

News from the Divisions

ACQUISITIONS SECTION (NSW)

A new acquisition for NSW

A NSW Group of the LAA Acquisitions Section has been formed and a programme of speakers, seminars and functions is being planned. The Secretary would be pleased to receive suggestions for such activities or notification of acquisitions issues which might be appropriate for the attention of the Group.

The Group is working on a second edition of the *Directory of Library Suppliers used by Australian Libraries*. A questionnaire soliciting information for the new edition will be distributed in the near future.

[Secretary to the Group: Paul Wilkins, Monograph Acquisitions, University of New South Wales, P.O. Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2033. Phone 697 2621.]

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES SECTION NSW

Possum Magic at the Zoo

With Sydney Harbour as the stage's backdrop, the executive committee organised and performed in a Possum Magic Twilight party at the Zoo as part of the Festival of Sydney on Australia Day 1985.

Inspired by Mem Fox's *Possum Magic*, illustrated by Julie Vivas, published by Omnibus Book, it was an evening of storytelling and songs enjoyed by 700 vegemite eating, smiling faces!

Plans are under way to repeat the event next year. Anyone interested in being involved should contact the section's president, Liz Maher on (02) 264 6555.

ERGONOMICS

The passage of new occupational health and safety legislation in some states and the rapid spread of repetition strain injuries through the population in recent years has caused greater attention to be paid to ergonomic factors in the workplace — that is, the technology of work design, or fitting the task to the person.

Ergonomics has 3 major components:

- task design
- workplace design
- work organisation factor

An important element of good workplace design is the ergonomic design of furniture — particularly that used by VDU operators. There is now a wide range of ergonomically designed furniture on the market, however prospective purchasers should ensure that such furniture truly meets the requirements of the user and that the use of term 'ergonomic' is not just a marketing gimmick.

The LAA recently purchased new desks and chairs for its staff who use VDUs and the following factors were taken into account:

- Work surface — should be in a matt finish to prevent glare and should provide adequate work space, including space to rest documents, hands and arms. It should also be adjustable for height, within the range of 720–750mm; for VDU height and for the VDU keyboard; whilst providing ample leg space.
- Chairs should be stable, with 5 legs but without arms. They should be adjustable for seat height, seat angle, back rest height and back rest angle and be upholstered in a fabric that breathes — not plastic. The edges of the seat and the back of the chair should be curved to prevent pressure on the back and the thighs.
- Controls for both desks and chairs should be easily adjusted from a sitting position.
- Document holders should allow for text directly in front of the operator with the paper raised up to a similar viewing distance to the screen to reduce awkward twisting and bending.

Obviously, even the very best furniture will not assist user unless correct posture is maintained. The operator's head should not be excessively bent over — the head inclined at an angle of 20° is a reasonable guideline. The spine should be slightly arched and forward leaning but the shoulders should not be hunched forward. The upper arms should be approximately vertical. The lower arms approximately

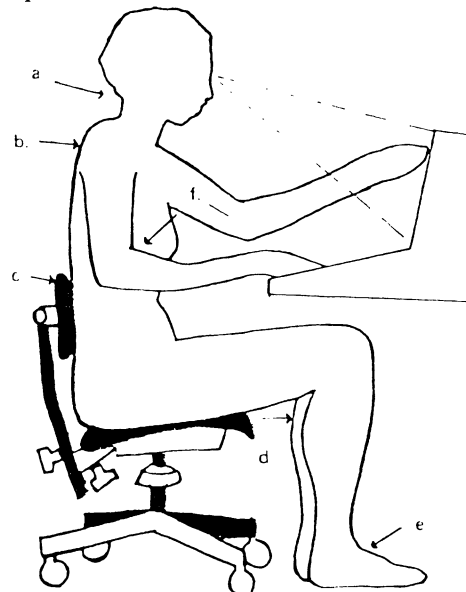
horizontal. Thighs should be horizontal and lower legs vertical, with feet flat on the floor. Foot rests are not usually necessary unless the operator is particularly short.

It is important when choosing furniture that maximum flexibility is achieved so that a single desk or chair can be adjusted to suit staff of all body sizes. The LAA members of staff for whom new desks were purchased vary significantly in height, however by adjusting their desks and chair they are able to adapt their work stations to cater for these individual differences in much the same way that a driver will adjust the seat and rear vision mirror before driving another person's car.

The LAA is currently compiling a list of libraries which have purchased ergonomically designed furniture which can be used to assist other prospective purchasers and would like to hear from as many libraries as possible. Details of the type of furniture purchased and comments about its suitability can be sent to the Industrial Information and Research Officer.

Advice about the selection of ergonomically designed furniture or equipment can be obtained from the Industrial Information Officer (02) 692 9233 for from Max Borchardt of the Ergonomics Interest group (03) 813 3844.

Correct posture for use of screen based equipment



- head should not be excessively bent over. SBE should be positioned to allow for a comfortable viewing angle.
- shoulders should not be hunched forward.
- back of chair should support lower back.
- seat height should be adjusted so thighs are horizontal and circulation in the legs is not inhibited. The lower leg should be vertical. (The edges of the back and seat of chair should be curved to prevent pressure on the back and under the thighs.)
- feet should be flat on the floor.
- upper and lower arms should be at right angles to each other; the upper arm nearly vertical and the lower arm and wrist nearly horizontal.

Louise Lansley

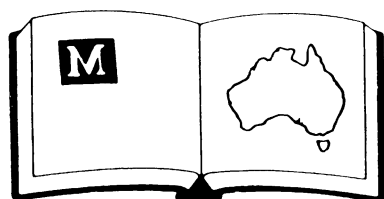
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