

ENHANCING THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC, STAFF & TENANTS



■ By Peter Middenway, Security and Cleaning Manager, Federation Square

EVENT

PHOTO: BY JOHN GOLLINGS

In the good old days public events attracted people from all walks of life whose attendance was only for the purpose of having fun, learning or being part of a social gathering. The main failure of an event was likely to be a lack of crowd numbers.

How things have changed. Event organisers and managers of public venues now have the added concern of general crime, terrorism, civil litigation and unruly / drunken / drug effected behaviour to contend with. The reality is that no longer is visitation limited to people simply wishing to enjoy themselves.

With all these added challenges venue surveillance and security have become a necessity to ensure the people who wish to have fun, can and that they can enjoy a family outing with little fear of something going seriously wrong.

CCTV cameras can provide some

comfort when utilised correctly and operated by a competent person. The availability of cameras fixed to a position of concern, whether it be a stage for performances, gift stall or shop, licenced area or a flight of stairs, enable continual monitoring for and playback of, noted incidents. Split screen captures enable numerous areas to be monitored at the same time.

General area cameras can allow the experienced operator to monitor crowd movement and behaviour and also pre-empt issues such as acts of violence, theft or generally unruly behaviour. A competent CCTV operator is able to pre-empt

anti-social behaviour and deploy roving security to the area ahead of issues. This proactive approach is a key focus for Federation Square security staff and using these processes allows roving security to de-escalate situations before they impact on the experience of patrons. A recent example of this was a CCTV operator identifying a person on site as carrying a concealed weapon. Roving team members approached the person and moved them away from other patrons while waiting for the police to arrive. The situation was handled discreetly and in a non-confrontational way so that families

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and other patrons in the area were none the wiser to the situation.

At Federation Square the CCTV system has also been invaluable in locating the owners of unattended bags. Even if a bag can't be seen being placed into position, a review of surrounding cameras can generally reveal who was carrying the bag. An inspection of the bag by our security team and a quick conversation with the owner (who has normally only wandered off to see the sights) generally finds the bag returned without Police intervention.

The availability of footage, to members of the Police force, has enabled a number of offences to be detected and the culprits presented before the courts. Perimeter cameras have led to valuable evidence being collected for a range of offences carried out offsite, including assaults, motor vehicle accidents, escape from Police and wilful damage, as well as other offences including the Moomba riots and the behaviour of the offender prior to the Burke Street massacre. Australian Federal Police are also using our CCTV camera coverage as part of a large ongoing investigation. A MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) is in place for the handover of footage to outside Agencies such as Victoria Police.

Privacy expectations and current laws have necessitated further MOU's with a major Federation Square tenant for access to recorded CCTV. Individual requests from members of the public are not approved unless they are subject to a court order or subpoena.

The Federation Square CCTV camera coverage (including coverage outside of the precinct) has been mapped and shared with relevant organisations including Victoria Police, Flinders Street Station and the City of Melbourne's Safe Streets team. Our control room is also in direct contact with security within these organisations, allowing real time surveillance across a number of precincts. This allows the tracking of offenders from area to area, improving arrest rates and helps Police to gain further admissible evidence.

An advantage with a CCTV system such as the Genetec system installed at Federation Square, is the ability to view cameras remotely. For large scale events such as New Year's Eve, White Night or an emergency situation, cameras can easily be viewed from alternate locations. This allows an emergency or events operations centre (EOC) to view the CCTV independently and coordinate resources such as

Police, Fire Brigade or ambulance without disruption to normal control room operations. This also allows for flexibility to view live footage remotely should a business continuity situation arise.

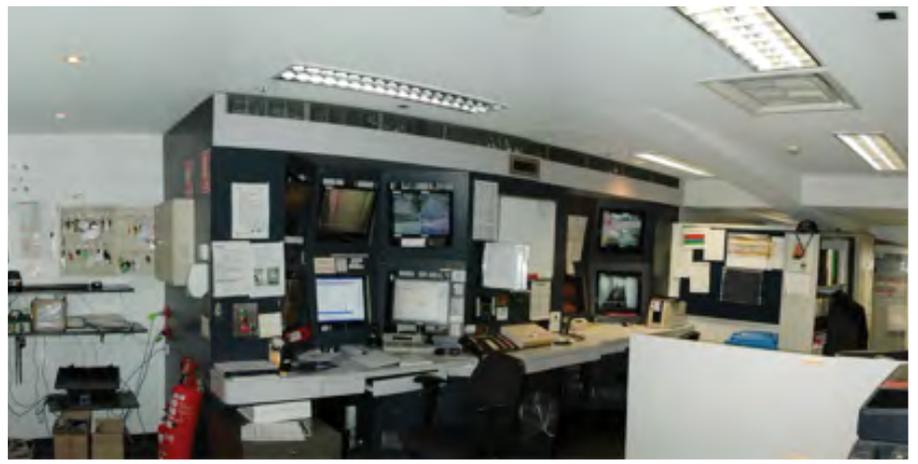
A modern and adaptable CCTV System, competent operators, alternate viewing locations and close liaison with emergency services and adjacent likeminded organisations provides an extra layer of safety to general operations, events and unplanned occurrences.

Additionally, guards performing duties on site should be familiar with the physical layout and CCTV coverage of the areas they oversee to enable them to rapidly locate via CCTV, any event or incident. In these situations time is of the essence. At Federation Square, gridded site maps have been introduced which are not only distributed to members of security but to our event teams, cleaning staff, event clients, First Aid providers and Police. This ensures a common language is used to reference incidents and enables areas of the site to be rapidly located via CCTV and a response coordinated swiftly.

CCTV when used in conjunction with a personal duress alarm such as the Smartrak system used at Federation Square, can also greatly assist in the safety and monitoring of lone workers. These are given to cleaning staff, event operations or security members who generally work alone. On receiving an alarm in the Security Control Room the system brings up on screen a map with the location of the alarm, allowing cameras to be rapidly focussed on the area and assistance deployed. These personal duress alarms are less obvious than using a radio, which can be important in situations where the lone worker is attempting to avoid the situation escalating. Of course their radio is still available for general or updated communication.

Final Control Room layout is extremely important for effective CCTV monitoring. In a recent upgrade, Federation Square moved from 12 monitors to three large screens (with a fourth screen available to one side, for incident viewing and monitoring by Management and Emergency Services). These three large screens provide more flexibility for monitoring CCTV than the previous configuration as the Genetec system allows for between one and sixty four cameras to be displayed on a single screen depending on monitoring requirements at the time. The security team have been trained on how to change the number of cameras on each screen as required. Lighting conditions, desk configuration, and computer monitoring position are also important factors in helping to optimise control room performance and operator comfort. Prior to the rebuild of the Federation Square control room, necessitated due to its outdated appearance and our inability to install digitalised equipment within the current configuration, I visited a variety of other Security Control Rooms and found most lacked a feeling on permanence with monitors etc being set up on trestle like tables and screens being affixed near entry and exits. This creates not only trip hazards but monitor viewing interruption by persons moving through the room. Most importantly this sends a message that security is not a priority within the organisation. A message that no company can afford to send in the current security climate

There is no doubt that the addition of state of the art surveillance systems and up to date processes at Federation Square has enhanced the safety of the public, staff and tenants alike and aided in the denial of false claims that may be brought against the organisation or individuals. **si**



Federation Square Control Room prior to rebuild.



Federation Square Control Room after rebuild.



Federation Square EOC.