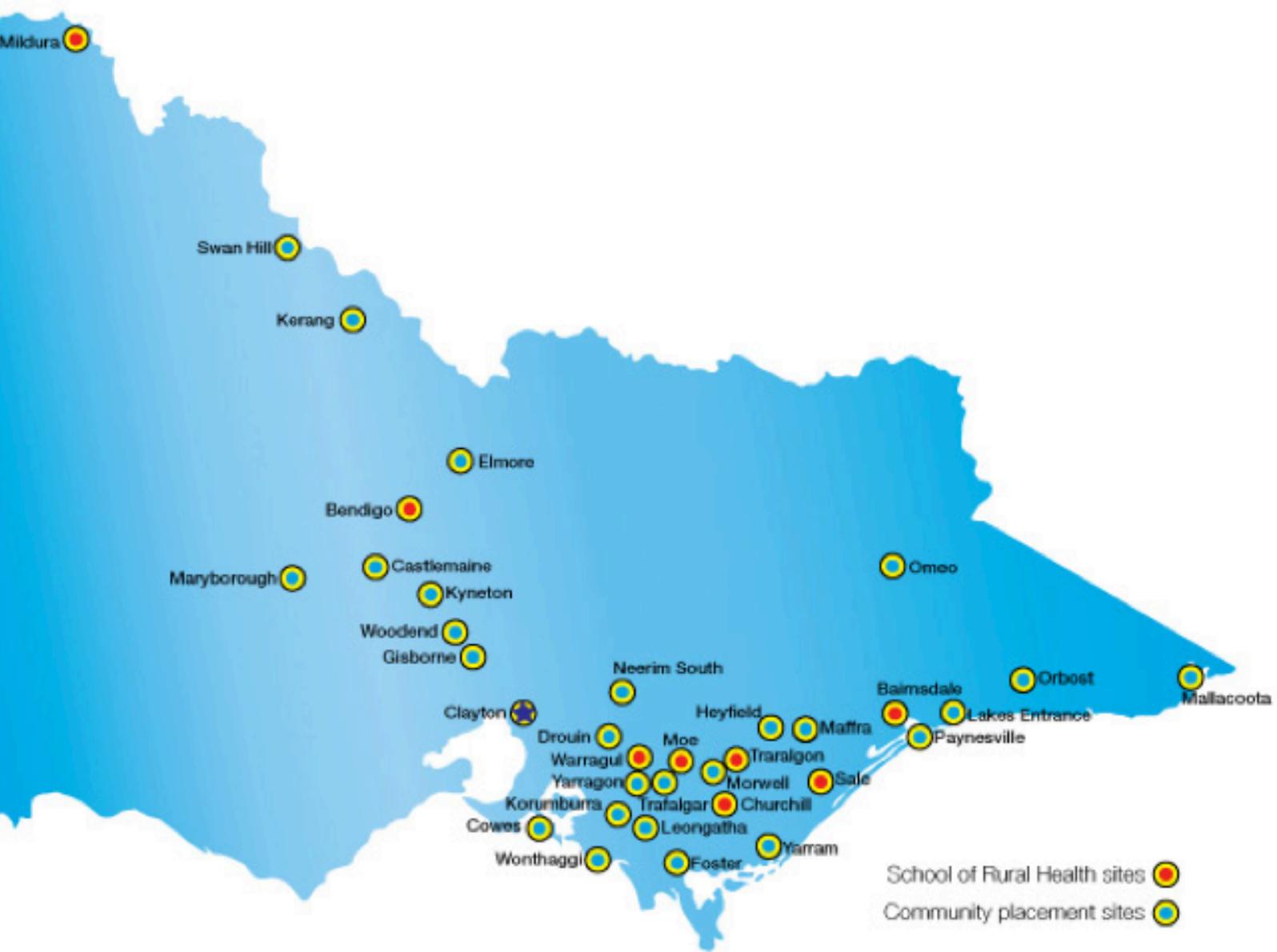
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MBBS Rural Placement Guidebook

Edition 2

**Brought to you by Wildfire and
MUMUS in consultation with the
School of Rural Health**



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The Editorial

From the School of Rural Health

The School of Rural Health (SRH) provides opportunities for medical students to experience the rewards of clinical practice in rural and regional areas with a view to encouraging them to return to complete postgraduate training and establish professional practice.

Monash medical students spend three years in clinical training (Years B, C and D for graduate entry students, and Years 3, 4 and 5 for direct entry students). Some students spend almost the entire three years in rural areas; others complete a compulsory four weeks. School of Rural Health clinical academic units host students in all three years.

MBBS rural placements are available across the North West and South East regions of Victoria. The North West region offers placements at SRH Mildura and SRH Bendigo. The South East region offers placements at SRH Latrobe Valley & West Gippsland (Traralgon and Warragul) and SRH East & South Gippsland (Sale, Bairnsdale and Leongatha). All SRH sites are attached to a regional hospital as well as partners with a range of community-based health services.

Please note – the cost of SRH student housing in 2015 will be \$130 per week. This includes utilities, wireless internet and maintenance.

Laura Major, Manager of Rural Education Program

From the Student's Perspective

This guide is designed to give students insight into what to expect at each of the rural clinical sites prior to selecting their preferences for Year 3B and Year 4C. It also serves as a great resource in anticipating the year ahead when site allocations are announced.

I am an undergraduate medical student from Shepparton, Victoria who entered the MBBS course with a Bonded Medical Place. In second year I decided to also become an ERC student because having two and a half years of guaranteed placements in the North-East suited me. Rural placements are attractive for a number of reasons. Small student numbers means more individual attention and more hands-on experience and mentoring both by tutors, doctors and older students. On top of this, the SRH sites are equipped with simulation patients which are heavily-utilised and an excellent learning tool. Generally, students live in fully-furnished Monash accommodation close to their clinical school or community placement. Rent is subsidised by the University and includes utilities and internet, and is much cheaper compared to living costs in Melbourne.

We hope you find this guidebook useful

Ruth McLeod, MUMUS ERC & WILDFIRE RHC Promotions

South-East Region

In the south-east students places are open to students from the Central stream and graduate entry MBBS. The placements available in this region are year level dependent:

Year 3B placements are at Warragul, Traralgon or Sale. The program features broad experience across medical and surgical units. Students based at Traralgon also have a short-term placement at Maryvale Private Hospital, Morwell.

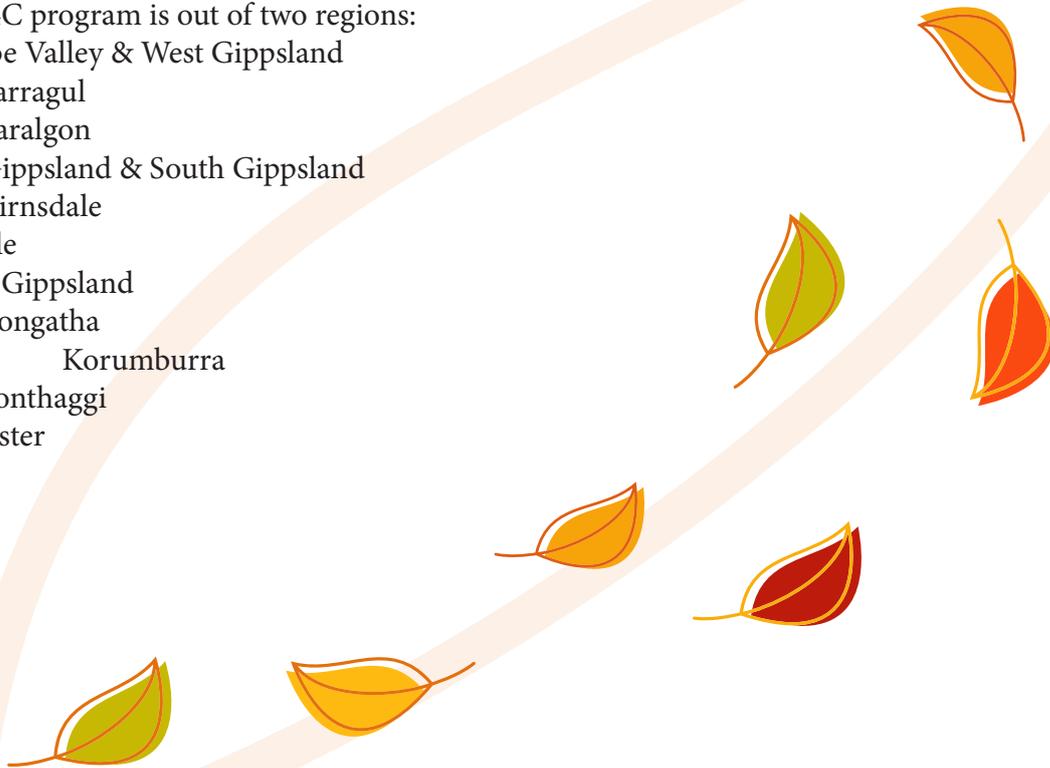
Year 4C placements built around three 12-week study blocks through the Gippsland Regional Integrated Clinical Education Program (GRICE). In each block students undertake study and clinical placements in General Practice and one in Women's Health, Children's Health or Medicine of the Mind. Students attend tutorials focused on General Practice as well as the discipline of their 12-week block. They also attend placements within community organisations relevant to that discipline.

The Year 4C program is out of two regions:

- Latrobe Valley & West Gippsland
 - Warragul
 - Traralgon
- East Gippsland & South Gippsland
 - Bairnsdale
 - Sale
- South Gippsland
 - Leongatha
 - Korumburra
 - Wonthaggi
 - Foster

It is possible for students to undertake up to two years rural placement in the South-East region by forming part of the Gippsland Rural Cohort (GRC). Unlike the Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) this is not a contractual position but it does grant you greater control over site allocation. Ideally, students in the GRC would undertake two years of placement in the South-East region across Years 3B and 4C.

For more information visit, <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/srh/latrobe-valley/> and <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/srh/eastgippsland/>



School of Rural Health Latrobe Valley & West Gippsland

Judy Lawless, Year 4C Clinical Site Administrator

The delivery of the Year 4C MBBS curriculum at the School of Rural Health Latrobe Valley & West Gippsland has been designed to reflect the styles of medical service provision in Central Gippsland.

Students enrolled in Year 4C at Latrobe Valley & West Gippsland will build on the clinical knowledge and skills acquired during Years 1&2-3 / A-B and extend and consolidate these while undertaking studies in four discipline areas: General Practice, Medicine of the Mind (Psychiatry), Children's Health (Paediatrics) and Women's Health (Obstetrics and Gynaecology). The program comprises three blocks of twelve weeks across the academic year. Each block involves a six week intensive placement in one of the hospital based disciplines complemented by six weeks in General Practice.

General Practice

In General Practice students are supervised under the wave model of consultation. Students observe the patient-doctor encounter, are observed interacting with patients and then consult with patients in parallel with their supervisor who sees two patients to the student's one. At the end of student's consultation, the GP checks what has been done and provides feedback and answers any questions to support the students' learning. Students can also work with other health professionals co-located in the practices for example psychiatric nurses, psychologists, practice nurses etc.

Medicine of the Mind

Students complete clinical placements in the acute adult in-patient ward, aged psychiatry, child and adolescent mental health units, and community health centres. While based at Latrobe Regional Hospital students are rostered to observe electroconvulsive therapy and to work with the consultation liaison team.

Women's Health

The Women's Health rotation includes opportunities to attend handover, ward work, scrub in in theatre, and witness, assist and "catch" at births. Students are supervised by O & G consultants in outpatient clinics. Community placements include, for example, attending antenatal classes, observing patient flow-through in maternal and child health clinics, and consulting with women experiencing fertility issues.

Children's Health

Students attend handover, work on the paediatric wards, and observe consultants in outpatient clinics. There are opportunities to scrub-in on paediatric surgical cases. Students are supervised dealing with children presenting to the emergency department. Immunisation clinics, schools for children with special needs are some of the examples of community placements in this discipline.

Tutorials addressing topics in each of the discipline areas are presented by clinical educators based at either Traralgon or Warragul. Students attend in person, sometimes travelling between sites to do so. On occasion, tutorials are video-conferenced.

School of Rural Health East & South Gippsland

Ros Pearce, SRH East and South Gippsland Administrator

With three sites offering an integrated community curriculum for Year 4C, the School of Rural Health East and South Gippsland gives, students a model of curriculum delivery with proven success over 10 years.

Year 4C is offered at the Bairnsdale, Leongatha and Sale sites with Sale also offering places for Year 3B students.

Geographically the areas are varied but all offer exceptional access to popular visitor destinations from the snow at Falls Creek to the rugged coastline of Wilsons Prom and everything in between.

And now for the serious stuff...

How do I learn?

Year 3B students are based at the Central Gippsland Health Service in Sale where they rotate through Medical and Surgical for their first clinical year where highly qualified clinicians deliver the curriculum with class room and beside tutorials. Opportunities for hands on clinical procedures are numerous and access to the emergency department is welcomed.

The Year 4C students are based at a designated general medical practice throughout East and South Gippsland based on preferences (Wonthaggi, Foster, Leongatha, Korumburra, Paynesville, Orbost, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Sale, Heyfield, Yarram and Maffra) where students quickly become part of the practice and more broadly the local community. Staff at the medical practices welcome students as part of the team and encourage and facilitate involvement in the community whether it is in a sporting, church, music, environmental or other group of interest.

The four disciplines of Woman's Health, Children's Health, Medicine of the Mind and

General Practice are delivered in an integrated model throughout the academic year with study days scheduled, in the main, 2 days per week.

With both Year 3B and 4C, exposure to learning opportunities is there for the taking with clinicians generous in their sharing of knowledge and time. Opportunities for interdisciplinary learning is available and is encouraged at all sites. As students move through their course they work collaboratively with other students, interns, registrars, senior doctors and nurses.

Academic coordinators and administration staff at each site are very committed and work closely with the students, clinicians, medical practices and hospitals, other health professionals and the local communities to ensure that all students have a supported and positive learning experience.

Where do I live?

Accommodation for Year 3B students is in shared houses within walking distance to the Central Gippsland Hospital and the education facility in Sale. Year 4C students are placed for the full year in student accommodation in the town of their general practice, travelling to the main education site for tutorials and to other sites where necessary.

Houses are fully furnished and included in the service fee per week is garden and house maintenance, a capped utilities cost paid for by the University and more than adequate high speed internet.

Travel is a consideration when choosing any rural placement and can be difficult without a reliable vehicle however fuel allowances are made to students to assist with travelling costs whilst in East and South Gippsland.

Traralgon



Harmeem Kaur, Class of 2016

Accommodation

Option 1: Uni Accommodation

This is by far the cheapest option to live. You get a room, all furnishings, and all bills included. The rent changes from year to year so I couldn't comment on that aspect. However; this option is cheaper for two reasons:

1. Monash subsidises rents
2. Everything you need is included (even internet)

However there are downsides:

1. Not everyone can get this. Prior to the placement the places are allocated using a ballot system. Essentially, if your name gets picked out of the hat you get the spot.
2. There are houses in Traralgon and Moe. If you get the Traralgon spots your life gets very easy; however, if you get the Moe spot then it is a 25 minute drive each way. Although at first glance this may not sound too bad but the Valley's propensity for rain and fog and your schedule involving many an early mornings, it will pile on very quickly.
3. If you have pets, forget Monash housing.

Option 2: Rental property in Traralgon

Since this is the option that I ended up with I can perhaps shed more light on this.

There are many newly built houses in Traralgon which are spacious and cheap. You must however be inclined to make an appointment with the agents and spend some time inspecting properties. As much fun as this sounds you must also then fill out multiple rental applications.

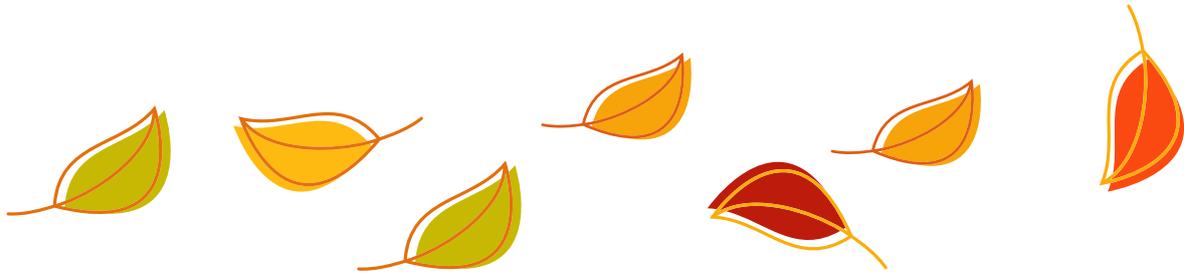
This option will work out a little more expensive because:

1. You will be investing (if you already haven't) into furnishings
2. You will be in control of your own bills (although this doesn't cost too much)

However, multiple upsides exist with this option

1. You may choose your own location and be as close and as far from the hospital as you like
2. You may pick your own flatmates, if that is what tickles your fancy or pick a place for yourself.
3. If you have a family, kids, or pets then option 1 is dead to you.





Curriculum

It's time to talk shop.

With respect to the curriculum, you are provided with a matrix of conditions. The matrix is the bible and perhaps the only guidance as to what you need to know. The conditions are categorised in systems and colour coded to the required depth of knowledge for each condition

Semester 1 revolves around Cardiovascular, Respiratory and Gastrointestinal Systems and there are plenty of opportunities to see patients with the relevant conditions on the wards.

Semester 2 includes all other systems. Again, opportunities exist to see most of these conditions on the wards.

How the wards work

You will be allocated a ward timetable and will rotate through the following Medical and Surgical specialties:

Medical:

1. General Medicine
2. Rehabilitation
3. ICU/CCU
4. Short stay
5. Community
 - a. Hospital in the Home
 - b. Asthma
 - c. Diabetes
 - d. Respiratory clinic
6. Radiotherapy
7. Chemotherapy
8. Dialysis

Surgical:

1. General Surgery
2. Endoscopy
3. Pre-admissions clinic
4. Day Procedures
5. Anaesthetics
6. Subspecialties
 - a. Breast screen
 - b. Amputee clinic
7. Orthopaedics

You will spend half of each semester in Medical specialties and the other half in surgical specialties. General Medicine and Surgery will be a part of both semesters.

Ward rounds are compulsory and need to be signed off on. Most rotations will require little effort from you to learn and absorb the knowledge. If you show up to the wards and pay attention, ask questions, get involved in patient management then you will learn a lot. There are some rotations like Chemo and Radiotherapy and Pre-admissions clinics where you must make an effort to find things to do. However, you will learn something everywhere.

People you need to know: Nilesh and Arun in ICU will teach you things you will never forget; all consultants on Gen Med are brilliant; Dr Prassanna on Rehab will blow your mind (you will also meet him in Amputee clinic); Mr Chan and Mr Jayasuriya on Surgery will "teach" you anatomy.

Emergency shifts

You are also assigned 3-4 ED shifts in the evening every Semester. This is an opportunity to learn clinical reasoning, practice clinical skills and learn how the team works. Along with ED, General Medicine and Surgery and Anaesthetics are other specialties where you will get much practice doing canulas and catheters and bloods and other clinical skills if you put your hand up.

Pathology

One of the hurdle requirements to pass the year is online Pathology cases. Do them. Do them. Do them. If you are late in handing them in you WILL fail.

Apart from the Pathology cases (which teach you very little if you don't make an active effort) there is abysmal pathology teaching. You have no guidance as to what you need and the little formal teaching is shockingly bad. The staff are however "sorting out the kinks." From the beginning of the year you might find either Underwood or Robbins Pathology books the only source of decent Path learning. You must put in the effort since there is an entire OSCE station on pathology and also plenty of this material is covered in the EMQ exams.

PBLs

There is one normal PBL (in small groups) and one PBL-plus (with entire class) each week. They run similar to the PBLs in Year 2A but are more clinically based. Much of the matrix is covered as PBL topics so even if you don't spend time actively doing the matrix you will find you know more than you think.

Bedside tutorials

You will be divided into groups and each group is assigned a Consultant who is their bedside tutor. One day each week the consultants will show you their most interesting patients and you will have a chance to practice your histories and examinations and hone your clinical reasoning skills. Since many final year students and interns and registrars also rotate through the hospital, from time to time many of them will also take you for bedside tutorials.

Life outside of med

Living in Traralgon you cannot rely on public transport (there isn't much). You must have a car. Given that your schedule will be much different to that of your classmates' you will need an independent transport vehicle.

For the foodies

There are many eateries, cafés and restaurants to tickle your taste buds. My favourite spots include Three Little Birds for daytime eating; Schnitz and Little Prince for dinner; 3844 (café by day, bar by night) runs wonderful special theme nights and if you are a sucker for atmosphere then 3844 is your place.

For the drunks and party people

Star bar, Cargo, Inferno, 3844. Enough said.

For the gym junkies:

Multiple gyms will make your heart sink but Snap fitness is your home. You will find most of your classmates will live here with you.

For the sports fanatics

The Valley is great for mountain biking, surfing, boating, sailing, fishing, skiing, biking etc. I'm sure there are sports clubs you are able to join as well. There are many nature trails and rivers that you will get hooked to the life outdoors.

All in all, in terms of social life you will get to know you will be good friends with the people you spend this year with by the end.



Warragul (Year 3B)

Achini Ratnayaka, Class of 2016

West Gippsland General Hospital is a ~83-patient bed hospital located in the town of Warragul (pop. ~17,000) in Gippsland. The hospital has 5 wards, but Year 3B is spent mostly on the Medical Wards (~25 beds) and Surgical Wards (~20 beds). It is located ~40 minutes' drive away from Berwick and ~1 hour drive away from the Clayton Campus via V-line or car. There are quite a lot of cafes and nice restaurants in Warragul and the region itself is scenic.

Accommodation and Rental

There are currently two houses for Monash medical students;

1. On-site (<1 minute walk to the wards and the Monash cottage), fully renovated, four rooms (but ~2 are designated for rotating 4th/5th years), Central heating.
2. Off-site in town (~5 minute drive from hospital), older 2-story house (built in 1970s?) and a bit worn down, four rooms (but ~2 are designated for rotating 4th/5th years), no central heating. Tends to be very cold in the winter. Two kitchens. Much bigger than the on-site housing.

Both student houses are fully furnished. Both houses are at a first come, first serve basis and fill up fast!!

Warragul is a bit on the expensive side when it comes to the Gippsland area. There are no 1-bedroom flats in Warragul, and a decent 2 to 3-bedroom flat costs about \$250-400/week. Students also reside in Drouin (~10 minute drive from Hospital) which can be a bit cheaper. Several of the students house share as well.

Transportation

There are no buses to Warragul hospital, so it is essential that you have a car for the year to travel between home, hospital, shops, and out-of-hospital excursions/tutorials. There is free parking at Warragul hospital and there are usually enough parking spots if you arrive early.

Lecture locations

Most lectures and tutorials are held at the Monash cottage located right behind Warragul hospital. It is a small cottage (incl. 2 study rooms, ~10 person lecture room, and a common room with amenities) where the Monash administration also is. There are also preceptor run workshops and intern lectures that students are welcome to attend, held in the hospital lecture room. Several times a year there are at-home visits, tutorials in town, and Law & Ethics days at Churchill. And bedside tutorials are done at the hospital obviously.



Curriculum

The Year 3B timetable at Warragul hospital mostly involves rotations in the General Medicine and General Surgery wards, and the hospital has limited support in specialised areas. However since the core components of Year 3B is general medicine and general surgery, you are not missing out on much. Rotations are in two week blocks, rotating through general medicine, general surgery, and 2 weeks off wards. PBLs occur usually twice a week, and sometimes three. PBLs are the mode by which most of the curriculum is delivered, with a lot of time left for discussion with the tutors who are local doctors.

Typical morning begins at ~7.45 am (depending on what rotation you are on). If you have class at 9, try to attend ward rounds until class.

Mon	Lectures with Pathology lecture in the afternoon. Usually the longest day of the week (ends at ~4-5 pm).
Tue	Pathology meeting at 7.30 am. Lectures and PBLs or bedside tutorials in the mornings and sometimes afternoon. Someone is usually scheduled for anaesthetics, theatre, or a specialty rotation in the afternoon
Wed	Lectures/tutorials in the morning. Someone is usually scheduled for anaesthetics, theatre, or a specialty rotation in the afternoon. Usually the shortest day of the week if not in theatre.
Thu	PBL in the morning, Bedside tutorial, lectures. Hospital meetings at lunchtime. Occasional PBLs after lunch.
Fri	Clinical skills/tutorials in the morning and general meeting at lunch. Occasional bedside tutorial or clinical/procedural skills after lunch.

Other Lectures

Students are welcome to attend weekly hospital meetings (i.e. Intern meetings, Radiology meetings, Pathology meetings, General meetings, and Journal club), in which the majority of Consultant Physicians and Registrars at the hospital usually attend. Classes and PBLs are usually scheduled to accommodate students going to these lunch-time meetings.

Other info

For those interested in surgical/theatre, Warragul is a great place for scrubbing in to theatre if you nicely ask the surgical staff, as there is less of a hierarchy you have to go through. The surgical staff are wonderful and there are usually only few other medical, nursing, and paramedic students that you need to work with to get some theatre time.

You also get to rotate a few hours a year at a different specialty (ex. ED, oncology, radiology, haemodialysis, pharmacy, gastroenterology, anaesthetics, and surgery). There are several times (3-4) during the year that we have full day Law & Ethics tutorials at Churchill as a whole rural group (Sale, Traralgon, and Warragul combined).

There are several MCQ textbooks in the cottage available. The hospital library is a bit small but has copies of all the required textbooks for the year with other supplemental books.

Academic Staff

Asra Bechaz is the first and main point of contact between students the rest of Monash. She send emails regularly, updates the weekly timetable, and deals with any other administrative matters. PBLs, bedside tutorials, clinical and procedural skills tutorials, and summative MCRs are run by 3-4 local GPs and registrars.

All staff are very nice and approachable, advocate for you if there is anything you need or are struggling at any point in time, and really take care of you. Year 5Ds, interns, and some registrars are generally willing to run some tutorials if you ask.

Food

There is only one cafeteria at Warragul hospital. The food is very inexpensive (~\$5-7 for lunch) but the food can get quite repetitive and they often serve the same type of food. It is recommended that you bring your own lunches for the day or 5 minute drive into town for food. There is free coffee and tea at the cafeteria. There are some great local cafes in town.

Life outside of med

The number of students placed in Warragul ranges from 9-12 students per year. Since you are staying with these folks for one year together, enjoy the time you have together and make friends! There are several small bars, clubs, a movie theatre, and monthly farmer's market in Warragul. Not to mention the scenic drives in the Gippsland area. There are several state parks in the area and Wilson's prom is also within 2 hours away if you are outdoorsy.

Advantages

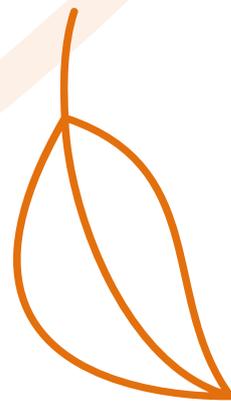
- Small number of students (like most rural placements), there are more opportunities for patient contact and clinical skills; make the most of it!
- Lots of practice OSCE sessions available
- Access to consultant teachings and assigned consultant room rotations
- Relationship with hospital and administrative staff is generally very good
- Take advantage of talking to consultants, registrars, and interns; they are very friendly and always willing to take a bit of time to teach you
- Emphasis on 'self-directed learning' and the rural curriculum is very unstructured compared to metro so you get a lot of time to study and less time in lectures
- Most patients we've come across are very nice and more than willing to have a chat or be examined by a med student, as long as you know when it's appropriate to ask
- Closest hospital to Melbourne, so you can go to Clayton campus if needed or go back home on some weekends easily

Disadvantages

- As with most rural placements, there are less specialties to rotate through
- Some difficulty between communication between central faculty and rural sites
- 'Self-directed learning', this can also be a hindrance, there aren't many lectures at Warragul compared to the metro sites, so you need to be organized, take that extra time you don't have lectures to study, fill in the gaps in your knowledge in your matrix, and be on top of things to make sure you aren't falling behind
- You will need your own transportation

Advice

- Make sure to attend all tutorials and try to aim to attend all ward rounds that you are slotted in for; they really pay off in the end (plus they keep track who's coming to class and not)!
- Most of your logbook can be completed easily as long as you continue to do it steadily throughout the year—Year 5Ds and interns are willing to sign you off as long as you catch them at a good time. Aim for getting your logbook signed off after ward rounds or head back to hospital if you finish early – they are usually the best times.
- Many of the 5th years are awesome and are willing to offer the class extra tutorials and are willing to help you out with your practice MCRs, so be nice to them!
- Try to spend some time after class at the hospital to work on finishing your logbook and talking to patients, or even in theatre, you learn a lot through patient interactions!
- More serious conditions are quickly passed onto Monash or larger hospitals so try to get information from the interns and registrars about how the case was managed and followed up.
- Year B is a big jump from Year A in terms of diagnosis and management especially in OSCEs so try to find out the level you need to know early in the year and keep practising!



Warragul (Year 4C)

William Bay, Class of 2015

Accommodation

Rentals can be a little difficult to come by. Having said that there are HEAPS of new housing developments popping up in Warragul and Drouin so this should be less of a problem as time goes on.

There is Monash provided share accommodation at the hospital in cottages and off campus as well. The accommodation is a little run down but because it includes all amenities it is passable.

Curriculum

The best part about Warragul is the small-town exposure you will get to clinical placement. You will become part of the community and receive a lot of support from your local clinicians.

The Paediatrics program is a highlight and has a team of highly supportive and professional doctors genuinely concerned about your growth and learning as a student.

There are many GP options in town and in the local area for your GP rotation.

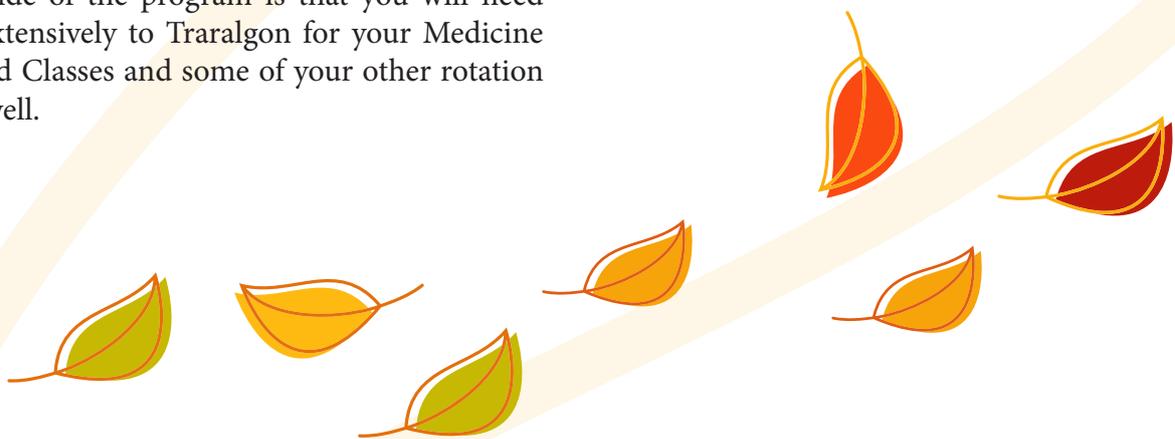
The downside of the program is that you will need to travel extensively to Traralgon for your Medicine of the Mind Classes and some of your other rotation classes as well.

Life outside of med

Warragul is ideal for access to skiing and tobogganing at Mt Baw Baw which is 1.5 hours away by car. Melbourne is only 1 hour away by car and is probably your best bet for shopping and entertainment on the weekends. In town the best food is Warragul Thai, Wild Dog Pizza, and the Courthouse and there are several pubs and a bowling alley as well.

There is an 11km concrete walking/cycling/running track from Warragul to Drouin which is a great asset for those seeking to keep up their fitness. Mt Worth State Park is only 30 minutes away which is a great forest for trekking and sightseeing.

A car is not required for living in Warragul if you are prepared to walk a few kms to the hospital and in to town for shopping. There are busses available but they do not run frequently. The train station is centrally located which makes travel to Traralgon and Melbourne convenient.



Accommodation

- 4 bedroom house in Leongatha at 16 Gibson St across the road from cow paddocks
- Large living and dining rooms, 2 bathrooms (1 of these is the ensuite of the master bedroom)
- Furnished with dishwasher, washing machine, TV, each room has a bed, lamp and desk and the master has an ensuite

Curriculum

South Gippsland is run as an integrated curriculum which basically means you're stuck in the GP for most of the year with 5 weeks at Warragul for paediatrics, 2 weeks at Warragul for women's health and 1 week at Traralgon for psych. These rotations are spread throughout the year and the women's and paed's weeks might be split or together. Accommodation is also provided for these. The rest of the time is in GP with one semester at the Leongatha practice and one at the Korumburra practice.

Usually you get 1.5 days in the GP practice (Monday & Tuesday morning or Thursday and Friday morning), one and a half days of tutes (Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday) and one and a half days of "self study" (Monday and Tuesday morning or Thursday and Friday morning) with Friday afternoons off. The tutes cover all four of the disciplines and there is some extra teaching when you're away on specialty placements. The closest medical library is about 45 minutes away.

Women's Health

The women's health teaching in South Gippsland is fantastic. It's run by a GP obstetrician named Deirdre who is one of the people who writes the exams. She gives almost all of the tutes and you should get through the content in first semester with second semester for revision and OSCE practice. You can spend as much time as you want to in the local hospital to try and get births. A lot of the GPs here also have diplomas in obstetrics and so are able to deliver babies. You can get as much or as little as you want out of the placement at Warragul. Most of the obstetricians are really nice but they're all busy and won't notice if you decide you need a few days break.

Leongatha Korumburra

Jake Gipson, Class of 2015

Paediatrics

You get one tute a fortnight with a paediatrician from Warragul plus the 5 weeks at Warragul hospital with students from other programs based in Gippsland. The paediatricians at Warragul are all great teachers and are happy to have you. Days usually start at 8am with a consultant ward round. You can then go to clinic or follow the interns round. It's a good idea to turn up early and find a patient to present to the consultant during ward rounds. It's good to take advantage of this because you don't see many kids in GP.

Psychiatry

This one will require a lot of self-directed learning. Tutes are given by a Mental Health Nurse (3 hours, usually 1-2 a fortnight). The week at Traralgon is in Flynn ward (a locked ward) so it's very interesting but everyone is too busy to teach and you can't see patients on your own.

General Practice

Pros: There's a lot of exposure to general practice. You also get the opportunity to do lots of suturing and removal of small lesions. GPs in the country tend to be a bit more widely skilled and see more interesting patients than those in the city.

Cons: The tutes are a little less structured than those in the city get so make sure you steal their notes.

Life outside of med

There's a gym, pool and footy team you can get involved with. Public transport is rubbish and you will often need to drive to towns around 30mins away for tutes. I wouldn't recommend the social scene but at least it's only an hour and 45 minutes from Melbourne for the weekends.

Accommodation

The provided accommodation is in the old nursing home, which has been converted into student accommodation. It is adjacent to the hospital, which is handy if there are any births, or other emergencies, after hours. The rooms are spacious, each with new furniture, their own ensuite, and there are 2 loungerooms, a kitchen, a courtyard and plenty of parking space. The intern (who rotates every 10 weeks from Peninsula Health) also lives here. The rent includes all bills and wireless internet.

Curriculum

Structure of the year...

The South Gippsland program is an integrated program, so you will spend most of the time in the GP clinic. Being a very small country town however you get exposed to a wide array of problems (incl. a lot of psych/paediatrics/women's health) in the clinic. Throughout the year each student also completes 5 weeks of intensive paediatrics in Warragul, 2 weeks of intensive women's health in Warragul and 1 week of intensive psychiatry in Traralgon (all with provided accommodation of course). You also get to do several community mental health days and community paediatrics visits around Gippsland.

Pros...

The teachers in South Gippsland, and in Foster especially, are outstanding. All of the GPs at the clinic are really passionate about teaching and have a wealth of knowledge and experience. Most of the tutors for the South Gippsland program are also from Foster, so you get a lot of opportunity to pick their brains. As there are only two students in Foster you get a lot of time to get to know your supervisors on a personal level and you get a lot more support and attention than if you were in the city. There is also plenty of opportunity to do procedural stuff, so if you're surgically minded then the GPs will be happy to let you do all of their sutures etc. Not to mention that several of the GPs will invite you over for dinner throughout the year or welcome you to join their cycling group!

Cons...

Because most of the year is spent in a GP clinic, and

Foster

Cassi Taylor, Class of 2015

most serious or rare cases get sent to bigger towns, there is not as much exposure to these as in Melbourne. You do get a lot of the bread and butter stuff in GP (which is more important for exams), but you may miss out on some of the more 'exciting' stuff that the city students get to see. Getting everything signed off in the logbooks is a little bit harder (eg. there are only ~100 births in Foster per year) but it is still possible. Also, being 2hrs from Melbourne may seem frustrating at first, but if you embrace the town and get involved in the community it can be a really rewarding experience.

Life outside of med

It takes approximately 2hrs to drive to Foster from central Melbourne and unfortunately there is no public transport service, so a car is essential.

There is not a whole lot to do in Foster itself, but there is a lot to do in South Gippsland. There are plenty of farmers' markets in Foster and surrounding towns, Sandy Point and Creek both have great beaches and are only 20min drive away, not to mention Wilson's Promontory (a beautiful national park with lots of hiking tracks) is less than an hour away.

The social life is nothing to write home about, but you do spend a fair bit of time in Leongatha and Wonthaggi (both much bigger towns) with the other South Gippsland students, so that's the best social aspect.

There are plenty of sporting facilities, including a great football/netball club, basketball, yoga and lots of cycling groups. The great southern rail trail is a 60km walking/running/riding track that goes through Foster and offers a much more picturesque training ground than in the city. There is also an opportunity to volunteer as a sports trainer at the football club, which gives a bit of exposure to sports medicine. Unfortunately the closest gym is Leongatha (30min drive away).

Wonthaggi

Lidia Guirgius, Class of 2015

Accommodation

The house is spacious and fairly new there are 2 wall heaters/AC in the living areas and each room has its own oil heater (which doesn't really do much!). With that said the only major let down with the accommodation is the size of the desks which are only about 1m wide. GP clinics are within a 5min drive so everything else.

Curriculum

As this is a yearlong placement the majority of the teaching is done within the 2 GP practices. There were 4 students in Wonthaggi this year 2/clinic.

Typical Week

- Monday/Tuesday AM: GP consulting (seeing your own patients)
- Tuesday PM: Tutorials or free afternoon
- Wednesday: Tutorial day
- Thursday/Friday AM: Study days at the GP clinic

NB

- Each student covers a night/week in the hospital attached to the labour ward/ED
- Tutorials are usually in Leongatha (30min drive from Wonthaggi – uni reimburses fuel).
- Study days are often taken up by community mental health days

Other placements

- 5 weeks of CH in Warragul – Great accommodation provided
- 2 weeks of WH in Warragul
- 1 week of Mom in Taralgon – average accommodation

Pros

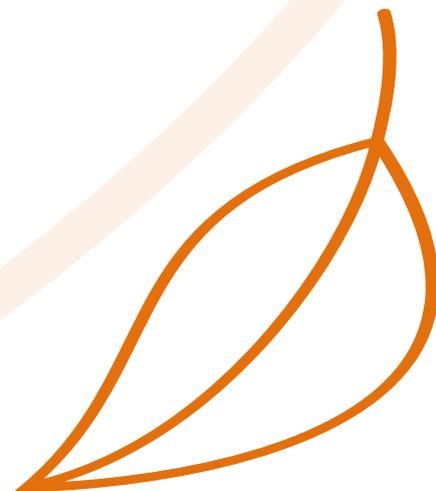
- Small group – everyone is really helpful and wants you to pass
- GPs are extremely friendly and encouraging
- Lots of practice OSCE and EMQs set up for you
- GP exposure is great

Cons

- Not as much teaching - you have to do a lot of the learning yourself
- MoM probably gets the worst teaching
- Lots of driving

Life outside of med

Wonthaggi is probably the most costal of rural placements. There are lots of beaches within a 10-15min drive. All the GP are also really friendly and they can usually get you connected with activities you want to do if you ask (ie. Sport clubs or community events) You definitely need a car! Or at least share a car with another student living with you.



North-West Region

Places in the North-West program are largely filled by Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) students. A small number of places each year are offered to students in other streams. Most ERC students enter the direct entry MBBS with this stipulation, but it is possible to transfer into the ERC program during Year 2 to ensure two and a half years of placement in the North-West Region.

The placements available in this region are year level dependent:

Year 3B placements are at Bendigo or Mildura. The program features broad experience across medical and surgical units.

Year 4C integrates the four disciplines of children's health, women's health, medicine of the mind and general practice into a year-long program delivered in both regional and rural settings. All students are placed in a rural hub for one semester and a regional hub, Mildura or Bendigo, for the other semester.

The Year 4C rural hubs are arranged into three regions:

- Murray
Kerang
Swan Hill
- Goldfields
Maryborough
Castlemaine
- Highlands
Gisborne
Woodend

For more information visit, <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/srh/mildura/> and <http://www.med.monash.edu.au/srh/bendigo/>



School of Rural Health Mildura

Kendall Livingston, Regional Manager

‘Through the eyes of a city girl who moved to the country –’

Mildura has been my permanent place of residence since late 2005 when I moved here from Adelaide and married a local plumber. Being a distance from the city, 400km from Adelaide and 550km from Melbourne, hasn't ever been an issue because Mildura has everything the city has to offer, on a much smaller scale. Mildura is a vibrant town of just over 31,000 people. The weather is beautiful, a Mediterranean style of climate, offering more hours of sunshine than Queensland. Temperatures range from 40 plus summers to mild winters with frosty mornings and an average rainfall of less than 300mm per year. The Mildura airport offers 6 daily flights to Melbourne, 2 to Sydney and 2 to Adelaide with 3 different carriers and cheap flights can be booked in advance. Mildura has fantastic sporting clubs and facilities. A young professionals networking group, plenty of opportunity for night time activity at local bars, pubs, cafés and restaurants along with theatre groups, bands and other community groups always looking for new members. The fortnightly farmer's market along the banks of the river is a "must do" and the farmers brekkie made from local produce is to die for. There are loads of tourist attractions within easy reach including Mungo National Park, museums, walking trails and historic Wentworth is a 30 minute drive away.

The School of Rural Health is situated right next door to the Mildura Base Hospital (MBH), a 146 bed (level 1) tertiary teaching hospital. The MBH provides a range of acute services including general

medicine and surgery, intensive care, emergency, maternity, mental health, oncology and dialysis. The school itself accommodates five modern tutorial rooms with a large student common room which students are given 24hr access to as well as an in-house library. Local GPs, surgeons, obstetricians, paediatricians, psychiatrists and a long list of other health practitioners deliver face to face tutorials along with our own academic staff.

Our recently expanded simulation laboratory houses the whole Laerdal family of SimMan, SimMum, SimNeonate and SimBaby in two separate high fidelity suites. There is plenty of extra learning space to practice on part task trainers and anatomy models, or simply watch the simulation sessions in the hi-fid suite via CCTV into a debrief room.

Our school prides itself on making the students feel as at home in Mildura as possible and are willing to assist in helping find part time employment or become involved in the community in any way possible. In a normal academic year we see approximately 10 students return to Mildura for a rotation in fifth year. It's great to catch up with these students again in their final year of training. I hope this has given you some insight into our site and what we have to offer and I look forward to meeting new members of the SRH-Mildura family.

School of Rural Health Bendigo

Michelle Moon, SRH Bendigo Year 3B Coordinator

SRH Bendigo offers Year 3B students a clinical experience unmatched by metropolitan placements. By blending both the Monash University and the University of Melbourne students into a joint cohort, the School of Rural Health, Bendigo delivers an outstanding, proven, enriched clinical program.

Associate Professor Chris Holmes is the Year 3B Academic Co-ordinator and Michelle Moon, the Year 3B Program Administrator. They work closely with all students to support and guide them during their time in Bendigo.

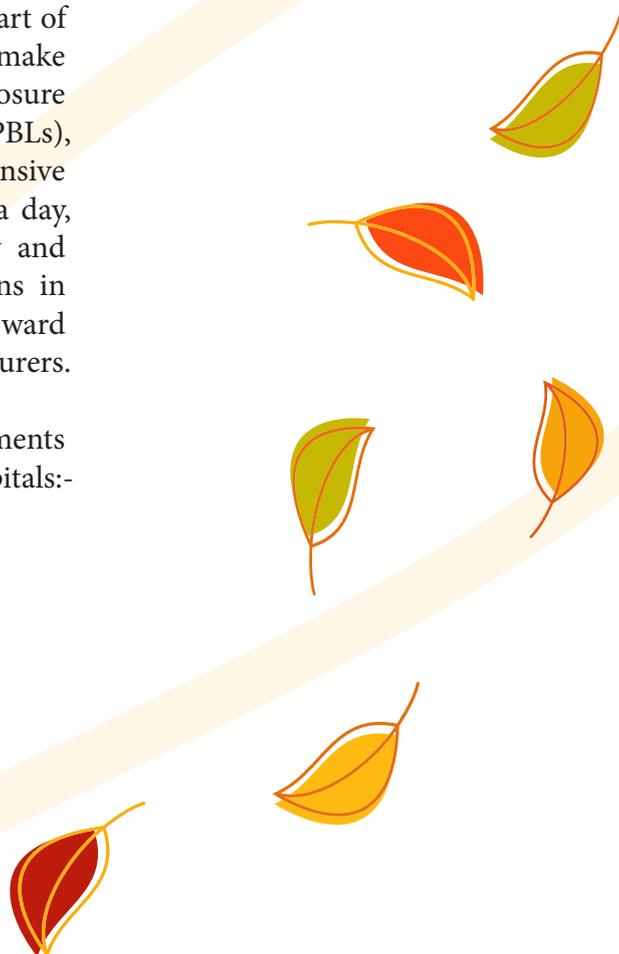
In Year 3B students spend most of their week at the hospital with hospital staff and tutors. A large part of the Year 3B clinical training is structured, to make sure all students gain the experience and exposure they need for Problem Based Learning (PBLs), tutorials and skills workshops. The comprehensive timetable includes added extras such as trauma day, pharmacology, extended ECG, ophthalmology and outpatient clinics together with weekly sessions in the Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre and ward appointments with our dedicated simulation lecturers.

Students rotate through the following departments at Bendigo Health and St John of God hospitals:-

- Anaesthetics
- Cardiology
- Emergency
- Geriatrics / Rehabilitation (BH & SJOG)
- ICU
- Medical (BH & SJOG)
- Medical Oncology / Radiation Oncology
- Renal
- Surgical
- Urology

Program Coordinator – Michelle Moon
Michelle is responsible for your timetabling and all other things administrative. Michelle has a long history of working with Monash and years of experience coordinating the Year 1 & 2 Rural Health Programs.

Clinical Lead - Associate Professor Chris Holmes
Associate Professor Chris Holmes is the Director of Nephrology at Bendigo Health and is also the Year 3B coordinator. He has been the Clinical Lead for this program for many years.



Sonya Steve, SRH Bendigo Year 4C Coordinator

Bendigo is a vibrant contemporary regional centre, boasting beautiful streets created from one of the world's greatest gold rushes. Wide streets lined by opulent buildings are now interwoven with intriguing laneways and arcades that are home to a new breed of innovators who again delve deep to create a vibrant energy across the city. Modern day Bendigo has sublime food, wine and shopping experiences against a stunning heritage backdrop. Bendigo's action-packed events calendar is a mix of long-standing traditions, food and wine events, car rallies, sporting excellence and a great sense of fun.

The School of Rural Health Bendigo is located within the education precinct in Mercy Street, adjacent to Bendigo Health and is walking distance to the centre of town, with many cafes, restaurants, pubs, shopping centre, malls, cinemas, art gallery, library etc.

The Bendigo site accommodates six modern tutorial rooms, a large auditorium, student lounge and an in-house Good Loaf Café. There is a share library adjacent to the building which the students have 24 hour access.

Our Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre officially opened September 2013. We are running a pilot MED5102 patient safety program here for the Year 5D students. The centre is equipped with a High Fidelity room, a pre briefing room, SIM Ward, SIM Gym and a multitude of part task trainers.

If you decide to choose SRH Bendigo for your Year 4C Regional Rotation, you will be one of fifteen students who will complete rotations in:-

- Women's Health,
- Children's Health,
- General Practice and
- Medicine of the Mind.

You will undertake Women's Health, Children's Health and Medicine of the Mind in two rotations of six week and one rotation of five weeks. With the exception of when you are in your Women's Health rotation, you will undertake your General Practice placement every Friday. We currently use eight medical clinics around Bendigo including one in Strathfieldsaye and Elmore, however this will increase in 2015. If you don't have

your licence or a car, you must let the coordinator know early on so you are not allocated to either of these medical clinics. However, non-driving students will still be expected to get themselves to placements around Bendigo, Strathdale and Kangaroo Flat, fortunately though Bendigo does have an excellent public transport system with city buses.

Your academic teaching timetable is from 4pm – 6pm Monday to Thursday with an extra Children's Health tutorial thrown in for good measure on a Wednesday giving you a 7pm finish. You have extremely experienced and dedicated consultants at your disposal for your academic teaching.

Medicine of the Mind - Clinical Lead

Associate Professor Pam Snow

Associate Professor Philip Tune is the Executive Director of Psychiatry at Bendigo Health and is your primary lecturer for Medicine of the Mind. Associate Professor Pam Snow and Mr Justin Moir also contribute to the teaching timetable. A/Prof Snow runs a couple of fun evenings over the semester, called DSM-V at the movies where you get to watch a movie in which the story line has links to mental health and a healthy discussion is held afterwards with the accompaniment of pizza or some other culinary delight!

Your clinical placement will be in both inpatient and community based services.

General Practice - Clinical Lead

Dr Dennis O'Connor

Your General Practice curriculum is delivered by Dr Dennis O'Connor and Dr Mary Hatzis; both GP's of many years' experience. Both are happy to give any extra assistance and guidance as requested and convince you that their profession is the choice you should be making!

Children's Health – Clinical Lead

Professor Geoff Solarsh

Professor Geoff Solarsh is the Director of the School of Rural Health Bendigo and is also the Year 4C coordinator and runs tutorials in children's health.

You will also see Dr Janaka Tennakoon, Dr Andy Lovett and Dr Anne Dawson paediatricians in the hospital on ward rounds during the semester. You'll have time allocated to the hospital, private clinics and community based services.

Women's Health – Clinical Lead

Dr Peter Roessler

Dr Peter Roessler is the coordinator for the Bendigo region and has been involved with teaching the students in his consulting rooms and in the hospital for a number of years. He has been coordinating at SRH Bendigo since 2011. He has recently opened a lovely new consulting suite after a number of years preparation. You'll be allocated a week of mentoring with one of the Bendigo O&Gs; Dr Monroe, Dr Jalland, Dr Cullen, Dr Borozdina & Dr Roessler. You'll also spend a lot of time with Staff Specialist Dr Moeed at Bendigo Health.

Program Coordinator

Sonya Steve

Sonya is responsible for your timetabling and all other things administrative. Sonya has a background of Managing the Medical Workforce Unit at Bendigo Health so is very familiar with the environment you are being placed in. She is also very strict on attendance and ensuring each student maximises their clinical placement experience. She has contacts throughout the placement program that let her know if a student hasn't attended. We have an extremely high expectation that ALL students attend ALL placements (illness and family emergencies aside) and will be quick to try and contact you if you absent yourself from a placement without notification.

If you choose to undertake Year 4C at SRH Bendigo you are part of a small and privileged group that has access to many specialist consultants, GP's and other allied health staff. You may also be witness to the thriving new health precinct that is being built around us including a world class new Bendigo hospital due for completion in 2016.

SRH Mildura (Year 3B)

Emma Sanderson, Class of 2016

Accommodation

Year 3B MBBS students in Mildura are provided with accommodation in fully-furnished and fully equipped houses within walking distance of the Mildura Base Hospital. The rent includes electricity, water, gardening, 50GB of downloads a month and maintenance. The houses are very modern, spacious and well-equipped. Each house has 3 bedrooms and you are able to allocate preferences as to who you live with. There are some free and secured parking spots on-site at the clinical school (subject to availability) and all of the houses have at least a 1 car garage. Free, unlimited parking at or close to the hospital is usually available.

Curriculum

Hospital Teaching

Year 3B MBBS students cycle through 2 major rotations in Mildura: general medicine and general surgery. Students also get short stints in orthopaedics, anaesthetics, rehabilitation, dialysis, cardiology and many of the visiting specialist clinics (rheumatology, endocrinology). As a general rule of thumb there are two Year 3B students per team. This means that there are plenty of opportunities for two-on-one teaching with your Year 5D student, intern, registrar or consultant if they have time. Because there are so few students in Mildura there are a lot of hands-on-experiences (especially in surgery) and opportunities to feel as if you are helping the team.

There are also many teaching sessions held at the hospital during lunchtimes, most of which you're welcome to attend if you wish to be exposed to some complicated medicine (and potentially get free lunch). Students on surgical ward rounds are also required to present patients to the surgical consultants on a 'Grand (teaching) Round'. Wear ties (boys only) and be prepared and you will learn a lot!

Clinical School Teaching

PBLs, clinical/procedural skills tutorials, radiology or ECG interpretation tutorials are held on most afternoons after the ward rounds. The tutors for all of these are consultants, registrars, or local GPs so it is important that you do your tasks well!

The clinical school in Mildura also has a newly renovated simulated patient facility that has the whole Sim Family (SimMan, SimMom and two baby Sims). SimMan is a high-tech simulated dummy that can be programmed for different emergency situations. You get the opportunity to be in the front-line and attempt to save his 'life'. It's very exciting stuff!

The clinical school staff lovely and are willing to go out of their way to help you with anything from academic enquiries to ideas for things to do on the weekends.

Life outside of med

Mildura is 540km from Melbourne (6 hours) and 390km (4.5 hours) from Adelaide which can be a major disadvantage for many students. Public transport to/from Melbourne involves a Vline bus and train which can take 8-9 hours however there are regular flights available at cheap prices if you book early. The flight takes little over an hour.

Public transport within Mildura itself is lacking so it is very beneficial to have your own car. That said, because there is such a small tight-knit group of students in Mildura you could probably survive without one.

Food is a major advantage of this placement. Look out for fresh local produce at the multiple Farmer's markets or dare to splurge your budget on a famous degustation at Stefano's. Other good places to visit include: Trentham Estate Winery for tastings and an amazing view of the river, Verdict Bar & Tapas, Thai-riffic, Mildura Brewery, The Office, The Pizza Café, Seasons and the Spanish Bar and Grill.

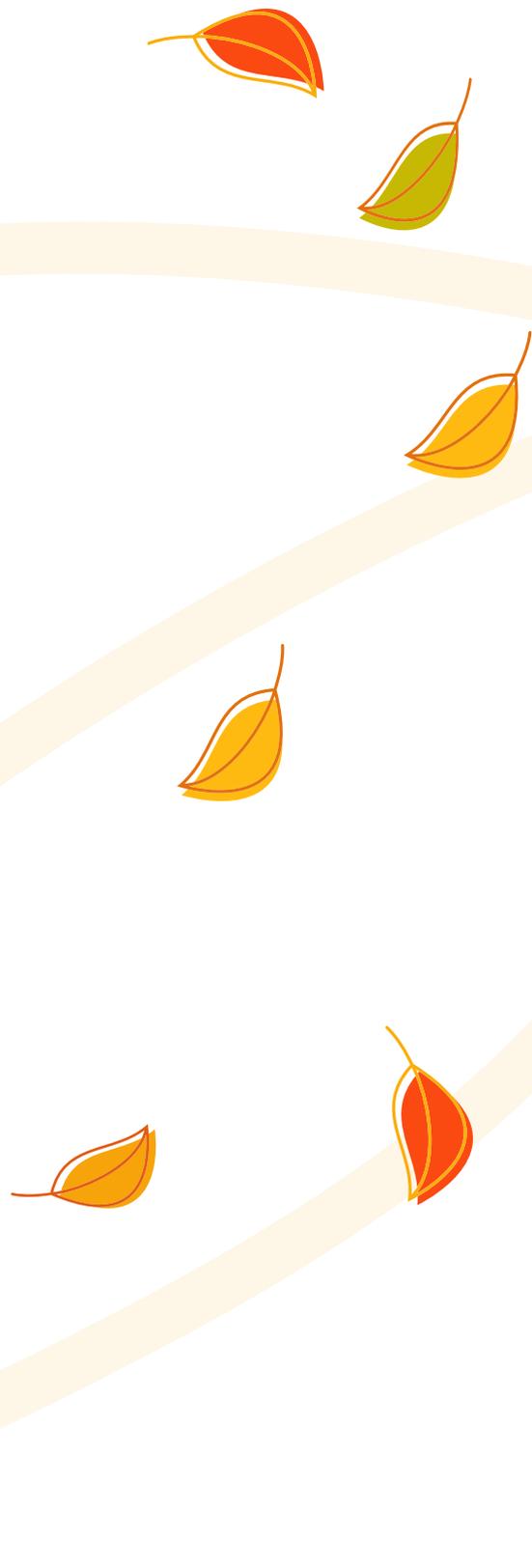
Mildura also has a really strong sporting and fitness culture. The choice of local gyms is large and Mildura Waves, Aquarius, FIT and SNAP fitness all want to seduce you with their free trials. Approach the gyms and you might be able to get a discount on membership. Other fitness/sports offered include CROSSFIT, small PT-run sessions in addition to all the regulars (AFL, netball, volleyball, soccer, badminton, mixed martial arts, mountainless mountain biking etc).

Many students in the past have got involved with organisations such as St John Ambulance. Medical students are prized members of the local division and get lots of hands-on experience with trauma management especially at the many motorsport events held in the region.

Mildura is suited for outdoorsy-types who like to get muddy and/or wet. The Murray River and surrounds is prime real-estate for skiing, swimming, fishing, walking, 4WD-ing, camping, etc. Also, apart from the first few weeks of the first semester when it is stinking hot, the weather will be sunny and dry almost all year round. It gets a bit chilly in winter but it's never unbearably cold.

Summary

- Pros: Excellent accommodation, good exposure to procedural skills, hands-on teaching due to small numbers, simulated teaching, clinical school staff that care about you, good food and weather.
- Cons: Far away from major capital cities in the 'year of the 21sts', less exposure to specialties, small number of students mean that it is likely that you will be asked a lot of questions, , booming ant population.



SRH Mildura (Year 4C)

Kate Maxfield, Class of 2015

Accommodation

Town houses are provided for all Year 4C medical students. They're all relatively modern homes; the smallest is a 2 bedroom house and the largest 4 bedroom. Rent includes utilities, internet, gardening and maintenance. The houses are fully furnished and include cooking utensils so all you need to bring is yourself (and maybe some clothes). There will be regular inspections every few weeks to ensure the houses are kept clean. The houses are all within walking distance from the hospital, the furthest being less than 2km away.

Paediatrics

Each morning you will attend ward rounds at 8am, they generally finish around 11am. Most of time you will be timetabled on to the special care nursery. Once you feel comfortable with newborns, know how to change their nappies (it's a skill you need to know) and conduct a newborn examination, you'll probably get bored. Instead I recommend attending the pediatric outpatient clinics which run most afternoons. If that doesn't interest you head over to ED to look for children, they're always welcoming of Year 4C students.

On top of this you will be expected to attend several different community placements and attend 2 paediatrics tutes/lectures per week (On Friday they will give you lunch). Make sure you ask about assessments at the start of the rotation and ask for the marking sheets. We had 1 case report and 2 bedside history and examinations to complete.

Curriculum

Women's

Women's is pretty full on. During your 6 weeks you will attend surgeries, outpatient clinics and deliveries at birth suite. On your final week you will be attached to a mentor obstetrician who you will follow around all day and night (You will also be given assessments to conduct during this week).

Getting births is the hardest part. Show the midwives you care, and spend time with the women, offer assistance whenever you can, even if it is just putting something in the bin. Make sure you ask for consent before the birth and make sure the midwife knows that you want to catch it.

There is only one lecture per week and the lecturer varies.

Psychiatry

For the psych rotation you will be based on the psych ward for 6 weeks. During this time you will also be expected to attend community placements most likely at the Mallee family Care, which is not far from the hospital.

There will be 2 tutes per week given by two extremely experienced psychiatrists. Dr Pham is amazing. EVERYONE loves him, and so will you! He will teach you everything you need to know for exam. The other lecturer is Dr Caracatsanis, he is slower paced than Dr Pham, but just as wise, and will teach you whatever you want to know (He hypnotized one of us). He also marks your psych reports so be nice.

Life outside of med

Mildura's a happenin' rural town with excellent sporting facilities and activities all year round.

In terms of sporting facilities there's pretty much everything. The local pool is pretty sweet, and membership for the combined gym and pool is affordable. There's a boutique Pilates studio close to the hospital that welcomes medical students. Badminton has also been tried and tested by medical students so highly recommended. If you like a bit of adrenaline check out go-karting or the local shooting range for some fun times!

'Must sees' include Trentham Winery, Kings Billabong and the Perry sand hills.

Other 'kind-of must sees' include orange world, the botanical gardens and Woodsies Gem Shop.

For those of you who like to drink the night away Sandbar, cider tree and the Black Stump are highly recommended, and you know you've had a big night when you end up at Dirty Doms or Evolution.

It would be advisable to have a car, specifically if you have to go to a community placement after a tutorial, although most placements are within a 30 minute walk. Mildura roads are bike friendly, but be wary of the double sided thorns that can deflate your tyres and ego in a second.

SRH Bendigo (Year 3B)

Talia Igel, Class of 2016

Accommodation

Lister House

All Year 3B students placed in Bendigo for the year set up home at Lister House. Lister House is in the heart of Bendigo and just a short walk from all the city sites and attractions.

Lister House is comprised of a block of three floors of bedrooms with a connecting common room, kitchen, computer room and study room. Each floor has two bathrooms and a laundry (with access to washing machines and dryers). There are both male and female only floors, and a mixed top floor that hosts Year 5D students on their 6 week rural rotations.

The common room makes you feel right at home with comfy couches, a plasma TV, pool, table-tennis and lots of room for big family dinners. Lastly, the kitchen is divided into small mini-kitchens that are used by 6-8 students and have all the appliances required to cook up a storm. Lister House costs include room-hire, Monash internet and all other utilities.

In Bendigo, year 3B students share the year with University of Melbourne MD2 students. These students are mature age students and are also based at Lister House for their accommodation. The MD2 students have some lectures that are separate to Monash University students but for the majority of the year, we are grouped together for our clinical placements and academic program.

Curriculum

Ward Time

Daily ward time is schedule from the beginning of rounds until midday. However, students are welcome to stay on the wards for as long as they like in any free-of-teaching periods. Ward time at Bendigo Health is an excellent learning experience as most consulting teams are only comprised of 1 or 2 Year 3B or MD2. This offers great opportunities to get your hands dirty with procedural work, to scrub in to operations and to get to know the different doctors that work at the hospital. Whilst ward time is not exactly compulsory, attendance is highly recommended and highly beneficial towards study.

There are 4 clinical rotations:

Ambulatory (8 weeks)

- Radiotherapy and Oncology (2 weeks)
- Rehab (2 weeks)
- Geriatrics (2 weeks)
- Breast and Colorectal cancer (2 weeks)

Gen Med (8 weeks)

- Acute Medical Unit (2 weeks)
- Cardiology (2 weeks)
- Gen Med (4 weeks)
- This rotation can include 2 weeks at St John of God Hospital

Surgery (8 weeks)

- Orthopaedics (2 weeks)
- General Surgery (6 weeks)

Specialty (8 weeks)

- Urology (2 weeks)
- ICU (1 week)
- Anaesthetics (1 week)
- Renal (2 weeks)
- ED (2 weeks)

Tutorials

Together with ward time, formal teaching is comprised of various tutorials covering different fields of Medicine. All Year 3B students will have Pharmacology, Pathology, PBL, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics, Clinical Skills and Surgical lectures or practicals, irrespective of their current placement. Furthermore, rotation-specific tutorials include Anaesthetics, ECG, Renal and Urology teaching.

Bendigo is the only site that has comprehensive Ophthalmology teaching in third year. Mr Burt has a great passion for medical student education and ensures all students come out of his lectures with a superior understanding of neuro-ophthalmological conditions. Pharmacology and Pathology lectures tend to be a bit dry, however all necessary material is covered.

It is important to note that the academic staff at SRH Bendigo have a reputation for being strict on attendance. This means students are expected to be at all scheduled ward time and tutorials unless otherwise discussed with a member of staff. They will notice if you don't show up and you will get a stern talking to!

Life outside of med

Your year in Bendigo can be a lot more than just medicine. A vibrant, rural hub, Bendigo offers ample opportunity to get involved in community life. Year 3B students have found themselves joining in with local organisations such as, Bendigo Theatre Company, Bendigo Football League, Centre for Multicultural Youth and more. There is also the chance to team up with the intern netball team at Bendigo Major League Multisports or continue the (so-far) undefeated legacy of the Bendiglobetrotters at Latrobe sport!

Social life is met with enthusiasm with most Thursday nights spent at the local nightclubs or bars. You haven't quite experienced Bendigo until you've had a boogie at Universal! Similarly, Wednesday night Trivia at the Golden Swan Hotel always makes for a good time and a good laugh.

Cars are not essential as both Lister House and Bendigo Health are both walking distance from the shops, gyms and train station. The V-line offers a Bendigo-Melbourne train that leaves every hour and takes about 2 hours between Bendigo station and Southern Cross. There is also a bus company that offers routes that pass near the hospital and Lister House.

SRH Bendigo (Year 4C)

Ian Tang, Class of 2015

Accommodation

In Year 4C, instead of living at Lister House, you live in private residential houses about a 5 minute drive from the hospital, or a 15-25 minute walk (depending on your pace). It is a little further from town than Lister house though, which is at times a bit annoying!

The houses accommodate up to 4 people, but you may only have 3 people living there at once. The houses are quite new and nice. There are 3 houses and all have 4 bedrooms: two with single beds, one with a double bed, and one with a double bed and ensuite – good luck getting it!

Curriculum

The 18 week semester (both Semester one and two) can be divided into the following: 1 week orientation, 6 weeks on women's health, paediatrics or psychiatry, 6 weeks on another and 5 weeks on the last of the three. Besides from hospital placements, there are daily tutorials in the evenings where everyone attends: Monday is psych tutorials, Tuesday is GP, Wednesday is paediatrics and Thursday is women's. There are no tutorials on Friday as that day is when you go on your GP placements every week unless you are on women's health. The teaching in Bendigo is really good! It can take some adjusting too though as it can be a bit full on, but you are definitely spoon fed there! With that said there is lack of direction and help in regards to theme I and II content (HSM/EBCP) – so you must get on top of those yourself! Besides from that, everything else is very structured in regards to the timetable.

Paediatrics

This is probably the busiest of the three, with some days literally being from 7am-7pm. It comprises of ward rounds, nursing shifts, shifts in the special care nursery, baby checks on maternity, outpatient clinics, including a surgical list, and community placements as well. All the doctors are really nice and are happy to teach! There is also a weekly bedside tute and a student run clinic where you pretty much take control of the consultation and report back to the consultant. It can seem daunting at first, but it is rewarding and allowed me to get use to examining infants and newborns!

Women's

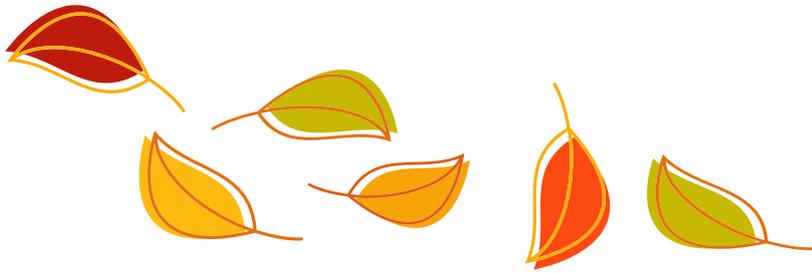
The women's rotation involves time in surgery, antenatal, gynae and family planning clinics as well as time on labour and maternity wards. There are also afternoons free for "self-directed" study too, and a week where you are shadowing a consultant (mentor week). Do not worry about getting births! You will get them! You may have to come in at night once or twice as it is easier when you do not have to compete with nursing and midwifery students but it is not as difficult as you think. The timetable here is quite flexible too if you want to swap with your peers as you often have to juggle things to see/do to get signed off.

Psychiatry

Psych is the least intense of the rotations made up of time in the inpatient units and community placements. Community placements can be a bit hit and miss depending on whether or not they know you are coming, or whether or not the patient is actually coming. Nonetheless, it is worth seeing. Just make sure you bring something else to do just in case. My advice, do your psych case report then.

Life outside of med

Things to do in Bendigo include joining the local sports teams. There has often been netball, indoor soccer, soccer and basketball teams. Get involved with the third years! There are also plenty of places to eat and go out for coffee. Pottery classes, gym classes, volunteering at the Salvos or St John's ambulance and more! Run around the lake or through Rosalind park, or go watch a movie. There is free win tasting every Wednesday and also trivia nights on then too! The occasional trip down to Universal on a Thursday night may be enticing for some too! Most the stuff is in town, which is quite a close drive, or walking distance if you are up for it! Get involved with the third years and interns as there is often a lot going on – you definitely will not feel lonely there!



Kerang

Emma Davey, Class of 2015

Accommodation

The house in Kerang is pretty big, especially considering there are only 2 people there. It's got everything that you need there already, including crockery, cutlery and pots and pans. It also has a washing machine and tumble dryer (but no dishwasher). Cost of SRH housing includes rent, electricity, gas, water and internet. The accommodation is about 100 metres from the hospital, and about a kilometre from the clinic (Fitzroy Street Medical Clinic). You do have to drive to Swan Hill (60km, takes about 40 mins) at least once, sometimes twice a week for Hub day and tutorials. Keep a petrol claim form and hand it in to get reimbursement from the uni.

Curriculum

GP training

Most of your time is spent in the GP clinic parallel consulting. It's a great clinic, the doctors are all keen to teach and you see a good variety of different cases across all of the year 4 disciplines. You get a lot of experience with minor surgical procedures as well, including skin excisions, suturing, injections, venesection etc. They also put mirenas and things like that in in the clinic.

Hospital training

Even though this is your GP placement, the hospital at Kerang is GP-run, so you also do ward rounds up there. All the doctors are on call there sometimes, and if you want to they will call you in for interesting cases as well. One of your GP supervisors is the GP-anaesthetist for the hospital, so you can sit in on the surgeries done by visiting specialists. These include gynae, ortho, ENT, ophthalmology and general surgery.

You also go to Swan Hill hospital for midwifery for 2 separate weeks. You can normally stay in the spare room at the Swan Hill house. This is a great opportunity to get most of your births signed off. There are a lot of times that nothing will be happening on the ward though, so it's worth taking some work along (I did a lot of the GP chronic case write-up while I was there).

Community Placements:

In a lot of the other placements you will be given a lot of structure with your community placements. In Kerang you basically seek them out for yourselves. You can go to the pharmacy, nursing homes, maternal and child health, school vaccinations, aged care respite programs and many others. The GPs have a lot of suggestions; you just have to organize them yourselves.

Life outside of med

You basically need at least one car between you because the only way to get to Swan Hill at the times that you need to is by car. There is a train line that runs through Kerang, and you can get to and from Melbourne on that, but it doesn't run all that frequently.

There are lots of markets in and around Kerang (pretty much every weekend there will be something). There is a gym and a pool (though the pool is only open in summer), and there are netball and football teams you can join. The football club is also very keen to have medical students there as medics. I did this and it's a great way to get involved in the town, as well as seeing interesting medical cases (head injuries, ligament and bone injuries) and a lot of experience in strapping joints. I also joined the local road cycling team. There are a lot of sports to get involved in, and if you just ask around then someone will be able to tell you who to get in touch with. There is also a choir that meets once a week that the GPs can get you involved in.

There is not all that much in the way of shopping in Kerang, but Swan Hill makes up for most of the lack. There is a decent sized Safeway where you can get most of what you might need.

Overall impression:

I had a fantastic time in Kerang. I got very involved in the community and found that the teaching was exceptional. It is quite isolated (very small town and a long way from Melbourne), but the locals are incredibly warm and welcoming.



Swan Hill

Alba Sanderson, Class of 2015

Accommodation

The accommodation in Swan Hill is an old house. It has 5 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. All have a double bed, desk and desk chair.

Bedroom 1: Close to the kitchen, reverse cycle air conditioner, double bed, double window facing into the carport. Good internet reception. No cupboard space but a hanging rack and chest or drawers are provided.

Bedroom 2: Spare room, no bed, desk, small, faces car port again, next to front door, used by the Kerang people when they come up for their weeks on midwifery. No Cupboard space

Bedroom 3: Next to the bathroom and lounge room, reverse cycle airconditioner, poor internet reception, window facing the garden, ++ privacy, may be woken by the shower, early morning sun. Good cupboard space.

Bedroom 4: Slightly bigger room, double window facing onto courtyard, poor - moderate internet reception (moderate if sitting on the bed), only old evaporative air conditioner that is windy and not particularly effective, great room for those that love the cold, or burning their toes on the oil heaters provided (you will be surprised how cold it actually is!), close to the bathroom. Cupboard space

5. Master bedroom, same airconditioner/heat situation as room 4, ensuite bathroom, double window facing the courtyard, good internet reception. Extensive cupboard space.

Curriculum

Teaching structure: 2 days a week with parallel and wave consulting, 1 day hub day, 2 days community based placement.

Hub day: sessions with Dr Ernan Hession and Dr Moynihan. Visiting specialists from the community and various other doctors from the clinic. Self-directed teaching.

Consulting days: At the Swan Hill Medical Group. 2 students placed with one doctor for the morning. Have 40 minutes with each patient with 10 minutes for the doctor to give feedback in the consultation and finalise management. Afternoon is parallel consulting, one student per doctor.

Community based placement: Self organized. I would recommend visiting the Child and Maternal Health nurses, the special school and ED. All good experiences. Don't be overly worried about signing all of the places on the list off.

Ensure that you read the unit guidelines to make sure you don't miss any assignments.

Pros: Great exposure to varied teaching. Doctors all have a lot of experience in rural health. Midwifery experience in the hospital (2-3 weeks each on call) provides you with a great opportunity to get the births you need for the log book.

Cons: Small town issues, lack of specialists, may see patients in the streets

Life outside of med

Lots of community events run, markets just outside town. Good cinema just down the road from the clinic. House is 15 minutes walk from the CBD, clinic, gym and supermarkets. Retail therapy opportunities are limited.

Country football netball leagues in abundance, all are welcoming to both players and trainers. Being a trainer is a good opportunity to practice your sports taping and first aid skills. There are at least two gyms in Swan Hill. One is open 24 hours and is in the main street. The other is the local council gym, with a pool and various classes through the week. Both are easy to locate and standard gyms. The Swan Hill races are in June, and are located directly opposite the house. They are good fun so head along if you are around.

Getting to Swan Hill is easy from Melbourne. There are a number of trains every day. It takes 5 hours on the train. Having a car is very useful if you want to go anywhere other than Melbourne because the transport is more restricted then but is still possible.

The town might seem a bit dead on the weekends but make sure you head along to the pubs and then make a night of it by heading out to Barrells, the only nightclub in town. Niko Niko is a great little Japanese restaurant if you are looking for something a bit fancy. Also Java Spice does some delicious Asian food. It is just out of the centre of town but worth the trip.

Maryborough

Patryck Lloyd-Donald, Class of 2015

Accommodation

Accommodation for Maryborough is situated at a private 2 bedroom rental house that both Maryborough students share. The address is 58 Holyrood Street, so feel free to Google Maps it!

The house is older (1970's?), but neat/tidy with a large fully equipped kitchen. The two bedrooms are large, with the master bedroom having a separate ensuite. Combined with the main bathroom, this means you both have a bathroom and toilet to yourselves. The place has a massive backyard and plenty of space in the house if entertaining is your thing.

Pros – large house, 2 minutes' drive from both clinics/hospital, (10 minute walk). Central location in town and 2 bathrooms. Massive backyard and gardening is done for you!

Negs – Older place. Maryborough tap water tastes like rusty cholera, bedding not included and the place is actually owned by one of the GPs who provides it to Monash, so do NOT trash it! :P

Curriculum

Maryborough is the best site for clinical GP training in Victoria, almost without question, in my very biased opinion. The placement is enormously flexible, allows you to get your hands well and truly dirty with the motto from the 3 fantastic supervising GPs being; “The aim of this semester is to transform you from students to junior doctors”, gulp, are you ready?!?

Week's structure:

- 2 days placements in the allocated GP clinic, usually Tuesday and Friday,
- A formal tutorial-style teaching day in Castlemaine, known as Hub Day, each Wednesday

- A multidisciplinary program that runs for 14 weeks each Thursday morning, known as WOSSP.

The rest of the time is free time, meaning you can either take Monday off to study or spend in Melbourne etc, or use it for more GP or hospital time – wait, what was that, hospital time on a GP placement?

That's right. The Maryborough hospital is staffed entirely by GPs and visiting specialists, with students acting almost as interns.

This means by the end of the rotation you (almost definitely) will be called in overnight to be first-assistant on an emergency C-section, you will deliver a baby, you will suture patients unsupervised, you will work patients up in A&E ordering radiology and pathology tests (with permission), you will administer anaesthetics and intubate multiple patients, you will excise multiple skin lesions and you will see over 200 patients by yourself and organize referrals to both Bendigo and Ballarat hospitals.

As such, by the end of the rotation, you will have received the most practical, intensive and hands-on 4th year GP training offered through Monash, almost guaranteed! Are you ready?!?!?

*Note: Interns are commencing in 2015, however students will still get to do a hell of a lot!

GP Supervision

Split between 2 neighbouring clinics, Claredon and Nightingale, with students split between 3 supervising GPs, who all are extremely good teachers and well experienced. Clinic days involve progressing from sitting in with the GPs for the first few weeks, to completely seeing all your own patients, organizing tests and completing a follow-up, with appropriate supervision when required. You will be given a metal name badge on the door- part of the staff much???

The days are 7.30am (ward rounds) – 6/7pm, with a 10 minute lunch break if you are lucky, however are so, so rewarding and clinically invaluable.

Hub day

Each Wednesday in Castlemaine hospital (45 minute drive each way, carpool pls). The Castlemaine and Maryborough students combine to make a group of approx. 8 students.

Teaching is split into PBL style tasks and tutorials by visiting specialists and Castlemaine GPs, and is varied with some of it being excellent, and some being poor. It is hit and miss like any tutorial, but the Co-ordinator, Jenny is amazing regardless. Pre-reading with Murtagh's definitely is beneficial.

The teaching room is old, cold and smells funny, but that's a minor details with so much 4th year med to learn!

WOSSP: Multidisciplinary group project, ran every Thursday morning.

Pilot year in Maryborough in 2014. It involves a small groups following 1 – 2 patients through several consultations, culminating in a 30 minute presentation. You will be mixed with Nursing, Physio and OT students and get a swanky document for the CV at the end. It sounds great in theory but is ultimately time-consuming, a bit painful and poorly organized!

Life outside of med

Town info

Maryborough is a community of particularly low socio-economic status, resulting in you seeing a great mix of chronic disease in the elderly, and acute accident/emergency stuff with young patients- however honestly does NOT make the most appealing social environment.

Night-life

The town has a few great and affordable pubs/RSLs and a nightclub, which is universally not recommended if you enjoy having bilateral vision...

Social

A highlight of the social immersion however is

dinner with one of the supervising GPs each week. Dr De Villiers loves bonding with both students and you will be invited for a meal each weeknight, either at their residence or at a venue in Maryborough or surrounding towns, and their generosity is definitely a highlight of the placement!

Sports

Maryborough has several sporting teams including netball, footy and soccer, who all participate in the Ballarat Leagues, being slightly closer to Ballarat than Bendigo, however the 45 minute trip to Bendigo made it possible to continue sport in any of the Bendigo leagues. The house is also situated 100m from an enormous park, with plenty of paths for running. Maryborough has 2 fully equipped gyms, a great golf course and swimming pool.

Shops

The town has several take-away shops, including all the major chains, as well as Coles, Safeway and Aldi- however not much else in the way of fashion shopping etc.

Conclusion

In all, the placement is a fantastic and immersive experience that is entirely dependent on what you want to put in. You have the capacity to pursue any interest that takes your fancy, and are given a stupidly free reign by the hospital staff and GPs, which makes saying "no" to a procedure you simply aren't prepared for yet the most difficult thing!

In all, get stuck in and become a part of the team and you will definitely feel like a doctor by the end of it, whether that comes from seeing a patient by yourself for the first time, or hundredth time, excising a lesion unsupervised or delivering a baby.

Enjoy the most intensive and hands-on GP placement in Vic!

Castlemaine

Cat Gaggin, Class of 2015

Castlemaine is an alternate town, with an active group against fast food stores (there is one new Subway) and no herd immunity. Located an hour-ish from Melbourne, and 30 minutes from Bendigo. 'Maine has experienced a recent influx of people from Melbourne seeking a tree change, which has led to a vast array of people and there being no car parks at the train station (cheers commuters). Castlemaine has 2 IGAs (owned by the same people) that are ridiculously overpriced, but the Coles at Kangaroo Flats is 22 minutes away and the money you spend on petrol you will save on lettuce.

Accommodation

Ahhhh the serenity, if serenity is near the fire station and train line.

The houses are 4 bedroom, 1 bathroom, 0 cupboards, and are usually shared between 3 people, and come with basically everything, including (an occasionally faulty) kitchen sink! The houses overlook Castlemaine, and most importantly the hospital (for a 9am start you can wake up at 8:58 and still make it, if you forgo eating and general personal hygiene). Bring your winter woolies because the houses can be a pain to heat (and by pain I mean they don't heat).

Curriculum

The week is split into halves, with a full on day of lectures in between. Two days are spent at your GP placement pretending you're a doctor, and the other two are community (study/sleep/catch up on TV) days. This includes WoSSP (1/2 day), which is really useful for getting a patient for the chronic case assignment (aka the bane of your existence). Hub Day is long, and lunch breaks/ breaks are a thing of the past, so if you have an attention span of a gnat (and even if you don't) these will be a struggle.

Placement

There are 3 GP practices, and 2 of those have GP Obstetricians. The furthest placement is less than 3 minutes' drive from the accommodation. Everyone is welcoming, and keen for you to be there. Placements are set up for parallel consulting, where you have your own room and see your own patients. The GPs do their own basic procedures, so there is the opportunity. The midwives are very protective of the hospital, believing it is a sacred space that medical students shouldn't take up, so only go with a GP. The hospital is GP run, and has a newly built Urgent Care centre, and if you are really keen the GPs usually round on their own patients before clinic.

Life outside of med

So. Much. Food. Castlemaine is renowned for its many, many café's (Saffs, Togs, Bells Belles), which are super delicious. Castlemainians are also massively into their sport, and according to many you are not a local until you play on a sports team. There are football (both codes) and netball clubs around, and if team sport isn't your thing, but fitness is the hospital has a basic gym for ~\$150 for the semester.

Castlemaine is a wonderful place and I would recommend it to anyone and everyone for fourth year.

Gisborne



Sarah Le, Class of 2015

Accommodation

Six students are placed in a 6 bedroom furnished house with private en-suite in each room. The bedroom contains 1 double bed, wardrobe, desk and chair. The shared living spaces include a kitchen, living room and laundry.

Students are expected to provide their own food and there is an IGA and Safeway in Kyneton. There is ample storage space in the kitchen and there is a large communal fridge, cookware, cutlery and a dishwasher.

The accommodation is located next to the Kyneton District Health Service (Hospital). There are plenty of parking at the house. The Kyneton train station is approximately 20 minutes (walk) from the house. There are two buses servicing the town that are scheduled to pass each stop once/twice every hour. The closest stop to the accommodation is at the hospital which is a 4 minute walk from the house.

Curriculum

There are six students placed at the Highlands hub and they are divided into four students at Woodend and two students at Gisborne. The placement in Gisborne is at Gisborne Medical Clinic and the hours are 9am-5pm with a two hour lunch break from 12pm-2pm.

At GMC, students work alongside different GPs: 2 GP's per day, two days a week. Each GP has their own sub-specialty and clientele: Kulbir Gill and Stephen Newton with chronic diseases, Heena Choksey with women's health, Rod Guy with musculoskeletal, Sandra Morrow with dermatology and Kasey Hogg with youth mental health. By the end of the placement, students should have exposure the four specialties: Women's Health, Children's Health, Medicine of the Mind and GP.

The teaching at GMC is mainly self-directed learning. You are expected to read up on conditions seen in consultation. The GPs are very keen to teach and are happy to discuss cases with students. Most of the GPs are also very good educators, especially Rod Guy on musculoskeletal medicine. Students should try to be proactive as there are many learning opportunities available such as suturing, punch biopsy, pap smear, flu vaccination, ECG etc.

Every week, there is an academic day from 9am-5pm. Students research individual tasks in their own time and present back to the group the following week. These days tend to be very long so try to make the presentations interactive and interesting to engage other students. Practice OSCEs and EMQ have been are good tools which have been relatively successful in stimulating learning within the class.

Life outside of med

It is recommended for students to have a car for ease and convenience, especially if the placement is in Gisborne. The Gisborne railway station, located in Riddells Creek is a 36 minute walk from GMC.

There are sporting facilities and fitness centres in each town. The price is quite standard with memberships generally costing \$60/month. The Macedon Ranges Shire Council have two aquatic and leisure centres located in Kyneton and Gisborne where memberships can be used at either facility.

There are many good restaurants in Kyneton such as Pizza Verde, Mr Carsis and Dhaba at the Mill (best curries!). There are markets on the weekends in Gisborne and surrounding towns.

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