



**TWENTY-ONE** years ago today, Mrs Pam Stone became the first Mayoress of Wodonga when her husband, Les, was made Mayor of Australia's first rural city. Mrs Stone remembers the ceremony well: "It was not stiff or formal, but yet there was a historic feeling about it." Today, the anniversary is being celebrated with a public breakfast at Woodland Grove — and a special eight-page Border Mail liftout inside. ● Recalling the beginnings — Page 21

## City 'has come far'

**TWENTY-ONE** years ago today, Mrs Pam Stone became the first Mayoress of Wodonga — the moment her husband, Les, was made Mayor.

Wodonga was proclaimed Australia's first rural city on March 30, 1973, an anniversary being celebrated today with a public breakfast at Woodland Grove.

Mrs Stone recalled that the ceremony had taken place on a sunny afternoon with hundreds of school children present.

"It was not stiff or formal but yet there was an historic feeling about it," she said.

"The Governor, Sir Ro-

By  
**HOWARD JONES**

han Delacombe, was a courtly old gentleman who referred to Les as 'my dear mayor'."

Cr Les Stone died in 1974 but Mrs Stone was elected in 1977 to become the Wodonga's first female councillor.

She also became first woman mayor in 1985 and was a councillor until 1992, often working closely with another pioneering councillor, Mrs Betty McLean.

Mrs Stone fought passionately for many causes, including beautifying High St,

more housing for young people and for a university.

Much has been achieved in all those areas and the award of an Order of Australia Medal this year recognised her contribution in those and other issues.

Mrs Stone said the city status had boosted the morale of residents and also enhanced the way that outsiders perceived Wodonga.

"We could tell people to 'come and see our city', which was much better than saying 'come and see our shire'," Mrs Stone said.

"We really took off after 1973."