



KEY players in the construction of the Curlewis Skate Park pictured at the official opening. Back row, from left, Shenhua Watermark's Paul Jackson and Melanie Layton, Gunnedah Mayor Owen Hasler and Shenhua Watermark Community Fund Committee member Brett Reynolds. Front: Councillor Colleen Fuller, Curlewis Progress Association's Gary Dunkley, Ros Reilly and Tony Rankmore.

# Skate park dream comes to life thanks to Shenhua

BY ASHLEY GARDNER

**THE Curlewis Progress Association is now seeing the benefit of \$73,000 in funding from Shenhua Watermark, after the Hamilton Park Skate Park was officially opened on Friday.**

The project also received funding of \$25,000 from the Curlewis community, including the Curlewis Hotel and Curlewis General Store, as well as grants from Gunnedah Shire Council.

Curlewis Progress Association President, Tony Rankmore, opened the skate park and thanked those who had contributed to its funding and construction.

He said the park was initially brought to the attention of the association by local resident Ros Reilly, who with the help of bus driver John Millerd, transported local children to study other skate parks in the area.

"This project involved 21 volunteers, who

worked more than 1250 hours in the past two years, with Ros Reilly the main instigator," Mr Rankmore said.

"Local tradespeople donated time and equipment for the upgrade and Adam Marshall, Colleen Fuller and Leon Mills were major supporters of the park concept when it was initially put forward.

"The skate park is part of the overall picture of what we want to achieve.

"We wanted to provide a facility for the whole family, which includes something for the kids to do," he said.

"We will be planting trees in June and future upgrades will include a toilet block with disabled access and changes to the cenotaph."

Shenhua Watermark Communications Manager Melanie Layton said a number of factors stood out on Curlewis Progress Association's funding application.

"The amount of community involvement in this project and the work of the proac-

tive progress association, was a stand-out in matching our criteria," Ms Layton said.

"It is important to have facilities that can be used by the whole community, if our project goes ahead, Curlewis will be our neighbours.

"It's about making communities attractive and rewarding for its residents.

"We can physically see what we are funding and knowing that the whole Curlewis community was behind it, is rewarding for us."

Gunnedah Mayor Owen Hasler said the Curlewis Progress Association is a role model for what others are able to achieve.

"We were literally gobsmacked at what has been achieved here, they have had help with funding, but the Curlewis community should be very proud of its own efforts in this project," Cr Hasler said.

The Curlewis community has also benefited from previous funding by Shenhua, which allowed the construction of a multi-purpose shed at the local recreation ground.