



John XXIII College

- IT help desk saw 80% decrease in connectivity issues
- Students and teachers embrace new learning experience in outdoor spaces
- With more free time, ICT team is able to strategically plan long-term initiatives



With a large university-style campus in Perth, Western Australia, John XXIII College has 1,500+ students enrolled ranging from pre-Kindergarten to Year 12, and employs 240 staff. The co-education College has a philosophy of providing students with a high quality, well-rounded Catholic education that stimulates enjoyment in learning and

prepares graduates to be people of competence, conscience, and compassion. For the ICT team, this means supporting students and teachers with the flexible, leading-edge technology needed to deliver the highest standard of education.

Introducing the Meraki Stack

To address connectivity issues for the spread-out campus and 2,000+ registered devices – many of them BYOD – the College chose Cisco Meraki. John XXIII College gained robust, high-density

wireless coverage and a centralised endpoint management solution to manage all devices across its campus, including all indoor spaces, a huge sports oval and shaded outside areas.

Under the project management of Yugon Chobanoff, ICT Operations Manager, and a three-person ICT team, the Meraki deployment was timed for a school break when teachers and students were off-campus. The College started with Systems Manager (SM), Meraki's endpoint management solution, and quickly expanded its Meraki stack with a strategic deployment of MR access points (APs) and MS switches.

With Meraki APs providing high-efficiency wireless, Primary and PE teachers are able to embrace a new style of teaching outside the classroom. Class content delivery is still done face-to-face, but introducing the Meraki web-based dashboard and cloud-managed devices has revolutionised ICT operations and the way education is conducted.

Product Deployment Summary

- 500 SM licenses were introduced to centrally manage hundreds of profiles on the school-owned computers, iPads, and mobile phones for easy device tracking, automatic app updates, and policy configuration
- 150+ APs deployed in high-density areas provide a reliable internet connection, allowing the College to meet the requirements for its diverse mobile device deployment and the media-rich demands resulting from digital transformation initiatives in education space such as LEADing Lights
- Close to 50 high-performance switches make it easy to do packet capturing and cable testing remotely. The ICT team can see switches, APs, and security infrastructure all together in auto-generated topology

Simplify Work and Improve Connectivity

Chobanoff and his ICT team deployed Meraki in order to simplify their day-to-day network maintenance, glean insight into network traffic and analytics, and eliminate the need for three external technology vendors. Previously, if their controllers had issues, the wireless network would go down.

The Meraki solution has successfully addressed this challenge. “With all the devices easily accessible from a single pane of glass, we’ve gained visibility and full control of the network. The Meraki devices not only perform well, but can also be managed from anywhere. I could access them from my phone on the campus, from my iPad at home, or right across the country. It’s outstanding!” said Chobanoff.

Managing Thousands of Student Devices in Seconds

The help desk, with one full-time staff, has tracked a noticeable decrease in connectivity cases. Previous issues with device enrolment and drop-outs roaming between classrooms and APs has vanished.

The wider team has also been ‘blown away’ by how easy it is to throttle bandwidth or problematic apps that were inhibiting the network, such as students using social media, iTunes or streaming content on devices. Meraki helps keep students focused on learning by applying policies that limit non-essential app usage and putting iPads in single-app mode.

“A lot of traffic is pushed through the APs, which are able to handle it with ease. Comparing with what we had before, the bandwidth that’s been freed up now is phenomenal.”

- Yugon Chobanoff, ICT Operations Manager

Going from On-Prem Solution to Cloud-Based IT

“A big take-home for me is that it’s not just me anymore, the whole team can manage the network on the go. A lot of things that were previously contracted out can now be decided and easily handled in-house – even APS Level 1 staff can assign VLANs and make network configurations,” shared Chobanoff.

ICT Services Administrator, Matthew Christides, says that Meraki has simplified their networking hardware deployment. “Previously, devices would have to be configured individually through commands in Terminal. Now I can configure the devices through the easy-to-use Meraki dashboard and can even clone and group configurations across the whole Meraki stack. This significantly reduced time when we configured and deployed a high quantity of switches,” said Christides. The College has been able to decommission costly and complex on-prem infrastructure that offered little interoperability.

Thanks to increased network visibility and control, the ICT team now has additional time to dedicate to future projects across John XXIII College. “That’s key for me – finally having the time to focus on how we can get the best out of our current technology, together with other stakeholders,” shared Chobanoff.

Chobanoff and the team are also excited about the possibilities in further expanding the Meraki portfolio into the security space. They are currently trialling MX security appliances and MV smart cameras to enhance the school’s IT services.

Summary of Outcomes

Students and teachers can now use their devices seamlessly indoors and outdoors. Meraki empowers students to choose space anywhere that suits them best for content creation or collaborative group projects.

Teachers are connected on their devices anywhere on campus, enjoying stable wireless connectivity while monitoring student activities through Apple Classroom easily.

The ICT team can now quickly troubleshoot connectivity issues in a fraction of the time it used to take with on-prem solutions. Network visibility and control has freed up time for the team to maximise all of its technology and plan long-term, strategic projects for the College.

For John XXIII College, the future of learning is bright – and connected.