



# *A taste of the outback for city slickers*

Roma Hospital plays host to two speech pathology students who are far from home

Speech pathology students Katherine Bishop and Gemma Willis had never ventured further west than Toowoomba.

But when the two Brisbane university students were stationed in Roma – 480km from home – it proved to be both educational and inspirational.

“We thought any town west of Toowoomba was too remote, too rural and too rugged,” Ms Willis admitted. “However, spending the past six weeks in Roma has been one of the best experiences of our training so far.”

The girls were in Roma for a six-week training practical as part of their Bachelor of Speech Pathology course through the University of Queensland.

“Working in Roma Hospital for the past six weeks has been a really positive experience,” Ms Bishop said. “We have learned so much – perhaps more than if we were placed in a metropolitan hospital,” Ms Bishop said.

Under the guidance of Roma Hospital speech pathologists Bridget Palmer and Melissa Reed, the students have completed a variety



**BACK: Katherine Bishop and Melissa Reed.  
FRONT: Bridget Palmer and Gemma Willis.**

of consults and patient examinations.

“That’s the most fantastic thing about being placed in a rural hospital,” Ms Willis said. “In a metropolitan hospital postings are quite specific with defined areas of consulting. However, over the past six weeks we have seen a variety of patients with broad health needs.”

Self-confessed city slickers, Ms Willis and Ms Bishop said working in a remote area such as Roma had been an inspiring experience.

“It is a really friendly community with a young medical team who are open to giving new people a chance,” Ms Bishop said.