

Stephanie Alexander influence at South PS

BY ASHLEY SWAIN

GUNNEDAH South Public School was brimming with activity yesterday as beautiful aromas spread throughout the grounds, at the official opening of the new Stephanie Alexander Kitchen.

A formal assembly started proceedings with the introduction of special guests and Gunnedah South Public School Principal, Emma Jeffery said it is a very proud moment for her as Principal to be able to officially open the kitchen facility.

Mrs Jeffery recapped the kitchen journey which began over two years ago when the school became involved in National Partnerships and were encouraged to think outside the square to improve student outcomes.

"Mr Humphries began with the idea and visited Forbes North Public School to see the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program in action and returned even more determined to bring it to life here at Gunnedah South," she said.

"Our dedicated and very supportive P & C were excited with the proposal and ready to support the school in anyway possible – but at this stage it was all still a dream as we had no funding."

Gunnedah South Public School applied for funding to the Shenhua

Watermark Community Fund Committee and were awarded \$164,000 for the new venture.

"I wish to sincerely thank Shenhua for their generosity, to be awarded over \$164,000 was amazing and meant our vision could become a reality," Mrs Jeffery said.

"This funding has meant that the school could build a purpose built cooking facility – one that will not only benefit over 500 of our students, but students from GS Kidd School and other community groups and organisations.

"In addition, to be awarded \$60,000 from Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation along with the professional development curriculum support for our staff is the icing on the cake," she said.

Shenhua Watermark Communications Manager, Melanie Layton was among special guests at the opening and said, "the kitchen ticked all the boxes on the community fund application and we are thrilled to donate money to Gunnedah South."

Shenhua Community Fund Committee member, Owen Hasler said, "It is really valuable to see something from submission stage to completion.

"It's also great to see the enthusiasm of the students – it's a wonderful team effort."

Special guests were treated to a three-course meal prepared by pupils

and kitchen staff, Jodie Sams, Tracy Keeler, Annette Percy and Noeline Stanger.

The program aims to change the way children approach and think about food.

At Gunnedah South, children, parents and staff are enthusiastically getting their hands dirty and learning how to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal food.

With fresh produce from the school's vegetable garden and eggs from the school farmyard, they are armed with plenty of ingredients to create their dishes.

"This years Education Week theme 'creating the future', certainly sums up our kitchen garden program," Mrs Jeffery said.

Gunnedah South are celebrating Education Week with lots of activities for the children, including special awards relating to their 'You Can Do It' program and each year performing an item relating to the theme, 'Creating the Future' today.

Tomorrow the older children will be dressing up as what they want to be when they grow up, while kindergarten to year two will dress up as magical characters for the opening of the school's fairy garden.

Friday afternoon the teachers have organised activities based around certain careers, such as fashion design or photography for the children to enjoy.



GUNNEDAH South Public School pupil, Piper Rankmore, serves Gunnedah Mayor Adam Marshall his main meal in the new Stephanie Alexander kitchen.



SHENHUA Watermark Community Fund Committee Members enjoying the three-course meal at the kitchen opening, from left, Owen and Di Hasler, Rebecca Heath, Paul Jackson, Melanie Layton, Brett Reynolds and Mark Kesby.