

# Rally calls for urgent action

By ALAN LANDER

THE Sunshine Coast faces a future where climate change will push temperatures above 35 degrees for 110 days every year.

That was the frightening prediction from a local expert as the Coast joined the global push for climate action, while world leaders meet in Copenhagen.

Keynote speaker Peter Waterman – an associate professor at the University of the Sunshine Coast – told a rally in Cotton Tree Park that by 2070, a third of the year would be spent in hot-house conditions.

At the moment, an average of just six days a year are above 35 degrees on the Coast. The message from yesterday's rally was simple: do something now.

"I think what we will see out of Copenhagen is an agreement to agree next year," Prof Waterman said.

"We in Australia can't even get our political parties lined up, and the federal opposition can't even get themselves lined up."

CSIRO figures compiled

on the Coast showed that by 2030, temperatures would rise between 0.3 and two degrees.

"By 2070 that will be up by six degrees and we could be looking at a 10-fold increase of 40 degree-plus days by 2070," Prof Waterman said.

"The local meteorological station currently shows we have an average six days a year with temperatures over 35 degrees.

"By 2030 that will rise to between 14 and 20 days of the same – and by 2070, 64 to 110 days a year will have 35-plus temperatures."

He said government decisions were not making sense in the light of current climate knowledge, using the proposed Sunshine Coast University Hospital's Kawana flood plain location as an example.

Prof Waterman told the 100-strong crowd that CSIRO figures also showed the Coast was getting 10mm less rain per year than for the last 60 years.

"It might not sound much, but it's less going into the soil," he said.

"It's measured so we

know it's getting hotter."

Prof Waterman said he wanted Coast residents to focus on what they could do.

If the Coast took up the personal challenges, we would not be lonely, he said, adding: "Coochiemudlo, Bribie Island, the Noosa Biosphere reserve, they are all taking it up, as are rural women in Victoria and South Australia."

Prof Waterman also addressed emission trading systems.

"There is little connection between an ETS and climate change – in fact, there's one," he said. "An ETS is an economic tool to gather money. It is not a practical measure to abate emissions.

"By the government's own figures, for five years they will let naughty polluters off and it will be 20 years before we can measure appreciable change – but we have a problem now."

Organisers of yesterday's rally asked audience members to sign a petition to "send a clear message to governments that they want real action on climate change in Copenhagen"



GO SOLAR: Ian Christesen, Peter Waterman and Rebel Lyons get behind the push to tackle global warming at a rally in Cotton Tree park yesterday