

Paolo Polimeni

Country: Italy

Course: Diploma of Community Welfare and Diploma of Disability Work

Institute: TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute



Paolo Polimeni knew he wanted his career to focus on helping people but, in his native Italy, he couldn't find a course that taught these skills.

"In Italy there is no equivalent vocational education training like TAFE NSW Institutes."

So he started to search for courses which led him to Australia and the Diploma of Community Welfare and the Diploma of Disability Work taught at TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute and he enrolled in 2005.

TAFE NSW - North Coast Institute, Kingscliff College, is a one-hour flight from Sydney but only 20 minutes from the Gold Coast Airport. The Institute spans northern New South Wales and includes the coastal cities of Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Ballina.

"I chose to study in Australia for the great quality of life, the level of education and the possibility of skilled migration."

Paolo found the practical teaching methods and student support services impressive. "I enjoyed the opportunity to participate in class, to give my opinion and be part of the discussion."

TAFE NSW Institute class sizes are small with an average 1:15 teacher-student ratio. While studying both courses, Paolo completed work placements in a youth refuge and with two charity organisations.

"The placements were very useful as they gave me a real opportunity to see what community work was like."

Studying at North Coast Institute, an Australian Government-approved regional Institute meant Paolo received five extra points towards his migration application. After graduating in 2006, Paolo applied for Australian permanent residency and gained employment as a Social Support Program Manager with a not-for-profit community organisation. Paolo works with the elderly, people with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS and intends to continue to work in this area.

"All the skills I learned at TAFE NSW I'm using every day."

Many employers, like Paolo's, provide work placement to TAFE NSW students enrolled in the Diploma confident that TAFE NSW students will have the academic knowledge, excellent professional skills and practical experience required in the workplace.