

# CASE STUDIES

## Fresh Air Audio — AV.technology

**Pereira Projects designs a residential-inspired audio system for the outdoor spaces of Newcastle's impressive City Administration Centre.**



Coming from a building with relatively no AV, it was clear any update to AV would be a dramatic change for the City of Newcastle. The multi-storey City Administration Centre on Stewart St houses much more than office spaces, with a large interactive digital library, automation-driven council chambers, collaboration-friendly workspaces, a hireable podcast studio, and a large staff kitchen with adjoining outdoor eating area.

AV consultants Pereira Projects came onboard to help add flesh to the bones of the vision by investigating the specific needs of the building's various spaces. One of these tasks was to create the right atmosphere in the outdoor areas.

### RAIN, HAIL OR SHINE

On the sixth floor, a large outdoor terrace is often used by staff to have lunch, sit and relax between tasks, or catch up with a colleague. The architects designed this terrace to have a fresh and airy feel with several planter boxes placed near benched seating with little disruption to natural light.

The audio requirement in this area was not only for background music. People can gather on the terrace to watch events or attend key announcements or staff addresses. So the sound system needed more capacity than a basic BGM fitout.

Jack Wilson of Pereira Projects ran point on the City of Newcastle project. As far as system design went, the outdoor spaces presented a clean slate.

"The outdoor areas were a late addition to the project and there was no design for it," says Jack Wilson. "The basic desire was to have nice background music that was installed discreetly and not in your face."

Another consideration was the warm Newcastle climate and how close the council building is to the sea. "We flagged straight away that the Level

6 rooftop environment meant dealing with close proximity to the sea, and belting hot days," Jack Wilson observed. "IP-rated equipment was necessary, but environmentally, we didn't want to just chuck big standard IP67-rated boxes on the ceiling."

So the challenge was to specify an outdoor audio system that had more hi-fi grunt than any off-the-shelf option; could withstand harsh environmental conditions; and would be mostly unseen.

### IN THE BACKYARD

Pondering a solution caused Jack Wilson to draw on his first love of residential AV. "From my days in residential AV, I'm more than familiar with Amber Technology's offerings, specifically with Sonance systems. I had used sub satellites in people's pool gardens before and I thought the outdoor spaces in this project presented an opportunity to do something a bit more creative."

Jack drew up a system using the Sonance Landscape Series product which consists of eight six-inch satellite speakers and a 12-inch subwoofer. Driving the speakers are QSC amps run by a Q-Sys Core 110f processor.

"I ran the basic design past the guys at Amber and Sonance who confirmed it would give good coverage for a well rounded sound."

The terrace has a raised floor which handily solved cabling issues. Speaker wires were pre-laid in conduits which terminated at various planter box locations across the terrace where a Sonance satellite speaker is covertly positioned to poke through the plants. Subwoofers were hidden in voids built into the planter boxes.

The hardy build quality of the Sonance loudspeakers ended up as a crucial attribute. Jack explains: "The first question about planter-box speakers, is how will they cope with regular watering of the plants! Luckily, the Sonance speakers use marine grade components and are designed to work in the harshest elements."

City of Newcastle staff have appreciated the contribution the Sonance system makes to the overall ambience of the Level 6 terrace area. Coverage is smooth while the speakers remain aesthetically unobtrusive.

"The results were really good," says Jack. "It's a nice spot that takes people away from the grind of the office. There are no SPL hotspots when people are milling about having lunch or a chat; you get that full, warm sound throughout."

City of Newcastle Project Manager, Rob Dudgeon, agrees: "Through their experience and industry knowledge, Pereira Projects enhanced the AV design process for City of Newcastle with superior results."

Sonance: [sonance.com](http://sonance.com)

Pereira Projects: [pereiraprojects.com.au](http://pereiraprojects.com.au)

Amber Technology: [ambertech.com.au](http://ambertech.com.au)

