

Case Study

How Yarra Valley Grammar School Increased Compliance and Cut Phish-Prone™ Percentage in Half

Australian organizations are no strangers to data breaches and cyber incidents. From 2023 to 2024, the Australian Cyber Security Hotline responded to more than 1,100 cyber security incidents and fielded 36,700 calls, a 12% increase from the previous 12-month period. Any organization in the country can be a target of cybercriminals and social engineering attacks, so everyone must be extremely vigilant—even schools like Yarra Valley Grammar.



YARRA VALLEY
G R A M M A R

Industry

Education

Location

Melbourne,
Australia

Challenge

Employees frequently field phishing attempts involving phone calls and emails claiming to be from the bank. As threats continued to evolve, the school had to move faster to help staff avoid phishing attacks

At a Glance

- ▶ Training completion scores of **90%**
- ▶ Phish-prone™ Percentage decreased **from 25% to 12.4%**
- ▶ Ability to support international audiences with an **extensive library of global content** to use in training campaigns



Educating Those Who Educate Others

Yarra Valley is a coeducational grammar school in Melbourne with over 1,950 students on a 30-hectare campus. The school fosters a culture of diversity and encourages students to become global citizens who contribute meaningfully to the rapidly changing world. Like many public institutions, they are increasingly attractive to threat actors.

“We’re being targeted quite heavily in Australia with threats on a global basis, on a national basis and a local basis, with rogue actors trying to manipulate our staff and possibly our students into gaining access to our IT systems,” says Yarra Valley Grammar Director of IT and Digital Learning Philip Callil.

Employees frequently field phishing attempts. One of the most common scams involves phone calls claiming to be from a bank and follow-up emails asking for access to account numbers. These attacks are extremely convincing, and it is imperative that staff can identify these threats, report them, and know not to engage.

The IT team stays ahead of cybercriminals partly through the periodic patching of systems and partly through training. Unlike traditional dry cybersecurity training, they aim to avoid repetition and make training content engaging. As the threats evolved, however, the school needed to move faster.

Addressing Unique Hurdles with Comprehensive Training and Reporting

Yarra Valley constantly updates and upgrades IT assets to provide students with the best learning environment, and it became clear that this also meant upgrading their training methods. They sought a more proactive approach to increasing security awareness and reducing risk.

“There are so many security threats out there in terms of our day-to-day work with email and even just answering the phone. We did extensive due diligence to find the best awareness systems available,” Callil says.

The team ultimately chose KnowBe4 because it offers optimized and customized security awareness training and simulated phishing attacks in a comprehensive, user-friendly product.

KnowBe4 delivers diverse content that is refreshed regularly. At the start of the school year, Callil reviews the new resources and selects content that reflects the school’s needs. KnowBe4’s training material covers so many threat scenarios that it’s easy to create relevant and inspirational content.

“There’s always something there that we can then put together in a comprehensive package for our staff,” Callil says.

KnowBe4 also offers comprehensive reporting and analytics tools that allow the organization to create in-depth reports showing where threats originate and how they respond. They can then identify new risks early and adjust the training program accordingly.

“The ecosystem includes a lot of analysis and data analytics that we can base that analysis on. So from that perspective, it’s very deep and very comprehensive,” Callil says. “We can look at where our threats are and how we can respond to them.”

They can also determine whether cybersecurity awareness efforts are effective and whether anyone needs supplemental or remedial training. For example, the IT team runs an ongoing phishing campaign consisting of simulated phishing emails. They analyze click-through rates, identify staff members who responded to these emails, and support them with further KnowBe4 training sessions. The approach is informational, not punitive, which helps get the message across.

Making Entertainment a Part of Security Training

Security awareness is serious, but training sometimes involves gamification. Keeping things light—and adding some friendly competition—helps staff learn willingly and retain the material. Another way they engage staff is through KnowBe4’s award-winning series, *The Inside Man*. This Netflix-style spy thriller teaches security awareness in action-packed episodes. The Inside Man is among the many resources available in KnowBe4’s ModStore.

One of the benefits of working with a large, global organization is having access to a vast library of content developed for international audiences. Callil can access training materials, including videos, informational posters, and even adventure games that make learning security awareness more fun. He can easily find material to assemble a tailor-made, entertaining program that appeals to staff while addressing IT’s concerns.

“The range of resources—from gamifying different activities to being able to target specific areas of concern in terms of phishing campaigns and social engineering—is part of an ecosystem that is probably second to none in the world,” Callil says.

Improved Awareness and Outstanding Support

KnowBe4 has transformed Yarra Valley’s security awareness program, and now, staff are better prepared to recognize and respond to threats.

One key metric that substantially improved is their Phish-prone™ Percentage, which hovered around 25% before KnowBe4. It’s now 12.4% and continues to drop.

“There’s only one reason that it’s gone down, and that’s because of the work we’ve done with KnowBe4,” Callil says. “This is front and square in front of our people, so they’re aware of those risks

and can respond accordingly to threats in their day-to-day work.”

Another successful metric is the training completion rate. Yarra Valley offers three hours of dedicated security awareness training annually, and another hour within the context of their professional learning program. The completion rate is around 90%. As they’d hoped, high completion rates mean that staff members quickly identify and report any suspicious activity, substantially reducing the risk to the school’s infrastructure.

“We’re really happy that we can validate what we’ve done with KnowBe4 on a day-to-day basis,” Callil says. “We know that reports to our IT administrators have increased. People are aware of it. People are thinking of those particular threats, giving us confidence that we can continue.”

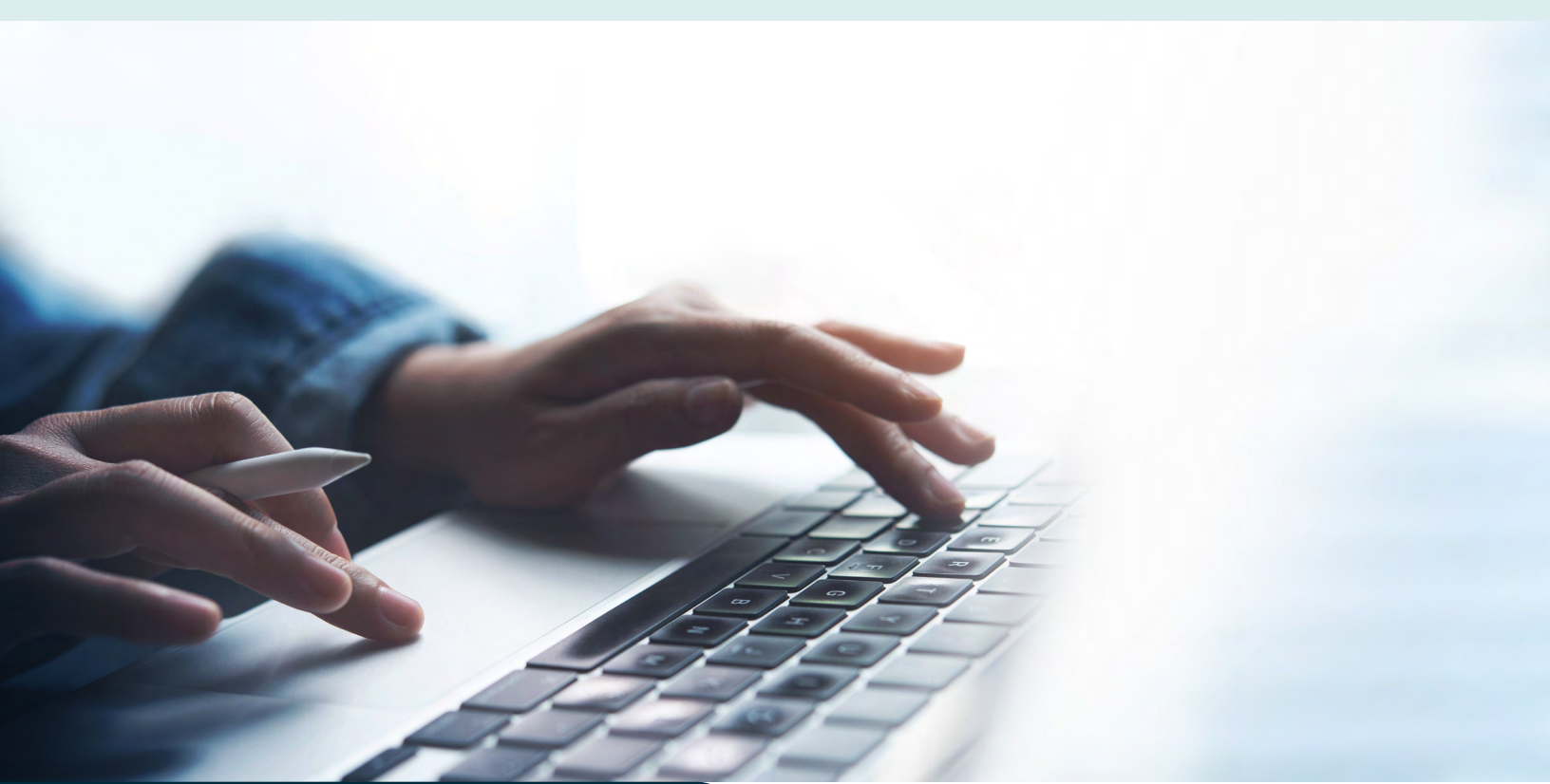
Part of their success stems from KnowBe4’s excellent customer support. The contextual help menus and online support are thorough and address most of the team’s questions. If they get stuck, they can contact their local representative, who is highly responsive and knowledgeable.

“The quality of the service has been fantastic. I’ve got a local customer success representative who I can call and I know will call me back within an hour. If they don’t have an answer, they’ll go away and find out,” Callil says. “There’s also a global email support system that has worked really well when I’ve asked particular questions about data analysis, and the online support resources are really comprehensive.”

No matter how complex the issue, Callil says the Yarra Valley team always feels supported.

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breaches, and protect their learning environment, thus prioritizing students’ safety and education. Between that and their positive results, it’s easy to make a case for KnowBe4 year after year.

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Any increased security awareness would be in vain if it didn’t support Yarra Valley’s goal: providing the latest digital and online learning resources and support systems and keeping their environment as safe as possible. With KnowBe4, the IT team is confident that they are.

Protecting Our Learning Environment and Prioritizing Students

With KnowBe4, the Yarra Valley IT team can prepare staff for every contingency. It enables them to identify potential incursions, prevent security

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KnowBe4, Inc. | 33 N Garden Ave, Suite 1200, Clearwater, FL 33755
855-KNOWBE4 (566-9234) | www.KnowBe4.com | Sales@KnowBe4.com

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