

# AN ARMY OF CYBER WARDENS READY TO REVOLUTIONISE SMALL BUSINESS CYBER SECURITY

**The ultimate line of defence against cyber criminals is about to march in, and they mean business.**

**July 27, 2023:** An innovative joint venture to help keep small businesses safe from cyber crime will graduate Australia's very first group of Cyber Wardens at an exclusive rollout event in Melbourne tonight.

More than 40 Telstra small business customers, staff and the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA) members will gather to experience the newly created Cyber Wardens program that teaches everyday workers how to lock their digital doors to cyber criminals.

This cutting-edge program equips small business staff with the skills to help safeguard their small businesses from cyber threats.

As Australian small business owners grapple with mounting cyber attacks that threaten their livelihoods and customer trust, the need for robust protection has never been more urgent.

Astonishingly, nearly half of all cyber assaults are aimed squarely at the nation's 2.3 million small businesses, jeopardising the wellbeing of the five million individuals they employ.

The Cyber Wardens initiative arose from a collaboration between Telstra, the Commonwealth Bank and leading small business advocacy body, the COSBOA. Recognising the critical importance of cyber safety in the small business sector, this partnership created Australia's first-ever cyber safety workplace certification program.

The program has been designed by small business, for small business, aiming to empower owners and employees alike, equipping them with free and user-friendly tools accessible through an engaging eLearning platform.

Attendees at tonight's Telstra-hosted event will have the opportunity to become Australia's inaugural Cyber Wardens graduates.

Once graduated, these newly minted Cyber Wardens will delve into the latest scams during a behind-the-scenes tour of Telstra's security operations centre to see first-hand how Telstra helps protect businesses from cyber threats. The centre stands guard against cyber threats and attacks towards Australian consumers and businesses 24/7, 365 days a year.

According to Scamwatch, Australians have already lost more than \$286 million to scams in 2023 with phishing, false billing, online shopping scams and identity theft the most reported scams this year alone.



Telstra Small Business Executive Anne Da Cunha said the Cyber Wardens program helped businesses understand how to identify threats and protect themselves, their customers and data.

“Designed specifically for busy small business owners and their teams, we’re proud that Telstra small business customers will be Australia’s first Cyber Wardens, and benefit from this innovative program ahead of the full nationwide rollout,” Ms Da Cunha said.

“For small business owners, the Cyber Warden Program is a simple way to stay up-to-date on the latest cyber security risks and to help ensure the right security controls and behaviours are in place to minimise the likelihood of a breach.

“Cyber security is at the forefront of everything we do here at Telstra from helping protect customers through our cleaner pipes program to stop scams before they hit customers while also helping to educate our customers and the broader community on how to be cyber safe.”

COSBOA CEO Luke Achterstraat said the Cyber Wardens program was making cyber security simple for small businesses across the country.

“Cyber threats to our small businesses impact Australian supply chains and our whole economy, so it is essential that we build a cyber-smart small business workforce that acts as a frontline defence against cyber threats,” Mr Achterstraat said.

“Anyone can be a Cyber Warden — you don’t have to be tech-savvy or an IT wizard to put your hand up, the program is a fit-for-purpose solution for small business.

“Just like we protect ourselves by locking up our businesses and homes at night, we can do the same by training Cyber Wardens to help protect small businesses from life-changing attacks.”

Recent research by COSBOA found most small businesses felt unprepared for a cyber attack, with six out of 10 business owners rating their cyber security practices as ‘poor’, ‘needing improvement’ or only ‘okay’.

CommBank Executive General Manager, Small Business Banking, Grant Cairns, said: “CommBank is proud to partner with Telstra and COSBOA on this important cyber security initiative. By building a culture of defence and developing important practical technical skills, small businesses will be better equipped to guard against the increasingly sophisticated cyber risks posed by hackers and scammers.

“This includes learning how to carry out regular cyber security inspections and risk audits, as well as keeping passwords and data safe, and reporting any suspicious messages and threats.”

**Date:** Thursday 27 July | **Time:** 4pm - 7pm

**Location:** Telstra Corporate Centre, 242 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000

For more information please visit [www.cyberwardens.com.au](http://www.cyberwardens.com.au)

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