



Cartoon: Rhys Turner and Jonathan Keegan

## Mining time for Liverpool Plains

### EDITORIAL

By **JOHN MAGNER, DARCY MOORE** and **JEMMA GRADY**

CAN farming and mining co-exist?

This is a question being asked a lot recently as Chinese mining company Shenhua Watermark plans to go ahead with mining on the Liverpool Plains.

In spite of opposition from the NSW Farmer's Association and a strong voice from respected former NSW Governor Dame Marie Bashir, we believe that mining can co-exist with farming in the region.

Shenhua has put in place a number of conditions to keep everyone satisfied that mining will not occur on prime farming land. Mining is not allowed on black soil and this is stated in their exploration licence from the government.

Shenhua will only mine country not suitable for farming.

There are many benefits that Shenhua will bring to the community.

They are going to employ a peak work force of 600 men and women both directly and indirectly, also providing trade traineeships.

The mine will continue with generational employment.

Seventy-five per cent of local business would like the mine to go ahead if the water quality is not affected.

Shenhua has a policy of purchasing from the local area where possible; this includes the use of a local builder to construct the corporate office in Gunnedah, and use of local suppliers for services such as maintenance, as well as cleaning and catering.

This can only have a positive local economic impact.

Extensive research has been carried out on both the surface water and the underground aquifers by Australia's top hydrogeologists available.

This research shows that the mine will have minimal impact to the water supplies.

Constant monitoring of the water will occur for the duration of mining.

The Shenhua Group places a great deal of importance on ensuring the safety of everyone associated with the mine.

The mine is expected to extract up to 10 million tonnes of coal per year over a 30 year period ensuring long term employment prospects.

The economic benefits that Shenhua will bring to the community are many and while safety and the terms to only mine non-prime farming land are upheld, mining in the Liverpool Plains should be able to go ahead.

# New doctor arrives in rural community

By **JORJI TAAFFE** and **CHLOE TOWELL**

THE Merriwa community welcomed a new doctor to town in 2015.

Dr Emad Jasem came to Australia in November 2013.

He was born in Iraq and left as a young man for the United Kingdom; he has studied medicine in three separate countries.

Dr Emad says there is only one reason he became a doctor.

"My mum wanted me to be a doctor, I am glad I took my mother's advice," he said.

Dr Emad started working in Merriwa in February 2015.

He moved to Australia because he wanted a new life.

"I wanted to go somewhere where the weather is nice and have the opportunity to work in a small community, so I found Merriwa," he said.

"Now I am in Merriwa I have more support and the weather is really nice, the skies are blue and most of all, the people are really nice."

Dr Emad says Australia is the place he has enjoyed practicing medicine most.

"The main difference between Iraq and Australia is that Iraq has more limited medical facilities and that Australia has more advanced medication with all the latest medical equipment."

Dr Emad says there was only one main obstacle in becoming a doctor in Australia. "I had some obstacles



Dr Emad Jasem has proven to be very popular since arriving in Merriwa.

Picture: Chloe Towell

with the organisation of immigration and it took nine months," he said.

He enjoys working in a small rural community rather than the city.

"Big practices are made up of many doctors where the patients don't get their choice of their doctor if they get hurt or are badly sick," he said.

"You do not get the opportunities to get to know patients."

"In a rural setting you are the main man; you look after and build a relationship with the patient."

Dr Emad helps the sick and injured at Merriwa Surgery and is working very hard for the community.

## Tennis, pony clubs earn needed funding

By **JONATHAN KEEGAN, NICOLE MARTIN** and **PATRICK MAGNER**

THE Merriwa Tennis Club and Merriwa Pony Club have recently been successful in gaining grants to upgrade facilities.

The tennis club has received three separate grants totalling \$21,000 while the pony club has received \$22,000.

Tennis Club president, Robert Smith, said "the grants will be used to build a new sports system starting with court

lighting". "We hope to be environmentally friendly and have looked at solar powered lights."

Merriwa Pony Club president, Clare Martin, also says grants are vital for the survival of small regional clubs.

"Our grants will be used to construct a cross country course," Mrs Martin said.

Mr Smith and Mrs Martin both emphasised the importance of



Pony Club members Rose Nairne, Emily Ninness and Nicole Martin are excited about the new course.

applying for grants in smaller sporting and community clubs.

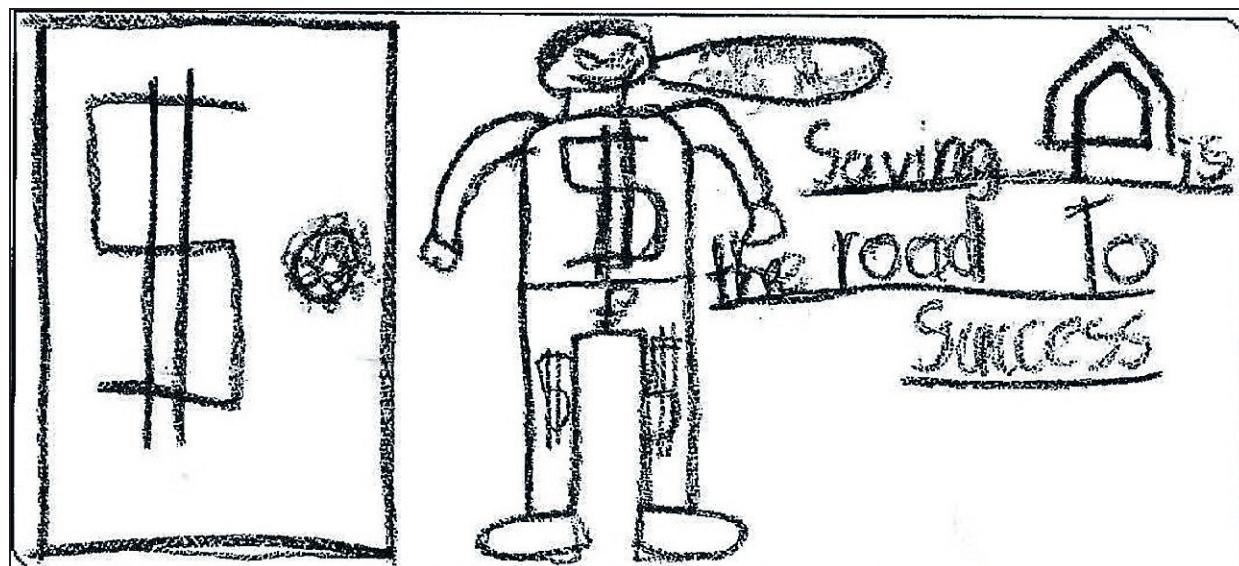
"Our club is a community facility which

helps provide a healthy environment for people to exercise but we just don't get enough money for big projects" Mr Smith said.

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