

## NAFEA- Remote student placement feedback

Completing a clinical placement in a remote setting provided me with the opportunity to learn clinical skills, advantageous to my learning. During my time at Alice Springs Hospital, within the Speech Pathology Department, I was fortunate enough to, not only provide clinical care to acute and subacute patients, but also be involved in Speech Pathology Advocacy. In Celebration of Speech Pathology Week, the Alice Springs Hospital (ASH) Speech Pathology team, including myself, held an informational and interactive stall, to raise awareness around the importance of swallowing safety.

The theme of Speech Pathology Australia week, 'Communication Access – Everyone Gets the Message', which draws on one of the eight key aspirations from the Speech Pathology 2030 project, reinforces the important role that speech pathologists play in the lives of Australians with speech and swallowing difficulties. Here, one of the main focuses, of the Speech Pathology team is to work towards 'Closing the Gap', within Aboriginal communities of Central Australia in health and wellbeing.

I assisted in providing hospital staff, visitors, patients and community members the opportunity to be a part of an interactive stall during Speech Pathology week. Some of the activities included within the event included, guessing the number of muscles used to swallow, how many times we swallow per day and sampling of thickened fluids. The team also introduced their video: 'The Safe Way to Eat and Drink' and flyers with safe swallowing strategies. Speech Pathology Week provided a platform to launch this culturally relevant and appropriate educational program focusing on swallowing safety. The video was made available in several local Aboriginal languages, including Arrernte, Walpiri, Pitjantjara, Anmatyere and Luritja, as well as English. Throughout the week patients, staff and community members were provided with educational flyers, with easy to follow instructions on how to swallow safely. We have been provided with an overwhelming amount of spontaneous, positive feedback regarding the materials and its relevance to the members of the community.

This experience has provided me with the skill set to work efficiently within an acute and subacute setting, in the Indigenous community in a remote setting. Throughout this 7 week placement, my passion for remote health delivery grew, and I am elated to note that I had been offered a contract as Speech Pathologist at Alice Springs Hospital, beginning in 2017.