

Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation, promoting sustainable technology and practice in order to protect our environment



ATA's highlights 2007/2008

Water

Greywater seminars

Despite decent rains in some parts of Australia, community interest in greywater reuse keeps growing. Due to demand ATA has continued to deliver greywater seminars and workshops through local councils and companies. The seminars cover pros and cons of different systems, examples from ATA's Greywater Trial, and environmental and health considerations.

Greywater soil analysis project

ATA, in conjunction with RMIT's Environmental Science department, undertook a soil analysis of seven suburban properties that have been using greywater on their gardens for a number of years. Sites were specifically selected on the basis of soil type, greywater reuse history and consistency of the water quality.

Overall the investigation was designed to identify the major contaminants in soil after greywater application and analyse the potential short and long term implications of continued greywater reuse. A summary report of the research is available on the ATA website.

Water: Not Just Down the Drain book

ATA launched the revised edition of *Water: Not Just Down the Drain* with support from the SmartWater Fund. The book provides homeowners with a practical step-by-step guide to creating water-smart homes using rainwater and greywater.

The book was written by Stuart McQuire, whose family home in West Brunswick demonstrates the effectiveness of using rainwater and greywater as substitutes for drinking water. Using the recommendations outlined in the book the McQuire family has reduced the use of drinking water in their home by 96%. They currently use less than 20 litres of mains water a day.

Energy

Lobbying for feed-in tariff legislation

Feed-in tariffs require electricity utilities to pay electricity generators, such as solar system householders, a set amount over a guaranteed time period for electricity they feed back into the grid. Feed-in tariffs have been used in many countries to increase the installation of renewable energy systems.



ATA in conjunction with RMIT's Environmental Science department conducted research on the short and long term effects of greywater use.

ATA has been a leading force in lobbying for the introduction of feed-in tariff legislation at a state/territory and federal level. From writing submissions, meeting ministers and raising the issue in the media, ATA has called for a fair and effective scheme based on gross metering. In the past 12 months South Australia, Queensland and Victoria have implemented feed-in tariff schemes.

ATA continues to push for improvements to the existing state schemes and for the development of a national feed-in tariff that is based on gross rather than net metering.

Energy efficiency schemes

Over the past 12 months ATA has played an active role in the design of state-based energy efficiency schemes in both South Australia and Victoria. Victoria announced their Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET) some time ago, and has been in the process of refining the scheme over the past 12 months. South Australia followed recently with their Residential Energy Efficiency Scheme (REES). ATA has provided input into both schemes.

Advocacy on energy and water

ATA has made various submissions on energy market reform, energy efficient appliances and commented on draft guidelines for the green plumbing industry. ATA has also provided input to the Wilkins' Strategic Review of Climate Change Programs and the Prime Minister's 2020 Summit, calling for a range of complementary incentive schemes to accompany the forthcoming National Emissions Trading Scheme.

Domestic wind turbines for urban areas

In conjunction with Sustainability Victoria, ATA has commenced the second stage of research into the suitability of small-scale wind power for urban areas. The project will involve measuring and assessing wind speeds and turbulence in a number of sites across Melbourne.

Renewable energy installations in East Timor

For the fifth year in a row ATA members went to East Timor in late 2007 to install renewable energy systems. Twenty ATA volunteers installed over 30 solar power systems in various locations including schools, health clinics and community centres. Key initiatives include the first phase of the Village Lighting Scheme which aims to provide solar lighting to all the inhabitants of a remote village. A wind turbine was installed in Liquidoe to provide lighting for an administrative building and to test the viability of wind power in remote areas.

Sustainable Living

ReNew: technology for a sustainable future magazine

The release of *ReNew* 100 in June 2007 was a significant milestone and publicity on its release introduced many new readers to the magazine. Newsagency sales have continued to increase by over 10%. Subscriptions to *ReNew* magazine have increased 20% in the last twelve months, helped along by incentives such as subscriber prizes

ReNew still leads the way as a valuable resource about sustainability, with practical advice and DIY tips. Articles by do-it-yourselfers, the lifeblood of the magazine, continue to increase.

ReNew/ATA subscriber prize

All new and renewing ATA members and *ReNew* subscribers went into the draw to win a 960 watt grid-connect solar system. The prize was generously donated by Solar Shop Australia. It was good to know that so many people were excited by the prospect of winning clean green electricity for their home.

Sanctuary: sustainable living with style magazine

With the expansion of *Sanctuary* to a biannual magazine, for the first time we were able to offer subscriptions. Subscriptions were extremely popular with 1000 new subscribers in the first nine months.



For the fifth year in a row, ATA members installed renewable energy systems in East Timor, including a wind turbine at Liquidoe.

Newsagency sales continue to grow with an increase of 10% in the past twelve months.

Home shows and community events

ATA attended over 50 home shows, environmental expos and community events across Australia, helping to spread the word on sustainability. The events are a great opportunity for ATA members to share their knowledge and experience with people.

Branches

ATA branches are groups of like-minded ATA members that meet regularly and provide members and non-members the opportunity to exchange information, experiences and ideas with those interested in sustainable living. In 2007/8 branches have been involved in a wide range of activities, from regular meetings featuring speakers on a variety of sustainability topics, to organising house tours, running sustainability festivals and also attending fairs and events.

Most branches meet monthly and discuss practical means to live more sustainably.

For more information on ATA's activities go to the website: www.ata.org.au