



Rural Clinical Exchange 2013

Emma Thompson: Exchange between Queenstown, NZ, and Kalgoorlie WA.

Two weeks in Kalgoorlie regional hospital and BEGA Garnbirringu Health service.

My Kalgoorlie placement experience was an incredible experience and one as a student I will probably never have again. I was there with another Otago student for the first week and he had already been there a week so showed me the ropes and all the admin things I had to do. It was much colder than I thought and I was surprised I actually wore my thermals! In the first few days I spent time at BEGA Garnbirringu the Aboriginal health centre which is an incredible Australian initiative to provide free and easily accessible healthcare to Aboriginal people. Everyone I met there was inspiring and motivated to provide a service to and change the way aboriginal people think about their health. It was a completely free clinic with no appointments necessary and all the service you could possibly need, including mental health and obstetrics. I made me realise the huge social issues that Australia has and how they are trying to remedy them. I heard some horrendous stories of hardship from patients and truly was astounded. A huge learning curve for me living in cushy Queenstown.

For the second half of my first week I was with one of the GP obstetricians who was incredible, she was on call 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. I went to my second only birth the first night I was with her and got to get fully involved. I'll never forget that night for sure. I went to ward rounds and clinic for the rest of the week with her and saw patients alone, with her and with the midwives. Obstetrics was not something I was being exposed to in abundance back in Queenstown to it was a great and educational experience and the Dr made time to teach me and do mini tutorial along the way which was extremely beneficial.



For the second week I was with the obstetrics and gynaecology team at the hospital. I got to scrub in for surgery, do ward jobs and go to clinic that was just next door.

I got to see some of the sites around Kalgoorlie also and saw the 'Superpit' the giant gold mine that apparently you can see from space! It was the biggest hole in the

ground I have ever seen. up to the hill where the water supply pipe comes from Perth, a lovely place for lunch. I went for a few runs around Kalkurla Forest park which had great views from the viewing platform and the bush was interesting because it was so typically Australian. My host took me to a park with lots of birds and animals so I got to see the wildlife. The junior doctors also included me



and invited me round for dinner and took me out for lunch. Which was great because all the student that are usually there were away when I was there so being included was awesome.

This experience is invaluable to me and I got to experience something out of my comfort zone and in a subject that was not high on my experience list. Everyone was so nice at the rural clinical school and made me feel as welcome as one of their own students.

