



## **Get to know Caine, our graduate speech pathologist gaining a wealth of experience Mount Isa**

At NWRH, we're proud to have a diverse team from all different cultures, backgrounds, professions and locations. This also includes our robust mix of graduates and experienced clinicians. Our team enjoys challenging, varied work in rural, remote, and regional communities, delivering healthcare services to those who may not receive it otherwise.

For graduates considering joining NWRH, get to know some of our new team members starting their career! We spoke with our graduate speech pathologist, Caine, about why he chose NWRH over metro opportunities and the wealth of experience he is gaining in all areas of speech pathology.

After a delayed start due to border lockdowns, Caine has joined us all the way from Adelaide. Interestingly, it was always his goal to move to Queensland after completing his degree, to be closer to family. When a position appeared in Mount Isa it was the perfect opportunity.

"At NWRH, I can learn about all areas in speech pathology, instead of having to specialise straight out of university," says Caine, "I had a really structured induction process and have been feeling really supported throughout my time here. It can be overwhelming to make the transition from student to clinician with a full caseload, but NWRH is extremely supportive and patient."

### **Varied caseloads & working in a multidisciplinary team**

As a speech pathologist, Caine is responsible for diagnosing and providing intervention for communication and swallowing disorders. He works with patients across a wide spectrum, from those with neurodegenerative conditions, to teens dealing with difficulties in social communication and children with motor-impacted speech development.

"Speech pathologists in cities and metro areas tend to be highly specialised, for example, in paediatrics, adults, speech or language. At NWRH, working in rural areas, I'm in a more generalist role, working with a hugely varied client population. This means I undertake lots of additional research for clients. There isn't necessarily the same transferable knowledge from case to case that clinicians in metro areas would see day in and day out. Here, almost every client I see has a different presentation. For me, this makes work really interesting and rewarding."

Caine enjoys working with a multidisciplinary team in his office.

"The people in the office are fantastic. They're always willing and open to sharing knowledge about being a clinician. There are many new graduates at NWRH, and we all share the same keenness and motivation. There's a good balance of experienced clinicians and graduates."

Working with another speech pathologist allows him to exchange knowledge in different areas of expertise. Outside NWRH, there's a tightknit community of speech pathologists in Mount Isa.

"We attend inter-agency meetings and people are always happy to meet one-on-one for me to ask questions. Recently, I met someone from the Department of Education and another person from the hospital to discuss acute care. Working for NWRH is a great role for new graduates."



While it's still early stages in his career journey, it's been great for Caine to see the progress some of his clients have made so far.

"One of my client's teachers called me to share their progress in using a communication strategy. The client was so proud, he was hanging out all week to tell me about it!"

### **Travelling to remote regions**

Caine works for three weeks in Mount Isa, then travels for one week to the remote communities in Boulia and Dajarra.

"I enjoy travelling to remote areas to see people who don't have many support options. I love working with the kids and seeing how much respect they have for our team visiting them to provide healthcare. I love being able to see five different patients and have five completely different sets of challenges to work with. It's an incredible work experience that always keeps you learning and growing as a clinician."

He typically travels with another occupational therapist and physiotherapist. This multidisciplinary approach enables Caine to learn more about other professions. It's often travel that forges the strongest relationships between clinicians.

"When visiting remote communities, we only have a limited time to see people. There's a strong sense of cooperation in our team to deliver joint services to achieve goals from all disciplines. You learn so much about what other professions offer and even ways to improve your own service delivery. You develop great friendships working and sharing time with likeminded people."

For Caine, it's a powerful learning opportunity to see the way his colleagues engage with key stakeholders, from parents and teachers to other health professionals in local clinics.

"My colleagues have worked for NWRH and engaged with these communities for a long time. They know everyone in the community and have built amazing relationships by providing great healthcare. There's respect for clinicians in the communities. They know we're there to help and are working to achieve positive health outcomes."

"You receive a lot of support from NWRH, and you're encouraged to further your studies and engage in professional development. When I first joined, I received a great orientation with cultural safety and awareness training. This is something NWRH does really well. Our manager has a clear vision to achieve this, and we all share the same goals to improve healthcare service delivery in a culturally safe and appropriate way."

### **Life in Mount Isa**

Outside work, Caine enjoys numerous hobbies – too many to count! – from woodwork to martial arts. (Did you know you can train in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in Mount Isa?)

"It's a great lifestyle and culture here; many people have moved from the city, from new graduates to others who are starting new careers. Because of that, it's easy to visit somewhere local and meet new people, as everyone shares the same mindset. My entire experience has been incredibly positive. I recommend NWRH to anyone looking to gain an awesome experience as a new graduate or experienced clinician."



For graduates interested in joining NWRH, Caine recommends being honest with yourself when you encounter knowledge gaps. “If you don’t know something, reach out to someone who knows more, or conduct additional research. Honesty and the motivation to improve are important skills to have.”

Caine is looking forward to growing in his profession, learning, and working with people from different cultures and backgrounds, and developing trust and strong relationships with clients and colleagues. He looks forward to expanding his theoretical knowledge and putting this into practice.

