



# Report of External Evaluation and Review

ProAction Medical Limited (trading as  
Yacht Lifeline)

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 2 February 2011

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# Purpose of this Report

*The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.*

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Location:	Westhaven, Auckland
Type:	Private Training Establishment
First registered:	2004
Number of students:	Runs short courses for over 1500 people a year.
Number of staff:	Four full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	ProAction Medical Limited is accredited for certain first aid and resuscitation unit standards in the health/emergency services/pre-hospital emergency care/first aid domains
Sites:	Holds courses off site at places such as the New Zealand Maritime School.
Distinctive characteristics:	Most of the courses last for two days and are held at the weekends. Employs two full-time instructors and several part-time instructors.
Recent significant changes:	Establishing Flight Lifeline Employing a new full-time instructor for Flight Lifeline
Previous quality assurance history:	At the last quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2008, ProAction Medical Limited did not meet 12 requirements of QA Standard One, the standard then in force. The requirements not met related to goals and objectives; governance and management; personnel; learner information, entry and support; assessment and moderation; notification and reporting on learner

Other: achievement; and achievement of goals and objectives.

ProAction Medical Limited trades as Yacht Lifeline and is recognised by its clients primarily by the trading name.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The following focus areas were identified for inclusion in the scope of the external evaluation and review:

- Marine first aid training courses.

Yacht Lifeline (ProAction Medical Limited) is the only specialist marine medical trainer in New Zealand. These courses are run in conjunction with Coastguard Boating Education and the Coastguard Northern Region.

- Governance, management, and strategy

This is a mandatory focus area.

## 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>*

The team consisted of a lead evaluator and an external evaluator who visited the site for one and a half days. The following people were interviewed by the evaluation team: chief executive officer, director, two full-time instructors, administration officer, and the Coastguard Boating Education training and development manager. The Coastguard Northern Region and two students were contacted by phone.

Yacht Lifeline (ProAction Medical Limited) has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **ProAction Medical Limited trading as Yacht Lifeline**.

The training courses are only a small part of the operation of Yacht Lifeline as equipment sales, medical advisory services, and non-NZQA related training provide most of the revenue. Most of the NZQA-accredited courses take place over two days and are generally held at the weekends. The assessment during the courses is formative and combines practical and written work. The pass rate is 100 per cent unless there are any unforeseen circumstances, such as illness necessitating non-attendance for part of a course. Although the courses impart a substantial body of knowledge, they also aim to build confidence in the students so that they can apply the techniques when called upon to do so.

Yacht Lifeline has a clear understanding of the needs of its stakeholders and is in regular contact with them. In this way, the organisation keeps abreast not only of stakeholder needs but also of new techniques and products which can be used in the marine environment. Coastguard Boating Education recognised this value and switched from another provider to Yacht Lifeline as it felt the programmes better matched their needs. The student evaluations of these courses reveal that over 97 per cent of the students during the period 2008-2010 rated the course content as excellent or good.

Major emphasis is always placed on ensuring the training is based on practical situations. The feedback from both Coastguard Boating Education and the Coastguard Northern Region stressed the importance of this. They recognise the experience possessed by the tutors, their high skill levels, and the enabling approach they use. Yacht Lifeline also appreciates the importance of these factors and ensures the high standards are maintained by a thorough induction process for new part-time tutors. The students recognise the effectiveness of the teaching and over 97 per cent of them rated the tutors as either excellent or good during the period 2008-2010.

The learners choose to do the courses either for personal development or because they are coastguard volunteers. In general, they do not require extensive learning support. Nevertheless, Yacht Lifeline caters for individual learning needs by offering extra practical assessment opportunities for students who need them and additional assistance for students during training breaks.

Strong support by the Yacht Lifeline board and management is evidenced by the strategic decision to specialise in the marine environment and the recent decision to extend training to air transport through the establishment of Flight Lifeline.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **ProAction Medical Limited trading as Yacht Lifeline**.

Learner achievement records provide the organisation with data which is used for self-assessment. There was evidence of some use of such data, although the analysis could be improved. Verbal feedback to the organisation also generates discussion and frequently prompts changes.

Through self-assessment, Yacht Lifeline is aware that a considerable number of students return to take other courses. The data shows that approximately 20 per cent of the students on the Coastal Medic course, for example, return to take the Offshore Medic course. Other data used by the organisation reveals that the Coastguard Northern Region sends its volunteers every two years on the Search and Rescue Medic course as a refresher course.

Yacht Lifeline keeps copies of the feedback forms from students and welcomes all types of feedback. There are examples of Yacht Lifeline using the student feedback on the tutors and the course content to improve future courses. For example, when the feedback revealed that some students wanted more time for practical work, the manikins (human models) were made available during training breaks so they could be used for further practice. Another example of Yacht Lifeline reacting in a positive way to feedback occurred this year when some of the venues for the public courses were changed.

The organisation recognises that the tutors' skills and knowledge must be kept up to date. This occurs using the services of the New Zealand Resuscitation Council, Nursing Council NZ, and the Emergency Care Group. These services are supplemented by peer review and use of a tutor delivery and assessment checklist to ensure a consistent standard of delivery.

The Yacht Lifeline board and the management respond appropriately to feedback when it is received. When Coastguard Boating Education suggested that a wider geographical spread of tutors would permit a more cost-effective way of running courses, Yacht Lifeline responded positively by employing two part-time tutors in other parts of the country. The self-assessment is therefore effective in that changes are made in response to feedback, but the process for analysing the feedback could be more coherent and comprehensive.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The training courses are only a small part of the operation of Yacht Lifeline as equipment sales, medical advisory services and non-NZQA related training provide most of the revenue. Most of the NZQA-accredited courses take place over two days and are generally held at the weekends. They are provided for people who refer themselves or are coastguard volunteers. These students are well motivated and frequently already have high levels of skill. Yacht Lifeline adds to these skills, improving the well-being of the individuals and of the community.

The assessment during the courses is progressive and combines practical and written work. The pass rate is 100 per cent unless there are any unforeseen circumstances, such as illness necessitating non-attendance for part of a course. Although the courses impart a substantial body of knowledge, they also aim to build confidence in the students so that they can apply the techniques when called upon to do so. The policies contained in the quality management system reinforce this commitment to student achievement.

Learner achievement records provide the organisation with data which is used for self-assessment. There was evidence of some use of such data, although the analysis could be improved. Verbal feedback to the organisation also generates discussion and frequently prompts changes.

Yacht Lifeline emphasised the positive nature of the feedback from super yachts based overseas. The owners of these yachts contact the organisation for courses tailored to the needs of their crews and in particular the skippers. Such feedback provides Yacht Lifeline with a form of benchmarking as the courses can be compared with those offered by overseas trainers.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Yacht Lifeline is in regular contact with its stakeholders. In this way, the organisation keeps abreast not only of their needs but also of new techniques and products that can be used in the marine environment. The content of each course is informed by the content gleaned from similar international programmes based overseas. Yacht Lifeline provides courses overseas and students on such courses provide feedback on other, similar overseas courses they have attended. These external links show the relevance of the organisation's programmes by enabling comparison with the content and training methods of off-shore providers.

The verbal feedback reinforces the high regard in which the courses are held. Particular mention was made of the anecdotal evidence of yacht crews using the first aid knowledge acquired on the courses. The crew members described how their response to a first aid emergency had become almost automatic. Mention was also made of the growth in learner confidence and how the ensuing higher skill level enhances the entire boating community.

Satisfaction with the outcomes is further illustrated by the fact that a considerable number of students return to take other courses. Approximately 20 per cent of the students on the Coastal Medic course return to take the Offshore Medic course. A Coastguard Boating Education spokesperson wrote that Yacht Lifeline provides "a high standard of training designed specifically for the marine environment", and consequently "we don't anticipate any change to this situation and look forward to working with you into the future". This arrangement has existed for over eight years.

Coastguard Northern Region sends its volunteers every two years on the Search and Rescue Medic course as a refresher course. Sixteen such courses were run in 2009 and by the end of October 2010, 21 such courses had been run, once again demonstrating a high level of stakeholder satisfaction with the outcomes. Yacht Lifeline uses the feedback from overseas students who have attended similar courses to compare the quality of its programmes. A substantial amount of informal input is also gained from the organisation's other business interests. The current pattern of informal feedback is effective at the moment.

## 1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Yacht Lifeline has a clear understanding of the needs of its stakeholders. Coastguard Boating Education is one such stakeholder and is responsible for the design and set-up of the Coastal Medic courses which cater to individuals in the boating world who need marine-based medical skills for licensing or personal development. This organisation switched



from another provider to Yacht Lifeline as it felt the programmes matched its needs better. The student evaluations from these courses reveal that over 97 per cent of the students over the period 2008-2010 rated the course content as excellent or good.

The attention paid by Yacht Lifeline to matching stakeholder needs is further exemplified by the design of the Search and Rescue Medic course for the Coastguard Northern Region. Yacht Lifeline appreciated that coastguard boats would be unable to carry stretchers and consequently devised procedures taking cognisance of this fact. The organisation also identifies the needs of its stakeholders and promotes improvements, such as the provision of defibrillators on all coastguard boats.

Yacht Lifeline continuously receives feedback from its stakeholders and knows that they will choose another provider if they are not having their needs met. One of the measures it takes to ensure stakeholder needs are met is a needs analysis of the learners on post-basic courses through competency exercises at the beginning of the course. The programmes are also continually checked and updated to make sure the content is appropriate and relevant. For example, in order to meet the needs of older people on boats with medical conditions requiring blood thinners, the organisation adapted part of its course to include reference to these medical conditions.

Yacht Lifeline keeps copies of the feedback forms from students which is overwhelmingly positive. All feedback is welcomed by the organisation.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Great emphasis is always placed on ensuring the training is based on practical situations. The feedback from both Coastguard Boating Education and the Coastguard Northern Region stressed the importance of this. They recognised the experience possessed by the tutors, their high skill level, and the enabling approach they used that encourages the students to have confidence in their own abilities. Yacht Lifeline also appreciates the importance of these factors and ensures the high standards are maintained by a thorough induction process for new part-time tutors. This involves them undertaking a critique of one of the full-time instructors' courses, sharing ideas on delivery techniques, and assisting on a course before delivering a course themselves.

The delivery on the courses is customised. Checklists are used throughout to record progress, and opportunities are provided for feedback. The tutors are available during the breaks as well as during course time for students who have additional questions or require further clarification of certain points. The students recognise the effectiveness of the teaching and during the period 2008-2010, over 97 per cent of them rated the tutors as either excellent or good.

Yacht Lifeline pays particular attention to analysing the student feedback on the tutors and the course content. The feedback is recorded and used to improve future courses. For example, when the feedback revealed that some students wanted more time for practical

work, the manikins were made available during breaks so they could be used for further practice. Another example of Yacht Lifeline reacting in a positive way to feedback occurred this year when some of the venues for the public courses were changed.

The organisation insists that any new part-time instructors should be already experienced in first aid in remote environments. It also recognises that the tutors' skills and knowledge must be kept up to date. This occurs using the services of the New Zealand Resuscitation Council, Nursing Council NZ, and the Emergency Care Group. These services are supplemented by peer review and use of a tutor delivery and assessment checklist to ensure a consistent standard of delivery. This careful and comprehensive approach to self-assessment is appreciated by the stakeholders.

### 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The learners choose to do the courses either for personal development or because they are coastguard volunteers. In general, they do not require extensive learning support. Nevertheless, Yacht Lifeline caters for individual learning needs by offering extra practical assessment opportunities for students who need them and additional assistance for students during breaks. They are also given opportunities to provide feedback during the courses so the instructors can adapt their approaches if necessary.

The instructors are mindful of the cultural background of their students and adapt their programmes accordingly. A particularly good example of this was the provision of chicken pieces for Muslim students to practise their suturing techniques rather than the pork hocks that are normally used. All the students are also provided with extensive manuals which guide them and provide them with additional support after the course has been completed.

Yacht Lifeline encourages the students to complete evaluations after the courses and uses the feedback to make improvements.

### 1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The Yacht Lifeline board consists of the two founders, one of whom is a tutor, and three other members. At its monthly meetings the board receives an overview containing specific information on the training courses. Such occasions are used by the board to show its support for the training, as embodied in the high level of resourcing allocated. This resourcing takes the form of the comprehensive manuals provided for each course member and the associated equipment such as crash packs and manikins.

Supportive governance is also evidenced by the strategic decision to specialise in the marine environment and the recent decision to extend training to air transport through the establishment of Flight Lifeline. Consideration of the need to support future courses is shown by the employment of a full-time tutor for Flight Lifeline and the employment of more part-time tutors. All these new staff go through the extensive induction process which has already been described.

The management oversees the quality management system which it views as good practice for the organisation rather than just a compliance measure. Management also ensures good communication and a high level of staff involvement throughout the organisation by holding regular weekly meetings. The performance of the tutors is closely monitored and problems are dealt with effectively. An example of this occurred when the problem of a part-time tutor with a perceived conflict of interest was successfully resolved.

The board and the management respond appropriately to feedback when it is received. When Coastguard Boating Education suggested that a wider geographical spread of tutors would permit a more cost-effective way of running courses, Yacht Lifeline responded positively by employing two part-time tutors in other parts of the country. The policies are reviewed on a regular basis through an online process. The self-assessment is therefore effective in that changes are made in response to feedback, although the process for analysing it could be more coherent and comprehensive.

## Focus Areas

### 2.1 Focus area: Marine first aid training courses

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

### 2.2 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

# Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

# Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.*

*In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.*

*This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.*

*The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.*

*External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.*

*External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>*

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