Helping to accommodate “our” ABC

N HP worked with many different engineers and project managers to ensure the success of the ABC Accommodation project, writes NHP’s Andrew Bau.

In 2002, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) celebrated its 70th Anniversary as the country’s national broadcaster. In the time since it first commenced services, the organisations evolution from radio to television broadcasting—and more recently to digital transmissions and online services—has led to increasing demands for infrastructure. The latest facility development has involved the relocation of the TV transmission and production studios in Sydney’s Northern Suburbs to the ABC’s Ultimo Head Office in Sydney’s CBD. To enable the relocation to take place, the ABC head office required upgrades and extensions to the existing premises with an additional building to house the new radio and television production studio and transmission facilities.

The prime building contractor, Leighton Contractors as a client, the ABC, commissioned Bassett Consulting Engineers to design and co-ordinate the electrical services involved with the project. Bassett’s engineer, Dennis Grech held the engineering responsibility of integrating the different services and packages to ultimately provide a total package to the ABC. Later, Stowe Australia in careful consultation with Bassett Engineering managed the sub-contractors that supplied the services packages that included the generators, building management system, light and power switchboards, SCADA and upgrade service to the existing electrical switchgear. NHP products were utilised in all aspects of the project and supplied through each of the different contractors involved with the project.

Light and Power

Stowe Australia, the successful electrical contractor was responsible for the project methodology, procuring and installation of the specified works as documented by the consultant. Stowe’s Project Manager, Mick Pawelko awarded the light and power contract to K.E. Brown Switchboard Manufactures, being for the supply of four new main switchboards and two temporary mainboards. Terasaki AT Series Air Circuit Breakers where used for the purpose of being interchangeable between the temporary and new main boards.

Monitoring function and display for controlling the lighting in each studio. Hitachi EH-MICRO PLC, ESA VT565 HMI, Nemo 96 Multi-function meters and Wago I/O were designed to provide real-time information and power levels that would alert the technicians if levels they were encroaching high set-points, thus enabling them to avert a trip situation.

Main Switchboard Upgrade

With the age of the Head Office approaching 12 years, concerns where raised about the reliability of the existing switchgear. However, rather than to replace the whole switchboard and disrupt the operation with a number of lengthy and inconvenient shutdowns, an upgrade plan was decided for the switchgear as the optimal path to improve the reliability and confidence of the product.

NHP introduced an A-Force Switchboard retrofit solution for the dating NAB1 air circuit breakers. The concept is to remove and replace the existing unit with an A-Force retro-fit kit that incorporates an Terasaki AR air circuit breaker that requires no modification to the switchboard. A total of six circuit breakers were replaced over three shutdowns. These where installed within an hour, tested and back up and running in a fraction of the time, compared to switchboard decommissioning and replacement.

Working Relationships

NHP worked hand in hand at all levels to help and support our valued clients involved in the ABC Accommodation Project. Early input by NHP’s Business Development Team assisted the process in conceptualising applications from a product perspective for the ABC, Leighton Contractors, Bassett Consulting Engineers and Stowe Australia. Understanding this allowed a hands-on approach that enhanced the general support offered to K.E. Brown Switchboard Manufacturing, Reliec Switchboards, Genpower/Asca and A-Force Switchboards before the commencement of detailed design and orders placed.

NHP is proud to be involved the design, construction and supply of products to the ABC Accommodation Centre at Harris St, Ultimo.

Andrew Bau