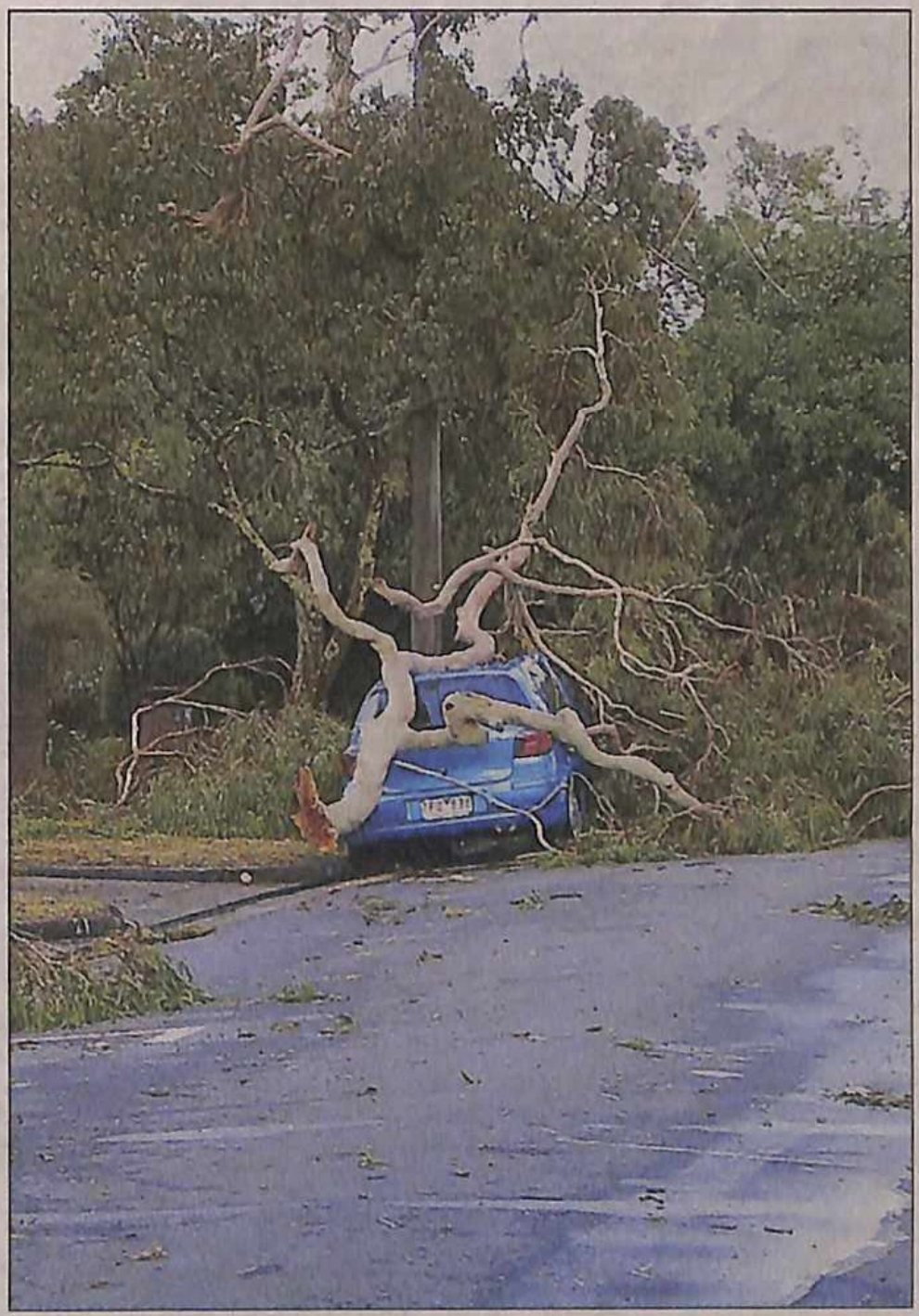
Branches crush vehicle



Kate Bertrand's car is crushed by a ghost gum branch.

MINUTES after Kate Bertrand moved her car to what she thought was a safer spot as clouds gathered last Thursday afternoon, it was crushed.

Ms Bertrand's 2005 Toyota Echo was squashed by a falling branch outside her parents' home in The Avenue during the mini-tornado.

It seems the 30-year-old chose the wrong time to visit her parents at their home in one of Blackburn's hardest-hit streets.

As well as Ms Bertrand's car, several homes in the normally quiet suburban street were also severely damaged by falling trees. One was partly demolished.

A nearby resident, who asked not be named, told *Leader* she had seen a cypress, a gum and a paperbark fall like dominoes on two houses.

"One, two, three, the trees fell on top of each other," she said.

The woman scrambled to bolt the windows of her home, which had been open because of the heat.

"It looked like the windows were going to blow off," he said. "It was just ferocious."

Ms Bertrand was inside her parents' house watching the tennis on television with her sister Jenny and parents, John and Margaret, when the mini-tornado struck.

During the 15-minute storm the television suddenly went blank after the power supply line was torn from the front of the house.

"It was like something out of the movie *Twister*," Ms Bertrand said. Potentially live power lines lay outside the house, downed tree branches were scattered and warm flood waters flowed along the street.

Like Ms Bertrand, the owners of the two damaged houses said they had insurance.