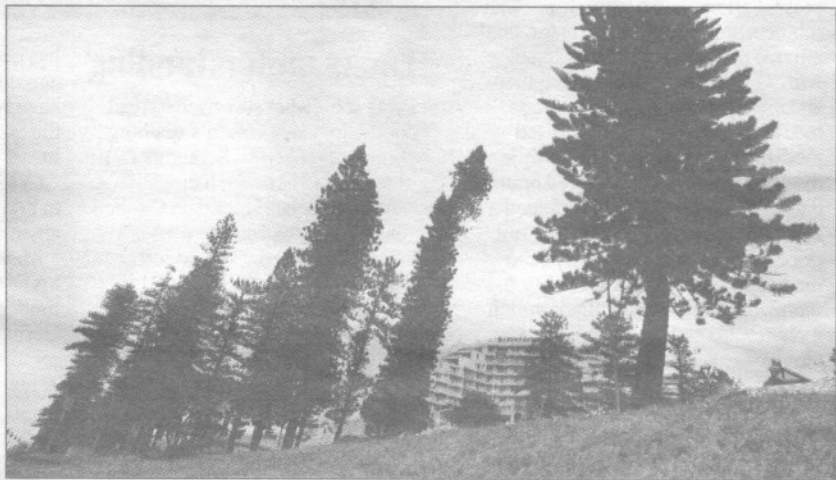


# Councillors lean towards removal



**Going, going:** Several pine trees in Cook Park will be replaced.

By Pat Stringa

THE majority of Rockdale councillors have agreed to replace six pine trees in Cook Park, Brighton-Le-Sands, following a notice of motion by Liberal councillor Gary Green.

The council also voted last week to develop "a plan for the replacement of pine trees in Cook Park in anticipation of their natural decline and that the new mature/advanced trees be planted/positioned appropriately to allow for a seamless transition".

Cr Green recommended the six trees be replaced because "the SES received numerous complaints about three pine trees in Cook Park and one in Princess Street, all with serious inclinations that appear very unhealthy".

He told the *Leader* in an email: "Council checked with two arborists, who used trees on either side of the unhealthy looking ones with dangerous inclinations as controls."

"Surprisingly, the controls turned out to be in worse shape than the ones in question and that's why I called for a report to have six out of several hundred pines in Cook Park replaced with mature-size versions."

Cr Green wrote that he was "for the retention of all the beautiful pines in Cook Park, excepting six dangerous ones that have been reported to council by the SES/arborists."

Councillor Liz Barlow and Greens councillor Lesa de Leau asked that their votes be noted against the recommendation.

Cr de Leau put forward an amendment to Cr Green's notion of motion stating that "the council retain all pine trees in Cook Park and undertake regular monitoring and maintenance as required".

Cr de Leau said the background infor-

## ARBORIST REPORTS

Two arborists reports were produced for Rockdale Council in August 2005 which looked at the health of the six pine trees in Cook Park opposite Princess Street, Brighton-Le-Sands.

The reports, compiled by Urban Forestry Australia and Sydney Arboricultural Services, looked at the health and hazard of the six trees - four Cook or column pines and two Norfolk Island pines.

The reports said the health of the Cook pines was good, with a life expectancy of between 15 to 40 years, while the Norfolk Island pines' health was only "fair", with an expectancy of five to 15 years.

One of the Cook pines has a lean of 23 degrees, which "appears to indicate the tree has remained in this position for some time and is not collapsing or moving onto the nearby tree", one of the reports said.

mation from Cr Green did not include the report prepared by the council's tree management officer which recommended after considering two commissioned arborist reports the retention of all trees with regular maintenance as required.

"Cr Green's background report failed to mention that the leaning Cook Pines are growing normally," Cr de Leau said.

Cr Barlow said: "I wonder if [the councillors] realise that they have voted to have healthy trees removed on the whim of one councillor."

"The notice of motion lacked some extremely important facts, as in both arborists' reports the column pines 'despite the poor growing environment, are displaying generally good vigour'."