



Awarded a 2025 NZIA Western Architecture Award and numerous 2025 Master Builders House of the Year awards, Aokautere is a masterclass, where a deliberately restrained minimalist aesthetic meets high-performance building science.

The home's striking and interesting silhouette, characterised by a completely white exterior and clean architectural lines, is deeply intentional. Every design choice, from the reflective cladding to the deep-covered deck, serves as a functional solution to manage solar gain and prevent overheating. Built to the eHaus Pacific standard, this high-performing home creates a healthy, allergen-free sanctuary that saves an average of 89% on heat energy costs, proving that minimalist design can be both visually cool and equally efficient.

BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGES

Despite 15 years of costly renovations, Jacinda and Kahu found their old 1940's home remained cold in winter, hot in summer, prone to condensation, and was costly to run.

When looking to buy a new home, they realised pre-existing homes suffered the same issues, so the family started thinking about building new. With asthma and allergies prevalent in the family, a home that reduced their exposure to pollen and dust was crucial.

From their initial design brief to eHaus, Jacinda

and Kahu talked about needing a low-maintenance home that was designed and built with sustainability and longevity in mind. They knew from the outset that they wanted a home that was well insulated, ventilated, and easily maintained a comfy temperature.

“We knew the traditional kiwi way to build, even with the latest building industry regulations, wasn't going to cut it. So it was a no brainer that we needed to build something high performing like they do in Europe.” Jacinda

OUR SOLUTIONS

Design: The aesthetic is deliberately restrained, and the compact, efficient form was chosen for thermal performance. What makes Aokautere particularly striking is how simple many of the solutions are to create a healthy, comfy home.

- Completely white exterior to reflect solar heat
- 140mm thick timber frames and Earthwool glasswool insulation throughout that is well above the standard 90mm
- Floor - Fully insulated concrete pad with a U-value of 0.182 W/(m²K)
- Ventilation - Zehnder ComfoAir Q350 Series
- Window Joinery – uPVC thermally broken windows from Klima - Uf value = 1.5 W/(m²K)
- Glazing - Double Glazed Ug value=1.1 W/(m²K) g- value = 58%

Shading: The deep covered north-west deck isn't just for looks. It's a zero-energy cooling system built right into the structure. During the summer months, the sun is high in the sky and the deck cover is calculated to cast shade over the windows during the hottest part of the day, effectively preventing the home from overheating. In winter,

the sun is lower and its angle allows it to pass under the cover and shine inside. This beneficial winter solar gain helps naturally warm the home, reducing the need for heating.

High performing windows: Windows are one of the biggest potential points of heat loss or solar gain, (with an estimated 35-50% of heat in a home lost through windows and doors), and a well-insulated wall can be undermined by poor performing window joinery.

Aokautere features New Zealand made uPVC joinery which is thermally broken to slow the heat transfer and improve insulation, warmth and condensation.

Window positioning: Positioning the home to maximise winter sun and minimise it in summer is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve comfort. Aokautere has large north-facing windows in the entry, kitchen and living space to capture sunlight in winter, with none in the east and only one small window on the western side. This window positioning was intentionally designed to reduce unwanted solar heat in summer and balance it with adequate warming in winter.

Exterior colour: The exterior is completely white including walls, roof, window joinery and garage door. This was a deliberate decision because lighter colours reflect sunlight and solar heat away, minimising heat absorption and therefore overheating. White roofs are proven to be one of the simplest and most cost effective ways to fight off the heat.





HOME OWNER FEEDBACK

“

In our old house, summer nights were unbearable. We often slept with all the windows open just to cope. Now we don't notice the weather until we step outside.

Comfort isn't something we think about anymore, it's only when people walk in and say, 'it's nice in here' that we're reminded how different it really is. It gives us peace of mind, especially knowing we're providing the healthiest possible environment for our son. This house is our sanctuary.”

Kahu & Jacinda, Aokautere owners

RESULTS

Aokautere meets the eHaus Pacific performance standard. Inside, the home maintains a remarkably even temperature year-round, with no condensation, fewer bugs, reduced noise, and minimal heating or cooling required. A mechanical heat recovery ventilation system ensures constant fresh air with 98% of pollutants removed which is an advantage with the families allergies and asthma. Due to the homes thoughtful design and construction, visitors regularly comment on its presence and calm interior feel.

1

Energy efficient

Aokautere on average saves 89% of heat energy costs.

2

Healthy space to live

98% of pollutants and allergens removed from the home and minimal condensation.

3

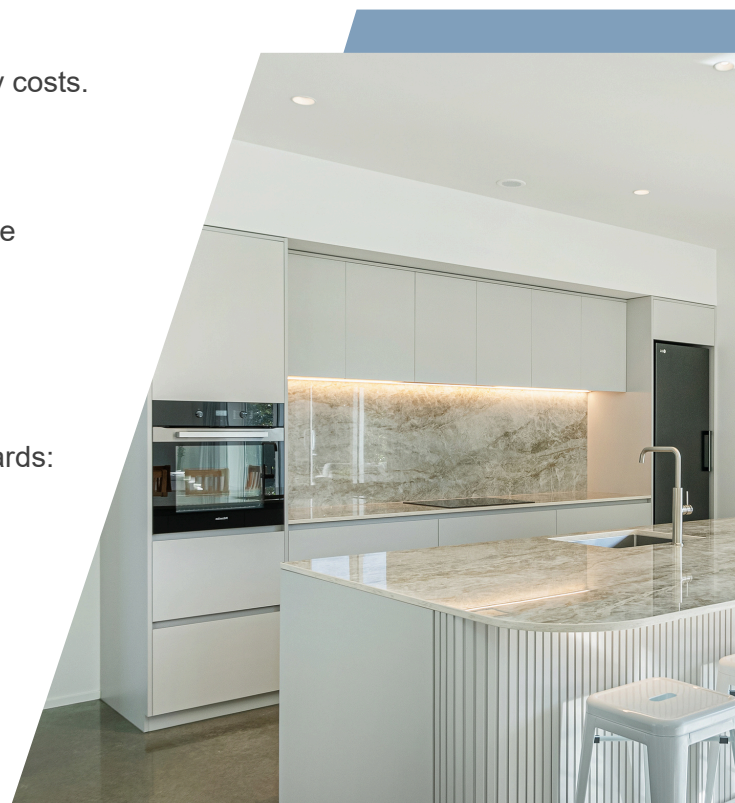
Award winning

- 2025 NZIA Western Architecture Award
- 2025 Master Builders House of the Year Awards:
 - Regional Category Winner
 - Gold Award
 - Regional Supreme Winner
 - Top 100

4

Carbon savings

Annual carbon savings of 4,837.53KG per year.



ABOUT THIS EHAUS

Understated and elegant, this two-bedroom home combines clean architectural lines with subtle warmth and impressive technical performance.

Timber soffits soften the modern silhouette, while white plastered cladding and generous glazing give the home a light, expansive feel. A deep covered deck creates a natural outdoor extension of the living area, framed by views of sky and hillside. The white exterior was purposefully chosen to reflect sunlight away, limiting the need for air conditioning.

Step inside and the tone continues: 2.7m ceilings bring volume to the open-plan kitchen, dining, and lounge space, where custom joinery and timber accents add practical texture. Dual sliding doors extend the living space to the outdoors.

The interior palette is pared back with soft greys and clean white finishes. A walk-in pantry, dedicated laundry and separate powder room round out the functional plan.

Although its aesthetic is deliberately restrained, the home performs well above minimum standards. It meets eHaus Pacific benchmarks, including full airtightness, with 140mm framing and insulated, high-performance glazing. A mechanical ventilation system runs continuously to supply fresh, filtered air year-round, and an electric heat pump supplies hot water with no reliance on fossil fuels.

The 200sqm home includes two bathrooms, generous storage, and an oversized double garage. Designed with intention and care, it's a graceful, low-impact home built for lasting comfort.

eHaus Regional Team and Project Managers:

eHaus Manawatu

Architect: Monika Puri

Year completed: 2023

Performance Specifications:

- Heating Demand: 17.9kWh/(m²yr)
- Heating Load: 16.0W/m²
- Frequency of Overheating: 2.3% year over 25C
- Treated Floor Area: 127m²
- Air Leakage @ 50Pa: 1.5 ACHn50

