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Net zero energy demand homes offer cost savings for buyers

On behalf of the Australian Government, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has today announced \$708,910 in funding to Frasers Property Australia (Frasers Property) to build new energy efficient homes to demonstrate the feasibility of achieving zero energy demand homes at scale.

Frasers Property will build 51 medium density energy efficient homes at its Ed.Square mixed-use community in south west Sydney. The homes, aptly named Balanced Energy Homes or BE.Homes, will focus on cost-effective solutions to significantly reduce energy bills for potential buyers.

The \$1.42 million project will integrate a suite of renewable energy, electrification and energy efficiency measures including 4 kW of solar PV per dwelling, ground source heat pump space conditioning, induction cooktops, electric boosted solar hot water, low-e glazed windows, LED lighting and roof insulation.

Data and knowledge gained from the demonstration of net zero homes such as cost, efficiency and effectiveness will allow Frasers Property to accelerate its concept throughout the rest of its property developments. Frasers Property will also gain customer insights into whether efficient and sustainable housing options are becoming a selling point for new home buyers. Knowledge from this project will also be shared with the building sector at large in order to refine, develop and elevate the energy performance of Australian housing.

The Ed.Square project will also use a new business model for the operation of solar PV where all systems will be owned and operated as part of an embedded network by Frasers Property's energy retail business, Real Utilities. With this option, customers will benefit from solar power via lower retail tariffs.

Last year, ARENA also supported Mirvac to build 49 net zero energy neutral homes in Altona, Victoria.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said together these projects will encourage Australia's housing sector to embrace more energy efficient and carbon neutral homes as a selling point for buyers.

"Through this project, we hope to highlight the benefit that energy efficiency and renewable energy can provide to next generation, net zero energy demand homes that will reduce emissions and energy costs.

"We look forward to working with Frasers Property throughout the construction of the homes at Ed.Square and sharing valuable knowledge that we hope industry can use to replicate this model and adopt more net zero energy demand homes in the future," he said.

Frasers Property Australia's Executive General Manager Development, Cameron Leggatt said: "Our vision for this project is for it to have industry-wide implications that will elevate the energy performance of not only the homes Frasers Property creates for its customers, but the new housing sector nationally.

"To achieve this, we've committed to sharing the insights we gain from the initiative and we're pleased to join forces with ARENA to ensure the data collected will be widely available for interpretation, scrutiny and most importantly, to drive better outcomes.

"Net zero energy demand must be a goal for the entire property industry across all sectors if Australia is to achieve its emissions reductions targets. Projects like this are an essential part of the broader effort required," he said.

The 51 Balanced Energy homes at Ed.Square are scheduled to be completed in 2022 with energy performance monitored for two years.