

Better stables in partnership

THE Gunnedah Show Society has decided to partner with local training organisation Gunida Gunyah to redevelop the existing stable complex, delivering a more extensive upgrade than had originally been planned at the same time as providing valuable hands on training for local trades students.

The Gunnedah Show Society received \$89,000 from the Watermark Community Fund in 2011 to replace two of the existing stable blocks with a new steel structure, which will be larger and provide better safety and comfort for the animals and their owners.

At the same time, Gunida Gunyah, is looking for community projects to give its trade students practical experience with metal fabrication and construction.

Gunnedah Show Society President George Truman told the Namoi Valley Independent the Showground stables are in "dire need of an upgrade".

There are currently six stable blocks at the Showground, however two of these no longer meet safety standards.

"The slab they are on is actually subsidising and they are too small for some of the larger competition horses," Mr Truman said.

"There's not enough room for a rider to walk around their horse, which is an Occupational Health and Safety concern."

The Show Society even had to hire portable stables in order to host the Gunnedah Show Jumping Festival, costing almost \$14,000 for the four-day event.

And the best part is, through using Gunida Gunyah, the Show Society hopes to be able to build three new stables instead of the original two planned.

"Initial quotes for the labour were more than the materials, so by using Gunida Gunyah and the vocational trainers, we

should be able to remove and replace three stables," he said.

"We get more and better facilities and the students get on-the-job, practical training."

Gunida Gunyah CEO Jane Bender said it was "a marriage made in heaven".

"One of the most important parts of training is to deliver meaningful, hands-on experience," Mrs Bender said.

"It is important for our students to get practical experience and to have the opportunity to follow a project through from beginning to end – you start something, you finish it, you own it.

"With the Showground project, the students will be able to pre-fabricate the panels in the workshop, but also be able to lay the concrete slab and to build the stables and see the finished product in use."

Shenhua Community Relations manager Melanie Layton said the partnership was originally an idea developed by the Community Fund Committee to try to promote "community ownership" of the new facilities.

She said it was hoped that promoting ownership of the project would reduce the likelihood of vandalism, and even encourage more young people to take an active role in the Show Society.

"The Gunnedah Show Society provides and maintains a wonderful facility that is used for many events throughout the year," Ms Layton said.

"The Showground has one of the best arena surfaces in Australia and now it will have new stables to match the high quality of events held there each year.

She said Gunnedah TAFE has also been contacted and is keen to assist where possible with this project.

"Because of TAFE's location next to the showground, it is likely that students from the Construction Course will be involved with the construction of the stables."

