

PRESS RELEASE CONTACT INFORMATION

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Australia, (HFESA)

Spokesperson: Dr Sara Pazell, 0421 824 644, info@vivahealthgroup.com.au or secretariat@ergonomics.org.au

Press release: 20.07.2020

Webinar: 23.07.2020

Time: 6.30PM AEST

Zoom: <https://www.ergonomics.org.au/events/event/pd-event-good-work-design-gwd-hfesa-position-paper>

GOOD WORK DESIGN IN THE POST-COVID WORKPLACE

Working from home is just one of the ways Covid19 has suddenly changed the way we work. If we are to propel the economy out of recession, we must go further and fundamentally change the Australian workplace to make it more productive, profitable, and beneficial.

One of the key strategies for a successful transition to the post-COVID-19 workplace is Good Work Design. A timely, innovative Position Paper elaborating the key elements of Good Work Design has just been published by the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Australia (HFESA). HFESA is the peak body that oversees the professional standards and the accreditation of ergonomists.

The Position Paper presents the professional experience and knowledge of ergonomists on the most effective means to optimise human work and system performance. It sets out the 3-phased process to create positive impact in the workplace, and it demonstrates that Good Work Design translates into the common good for all those connected to the enterprise.

WHAT IS GOOD WORK DESIGN?

It is design that not only solves problems in the workplace, but also optimises the entire system. “Good design inspires growth and change, not just constrains adversity. It conditions a workforce and contributes to broad community strategies, such as sustainability,” says Dr Sara Pazell, Chair of the Position Paper Committee Members. This includes fostering innovative ways of doing work and producing positive impact that is both measurable and sustainable. Because it mainly affects the people at work, Good Work Design does not mean increasing production costs. It is a participatory process that involves workers, management, and all

stakeholders. The end-users become the co-designers. This inclusive model empowers the workforce to become the architects and owners of the improved work design. It helps an organisation design for diversity.

WHO BENEFITS FROM GOOD WORK DESIGN?

The guiding principle is that all stakeholders should benefit from Good Work Design:

- **Workers** benefit from improved health, safety, confidence, engagement, performance, and career advancement.
- **Employers** and management benefit from demonstrable improvement in productivity and profitability. They do not suffer enormous losses due to inefficiencies, work injuries, absenteeism, and compensation claims.
- The **environmental** and **social impact** of the enterprise is enhanced, which adds to its profitability, retention of workers, and prospects for investment.

THE COSTS OF POOR DESIGN

Many Australian workplaces have poorly integrated or articulated work design. As a result, many are plagued with reduced productivity, costly product and system failures, a workforce with low levels of competence and engagement, compromised safety, and a negative impact on the environment. These workplaces typically suffer a high number of workdays lost due to injuries - predominantly musculoskeletal disorders. This is costing the Australian economy over \$25 billion each year and is untenable if we want to achieve economic recovery.

There are significant ramifications when workplaces aim to carry out the minimum health and safety regulations. For example, under a new Victorian workplace manslaughter law introduced following a growing number of fatal accidents at work, an employer could now be liable for a \$16.5 million fine and 25 years jail time.

Good Work Design does not just step in after a failure or accident to determine 'what went wrong'. It should apply at the outset to determine 'how can we design or make the whole system better?'. The Good Work Design process can be applied to existing workplaces and activities, as well as new job tasks, equipment, products, or work environments.