

In August of 2017, I was lucky enough to head to sunny Alice Springs for a 3 week audiology placement with NT Hearing. My placement included working at a range of different sites. Our main site was a community health centre, where I worked with a range of diverse health professionals, including speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and child health nurses. I was also lucky enough to spend some time at the Alice Springs hospital, where I worked alongside ear nose and throat specialists and even ran a stall for Hearing Awareness Week. At the beginning of the placement, I wasn't aware as to how much I would love working in a rural setting, however as the placement went on, I found that I was not only learning so much more than I would have in a metro placement, but I was also having a lot of fun. My favourite aspects of this experience would have to be meeting and learning from some of the best health practitioners in the country. I found that in no matter which discipline they belonged to, every health professional that I dealt with had a wealth of knowledge that they were more than happy to share with me and other students. As there is a large indigenous population in Alice, I was also able to learn a lot about indigenous health, which is extremely invaluable in any profession. It was such an eye opening experience to see the differences in health care in rural areas, when compared to those in metro areas. Another experience was witnessing my first ear surgeries with the ear, nose and throat surgeons. I knew I was very lucky to experience this, as it is highly uncommon for this to happen in the city. It wasn't all work though, on the weekends and some weeknights I was also able to explore the town, and I took tours of Uluru and Kata Tjuta, the West McDonnell Ranges and even visited The Kangaroo Sanctuary, where I got to play with some pretty adorable wildlife. There was nearly always something happening in town from night markets, to musical performances and exhibitions of the most beautiful indigenous artwork. I

am beyond grateful for this experience as I was able to meet so many amazing people, learn so much about my field and the health sector in general as well as explore an amazing part of this country. I could not recommend a rural placement more, and only wish I could go back and do it all over again!

-Angela Hennes (LaTrobe University)

