

Locals recognised in regional training awards

LOCAL mining company Shenhua Watermark, St Mary's College Captain Matthew Jauja and Samantha McApline were honoured at the New England Training Awards held in Tamworth on Friday.

The awards were held at TRECC in front of more than 500 people, with

finalists from across seven categories recognised. The winners will now progress to the NSW Training Awards in Sydney on September 5.

Samantha McApline, who works at Aboriginal Employment Strategy, was a finalist in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander category and winner of the Sue Haylock Memorial Award.

Samantha studied Business Services - Business Certificate II.

St Mary's Year 12 student, Matthew Jauja, was highly commended in the VET in Schools Student of the Year award. Matthew also studied Business Services - Business Certificate II and was employed by GTES.

Shenhua Watermark won the Industry Collaboration of the Year award for its Make It Work Foundation.

Gunnedah was also represented by a number of finalists including Daniel Warren and Andrew George (Apprentice of the Year), Emma Clark (Trainee of the Year), Shellee Sutcliffe (Vocational Student of the Year) and Jarrod Murray (school-based apprentice/Trainee of the Year).

New England North West Group Training (NENWGT) nominated Shenhua for the sponsorship of its school-based trainee program which commenced in November last year. The program provides eight students from local high schools with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and training by regional employers.

The sponsorship sees Shenhua cover the costs of the school-based trainees by directly paying their salaries, allowing local employers who otherwise could not afford to provide the opportunity to local students.

Shenhua Watermark CEO Mr Wang Ningbo said being a finalist for the award was a huge achievement for both the students and local participating businesses.

"The program offers local students a unique opportunity to gain valuable exposure and experience to various local industries while undertaking



CHEN Chao (Senior Administration Manager, Shenhua Watermark), Justin Constable (Field Officer, NENWGT), Debbie Watson (Shenhua Watermark), school based trainee Karlee Longworth (St Mary's College) and Gerry McDonald (HR Manager, Shenhua Watermark).

their final years of school," Mr Wang said.

"As we do not currently have a work-site we have decided to sponsor the program to invest in the local region's youth. Shenhua takes its social responsibility seriously and this program is another way we can contribute to the local community as we work towards the development of our Watermark Project.

"We will use a local workforce throughout the life of the Watermark project in line with our vision to see Gunnedah grow in the next 30 years.

"By helping train local young people we are hopefully equipping them

to take advantage of the opportunities the Watermark project will bring to the region in the future," Mr Wang said.

The program is a collaborative enterprise between a number of local stakeholders, including TAFE New England, St Mary's College, Gunnedah, Gunnedah High School and Quirindi High School, seven regional businesses, Shenhua and NENWGT.

Local employers engaged in the program are McKechnies Boggabri, Downer Rail Werris Creek, Gunnedah Shire Council, Tamarang Engineering Quirindi, Gunnedah Industries, Ray Priestley Earthmoving and Coates Hire.



NEW England Training Award winners Samantha McApline, winner of the Sue Haylock Memorial Award, left, and Matthew Jauja, VET in Schools Student of the Year finalist and highly commended.

