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External Evaluation and Review Report

Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand (SARINZ) Limited trading as LandSAR Training

Date of report: 19 October 2021

About LandSAR Training

LandSAR Training traces its history back to 2002 as the Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand (SARINZ). LandSAR Training was established in early 2019 as a wholly owned subsidiary of LandSAR Inc. It delivers applied and practical training to LandSAR volunteers and external clients within the broader emergency services response sector (including civil defence, police and coastguard). The PTE accesses some Tertiary Education Commission ‘Mix of Provision’ annual funding, but the bulk is on a user-pays, self-funded basis.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Unit 8, 35 Sir William Pickering Drive, Canterbury Technology Business Park, Christchurch
Code of Practice signatory:	N/a
Number of students:	Approximately 3,500 students or 66 EFTS (equivalent full-time students) per year. Male learners make up 64 per cent of enrolments. Māori learners make up 8 per cent, and Pasifika learners 1 per cent of 2020 enrolments by ethnicity.
Number of staff:	Of the 26 staff that LandSAR employs, five are with LandSAR Training, along with a team of approximately 100 part-time or casual contract tutors with specialist skills and expertise.
TEO profile:	Search and Rescue Institute NZ (NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) visit, conducted in May 2017, NZQA was Highly Confident in LandSAR Training’s educational performance, and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of this evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applied Coordinated Incident Management Training Scheme (level 4) (114569); colloquially known within the emergency response sector as CIMS 4• Stakeholder Engagement

MoE number: 7927
NZQA reference: C45311
Dates of EER visit: 21 and 22 July 2021

Summary of results

LandSAR Training continues to deliver high-value short courses which mostly involve content directly related to the well-being and safety of all New Zealanders, and visitors to the country. There are effective, documented processes for maintaining alignment with stakeholder and learner needs; developing and refining course content; selecting and developing effective tutors; self-assessment; and administering all this within an efficient and compliant manner.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Stakeholders are clearly identified; engagement with them is ongoing, structured and well documented. This leads to course currency and continuous improvement.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The PTE has considerable expertise and experience (on the staff, board, advisory groups and tutor roster), and benefits from being a subsidiary of the LandSAR national body.
- The short-course pass rates are high, with relevant content and valuable outcomes. These relate primarily to search and rescue and disaster response activities and strategies.
- Guidance and support is integrated within the training. Survey feedback indicates learner satisfaction with all aspects of the training. LandSAR desires to attract more priority group learners as volunteers and learners.
- As well as ongoing reflection and review, research-based course content evaluations occur to ensure their currency and relevance.
- All training is increasingly linked to a wider competency framework, and this is being developed to reflect a 21st century view of ‘skills currency’, and how that is maintained, including by activities outside of formal training.
- Governance and management structures and processes support learner achievement well.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Almost all learners succeed in achieving the assessment requirements and pass their short course training at the PTE. Commonly, these learners are LandSAR, coastguard or other volunteers, and what the PTE describes as ‘corporate clients’.² These are people with some preparatory knowledge gained in a professional role, or from voluntary and recreational experience, and are mostly over 25 years of age. In common with much short course training, the content is well aligned to the assessment requirements and is taught to small cohorts.</p> <p>The content being achieved is of high value. The largest course by volume (CIMS 4) is based around the mandated New Zealand system to manage and coordinate response efforts to emergency events, across groups and agencies. Course materials have been updated recently, with the latest version unit standards implemented in 2021. Pre-moderation for these materials was conducted by The Skills Organisation.</p> <p>Tracking of course quality and monitoring of results is linked to course scheduling, is systematic, and has sound quality assurance oversight. Data analysis also includes demographic information, but no specific comparison with Tertiary Education Strategy Priority Learner Group achievement. However, there is no evidence of any variation in pass rates by gender or ethnicity from the data presented to NZQA.</p>
Conclusion:	Pass rates are high and defensibly so. Materials and content are useful and subject to review and moderation. Efforts to maintain their currency and suitability are sound. Fundamental knowledge relating to search and rescue and disaster response strategies is transmitted across New Zealand.

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation’s activities.

² Such as staff of MBIE, New Zealand Police, Navy, Air Force, civil defence and local government.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>As indicated under 1.1, the training content is of high importance and value. That there is an increase in demand for CIMS 4 since 2020 is notable and is a response to an identified national under-preparedness for natural disasters. The PTE has multiple competitors but considers itself as a leading provider because of staff capability, increasing volume, and repeat business from significant stakeholders. There is consistent uptake of all training offerings by client groups and individuals, indicating high confidence, and there is consistency in survey derived learner satisfaction rates across the programme suite.</p> <p>A range of individual and group learning needs are being served; there is value added for experienced practitioners in refresher training, as well as confidence building among professionals and volunteers involved in search and rescue and emergency response settings. The courses also provide a crucial context for collaboration and sharing of experience among different groups. Feedback from a 2020 learner survey was positive, including 99 per cent positive for course organisation and delivery, and similarly for student feedback on the quality of tutors' delivery.</p> <p>The LandSAR advisory committee meets quarterly, and in addition there are 10 subject-specialist stakeholder advisory groups which meet at least annually. These are key mechanisms for monitoring that courses are aligned with need. The courses and their ongoing refinement provide a forum for gathering and disseminating best practice (including some international perspective) across multiple communities of interest nationally.</p>
Conclusion:	There is strong engagement with sector expertise and leadership. The PTE intentionally seeks ongoing external scrutiny and advice. Learners gain or refresh new skills and knowledge and contribute positively to their local and wider communities. Tutors have the capability to deliver training to first-time learners as well as to skilled practitioners, consistently making a positive impact.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning activities, match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Stakeholder engagement informs the design and delivery of the learning activities at LandSAR Training. The PTE employs or contracts a diverse tutor group of highly experienced sector specialists. Some key stakeholders have formal annual training plans with agreed outcomes, including the approval of materials. For some courses, advisory groups must formally approve any new tutors. These contractual and compliance requirements can be time-consuming and occasionally lead to delivery of slightly outdated material.</p> <p>The appointment, induction and oversight of new tutors is thorough and well managed. It includes in-class observation, co-teaching and moderation of marked assessments. Observation and feedback templates and other material evidence show clear criteria to achieve the desired quality and consistency of delivery. There is a documented system and pathway for tutors from recruitment and induction through to lead tutor status. This process is in use and is supported through initial shadowing by an experienced tutor, supervised co-teaching, and finally sign-off as being competent to deliver and assess using centrally developed and approved materials.</p> <p>Thorough, expert-led investigations around particular aspects of course content occurs, and the reports are disseminated for discussion and reflection before any formal consultation on changing course content takes place. These have included, for example, the Cave Rope Rescue Testing Report and the LandSAR Tracking Programme Review (both 2021). Sometimes there is an aspect of responding to feedback or concerns raised when initiating reviews, although in other cases the desire to constantly refine practice is the catalyst. Improvements in first aid training to reflect remote incidents was another example described by PTE staff, a medical advisory group member, and a graduate.</p> <p>Assembling the dispersed roster of tutors for group professional development and self-assessment is challenging. However, it has occurred since the last EER, and another event is</p>

	scheduled. Any risks here are mitigated by the quality assurance processes described above.
Conclusion:	Stakeholder input is consistently sought and utilised. Learners have formal and informal opportunities to provide critical feedback on their experience of the training. Learning activities and resources are effective in engaging learners within a safe context. The programme portfolio is still undergoing a comprehensive, all-course review since the establishment of the PTE, but all high-use courses have been comprehensively reviewed.

1.4 How effectively are learners supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Learners are initially guided by the resources and relevant information on an easily navigable website. Barriers to participation are reduced by course delivery occurring at suitable premises across New Zealand. An efficient central course administration team uses well-developed processes to organise each course offering and communicate in a timely way with participants.</p> <p>Course outlines and teaching materials provide clarity around the competencies covered in each course, as well as the assessment requirements. Depending on need, learners may be paired or grouped to enable peer support and guidance. Often there is a wide range of learners, and tutors attempt to quickly draw on this variety of experience to enrich the training and to identify any special needs which may need their intervention. This may include learner disability or confidence concerns.</p> <p>Stakeholders described tutors as knowledgeable, with lots of practical experience who use scenario-based problems which add realism. CIMS 4 is seen as an opportunity to assemble learners from various organisations – building a shared language, understanding and relationships, which all reflect the intent of the training scheme.</p> <p>The recent interim domestic Code of Practice review enabled a deeper consideration of this key evaluation question by the PTE, and the context they are delivering in (which may touch on high-</p>

	risk situations and sensitive content which could be uncomfortable for some learners and tutors). A flyer comprising a wellness self-assessment (see Appendix 2), and links to external mental health support have been developed and are now routinely provided to learners.
Conclusion:	Learners are suitably guided and supported, in keeping with the short duration of the training. Responses to the well-being needs of learners are appropriate. Refinement is constantly occurring.

1.5 How well does governance and management support learner achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The PTE has a governance board, including volunteer member representation, which meets formally every two months. Moderation activity, programme development-related information, quality improvement requests, and student evaluation metrics are reported to the board. Meetings are clearly prepared and minuted and there is a clear tracking of actions and allocation of responsibilities; timeframes are assigned for action. Succession planning, investment in IT and managing growth have been topics of attention. Additional staff have been employed to cope with growth, and a relatively new client relationship management tool is being embedded into practice.</p> <p>The chief executive is employed by the board and has military, search and rescue and PTE experience. He also delivers some training. A long-serving training manager capably oversees operations and delivers some courses as well. As described earlier, stakeholder identification and engagement is sound and ongoing. There are some time-consuming financial complexities due to the structure and processes of multiple funding sources in this sector. However, based on interviews and board papers, this appears to be well managed, with aspirations to reduce the complexity.</p> <p>Operationally there is well-planned regional provision. This is enabled by a training needs analysis and calendar set by regions, reflecting seasonal priorities as some training is outdoor. A nimble response during the pandemic lockdowns of</p>

	<p>2020 led to some online delivery.³</p> <p>There is a strategic ‘culture shift’ and move from repeated courses for maintaining currency to one which uses multiple points of evidence. This relates to a wider LandSAR goal that ‘all...volunteers are actively engaged in a competency framework that describes the operational roles and articulates the skills and knowledge required to carry out those roles competently and safely’. This has implications for the ongoing review of courses and is quite visionary.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>LandSAR Training is forward looking, has clarity of purpose and direction, and is responsive to stakeholder needs, benefiting from numerous active advisory groups. Staff are valued and consulted, and efforts to gather and inform the dispersed tutor pool have strengthened. Documentation, policy setting and data analysis processes are sound.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There are numerous processes and outcomes which indicate that compliance management is attended to and is sound overall, including the following.</p> <p>The PTE board holds overall responsibility for compliance, with structured delegation to management and quality assurance functions. It meets six times annually and appoints an audit committee which reviews all policies and financial commitments and undertakings.</p> <p>The board appoints the chief executive, who has operational responsibility for overseeing compliance. There is an annual management plan to support the board’s strategies. The board meeting documents sampled by the evaluators showed effective processes and clarity of information. A typical milestone action plan is also used by the quality coordinator. Responsibilities are clear and formalised in policy and job description.</p> <p>Service Level Agreement Reviews provide a structure for</p>

³ Not the formal CIMS 4 or first aid.

	<p>numerous aspects of the contracted delivery. These are formally monitored and reported, with no apparent compliance concerns, and attention is paid to resolving issues which crop up, or to improving, for example, financial reporting.</p> <p>A tutor qualification benchmark, and a tutor development pathway, is clearly outlined in the PTE's policies and procedures. The requirements to meet these are attended to in relation to, for example, industry training organisation requirements.</p> <p>Required documentation is provided to NZQA in good time and with accuracy. Delivery of the focus area training scheme aligns with NZQA approval. A domestic Code attestation to NZQA was completed after self-review and identification of a few required actions (some completed and some in progress) to align all activities with the expected outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	Key compliance accountabilities are well managed. No outstanding questions, limitations or gaps were noted.

Focus areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Applied Coordinated Incident Management Training Scheme (CIMS 4)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Contextual comments:	The aim of this seven-credit training scheme is ‘to instil an understanding of the principles, structure and operation of the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) as it is applied to emergency response in New Zealand’. The delivery at LandSAR Training is consequential and sizeable (42 EFTS of user-pays training is currently being delivered). It is current, and increasing in national reach as more uptake has occurred since 2020. The training scheme was modified, and then re-approved by NZQA in 2020. The changes included the replacement of an expiring unit standard, updating the other two standards, and refreshing the training materials. Tutors are specialists, and normally teach in pairs to mixed learner groups.

2.2 Focus area: Stakeholder Engagement

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not mandatory, but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. These include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Moderation outcomes for LandSAR training

Table 1. Pre-moderation

Year	Industry	Unit	Result
2019 and 2020	First Aid	6400 6401 6402	Approved
2020	Emergency Management	32158 29553 29554	Approved

Table 2. Post-moderation

Year	Industry	Unit	Result
2020	Emergency Management	17279 29553 29554	All Samples Met Moderation

Source: The Skills Organisation (22.7.2021)

Appendix 2

LandSAR Self Wellbeing Check-in Tool

This tool has been designed to assist you to reflect on your own mental health status, to frame up your triggers and to guide your support planning

	Thriving	Surviving	Distressed/Stressed	Unwell
Physical Wellbeing	Physically well & feeling full of energy	Low energy & motivation Muscle tension, headaches Tired & lethargic at times Minor physical ailments – but responding anyway	Low energy & feeling tired/fatigue Frequent muscle tension, headaches, aches & pains Significant loss/gain in appetite/weight Use of alcohol to forget or feel numb	Physically unwell or physical illness Significant weight loss or gain Decreased personal care Use of drugs or excessive alcohol
Emotional Wellbeing	Usual fluctuations in mood with frequent positive emotions Able to manage usual frustrations & stressors	Some nervousness, irritability, or sadness evident Cranky with others	Frequent anxiety, nervousness, anger, sadness, hopelessness or irritability Feeling numb and disconnected Family and friends have detected change	Intense & persistent displays of emotions - agitation, anger, anxiety, low mood, irritability, hopelessness, overwhelmed Frequent worry or concern
Sleep	Able to achieve quality rest & sleep; presents as well rested	Difficulties achieving adequate rest or sleep	Difficulties achieving adequate rest or sleep Restless or disturbed sleep	Difficulties falling or staying asleep Sleep disturbed by dreaming, worry or excessive thinking Sleeping too much or too little Insomnia
Activity	Psyched to receive a call out Eager to help out with any extra volunteer work that's not operationally focused Have a sense of purpose & confidence Socially active with strong connections with others Engaged at home & work	Questioning if the call out is worth responding to Cutting corners Loss of situational awareness Decreased interest in social activity & engagement with the team Decreased involvement in usual activities	Having the 'Oh No' moment when called Reduced motivation & not meeting expectations Easily frustrated and not interested in training with group Avoiding normal recreational activities Social avoidance, withdrawal or detachment from others – peers, family & friends	Hate or fear getting a call out & finding ways or excuses to avoid responding Don't want to respond to group meetings or trainings Difficulties making decisions or completing tasks Isolation from others, and avoiding social activities
Thinking	Good focus & attention Open to new ideas, change is exciting/not threatening Concerns or worries can be dismissed or managed	Others aren't pulling their weight; stupid ideas Procrastination Reduced concentration & forgetfulness Difficulties making timely decisions	Regular thoughts & worries about issues/ incidents Negative outlook, thinking or attitude Increased forgetfulness	Going through motions without emotion Frequent thoughts/dreams/memories of issues Unusual/disturbing thoughts Chronic negative & critical thinking Difficulties with memory & concentration
Actions	MAINTAIN AND OPTIMISE YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING Actively engage in coping strategies and support options as proactive strategies to optimise wellbeing Promote positive wellbeing & mental health literacy within the group, and normalise support and help seeking Maintain and nurture relationships Practice gratitude and self-compassion Maintain an optimistic outlook	STRENGTHEN WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE Explore opportunities to increase use of coping strategies including the use of new strategies Amplify healthy lifestyle habits; exercise, nutrition, sleep, social activities	MOBILISE SUPPORT & DEVELOP A WELLBEING PLAN Reach out to social supports, friends, family, social networks. Proactively schedule social activities and pleasant events Connect with LandSAR Support Services; Member Assistance Programme (MAP) Where necessary consult with your GP	SEE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE & DEVELOP A SUPPORT ACTION PLAN Establish a strong network of support including a mental health professional (through LandSAR MAP or your GP) Where appropriate consider ACC

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA’s published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report’s findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud⁴*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

⁴ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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