

# SEMS Case Study

EDUCATION, INNOVATION, COMPLIANCE



## SEMS Case Study

Event Name: Sydney's Biggest Backyard Australia Day in Hyde Park  
Event Client: NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Industry: State Government / Community  
Number of attendees: 100,000  
Event Date: January 26, 2009  
Event destination: Sydney  
Venue: Hyde Park  
Event Organisation: Office of Protocol and Special Events  
Event manager: Alastair Lyall  
Number of staff engaged in SEMS: 5

### The Event

Sydney's Biggest Backyard is a free community event providing entertainment and activities for families in Hyde Park on Australia Day.

'Sydney's oldest park became the city's largest backyard with entertainment, barbecued food and dancing. There was the Great Aussie BBQ, the ABC702 bus broadcasting live and the Wyndham Estate Mobile Cellar Door was on site. Attendees danced under the stars as the sun went down.'

### SEMS

SEMS is a unique, easy to use sustainability framework designed by event management professionals in conjunction with environmental and sustainability experts. SEMS identifies and reports on social environmental and economic benefits of an event or meeting. SEMS has been developed for all event and meetings organizers to include industry, Government, private enterprise and NGO's.

SEMS focus is to educate, create awareness, implement best practice measure performance and report sustainability outcomes for an event. SEMS will raise and improve sustainability and create a benchmark for sustainable event management across Australia.

Designed to provide a sustainable event pathway SEMS

- assists the user to develop a sustainability policy for the event
- plans the event to comply with the policy
- offers self assessment performance measurement and results
- optional external auditing
- offers analysis of sustainability performance
- produces reporting against industry benchmarks



## Sustainability Drivers and Objectives

- The primary sustainability objective of Sydney's Biggest Backyard Australia Day in Hyde Park was to assess the environmental impact of the event so as to understand what sustainability measures should be put in place to improve outcomes of future events
- Sustainability drivers were to measure performance
- Implementation of a logical system that covered a vast field of expertise to enable improvement of performance
- SEMS enabled ADCNSW to measure sustainability for the first time and ascertain a point to improve from. Up until this time ADCNSW had made improvements randomly but had little guidance, structure, strategy or data to report on past overall performance.
- The directive to implement SEMS across this event came from within the Office of Protocol and Special Events upon realising the need to take a leadership position on improving the departments' community events and sustainability outcomes. There was internal recognition of a tangible social and business imperative to act.
- The Sustainability champion was Alastair Lyall who is the convenor of the Community Engagement and Events Division's Sustainability Working Group

## Implementation

- ADCNSW investigated tools in the marketplace but did not find any suitable alternatives. Environmental consultancy was investigated however options tabled involved the building of a tool from scratch. 'Beauty of SEMS is that it's already done.'
- No sustainability policy was developed for this event as SEMS was implemented after all event pre planning had been completed. The focus of this SEMS implementation was to measure current performance from which guidelines could be developed
- From the SEMS sustainability report, development of event sustainability policy or guidelines may now be based upon credible, tangible and comprehensive results. As guidelines are required to be in line with the *NSW Government Sustainability Policy 2008*, this may not be produced immediately
- Recording carbon data was important however as no across the

# SEMS Case Study

EDUCATION, INNOVATION, COMPLIANCE



board system was in place this was only achieved across event energy, office and event waste. Travel data is not currently captured within the organisation or across events nor is catering (food and beverage) which is difficult across a public event. This is an area that can be easily improved upon. The department chose not to offset although all grid power accessed at Hyde Park was "Green Power" and was therefore mitigated.

- The staff engaged in SEMS found the system easy to use and time efficient. Implementation of new initiatives was not undertaken as this was a case in point study although knowledge was ascertained from the education offered within SEMS

## Scorecard

### Production Office Score

Office Management	13%
Office Energy	40%
Office Recycling Facilities and Waste	100%
Office Water Use and Conservation	67%
Office Staff Travel	67%
Office Innovation	0%

### Event Score

Management	0%
Destination	100%
Travel	31%
Accommodation	67%
Sustainable Building Design	100%
Energy	56%
Reuse, Recycling and Waste	67%
Water Use and Conservation	0%
Treatment and Reuse of Waste Water	0%
Advertising and Promotion	60%
Subcontractors	0%
Public Transport	100%
Catering Supplies and Processes	29%
Materials Re-Use & Recycling opportunities	67%
Materials used	50%
Fair and Safe Eventful	100%
People and Community Participation	100%
Event Gifts and Collateral	100%
Event activities	100%
Freight and Transport	100%
Cyclist Facilities and Alternative Transport	0%



Innovation

0%

## Areas excelled in and initiatives that achieved best practice

- Within the office /organisation (ADCNSW) the area excelling in was office waste, recycling and reuse. Data is collected, waste streams are observed and strategies are in place.

## Across the event there were many areas and indicators that excelled

- Of note was event waste and recycling. The team were aware of the contamination problem when using a two or three bin system. Alastair Lyall believes *'that at many events, the unfortunate truth is that 50% of people do care but 50% couldn't seem to care less'* and do not take the time to check the bin their rubbish is deposited into.

To prevent this happening and to ensure that as much waste as possible was recycled .ADCNSW spent time to identify the best practice waste process available and put together suppliers to enable it to happen. This model is one where all rubbish is collected in one bin and is sorted at the recycling plant post event. This was possible due to access of the Ecolibrium System in Western Sydney.

- Destination – the event was central to Sydney, all suppliers were local and no air travel was required by staff or attendees to participate or attend.
- Sustainable Building Design – Hyde Park implemented as little high impact services as possible. The venue was outdoors with few hard structures, there was no air conditioning used and generators were powered by bio diesel.
- Public Transport was easily accessible and was available via more than one form and was communicated to all participants via the website and within promotional materials.
- Community Participation - was considered at all times and the local economy benefited by the large numbers the event attracted.
- Fair and Safe Event – All security and OH &S measures were in place as were facilities for special needs. A traffic management plan was in place.
- Event activities and gifts and collateral were fully considered so as to reduce impact substantially in these areas.

# SEMS Case Study

EDUCATION, INNOVATION, COMPLIANCE



- Surrounding Environmental Impacts were fully considered to include, sound, air and transport pollution.

**Areas identified to improve** – improvement, strategies and implementation is required across a number of key areas

- Office and Event Management – Clear leadership is required to put in place policy, guidelines, conditions and recommendations across all events. This should start with a departmental event sustainability policy that is in line with the NSW Government Sustainability Policy however specific to event production and delivery

Education is key across the team (internal and external) and needs to extend to all procurement and preferred suppliers. This could be instigated through inductions or workshops courtesy of ADCNSW. Please note that if all staff had an awareness of sustainability within the workplace it will filter through to all other aspects of business and potentially personal daily practices.

Contracting should require evidence of the service providers' sustainability directives and or commitments and be requested within all RFT's.

- Office and Event Innovation is an area that can be considered fully as at this time no beyond best practice initiatives are in place across ADCNSW.
- Office Energy – office energy is not measured
- Event Energy – although energy was measured there were no formal reduction strategies and or targets in place.
- Office and Event Water – there are no initiatives developed to measure, reduce or recycle.
- Office and Event Travel - can be measured through the development of staff and attendee ground travel surveys, strategies to reduce travel can then be developed and data can be tracked so as to set reduction targets.
- Subcontractors – there were no documents to communicate the sustainability directive for this event.
- Event Cyclist Facilities – no secure bike stands at this event
- Event Catering – Very few initiatives were put in place to ensure

# SEMS Case Study

EDUCATION, INNOVATION, COMPLIANCE



best practice delivery of food and beverage.

- Event Waste –better solutions can in time be found for waste of certain items like fencing scrim and mass promo pieces. Currently the contractors in charge of the production or disposal of these aren't willing to go to the extra effort required because of very high workloads. Alastair noted, 'It just becomes too hard'.

## Achievements

- ADCNSW should be commended on implementing SEMS across this event so as to initiate education and a better understanding of their sustainable event production across the team. They have demonstrated industry and Government leadership and engaged with the system and assessment well.

Although there are many areas that require attention, they now have a benchmark to inform what short, medium and long term areas of improvement need to be addressed and in what priority.

## Other

- The overall benefit was to measure the event's sustainability performance, to put a logical system in place that covers a vast field of expertise and to enable them to improve overall outcomes.
- ADCNSW would like to see SEMS further tailored to large community events as they have identified SEMS will be '*particularly attractive to the massive Local Government market*'. Alastair Lyall.
- ADCNSW look to implement SEMS across their events ongoing and have recommended the system on numerous occasions
- ADCNSW found the trial offer cost efficient enabling them to test the system and to 'get a handle on the event' from a sustainable perspective.
- Social benefit - ADCNSW will promote the sustainability focus of their events to the public in a larger way in 2010
- Environmental benefit – '*ADCNSW now have a measurable place from which to improve upon whereas previously we may have made improvements here and there but had no idea how our overall performance was*'. Alastair Lyall

"SEMS takes a very complicated and confusing area – Sustainability, combines it with an equally complicated area of business – Event

# SEMS Case Study

EDUCATION, INNOVATION, COMPLIANCE



production / management, breaks them all down, chops it up and allows you to approach the two methodically understand the language, manage the process and offers a result" **Alastair Lyall**