

Flood of requests for funding

GUNNEDAH coalmining company Shenhua Watermark has received 48 applications totalling more than \$10 million for its community funding this year.

There had been only one application received at the beginning of the month as the June 8 deadline loomed.

But staff had been confident they would receive more, and based on the previous year's experience, they expected a flood of applications at the last minute.

The Watermark community fund committee members will now have their hands full in the coming weeks as they analyse and assess all 48 funding applications.

Shenhua communications manager Melanie Layton said the number of applications received was lower than last year, but the quality was extremely high.

"The quality of applications received this year demonstrates that people have put a lot of thought into what their community needs," Ms Layton said.

The majority of applications have requested funding for improvements to local amenities and facilities, construction of new sporting and recreational facilities, installation of playground equipment, and investment in educational and training programs.

Ms Layton said most applications requested funding of between \$250,000 and \$500,000, and there was one project in Gunnedah that came in just under \$2 million.

The successful applicants will be notified towards the end of the year.

The \$5 million Watermark Community Fund was pledged by Shenhua as part of the tender process for its exploration licence back in 2008.



SEALED AND DELIVERED: Shenhua communications manager Melanie Layton hands over funding applications to committee member Brett Reynolds.