



NEW Shenhua CEO Liu Xiang and Federal Minister for Regional Australia, Simon Crean, cut the ribbon to open the new Shenhua Watermark wing of the Gunnedah Rural Health Centre.



GUNNERAH Rural Health Centre Board Chairwoman Penny Crawford, Minister Simon Crean, Santos Community Relations Manager Sam Crafter and Board Director Phillipa Murray.

Shining monument to community effort

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"The [communities] that are reliant on single industries, non-diversified, are the ones that are struggling," Mr Crean said.

"The communities that have diversified their economic base are the ones that are growing, providing employment opportunities, providing security in the future.

"Narrabri, from which we've just come, is starting to experience that diversification."

"But it is also the case that if the economy is to grow from that diversified base it's not just the employment needs that need to be addressed, it's the service needs as well.

"That's why investment in these facilities is so important and I'm delighted in this case that Shenhua and BHP have seen the significance of contributing themselves to making sure this is a bigger project than would otherwise be the case."

Rural Health Centre Board Chairwoman Penny Crawford said the Centre stood testament to the extraordinary community Gunnedah is.

"Our Rural Health Centre is a shining example of what a community

like ours can achieve through vision and persistence," Mrs Crawford said.

"The community recognised a need for a modern health facility, with room to grow, to help attract and retain doctors and allied health professionals, and through the hard work and generosity of many, it was finally achieved.

The \$6.5 million centre has five wings – two medical, and one pathology, treatment and even a training wing – that bring together GPs, allied health professionals and other health services in the one location.

It is hoped the educational facilities at the centre will give the town the opportunity to "grow" our own health professionals.

Individual wings were named after BHP Billiton and Shenhua as the largest donors to the cause, while a supporters tree will be on display in the reception area in perpetuity, listing more than 30 other major contributors to the project.

Mrs Crawford said the facility was unique because it was "community-owned" – \$4.3 million was Federal funding, but the remainder was

contributed by the community and companies in the area.

She thanked BHP Billiton for \$500,000 'seed funding' and the Shenhua Community Fund for \$1million toward the project as well as Santos (\$100,000 plus ongoing support for the educational wing), the Manildra Group (\$50,000) and "countless members of the community who had donated time, hard work and financial support to the project".

Mr Crean said the project would never have got off the ground without such strong support both from the community and from industry.

"There are needs all around the country in terms of infrastructure, service provision etcetera," he said.

"No one government alone can do it, but collectively we can. It has got to be a collective effort between the three levels of government, by the corporate sector, by the community.

"This is an example of that investment, that partnership between the Commonwealth Government and the corporate sector, but significantly, responding to a community driven need."



THE 'Tree of Life', recognising many of those involved in getting the centre built.