



Eden Community Access Centre

Who are we

Eden Community Access Centre in the picturesque town of Eden on the southeast coast of NSW is a thriving local resource created and staffed by a dedicated band of volunteers. Thanks to a \$10,000 Telstra Connected Communities Grant, the community centre held a series of free, popular cyber security workshops designed to meet the broadest possible needs of residents.

What we needed

To boost community digital capability for cyber safety in Eden and surrounding communities by providing specialist IT training weekly for six months and a weekly drop-in service to check device security. We noticed this need by the increasing number of people coming to us for advice and support on privacy and cyber security. Sessions had to be social as well as practical. Helping people get together is a big part of what we do as a community centre.

How we got there

We used the grant to develop a PowerPoint called Seven Simple Steps to Stay Safe Online. The presentation worked as a guide for a series of free, face to face cyber security sessions in Eden, Mallacoota and smaller towns – everywhere from community halls to Rural Fire Service sheds. Our approach was to share tips on safe browsing and private browsing that people could easily understand. Topics included protecting your identity, strong passwords, avoiding scammers and hoaxers, banking and paying bills online, using public computers, social media and privacy.



Why it worked

Putting on free morning tea was a big drawcard. Which is why we called our sessions morning tea to talk about scams. We would've had much lower attendance if we'd just called them cyber security workshops. Being fun and inclusive also made them popular. Each started with a quiz called 'how safe are you?' to prompt conversation.

Once people got talking about scams they'd come across the discussion just flowed. We encouraged people to put their concerns in their own words and get answers that they understood. We also created handouts so people had info at their fingertips at home, including Telstra and government resources. The best were the ones in plain English without tech jargon.

Where to next

The success of the workshops has reinforced our reputation as a trusted source of information for locals and made us even more conscious of the digital literacy needs in our region. Next year we plan to do follow-up sessions in Eden plus more workshops in Bega and other towns. Our digital focus has also got the interest of young people. We get lots of primary school students at our regular Tuesday afternoon gaming program. We now run a gaming and coding program in Eden High School that has a disaster preparedness theme and the same program in Pambula and aim to offer the same thing in Bega next year.

The Telstra Connected Communities Grant Program

Applications for the 2024 Telstra Connected Communities grant program on Tuesday 27th of February and will close at 5pm on Wednesday 27th of March 2024. This round will make \$200,000 available for applications of up to \$10,000 each. Successful grants will be announced in June 2024 and successful applicants will have 12 months to complete funded projects.

Learn more about the 2024 Connected Communities grant round here

<https://frrr.org.au/funding/place/telstra-connected-communities-program/>