

# New equipment for new mums

MUMS to be will have a much more comfortable birthing experience thanks to the local Pediatric and Maternity Support (PRAMS) group.

The group recently purchased a new electric labour bed and fetal monitor for the Gunnedah Health Service Maternity Ward at a combined cost of \$47,000. The purchases were made possible thanks to a \$90,000 funding grant from Shenhua mining group.

Hospital midwife Janet Allan said the bed would allow women to have more control of their own comfort while giving birth.

"The beauty of this is that the mothers can actually be involved in manipulating the bed themselves," she said.

"It's got many positions, it's got a birthing bar, it conerts to almost an armchair as such, so that they can take many position in labour and still be on the bed.

"The magnificence of it is it's also for the ease of management for staff as well so there isn't a lot of man handling or a lot of physical effort involved, whereas before it relied on us doing the physical adjustment."

Ms Allan said the new fetal monitor would also assist both patients and staff.

"It's got some in built functions so instead of having three machines we can do it all from this one," she said.

Founder of PRAMS Amber Donoghue said the



PRAMS members Pam Duff and Amber Donoghue (with Scarlett), health services manager Carol Young, PRAMS members Alysha White and Heidi Mainey, midwife Janet Allan and PRAMS member Lauren Robertson, with the new electric labour bed and fetal monitor.

remaining funds from Shenhua would be used to give the entire maternity ward at the hospital a makeover.

She said the works would match the new waiting area, which the group had already refurbished.

"The rest of the rooms and hallways will match that look - it will be a hotel-like

theme to the whole ward," she said.

"The outside courtyard is going to be an outdoor visiting area with a little playground and outdoor seating so that when families come to visit you can go out there rather than be concerned about keeping kids quiet."

She said the makeover

would also include a bathroom upgrade.

"The bathroom will include a spa bath plus it will be fitted out as a regular bathroom so that women can have the option of having a spa bath during their labour," she said.

"Most hospitals offer that as a standard practice."

In just three years the

PRAMS group has raised more than \$60,000 which has been spent on the maternity ward courtyard and waiting room, as well as a number of machines and other equipment for both the maternity and pediatric wards.

Mrs Donoghue said the group started after a number of mothers who had babies at similar times got

together to fund-raise for the hospital.

"It was purely because the staff were so wonderful yet the facilities were a bit tired and they didn't go hand in hand," she said.

"We started with a raffle. The community really embraced it when we said what we were doing, we couldn't believe the support."