

Making the right call on ergonomics

Tasmanian members helped to promote the role of physiotherapy in establishing safe work practices by their involvement in Worksafe Week last month.

IN HOBART, Lyndall Hannaford and Jenene Oates presented a free workshop (open to the public) on chair transfers for the elderly and people with disabilities. The workshop was fully subscribed (15 participants) with people from diverse backgrounds, including aged care trainers, hospital employees working in rehab, and carers working in group homes with clients with significant disabilities.

The course was designed to give the participants some tips on how to make the task of chair transfers much safer for the client and the carer. This included techniques for clients who did not need much help, to clients who needed hoists. The training was based on manutention principles.

Also in the south, Susie Riddoch and Michael Roberts presented sessions on how to set-up and assess people at computer workstations and injury prevention in call centres. The afternoon was about workstation ergonomics



Anne Taylor

featuring the Vodafone Call Centre.

Ron Lanyon told us of the innovative ideas Vodafone uses to reduce stress at its Kingston Call Centre. He discussed the change from an autocratic regime with associated high injury rates to a flatter management structure that extensively reduced injuries.

Vodafone supplies free fruit regularly and has gold coin cappuccino days plus a full sized billiard table for employees. Most interesting of all is that it allows

employees almost free rein to take breaks as they choose each day.

Susie discussed the findings of her field study on work-related neck and shoulder pain at Vodafone and explained the use of biofeedback EMG to reduce muscle tension. Michael spoke on the key aspects of setting up an employee's ergonomic chair, desk, and computer. He also discussed the rationale behind requesting more specialised assessment and showed

a variety of interesting innovative ergonomic products for computer use.

Meanwhile, in the north of the state, Anne Taylor joined an array of local and interstate presenters at the TCCI 'Working Safe' conference in Launceston, attended by 170 delegates. Anne gave three presentations looking at ergonomics, manual handling, and exercise as topics linked with injury prevention in the workplace. ■



Susie Riddoch and Michael Roberts with Vodafone representative Ron Lanyon.

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