

New recruit for Watermark Project

The past month has been an exciting time for the Shenhua Watermark Project.

The Review of Environmental Factors for exploration has been approved, exploration drilling has commenced and the Gunnedah-based management team has grown with the appointment of a new Communications Manager.

Having worked on the project as a consultant for the past six months, Melanie Layton has accepted a permanent role as Communications Manager for the Watermark Project. It is a significant step for Shenhua with Melanie being only the second non-Chinese employee appointed since setting up office in Australia.

Melanie accepted this position to be part of a team that she believes will set a new benchmark for how mining companies and communities work together.

"Shenhua takes its responsibility to community consultation very seriously," Melanie said.

"There is a plethora of consultation tools and techniques being used in the industry but nothing is more effective than

face-to-face, honest and transparent communication."

This appears to be the mantra of the Watermark Project team. In the past three months alone, Melanie and Watermark's Project Director Joe Clayton have met with more than 40 landholders for one-on-one discussions to deal with their individual queries and concerns.

Melanie believes that farming and mining can coexist and, more importantly, should coexist for the long-term benefit of all stakeholders and the community.

"The benefits that will come to the Gunnedah community through this project are immense," Melanie said.

"The Watermark Project will bring social, employment and training opportunities to Gunnedah, and those benefits will flow on to the agricultural industry as well."

However Melanie is aware that this cannot be achieved without community support.

"As the Communications Manager, and a new resident of Gunnedah, I am committed to ensuring there is a robust process in place for stakeholders to be informed, involved and engaged in the project and have the opportunity to



Melanie Layton, pictured with Watermark Project Director Joe Clayton, is Shenhua's second non-Chinese employee

provide feedback."

Melanie holds a Bachelor degree in Communications Public Relations and Media, and brings to the role more than 11 years in communication and

community consultation for some of the largest infrastructure projects in NSW.

Editorial and photo courtesy of Namoi Valley Energy

 **SHENHUA WATERMARK**