

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



ATA's highlights 2009/2010

Carbon pollution reduction scheme

As the political debate swirled in 2009 about emissions trading and with the Federal Government attempting to legislate its program, ATA advocated on behalf of its members for both a strong scheme that recognised the science of climate change, along with one that took into account voluntary emission reduction activities by ATA members and the general public.

ATA was concerned the government's sole interest was to regulate large-scale energy production and that the actions of thousands of people across the country to reduce their emissions, by such means as investing in GreenPower and solar photovoltaics, would be ignored and simply reduce the compliance costs for the big polluters. The government eventually accepted GreenPower sales as a significant form of voluntary action under the scheme and designed its policy to take account of these voluntary investments .

Renewable Energy Target

As one of the main policy tools for investment in small and large-scale renewable energy, ATA has always devoted a large amount of advocacy time to the Renewable Energy Target (RET). With the legislation before Federal Parliament twice; once in August 2009 to get the scheme expanded to include a target of 20% by 2020, and a second time to fix the problems between the small and large-scale sectors.

While supporting the RET, ATA has long been a critic of the way it interacts with investors in small-scale technologies. After much lobbying, many issues were addressed in the second round of the legislation in June 2010, which resulted in a split of the large and small-scale markets, a fixed price for renewable energy certificates for owners of small-scale systems and an uncapped market for small-scale technologies.

Tankulator

An original idea for calculating rainfall collection to water tanks from one of the ATA's staff turned into a full-blown project, the Tankulator. The ATA's water team received support from the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund, managed by Sustainability Victoria, to develop the innovative online rain harvesting tool, which will calculate personalised recommendations for households all over Australia. People wanting to buy a tank or those wanting to expand on their current system will get a better match between their harvesting capability and water demand with the help of the Tankulator. To be launched in 2011.

ReNew: technology for a sustainable future magazine

ReNew 110, with sales of 10,291, became the biggest-selling issue when it came out in December 2009, thanks to a very popular solar panel buyers' guide. While ReNew 110 was a bestseller, ReNew 112 was a milestone issue, celebrating 30 years since the magazine was first published in 1980. The issue



Watch the Speed dating with sanctuary magazine short video on youtube www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEkLL7ngMA

featured a fold-out timeline mapping the ATA's history plus a feature on one of the original members.

ReNew's new website was launched in June, helping to promote the magazine to a new audience and giving regular readers a place to learn more about DIY household sustainability. And while ReNew engaged more with its online audience, it also took sustainability on the road, holding an open house day in Castlemaine in central Victoria as part of the State of Design festival.

Sanctuary: beautiful, green homes magazine

Sanctuary magazine continued to attract readers as subscriber numbers climbed 69 per cent over the financial year and newsagency sales remained strong. A new look to the magazine was introduced in issue 11, with a design update and new features such as Ask the Experts, Design Notes and In Focus.

In mid-2010 *Speed Dating with Sanctuary* was held at the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne as part of the State of Design festival. We organised 90 "dates" in 90 minutes in a fun, interactive environment and great media exposure. Watch the short video on youtube.

Sanctuary magazine won "Best Shelter Magazine" in Treehugger website's Best of Green 2010 awards. Treehugger described Sanctuary as "a mag with a mission ... with the mandate to make sustainability sexy, and it succeeds – modern design never looked so good and worked so well."

Smart Meters

As part of its ongoing advocacy work in the national electricity market, ATA was heavily involved with the policy and technical design of smart meters under the National Smart Meter Program. Contributing to a number of the working groups, ATA helped to draft the minimal functional specification for meters to be installed across the country, ensuring that the issues and requirements of

electricity consumers and micro-generators were taken into account. This work will continue over 2010-11.

Promoting renewable energy in East Timor

The ATA's International Projects Group (IPG) continued to forge ahead with its work, opening a small office in Dili. Two new and key areas for ATA work in East Timor were water pumping and training development. The Village Lighting Project grew with another 170 households receiving solar lighting systems and upgrades to 90 existing locations, while fundraising allowed the ATA to install another 400 household lighting systems in 2010. The energetic work of the IPG volunteer team was recognised when it was named runner-up for a Community Volunteering Achievement Award from the Victorian Premier.

Greywater Watch

Soil testing for the effects of greywater irrigation on soil health was carried out by the ATA's water team in member households. The ATA worked on getting funding to involve households nationwide in Greywater Watch and thereby inform the science on domestic greywater irrigation. ATA's water team believe that by giving households the ability to monitor their soil and greywater quality, poor soil health—specifically sodic soils—can be avoided.

Shaping feed-in tariffs

In the 2009-10 financial year, feed-in tariffs were introduced in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, and there was a review of the 18-month old South Australian scheme. ATA participated strongly in each of the feed-in tariff processes, pushing for stronger tariffs in each state and seeking to broaden their technology scope and their system size design. ATA believes there is an opportunity for most states to look at how to drive medium-scale, community-owned renewable energy projects through their feed-in tariffs.

ATA also undertook a national survey of all electricity retailers' feed-in tariff offers, including analysing the terms and conditions associated with each retail deal.

Forums, shows and community events.

ATA branches, volunteers and staff worked hard in September 2009 to make Sustainable House Day a success yet again, co-ordinating the event in many states. ATA also promoted sustainability at home shows and environmental festivals across Australia.

One Million Homes

The ATA joined forces with 10 other environment, social justice and consumer groups to form the One Million Homes Alliance. The aim was to lobby the Victorian Government to launch a large and coordinated program to environmentally retrofit homes across the state for energy and water efficiency, with the emphasis on low-income and disadvantaged households.

Within weeks of the launch of the campaign, the Victorian Government announced a major commitment to energy and water efficiency retrofits as part of its Climate Change White Paper.

Power supply in bushfire-risk areas

With ongoing community debate about lessons from the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires during the sitting of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, ATA conducted research on renewable power alternatives outside the energy grid in rural areas. ATA lobbied the Victorian Government for solar and wind power options instead of costly power line upgrades, resulting in a place on the state taskforce looking into power supply in bushfire-risk areas.



Almost 200 households accessed electricity under the ATA International Project's Village Lighting Scheme.

Wind energy

ATA was involved in a number of exciting and innovative wind projects, including wind monitoring and energy resource assessment for Brimbank Council in Melbourne's west, assessment of potential wind farm sites in New South Wales for a community wind farm organisation, helping write a how-to for the Embark group's community renewable energy Wikipedia site, and advocacy on small and large-scale wind energy on local and national radio.

ATA in the news

ATA continued to promote its events, research and opinions in a variety of media outlets. As the public's interest in renewable energy and sustainability issues continued to grow strongly, ATA spokespeople were quoted in *The Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *7.30 Report* on ABC TV, Radio National, REX Airline's in-flight magazine, *Australian House and Garden* and regional newspapers around the country.

Branches

ATA branches are groups of like-minded ATA members that meet regularly to exchange information, experiences and ideas with those interested in sustainable living. Branches have been involved in a wide range of activities over the past year, including holding regular meetings featuring guest speakers; participating in Sustainable House Day; running information seminars; and attending fairs, festivals and other events which involve managing an ATA stall and presenters.

Awards

ATA's work was also recognised by a number of awards including:

- Finalist in the Victorian Premier's Volunteering Awards achievement category.
- Finalists in the Victorian Premier's Sustainability Awards community category.
- Winner of Best of Green "Best Shelter Magazine".



Finalist Premier's Sustainability Award 2010

For more information go to: www.ata.org.au