



# GOOD WORK DESIGN

**Human Factors & Ergonomics  
Society of Australia Inc.**

## What is Good Work?

Good work involves activities that are purposeful, that fortify and condition the worker, that engage workers and create positive impact, and that are meaningful to those who do the work. The work is agile, adaptable, and flexible, and advances organisational strategy while promoting and protecting worker health. Good work helps people participate, contribute, and achieve great things while operating at the peak of their performance curve. The work expectations are transparent and manageable, and the activities can be achieved by the physical, cognitive, social skillsets, and capacities of workers. Work organisation has been designed to provide adequate support, and technology and systems are in place to enable a sensible and manageable degree of autonomy in decision-making. The work environment is enterprising and conducive to health and happiness.

## What is Good Work Design?

Good Work Design (GWD) is a human-centred approach to ensure that good work is available to workers. It is a holistic and inclusive process that considers all aspects of human performance to enable prosperous working conditions. It focuses on people at work. Since ergonomics is the study of human-system interactions, the two concepts, people and work, are a central focus when considering tasks, job roles, environments, and systems. The goal of GWD is to enhance productivity, health, wellbeing, and safety of employees within existing legal frameworks. It relates to good business and generates wider benefits for industries and society since it contributes to sustainable economies, healthful living, and environments that support business and national interests. GWD does not mean increasing production costs because it mainly affects the most price-elastic component of our workplaces: the people.

When employing principles of human factors and ergonomics, GWD identifies opportunities to be realised or problems that can be addressed and leads to improvements to job tasks, equipment, tools, the working and technical environment, activities, relationships, roles, and/or responsibilities. GWD is about the (re)design of work (i.e. what we do) and job (i.e. how we do), such as the tools and equipment with which workers interface or maintain, the computer software with which workers engage, the learning and development strategies, the communication strategies at work, the schedules and rosters, the workflow and allowances for rest and recovery, or the social and physical environment in which work occurs. It is a systematic approach (i.e. follows specific stages customised to each workplace) and is based on systems thinking (i.e. considers interactions and dependencies among all workplace elements such as staff, technology, and the environment). The three principal GWD stages are (1) discovery, (2) design, and (3) realisation of tangible outcomes towards good work. The GWD stages necessitate collaboration among all stakeholders, and the results of GWD are communicated and celebrated to acknowledge the success that was achieved.

GWD draws on a broad and diverse range of scientifically proven design principles to achieve its objectives. GWD is a continuous endeavour embedded in organisational activities, embraced by leaders and managers, and its effectiveness can be monitored through health, safety, and productivity outcomes. GWD contributes to organisational resilience that renders individuals and teams capable of dealing successfully with demands as work evolves. A corporate culture that supports change and values workers and public health is most likely to contribute to the success of GWD initiatives.

### What is the Position of HFESA on Good Work Design?

It is the position of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA) that workplaces that implement good work design will be uniquely positioned for competitive, reputable, and resilient operations. The design of good work contributes to health, engagement, and productivity. Good work design extends beyond a health and safety agenda and is most effective when implemented as a whole-of-business strategy. Certified Professionals of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia are specialised in facilitating, coordinating, and advancing good work design.

### For More Information

If you want to learn more about GWD and read success stories of GWD application using ergonomics principles, visit <https://www.ergonomics.org.au/> and <https://www.ergonomics.org.au/ergonomics-and-human-factors-in-action/ergonomics-and-human-factors-in-action/who-needs-ergonomists>