

## Live Easy, pioneering the local 'impact housing' trend

Live Easy was established seven years ago with one goal in mind - to provide young, upwardly mobile citizens access to safe, affordable formal housing within sought-after urban areas.

 By Johannes Masiteng 17 Sep 2021



Source: Facebook via [Live Easy Residential Apartments](#)

Currently operating in Johannesburg and Pretoria, the property company provides nano units at lower rents in an effort to uplift and bring young, first-time formal renters close to their places of work.

Live Easy co-founder Jeffrey Froom tells us more.

### **Briefly tell us about Live Easy.**

Live Easy develops and manages affordable residential accommodation. It's become a household brand people looking to start out and rent on their own or the person out there looking to save money on rent without compromising security and lifestyle.

Live Easy is where the original nano (15m<sup>2</sup>, self-contained) unit was born.

### **When, how and why did you get started?**

Back in 2014, a typical two-bedroom 'flat' was divided into small bedrooms with a curtain as the divider. A person would be staying behind the curtain, another one in the lounge and a third and fourth person in the other bedroom. All sharing a common bathroom and kitchen.

Each person is a self-sufficient working class man or woman paying rent but not enough rent to live on their own. So we developed a unit that would be affordable, small and self-contained so that people staying

behind the curtain could now live on their own with dignity and pride. Once they move in they have instantly moved up!



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### ▣ ***What are your key objectives?***

As a business, we want the Live Easy flags all over South Africa, offering the most affordable, real value accommodation out there. We want tenants to feel proud of staying in Live Easy.

Live Easy, at an affordable rent, offers everything that you would find at any one of these 'exclusive' estate Wi-Fi, clubhouse, rooftop gardens, workspace, laundry service, gym and hair salons. We want to show the South Africans out there that you do not have to be at the top of the income-earning pyramid to live in a uni that offers all the luxuries and amenities.

### ▣ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?***

Everyone loves a fresh idea, especially a good, fresh, new idea. The problem is you have to convince the

that it really is good. Development of these nano units had never been done and so every step of the way was convincing the architects, the town planner, engineers, fire consultants, builders and council representatives that there was no 'rule book' for nano units, we were writing it.

So we had to make sure what we had so clearly pictured in our heads was born. The challenge rippled upwards too - in finding equity and debt partners.

### ▄ ***What are its impacts on society and the environment?***

Talk about impacting society - we are changing peoples' lives. We are giving that person their own space, their own unit, the ability to move up in the world.

We have created a space that now allows a huge segment of the market that previously could not afford to stay on their own in areas that are more desirable or even close to work. We have created a safe, happy, self-contained little world all within their boundaries of their nano units.

### ▄ ***South Africa is currently in Covid-19 Adjusted Level 2 lockdown, how is it affecting you and what steps are you taking to continue operating?***

Unfortunately, many people have lost their jobs which naturally would translate back to some of our tenants losing their jobs thereby unable to pay rent.

Despite the early terminations of leases, our portfolio has proven to be very resilient as we have found that we have taken on many new tenants that were previously staying at more expensive units, that have now been forced, due to salary cuts, etc., to downsize a little - a perfect place for Live Easy.

### ▄ ***What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly in the property sector?***

It's a big world out there and property fills a lot of it with its many different shapes and sizes. Find the shape that talks to you first, meaning, do you want to go into residential, offices, retail or maybe warehousing?

Regarding the size of the shape, well I think most people want the 'big' shape, but build the small shapes first, so I guess, eventually when you have the big shapes you will have something to compare and measure them against.



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### ▄ ***What does the future hold for the South African residential property market?***

People always need safe, affordable accommodation to live in. This segment of the market, the affordable impact housing segment, has for far too long been undervalued or overlooked.

You can quote this, you can disagree with it, you can glorify or vilify it, but one thing you can't do is ignore it

### ▄ ***Where would you like to see Live Easy in the next five years?***

Residential property is our 'shape', so we would like to think it still has lots of growth and size out there. We

want to carry on building as many nano units as we can, one nano at a time, and in doing so, hope to continue to inspire people to move in and move up.

## ABOUT JOHANNES MASITENG

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