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PowerNet Smart Energy Home residents saving money and energy

Saving on petrol and tapping into cheaper power rates are among the benefits the new residents of PowerNet's Smart Energy Home are enjoying.

Natalie Skeggs and son Hayden Arthur are living in PowerNet's Smart Energy Home for a year. They moved into the house during the Easter break. During the first year of the project in 2018, Cam and Chloe Waru and their young daughter Maci lived in the home.

The family were selected from a pool of applicants for the opportunity to live in an Invercargill house equipped with smart energy technologies.



Hayden Arthur and Natalie Skeggs.

Natalie and Hayden were attracted to the Smart Energy Home project for two main reasons.

"We were ready for a new challenge and learning to live smarter and cheaper with energy was a drawcard," she says.

In the second year of the Smart Energy Home project, PowerNet will learn about how a different customer mix affects the profile and level of household and EV electricity usage, and the interaction between customer, technologies and prevailing weather patterns.

Natalie says adjusting to living in the Smart Energy Home has been pretty easy, and that they're living normally, while making small adjustments as they go.



The biggest adjustment they were noticing was being more energy aware in general and making a conscious effort to do things at different times.

"I didn't have a dishwasher before, so that's been the easiest thing to adjust to using it at the cheapest time," Natalie says.

Going from one heat pump to two and learning how to manage them efficiently was another challenge.

She says she's enjoying learning about how the solar panels and the battery work and being able to tell other people about the basics of how it and the EV work.

Finding out about how to use household appliances at more cost effective times of day was another money-saving move, Natalie says.

"Timers are great to be able to set the dishwasher and washing machine to go at cheaper rates, so we use them a lot."

Being able to see energy being used by appliances through the monitoring system is helping her become more aware of the amount of energy being used, she says.

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“It’s always on your mind when you go to turn something on, especially an appliance that uses a lot of power, so learning the best times to do it is good.”

The most immediate benefit Natalie has noticed is the saving on petrol costs.

The EV is really easy to drive and to charge, she says.

“Charging it simply involves setting a timer and plugging it in, and the timer automatically charges the car overnight.”

To date, Natalie says she’s mostly used the EV around town with one trip a bit further afield.

“I use it to go to work each day and for shopping trips. It’s great for around town. I have taken it to Wallacetown (a 26km round-trip), the battery does go down faster once you hit the open road.”

Newer EVs have ranges of up to 400km per charge.

Their initial power bills have been slightly cheaper than bills for a similar period in their previous home – but their Smart Home power bill also includes the EV charge costs, she says.

“We’re hoping that we will notice a bigger difference in power bills during summer.”

- If you have any questions about the Smart Energy Home and other new energy technologies, email us at: SmartEnergyHome@powernet.co.nz
- For more information on the Smart Energy Home project visit: www.powernet.co.nz/smart-energy-home