

ergonomics

New Zealand

The newsletter of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society

Volume 1 Number 1 April 1986

Inaugural Meeting

The Inaugural Meeting of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society was held on 22 February 1986 at the New Zealand Disabilities Resource Centre in Palmerston North.

Thirty seven people attended, mainly from the North Island, with two representatives from the South Island and one from Australia.

The proceedings were opened by Carol Slappendel, who introduced Terry Cunniffe.

Dr Cunniffe spoke of the development of New Zealand as a manufacturing nation, and the vital role of ergonomics in this process.

The guest speaker was Mr Peter Sutton, Chief Projects Officer of the Consumers' Institute. Mr Sutton's speech will be published in a future issue of the newsletter.

The guest speaker was followed by Carol Slappendel, proposing the formation of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society.

Ms Slappendel started her delivery with the statement that an Australian based ergonomics organisation, the Ergonomics Society of Australia and New Zealand Inc. (ESANZ), existed and membership was available to New Zealand professionals. Currently two members of ESANZ were known, the speaker and Dr A Vitalis of Massey University.

Towards the end of 1984, it was recognised at a meeting of the ESANZ executive that a reduced membership service was being presented to New Zealand members and contact was made by the President of ESANZ offering New Zealand members a number of options. Included in these options was the possibility of an independent New Zealand Ergonomics Society.

The speaker felt that an excellent case could be made for the establishment of such an indigenous society.

Information was given that ESANZ was approximately 20 years old (compared with the 36 year old UK Society) with a current membership of 600. Membership growth has been boosted particularly as a result of publicity given to RSI. The Executive of ESANZ is developing a five year plan which includes a membership objective of 2000.

Ergonomics is a technology that seeks to improve mental and physical well-being by optimising the function of human-machine-environment systems.

The objects of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society are to promote the application of ergonomics knowledge and to advance ergonomics research, education and public awareness.

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The speaker suggested that the low level of participation by New Zealand members should be regarded as a consequence of the practical difficulties faced by an Australian based organisation providing service to New Zealand. Given the limited service, membership fees are relatively high. Current annual subscriptions are \$A50 with an indicated increase to \$A60, giving a New Zealand equivalent of \$90.

Even if membership concessions were to be offered, problems including the remoteness of scientific meetings and operation in different political spheres would remain. Whatever the decision made at today's meeting, ESANZ has indicated that it will support the decision. New Zealanders can still be members of an Australian Society.

Ms Slappendel concluded her presentation by circulating topics for discussion. These included

- Definitions of "ergonomics"
- The objects of an ergonomics society
- Membership
- Structure of a society

These topics were addressed in five discussion groups, and many points of value were made during the subsequent reporting back.

It was unanimously agreed that a New Zealand Ergonomics Society should be founded.

A working definition of the term "ergonomics" has been adopted and this appears on the front page of this newsletter.

The objects of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society were agreed to:

"to promote the application of ergonomics knowledge and to advance ergonomics research, education and public awareness".

Membership and membership fees were discussed at some length. It was agreed that membership be open to anyone who supports the aims of the Society. In the future, a professional membership category can be considered. Initially, the membership categories are

- member
- student member
- affiliated organisation

It was agreed that a committee of seven should be elected, including President, Secretary/Treasurer, and five committee members, one of whom should be designated as Vice-President.

One particularly valuable recommendation was that the major focus of the Society in its first year should be to organise a Conference. This recommendation received warm support from participants, many of whom agreed to present papers at such a Conference.

This also meant that committee portfolios needed to reflect this goal, so the Society structure was amended to be:

- President
- Secretary/Treasurer
- 5 Committee members

Portfolios are required for

- constitution/membership
- publicity/fundraising
- research
- education
- conference
- newsletter

While many points of detail remained unaddressed, general consensus had been reached on the formation of the Society, its objects, its membership, its basic structure, and its immediate goals.

At this point, and feeling that a great deal had been achieved, the meeting broke for lunch.

In the afternoon, the formal inaugural meeting of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society was called into session. The Minutes of this meeting are being posted to members.

The day ended with a dinner at Wharerata.



Committee Members

Committee members have been invited to introduce themselves, and to describe their areas of interest.



President: Dr Terry Cunniffe

Portfolio: Publicity and Fundraising

Six years apprenticeship Precision Engineer. Qualified as Design Engineer, Rolls Royce, Derby Honours degree in Industrial Design, Leicester MSc in Ergonomics, Loughborough

PhD by research: The Application of Ergonomics to the Design of Wheelchairs, sponsored by the Agatha Christie Trust for Children Research Associate, Institute for Consumer Ergonomics, Loughborough.

Founder and Director of

NZ Disabilities Resource Centre

NZ Disabilities Information Bureau

Fellow of the Ergonomics Society, UK, and member of seven other professional bodies

Honorary Fellow, Massey University

Ambitions:

To create a new industry for New Zealand, that of rehabilitation equipment manufacture.

To assist in ensuring the continued development of ergonomics as a practical component of daily life.

Interests:

The disabled; home and family; running.



Secretary/Treasurer: Carol Slappendel
B. Tech (Hons)

Portfolio: Membership/Constitution

My background is in industrial engineering and in ergonomics research. I am currently working as a Graduate Assistant in the Faculty of Business Studies, Massey University, and as consultant ergonomist for the NZDRC. Besides being involved in the administration of the Society, I hope to complete a Master of Business Administration degree this year.



Vice-President: Dr Tony Vitalis

Joint Portfolio: Research

I first realised the importance of ergonomics while working in the UK industry as an engineer. My formal training in Ergonomics was done at the University College, London. My particular interest is in work psychology which nicely complements the interests of Mike Smith in the Psychology Department and of Carol Slappendel's in the Management and Administration Department at Massey University. My present position is Reader in Massey University's Management and Administration Department.



Fiona Scott-Milligan

Portfolio: Conference Convener

I graduated Master of Arts in Psychology in 1985. Research for my thesis was in the area of aviation psychology, and involved both Air New Zealand and the Royal New Zealand Airforce. I am presently embarking on research for a Ph.D., working again in the area of aviation psychology, with the RNZAF.

I have attended an intensive Human Factors in Aircraft Operation Course, as well as an Advanced Air Accident Investigation Course, both held recently in Australia.

I am Human Factors Consultant for Flight Operations, Air New Zealand and Aeropelican (Australia). I am a member of the Association of Aviation Psychologists (USA); Western European Association of Aviation Psychologists; and the New Zealand Psychological Society.

My main aim as Conference Subcommittee Convener is to ensure that the inaugural conference of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society is a success.



Dr Mike Smith

Joint Portfolio: Research

I am a lecturer in Psychology at Massey University and have been interested in Ergonomics for well over fifteen years. My main interests now centre on Cognitive Ergonomics which deals mainly with machines: the way they work and the way we think. I have a BSc Tech (Hons) from the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology and a Doctoral degree from Massey University. I have joint responsibility for research on the inaugural committee and am looking forward with enthusiasm to the conference in Auckland in February 1987.



B. Leong Yap

Portfolio: Education

I am Head of Ergonomics Laboratory of the School of Design, Wellington Polytechnic, and a visiting lecturer of the School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington. I received my Diploma in Industrial Design from the Wellington Polytechnic in 1974 and an MSc degree in Ergonomics from the University of Technology, Loughborough, England in 1979. In 1980 I was appointed as Ergonomist of the Accident Compensation Corporation. Since that time I have been actively involved in the application of Ergonomics to safety, health and productivity. Besides my teaching career, I am a practising Ergonomist and Industrial Designer. I am consultant to the Accident Compensation Corporation, Ministry of Works and Development, Ministry of Transport, the Design Council and the New Zealand Railways. I am a registered member of the Ergonomics Society, England; member of the British Institute of Interior Design and member of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers, England.



Pat Cunniffe

Portfolio: Newsletter

I graduated BA Hons in Modern Languages from Nottingham University, taught French for a few years, then took a course as a teacher of handicapped children. My introduction to Ergonomics was as a research assistant then a research associate at the Institute for Consumer Ergonomics, Loughborough University, testing consumer products for their suitability for use by disabled people. I now run the NZ Disabilities Information Bureau in Palmerston North. I am a member of the Institute of Information Scientists (UK), and a foundation member of the NZ Association of Disability Information Officers.

My task on the Committee this year is to edit and distribute four Newsletters to members of our Society.

President's Column

Congratulations, your enthusiasm and goodwill made the inaugural meeting of the Society an exciting and constructive weekend. Not since Loughborough have I experienced the subject of ergonomics being discussed so positively and with such clear direction.

Possibly what assisted the success of the meeting and its conclusions so significantly was the range and quality of professional skills represented.

Individuals were able not only to contribute to the proposed organisational structure of the event, but also give direction to the areas of initial emphasis.

This emphasis must lie with the creation of an organisational structure that has both professional credibility and is useful to its membership.

Concurrent with this objective must exist a determined policy to encourage the recognition of ergonomics as an effective and attractive tool in manufacturing, industrial safety, as well as in the domestic and health areas.

To assist in the application of ergonomics, a president's professional panel is to be compiled from the information contained in membership returns. This panel will exist to help interested professionals to operate at a higher ergonomic level by providing information and experience where appropriate.

The status of the panel will be that of a reference body, contributing their time freely on an informal basis.

In addition to making this practical help available, the Committee is seeking to facilitate the establishment of a full time tertiary ergonomics course at a minimum of one New Zealand university, and to this end a letter has been written to each of the Vice Chancellors.

With the graduation of indigenous ergonomists, it will be possible and desirable to consider the establishment of a professional register to complement the membership categories of the Society.

On the domestic scene, the NZ Disabilities Resource Centre has recently placed orders for \$50,000 worth of equipment for its ergonomics/orthotics laboratory, including a \$1,500 design and build commission for an ergonomically correct gait analysis console. This commission has been given to the design students at Wellington Polytechnic.

Approaches have been made to the Resource Centre by the organisers of the 56th Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. This international event is to be held at Massey University over the period 26-30 January 1987, and is to include a substantial component of ergonomics.

As Chairman of this session, I shall be calling for papers from members in the following subject areas:

- Product design
- Industrial safety
- Rehabilitation technology

While no payment is available to participants with selected papers, requests for assistance in terms of travel and subsistence will be sympathetically received by the Chairman.

Further information on this prestigious conference will be sent to individual members shortly.

Please consider seriously the possibility of submitting a paper and do not be put off by any thoughts of lack of subject/scientific content credibility.

Take care
The President

Secretary's Column

Membership Categories

While it is envisaged that in the future additional membership categories will be formed, including a professional register, to which Society members can apply for admission, there will initially be three membership categories.

- Member** open to individuals who have an interest in ergonomics and in furthering the objects of the Society
- Student member** for those enrolled in a full-time course at a recognised educational institution
- Affiliated organisation** for commercial organisations and other associations/societies who have an interest in ergonomics.

Provision has been made for foundation membership. The following conditions apply:

Foundation member status shall be accorded to individuals who attended the Inaugural Meeting of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society held on 22 February 1986 and who pay their initial membership and joining fees by 1 October 1986. Foundation affiliate status will be accorded to affiliated organisations who apply for membership of the Society and pay fees before 1 April 1987.

Membership fees

Membership fees are as follows for the financial year 1.4.86 to 31.3.87 or part thereof:

Member	\$40 plus \$10 initial joining fee
Student member	\$15
Affiliated organisation	\$150

How to apply

Application for membership is made by completing the application form and sending it, together with the appropriate membership fees, to the Secretary/Treasurer, New Zealand Ergonomics Society, 840 Tremaine Avenue, Palmerston North.

Commercial organisations and other associations/societies which have an interest in ergonomics should apply in writing to the Secretary/Treasurer. Affiliated organisations shall appoint a representative, who will possess a voting right and will receive on behalf of the organisation all circulars and correspondence.

Make cheques not-negotiable and payable to 'New Zealand Ergonomics Society'. Receipts will be provided.

N.B.

The Society has adopted the resolution that 'The name of the Society may not be used at any time financially to further the ends of any company, individual, or Society member'.

Membership of the Society does not as of right entitle individuals to adopt the title of 'ergonomist'.

The following article was requested from Dr Rex Newsome, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Saint Lucia University, Queensland. Dr Newsome is at present at Massey University for six months. His thoughts on ergonomics in Australia make very pertinent reading for our fledgling Society.

Ergonomics in Australia

The first problem in trying to characterize the current state of ergonomics in Australia is, of course, the width and inclusiveness of the term ergonomics when applied to a society seeking a growth in membership as does ESANZ (or as it will become, I guess, ESA). Not having distinctive academic or professional criteria for restricting membership eligibility, and indeed, not wishing to limit membership to a few narrow interests leaves the society somewhat to the mercy of prevailing winds. For example the current pre-occupation with RSI has produced an extraordinary growth in popular interest in ergonomics and an unprecedented growth in membership of ESANZ. However, will that mean that the society will have to drift towards the interests of whatever takes our new members' fancy when the RSI issue wanes? We might hope that once awakened to ergonomics these members will broaden interests to other aspects of ergonomics, but who knows? This is a general problem that faces any society with a loosely defined bailiwick. It is one that should be thought about by this nascent society.

Ergonomics in Australia then, is probably best described as a collection of people, developing institutional interests and courses, and a few professionals who are busily endeavouring to fill the rapidly growing demand for ergonomic expertise. There are some diploma courses now being offered, both at undergraduate and post-graduate level. While ESANZ is considering the matter of a restricted professional category of membership, it is one thing to suggest that only those so defined be consulted but it is another to persuade user compliance, especially if one's society is small and without clout.

While there are many courses that feature ergonomics or have ergonomic content, and several leading to diplomas in ergonomics, as yet no specific degree courses have been established although there are moves in that direction. A major difficulty is that any such courses must have a strong link with ongoing practice if it is to have any validity and status.

Teaching staff with one foot planted firmly in the applied side of ergonomics are required. These, of course, are hard to come by as applicants having both applied experience and the academic specifications required by tertiary institutions are thin on the ground. People with such qualifications, in any case, can do better elsewhere. Competition in establishing an ergonomics school and an appropriate reputation is another factor in the consolidation of ergonomics as a professional entity. The dangers should be apparent to you in New Zealand of allowing too many tertiary institutions to become involved in trying to provide major courses. An early decision should be made as to where support should go. It would be sensible if one strong school could be established. Let us hope that this can be done in the near future.

Preliminary Registration

Those who anticipate attending are asked to return the enclosed form not later than 1 July 1986. Further particulars and details of registration will be sent out at a later date to those who have made a preliminary registration.

Please feel free to pass this information on to others who may be interested in attending. Photocopies of the Reply sheet will be accepted.

Fionna Scott-Milligan
Conference Subcommittee Convenor
37 Rockfield Road
Ellerslie
Auckland 5

Conference News

The most important Conference to be put in your diary is the Inaugural Conference of the New Zealand Ergonomics Society. This will be held in Auckland in February 1987.

Programme

The main theme of the inaugural conference is *Ergonomics in New Zealand*. The format of presentations will range from papers and workshops to poster papers and manufacturers' displays.

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for the afternoon of Day 1.

Paper sessions and a chance to view poster papers will take up most of Day 2.

Sub-themes of the Conference will be considered in more depth on Day 3 with workshops on each.

The Conference will close on the afternoon of Day 3.

Social Programme

Social activities will include a reception following the AGM, and conference dinner (possibly in the form of a Harbour Cruise) on Day 2. Social activities will also be arranged for delegates' families.

Conference fee

In order to encourage a wide range of participation, fees are unlikely to exceed \$75.00 (full registration), and there will be a reduction for full-time students.

Call for Papers, Posters, Displays and Workshop Themes

You are invited to . . .

- present a paper of approximately 20 minutes' duration
- present a poster-paper
- present a display
- and/or suggest a workshop theme.

Notice of intention to make a contribution is required by 1 July 1986. A form is included with this Newsletter.

- Asia-Pacific Congress on Occupational Health and Safety, "Health, Safety and Productivity - Partners in Progress", to be held at Massey University, Palmerston North, 17-20 November 1986. Contact the Congress Secretariat, Asia-Pacific Congress, Management Education and Development Centre, Massey University, Private Bag, Palmerston North.
 - Nelcon 86. 23rd National Electronics Conference, "Electronics - The Human Interface", to be held at the Centennial Convention Centre, Palmerston North, 26-28 August 1986. Contact Programme Committee, Nelcon 86, P O Box 1390, Palmerston North.
 - Ergonomics Society of Australia and New Zealand 23rd Annual Conference 1986, "Trends in the Ergonomics of Work and Leisure", to be held at the Parmelia Hilton, Perth, Western Australia, 24-28 November 1986. Contact Geof Roberts, Production Engineering, Western Australian Institute of Technology, Perth, Western Australia.
 - 19th Congress International Ergonomics Association, 1-5 August 1988, Sydney, Australia. Contact Narelle Ryan Conventions, GPO Box 1441, Sydney, NSW, Australia 2001.
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Can You Help?

Tony Vitalis, Massey University, asks if any member has or knows of a portable oxygen consumption meter they could loan or rent. Would anyone be interested in shared purchase of such an item?

The Editor will be pleased (in fact delighted) to receive any contributions for the Newsletter. Letters, articles, opinions, gripes, cartoons, suggestions etc will be welcomed.

Secretariat:

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