

Rotary riverine project almost complete

ALONG-HELD dream of Rotarians to beautify the riverine area on the banks of the Namoi River has almost been realised with the official opening next Thursday.

The Rotary Club of Gunnedah received just over \$100,000 in the first year of the Shenhua Watermark Community Fund for the Gunnedah Riverine Improvement Project.

The scheme on the foreshores of the Namoi River was designed to improve the recreational and sporting opportunities for Gunnedah citizens and visitors, and to conserve and protect the river riparian zone and adjacent parklands.

Although initially planned as a one-year project, the need for sound planning and thorough co-ordinated construction saw the project divided into Stages 1 and 2, with Stage 2 completed with the recent installation of four picnic tables.

Further enhancement will be undertaken in coming months when the Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group will be involved in additional planting of native and shade trees in the riparian zone.

The preparation for large scale tree plant-



THE finished product. One of four sets of picnic tables that were installed near the Namoi River on Saturday. Pictured, back left, Brian Wilson, George Paul, Steve Benham and Rod Browne. Front left, Roger Carter, Rodger Lucas and Max Corbett.

ing has been delayed by extended drought conditions over the last 21 months.

At the time of the original application for funding, the Rotary Club was in discussion with Gunnedah Shire Council, which manages the land in the project

area, regarding the detail of the project and the type of improvement works that would be permissible and acceptable to the community.

A key aspect of the original application was the need for control of traffic in areas that were to

be protected and better managed.

After discussions with council, it was determined that the installation of heavy duty concrete bollards would meet the requirements for visual amenity, vandal proofing, flood passage and ability to withstand impact by flood debris.

The concrete bollards are very sturdy, and installed deeply on a solid foundation.

Further discussion with council resulted in an improved layout for the riverine area that protected a significant area, provided for adequate vehicle traffic and parking at the site and allowed further development of walking and cycling facilities.

The installed bollards, when combined with the metal fencing around the extended Donnelly Fields, protects a greater extent of riverine land than originally envisaged in the first application.

A significant contribution by council, meant that

the project funds were able to be extended to provide for an entrance ramp suitable for cycles at the eastern entrance, sealing of the eastern access road and turning area, and a sealed walking/cycling track, connecting the concrete track at the eastern end to the western entrance of Donnelly Fields.

It was not expected that the original funding would have achieved this level of outcome.

Feedback from the community on the work undertaken to date has been very positive, and the numbers of locals and visitors using the new sealed access road and enjoying a much more presentable river foreshore area for walking and relaxation has been encouraging.

The project has been co-ordinated by the Rotary Club of Gunnedah.

• Members of the community are invited to the official opening on Thursday, at 10am, near Cohen's Bridge.



CEMENT bollards installed to protect the river banks.



ROTARIANS working on the initial relocation of the fence around the playing fields early in the project. From left, Roger Corbett, Jamie Corbett, Rod Browne and Bob Laister.