A strategic approach to healthcare facility and workforce commissioning

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1. Scope
The Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital with 359 beds, is the largest paediatric hospital in Australia. The purpose built hospital brought together two existing hospitals which shared more than 200 years of experience providing paediatric care, with 25% more beds than both combined. The hospital opened in late November 2014 thanks to a combination of the exceptional skills and services of the two workforces and a precision exercise to relocate patients from both hospitals on one day.

2. Project organisation
A team of work health and safety professionals have journeyed through operational commissioning and early operations. This is an industry case study, providing reflection, analysis and a proposed strategy to assist end user organisation’s to achieve safe, healthy and productive work and people, in new healthcare facilities.

3. Human Factors topics covered
The Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital project required the successful commissioning of (1) a new facility and precinct (2) a new/combined workforce, and, (3) new/combined services and models of care. This complex change required strategies to address the physical, psychosocial and organisational domains of human factors practice.

Equally, a strong analysis of and approach toward compliance and performance requirements was needed due to the overlapping, interacting and at times competing aspects of various legislation, standards, contractual requirements and best practice, in many fields.

The functional design brief is proposed as a key means through which an end user organisation can systematically examine and establish, as early as possible, the manner in which it will achieve the broad objective of safe, healthy and productive work and people. The document should then be used as a reference point to inform decision making, priorities and resourcing through the project life.

4. Project phases
The team was primarily involved in this project during the operational commissioning and post occupancy phases. Previous team members had some involvement in design development user groups.

5. Conclusion
Human factors can be strategically analysed in the early project phase and then addressed at the right time, by the right people, throughout the project, so as to result in safe, healthy and productive work and people.