



## How our Exercise Physiologist, Jacob, improves health outcomes in rural communities

### Mount Isa

Working in rural and remote communities can be a challenge. At NWRH, our team members perform long hours and cover a lot of distance to see patients who may not otherwise have any access to healthcare and support otherwise. We get to see the real difference our work makes in the lives of people and communities, and that's what makes our work so rewarding.

Jacob, our exercise physiologist, sees a range of complex health issues and travels a few days every week to remote communities. "I see a lot of conditions that I wouldn't ever see in metro areas. More complex cases would, in other locations, fall under the domain of a supervisor or senior clinician. We get thrown in the deep end out here, but it's a great way to learn and grow as a clinician."

Jacob is passionate about Aboriginal health and works in a number of Aboriginal communities. "The elders and people in these communities are great to work with. We do have to be different in our practice to get the best results. It's important to be sensitive and use the right language to ensure everyone is on the same page. All our interactions are based on respect, which goes a long way."

Jacob moved to Mount Isa from Brisbane after completing his post-graduate degree. It was a big change, but he has adapted to the lifestyle, and is now well and truly a part of the Mount Isa community. In fact, his neighbour is another NWRH exercise physiologist who travels to towns south of Mount Isa, while Jacob travels east and west.

"We each bring something different to the table, whether it's clinical knowledge or different ways to engage with clients and communities. All of the team at NWRH help each other, and it's a very supportive environment."

Jacob works closely with health practitioners in other fields, both when he is working in Mount Isa and when he travels throughout Camooweal, Cloncurry, and Julia Creek.

"Our multidisciplinary practices are unique to NWRH. We work so closely with so many professions, which helps to grow all of our skills. Health problems often don't happen in isolation, so we work best when we can treat people as a team. For example, I might see someone about their heart health, then refer them to our dietician and a podiatrist. Our goal is to treat not only symptoms but deal with the root cause of their health concerns."

One of the most rewarding things about working in remote Queensland for Jacob is seeing the difference that he can make every day. With the help of the NWRH team, patients have the opportunity to transform their health.



“Recently, one of our patients was able to completely turn his life around. Previously, he did not live a healthy lifestyle. Now, he’s exercising every day and eating well. He’s a completely different person. It’s a great feeling to have played a part in changing someone’s life for the better.”

When Jacob isn’t at work, he loves exploring nature and making the most of the fantastic social life Mount Isa has to offer. “I’ve made many new friends since moving here, from miners to electricians and doctors. Many move to Mount Isa for work, often without having any connections, so we stick together. It makes for a great social life, and I’m so busy that it keeps things interesting.”

Every day out here is different, and Jacob is looking forward to continuing to develop his clinical skill set by seeing new conditions every day, and embracing new challenges as they come.

