

Spin A Yarn (SAY) Speech Pathology in Outback Schools Program

An initiative of Speech Pathology, Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney and Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health



Speech Pathology services for children in the Broken Hill area have experienced a chronic lack of consistent staffing for the past 20 years. As a result many children with significant communication impairments have not received appropriate treatment. This initiative aims to provide regular and consistent speech pathology services to the schools of Broken Hill and surrounding areas. It is proposed that during each year up to four teams of speech pathology students will spend 6-8 weeks in each school term living in Broken Hill and providing assessment and treatment services to children attending school in the area. These placements will be part of the undergraduate fourth year clinical experience or the final semester graduate entry masters clinical experience.

A partnership has been formed with the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health (BHUDRH) and school principals in the area. BHUDRH will provide speech pathology students with free accommodation during their 6-8 week stay in Broken Hill as well as an orientation to Broken Hill, opportunities to learn about health issues in rural Australia, Indigenous cultural awareness training and engagement in interprofessional learning with other health students. Staff from the BHUDRH will also be available to support students during their placement and advise on indigenous issues. To find out more about BHUDRH click on the link below. School principals have agreed to provide space for the students to work in and support from teaching staff.

<http://www.drh.med.usyd.edu.au/>

Broken Hill has six Department of Education primary schools and this new placement program will see speech pathology students spending time in each school throughout

the year as well as smaller outreach schools such as Menindee Central School and Children's Centre (Preschool).

<http://www.menindee-c.schools.nsw.edu.au/>
<http://www.brokenhills-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/>

Students on placement in Broken Hill will benefit from face to face supervision as well as remote supervision from experienced speech pathologists. Pre placement briefing and debriefing will also be available. This placement is an opportunity to experience life in Australian rural and remote communities, to learn about the health issues of these communities and to make a difference in the lives of the children and families who live there. On the weekend there are near by national parks to explore and Broken Hill has a thriving art, sport and social scene.

The planned commencement is for pilot programs to be conducted in June 2009 (approximately 4 weeks) and late August- September 2009 (approximately 6 weeks). It is hoped that a full rollout of the proposed program could subsequently commence in 2009. If you are interested in participating in this unique and exciting placement program as a final year student (masters or undergraduate) in 2009 or 2010 please advise Charlotte Colaco (C.Colaco@usyd.edu.au). Further questions about the program should be directed to Liz Bourne (nee Scott) (e.scott@usyd.edu.au).

