Christine Aickin, IEA Rep

How did you find out about ergonomics?

I had a few friends who were involved in ergonomics and hearing them talk made me interested to know more. Then I was invited to a meeting of the then Ergonomics Society of Australia and I went along. Well, they were such an interesting group of people that I decided to join the Society.

Why a career in ergonomics?

Ergonomics was a career change for me after ten years working as a clinical physiotherapist. It offered an opportunity to grow professionally and to build considerably on my existing knowledge and skills. This was just what I was looking for at the time.

What's been the most interesting project you've worked on?

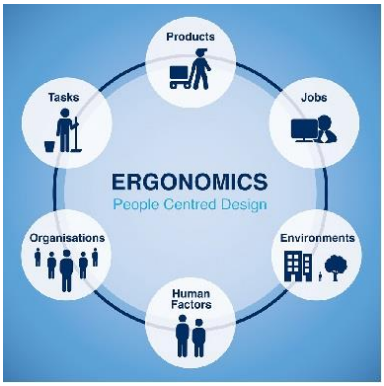
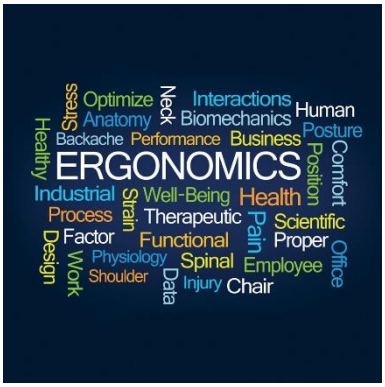
I was asked to look at a manufacturing site where the management wanted to cut certain jobs, but not at the expense of occupational health and safety. I took a risk management approach to the assessing these different jobs and found that it would not be safe to remove any of them. I was also able to identify a way forward for management by identifying which tasks were particularly hazardous and suggesting ways of reducing the risk in the future.

What do you do on a typical day?

A typical day involves a site visit including interviews with employees, supervisors and managers, observing work and taking photographs, measurements and doing various tests. Assessment and analysis follows when back in the office with report writing beginning if time permits. A project may take a day to many weeks or even months.

What do you find most satisfying about your work?

I enjoy going to different workplaces, meeting people and seeing what they do at work each day and over a working life. I also enjoy problem solving to reduce the injury risk that I identify. I consider it a privilege to be able to spend time with people as they work.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