

'Refreshing' concept by shire — Hunt

Wodonga Shire Council's plan to convert its status to "rural city" was new and refreshing, the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Hunt, said yesterday.

Speaking at a Press conference after discussions with a council sub-committee, Mr. Hunt said it was obvious the council wanted the best of both worlds.

He promised to support the council in moves for city status and provide a sympathetic hearing for ideas associated with the move.

Mr. Hunt described the rural city idea as "a new concept developed by a council keen to obtain the status of a city, yet retain the charm and character of rural living."

Many people in the shire might be afraid of such a change, but it was commendable that the council has the ability and forethought to recognise advantages to be gained, he said.

PROMISED HELP

Mr. Hunt said the council had impressed him by deciding no move would be made without the support of ratepayers.

He had also promised to help the council with legal difficulties in the status change.

One problem involved was that before a municipality could be declared a city, it must be "substantially urban in character."

"It may be argued that because of the shire's substantial rural area, it could not be considered, although the fact that 90 per cent. of the population and 80 per cent. of the rates come from the urban area says a lot for it."