Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre: Case Study

A case study on the use of MEX - Computerised Maintenance Management Software

"WE WOULD not know what to do if we didn't have MEX," says Allan Pollock, Facilities Manager of the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre. "Whenever the computer systems go down we realize how dependant we are on MEX to keep us functioning on a daily basis."

Based at the Sydney 2000 Olympic site in Homebush Sydney, the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre is home to numerous sporting groups and cultural events including the recent winners of the trans Tasman netball championship the NSW Swifts and the Sydney Razorbacks NBL basketball team.

The Centre comprises a 6000 seat multipurpose arena, a secondary training/multipurpose hall, a Gymnastics Centre, two artificial turf hockey pitches & grandstands, the Hall of Champions and two 3300 Sq Metre Multipurpose Sports Halls. The centre pre dates the Olympics and was the first facility on the Homebush site in 1984. The centre is now within a complex of other venues that all share the 2000 Olympic site area.

Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre manages and maintains all the facilities that include an enormous amount of sporting equipment, change rooms, meeting rooms, administration offices and seating for many thousands of spectators. They however, do not look after mechanical plant maintenance as the Sydney Olympic Park Authority the owner of the facilities, who also happen to be a user of MEX handles this.

How MEX is used.
Since 2001, Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre has been using MEX. They have progressed their maintenance department forward to an almost paperless operation that runs very effectively. To achieve this all maintenance staff use MEX Mobile, a handheld version of MEX that runs on any windows powered PDA. This allows for all work done to be captured through single point of entry whilst in the field.

Maintenance personnel receive daily updates of the work outstanding from performing a direct synchronization and are hoping in the future to go live with the use of MEX Mobile via a wireless network. This will keep all maintenance staff up to date with all the work to be done minutes after being entered into MEX.

One of the real advantages of using MEX Mobile is that the work is captured instantly in the field. The normal practice of the translation of tradesman's notes on a work order into a computer system after the fact has been removed. Leading to a higher quality and quantity of information on assets and the work done.

Request System
All 35 permanent staff at the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre use MEX Ops, MEX's online job request system, to request maintenance work. Entry of any request work by personnel at the Centre are entered via MEX Ops.

The Maintenance department then scrutinizes entries and creates work orders from these at the push of a button.

"Initially it was hard work to get all staff to swap from using E-mails to using MEX Ops" said Allan. "But eventually all staff saw the benefits they received from entering via MEX Ops, by being able to get feedback on their requests".

Like many facility managers, the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre has only a small team of full time maintenance personnel and utilizes contractors for a large amount of their maintenance work.

The Purchasing system within MEX is used extensively for management of the contract work as well as the purchasing of inventory. This has allowed for close control over the work done and money spent on

all maintenance work.

Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre has an inventory of thousands of parts that is all managed through MEX. One part of the inventory system that Allan is planning on having operational in the future is to have all parts issues or returned to be against their relevant work orders. To enable improved costing of assets and the work done. Currently cost control is achieved by using account codes only.

Additionally Allan uses two other software packages in Maintenance. An Autodesk AutoSketch CAD program for all drawings within the facility and ProMaster Key Manager a key management software package for all keys used throughout the facility. Allan has used these packages for a long time, and even though they could be somewhat accommodated by MEX these packages work and do the job required.

Why did they get MEX?
One of the reasons they chose MEX over other systems available is firstly the price. MEX was a low cost system compared to the other products available on the market.

Secondly, Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre had already gone through two different Computerised Maintenance Management Systems that had shut up shop. So, they needed to get a system that they knew would be around for a while. As in each case of having to change systems data would be lost. In the changeover to MEX most of the existing data from the now defunct Maintenance Management system was transferred to MEX by MEX in Brisbane. Retaining the majority of the data and instead of the initial setup of MEX taking months it took days.

And MEX, having been around for over 13 years and with over 2,000 users at the time looked like a good choice.

What else would you like to have MEX do?
One thing that Allan is looking forward to is the Import/Export tool, which is to be released soon by MEX. Currently they are double entering all the purchase orders into their accounting system. This is a time consuming and ultimately an expensive task. This is due to be released by MEX in the 3rd quarter of 2008.

Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre currently does not use any PM's or inspections from MEX.This is because of the equipment and plant that they have to maintain is all facility fixtures and fittings and find the greatest workload comes from the work discovered each day by maintenance staff. However, they are looking into using this particular module in the future.

Training
Training requirements in the 7 years has been minimal. Allan and Neil Gillies (Assistant Facilities Manager) are the only ones to have been trained on MEX. All maintenance staff have subsequently been trained by Allan and Neil.

As well as all operational staff on the use of MEX Ops. Allan has also regularly attended the MEX User Conferences.

Picture: The NBL Basketball teams the West Sydney Razorbacks & the Sydney Kings playing in the main arena of the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre

> " **The support we have received has been great.** "

The benefit
The greatest benefit the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre has achieved from the use of MEX, MEX Mobile and MEX Ops is the improvement in efficiency of their operation. From going paperless in the field to being able to easily create monthly reports has all added to a more streamlined and effective maintenance operation.

Their biggest problem
As with any maintenance management systems, if the information going in is not good then the information coming out will be the same. Here, it requires constant reminders to staff to ensure MEX Mobile units are updated and that work that is done is entered properly. Having MEX Mobile has greatly reduced the effort required to achieve this, but as with any system some management supervision is required.Allan commented that the recent release of MEX Mobile, which superseded the HandiMEX product, has had a huge impact on people using the system, as the new version is so much easier to use.

MEX has always stated, along with many industry experts, that every system needs a watchdog. Someone to ensure the right data goes in and that people do their job and follow procedures. And no matter the size of operation diligence in this area is required to ensure success of a system.

Last Comments
Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre has been very happy with their choice of MEX.
As stated by Allan, "The support we have received has been great. If support cannot give the answer straight away, they always get back to me within a couple of days with a solution. The company is also very receptive to our suggestions for program changes."