

PRICE \$544 WEB www.draytek.com.au

DrayTek Vigor2136ax

Draytek's latest router has faster ports and an overhauled OS with many business-management upgrades.

If you're not familiar with Draytek, it's an old-school router maker that makes old-school routers that use old-school user interfaces along with bleeding edge security, privacy and VPN technologies for modern businesses. I could review the latest model, the SMB-focused Vigor2136ax, by simply listing all the relevant code numbers and acronyms that define it. So, let's see if we can humanise what's on offer...

The basic-looking router thumbs its nose at rivals which take their design cues from furniture, robot crabs and space ships. It has a 2.5GbE WAN port a 2.5GbE configurable WAN/LAN port and three Gigabit LAN ports. There are also two USB ports that can be used for connecting an FTP server, print server, thermometer or 4G failover adapters.

It supports Wi-Fi 6 at dual-band AX3000 speeds. Being Draytek, there's also a version without Wi-Fi for those who view it as a security risk. Either unit can function with up-to seven of DrayTek's new, modern-looking (cylindrical) VigorAP 805 access points which run the same firmware.

DrayTek makes the point that, compared with the previous Vigor2135, the 2.5Gbps ports push throughput up from 950Mbps to 2.3Gbps (and make IPsec throughput 2.3x faster).

For new users, the DrayOS 5 firmware is the star of the show. Accessed via web browser, it provides responsive access to countless settings related to all things networking.

Notable features (for the target market) include it arriving fully optimised to easily connect to multiple, ANZ broadband WAN technologies from providers including NBN and Starlink. It also lets you easily set-up and configure multiple LAN and Wi-Fi networks.

Both the 2.4GHz and 5GHz Wi-Fi channels can be set to connect to Wi-Fi hotspots for failover provision which, in conjunction with two 4G dongles

SPECS Speed: Dual-band Wi-Fi 6 AX3000Mbps; Connectivity: 1 x 2.5Gbps Ethernet WAN, 1 x 2.5Gbps Ethernet W/LAN, 3 x Gigabit Ethernet LAN, 2 x USB 2.0 ports. Features: Sixteen built-in VPN tunnels, bandwidth management, content filtering, failover management, remote user management.



“No surprise, the beefy hardware offers standout performance for productivity tasks, but what about gaming?”

and the W/LAN port, can guarantee uptime by bringing the number of potential, simultaneous, failover connections to five(!)

Other features that go above and beyond the norm include DrayDDNS which is a service which provides easy and secure remote access to the router from anywhere in the world; multiple QoS configurations that revolve around manual settings and applications; a business-grade firewall; plus, extensive web-content filters with an option for utilising pre-configured subscriptions.

Its statement features revolve around the VPN capabilities. The new hardware has sixteen built-in VPN tunnels (up from two in the previous model) but the main attraction surrounds the identity and access management features. There are numerous options to manage both individual users and user groups (which might mean teams of telemarketers).

Multi-factor security features are available (as are one-time passwords) and Draytek's free Smart VPN Client can be used on Windows, Mac, Android and iPhone. Numerous monitoring, logging and reporting features are also present.

At the end of the day, the DrayTek Vigor2136ax is the router you use to remotely manage an office that caters to remote workers. It prioritises security and reliability much more than any other networking product we've reviewed here and it offers significantly more supporting hardware and services too. You'll know if you need it. If you don't, it's not for you. ■

VERDICT



If you need a Wi-Fi router to manage an office with reliable and secure connectivity, this is it.

NICK ROSS