



PICTURED with the Voluntary Planning Agreements are, from left, Mr Wang Ningbo (CEO Shenhua Watermark), Liverpool Plains Mayor Ian Lobsey, Gunnedah Mayor Owen Hasler, Tamworth Mayor Col Murray and Mr Liu Xiang (Chairman Shenhua Watermark).

Council and Shenhua agree on \$18m VPA

SHENHUA Watermark Coal has finalised negotiations with Gunnedah Shire Council over its Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) which will see \$18 million spent in the community over the 30-year life of the project, if approved.

The Chinese miner completed the process ahead of the upcoming Planning Assessment Commission review set down for June 26 in Gunnedah.

Shenhua Watermark Project Manager Paul Jackson said the VPA, which will be worth approximately \$18 million over the life of the Project, would help upgrade community facilities and infrastructure needed to service the population increase expected in the Shire.

"We are pleased to have reached in-principle agreement on the terms of a VPA between Shenhua Watermark

and Gunnedah Shire Council," Mr Jackson said.

"Shenhua is committed to ensuring positive economic and social outcomes for the local community as a result of our mine proposal and the VPA is a further demonstration of the company's commitment to the economic future of this region," Mr Jackson said.

Shenhua Australia's CEO, Mr Wang Ningbo said, "Over the past five years, Shenhua has committed \$5 million to the regional community through the Project's Community Fund to support the development of the region's economy, enhance and maintain the environment, improve important indigenous and local facilities and develop and promote training and employment opportunities."

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Mine VPA finalised

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"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.

Gunnedah Shire Council Mayor Cr Owen Hasler thanked Shenhua Watermark for the company's efforts during the negotiations.

"We are pleased that Council and Shenhua Watermark have reached an in-principle agreement in respect of the components and quantum of the VPA," Cr Hasler said.

"Council's representatives were pleased with the fact that the discussions took place in a positive and mutually respectful climate recognising that both parties were seeking a result which would support the project, should it gain planning approval, while providing appropriate compensation for the projected impacts caused to our local government area.

"We thank Mr Liu, Mr Wang and Mr Jackson for the professional manner in which they represented Shenhua Watermark in the negotiations," Cr Hasler said.

Under the terms of the VPA, which will be binding if and after the Project is approved, Shenhua will provide Gunnedah Shire Council with:

- A \$6 million lump sum amount to be applied to the construction of a facility for the benefit of the community in the local government area (community facility)
- Up to \$500,000 for the detailed engineering and preparation of tender documentation for the community facility
- \$0.06c per tonne of product coal produced from the Project during the period of the approval.

The Voluntary Planning Agreement document will now be drafted for consideration and execution by Shenhua Watermark and Council.