



TOO INTERESTING

Sweeping change

WHEN it comes to elite, Olympic level rowing, a race can be won or lost by hundredths of a second.

That's why Charlotte Nash-Stewart and Philip Teakle — two engineering scientists at the CSIRO's Centre for Advanced Technologies at Pullenvale, have started a project to give rowers a competitive and psychological edge.

A year ago, CSIRO researchers met Australian Institute of Sport officials for a "speed dating" session to find potential improvements in sports equipment, Teakle explained.

The pair's main challenge is to develop fibreglass pressure pipes which will replace the heavy, corrosion-prone, metal pipes often used in underground mining.

Their pilot project looks at using carbon fibre, with an epoxy resin matrix, to design a new type of scull oar.

"The aim is to have a technology to demonstrate improvements over the way



BLADE runners . . . Charlotte Nash-Stewart and Philip Teakle hope to redesign rowing oars for elite Australian rowers. Picture: Kevin Bull

the oar shaft is made," Teakle said.

It'll be too late for the Beijing Olympics but if the pilot project goes well Aussie hi-tech racing oars could be making an appearance in 2012.