

Media Release

January 29, 2025

Veterinarians urged to put a muzzle on cyber criminals

JANUARY 29, 2025: Don't let cyber criminals off the leash in your business. That's the message for Australia's vet practices as hackers increasingly target the industry.

COSBOA's [Cyber Wardens](#) program is on a mission to help protect veterinary practices, as online attackers attempt to get their claws into sensitive business and client data.

In the wake of high-profile attacks on the industry, including one of the UK's [largest vet chains](#), the industry in Australia is taking steps to bolster its cyber security practices.

The Australian Veterinary Association has accredited the free, government-funded Cyber Wardens eLearning program for professional development training, for small vet practices.

Cyber Wardens is a national initiative of the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA), supported by the Australian Government and an industry alliance led by Telstra, CommBank and the Australian Cyber Security Centre, to help protect Australia's 2.5 million small businesses from online threats.

COSBOA CEO Luke Achterstraat said vet practices were among the raft of healthcare businesses being caught in the crosshairs of online attackers.

"It's not the first thing that springs to mind during a visit to the vet, but hackers are getting their claws into vet practices to try and steal data such as the financial details of pet owners," he said.

"We want to urge vet practices across Australia to put a muzzle on cyber criminals.

"Given Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world - about 5.7 million households have a pet - vet practices are a lucrative target. But when an attack happens, a small business risks not just financial loss, but the trust of their customers."

He said it was also important for small business owners to think twice when using their furry friend's name as their password.

Bella, Luna, Oscar, Charlie, Milo, Max, Coco, Ollie, Pepper, Tilly and Zoe were the top male and female dog names in Australia in 2024, one [survey](#) found.

"We know Australians love their pets, but please don't use their name as your password," he said.

"Passwords are your first line of defence against cyber break-ins. We advise strong, long and unique passwords to keep your accounts secure or, as a gold standard, passphrases using at least four unrelated words."

Vet practices are among the small healthcare businesses that can now fulfil their training requirements while boosting their cyber awareness.

The Cyber Wardens program is available for CPD (Continuous Professional Development) training through a range of peak bodies, including the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

If you're a vet, a vet nurse, or a vet practice team member, you can claim Cyber Wardens as one CPD point towards your annual CPD requirements.

The Cyber Wardens program offers a range of course options, including a ten-minute Foundations course.

For information on the range of courses available, visit cyberwardens.com.au.

To arrange an interview please email media@cyberwardens.com.au or call 0409 994 433.

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