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Council will seek control of city

By Our Civic Reporter

The Sydney City Council is preparing to "get tough" in an effort to wrest managerial control of the city from the State Government.

If it succeeds it would have power to close off streets without Government approval, regulate Kings Cross shopping hours and license city taxis.

Also, it would collect all city parking fines — worth several million dollars annually. These are now going into State consolidated revenue.

The council's hard line attitude was disclosed yesterday by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Shehadie, who said he would make a determined attempt to have the Government hand over

all powers to control the city's destiny.

"It is now evident that the council has the ability to manage the city's affairs without first having to seek ratification from the Government for many decisions," he said.

"I will be pushing — stressing is not a strong enough term — the State to let the council make decisions which affect the city."

Alderman Shehadie was speaking at the opening of an exhibition in the Lower Town Hall of 16 action plans being undertaken by the council.

The exhibition includes details of a review of the 1971 Sydney Strategic Plan and will be open to the public until August 10.

Alderman Shehadie said he would begin his campaign by organising meetings with State ministers in

an attempt to convince them of the worth of his proposal.

He and the chairman of the council's city development committee, Alderman A. Briger, said the State should be required to consult the council before going ahead with new education facilities in the city.

At present the State Government could override the council and build without obtaining council agreement.

They said organisation of public transport in the city also should have council support before it was altered or improved.

As things stood, the council could not close off a minor street to create a public park without first getting approval from the Police Department.

Alderman Shehadie said the council paid the police

\$200,000 a year to patrol city parking meters, yet the council got none of the money collected in parking fines.

The council had an \$18-million debt, built up over the years, to various public and private lending authorities.

About 60 per cent of the properties in the city belonged to Church, State or Federal authorities and did not pay rates.

It was unfair that 15,000 individuals and companies had to pay rates to the council to provide these non-ratable properties with council services.

Alderman Shehadie said: "We believe that the State is in a position to give us, and these people, some relief."