Salisbury East High School

- Progressive high school transformed its network with Cisco Meraki

- Helpdesk tickets from teachers and students decreased by 40%

- Effortless network optimisation and troubleshooting frees IT team to innovate

Attracting hundreds of students from across the northern suburbs of Adelaide, Salisbury East High School (SEHS) provides world-class, personalised learning experiences within a supportive and culturally rich environment. The school's vision is to empower all students to achieve personal and academic excellence and become responsible global citizens.</p><p>As a progressive South Australia secondary school, SEHS recognises the importance of online resources for education. Both in and outside of the classroom, students rely on the school network to access a host of invaluable applications and services, including everything from personalised timetables to Google Classroom.

TACKLING LATENCY AND PACKET LOSS

With digital resources starting to form a core component of school life at SEHS, network performance became a top priority. However, the legacy network infrastructure was not prepared for the increase in traffic. Adam Masters, Network Administrator at SEHS, explained: "Latency was becoming a problem. Even while standing directly under an AP, we would get 250ms latency with as much as 30% packet loss. As a result, connectivity issues were getting increasingly disruptive, preventing teachers and students from taking full advantage of the online resources we offer."

As wireless performance deteriorated, Adam and the IT team began receiving frequent helpdesk tickets. With no visibility into the network, the team spent a significant amount of time in a day to manually identify and resolve issues. Plus, without tools for remote management, the IT staff had to physically visit each device around the campus to diagnose and resolve network problems. Students and teachers were beginning to lose faith in the school's access to online resources, leading Adam and the IT team to start their search for a new solution.

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— Adam Masters, Network Admin, Salisbury East High School

UNRIVALED SIMPLICITY THROUGH THE MERAKI DASHBOARD

The SEHS IT team evaluated several hardware vendors before choosing Cisco Meraki for two main reasons: network visibility and ease of use. "Our team's philosophy is simplicity," said Adam. "We want to make sure our IT is as straightforward as possible without unnecessary complexity. I was delighted to discover that Meraki has the same mentality. The Meraki dashboard is the embodiment of simplicity. It enables us to see and control the entire network from a single, centralised location."

Built for performance, the new enterprise-grade solutions deliver significantly faster connections, higher throughput, and greater user capacity than the school's old hardware, eliminating the latency and packet loss issues. Furthermore, the Meraki APs provide total visibility into the network, even usage down to the application level. This insight, along with a wealth of powerful management tools, is all available to the IT team remotely through the intuitive and web-based Meraki dashboard.

SEHS also deployed Meraki MS switches. Replacing their legacy devices with Meraki MR and MS devices was a breeze. Zero-touch provisioning enabled the team to pre-stage the APs and switches before plugging them in, making the deployment an effortless plug-and-play exercise. Adam commented: "Our legacy switches took a whole week to set up and configure. But the changeover to Meraki only took a little over a day. Configured, installed, done. It was exceptionally easy."

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"GREAT TO HAVE EVERYTHING JUST WORK"

Their new network has empowered Adam and his team to take advantage of a variety of valuable features. For example, Meraki Wireless Health automatically highlights problems with connectivity, performance, and user experience, making it easy for the team to optimise device configurations. Additionally, the Air Marshal wireless intrusion prevention (WIPS) automatically squashes rogue SSIDs, ensuring network security at all times.

Since moving to Meraki, SEHS has seen a massive drop in network issues. "Helpdesk tickets are down by 40%. All of the little niggles that used to eat away at our time are gone." said Adam. Users throughout the school now enjoy reliable and low-latency connections. It's also a breeze for the IT team to manage and optimise the network. Adam highlighted, "Now, we can focus on our own innovation. For instance, we've just launched a new student login portal that has links to all our learning resources for easy access."

The IT team has far fewer network problems, and those that do occur are far easier and faster to resolve through the dashboard. At a glance, Adam can see everything on the network and take action from within the same application. "It's great to have everything just work," Adam concluded. "We can have all the classrooms connected and streaming media at the same time. There's no longer any questions about whether the network can handle it. Students and teachers can now make the most of all the online resources we provide."