



Swallowing is no choking matter according to Katie

Most people swallow food and drink everyday, without a second thought, however Roma Queensland Health pathologist Katie Wright said swallowing is no choking matter.

In accordance to Speech Pathology Week which commenced on Sunday, Roma speech pathologists will showcase the profession's vital role in helping the local community.

"Simple, but crucial functions such as swallowing can be a daily struggle for some Australians," Ms Wright said.

"Swallowing disorders, or dysphagia, involve difficulty swallowing food, liquid or saliva.

"Dysphagia can affect people's quality of life and, in severe cases, it can be life threatening and can affect Australians of all ages"

"It is estimated the condition af-

fects up to 70% of premature babies and 50% of all stroke patients.

"In adults, dysphagia may result from conditions including cancer, stroke or neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

"Symptoms in adults may include coughing when eating or drinking, difficulty swallowing saliva, a gurgly voice, difficulty chewing some foods, and food getting stuck in or spilling from the mouth."

Ms Wright will have a display at the Roma Hospital throughout this week, and Education Queensland's speech pathologist Shannan Poulter will mount a display at EQ's district office.

Ms Poulter said speech pathologists played a crucial role in im-

proving quality of life by helping to manage the difficulties created by dysphagia.

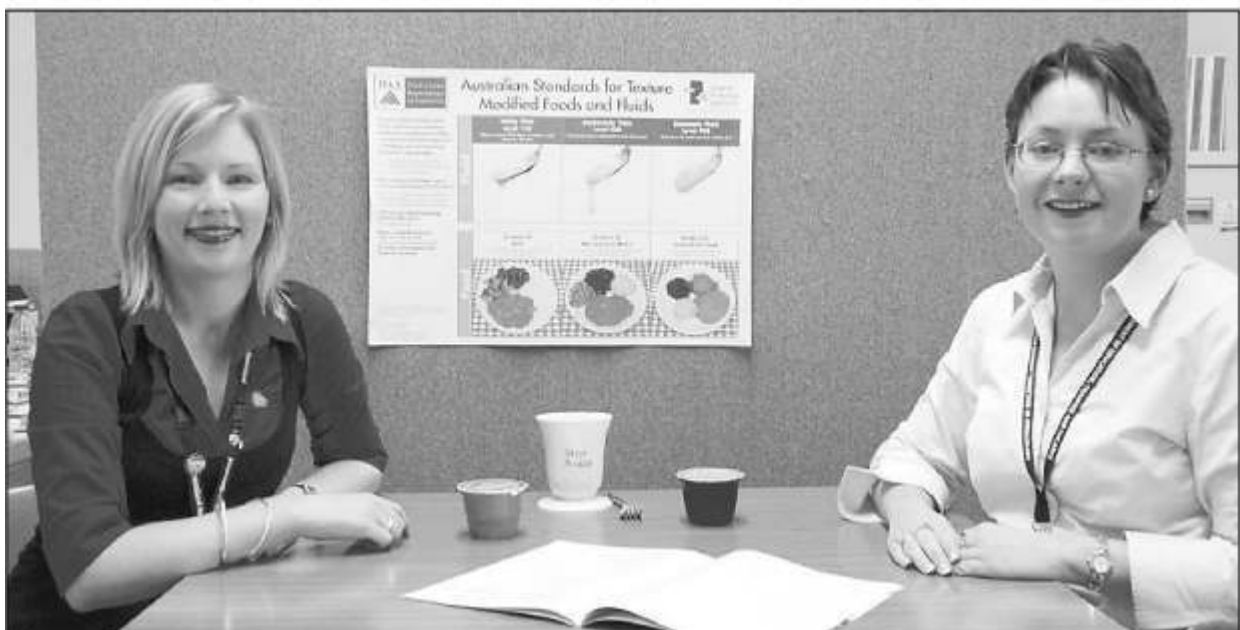
"Speech Pathology Week, from 22 to 28 July, provides an opportunity to raise awareness of our work with speech and language difficulties, as well as with dysphagia," she said.

"There are treatments available to help manage dysphagia.

"If you are concerned, your local GP can refer you to a speech pathologist."

Speech Pathology Week, this year themed: 'Feeding and swallowing — it's no choking matter,' is an initiative of Speech Pathology Australia, the peak national body for speech pathologists.

For more information visit www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au



Katie Wright and Shannon Poulter preparing for Speech Pathology Week which commenced Sunday