Futureproofing wireless connectivity on UNSW's latest campus

AT A GLANCE

Summary:
The University of New South Wales is one of Australia's preeminent higher education institutions, with a reputation for putting cutting-edge technology at the heart of its operations. UNSW relies on robust wireless connectivity on all its campuses to support learning journeys, research, and cross-disciplinary collaboration amongst faculty members and staff alike.



The situation:

New campus in need of scalable, seamless wireless connectivity – but with technical requirements and construction plans subject to rapid change



The solution:

Predictive wireless surveys and deep stakeholder engagement, mapping out multiple options and adapting network design throughout construction



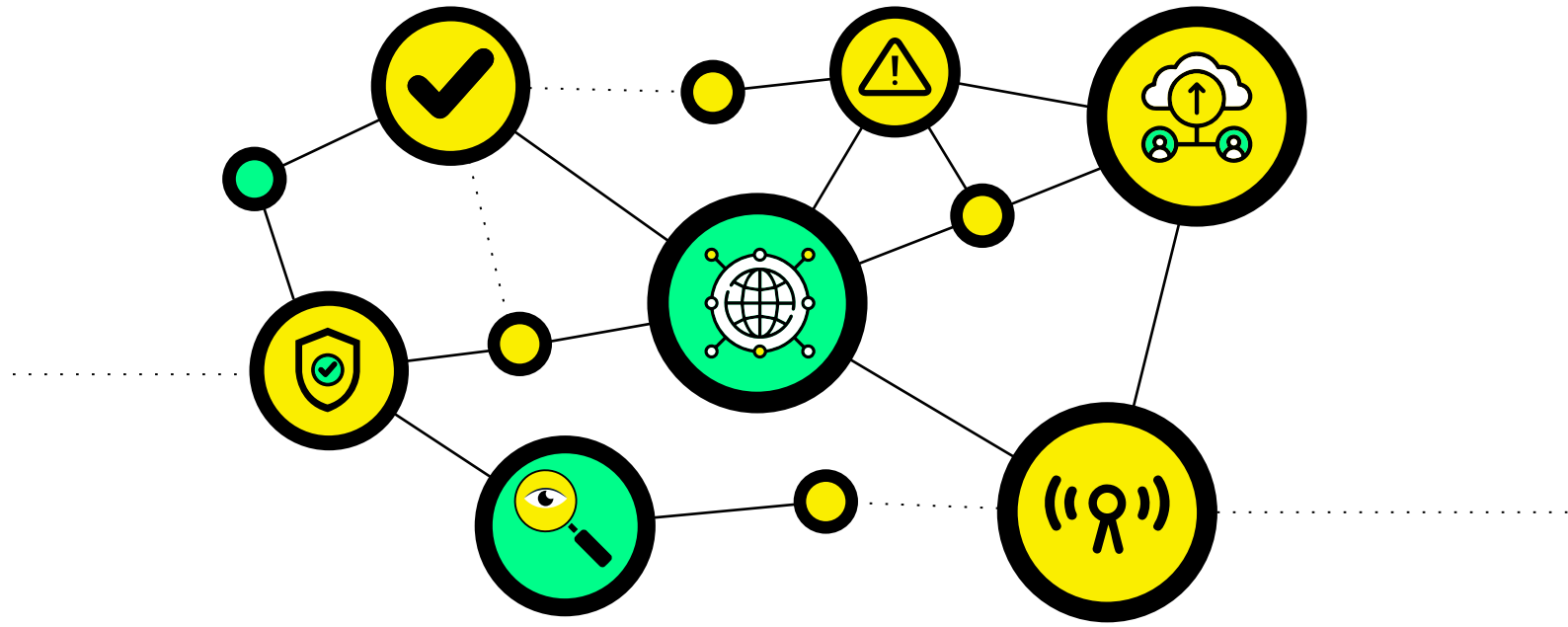
The results:

Seamless, scalable wireless experience for students, with real-world performance almost precisely matching design predictions

THE SITUATION

When planning its new campus in Wagga Wagga, UNSW needed a wireless network that could support its long-term vision with robust capacity and a seamless student experience. However, the network had to be designed while the campus was still under construction if UNSW was to meet its project timelines. Furthermore, UNSW was still finalising its network requirements at the time – meaning any design needed to be flexible enough to adapt to changing goals during construction.

UNSW enlisted help from Affinity Blue to create both high-level and detailed network design for the Wagga Wagga campus, including comparisons between both Cisco and Aruba to help the university in its final decision. “We needed to essentially predict what was going to work best for the university, even before they themselves were certain of the right path to take,” said Simon Hayward, Managing Director and co-founder of Affinity Blue. “It was clear from Day 1 that flexibility and forward-thinking would make or break the eventual longevity of the network.”

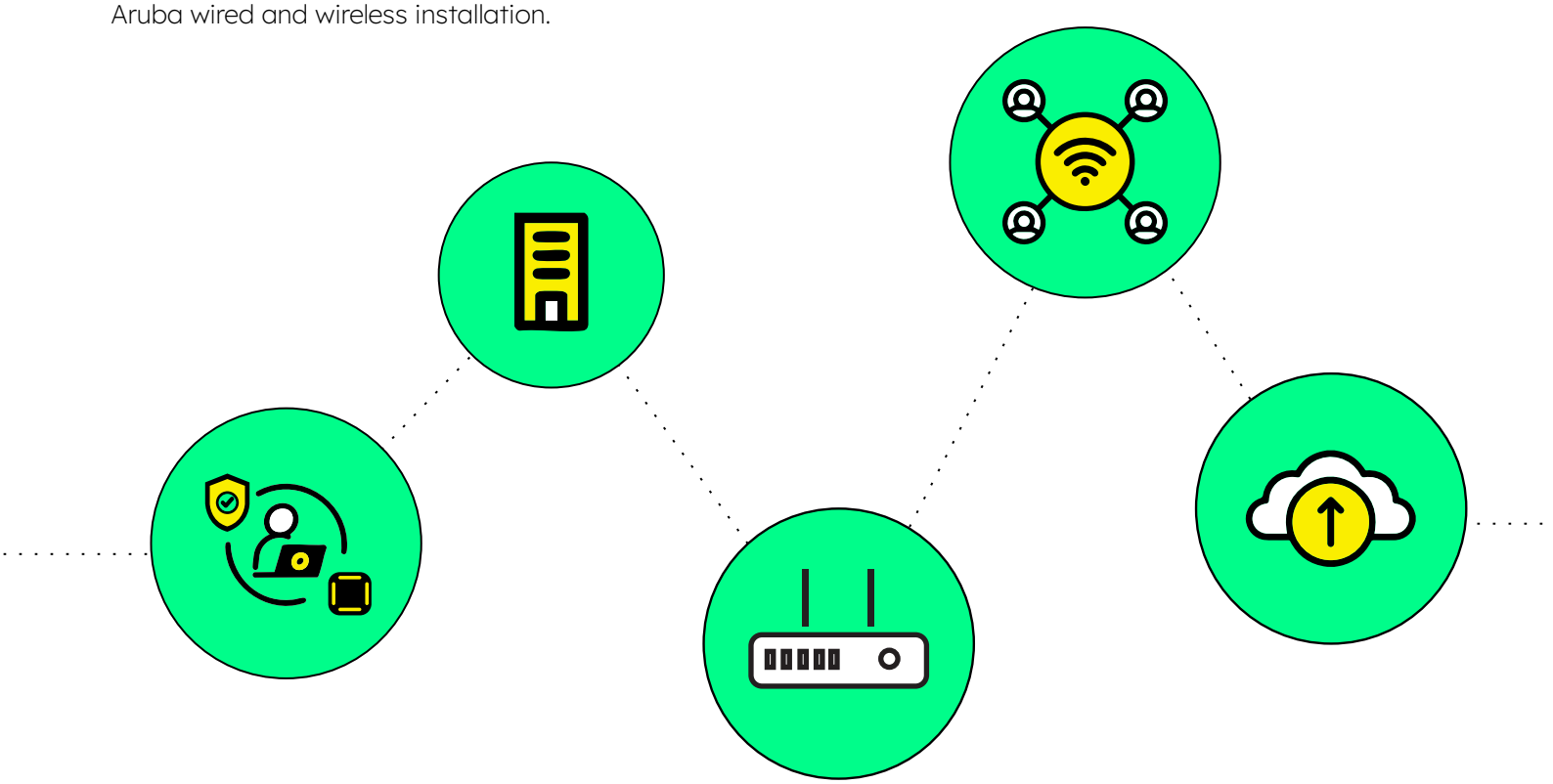


THE SOLUTION

Affinity Blue carried out extensive fieldwork and stakeholder engagement to understand UNSW's requirements as well as possible. At the same time, the team ran predictive wireless surveys to optimise access point placement and maximise wireless coverage, regardless of the vendor and hardware UNSW ultimately selected.

Approaching this "homework" with rigour helped Affinity Blue design a solution that provided strong, reliable Wi-Fi for a seamless student experience, with ease of scaling and redundancy to support future campus growth. Affinity Blue's proposition also guaranteed full integration with UNSW's existing cybersecurity and WAN infrastructure, minimising potential disruption to operations and student experience alike. Finally, the solution mapped out the comparative performance of both Cisco and Aruba within the campus' built environment, ultimately leading UNSW to accept the team's recommendation for an Aruba wired and wireless installation.

That same flexibility permeated the entire implementation process as construction got underway. **"The building plans for the campus were constantly evolving, as were many of the specific network requirements involved," Hayward recalled. "We made sure our project managers were in constant communication with key stakeholders to clarify details and adjust our deployment every step of the way."**



THE RESULTS

Not only was UNSW highly pleased with the design phase, but implementation also delivered the strong results that IT was hoping for. Despite the complexity of the project, post-commissioning wireless surveys found that access point performance almost exactly matched Affinity Blue's predictive surveys. The success of the wireless design and build, even under challenging conditions, gave UNSW the confidence to tap on Affinity Blue as network implementation partner for its next campus in the works.

"We've spent a long time developing a process that can accurately and effectively design the right network for our customers' needs," said Hayward. "It's always encouraging to see that process bear fruit, especially with so many variables changing at speed during the project. Being able to help institutions like UNSW steer through operational complexity is just another part of how we always try to go above and beyond no matter the situation."



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Simon Hayward,
Managing Director

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