

Leading School Trusts Ed-tech Specialists to Protect its Precious Data

Canberra Grammar School prides itself on taking a sector-leading approach to data retention. To ensure all its digital records remained retrievable for as long as they could be required, the school called on education technology experts Qirx to deploy a solution from backup specialists Veeam.

INDUSTRY

Education K-12

PROJECT GOALS

- Implement Veeam Backup & Replication solution to maintain leading approach to educational data retention
- Simplify backup processes while ensuring easy access to archived data when required

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH QIRX

- Trusted technology partner for more than a decade
- Education technology experts
- Experienced Veeam Silver ProPartner with deep product knowledge
- Rapid, personal response to service requests



Addressing Complex Data Security Requirements

Established in 1929, Canberra Grammar School (CGS) is an esteemed co-ed independent Anglican school. The school is well known for offering outstanding academic education, co-curricular opportunities, and exceptional pastoral care.

CGS has more students than any other school in the ACT – around 2200 day and boarding students from pre-school to Year 12.

The school prides itself on the quality of the IT solutions and services it provides to both students and staff. This involves ensuring its IT systems, including its core Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System (SIS), are secure and that data is protected and retained for as long as it is required.

In fact, CGS is a leader amongst schools when it comes to data storage and retention. It is committed to ensuring its data is retained long-term while most other schools do not have the infrastructure in place to make such commitments.

The school's IT department runs a predominantly VMware environment. It has 60 virtual machines to back up, about 25 of which are considered 'critical,' including four storing LMS and SIS data that are backed up daily. Those daily incremental backups (averaging about 1.5 GB) are in addition to full weekly backups of all data and the VMs (about 10 TB).

The backups are stored on two 35 TB SAS disk drives and the data is also replicated, for long-term retention, to a DR tape library housed in a fire-proof/water-proof safe at a remote site

JCGS's Network and Systems Administration Manager, Naveed Sarwar, explains that the school's previous backup environment involved a very complicated solution that required those IT department staff who managed it to have a lot of training.

After investigating the options to shift away from that legacy solution, which was primarily designed for backing up physical infrastructure, the school concluded that leading vendor Veeam's Backup & Replication solution would be ideal for its VMware environment.

A 4-in-1 backup and recovery solution for storage snapshots, backups, replicas and continuous data protection in one product, Veeam Backup & Replication was also a cost-effective option for CGS.

For more than a decade, CGS has partnered with Qirx, an Australian-owned professional services and managed services company focused on providing innovative and robust IT solutions.

Qirx is known for its established expertise in the education sector, because their consultants understand business processes and operations.

They offer all round knowledge of hardware infrastructure, software installation, configuration and management, in addition to the depth of experience and initiative required to provide solutions that meet their clients' needs.



The improvement in backup performance between solutions has been impressive, with average backup times reducing from about 10 hours to around one hour.



Naveed Sarwar, Network and Systems Administration Manager

Benefits of Industry Partnerships and Knowledge

Over the years, Qirx has established a range of strong industry partnerships, including as a Veeam Silver ProPartner. With its in-depth experience of Veeam's solutions, Qirx was ideally placed to assist CGS's transition to Veeam Backup & Replication.

Qirx set up the school's new Veeam environment and completed the migration from the previous solution to a Veeam backup server, where the backups and snapshots were stored, and used as the output to the tape library.

The project faced some early hurdles were the Qirx team's Veeam experience proved invaluable. The aging server infrastructure that was previously used to host the backup environment resulted in slow I/O speeds, hindering the process of getting Veeam into production. To solve these issues, the servers were upgraded to higher-performing SSD drives and the Qirx team were able to configure Backup & Replication for maximum efficiency.

CGS's Network and Systems Administrator, Chamath de Silva, says the project ran smoothly, despite the initial infrastructure issue, and the school is delighted with the performance and capabilities of Veeam Backup & Replication.

Qirx Experts Always Available to Go the Extra Mile

"The Qirx team pulled late nights to get the backups working. So, as always, they were exceptional in coming through for us," he says.

"We've had no issues with the backup infrastructure. It's very easy to figure out and the documentation Veeam has with their product is exceptional. So, if you get stuck you can literally follow the guide to resolve most issues. And when we are still stuck, we just reach out."

Naveed says the improvement in backup performance between solutions has been impressive, with average backup times reducing from about 10 hours to around one hour.

"Qirx did a great job. We are very happy because what we have experienced with Veeam has met all our requirements and expectations."

Naveed and Chamath say after more than a decade of partnership, Qirx are very familiar with the school's IT environment and have successfully delivered a large number of projects including a recent major Wi-Fi upgrade involving the replacement of more than 300 access points.

"They always come through and we haven't had any issues. They've been very professional. They are punctual and they have the knowledge," Chamath says.

"What I find is, whether it's a technician who's a firewall expert or someone who's a database expert, Qirx have the wide range of resources within their business that we need."

With so many students and staff relying on the school's systems, outages are a stressful experience for the staff at CGS's IT department.

Chamath says the team appreciate having a single point of contact at Qirx who can quickly connect them to the right expert when necessary.

"If we can't figure things out, Qirx are literally just a phone call away. Whether it's an experienced firewall technician or a database expert, they have the depth of resources within their business that we need."

Canberra
Grammar
School



VEEAM

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