

# Winning at the Oval



The south gate of the iconic Adelaide Oval

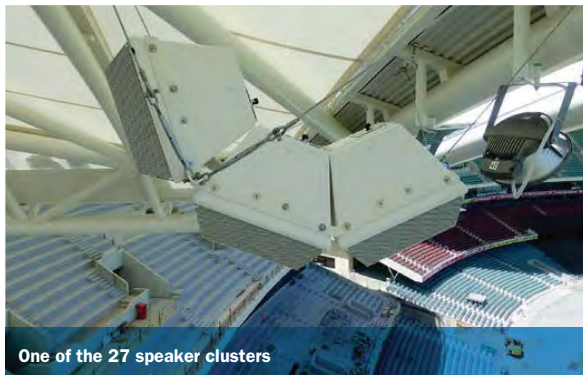
With a history stretching back to 1871 and high expectations, the recent retrofit of the Adelaide Oval presented a big challenge for The PA People

## THE ADELAIDE OVAL, OPENED IN

1871 under the stewardship of the South Australian Cricket Association, is one of Australia's most-loved sporting grounds. Whether hosting a test match or an AFL game, the stadium has long been a favourite for teams and fans alike. Its recently completed renovation has not only changed the look of the ground dramatically, but has also seen it fitted out with technology unimaginable to its founders. Three huge LED screens, digital signage around the perimeter and a converged fibre network serving all A/V requirements have been incorporated into the new facilities.

The task of installing and commissioning the main bowl PA system fell to The PA People. Designed by Texas based consultancy WJHW, the system had to provide comprehensive coverage whilst remaining unobtrusive. Brett Steele, manager - installed systems at The PA People, inherited the completed design approximately one year ago, eventually signing off on the full system prior to its first public use – a local Australian Football League game in March 2014.

Nor was it a small challenge. The PA People remit included the supply and installation of all main FOH



One of the 27 speaker clusters

clusters, fill speakers, gate speakers, amplifiers and processing. The new arcs of the southern, eastern and western stands roofs are home to 27 separate clusters of EAW QX 500 loudspeakers between them, supplemented by over 230 JBL AWC82 100W line loudspeakers as in-fill around the ground. Originally, another in-fill solution was specified, but the current design was chosen instead, saving the project a considerable part of its budget.

In addition a number of specialised loudspeakers have been installed in key positions. JBL CBT Series column speakers are positioned outside of the south and east gates for crowd address. The north gate is covered

with EAW UB12 series speakers. The northern end of the ground, which houses the historic wooden cricket scoreboard, a grassed area and an LED screen, is covered by JBL AE Series speakers mounted on a light tower, under a camera deck, on the new LED screen and inside the heritage-listed scoreboard itself. 'We had to get special permission to install that one,' explains Mr Steele. 'You can't see it, which was our aim.'

Linking all the audio, video and data elements is a fully converged network, distributed via fibre-optic cable through Cisco enterprise switches. Installed as part of the base build contract, the network enabled The PA People to distribute all audio via Dante and QSC's Q-Sys platform. A Yamaha CL5 digital mixer sits in the southern stand control room, linked to a combination Rio3224-D and Rio1608-D I/O boxes located throughout the ground, some installed as part of the system and some brought in by local production. 'There are six Rios around the venue,' continues Mr Steele, 'including positions in the control room, in the basement for linking to the IPTV

system, and in strategic places at ground level for pick-ups'.

Katherine Connelly, in-house audio mixer for production company Kojo, finds the flexibility of the Dante system perfect for game-day operations. 'It definitely gives you more opportunities to patch and route around the stadium,' she explains. 'For example, sometimes our host commentator won't be in the same room as us, so digital patching makes it much easier to get audio to and from him.'

At the system's heart, meanwhile, is a Q-Sys Core 4000, handling all system processing and routing to QSC power amplifiers across seven amp rooms. All main signal distribution is via the Q-Sys protocol. 'There are two amp rooms in each of the main stands, and one in the north,' clarifies Mr Steele. 'This is all running on the converged network along with the digital signage, video and IT.' Assisting The PA People with Q-Sys design and commissioning was Ewan McDonald, Q-Sys system sales specialist with local QSC distributor Technical Audio Group. 'Ewan helped with programming from the start,' confirms Mr Steele, 'and he did it very well'.

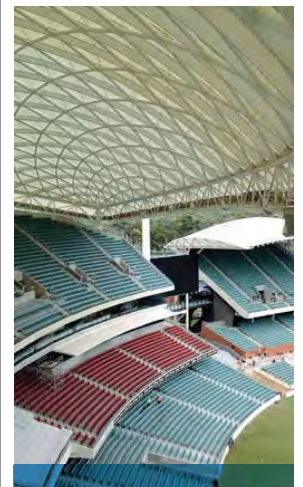
Additional Q-Sys IO 22 breakout boxes are located in the function spaces that are served by A/V contractor Central AV. 'We send them an audio feed of the bowl and a relay contact from the fire system that shuts their local PA systems down in case of emergency,' Mr Steele explains.

Other items integrated into the system include a Listen Technologies 150MHz hearing assistance system, four channels of Shure ULD-D radio microphones and Shure IEMs.

Phase one of the Adelaide Oval renovation project saw two thirds of the system up and running for the Ashes, with March 27th as the completion date for the balance. 'The PA People's long-time associate, Brian Chilcott, was part of our commissioning team and he assisted with tuning,' notes Mr Steele. 'Brian is very much a part of our stadium team.'

The completed project is described by PA People managing director Chris Dodds as 'an excellent project for South Australia's premier sporting venue, the iconic Adelaide Oval. We are proud to have been involved.' With technical systems now in place that weren't even dreamed of when the original Oval was constructed, a new era of the venue's long history is beginning.

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EAW QX 500 speakers cover the stands



The Oval as seen from above