

NEWSTALK



## AUSTRALIAN BATTERY-POWERED HOMES CAN CHARGE EVS

An innovative Melbourne company has unveiled affordable battery-powered homes with EV charging points and zero energy bills.

Zero Living, co-founded by Ingrid and Tom Graze, has launched five homes with a breakthrough design that makes them more affordable to buy and live in, with zero energy bills and no blackouts.

Costing from \$640,000 for a two-bedroom home, the fully engineered houses are in the western Melbourne suburb of Albion, where the median house price is more than \$800,000.

Fitted with Enphase microinverter-equipped solar panels and Tesla batteries, each house generates more than twice as much energy as it consumes, says Graze.

That effectively reduces energy costs to zero, saving its owner an average of nearly \$50,000 in energy costs over 20 years.

All Zero Living energy houses have EV points and have an electric power cord running underground to a nature strip to provide for a kerbside EV charging port when allowed by local government.

Zero energy homes are designed from the roof down for space, comfort and low energy use, with high-quality energy-efficient materials, appliances, and insulation, Graze says.

Each home is tailored individually to its building site, maximising its liveable space while reducing the building footprint and property cost.

The Grazes have collaborated for the past three years with Swinburne University of Technology's School of Engineering to develop smart energy monitoring systems to help homeowners become more energy efficient.



Each home is wired to monitor major appliances in real-time, with Swinburne analysing the data and returning it to the homeowner or occupant via a Zero smartphone app.

Ingrid Graze says the idea for Zero energy homes was sparked by the increasing unaffordability of buying and running a home. Zero Living built its first three fully-engineered houses three years ago in Footscray, renting them out through Airbnb as "living laboratories".

Swinburne monitored energy use by nearly 600 tenants and compared the performance of various solar panels, appliances, and equipment.

Monitoring confirmed the houses produce significantly more energy than they consume and achieve zero energy bills.

Zero Living has since unveiled five houses for sale on Derrimut Street, Albion, with about 40 more in the pipeline.

That latter include two- and three-bedroom houses in Footscray. West



Footscray, Albion, and Maidstone.

The company can also design and build a Zero energy home on a client's block of land.

"Each home's energy use is monitored in real-time in the same way as a Tesla car," Tom Graze says.

"We use 415-Watt solar panels, each fitted with its own Enphase microinverter, to work independently as roof space and angles are limited," he adds.

The Australian Energy Market Commission reports that the average Australian electricity bill in 2021 was \$1645.