

# ElectroLink



**Safety and innovation drive Jackson Electrical growth**

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Late last year, a candyfloss seller at a Christmas carnival was replacing lamps near his family's stall when his five-year-old daughter stuck her thumb into a light fitting and received an electric shock.

Fortunately the power cut off instantaneously and the girl suffered only minor burns. As her mother commented on Facebook: "Thank God for miracles that we still have our baby girl here with us."

Divine power might have saved the little girl, but it was the divine power protection provided by an RCD that disconnected the power in less than 30 milliseconds and before it could arrest her heart.

Yet another life had been saved by the rapidly responding RCDs that stand sentinel over human life in every 'Lifeguard' portable electrical product designed and engineered by Jackson Electrical.

A Jackson Lifeguard power distribution



**David, Jim, Amanda and Mark Jackson provide second generation commitment to ensure the company's future**



**Market leadership earned in New Zealand through a strong commitment to product quality and reliability has enabled Jackson Electrical to grow markets off shore**

system was used to supply temporary power throughout the carnival site, protecting everyone using all manner of equipment from heavy rides to a handful of decorative Christmas lights.

Jackson Electrical managing director, Jim Jackson, says it was heart-warming to hear of this young life saved and that his team of 60 staff at the company's Auckland manufacturing facilities had come through yet again for the community.

"We designed Lifeguards to be the first and final defence for people needing reliable power beyond the reach of electrical installations safely installed by electricians. Whether for temporary power to get construction sites up and running or for public events, Lifeguard's are specifically designed for people protection, and that's how they got their name."

## Hard-won innovation

RCD protection has been at the core of Jackson's innovative Lifeguards since 1977, when Jackson began importing and distributing Fuji RCDs. But getting RCDs approved for this life-saving role had taken years of convincing sceptical regulators and the electrical inspectorate.

Energy Safety's principal technical advisor, Peter Morfee, says it was Jackson's belief in the new technology and his persistence that finally got RCDs accepted as the safety solution the industry and public take for granted today.

"If any one person can be credited with the successful introduction of RCDs in New

Zealand, Jim Jackson deserves that credit. Electrical safety took a significant step forward thanks to his contribution."

That contribution continues today as Jackson Electrical develops new products and technologies – some beyond the company's electrical base. Most recently, Jackson developed moulds to make Emirates Team New Zealand's foils that raised catamaran speed to new heights in the America's Cup.

But while other areas of design opportunity have caught Jim Jackson's engineering eye, Lifeguard systems continue to develop as the company's flagship products. Incremental improvements in materials, components and design add to the already solid reputation and market leadership earned by Lifeguard over many years of reliable operation.

Jackson's retiring general manager, Terry Daly, says Lifeguards are the most reliable

products of their type and this is confirmed by the regular testing regime run by Jackson Electrical to ensure Lifeguard systems sold or hired out by the company continue to operate at the highest safety standard. He says the company runs an extensive hire service from both its Auckland premises and its recently established Christchurch division which is operated by Mark Sweetman, who previously worked for Jackson in its design office.

The company offers a variety of units ranging from 10 amps to 1000 amps. These units are inter-connected by a range of cables including standard-compliant, flexible cables manufactured specifically for Jackson Electrical and to its specification. These yellow-sheathed, earth-screened cables provide robust mechanical protection and are especially designed for construction sites in both New Zealand and Australia.

Temporary site lighting systems are also available for use on the harshest construction sites as an addition to the range of permanently installed weather-proof Lifeguards used in heavy industry, including timber and dairy applications. Daly says all enclosures are manufactured by the company from highly resilient polyethylene, glass-reinforced plastic or stainless steel.

Where the convenience of local RCD protection is required for equipment operators, such as for regular maintenance on industrial sites, Jackson Electrical supplies wall-mounted Lifeguard units that deliver safety and three-phase supply in the same convenient place.

## Safer construction

The first major construction company to standardise on Lifeguard power distribution systems for its building sites was Hawkins Construction.

Hawkins plant manager, Dave Wright, says the company now has about 300 Lifeguards (mostly in the company's unique orange colour) and 200 lighting units deployed throughout its projects.

He says he has tried one or two alternatives to the Jackson products but never found them to be as robust or well-engineered.

"They last forever. We still have some of the original metal units in use in Christchurch. We have replaced most of these decades-old units but not because they failed but because they are heavy and we switched to

the lighter high-impact-resistant polyethylene units which are easier for one-man use."

Wright says he likes the new units with each phase having its own RCD protection so the entire board doesn't shut down when the RCDs do their job.

He says safety is paramount on Hawkins sites and Lifeguards are hugely important for ensuring safety.



**Local manufacturing by Jackson Electrical builds component, materials and design expertise for continuing product development and the employment of 60 skilled staff**

"We supply temporary power through the Lifeguard system for our sub-contractors. We know the system is safe and proven and nothing goes on-site without a new test tag."

He says Jackson staff are very good to deal with.

"They know their stuff and keep up with the regulations so we know all compliance obligations are being met. They also do their homework on what the industry needs and are adaptable to changing requirements."

## Electrical product supply

Complementing the power distribution systems, Jackson also distributes a comprehensive selection of heavy duty IEC309 industrial plug and socket systems up to 125 amps, RCDs and circuit breakers from European manufacturers.

A recent addition are 'plug-and-play' soft wiring systems for office fit-outs en-

abling workstations to be relocated and plugged back in without the need for hard wiring.

Jim Jackson says a lot of the company's focus is on providing products with a difference. He prefers leading, not following.

"We want to make the best product and have invested heavily in seven CNC machines and other plant to achieve this. When it

comes to product customisation or improvement, there is no such word as 'no!'"

To add to the core values driving Jackson Electrical's growth and development over its past 37 years of business in the New Zealand and Australian electrical industries, second generation Jackson family members Amanda, Mark and David have joined the company over the past seven years.

"They are continuing to provide innovation and direction by working alongside long-serving staff members who are critical to the ongoing manufacturing process and without them there would be no business." ■

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