



## ***Speed Dating a Sustainable Designer***

Connecting homeowners with Australia's leading sustainable architects and building designers



Promoting Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation since 1980  
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## **About the Alternative Technology Association**

The Alternative Technology Association (ATA) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been promoting renewable energy, water conservation and sustainable residential design since 1980. The ATA provides expert, independent advice about sustainable solutions for the home to homeowners, government and industry. With nearly 6000 members across Australia and New Zealand walking the talk in their own homes, ATA's knowledge is based on our members' practical experience.

The ATA publishes two market-leading sustainable living magazines, *ReNew: technology for a sustainable future* and *Sanctuary: modern green homes*. The magazines have a combined readership of over 120,000.

ATA has extensive contacts and good working relationships with Australia's leading sustainable architects and building designers. We also have extensive contacts with sustainability products and services providers.

[www.ata.org.au](http://www.ata.org.au)

[www.sanctuarymagazine.org.au](http://www.sanctuarymagazine.org.au)

[www.renew.org.au](http://www.renew.org.au)

## **Speed Date a Sustainable Designer: background**

*Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* is an engaging and fun event with homeowners receiving free advice from Australia's leading sustainable building designers and architects. The event will not only raise awareness about sustainable building design principles but will engage homeowners who are at the point of buying, building or renovating, offering personalised advice and ideas which they can then act on.

The idea for *Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* originated from regular requests the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) receives from homeowners looking for sustainable architects and building designers. Homeowners' needs range from general advice, to feedback on potential plans, to wanting an architect to design their green home or renovation from scratch. *Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* is an innovative and effective way to respond to this need. The event provides a platform for green homeowners to come together with like-minded architects and designers to share ideas and inspiration.

We conducted *Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* at Victoria's *State of Design* festival in July 2010, at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Carlton. At this event we arranged 90 "dates" between 10 sustainable architects/designers and homeowners. Each "date" was 10 minutes long and the event ran for 1.5 hours in total. Architects and designers volunteered their time for the event. Attendees brought along sketches, plans and photographs for critique and advice, in some cases on their laptop computers which allowed for immediate design feedback. The architects and designers offered solutions, ideas and alternative viewpoints. Each homeowner had one to three scheduled appointments or "dates".

In addition to the architects and designers present, ATA staff and volunteers were there to provide advice about sustainable technology – for example, solar hot water, grey water or residential photovoltaic systems – drawing on first-hand experience and knowledge.

**Over 500 homeowners applied to be part of the event which shows the demand for the event.**

Key to the success of this event is that each attendee was in what we term the 'renovation cycle', actively looking for sustainable design and products advice. We were able to provide this advice right when they needed it, helping them achieve their goals to create more energy- and water-efficient dwellings.

The demographic range of attendees at our first event was varied. Most attendees were between 20 and 60 of even gender split. There were families with children, families without children, singles, renters and home owners. Several people had travelled interstate to attend the event, while intrastate travellers were also represented.

**You can watch the short YouTube video overview of the event: <http://bit.ly/gi1vnt>**

*We had an amazing time at the [sic] Speed Dating. I can't believe how much information can be imparted in 10 minutes! Since our "Speed Date", Ian at Sustainable Spaces has started working on our house plans with us, which is very exciting. Natasha, July 2010*

*Had a great time at this event, managed to talk to quite a few of the architects despite having only one booking - I might have been a bit pushy, or - more kindly - just enthusiastic ... A truly brilliant idea. Kerry, July 2010*

## **Proposed Format**

The format of the event involves 10 or more leading sustainable building designers and architects who provide homeowners with a free 12 minute “date” (consultation). At the end of their “dates” a bell is rung and the next person in the queue has their “date” with the designer. The speed dating format gives the opportunity for homeowners to receive free advice from a number of designers.



As part of the event we can also host a mini market place including 8 to 10 local suppliers of a range of sustainable technologies and services such as solar photovoltaic panels, solar hot water and rainwater tanks. Homeowners who are in-between “dates” or non-daters can visit the market place and ask questions from suppliers. The ATA would choose which companies could be represented to ensure that they are quality products and providers.

The proposed format for *Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* event is:

- Two x two hour speed date events on the same day (a morning and an afternoon session) on a weekend.
- A total of 180, 12-minute scheduled “dates” between 10 sustainable architects and designers and attendees.
- ATA advisory staff and volunteers present to answer questions about all aspects of sustainable living. These will be unscheduled sessions so that attendees and onlookers can receive advice while they are waiting for their “date”.
- Mini market place of ATA-vetted sustainable products and service providers.
- Information displays from the building designers and architects attending.
- An after-event with architects, designers, event partners and staff to encourage networking and information exchange between like-minded practitioners.
- A post-event survey of attendees and architects/building designers/sustainable products and service providers.

## **Marketing & Promotion**

The ATA has extraordinary reach through its membership, community, industry and government stakeholders, and magazine readership.

The ATA would promote the events through:

- E-marketing to ATA’s email list of over 25,000 members, consumers, industry and government stakeholders
- Print marketing via ATA’s *ReNew: technology for a sustainable future* and *Sanctuary: modern green homes* that have a collective readership of over 100,000
- E-marketing on ATA’s three websites: [www.ata.org.au](http://www.ata.org.au), [www.sanctuarymagazine.org.au](http://www.sanctuarymagazine.org.au) and [www.renew.org.au](http://www.renew.org.au)
- E-marketing via ATA’s social media platforms including twitter and facebook
- Media campaign
- Advertising through partner organisations

Through previous experience this novel event provides a great hook for media with the Melbourne event receiving extensive coverage in *The Age*, *Good Weekend* magazine, *Melbourne Inside Out*, *Melbourne Life*, community radio interviews and Domain.com.au



The Age, July 17 2010

## **Benefits of Speed Date A Sustainable Designer**

Each year over 500,000 Australians build and renovate homes. ATA aims to make those homes greener.

*Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* serves a community need to receive independent advice about sustainable building, renovation, and technology. We know that any building stock built or renovated now is going to have an impact for decades to come, so it's important to design environmentally responsive architecture today.



As the *Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* event is free, they are accessible to a broad audience.

*Speed Date a Sustainable Designer* are events that:

- Have a tangible impact. Attendees are actively looking for a range of viewpoints and design ideas. This event provides an engaging forum to educate and influence homeowners to make their homes more sustainable.
- Help build knowledge to ensure new and existing house stock is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Builds community, encouraging engaging information exchange between the community, architectural and design practices and green technology suppliers.

**For more details about this event including sponsorship contact:**

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