



Coopers Brewery

- AU brewery uses Meraki MR & MX to support network in brewery & branch sites
- Meraki APs support automated guided vehicles (AGVs) used for production
- Devices pre-configured in dashboard and online immediately when plugged in



Walk into Coopers Brewery and you'll see bottles upon bottles, tanks, vessels, conveyer belts, and other complex machinery. You'll hear words like brewing, malting, fermenting, filtering, and maturing. Being family-owned since 1862,

despite takeover attempts, and the largest Australian-owned brewery known for its Pale Ale and Sparkling Ale certainly set Coopers Brewery apart. Coopers Brewery is passionate for the craft of brewing beer and maintaining high levels of quality.

To support the intensive operations behind brewing beer, along with machinery and staff, Bradley Brazil is responsible for making sure the network is resilient, secure, and always strong in signal strength. With Cisco Meraki cloud managed MR Access Points (APs) and MX Security Appliances, he's able to do just that.

Brazil leads everything related to the network and its day-to-day operations. Within the two years Brazil has been at Coopers, the network infrastructure has been updated and refreshed to bring in new technologies, particularly as other areas of the brewery were also advancing in technology as well.

Brazil was first introduced to Meraki after attending a presentation focused on wireless solutions. At the time, Coopers did not have a sophisticated enterprise grade WiFi network. "We launched right into Meraki after that. Then I watched webinars on all of the devices and

tried the free gear at home," said Bradley. "The devices are of a high quality and the mobile app is a great feature to monitor the site remotely."

A dozen MR16 Meraki APs were initially purchased to create a WiFi network in the two-story admin area. Then, shortly after, the IT team was tasked with putting in automated guided vehicles (AGVs), which are automated forklifts. This was a challenge as there are rows and rows of beer in the production area, continuously being sent out for distribution while more is brewed and stacked. On top of that, some types of beers, like pale ales, need to sit on the production floor for two weeks before they get shipped out for distribution. This created WiFi coverage issues for the AGVs because there are walls of beer at any given time and the production team couldn't afford to have any decreases in signal strength as that would lead to non-functional AGVs, thus downtime in production. When representatives came to Coopers to test the AGVs, the signal strength was far in excess of what they needed, leaving Brazil and the production team assured that their decision to refresh with an additional 38 Meraki MR APs was a wise one.

In addition to the headquarters site in Adelaide, Coopers has offices in all states outside of South Australia. As Brazil worked on updating the network in Adelaide, the distributed staff in other offices still needed to access the core software to continue working. From there, Brazil assessed the Meraki MX Security Appliances and purchased three

to create a site-to-site VPN network between the head office and the interstate sites. Other sites will be brought online with Meraki MX units over time. Coopers also installed APs in their Queensland office, offering those in the field the ability to walk around any Coopers office and instantaneously hop from one AP to the next without any connection disruptions. This feature will be rolled out to other offices over time. Using the Meraki network has helped support the IT team when speaking with management as they continue to bring in new technologies to support the business and capture more data, ultimately, gaining more buy-in from management.

“The devices are of a high quality and the mobile app is a great feature to monitor the site remotely.”

– Bradley Brazil, ICT Coordinator

Recently, Brazil had to install an additional MX unit in Melbourne. The device was pre-configured so when it was plugged in, all of the configurations were automatically downloaded from the cloud and the appliance was running within minutes. “The implementation of the MX device was very easy,” added Brazil.

Back at the brewery, a guest network was created with traffic shaping and bandwidth shaping rules in place as public brewery tours are led every day. Recently, someone on-site plugged in a home WiFi unit to test a homebrew kit. Brazil quickly spotted this and had the staff member remove the WiFi unit. He provided a separate SSID in the Meraki dashboard instead. This simple fix took under a minute to complete in the dashboard and Brazil was able to remove the offending device.

Today, employees at Coopers are given tablets rather than laptops and staff members can now move and stay connected wherever they need to go around the entire brewery. Following the Meraki AP and security appliance deployment, Brazil is assessing Meraki Systems Manager, the Cisco Enterprise Mobility Management solution, to more effectively manage the Surface Pros and have control over applications, user profile rules, geofencing, and more. While that’s in process, the Meraki dashboard continues to ensure that the Coopers team is able to reach production schedules, deliver beer to distributors on time, and keep Australian watering holes full of its delicious ales.