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Hearing Augmentation Solutions … Balancing Social Obligation and Compliance

Hearing Augmentation Systems are a legal requirement in many public spaces as defined in the Building Code of Australia. They are also a vital public service.

The purpose of these systems is to assist those with hearing difficulties to both comprehend and enjoy material that is being amplified through an installed PA system, and their provision is mandatory in many public spaces, including educational institutions, places of business, auditoria, rooms used for legal proceedings and some reception areas.

The P.A. People has been delivering hearing augmentation solutions for well over 20 years. The company has been and continues to be a leader in the design and delivery of these systems. Prior to Sydney's iconic Olympic Games in the year 2000, they installed hearing augmentation systems in many of the new venues that were constructed – including the Olympic Stadium. While not as 'visible' or well known, they also provided coverage of Yulang – a 5,000sqm outdoor paved space around the Sydney Olympic Park railway station. Since that time, The P.A. People have installed solutions in The Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Town Hall and Sydney Airport – just a few venues that have benefited from our understanding of and expertise in hearing augmentation.

Australian Standards: AS60118.4 and AS1428.5

The P.A. People will design a system that is appropriate to your venue or precinct needs and meets the required Standards. All systems designed and installed by them are custom engineered solutions that draw on extensive experience working with builders, engineering consultants, suppliers, clients and end-users.

Case Studies

The P.A. People deployments have included fit-for-purpose solutions in airports, train stations, ferry terminals, theatres, churches, civic buildings and corporate offices. The following represent some diverse applications – and their experience beyond these extends to a wide range of locations and venue types.

Yulang, Olympic Park

Well before the crowds arrived for the Sydney 2000 Olympics, The P.A. People were installing hearing augmentation systems throughout the new venues built for the Games, including the Olympic Stadium itself.

Not as obvious though is the vast 70 metre by 70 metre induction loop system The P.A. People installed under Yulang, the 5,000 square metre outdoor paved space around the Sydney Olympic Park Railway Station. Working with the paving crew, The P.A. People laid kilometres of copper wiring under the pavers to complement the PA system, ensuring all visitors to the existing precinct could clearly hear paging and announcements throughout the vast space.

Centennial Hall, Sydney Town Hall

Sydney's heritage-listed Town Hall was the largest municipal hall in the world when it opened in 1889. Its red cedar galleries, marble columns, stained glass windows and massive pipe organ are national treasures. Sensitive to the aesthetic and historical importance of the building, The P.A. People installed an induction loop under the Centennial Hall floorboards. A challenge for the installation was the presence one storey down of the Lower Town Hall, a multipurpose space often used for concerts and community events. This meant that the Centennial Hall induction loop needed to be considered within the design, to minimise audibility of the loop in the lower hall.

Barangaroo Ferry Wharf

Sydney's new transport hub, the Barangaroo Ferry Wharf, opened in June 2017. The two wharves are 48 metres long and 23 metres 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 25 metres by 18 metres 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 P.A. People were very accommodating," commented David Duong. "They provided lots of information and were happy to share their knowledge. The practical nature of their 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."

Go to www.papeople.com.au for more information.