Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA): 50th Anniversary History

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1. Introduction
The Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2014. The presentation will reveal some of the achievements made by the society and its members between 1964 and 2014. The presentation comprises three sections. The first details the formation of the society, the major milestones, and identifies some of the society’s eminent members. The second section presents a video that examines the society from six interest areas – Mining, Transport, Anthropometrics and Design, Occupational Health and Safety, Human Computer Interaction, and Health. The presentation concludes with an account of the forgotten history and stories that never made it to the history books. This presentation is a celebration of HFESA to be enjoyed by members, international delegates and guests attending IEA, 2015.

2. Background
The Society’s beginnings can be traced back to 1964. In that year, a group of people from Australia and New Zealand with a common interest in human factors and ergonomics gathered for the first conference on the topic, at the University of Adelaide. This event was timed to coincide with a visit to Adelaide by Professor Alan Welford, a distinguished academic and a founding member of The Ergonomics Society (now known as the Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors) in the United Kingdom.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the society had a mix of academic and practitioner members from backgrounds including engineering, medicine, psychology, higher education, architecture, and physiotherapy.

In 1970, the society became a federated member of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA), the peak international group representing human factors and ergonomics societies. Australia hosted the IEA Triennial Congress in Sydney, in 1988, with resounding success, and was awarded the opportunity of hosting the Congress again in Melbourne in 2015. Numerous HFESA members participated on the IEA council over the years including David Caple who was IEA President between 2006 and 2009. A highly regarded consultant and practitioner, David was the first non-academic elected as president of the IEA.

When New Zealand decided to form its own society in 1986, the Ergonomics Society of Australia was created. More recently, the society changed its name to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of...
Australia, in recognition of the broad scope of research and practice internationally, as well as Australia, in human factors and ergonomics.

Over the years, many outstanding people have joined the society. Many are still members today. Today, the Society has 700 members including 76 members who have become Certified Professional Ergonomists; the Society’s highest general membership category and welcomed 29 members as Fellows of the Society. They represent the three core areas of human factors and ergonomics: the Physical, the Cognitive & the Organisational domains.

In addition, eight different awards for excellence were created and named in honour of our most eminent and inspirational members: Professor Ron Cumming, Dr John Lane, Professor David Ferguson, Professor Alan Welford, Professor Ken Provins, Professor Tom Triggs, Professor Gitte Lindgaard and Barbara McPhee, who was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia in 2014.

Since the society formed in 1964, members have worked in a variety of fields within academia and the community, including but not limited to Anthropometrics and Design, Human Computer Interaction, Health, Mining, Occupational Health and Safety & Transport.

Acknowledgements
HFESA congratulates the current and past members who have and will inspire the next 50 years of Human Factors and Ergonomic academics, researchers and practitioners.

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