

# Tree debate heats up

By Marianna Papadakis

THE debate over the development application (DA) for the removal of six Cook Park pines has intensified relations among Rockdale councillors.

The DA, lodged with an independent heritage study on November 28, will be on exhibition in the Christmas and New Year period from December 13, 2007 to January 10, 2008.

A further report to be submitted on the policy implications of the decision comes after the *Leader* broke the story on the council's breach of policy on the removal of heritage-listed trees.

Debate reached boiling point between councillors Gary Green and Liz Barlow after the former tabled a surprise fourth arborist report at a council meeting.



**Controversy:** The leaning Cook Park pines.

Cr Green said the community was regrettably misinformed by "scaremongering extreme greens".

The report by James Watsford of Canopy Trees Pty Ltd, paid for by Cr Green, states "all six trees should be removed due to the high risk the trees present to property and the public".

Cr Barlow said it was a significant issue for residents and the report should go to an information session.

"Previous reports paid for by ratepayers are being ignored. People

are saying this council does not listen," Cr Barlow said.

Council director of city services Greg Smith said that, given the sensitivity of the issue, it would be brought back to council for a decision next February.