

STATEWIDE

Industry's heating up

THE TIME FOR SOLAR IS NOW

Tyron Butson

THE state's solar industry is on the "brink of a revolution", despite its gutting by the O'Farrell government, an industry conference has heard.

Solar sector leaders, academics and researchers from around the world have gathered for the 2011 Solar Conference in Sydney to showcase the latest trends in renewable energy.

Australian Solar Energy Society chief executive John Grimes said the rise of China's solar market had pushed global prices down.

"There's not been a better

time to get into solar - we're on the brink of a revolution here, a solar revolution," he said. "Solar prices have been slashed by more than 70 per cent in the past year, largely due to the massive solar growth in China.

"Australian households can now reap the benefits."

China's solar industry was virtually non-existent in 2009 but it has since introduced a feed in tariff and stands at the fourth biggest installer of solar panels in the world.

But Mr Grimes attacked the NSW Government's slashing of the solar bonus scheme earlier this year.

CLIMATEWATCH



Volunteer guide Jenny Pattison.

Picture: CRAIG WILSON

Citizen scientists tracking change

Rashell Habib

YOU can now become a scientist and there won't be any test tubes involved.

Citizen scientists are being called on to help collect and record information about the natural world to help form a more specific response to climate change.

Lilyfield's Jenny Pattison, a volunteer guide who specialises in fauna, will be running free training workshops to give people the skills to run their own neighbourhood Climate Watch.

"You would be able to go for a walk through your local park and see some species you can document," Ms Pattison said.

"I find it's really making me notice things and the changes in nature."

Ms Pattison is a retired primary school teacher who

TAKE A WALK

WHAT: ClimateWatch Guided Walks 2011

WHEN: 10am December 10

WHERE: Start from the Information Booth outside the Garden Shop (Palm Grove Centre), Royal Botanic Gardens

CONTACT: 9231 8304

COST: Free

took her love and knowledge of nature to the Botanic Gardens where she's helping people become "citizen scientists" through guided tours.

ClimateWatch enlists the community to gather data about flowering times, breeding cycles, migration and distribution of the flora and fauna so scientists can assess and address the impacts of climate change.