

**All Aboard:** The Barangaroo Ferry Wharf required the decades of experience of The P.A. People in designing hearing loops to achieve an outstanding result. (Image: Transport for NSW)



## CASE STUDY: BARANGAROO FERRY WHARF

Sydney's new transport hub, the Barangaroo Ferry Wharf, opened in June 2017. The two wharves are 48m long and 23m wide and can berth eight ferries at full capacity. The P.A. People worked closely with builder McConnell Dowell to install a technically innovative, large-scale induction loop system that covers 25m by 18m of the structure, as well as individual loops that cover Help and Information points.

"The P.A. People actually installed two induction loops that overlap to cover dead spots," explained David Duong, Project Engineer at McConnell Dowell. "It was a complex installation on top of metal pontoons, fabricated from steel, which usually causes problems with induction loops."

"It's an elaborate induction loop," confirmed Ross Ford, Project Manager for The P.A. People. "Installing an AFIL (Audio Frequency Induction Loop) on steel has been considered to be detrimental to performance, but we have found that if you properly install, paying attention to correct insulation, it is working extremely well."

"The practical nature of The P.A. People's understanding was beneficial to us as a builder, as they knew the issues that can arise in the building phase. That allowed us to fix those issues before they occurred, meaning that the installation went very smoothly," said David Duong. The P.A. People was been delivering hearing augmentation solutions for well over 20 years. The company is a leader in the design and delivery of these systems. They were responsible for many of the Sydney Olympic Games venues in 2000, and have since installed solutions in The Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Town Hall and Sydney Airport.

The P.A. People: (02) 8755 8700 or [www.papeople.com.au](http://www.papeople.com.au)

## Hearing Augmentation: Kept in the Loop

Hearing aids are undoubtedly getting better, nevertheless a hearing assist system helps ensure those with hearing difficulties are afforded every opportunity to enjoy audio amplified through an installed PA. Installing a hearing augmentation system into your venue is not only the right thing to do but it's quite often legally mandated. Think of it as the equivalent of a wheelchair ramp for your hearing impaired patrons.

### THE TECHNOLOGIES

The best known and most established hearing augmentation platform is the 'hearing loop' or Audio Frequency Induction Loop (AFIL). It's ideal for common areas such as train stations, theatres, lecture halls, foyers, houses of worship and others. For those with a T switch on their hearing aids it provides an independent way to have the amplified audio piped directly to their ears, without any need for staff intervention or additional hardware. The technology works via a loop of wire in the venue that carries the audio, and

if you're situated within that loop you're covered. Unfortunately construction steel and other metal elements impact the efficiency of a hearing loop. So it's not enough to install the loop, ensure you use experts to best negotiate the technical aspects of the installation and get the most from the loop.

Other emerging technologies can be useful when a hearing loop is impractical or they can be better for more specialised applications.

WiFi hearing augmentation systems (where you can use a device to log into the audio service) are ideal for interpretation services, audio tours and the like but are no substitute for a properly installed hearing loop.

FM solutions can be effective, but require the venue to maintain a quantity of beltpack receivers — serviced and powered up. Infrared is another excellent alternative. Given it works by being in the line of sight of the transmitter it provides superior security (it's more difficult to eavesdrop than with a hearing loop), but again requires additional hardware. [venue](http://venue.com.au)