

# Potential Shenhua funding for indoor sports centre

Representatives from Shenhua Watermark recently met with Mayors from the Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah and Tamworth Councils for the announcement and signing of the in-principal agreement of the Watermark Project Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA).

The VPA was signed with the focus of advancing community amenities and infrastructure within the three shires to accommodate for the expected population boost that will occur if the Watermark project goes ahead.

Over the estimated 30 year lifespan of the

mining project, the agreement will see \$18 million provided to the Gunnedah Shire, \$1.2 million to Liverpool Plains and \$350,000 to Tamworth.

The \$1.2million allocated to the Liverpool Plains will be put towards the construction of a multi-purpose indoor sports stadium in Quirindi. The development is planned to provide a venue for sporting activities such as basketball, netball, indoor cricket and futsal among others.

Liverpool Plains Shire Council hopes that the creation of the facility will minimise the need to travel for

sporting events and will attract teams from other towns to visit Quirindi, consequently boosting the local economy.

According to Mayor of Liverpool Plains Shire Councillor Ian Lobsey, "Council was very pleased to be able to negotiate for the construction of a \$1.2m multipurpose indoor sports stadium in Quirindi"

"This much needed facility will be welcomed by the wider community of our Shire. It has been on our wish list for years however budget constraints and other more pressing priorities have resulted in it being regularly deferred," he added.

Alongside the \$1.2 million construction costs, Shenhua will cover expenses of up to \$300,000 for the detailed engineering and preparation of tender documentation for the sporting centre.

CEO of Shenhua Australia, Mr Wang Ningbo expressed how the VPA was the next stage in Shenhua's efforts to assist the local communities following the recently announced final round of Community Funding.

He explained how the \$5 million in community grants were awarded in order to assist with economic prospects, protect and enhance the

environment, improve cultural and community services and promote training and employment within the area.

"This VPA is a natural extension of this philosophy and demonstrates the company's commitment to being a part of the local community over the 30 year life of this project," Mr Wang Ningbo said.

The contracted terms of the VPA will be fixed if the project goes ahead. A Planning Assessment Commission review for the Watermark project is due to occur in Gunnedah on June 26.