

## CASE STUDY

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre  
(MCEC)

“Without an effective communications system, the MCEC could not provide the level of service our clients’ require.”

Interview with Michael Walsh, technology operations manager for the MCEC



The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) get it right with green credentials and smart technology

“With the anticipated growth of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, it was imperative that the system had to be at the absolute forefront of technology.”

Although terms such as ‘cutting edge’ and ‘state of the art’ have become ubiquitous, the extension to the MCEC can genuinely be described as conforming to both expressions.

The team of architects (Joint Venture Architects Woods Bagot and NH Architecture) commissioned to design the latest addition to Melbourne’s exhibition spaces determined this edifice would be the largest, most versatile convention and exhibition space in the Southern Hemisphere.

And not only that; it is the first and only ‘6 Green Star’ environmentally rated convention centre in the world, as well as simultaneously boasting the very latest in technology throughout the building. This last was a big focus which is why there is full wi fi right through the venue. Every room has its own sophisticated audio visual presentation set up, which is all managed from a central control room.

Intriguing too is the subtle integration of the various symbols of Melbourne embedded in many facets of the building, illustrating a tieback to the quality for which Melbourne is famous.

Logically, a structure of this size and quality has to have an up-to-the-minute solution insofar as a communications system is concerned. Fortunately, in mid 2008 when the technologies were being evaluated, Motorola released MOTOTRBO. That is the system that is in place for this stylish building.

Michael Walsh, technology operations manager for the MCEC says “The MOTOTRBO digital two-way radio system, designed and implemented by Motorola and TR Bearcom, was the perfect blend of traditional communications with the latest technology.”

A large component of the building is located underground, including basement car parks, loading docks and kitchens. There are four levels, including ground and lower ground which often present incredibly challenging areas for communications systems. Michael says the MOTOTRBO system has performed brilliantly despite these rather taxing conditions.

Aesthetics and presentation in the hospitality business are a prime consideration. In this building everyone has to look as sharp as possible, further cementing the designer fundamentals that don’t stop with the structure itself. To that end, the in-ear discreet earpieces that Motorola provides for its radios were no small advantage. Where to hide the wires became a non-issue.

### Why MotoTRBO?

“The MOTOTRBO digital two-way radio system, designed and implemented by Motorola and TR Bearcom, was the perfect blend of traditional communications with the latest technology.”





After five months using the new system Michael Walsh says it has exceeded their expectations. He was impressed that TR Bearcom understood the needs of the organisation and proceeded to develop a solution that would meet these needs, now and into the future.

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“And it has offered a number of benefits. The previous system often had crackling transmission noise; however the new equipment has resolved this issue. Overall there is now a much better work environment and improved communications,” he says.

It’s a huge system for a huge venue but the installation went very smoothly. As soon as the old building was closed, everyone was up on the new system.

Michael explains that the ability to leverage the existing Distributed Antenna System within the new structure ensured the new system was able to deliver venue wide coverage which is critical to the operations of the venue. He believes that one of the unique things about the new system is the fact that, (even though they are operated by a partner organisation), everyone, from the security guards through to the cleaners, is connected through the communications infrastructure.

According to the architects, their brief was to design a building that elevated the generic convention centre from its second grade civic position. Undoubtedly, they’ve succeeded.

Impressive design and excellent technology have combined to ensure the MCEC can truly be called ‘cutting edge.’