

# Citizens gain secure WiFi access in public spaces

Hutt City Council in New Zealand installed next-generation firewalls to secure public WiFi access at eight municipal libraries, at city admin buildings, during public soccer games and more



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*Rob van Endt, Chief Information Officer and IT Manager, Hutt City Council*

## Customer profile



<b>Company</b>	Hutt City Council
<b>Industry</b>	Local Government
<b>Country</b>	New Zealand
<b>Employees</b>	420
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.huttcity.govt.nz">www.huttcity.govt.nz</a>

## Business need

Hutt City Council wanted to implement reliable and secure public WiFi service at various locations in Lower Hutt so that citizens could easily access the internet.

## Solution

SonicWall next-generation firewall solutions give visitors to Lower Hutt public buildings and outdoor spaces access to the internet without putting city administrative networks and data at risk.

## Benefits

- Easily configured WiFi in all libraries, museums, swimming pools and other public spaces separate from corporate networks to enhance security and avoid impacts to bandwidth
- Saved IT staff time through ease of management and low maintenance
- Improved business efficiency with mobile WiFi access in all city buildings for employees and visitors attending meetings and workshops

## Solutions at a glance

- Network security.
- Mobile network security.

The city of Lower Hutt lies just north of Wellington, New Zealand, and is home to about 100,000 citizens. Hutt City Council is responsible for overseeing municipal government activities such as road maintenance; managing the city's libraries, museums, swimming pools and visitors' center; conducting building inspections; and running the animal control service.

Hutt City Council wanted to implement reliable and secure public WiFi service at various locations in Lower Hutt so that citizens could easily access the internet.

Lower Hutt's eight public libraries receive several hundred thousand visitors each month. The library system administrators wanted to create a consistent and reliable WiFi experience so patrons could walk into any of the eight libraries and easily connect to the internet without using a password or pin number.

A number of security concerns came up as the City Council began planning the new system. The IT team needed to find a way to control access and bandwidth to protect the library's internal network and data.

"We wanted to make the WiFi completely free, and we wanted to keep it very simple so that visitors could just walk into the library and immediately connect," said Rob van Endt, chief information officer and IT manager for Hutt City Council. "But we needed to find a way to control access as well as bandwidth based on the libraries' schedules and who was visiting the library when. We needed to ensure that the free service couldn't be abused."

At the central library, the City Council implemented a SonicWall 3500 next-generation firewall combined with SonicPoint Series Wireless Access Points. Each branch library is outfitted with a SonicWall TZ series firewall. The library's public WiFi zone is kept separate from

the library's administrative network, so visitors can access online resources without using a password, and their activity does not affect any part of the library's internal data or bandwidth.

The Hutt City Council uses SonicWall next-generation firewalls at 26 locations beyond the libraries, including the public swimming pool, museums, city administration buildings and so on. Smaller sites are set up with SonicWall TZ 105, 210 or 220 as a local firewall, which allows employees to VPN back to the corporate network to access internal data as well as the internet. At its corporate office, the City Council has implemented a highly available SonicWall NSA 4600 employed in active-passive mode.

The NSA 4600 allows the City Council to use two fiber internet connections for its corporate activity. Eventually, the IT team plans to implement two main internet WAN links on the same firewall,

## Products & Services

### Hardware

[SonicWall NSA 4600, 3500 next-generation firewall](#)

[SonicWall TZ Series](#)

[SonicWall SonicPoint Wireless Access Points](#)

### Software

[SonicWall Comprehensive Gateway Security Suite \(CGSS\)](#)

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*Rob van Endt, Chief Information Officer and IT Manager, Hutt City Council*

enabling staff to control what type of traffic is moving across which link.

Hutt City Council employees use an SSL VPN connection to access corporate resources, and they can use the internet via corporate or public WiFi connections depending on where they are. That way, public and employee access is kept separate. "For example," van Endt says, "the public can access our websites and they will have a good experience because it's a dedicated internet link. And if our staff surfs the web, that goes through a separate link. We can also keep email traffic separate as well. So everything works a lot better."

Because the NSA 4600 offers two fiber internet connections, Hutt City Council has been able to experiment with some other interesting public solutions. For example, during a professional soccer event, van Endt and his team set up free public WiFi access across the town's stadium and was able to keep it separate from the corporate network. A SonicWall NSA 4600 next-generation firewall was used to set up rules and access controls to provide internet service to the approximately 10,000 spectators attending the match.

### Ease of configuration

For the libraries, the Hutt City Council IT staff wanted a solution that would be easy to configure to meet both the need for a public WiFi connection and the library's need to conduct business as usual and protect data.

To help ensure that the free WiFi service wouldn't be abused, the City Council implemented internet protocol, bandwidth and usage controls — all through the SonicWall firewalls. Bandwidth allotments for each access point provide users with a guaranteed minimum connection speed, and since

the network load is balanced among the access points, everyone using the internet to check email will still have a good connection even when other people are streaming media. City Council IT staff can easily adjust configuration rules and bandwidth allotments to specific access points as needed.

Free public WiFi access is available only during the libraries' open hours — but during those hours (10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.), the City Council set bandwidth allotments to fluctuate according to peak usage to ensure that every visitor has an available IP connection. "At the main library during peak hours, as many as 100 people can be connecting to the internet at the same time — and during bad weather, everybody comes inside the library to use the WiFi," van Endt says.

Library staff can also use the public WiFi to connect to the internet using personal mobile devices. In addition, all administration buildings have a separate WiFi network set up with its own SonicPoint Series Wireless Access Points and different controls. However, to access data and resources on the corporate network, library employees must connect using a VPN connection — or use a city-issued computer or device that is set up to connect directly to the LAN.

### Ease of management and maintenance

Because the Hutt City Council oversees so many aspects of municipal operations, the IT team wanted to find a way to secure the public WiFi solutions that would not require a lot of hands-on support.

"The SonicWall systems look after themselves," van Endt says. "We installed them and basically walked away. It's been about three years with very little IT support needed at all."

For all of its firewall solutions, Hutt City Council makes use of the SonicWall Comprehensive Gateway Security Suite (CGSS), which includes Gateway Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, Intrusion Prevention and Application Intelligence and Control Service, Content Filtering Service and 24x7 Support.

Hutt City Council has been a SonicWall customer for more than a decade and keeps returning because it can count on outstanding performance.

"We needed a product we could rely on — that's why we selected SonicWall for the libraries," van Endt says. "We've been very happy so far. We've had no problems at all in terms of security and no performance issues."

### Improved business efficiency

The Hutt City Council's WiFi setup, secured by SonicWall next-generation firewalls, has helped enhance overall productivity. Having WiFi throughout all of the administration buildings has made it easy for employees to connect to resources from anywhere.

In addition, the City Council often hosts all-day workshops and meetings, and the new WiFi setup makes it easy for contractors and visitors to connect from anywhere and efficiently conduct business.

"The SonicWall solutions just work really well," van Endt says.

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