netstrategy
IT and cybersecurity for schools

CASE STUDY

Kingswood College
Access Point Upgrade
Mr Steven Wiggs, IT Manager

Bringing the **learning environment** outside

Coming out of COVID-19, lockdowns and digital learning, the IT team at Kingswood College wanted to enable their staff and students to hold classes outside – with reliable internet access to match.

On top of this, the school's existing Access Points (APs) and associated controllers were out of lease and out of warranty. Kingswood College's IT Manager, Mr Steven Wiggs, knew that the entire system would need to be replaced to deliver a reliable learning experience.

'IT technology that's heavily relied upon and infrastructure that's used every day can become a liability once it gets too old,' Mr Wiggs says. *'The learning environment relies on our technology for everything. If our IT goes down, the classes just can't function – or certainly not in the way they would be planning to function. For us, that wouldn't be good enough – we want the students and the teachers to be able to focus on learning, and not have to worry about technical issues.'*

With over 1500 devices using the school network each day, Mr Wiggs and his team knew they needed support from a partner that could handle the complexity of the changeover process, while minimising downtime.

'As a team of only three people, we didn't have the time or the expertise to execute the highly technical elements of the AP systems. And there was pressure on us to get this right – because if a project goes badly and there's lots of down time, people will look

Client **Profile**   **Kingswood**College

Mr Steven Wiggs
 IT Manager
Kingswood College

- An independent school located in the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

- 650 students from K-12.

- Around 130 staff.

to us and say "why is this happening?"' Mr Wiggs says. 'So for us it was important the project went smoothly, and that we really delivered on user experience.'

When COVID strikes

After deciding to partner with NetStrategy, Mr Wiggs and his team were immediately impressed with the transparency and consistency of the communication they received.

'NetStrategy warned us early on that supply chain issues could impact the timeline of the project, and they wanted us to be informed and prepared. Knowing that we were planning to execute the changeover in March, they advised us to place an order for the APs in October so we'd have what we needed,' Mr Wiggs says.

When the APs arrived in March and the project kicked off, Mr Wiggs and his team faced an additional challenge – he had COVID, and was not able to be onsite to run the project.

'I wasn't there that week. We had our electricians onsite changing the APs over and I was working with NetStrategy remotely, but they really took care of it,' Mr Wiggs says. 'I was stressed for the first day or two, not being able to be there to manage things in person. But then I could see things were progressing and everything was working – and I knew I could trust them to get it done.'

One of the key factors of the project's success was the responsiveness of the NetStrategy team to the internal team's requests and queries.

'I was regularly in touch with a couple of the main guys who were doing the programming. If we noticed any problems, I could just shoot them an email and they were waiting and ready to jump on it straight away,' Mr Wiggs says. 'NetStrategy had allocated a couple of technicians to our project, and made it clear it was their job to make sure the project went smoothly. They were always available, ready to help.'

Ongoing support and a seamless transition

In order to make sure the newly installed APs and systems worked reliably, NetStrategy remained on board to test for and fix issues as they were identified.

'They stood out because a lot of companies are very helpful in the lead up to getting you to sign a contract. And sure, they'll deliver the installation, but afterwards if you find problems they're not so interested in helping,' Mr Wiggs says. 'With NetStrategy, they factored in ongoing support, and it was worth the money. So after they delivered the changeover, they continued to fine-tune the network. Even now, if I have a question about the Wi-Fi configuration or performance, I know I just have to fire off an email, and the NetStrategy team will come back with an answer.'

As the project came to a close, the measure of success was the minimal impact the changeover process had on the learning environment – apart from the expanded coverage meaning that students could now enjoy outdoor learning without experiencing a drop in wireless coverage.

'There's a lot to be said for things just working properly. And that's what you're paying for – the right equipment, the ongoing support and the technical expertise for complex projects. In terms of value for money, it's about feeling confident the end project will be right for your school,' Mr Wiggs says.