

## Suzanne Johnson, Treasurer



### How did you find out about ergonomics?

Was a topic covered in my Occupational Therapy course.

### Why a career in ergonomics?

We had quite a dynamic lecturer while studying my O.T degree who piqued my interest, particularly, around the industrial application of ergonomics and workplace health and safety.

I went on to eventually study my Masters of Ergonomics at the University of Queensland.

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

A project we have just piloted at Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. The work involved WHS inspectors attending workplaces following a worker's compensation claim associated with either a hazardous manual task or a slip, trip, fall at level. It was exciting to see the benefits to casting a systems and design lens over how the workplace had addressed the risk following a workplace injury. In many cases, more sustainable systems changes and engineering solutions were implemented as a result of the visits. Too often injured workers are returned to hazardous tasks without due consideration to potential redesign of plant and processes.

Going back a number of years, I still regard work I performed as a Senior Research Assistant for Dr Robin Burgess-Limerick as interesting and exciting. The underground equipment project and Participative Ergonomics for Manual tasks (PERforM) in Coal Mining has informed much of my mindset in the subsequent years of my career.

### What do you do on a typical day?

I manage a team of 6 dynamic and passionate Ergonomics Advisors. We are in a unique position where we have the opportunity to have an impact on the health and safety of workers across a whole industry rather than 1 workplace at a time. My team leads the ergonomics program for our department and at any one time we have a number of projects underway covering a wide variety of industries and ergonomics issues. For example at the moment we are working with our manufacturing team and workplace health and safety inspectors to design and implement an audit campaign, we just started our social media campaign so I'm learning a lot about hashtags and we are working with construction industry representatives to develop guidance material to assist the industry to manage hazardous manual tasks. We work closely with all areas of our department such as Policy, Industry Strategy and inspectors and do everything from providing advice, developing initiatives, convening working groups, developing tools and resources, giving presentations and assisting inspectors with assessing compliance. No day is the same and the diversity of work we have on at any time keeps it interesting!

### What do you find most satisfying about your work?

The opportunity to make a difference to the health, safety and wellbeing of workers so that they go home safely every day and eventually finish their working career healthy and well.

