



HUMAN FACTORS & ERGONOMICS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Dear Members

A number of important decisions were made at the meeting of the Board on August 22.

The decisions included:

Adoption of a new strategic plan for 2007-2011

The plan is available for your viewing from the member downloads section of the website (log in, and choose the appropriate member item on the right of the page), but in brief, the strategies to be employed to meet the aims of the society are:

- (1) Professional Development - form a national professional development committee and fund a professional development coordinator to assist the committee.
- (2) Mentoring - develop and implement a mentoring program.
- (3) SIGs - seek and facilitate the formation of new SIGs.
- (4) External alliances - seek and facilitate alliances with other relevant associations.
- (5) Promotion - obtain professional advice and support for the development and implementation of a marketing plan.

Formation of a National Professional Development committee and engage a National Professional Development Officer

The details of this strategy are also available from the member downloads section of the website. Expressions of interest in the PD officer role have now closed and a selection process is underway.

To put constitutional changes to the Membership which would facilitate the formation of new special interest groups

This will be done by postal vote. Current Members, Professional Members, Fellows, and Retired Members will soon be receiving notice of the proposed changes and they will soon be available on the website.

To engage an ex- HFESA Member, now a marketing professional, to conduct a workshop with the Board at its next face-to-face meeting to define our objectives for marketing.

This action is a necessary step, and will make good use of the information gathered by Verna and Andrea as part of the strategic planning process.

To make a \$200 bursary available to all full-time students attending the 2007 annual conference who are current members, or apply to join the society.

The Board is conscious that the cost of the annual conference creates difficulties for full-time students. Consequently, full-time students who are currently members of the HFESA, or apply to join the HFESA within two weeks of the conference will be eligible to receive a \$200 bursary. Please make this opportunity known to students you come into contact with.

To begin preparations to bid for the IEA congress in 2015

The Board, through Christine Waring, will commence planning for a bid to hold the 2015 IEA congress in Melbourne. The bid will be prepared with the assistance of the Melbourne Convention Centre.

President's Nominations for the 2009-2010 Executive

My nominations for executive positions for 2009-2010 will be:

President - Christine Waring (VIC)
General Secretary - Michelle Koripas (QLD)
Treasurer - Todd Bentley (VIC)

The process for choosing the next executive is described in section 6.3.9 of the constitution, viz:

6.3.9 - Any Member of the Society may propose to the Society for election names of Members qualified for the Positions of President, General Secretary and Treasurer. Each such nomination shall be proposed and seconded by two Members in writing, shall include the written consent of the nominee and must be in the hands of the General secretary at least 6 weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting. The President, acting on the advice of the Board, may also nominate appropriate Members for election. Each nominee must provide a written supporting statement no longer than 500 words at the time of the nomination for distribution to members. The President's nominees shall be deemed to be elected if no nominations are received from Members. Otherwise elections shall be by ballot for each position, declared at the Annual General Meeting.

Consequently, any other nominations, including supporting statements, should be communicated to the General Secretary (generalsecretary@ergonomics.org.au) on or before the 12/10/07.

Finally, my thanks go everyone who contributed to the strategic planning process, especially the previous executive; Christine Waring, who chaired the strategic planning sub-committee; Verna Blewett & Andrea Shaw; and all participants in focus groups and the Board workshop. There is a lot of work to do to bring these strategies to fruition and I look forward with optimism to co-operation and assistance from all members.

Yours sincerely

Robin Burgess-Limerick PhD CPE
President HFESA 2007-2008

MEMBER PROFILES

Robin Burgess-Limerick President

Robin Burgess-Limerick PhD CPE holds a fractional appointment as Associate Professor in the School of Human Movement Studies, The University of Queensland, where he co-ordinates postgraduate programs in ergonomics. Robin's research interests are eclectic, ranging from field investigations of participative ergonomics for manual tasks injury prevention and injury risks associated with underground coal mining equipment, to laboratory investigations of office ergonomics topics and the use of virtual environments to assess issues of equipment control design. Robin has received a number of national and international awards for research, and published more than 40 papers in refereed journals. Robin also provides ergonomics and evaluation



consultancy services to a diverse range of private and public sector organisations.

Margaret Cook CPE National Treasurer

Past

I started life in New Zealand, but saw the light as an 18 month old and moved to the UK. Eventually got it right at the age of 4 yrs and moved to sunny North Queensland. Did all my school in Townsville, but used university study as an excuse to leave home and experience an independent life. Started studying architecture and after two years changed to occupational therapy – although to the outsider they seem to be disciplines that are poles apart, they both require creative thinking and a holistic approach. Graduated as an occupational therapist, but realised quickly that I would prefer to prevent injuries rather than patch them up. So undertook a Graduate



Margaret & daughter, Emily

Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety, followed by a Masters thesis on home-based work, eventually completed a PhD exploring carpal tunnel syndrome in the red meat industry. I have worked in a variety of roles in industry, academia and consulting. I have been a member of HFESA since 1991, and this is my second term as National Treasurer, having first had the job in 2000/02.

Current

I currently hold down two academic positions, one at the University of Queensland with the Masters of Ergonomics program, and one at

Queensland University of Technology with the Graduate Diploma in OHS. I also manage an 11 year old “dancing” daughter, who keeps me out of mischief in my spare time, plus there is also a very helpful husband in the equation.

Future

In the short term I am looking forward to the Perth conference, WA being the only state/territory I haven't been to before. In the longer term I am looking forward to the HFESA bid for an IEA Congress, and would love to see all our international friends visit us here.

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## **Man Yi (Justine) Chim**

### **Combining Expertise in Human Resources Management with Ergonomics and OHS Management:**

What did I do in the past three years and three months? I had a wonderful time studying and working in Australia and have just returned to my home country - Hong Kong. I am a Hong Kong Chinese and graduated with first-class honours in Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) with a major in Human Resources Management, at Hong Kong Baptist University.

After graduation, I worked as a human resources executive in Hong Kong and China for about six years. My interest is to setup/review the human resources (HR) departments and systems for improving the HR management efficiency. I had successfully setup and reviewed the HR departments for eight local and multinational corporations in Asia and completed about 20 human resources projects. One of the biggest assignments was to setup the human resources department, during the three years pre-operating stage, for a new container terminal in Hong Kong. It was my last job before going to Australia.



Beautiful Hong Kong night scene

Due to using computer for long hours, I suffered from De Quervain disease. Hong Kong only has limited information about the treatment of this disease and unwittingly, I found and read a book concerning ergonomics, gaining a strong interest in studying ergonomics as a result. Eventually, I went on to study a Master of Ergonomics at the University of Queensland in 2004 rejecting an offer of studying for my MBA at a well-known university in the United States. When I decided to study ergonomics, none of my friends and family members knew “what ergonomics is”! However, it did not hamper my decision to study ergonomics.

Ergonomics is a very new topic in Hong Kong and if we want to apply ergonomics knowledge in Hong Kong, it needs to combine with other relevant knowledge such as Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Management. After consultation with my ergonomics professor, I decided to study the Postgraduate Diploma in OHS Management program at the University of Adelaide. Within two years, in 2005, I completed the Master of Ergonomics and a Postgraduate Diploma in OHS Management. I am delighted to be the first Hong Kong graduate from the University of Queensland’s Master of Ergonomics program. In addition, I was awarded the Most Outstanding OHS Graduate Student Medal - South Australian Division by the Safety Institute of Australia.

The learning experience in Australia opened up many career opportunities and widened my management knowledge and skills at another level. I learned the theoretical knowledge and was also able to acquire practical experience in the class and project assignments as well. One of the most memorable experiences was to deliver a presentation and publish one of my academic projects at the HFESA annual conference last year. The study was conducted in a major South Australian hospital. The physical demands, physiological responses and perceived workload were analysed to identify the risk factors arising from six manual tasks performed by Kitchen Hands. This was a valuable experience to further build up my strong interest and pursuit in the ergonomics profession.

My first ergonomics work experience was working for the Arnott’s Biscuits in Adelaide for a manual handling risk management project. After finishing the first year of the Master of Ergonomics program, I moved to Adelaide to study OHS Management. It was not a plan, but I lived on the opposite side of the road of the Arnott’s Biscuits Marleston factory. The smell of biscuits baking was irresistible and it woke me up every morning. What a coincidence that Arnott’s Biscuits was looking for a candidate for undertaking a manual handling risk management project. I got the job in Arnott’s and this job opportunity not only enhanced my manual handling risk management skills, but also developed my confidence to work in an overseas country. In the same year, I was employed by the South Australian WorkCover Corporation as OHS Project Officer.

After I graduated from the ergonomics and OHS studies, my first full time job was employment as an OHS and HR Manager for a fibre-glass piping manufacturing company, Fibrelogic Pipe Systems, in Lonsdale, South Australia. I led the OHS and HR team on developing, implementing, monitoring and continually improving the OHS and HR systems for a fast growing organisation in a brand new factory. It was a very challenging role for a new ergonomics and OHS graduate, especially as I was the youngest and only female manager in the management team. I enjoyed the time working with management as well as the OHS committee. We had the same ambition to create a safe and healthy working environment. It was this warm and harmonious working environment which I missed the most.



The ergonomics employment market is yet to be developed in Hong Kong although the manual handling type injury, i.e. injured whilst lifting or carrying, has been recorded the highest injury category in all industrial undertakings. Since returning to my home country, I have the ambition to promote ergonomics applications in Hong Kong and hope to reduce the work related musculoskeletal disorders injury, promote the workers' comfort and assist in a company's productivity advancement.

I have been exploring every avenue to pursue my interest and ambition in the ergonomics profession. Recently, the Australian Consulate-General in Hong Kong profiled me as an interesting Australian alumni graduate through radio and press coverage. I received a valuable chance to promote ergonomics to the community. I have many friends who told me that they knew what I was doing in Australia just through the media interviews. I am very pleased to have received the support from both my family and friends.

I have recently registered a website ( [www.my-ergonomics.com](http://www.my-ergonomics.com)) and plan to use it to promote ergonomics. I will love continuing my career in ergonomics, OHS and HR management.

Justine Chim from Hong Kong ( [justinechim@my-ergonomics.com](mailto:justinechim@my-ergonomics.com))

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Taissa Polak- Holiday

Thinking back to my holiday now, it's almost hard to believe that my overseas trip was a month in duration. It felt like it was only a week! Not to mention that fact that I almost needed a holiday to recover from this holiday....

The trip included going to Poland (to attend a family wedding) followed by a road trip of the North East, then to New York and a few days of (much needed) recovery in Hawaii on the way home. I would have to say that the highlights of the trip were the food, history and architecture.



Firstly the food, there was so much of it. Being in Poland and visiting relatives and attending the 3 day wedding meant that my days mainly consisted of eating – wonderful hearty food like bigos (cabbage), potatoes (mashed, boiled, fried, roasted you name it!), sausages (including the metre long sausage I attacked –along with others- on a rainy afternoon), schnitzel.....not to mention the pickled herrings, smoked trout and marinated mushrooms. I have now learnt the art of making people think you are eating non stop (essential to keep your relatives happy); Have food on your fork, food on your plate and accept anything that is offered to you.

New York was completely different but I still managed to fill it with food - although this time it was to ensure that we tried all of the different foods that were on offer: hot dogs, pretzels, bagels, ribs, pizza.....and of course the 'New York Cheesecake'

I definitely walked off the saturated fats and oils with the amount of walking I did. And that brings me to the other major highlights of the trip: The History and Architecture. And this was the other major difference between Poland and New York. In Poland I visited the medieval towns of Krakow (where my family lives), Torun and Malbork with their beautiful buildings, churches and town squares and the site of the largest medieval battle in 1410 at Grunwald. The castle at Malbork was amazing- mainly for the incredible capability of the designers. A central heating system was designed and implemented back in the 1300's and worked incredibly effectively bringing the indoor temperature from minus 18 to 20 degrees! I have to say, the toilets were not nearly as sophisticated. They consisted of a wooden box with a hole suspended over a 40-metre drop to the moat below!



New York from the top of the Empire State Building was breathtaking - dense skyscrapers almost as far as the eye can see. And such a contrast to Poland with the high-tech, light filled signs and centres. Central Park was a wonderful relief from the hustle and bustle, there were places where you could not hear or see the city and could feel like you were a million miles away. I couldn't believe it when I saw a statue of a Polish King in Central Park to commemorate the victory at the battle of Grunwald. What a segue!



AUSTRALIAN SAFETY & COMPENSATION COUNCIL

The ASCC has issued a media release regarding the declaration of the National Standard for Manual Tasks (2007) and the National Code of Practice for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders Caused by Performing Manual Tasks at Work (2007).

The aim of the revised standard and code or practice is to prevent injuries caused by performing manual tasks at work by identifying and managing risks.

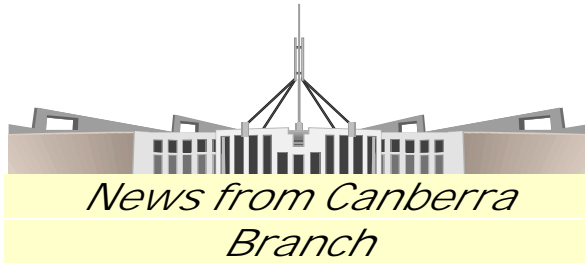
[View the National Standard and Code of Practice](#)

(<http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/HealthSafety/HazardsSafetyIssues/ManualTasks/>)

[View the Media Release](#)

(<http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/NewsEvents/MediaReleases/>)

NEWS FROM STATE BRANCHES



The ACT Branch of the HFESA is preparing two Professional Development sessions in the coming months.

We will be presenting an informal Scientific Meeting to review and discuss experiences in the use of Musculoskeletal risk assessment tools on 18 October – see below for further information.

We are also organising a seminar on Mental Workloads for November.

Information regarding the seminars will be sent to all members.

Margaret Hay
Branch Chair

Notice of Seminar

PHYSICAL WORKLOAD RISK MEASUREMENT TOOLS - REBA-RULA

Join us with the one of the creators of REBA and RULA, **Dr Lynn McAtamney** and an expert panel to learn how they are used and to have some hands on practice.

Who should come? Anyone wanting to know how to use these tools to measure manual workloads:

- Ergonomics and Human Factors practitioners
- Health Professionals
- OHS Professionals
- Other colleagues in the Canberra region are welcome.

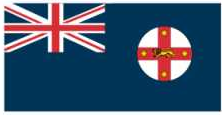
Date: Thursday October 18th 2007

Venue: Conference room, CSIRO, Limestone Avenue, ACT

Time: 4.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Cost: \$9.90 *includes light refreshments*

Please RSVP by contacting Wendy Elford at info@ergodesign.com.au by the 15th October 2007.



News from the NSW (Sydney) Branch

Announcing the new Branch team for 2007 - 2008:

Chair: Louise Whitby
Secretary: Fiona Weigall
Treasurer: Vacant
Members: Jenny Long [who continues as Board Rep]
Christine Aickin
Rebecca Mitchell
Max Hely
David Brown
Sharonne Phillips
Jonathan Talbot
Claire Folland
Airdrie Long, and
Mahinda Seneviratne

This is a fantastic group, many of whom I have worked with at Branch, Federal and also professionally, and I look forward to the year ahead.

A big "thank you" to Jenny Long for her leadership over the last four years. Also, thanks to Sharonne Phillips and Veronica Goodwin for their work as secretary and treasurer, respectively. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to keep a Branch ticking along and I think it is important to acknowledge this effort with heartfelt thanks.

At our next committee meeting on 3 October we will be planning the calendar for 2008. So, if you have any ideas about the sorts of PD sessions you would like, or know of someone who may be interested in speaking to our group, please contact me before then.

Looking forward to working with you over the next year, regards

Louise Whitby
Chair, NSW Branch HFESA

Observational Tools Workshop a Hit in NSW

The HFESA (NSW) Branch hosted a workshop on the 3rd August 2007: Assessing the Risks of Musculoskeletal Disorders in Manual Tasks. Two observational tools were presented: ManTRA by Associate Professor Robin Burgess-Limerick (University of Queensland) and the Quick Exposure Check (QEC) by Alison Bell (University of Wollongong).

Interest in this workshop far exceeded our expectations and we sincerely apologise to any members who were unable to attend due to restrictions on numbers. Fortunately we were able to upgrade to a larger room to accommodate the sixty nine participants. The

workshop format was largely maintained with the help of Christine Aickin, Fiona Wiegall, Airdrie Long, Max Hely and Louise Whitby who acted as workshop assistants on the day.

Overall the feedback for the workshop was positive and some participants also took the opportunity to join the HFESA when submitting their registration for the workshop. We hope to present other tools in future professional development events.

Jennifer Long
Committee Member
HFESA (NSW)



News from Queensland Branch

“Ergonomics and Aquatic Environments” - 15 September 2007 Professional Development Activity

Gold Coast was the location for an exciting look at ergonomic issues that are found in aquatic environments. Speakers were Mitchell from Sea World and John from Surf Life Saving Queensland.

In the first session, we were shown just how difficult it can be to move a sea animal. Animals, especially injured ones in the wild, are cautious of people. For starters, English is not an animal's native language, which hampers efforts to communicate. Also, most animals become agitated by machine noise, such as, a crane to lift a dolphin from an enclosure, and may unintentionally sustain injuries trying to escape. Such an animal will pose extra risk to staff attempting to access the animal (think powerful whipping tails and gnarly teeth). Furthermore, animals in the wild seldom visit a local boat ramp if in trouble. All too frequently, an injured animal will be found amongst a rocky headland or on a beach as far from the rescue vehicles as physically possible. For this last situation, we were shown a specially built stretcher used to lift and carry injured dolphins. Holes are cut along the stretcher to accommodate a dolphin's flippers, while still providing somewhere for the rescue team to carry the stretcher.

Fortunately, things are different inside the park. Over the years, Sea World's staff have trained animals to assist staff. Resident dolphins are trained to roll onto their back and position their body such that a vet or staff member can easily access their underbelly or mouth. Also, picture a seal lifting it flipper to permit blood extraction. The basis of such wonderfully cooperative behaviour is the trust between the animals and staff. However, not all cute and cuddly animals are cute and cuddly. A good example is a polar bear, who given half a chance, would rather eat the staff than be poked by them. Understandably, polar bears are sedated before any staff enter this enclosure.

As 2007 is the year of the Surf Life Saving organisation in Australia, our second speaker talked about the problems along Queensland beaches. The talk focused on the inflatable rubber boats (IRB) that are used in about 25% of surf rescues. It uncovered some of the injuries sustained by volunteers while out in the surf. Most injuries are sprains and strains. One risk that led to some of these was the use of restraining straps around either someone's ankle or wrist. Imagine the IRB suddenly lurching one way while a volunteer is thrown another way. In fact a current issue is the design of the two foot straps inside the IRB. Any one looking for a working holiday may wish to consider this problem. Also, members will find John's presentation loaded on the HFESA website soon.

After the activity, all the attendees sat under the vine covered pergola, enjoyed Gold Coast's famous weather, ate lunch while meeting and talking to one another. Ergonomic issues do exist in our aquatic environments. Some have been managed well (such as non-slip shoes) while others stirred up queries and concerns (such as larrikinism while launching an IRB off the back of a big wave). One thing became clear from this activity – ergonomics and aquatic environments have many opportunities for budding researchers and problem solvers. The Queensland Branch committee would like to extend our thanks to the School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science at Griffith University for their support.

Until next time

Andrew Petersen, Qld Branch Committee

News from SA Branch

**Congratulations to the new
Branch executive:**

Chair: Saody Lee
Secretary: Sara Warren,
assisted by
Jennie Window
Treasurer: Andrew Muriti

A huge "thank you" to Valerie O'Keeffe, Sara Warren and the previous committee for their hard work over the last twelve months

The visual demands of screen based work – from the control panel to the cockpit

prepared by Saody Lee and Jennie Window



Optometrist, Neil Murray was the presenter for the SA Branch personal development session.

He is interested and has expertise in optometry in aviation. Neil is also actively involved with Sports Medicine SA, and is a member of the Injury Surveillance Committee.

Neil talked about the ergonomic and human factors aspects of screen based work, comparing Cathode Ray Tubes CRT (deep screens) with Liquid Crystal Displays LCD (Flat screens). *Most of us can relate to computer work stations where we have either the old style deep screen or the new style flat screen. Of course in the case of cockpits and many other types of control panels, they do not appear as the computer VDU, but the underlying principles are still the same.*



Most people have some degree of inherent eye alignment problems or miss-alignment in the eyes. In addition to this, 1 in 12 males have a colour deficiency compared to 1 in 200 females (females pass on the gene though!). These factors generally affect recognition time by 83-90%. Colour palates can be used to correct this.

Did you know that Cathode Ray Tubes CRT (deep screens) generate heat which actually causes the room environment to heat up on average by 1 degree? The air-conditioning in the room tries to compensate and the greater airflow causes dry eyes. In addition to this, the screen's brightness balance with the periphery against the light of the screen has to be balance can influence mental fatigue. Neil Murray recommends that you adjust the screen brightness 3 to 4 times in the day eg. at mid-morning, lunch and afternoon breaks. Apparently, when the CRT is first switched on it takes 10 minutes to display consistent level of brightness.

Companies have generally moved from paper based tasks to screen based tasks. However, they did not take into account that vision on screen base task is at a higher demand level than paper. Instead of spending half a day at a time (eg. starting work to the lunch break) looking at the screen, it is better to spend 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. The more regular screen rest breaks are better.

The distance between the screen and the person reading it affects the clarity and focus of the screen information. It is more difficult to focus less than 40 cm (less than 60 cm as you get older). Females also have more problems due to hormone changes. The recommended typical reading distance from a screen display is 40 cm with 25 -30 degrees visual field. Outdoor recreation activities (without UV protection) will also, over time, effect vision.

A person's visual awareness relies on pattern recognition i.e. physical position, and tactile cues are connected to learn pattern panel. When using instrument display screens, people have a typical search pattern where they experience a reasonably constant source for performance although usually every 3rd time they perform major scan checks they will subconsciously perform a minor scan check.

Vision difficulty may result due to poorly adjusted screens or excessive viewing of screens without a break. Plus, musculoskeletal factors affect vision (and also posture). Neil Murray recommends that when doing screen based work you :

- look away from the screen every 10 minutes, to a far window, or far end of office.
- Allow slow adjustment and relaxation to occur before going back to the screen.
- Relax and obtain clear distance vision first. *Practice for 2-3 minutes at a time until behaviour and ability (to relax) is mastered. Flexibility in visual system is important.*
- Sit with your ankles in front of the knee - it aids in a more balance neck posture. *Sitting with the ankles behind the knees leads to tension on the back of the neck and occipital headaches.*

Not relaxing enough adds more strain from work load where the muscles and neurological efforts are multiplied. Symptoms often experienced are frontal headaches, (sometimes) temporal headaches, and/ or irritated eye surface.

When you go to the optometrist you will need to explain the proportion of time spent on screen base activities and the distance of the screen from your normal sitting posture. Neil claims that most people can't estimate distances accurately.

During the PD session, Neil also gave examples of how colour effects visual efficiency. For example, in some medical situations colour corrected fluorescent lights are used to accentuate skin colour (in the morgue / operating theatre). However it's inefficient and takes lots of emergency to work, generates lots of heat and costs lots of money to run. Consequently, they have to use it in very specific critical activities only.

MEETINGS

7 November 2007

The site visit to General Motors Holden (SA), scheduled for November has been postponed until 2008. The November meeting will now be a 2008 Annual Conference organising session. **SA Members please attend as your support and assistance would be very appreciated.**

5 December 2007

Christmas drinks and awards – venue to be decided

All meetings start at 5.30 pm for a brief update on committee matters with the speaker presenting from 6.15 to 7.30 pm. We would like the RSVPs to the host venue, please.

Sara Warren
Secretary, HFESA SA Branch



NEWS FROM THE VICTORIAN BRANCH

Victorian Branch 2007 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Victorian Branch AGM will be held at 6.30pm on 25 October 2007 at Fitzroy Victoria Bowling & Sports Club, 578 Brunswick Street, North Fitzroy, 3068.

Chatting, catching up with old friends and general laughter will be available with drinks at bar prices from 6.00 pm.

Long-standing and well-known member of the Victorian Branch, Mark Hennessy, has accepted

our invitation to be guest speaker. He will present, in his own insightful way, the general topic of the future of ergonomics and where he believes it's heading. Mark will include his reflections on the past to provide a colourful backdrop to his prognostications.

More detail will be provided to members by email shortly.

Safety in Action (SIA)

The Safety Institute of Australia (Victorian Branch) runs a yearly conference Safety In Action (SIA) in March. This conference is well attended and very successful. The Institute has invited the HFESA Victorian branch to join them in organising an ergonomics stream for the March 2008 conference.



Two members of the Victorian committee will work with the SIA

Steering Committee to invite speakers, chair the sessions and chase papers, etc.

A recent graduate from La Trobe University, Helen Tyler-Meers has been co-opted to the Victorian Branch committee. She was invited to speak to the committee earlier in the year about her experiences of mentoring by another professional association. The committee looks forward to her fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

WorkSafe Victoria

HFESA, **Victorian** Branch, together with a number of other professional associations, was invited to attend a meeting with WorkSafe. The objective of the meeting was to discuss opportunities for WorkSafe and the professional OHS community to work together to improve OHS outcomes in Victorian workplaces.

Key points of discussion in the meeting were:

- The potential for a Memorandum of Understanding between WorkSafe and the professional associations as a vehicle for driving the initiative. One outcome of this activity may be to give employers insight

into how to select a suitable, qualified OHS practitioner

- WorkSafe need to produce guidance material that will better assist members of professional associations
- WorkSafe should define what it is that they want employers to do regarding their OHS capability, particularly employers with high risks.

A second meeting is to be held on 15 October 2007 to form a working group and to plan the next steps.

Knowledge through Sharing Seminar 2007

Once again the Victorian Branch of the HFESA managed to convince 15 ergonomists that we needed to hear their stories. The Branch held its 4th annual Knowledge through Sharing Seminar in August where a varied and interesting programme of short papers helped to keep the audience of 50 informed and entertained. The presenters described the challenges and outcomes of their ergonomics projects. One well known member was overheard saying "Today's KTS was the best of all - most informative and useful presentations."

The Branch was fortunate in organising a very enthusiastic sponsor for the day, Auzspec Enterprises Pty Ltd. Rick Clancy, Managing Director of Auzspec, produced a display of many interesting computer workstation products, including some giveaways for members. Not only did they display the products, but were keen to hear what members had to offer in relation to use of specific equipment. Rick reported that many members had made valuable comments to them about what products they could display in the future. Visit www.auzspec.com.au for information about computer workstation equipment and Rick's short report of our seminar!

The seminars have proved a useful way for practising ergonomists to learn about regulatory changes. **Derrick Harrison** from WorkSafe Victoria provided an update on the new and revised WorkSafe Regulations (effective from 1.7.07) that involved extensive employer and employee consultations, submissions and stakeholder meetings. The new Regulations have a risk control focus with an emphasis on plain language and clear diagrams. Website topics on "*Your Health and Safety Guide*" and "*Health and Safety Solutions*" have been increased, and changes to licences in the construction industry to reduce fraud from false papers were explained. **Ros Kushinsky**, also from Worksafe, introduced us to the new National Standard and Code for Manual Tasks that includes work organisation (psychosocial factors) for the first time.

We heard how much time and effort **Tony Payne** puts into his role as an HFESA representative on the Standards Committee for Safety of Machinery (machine guarding). The new AS4024 adopts International and European standards and as a result, the standard has become very large. It is in 3 tiers: core, supplementary and machine specific, but Tony expressed the frustration that in his experience it is hard to find the relevant material. The information is detailed and of increasing complexity and it is difficult to cross reference the International and European standards on which the Australian Standard is based. It seems that the greatest concern with machine guarding is reach distances for upper and lower limbs and the minimum size of gaps, and most of Tony's consulting time is taken up with these issues.

Did you know that where a second person supports a ladder, it is more effective for them to stand on the bottom rung than it is to place their feet against the stiles (side posts)? How people use their ladders has been of interest to **Paul Cockayne** for many years. Using case studies and illustrations, Paul described the mishaps that can occur when using ladders (the commonest slip is missing the bottom rung) and measures that can be taken to reduce some of the serious accidents that unsafe ladder use can cause. He described the recommended placement of ladders for various situations and explained how difficult it can be to judge correct placement in some situations.

The handling of our goods for our worldly travels by airport staff had **Geoff Dell** comparing aircraft-hold loading systems practised overseas in order to make recommendations to an airline company in Australia. Employees move up to 10 tonnes each 8 hr shift and work in the awkward postures of kneeling, crouching and sitting on the floor. Following his analyses and the opinions of some 20 Certified Professional Ergonomists (CPE), Geoff concluded that robotics were probably the only solution.

Health care industry staff in the mental health, aged care and emergency fields, are frequently subjected to physical and verbal abuse. **Fiona Begg** has achieved a break-through by convincing organisations that design is a key factor in reducing abuse. She showed a range of examples of workplace design features such as clear signage, uncrowded and quiet waiting areas, no unpleasant smells, natural light as a link to outside, reception desk layout, choice of door locks, access to duress alarms, judicious use of glass walls and monitoring building access points with closed circuit TV that have been found to be effective.

The current emphasis on design was also the topic of **George Rechnitzer's** presentation. George sees design as the core element of the safety system. For too long the operator has been blamed for accidents and indeed, although 90% accidents are due to the person, the reasons for the person's involvement in the accident are ignored. George has found for example that safety in the construction industry, is often overlooked by designers and architects, however he sees a shift in the industry which is moving from training the operator to "be careful" to improving design.

John Culvenor took design decision-making a step further. He demonstrated, through a simple questionnaire, the comparison between safety practitioners' and student engineers' understanding of the design process. He found that 94% of student engineers agreed that making the item reliable was of greatest importance and only 25% agreed it's important to consider workers not having their mind on their job. In an interactive presentation where we all became part of what will probably be John's next comparative study, he showed us why safety design needs to be "infused" into all steps of the design process.

People working with horses in the racing industry face all sorts of hazards apart from reluctant horses at the starting barriers requiring bulldozer-like efforts from handlers to get them into position. **Bindi Bowman** pointed out that as well as the well-known hazard of falls by jockeys from horses, fatigue from early morning starts, prolonged driving and long days are a significant hazard in an industry where the horses come first. In order to encourage a culture change in which the person is placed first, Bindi has made/held/facilitated numerous site visits, workshops and focus groups.

David Caple the enormously busy IEA President, summarised the innovative activities of the international ergonomics community. He also described projects such as the mining industry in southern Africa receiving mentoring from large Australian mining companies, the fashion industry launch in Adelaide in 2009 of a national body-size database and work in schools. Since ergonomics continues to be perceived as being about computers and chairs, there is a renewed emphasis on “affective” ergonomics, ie understanding people’s emotions, expectations, reactions etc. David advised that IEA policy does not permit use of the word “ergonomic” to describe products, but at present recognition is given to companies in Asia and Europe (but not yet in Australia), that use the “ergonomic process” in applying risk assessment and controls etc.

Steve Bartram has recently treaded the challenging path of product design and development to produce “The ANT”. Steve responded to a client’s need for a device for service people to lift and move washing machines in customer’s homes. The device needed to be light enough to be moved comfortably in and out of the service vehicles and strong enough to lift a 50kg machine. He described the design process with its delays and pitfalls, engineering and material-testing and the disappointments when the client balked at buying enough devices to justify his huge investment of time and money. Steve demonstrated “The ANT” for us and gave members the opportunity to use, dismantle and lift it. The general census was - it works beautifully.

In studying the ageing workforce, **Karen Munk’s** findings made us think that it might be best for women to leave the workforce at 45 years of age! Slips, trips and falls in the female 45+ group occurred 1.5 times more frequently than for men in the same age group. Together with increased risk of bone fractures, recovery and return to work takes a whole lot longer. Karen sees a need for more emphasis on the prevention of slips, trips and falls not only in the workspace but also through workplace health promotion programs. In the Finnish model of “workability” the approach is workplace modifications plus attention to personal health issues.

Some of us are involved in office ergonomics and **David Trembearth** reminded us that getting the desk height right requires special attention. David demonstrated taking the floor to underside of the elbow measurement less 30mm for keyboard thickness, to establish the correct desk height. David has found that most desks are too high to achieve the appropriate keying posture and as we have all found out, height-adjustable desks are just great but unfortunately not always available.

Ron Cordingly explained that with appropriate partitioning, curtains and carpeting, a suitable sound level for speech privacy in an open plan office could be obtained. The partitioning heights recommended by Ron are 1260mm where a degree of noise is permitted, 1650mm for ‘normal’ office environments and 2100mm where considerable quiet is needed. While the partitions should be of an open-core, acoustic design and covered with a sound-absorbent material, reducing the cage-like effect by the use of some glass and lower partitions for the non-voice areas of a workspace are helpful.

Mark Dohrmann regularly keeps us up to date with the goings-on in the courts of law and warned us that with the scrutiny of experts tougher than ever, ergonomists have to keep sharp. The ergonomist needs to be able to name all sources of information, all relevant standards and any facts assumed. Mark warned that a place or an act being simply “unsafe” may not persuade a court and that a better outcome is likely to be achieved when a similar previous incident has occurred.

Christine Waring
Victorian Branch Chair



WA Branch News

43rd Annual Conference of the Human Factors & Ergonomics Society of Australia

A Healthy Society: Safe, Satisfied and Productive November 26 – 28 2007

Registrations are coming in fast for this year’s conference with delegates indicating a high level of interest in all the workshops. Unfortunately the process of double peer review of each full paper has taken longer than expected and led to a delay in the program being finalised and posted on the website. However the program should be on the website in the near future.

The committee of Kendall Leggett, Leon Straker, Melanie Speelman, Ron Lo, Sarah Adams, Stroma Lawson, Wendy Pietrocola, and ourselves has been working hard to organise an interesting program for all and give interstate and overseas attendees a taste of WA hospitality and an appreciation of what it’s like to live in this beautiful state!

We have a full program of paper and poster presentations as well as workshops relating to the Conference theme. Sponsors have been enthusiastic in their support of the conference and all our trade booths have been sold!

All details about the conference are on the conference website:

www.keynotewa.com/HFESA-2007/

We look forward to seeing you all in Perth in November for an exciting program at the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society’s annual conference.

Jenni Miller & Ian Gibson
Co-convenors

WELCOME TO NEW HFESA MEMBERS (Since June 07)

Apology – Julia Watson, HFESA Member listed as NSW in the June Newsletter is a new Qld Branch member.

Name	Membership Category	State
Clyde Crawford	HFESA Student	NSW
Karen Thornton	ANSTO – HFESA Corporate	NSW
Samantha Arkapaw	ANSTO – HFESA Corporate	NSW
Kathryn Masters	ANSTO – HFESA Corporate	NSW
Margaret Barry	HFESA Member	NSW
Anita Green	HFESA Affiliate	NSW
Craig McManus	HFESA Member	WA
Jeanette Larsen	HFESA Affiliate	SA
Sonja Belle-Wood	HFESA Member	WA
Karly Hutchings	HFESA Member	WA
Michael Sainsbury	HFESA Member	VIC
Bronwyn Young	HFESA Member	VIC
Nadine Milgate	HFESA Member	NSW
Catherine Campbell	HFESA Affiliate	VIC
Stephen Lum	HFESA Affiliate	NSW
Scott Weeks	HFESA Affiliate	SA
Ross Mills	HFESA Member	NSW
Ngoc Bich Huynh	HFESA Members	VIC
Michele Stromquist	HFESA Affiliate	NSW
Rosie O'Halloran	HFESA Member	VIC
Brendan Grimes	HFESA Member	VIC
Janine Carlino	HFESA Affiliate	WA
Elana Merlo	HFESA Affiliate	WA
Melissa Lombe	Charles Sturt University – HFESA Corporate	NSW
Libbie Tyburski	Charles Sturt University – HFESA Corporate	NSW
Annette Combs	Charles Sturt University – HFESA Corporate	NSW

Steven Koncz	HFESA Member	WA
Sarah Verrion	HFESA Affiliate	VIC
Tania Monument	HFESA Member	WA
Maree Webber	HFESA & CHISIG Member	TAS
Mark Cohen	Therapod Seating Solutions - HFESA Corporate	VIC
John Umseher	Therapod Seating Solutions - HFESA Corporate	VIC
Sam Papagiris	Therapod Seating Solutions - HFESA Corporate	VIC
Mark Hawkins	Therapod Seating Solutions - HFESA Corporate	VIC

Member Photo's

Congratulations to Laurie Dent & Margie Ratcliffe
on the birth of their daughter

Lucy Musette
Born 30th June, 2007
Weight: 2.63kg
Length: 47cm



Letters from the President – IEA

As advised in the last Newsletter, letters from the President, David Caple, are now available on the IEA Website – go to www.iea.cc and click into “President’s Letters” (under *Announcements* to the right hand side of the home page).

POSITION VACANT



Australian Government

CRS Australia

CRS Australia is seeking a Rehabilitation Consultant to deliver services in the commercial market in the Murray Ovens Goulburn Region (Shepparton, Wangaratta, Echuca, Deniliquin).

CRS Australia provides return to work, injury prevention and occupational health & safety services in partnership with private and government organisations across a range of industries in our local area. We are seeking an occupational therapist, physiotherapist or ergonomist with experience in occupational and health safety, ergonomics and workplace training to join our team in the delivery of services and the growth of our market.

The successful applicant can be located at any of our sites and will work with a regional team to deliver efficient and effective services.

Attractive remuneration package, including salary up to \$66,937. An AWA will be offered to the successful applicant.

To find out more please contact **Denise Frederick** on **03 5833 4500**.

CRS Australia is a national network of more than 175 offices and is part of the Australian Government Department of Human Services.



To everyone who contributed to the Newsletter

All members are welcome to send contributions to the Newsletter. The next issue will be out during December. Please forward articles, member profiles, photo's, etc, to Pauline:

Email: secretariat@ergonomics.org.au

Fax: 02 9680 9027