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**​June 2020**

**Mitchell Christiansen**

Hi, my name is Mitch Christiansen. I’m 23 years old and live in Grafton, Northern NSW. I completed Year 12 at McAuley Catholic College, Grafton in 2015. For the past 2 years I have been doing lab work for a Geotechnical company.

Last year I got my driver's license. It took some time as we had to travel to Port Macquarie to have lessons with a specialised driving instructor. I have a spinner control knob with all the controls (blinkers, lights, etc) and a left foot accelerator. It’s great to be able to drive independently.

I have been competing in athletics as a para-athlete for the past 14 years. My classification is T37 as I have right Hemiplegia. I have competed at local, State and National and International levels.

The events I compete in are 100 & 200m. I have recently started training and competing in Long Jump also.

My local club is Grafton Athletics Club where I have been a member for 14 years. During this time, I have formed many long-term friendships with my fellow training squad members and my Coach.

During the COVID19 epidemic, I had been training from home. My home program was similar to my usual program, following instructions devised by my Coach and my Exercise Physiologist. My training was completed by facetime and zoom sessions and one on one training as restrictions eased. I also competed in an online virtual athletics competition for athletes in Northern NSW.

I found it hard at first to train independently as I enjoy the camaraderie, support and encouragement from my squad.

I generally train 4 times a week. Training sessions consist of circuits, sprints, weights and strength exercises. We also train on the sandhills at one of the local beaches. The pros of living in a country town is I don’t have to travel far to train. The track I train on is at the end of my street but is a grass field. The cons are that during the athletic season I travel 3-4 hours to the Gold Coast or Brisbane Qld for competition Shield events. Sometimes this is 3-4 weeks running. I travel 7 hours to Sydney for State titles.

Apart from athletics, I played cricket for four years. I just do athletics now. This is my main focus. I’m pretty interested in most sports, however, Rugby League and NRL are my favourites. I am a very passionate Roosters supporter.

My short-term goals are to continue to increase PB times and do well at the Melanesian Championships in Fiji later in the year. My long-term goals are to compete at CP World Athletics Championships and Paralympics. My proudest sporting moment was getting a bronze medal at my first international competition in Townsville at the Oceania Championships last year.