

# RURAL PLACEMENT GUIDE 2025

July 2025 | 13<sup>th</sup> Edition



**EVERYTHING YOU WISH  
YOU KNEW BEFORE  
GOING RURAL**

Details on each rural site  
Student accounts of hospital and GP placements  
Curriculum Descriptions  
Details on preferencing rural placement  
Read on for more!



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Editor

Lois Segun-Beloved

## Previous editors

Mykelti Kotzur (9th and 10th edition)  
Yude Jayachandran (8th Ed)  
Caitlin Smart (7th Ed)  
Maushmi Udaya Kumar (6th Ed)  
Gaby Bolton (5th Ed)  
Michael Barclay (3rd and 4th Ed)  
Ruth Mcloed (2nd Ed)  
Ellysia Bourke (1st Ed)

## Photographers

Amy Sylviris  
Stephanie Stavrou  
Nicholas Wilkes  
Padmesh Ramanujam  
Jacob Proctor  
Rachel Neisen  
Jasmine Kenzie  
Lois Segun-Beloved  
Elizabeth Day  
Maham Ahmed  
Elizabeth Skvortsova  
Ibuken Oloruntoba  
Jamin Kenzie  
Xuan Lee  
Wai Chung Tse  
Tracy Nguyen  
Mitch Roberts  
Breanna Teo  
Anna Shalit  
Abhinav Singh  
Tiong Ang



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# LETTER FROM MRH



The MUMUS Rural Guidebook is an excellent resource to assist you in considering and planning for rural placement as a part of your course, with valuable and informative contributions from medical students and the Monash Rural Health (MRH) team.

MRH is proud to provide students with hands-on learning experiences to prepare you for clinical practice. At our rural sites, you will get more time with patients at the bedside and will spend more time learning with senior clinicians and multidisciplinary healthcare teams. There will be mentoring opportunities and more occasions to practice and develop your clinical skills with patients. Importantly, you also have the opportunity to become a part of the local community through sporting, cultural and other activities, as well as experience first-hand the attractions that regional Victoria offers.

MRH has two cohorts of students that commit at Admission to complete the majority of their medical school training in rural Victoria. For students in the direct entry program, we have the Extended Rural Cohort (ERC). In the graduate entry program, we have the rural end-to-end cohort. We take 60 students into our rural program each year, together are referred to as the Monash Rural Cohort. The School strongly encourages students who are not part of the Monash Rural Cohort to experience rural medical training if they wish. There are certainly rural placement opportunities for non-rural cohort students across the clinical years.

All MRH sites boast exceptional educational facilities, hosting students across Years A, 2, 3B, 4C and 5D. The School is committed to the delivery of excellent regional and rural health education and research programs across the healthcare sector in a vibrant and exciting regional and rural environment. Our aim is to increase the rural medical workforce and to improve the health and access to healthcare of regional and rural communities. You have the opportunity to get involved in research within the rural setting through your Scholarly Intensive Placement or through the BMedSc(Hons) program.

In the North-West, MRH offers clinical placements at the two major teaching sites at Mildura and Bendigo, with surrounding towns also involved in 4C placements. Similarly, in the south-east, MRH has teaching sites at Traralgon, Warragul, Sale, Bairnsdale and Leongatha as well as extensive placements in surrounding townships. The first year of the graduate-entry MD program is delivered at our MRH Churchill site and includes clinical hospital placements in the southeast at Warragul, Traralgon, Sale, Leongatha and Wonthaggi.

Through our Regional Training Hubs, we can provide you with information and connections with the medical Colleges, young doctors and senior mentors that enable you to consider the opportunities for internship and postgraduate training in regional and rural Victoria. If you would like more information about our programs, feel free to contact our Rural Health Education Program Office at [rural.health@monash.edu](mailto:rural.health@monash.edu), who will assist with any queries and questions you might have about the training experiences offered at MRH.

At this stage of your course, you may not be sure which speciality you might like to work in or the primary location in which you may like to practice. Monash Rural Health provides you with a great opportunity to taste regional/rural clinical practice in short-term or longer-term placements and see if it suits you. I certainly hope that you can take up this opportunity.

*Professor Shane Bullcock*

PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF SCHOOL, MONASH RURAL HEALTH

# Letter from WILDFIRE

Hello everyone and welcome to the 2025 Rural Guidebook

Welcome to your rural placement journey — a chapter that has the power to shape not only your understanding of medicine, but your understanding of people, purpose, and place.

As Presidents of WILDFIRE, we are thrilled that you're about to step into one of the most vibrant, grounded, and rewarding facets of healthcare: rural and regional practice. These communities offer more than just a setting for clinical learning — they offer connection, authenticity, and the chance to make a real difference as a student.

You'll quickly learn that rural health isn't just about the medicine — it's about community. It's chatting with patients at the local bakery, being waved at as you walk down the main street, and having the privilege of being trusted with people's stories. It's about doctors who wear many hats, who teach with generosity, and who know their patients — not just as cases, but as neighbours and friends.

This guide is here to support you through the logistics and the lessons — but we encourage you to go beyond it. The more you give, the deeper you'll be invited—and the more you'll take away: clinical confidence, cultural humility, a love for resource-smart innovation, and friendships that stretch well beyond university.

We challenge you to embrace every opportunity: try the procedure you've only read about, champion preventive health, advocate for equity. Rural communities are resilient partners in care; they will celebrate your curiosity and forgive your stumbles as long as you show up with honesty and respect. Because in embracing rural life, you'll find something powerful: a sense of belonging, purpose, and perspective that stays with you far beyond your placement. These next weeks and months will challenge you, surprise you, and most of all — grow you. We hope you lean into every moment, and leave with more than you came with.

*Sharni Howlett & Lois Segun-Beloved*

WILDFIRE CO-PRESIDENTS 2025

# Preferences & **ALLOCATIONS**



By Laura Major

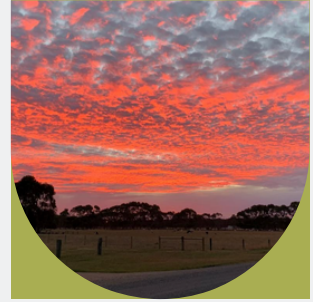
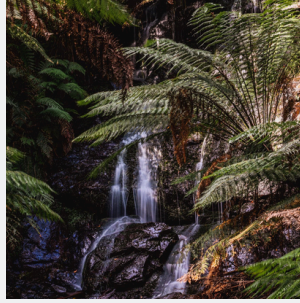
Rural Health Education Manager, Monash School of Rural Health

**Each year when clinical site placements are released there are always questions regarding the system used to allocate students. The following is an overview of the Faculty's allocation processes.**

Though we do offer students the opportunity to preference rural sites, some sites are more in demand than others, so not everyone will get their top preference/s and in some instances, students will be allocated to one of their lower preferred sites. With this information, during preference time, students will be able to make the most informed choices for the following clinical year.

**Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) and Rural End-to-End Cohort (E2E) students**

In 2026, End-to-End cohort 3B-5D students will undertake clinical placements across the North West footprint through the School of Rural Health. This doesn't mean that there are no spots available for other students. We have ample opportunities for non-rural stream students to take up rural placements in 2025. E2E cohort



students will undertake their placements in north west Victoria and are able to preference sites across this region for their full year placements in Year 3B, a semesterised program in 4C and either a full year model or split model (a semester in rural and a semester in metro) in 5D.

ERC students will undertake their clinical placements across the School's entire footprint in rural and regional Victoria and are able to preference sites across rural Victoria for their full year placements in Year 3B, a semesterised program in 4C and either a full year model or split model (a semester in rural and a semester in metro) in 5D.

Non-ERC & non-E2E students (or non-rural stream students) can opt in to Rural and then preference rural sites across the School's footprint in Gippsland and north-west Victoria.

E2E cohort students in 4C for 2026 will be preferencing SRH sites in north west Victoria. If you are placed in Mildura for 3B in

2025, and choose not to remain there for 4C, SRH will aim to facilitate a semester in Bendigo for your regional hospital rotation in 4C, depending on your preferences and availability. Please note, placements cannot be guaranteed. Similarly, if E2E students complete 3B in Bendigo in 2025, SRH will seek to offer a semester in Mildura during 4C to ensure a well-rounded regional clinical experience.

The above applies to any student completing a full year placement in Bendigo or Mildura in 3B in 2025.

The 4C rural practice community rotations across the Murray, Highlands, and Goldfields regions (including Swan Hill, Woodend, Gisborne, Maryborough, Kyneton, and Castlemaine) are all coordinated by the SRH team based in Bendigo. While the Murray region is geographically closer to Mildura, it is grouped with the Highlands and Goldfields as part of the Bendigo-managed rotation options. Therefore, E2E students who undertake their 3B

placement in Mildura may be allocated a semester in Bendigo (subject to preference and availability), with an equal opportunity to be placed in the Murray, Highlands, or Goldfields regions for their second semester. Student preferences are carefully considered as part of the allocation process.

### Rural Origin Students

At times, rural origin students are keen to return to their home town for rural placements. The School of Rural Health will try and prioritise students with rural backgrounds (DRL) who come from rural areas and express a preference to return to those areas. Being a rural origin student, and preferencing your local town, does not guarantee you a placement there, but it does improve your chances of being allocated to that location. By providing additional details through InPlace regarding your reasons for desiring to return, such as your interest in applying for internship positions or seeking employment in the area after graduation, you will aid us in our decision-making process.



### **For all students preferring regional/rural placements**

Faculty approved special consideration cases are allocated first and foremost, followed by students who might be repeating a year and need to be at the same site as the previous year.

Importantly, in submitting your preferences, you need to be aware that there can be no guarantees of placement for first (or in some instances second) preference. Limited places mean that there is a high likelihood of being allocated to a lower preference. Before submitting your preferences, it's important to familiarise yourself with the information in this guide to better understand all sites on offer to you.

All students allocated to the School of Rural Health across Years 3B-5D will have the option to nominate a friend with whom they would like to be placed. Please ensure that you both select the same site preferences and provide each other's names, otherwise friend nomination requests cannot be taken into consideration. You will be asked to let SRH know via InPlace what's more important – site or friend – that way, if you can't be with your friend, you may be able to acquire a higher site preference, or if you'd rather be with your friend, the School can take that into consideration and you may acquire a slightly lower site preference, but be allocated with your friend.

Once provisional rural site allocations are released, you will have the opportunity to apply for a direct one-to-one swap. All applications must be submitted by the specified deadline, and you will be notified of the outcome once the review process is complete.

### **Special requirements**

For 2026, if you have special requirements that need to be taken into account for your clinical placement year, you may submit these either at the time you opt into the Rural Stream (both 3B and 4C) via InPlace, or when you submit your rural site preferences.

All supporting documentation must be uploaded to InPlace or emailed to Laura Major at [laura.major@monash.edu](mailto:laura.major@monash.edu) Please note that requests without supporting documentation will not be considered. Submitting a special requirements application does not guarantee your first preference will be allocated, but it will be taken into account as part of the overall placement decision process.

The following circumstances will be considered in allocation decisions:

- Major health problem(s) requiring frequent and ongoing specialised treatment which is only available in certain locations
- Being a parent of a dependent child or children
- Being a registered carer (through Services Australia) for a sick family member or dependent
- Being part of the Monash Elite Student Performer Program
- Severe financial hardship
- Family and domestic violence
- A common-law (defacto) relationship

### Supporting documentation

Students will need to provide supporting documentation for special requirements to be considered.

### Health issues

- Letter from your treating doctor, counsellor, psychologist or other Ahpra registered health practitioner

### Parents

- Birth certificate of dependent child

### Elite Student Performer Program

- Registration letter from the Monash Elite Student Performer Program

### Being a registered carer for a dependent

- Evidence of being a registered carer (from Services Australia or the University Disability Support Unit)
- Letter from Monash Disability Support Services

### Family and domestic violence

- A police or incident report
- A medical certificate
- A court document
- A signed statement from a social worker, counsellor, doctor or other party

### Financial hardship

- Bank statements showing a reduction of income/spending on essential items and services
- Income statement or payment summaries from all of your employers
- A letter from your employer, stating your estimated income for a part-time job in a particular location



- A letter from an accountant
- A report from a financial counselling service
- Debt repayment agreements
- Any other evidence you have to explain your circumstances

### A common-law (de facto) relationship

- Demonstrate a shared life, a committed relationship, and a shared domestic life through documents like joint leases, bills, bank statements, and correspondence, as well as statements about shared responsibilities.

Every effort is made to accommodate documented special requirements. However, due to limited capacity, there may be situations where the School is required to allocate students to a clinical placement location they did not nominate as a preference.

We understand that limited access to transport can make travel to clinical placements challenging, especially without a licence or a car. On InPlace, you'll find a free-text box to outline your transport situation - please provide accurate details so we can consider this during allocations. While we'll do our best, we can't guarantee placement in your preferred area. If you don't have a car, your site will help connect you with other students for carpooling.

Please note that regional and rural site allocations are managed through a fair and transparent process, free from any external or personal influence. The online placement system is designed to match students with their highest possible preference. Once allocations are made, they are final, except in cases where manual changes are required due to Faculty-approved special consideration or rural site programmatic requirements.

We look forward to welcoming you to Monash Rural Health in 2026 😊

A scenic view of a lake at sunset or sunrise. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue, transitioning to a soft orange and yellow near the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. In the foreground, there are tall, brown reeds and grasses. In the distance, a building with a white roof is visible on the left side of the lake, surrounded by trees.

# **STAFF DESCRIPTIONS**

# BENDIGO

**Bendigo is a large regional city (population 125,000), situated 153 kilometres from Melbourne.**



It offers a contemporary lifestyle with many cafes and restaurants, Bendigo Art Gallery, Ulumbarra Theatre and a range of sporting clubs. There are two main hospitals, Bendigo Health and St John of God Bendigo. The new Bendigo Hospital opened in January 2017 with new facilities: 372 inpatient beds, 72 same-day beds, 11 new operating theatres, a regional cancer centre, an 80-bed integrated mental health facility and a mother-and-baby unit. The hospital has a helipad and accepts time-critical and high-acuity trauma and cardiac patients from the region. St John of God has also undergone extensions and has increased capacity by 50 percent. There is also an extensive range of community health services. All students will be expected to comply with all Hospital protocols, including wearing masks and vaccination requirements and demonstrate community leadership in these areas.

## **Curriculum**

### **Year 3B**

Year 3B students with Monash Rural Health (MRH) Bendigo are based at Bendigo Hospital for the full academic year.

In 2025, with the cessation of the NVRMEN (Northern Victoria Rural Medical Education Network) program, Monash University is the sole medical student program in Bendigo. Students undertake an orientation program incorporating intensive basic clinical skills refinement prior to four eight-week rotations through medicine, surgery, ambulatory care and specialties. The emphasis of the program is the development and refinement of basic and procedural clinical skills, core clinical knowledge and clinical reasoning. Students participate in a mixture of individual, small group, ad hoc and whole group teaching sessions with direct interaction with senior clinicians across a wide variety of medical and surgical specialties. This is complemented by weekly teaching scenarios in the clinical skills and simulation centre, and weekly interactive clinical seminars.

### **Year 4C**

Year 4C in the north-west consists of two parts: a semester-long rural rotation with our MRH Bendigo Hubs (Goldfields, Highlands and Murray) and a semester-long regional rotation at either the

MRH Mildura or Bendigo sites. Bendigo hosts all year 4C students for an orientation week. During the regional rotation students have extensive exposure to the core disciplines of Year 4C: children's health, O&G and psychiatry. The platform for integrating and embedding specialist knowledge and skills is the one-day-per-week GP placement with parallel consulting alongside the student's GP supervisor. This allows for consolidation and integration of these disciplines. Students have learning opportunities with paediatricians, obstetricians and gynaecologists, psychiatrists and GPs, and the teams of practitioners, nurses and allied health professionals who work with them. During the rural rotation students are allocated to hubs either in the Goldfields (Castlemaine or Maryborough), the Highlands (Gisborne or Woodend) or Murray region (Swan Hill).

Students are immersed into a busy and intensive general practice setting where they will have the opportunity to see their own patients both in the general practice and with clinicians in the hospital and community setting.

This longitudinal experience provides the opportunity for students to gain continuous hands-on experience in primary care practice while reinforcing their learning in children's health, O&G and psychiatry in a different healthcare setting.

#### **Year 5D**

MRH Bendigo offers the core Year 5D rotations as well as a range of specialties at Bendigo Health. Students can be based in Bendigo for either 1 or 2 semesters. A full Scholarly Intensive Student Program operates, with the opportunities for students to present their work in a variety of academic meetings Year 5D students operate in an intern shadowing role and are offered a comprehensive simulation program. The focus of the program is to transition to practice as an intern in 2025.

#### **Accommodation**

We have a 48-bed accommodation block with shared bathrooms and six communal kitchens. In the same vicinity of this accommodation block, we have a new 15-bed refurbishment, again with shared bathrooms and kitchens. You need to bring your own linen (sheets, mattress protector, doona, pillow and towels) and personal items. The kitchen equipment supplied varies depending on your length of stay (students staying for a short time tend to have more things supplied). We also accommodate students in rental properties around Bendigo. All of our accommodation is within 30 minutes walk to the Bendigo hospital (parking around the hospital can be difficult). An accommodation rental fee is charged weekly.

#### **Lifestyle**

Bendigo's location in central Victoria means that it has prime positioning to all that the state has to offer. It is two hours drive to Melbourne or the beach or the snow. Within Bendigo itself are a range of cultural organisations (such as the Bendigo Symphony

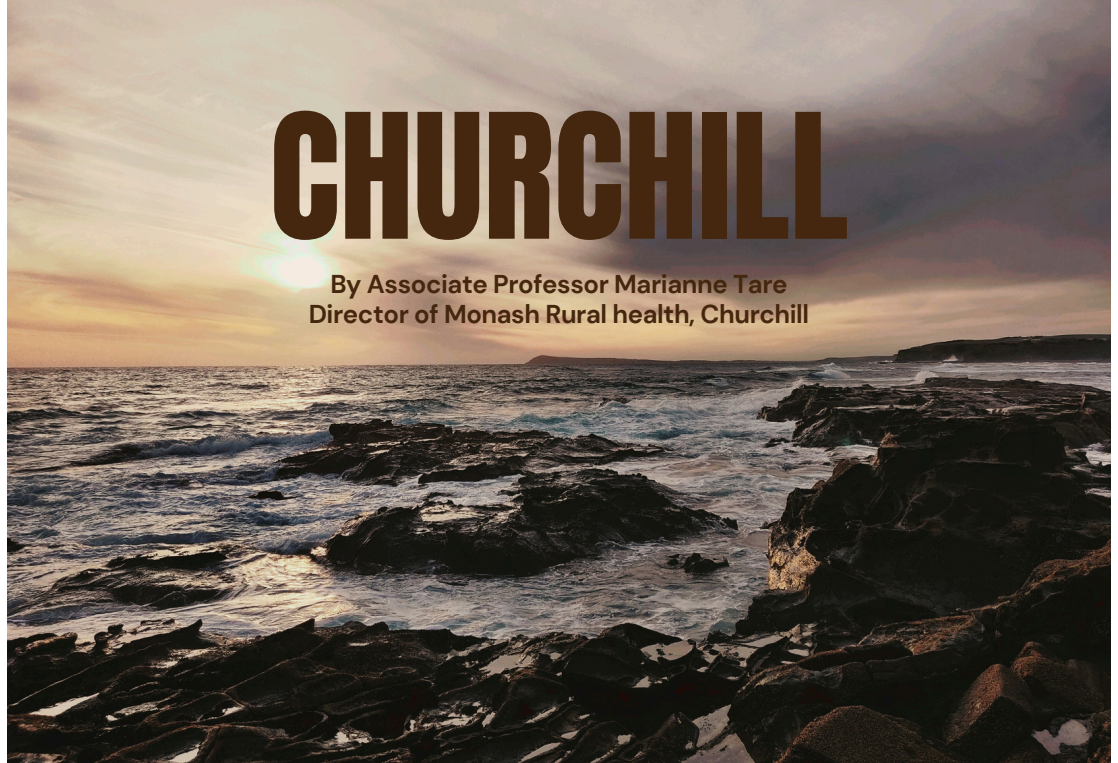


Orchestra) and sporting clubs (including hockey, netball and soccer). Bendigo's size means that it can support more eclectic interests as well, including Lion dancing, archery and yachting. The city has festivals or activities on most weekends, and you can always find a great place for coffee or to eat.

Consult the City of Greater Bendigo's community or ask any staff member what is available locally. Many of the faculty and clinicians who are your teachers also belong to community organisations and will be happy to share contact details.

# CHURCHILL

By Associate Professor Marianne Tare  
Director of Monash Rural health, Churchill



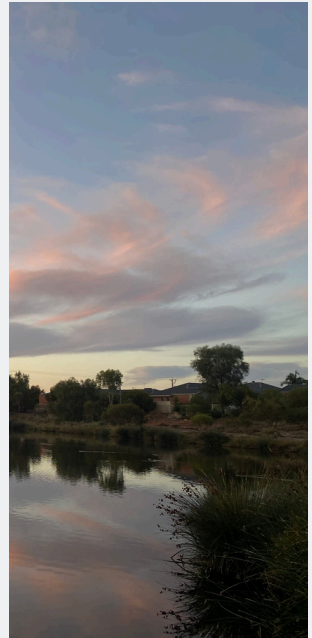
Monash Rural Health is the oldest and largest rural clinical school in Australia. At Monash Rural Health – Churchill students undertake the first year, Year A, of the four-year graduate entry medical program. Our medical school is co-located on the stunning grounds of the Gippsland campus of Federation University at Churchill, nestled in the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges. Churchill is 160 km to the East of Melbourne and is an easy, less than 2-hour drive, via the Princes Highway. Year A students have the privilege of beginning their medicine journey on the lands of the GunaiKurnai people.

The Churchill campus is conveniently located close to larger regional towns such as Morwell and Traralgon, the largest city in the Latrobe Valley. These and other smaller towns in the area offer a variety of sporting, entertainment, cultural and dining opportunities for students to explore. Students enjoy the supportive environment created by staff through our interactive active learning approach to curriculum delivery, social activities and the events organised by pre-clinical and clinical students across Gippsland. Former students tell us that in Year A they make friendships that endure for the remainder of their career.

## Curriculum

Year A is the preclinical year of the graduate entry program and consists of over 100 students embarking on their medicine journey. The contemporary pre-clinical program in Year A is delivered by a passionate and dedicated team of content experts, researchers and clinicians via immersive and innovative teaching sessions including clinical skills and authentic ward simulation. Students enjoy a mix of small group and whole of group teaching environments. The course develops through theme studies in personal and professional development, population, society, health and illness, scientific basis of clinical practice and clinical skills. Students begin to learn and develop their basic clinical skills. The learning approach has an emphasis on clinical contextualisation, and there is a focus on rural medicine.

Students in Year A are privileged to be able to go out on clinical placement at our partner hospitals across Gippsland. This experience begins early in the year and students are immersed in the clinical environment through fortnightly placements. Professional development is further nurtured through non-clinical placements at community and health support agencies throughout Gippsland. Through working with these agencies and their clients, students get unparalleled, first-hand experience of social, cultural and economic issues that impact health at the community level.



### Accommodation

There are a variety of accommodation options to cater for different living requirements and preferences available through Fedliving at Federation University. On campus accommodation at Churchill is very convenient and only a few minutes' walk to the tutorial rooms! For more information about on campus accommodation phone Fedliving on +61 3 51226236 or email [fedliving@federation.edu.au](mailto:fedliving@federation.edu.au) and refer to this website: <https://federation.edu.au/about-us/facilities-and-services/commercial-services/fedliving/applications> .

### Lifestyle

The stunning grounds of the campus at Churchill are renowned for their natural ambience with a back drop of rolling hills and mountains, and resident native wildlife including kangaroos, koalas, echidnas and kookaburras. A walking track around the campus provides a great escape to reinvigorate the body and mind between classes, and you will almost always see some wildlife along the way. The campus boasts a variety of state-of-the-art facilities and student-centred study and recreational spaces. Monash students are able to support their studies with complete library services offered through both Monash and Federation Universities. Year A students enjoy the on-campus student facilities, and social and sporting clubs. A short walk from the campus is a leisure centre, golf club, modern shopping complex, parks and a lake stocked with fish for recreational fishing. The campus is the perfect base for exploring the Gippsland region. Within easy driving distance are popular tourist destinations including spectacular beaches, ski resorts, national parks, gourmet deli trails, rail trails, craft villages, galleries, country weekend markets, award winning cafes and pubs, old gold mining towns, gardens and great walking tracks. The nearby town of Traralgon boasts a vibrant arts and culture scene. Sporting clubs are the lifeblood of towns in the area and students enjoy participating in a variety of local sporting activities. The campus is adjacent to the expansive Mathison Park with walking tracks, lake, all ages fitness station and BBQ facilities. The adjacent Koori Garden contains plants that the local Gunaikurnai clan have used for thousands of years. There are also totem poles decorated with Gunaikurnai artwork. The Latrobe Leisure Centre at Churchill is conveniently located next to the campus and offers the community everything for health and fitness, aquatics and indoor sports. Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre is a new, state-of-the-art recreation centre and is located in Traralgon. Behind the northern end of Federation University Churchill is Churchill Monash Golf Club, a picturesque 9 hole Par 79 course. For a guide of things to see, do, savour and devour in Latrobe City and surrounds visit <https://visitlatrobe.city.com/>.

We look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful part of the world!

# GIPPSLAND



**By Associate Professor Rob Dawson  
Deputy Director of Monash Rural Health, Gippsland**

**Monash Rural Health Gippsland has the largest geographical footprint of all the sites stretching from Warragul in the West to Wonthaggi in the south and Bairnsdale in the east. Each clinical site is linked to a regional health service or a general practice/ community-based health service.**

Year 3B consists of a year-long hospital placement at one of the following health services: Central Gippsland Health (Sale), Latrobe Regional Health (Traralgon), West Gippsland Healthcare Group (Warragul), and excitingly Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (Bairnsdale) for the first time in 2026. The aim of the program is to give the students a firm grounding in clinical reasoning through experiential learning with exposure to a wide range of patients.

Year 4C, the student year is split into two semesters: one based in General Practice and one in hospital-based rotations in

Children's Health, Women's Health, and Psychiatry. Psychiatry requires time based at Latrobe Regional Health but the other placements may be anywhere in the Gippsland footprint. If you are considering a career in regional/rural generalism or general practice this year in Gippsland is a fantastic introduction to future training pathways.

In Year 5D we offer either year-long or semester-long options. The placement sites are Bairnsdale, Sale, Traralgon, Leongatha and Wonthaggi. Speciality terms are available at each site that include general practice, anaesthesia,

intensive care, radiology, oncology, and palliative care amongst others. Please enquire if you have a specific speciality in mind. Scholarly Intensive Placements (SIP) are worth considering during your time in Gippsland. The Year 5D coordinator is also the SIP coordinator. The quality of the local SIPs is outstanding.

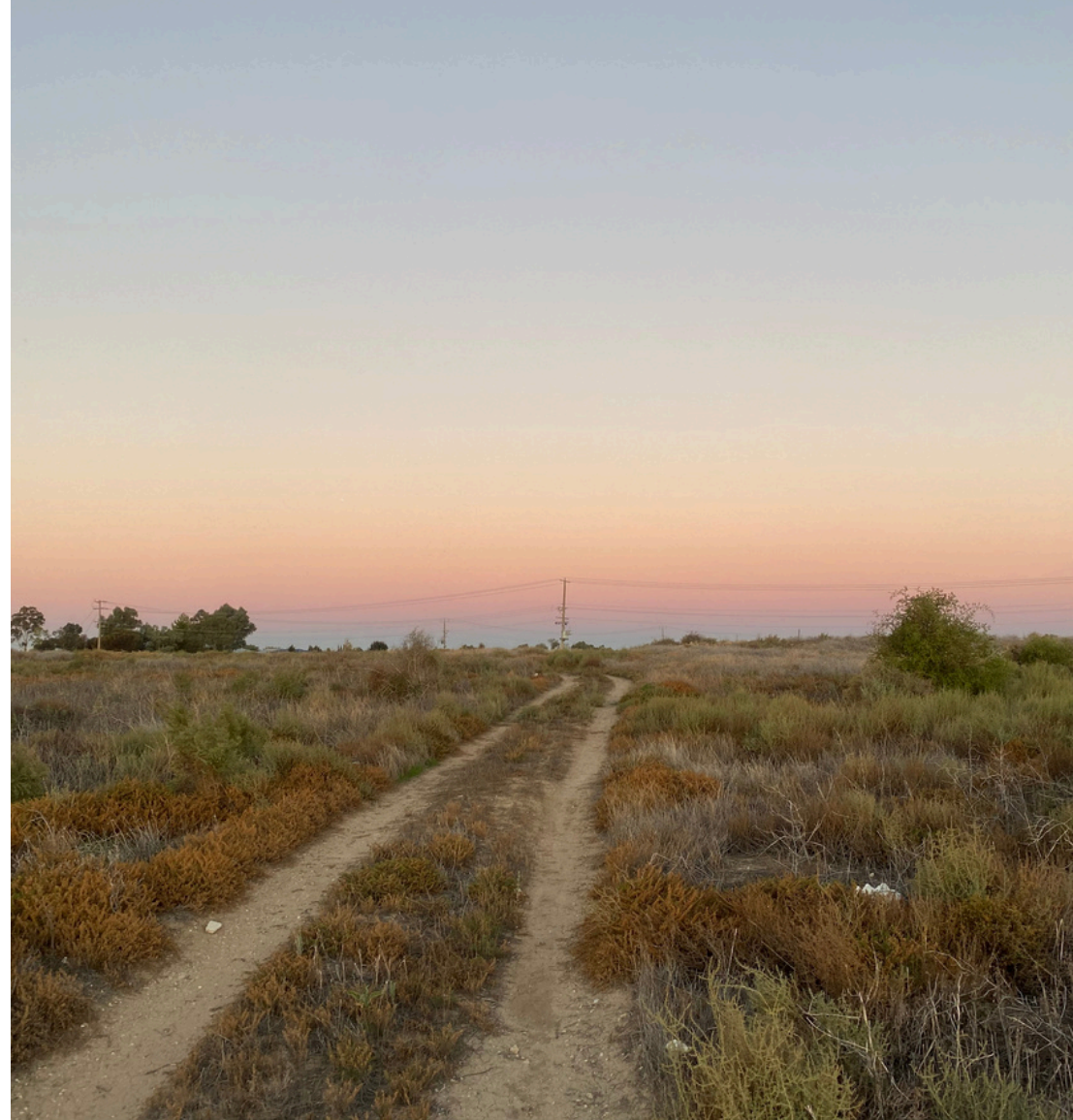
### **Year 3B Curriculum**

Our Year 3B curriculum focuses on building your knowledge of the fundamentals of medicine and surgery, ensuring the development of clinical reasoning skills, beginning to develop your other clinical skills, and developing your professional identity. The academic team provides uniform teaching across the region with problem-based learning, pharmacology tutorials, and clinical reasoning skill sessions on your placement site. The entire cohort also has access to clinical skills days, specialist masterclasses, and APEx practice at a single site to enable the group in Gippsland to network and renew friendships. We emphasise the importance of experiential learning encouraging you to spend as much time as possible in the clinical learning environment interacting with patients, near peers, junior medical staff and your bedside tutors. Each site also has a clinical skills laboratory to commence your practice in the simulation space.

### **Year 4C Curriculum**

The structure of the Year 4C program differs from that of the metropolitan and Malaysian programs as there is an 18-week general practice/ community health centre rotation that gives you an insight into regional/rural general practice or rural generalist practice. This semester includes opportunities depending on your location in Women's health, Children's health, and Community Health Unit attachments. The alternative 18 weeks covers Children's Health, Women's Health and Psychiatry. This is a year that offers excellent hands-on learning opportunities.





### **Year 5D Curriculum**

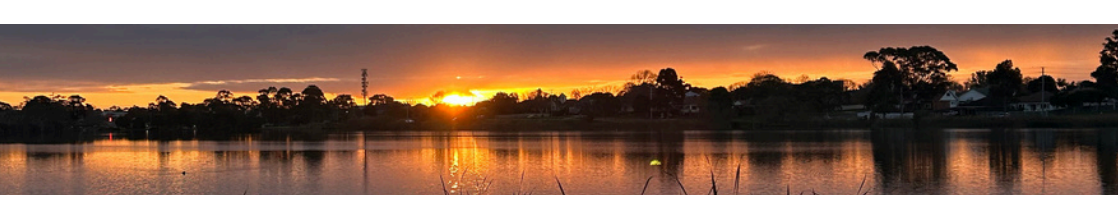
The Year 5D program is designed to prepare you for your transition to internship. The emphasis is on you becoming part of the patient care team. You will be exposed to the clinical learning environment of the intern. Teaching locally is focused on MED5103 through clinical skills workshops and an extensive immersive simulation day at the updated simulation centre at Churchill.

### **Accommodation**

Clean, comfortable and fully furnished 4-bedroom share houses are available for all our students. 1000GB of Wi-Fi per month is provided for each house. Students only need to supply their own linen and food. A subsidised accommodation rental fee is charged weekly. The rental fee for 2026 is \$ 135/week.

### **Lifestyle**

Gippsland is the southeast corner of Australia and so includes the Great Dividing Range and is girt by the Tasman Sea and Bass Strait. The scenery is magnificent with a wide range of fauna and flora and provides many different outdoor experiences from hiking, kayaking (and other water sports), skiing and surfing. The regional towns boast a full range of shopping, café and dining experiences. Many award-winning wineries are within easy access.



# MILDURA

By Associate Professor Fiona Wright  
Director of Monash Rural Health, Mildura

**Welcome to Mildura, a vibrant regional city where medical students don't just learn—they thrive. Situated 542 kilometres from Melbourne, Mildura blends world-class medical training with a unique community-focused experience, preparing you for a dynamic career in medicine.**

## Why Mildura?

Choosing Monash Rural Health Mildura means stepping into immersive, hands-on learning, surrounded by supportive mentors and diverse clinical opportunities. Whether you're scrubbing into your first surgery or managing emergency cases, you'll gain the confidence and skills to excel.

### Year 3B: Where Clinical Training Begins

Your first real taste of the hospital environment starts here!

- Small cohorts (up to 16 students) = personalized guidance
- Continuous clinical immersion in rotations like Surgery, Orthopaedics, Emergency, Anaesthetics & Indigenous Health

- Direct mentorship from interns, registrars & consultants
- Simulation lab training to master procedural skills
- Exciting high-yield case scenarios (COPD, AMI, trauma & more)
- Practice APEX examinations held throughout the year

Imagine learning by doing—every day, while becoming part of a team that values your growth

### Year 4C: Mastering Specialties with Mentorship

Expand your expertise in Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, and Psychiatry. 12 positions per Semester.

- Hands-on experience in birth suites, theatres & clinics
- Real-world emergency exposure in wards & ED
- Dynamic simulation training, including WHIPLS & ONE-SIM
- Paediatric-focused learning using Sim Baby & Sim Junior
- Practice APEX examinations held throughout the year

### Year 5D: Your Final Steps Toward Internship Success

Up to 16 students at any one time. Step into advanced rotations with greater autonomy, real responsibility, and career-shaping experiences.

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A scenic view of a lake with a clubhouse and trees in the background, and reeds in the foreground. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. In the foreground, there are tall, brown reeds and grasses. The clubhouse is a large, white building with a dark roof, situated on the far side of the lake. There are several trees around the clubhouse and along the shoreline. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

# **YEAR 3B PLACEMENTS**

# BENDIGO

By Coco Jefferey  
Year 3B student



Bendigo Health completed its purpose-built medical teaching hospital in 2018, offering a highly immersive and supportive clinical learning environment. Monash Rural Health Bendigo operates across two key locations: the Monash Bendigo teaching and academic site, and Bendigo Health Hospital. The Monash building is conveniently located within a short walk from the main hospital, creating an integrated campus feel.

The teaching and academic site serves as the hub for lectures, tutorials, and clinical skills training. It features state-of-the-art simulation labs where students can practise a wide range of procedures under realistic conditions, including venepuncture, suturing, and catheterisation. The addition of 'The Good Loaf' café and a student lounge offer a welcome break from clinical duties, with amenities such as a kitchenette, microwave, and even a soccer table—fostering a strong sense of community among the roughly 24 students placed at the site.

One of the key advantages of the Bendigo clinical year is its extended three-week orientation program—compared to the one-week orientation at other sites. This thorough introduction is designed to equip students with the foundational skills necessary for hospital life, which can feel daunting in your first clinical year. The extended orientation helped ease initial nerves and made students feel more confident and better prepared.

Bendigo Health excels at integrating students into the clinical team, making them feel welcomed and valued. The orientation includes hands-on practice in history taking, physical examination, and essential clinical skills—providing a strong base for a smooth transition into the clinical environment.

## Clinical Rotations and Student Life in Bendigo

Bendigo offers four core clinical rotations, each lasting eight weeks: Medicine, Surgery, Ambulatory Care, and Specialty. Within each block, students typically rotate between different teams every 1–2 weeks, providing diverse experiences across a range of clinical settings. Each team generally includes a consultant, registrar, two interns, a fifth-year student (rotation dependent), and you—sometimes alongside another 3B medical student.

This rotational model ensures a well-rounded clinical experience and enables students to explore their interests across various specialties, including anaesthetics, ICU, general medicine, and emergency medicine.

A "typical day" at Monash Rural Health Bendigo, varies a lot depending heavily on your rotation, personal interests, and initiative. Most days begin with ward rounds, during which the treating team reviews patients admitted overnight, along with ongoing cases. Start times vary between 7:00–8:30 AM depending



on the team. For example, ward rounds in orthopaedics were relatively short, whereas those in ICU were longer and involved more complex cases.

Ward rounds can be tiring, but they offer valuable insight into the workings of the health system and provide excellent opportunities to observe patient interactions, take histories, and perform examinations. Comfortable footwear is a must—some teams walk at a fast pace!

As for attire, based on my experience in the Surgery and Specialty rotations, dress code can vary. Many students wear scrubs of any colour, while others opt for professional attire. It's usually best to mirror what your team is wearing.

After rounds, students are encouraged to show initiative by examining patients, scrubbing into theatre, or attending specialist clinics—these are often like one-on-



one tutorial with consultants. Some teams even treat students to coffee or lunch! Most students finish clinical duties by midday and take a lunch break or relax in the student lounge before attending afternoon classes, including PBLs, tutorials, and seminars. The Specialty rotation offers a packed schedule of tutorials led by consultants. Make the most of your classes by starting to work through your matrix conditions. PBLs and other tutorials also provide opportunities to ask questions about conditions you've encountered in the clinical environment, allowing for valuable reflective learning.

One standout experience is the Ophthalmology program with the fantastic Professor Burt at the Bendigo Eye Clinic, located just across from the hospital. If you get the chance, I highly recommend joining him—he's passionate about teaching and really involves students in his clinics.

Another invaluable aspect of the Bendigo experience is the support from fifth-year student mentors. Their guidance has made navigating the clinical journey much easier.

### **Accommodation in Bendigo**

Students in Bendigo typically choose between two main accommodation options: private housing or student accommodation at Lister House. Lister House is centrally located—just a 10–15

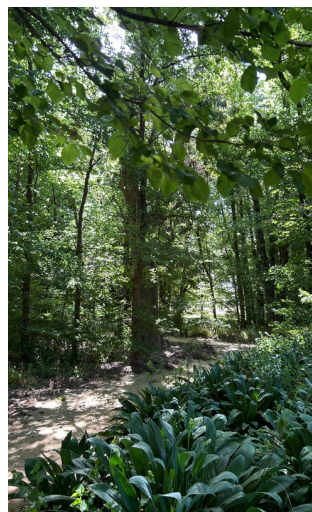
minute walk from the hospital—and sits beside the Sacred Heart Cathedral. It consists of two buildings: New Lister (for 5D students) and Old Lister (for 3B students).

Rooms in Old Lister are well-equipped with a King single bed, desk, armchair, wardrobe, and generous cupboard space. Heating and air conditioning is supplied by a state-of-the-art split system. Shared amenities include kitchens, bathrooms, showers, and laundry facilities. Each floor has four toilets and four showers shared by up to 10 residents, while each kitchen serves 6–8 students and includes designated fridge storage. Any maintenance etc that is required is quickly supportively dealt with by the staff which is an added bonus.

The communal room at Lister House features a ping-pong table, a new TV, and a sound system, making it a great space to relax, socialise, or host events. Most 3B students choose to stay at Lister House, and I've found it to be a very sociable and supportive environment. Street parking is also available and usually ample depending on the time of day.

### **Lifestyle and Extracurriculars**

Beyond academics, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in extracurricular activities. These include volunteering with organisations like The Smith Family Tutoring Program and joining clubs



such as WILDFIRE, MUSIG, and AMSA. The Bendigo Ball is a social highlight of the year, and clubs like WILDFIRE regularly host end-of-rotation dinners and events at Lister House.

While having a car in Bendigo is convenient, it's certainly not essential, thanks to the city's walkability. Shops and grocery stores are within a 15–20-minute stroll, and there's almost always someone willing to offer a lift if needed.

One thing to note is that Bendigo has the rural charm of very chilly mornings—winter here feels quite



different from Melbourne. The mornings can be particularly icy, and overall, the winters are notably cold (speaking as someone who has lived in the UK!).

If you do choose to drive to placement, free parking is available near the hospital—though the closest spots tend to fill up early, which may mean a short walk. Alternatively, all-day paid parking is available for just \$8. Cycling or skateboarding are also great transport options, with bike storage facilities available on site.

Bendigo's food and nightlife scene is vibrant and full of variety. Local favourites like Oya's, Okami, PGO, and Borchelli's are all within walking distance. There are also plenty of breakfast and lunch spots—some of my personal favourites include Percy and Percy, Bayleaf, Out of Order, and Lou's on View.

For fitness, several gyms such as SNAP Fitness and Silverback are within walking distance and often offer student deals. There are also options for swimming (including an outdoor pool on the way to the hospital), as well as yoga and pilates classes. If you enjoy the outdoors, Lake Weeroona and Kennington Reservoir are beautiful spots for walking or running. Rosalind Park is especially stunning in autumn, with colourful foliage and peaceful running trails.

For weekend adventures, you can head out to the Macedon Ranges for a quick hike or enjoy water sports like paddleboarding at Lake Eppalock or Bridgewater Lakes. Bendigo also offers cultural experiences such as the Bendigo Art Gallery, regular exhibitions, and major community events like the Chinese New Year and Easter Festival.

Getting to and from Bendigo is easy via both private and public transport. Whether you're driving or catching the train, it takes roughly two hours to reach Melbourne's CBD—often less if you're based in the western or north-western suburbs.

Bendigo truly stands out—not just for its supportive and hands-on clinical training, but also for its unique blend of regional charm and accessibility. It strikes the perfect balance: not so remote that it feels isolated, but just far enough to give you that authentic, relaxed country lifestyle.

# MILDURA

By Jennifer Allan  
Year 3B student

## Hi I'm Jen! I'm a 3B student in Mildura in 2025

If I had to sum up 3B in Mildura in one word it would be "surprising". I have been surprised by how beautiful Mildura is and surprised by how welcomed I felt from day 1. Faculty up here is simply amazing! Every staff member knows you on a first name basis and are genuinely interested in your wellbeing and academic progress. The community here in Mildura amongst medical students is very strong, everyone knows everyone which makes organising social events very easy! If you arrive in Mildura with the right attitude, it will be very easy to assimilate!

### Rotations

3B rotations in Mildura are General Medicine, General Surgery, ED, Orthopaedics, Cardiology, Renal, GP and Aboriginal Health. Given the small size of our cohort, you are usually one of 2 students on a team, so you really get to be involved in discussions and clinical decision making. This is best exemplified in the fracture clinic, where from day 1, you are assigned a cubicle and told to start seeing patients from the waiting room (and then of course present to the doctor afterwards!).

Most of the consultants are locals, but almost all of the juniors are up rotations from the Alfred primarily, but also from the Austin, Monash Heath, & Eastern Heath. So despite the small size of the hospital, you still get access to some amazing medicine! The nursing staff on the wards are all very friendly if you ask them about procedural skills like cannula's, BGL's or injections, they are more than happy to sign them off for you.

General Medicine (6 weeks): Morning placements start at 8 am. Shifts include team ward rounds, coffee rounds (depending on the team) and some bedside teachings (depending on the registrar). If you finish early, sometimes you can see the interns do jobs, or they can give a learning point or two about interesting patients on the wards- a good time to do a lot of your physical exams and histories. This is where I completed almost all of my logbook.

General Surgery (6 weeks): Most mornings, placement starts at 6:30 a.m. This rotation has quicker ward rounds as they need to start the list of patients intended for theatre by 8 a.m. There are plenty of

There are plenty of chances to scrub in on cases, and the registrars are very happy to let you be involved in cases if you ask. If you do get the amazing chance to scrub in, go for it; it's a lot of fun to observe surgeries right from inside the theatre. One of the highlights of Surg is the paper round at Nash Lane, where the consultant or registrar will be busy giving everyone coffee - this is where you will be asked a lot of teaching questions by the team, so enjoy your coffee but be ready to recall some anatomy!

Emergency Department (6 weeks): Either morning, afternoon or evening shifts. This is where things get real! Almost everyone gets a cannula, so you're up! It's a great opportunity to get a lot of physical exams and procedural skills signed off. The ED consultants are very kind to medical students and will often ask, "What do you need to get signed off?". It's also common for you to be asked to take a history and exam from a patient before a doctor takes over, so you really feel like you're part of the machine that is the ED. A downside is that Mildura is a small 14-bed ED, so there is a lot of "corridor medicine" and it's unfortunately very common for the hospital to be bed booked or the Ambulances to be "ramped". This puts a lot of stress on the Doctors and Nurses, so just remember to be kind and always put patient care over your need to get logbook stuff signed off.

### Teaching

Most days after placement, there will be 2-3 classes in the afternoon. The clinical skills teaching is fantastic, incorporating one-on-one time with tutors so that you can ask questions and make mistakes before you starting putting them into practice. The matrix teaching is comprehensive, which sometimes means you have looong days at uni. But the tutors mostly recognise this and once or twice have bought the whole class coffee! A highlight of Mildura is SimLab where a group of 4-5 of you pretend to be ED doctors on a life-size high-fidelity mannequin. It's a favourite class amongst students, and even though it feels like you have no idea what to do, you usually come out of sim feeling like you've learnt something new.

### Accommodation

Most students in 3B have been allocated to student



accommodation houses within a 5-10 minute radius of Mildura. All of the houses are nice, but have the occasional mishap (like the air-con breaking right when the temperature hit 45°). Monash staff, however, are very good at following up on any maintenance issues that there are. At the start of the year, students are able to request friends to be roommates, and together, you'll be living, cooking and hanging out with each other. This accommodation is subsidised, and you pay a very modest price.

Good point on transport-you definitely do not necessarily need a car to study in Mildura. In most places, you can walk under 15 minutes or get a ride with a friend if needed.

Additionally, flights from Melbourne/Sydney to Mildura are available, with QANTAS and Rex flying most days but are quite expensive (\$200 - \$300 one way). The V line is fairly cheap at about \$22 return, but is a long trip through Swan Hill by bus and then down to Melbourne by train.

### **Lifestyle/social activities**

Sports: There are many different options for social sports, from badminton, netball, golf, footy and soccer! They range from professional players to newbies, so there is no stress. Mildura loves their footy and netball, so if you're interested sign up at the start of the year to join a local club. Alternately a few of us work as trainers for the footy teams so that other way to be involved in the community.

Gym: Gym life is big in Mildura with many different gyms offering student memberships or free trials. Many of these gyms are within walking distance as well so a really good routine can be during lunchtimes, after classes or even just weekends!

Park Run: Every Saturday morning, there is a gathering of runners from the community who go for a run down by the Murray River, including many doctors and medical students. The riverfront cafe, Shippy's also give a discount for all park runners so make sure to grab a coffee and a sweet treat! There's also a local Marathon festival that happens in June which ended up being a really great event, I even spotted our academic coordinator volunteering at one of the checkpoints on the course!

Wineries: Mildura is the land of wineries. Grape farms and vineyards as far as the eye can see. There are great places to visit within 20 minutes out of Mildura (you can even cross the border to NSW) to taste the delicious wines or even just plan a cute picnic gathering to enjoy Sunday afternoons or celebrate a special occasion! Trentham estate is particularly beautiful!

Trivia: Every Wednesday at the Setts there is Trivia. Here you will find \$25 pot and parma's, an overly zealous host, and most of the MBPH doctors. We were able to beat the Surgeons most nights but the Medics put up a tough fight. Beating the doctors at trivia is a good way of breaking the ice on the wards!

Food: Soooo many Yummly places to eat in Mildura! There are countless coffee shops, bars, wineries and restaurants. My personal favourite are, Nash Lane, Shippy's, Thai-riffic, Sip, Grade, and Daawat-E-Mildura.

My biggest advice for anyone who is coming to Mildura or thinking about coming up here, is to try and immerse yourself in the community. It is possible to go to Melbourne on the weekends, but in my opinion you would then have to trade off a lot of the social experiences that make Mildura special.

That's all from me! Have a great year!

# TRARALGON



**By Morgan Williamson**  
**Former Year 3B student**

## Things to Do

Traralgon, Latrobe Valley's largest town, is located 164 kilometres southeast of Melbourne and is the cornucopia of the most incredible cafes and dining. Not only is the country life serene and indulgent, but the newly renovated hospital means you are always somewhere appealing! Traralgon experiences an almost Mediterranean climate with hot summers and cold, rainy winters fostering its beautiful, lush landscape. For those who love the outdoors, there is the Toongabbie Town Track, the Traralgon Creek Track (which never gets old), and if you are looking for a shorter wander or somewhere to simply luxuriate in nature, the Jean Galbraith Reserve and the Traralgon Railway Reservoir Reserve are there for your enjoyment. If you're one for slightly more intense hiking, Walhalla (only 40 minutes away) has many different trails, and for those who prefer indoor exercise, the Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre has everything any gym bunny or swimmer could need, plus a couple of water slides for some fun in the sun.

Due to the nature of small-town living, the relationships you build not only within the small cohort you are placed with, but also amongst the incredible hospital staff, is a highlight of year. Students placed at Latrobe Regional Health regularly hold events and get-togethers, further cultivating the incredible sense of community that Traralgon placement has to offer.

## Curriculum, Rotations & Clinical Experience

With reference to the academic side of Traralgon placement, students complete many different rotations, including but not limited to Anaesthetics, Intensive Care Unit, General Surgery, General Medicine, Orthopaedic Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Oncology, Cardiology and more. Being placed in a regional hospital also provides many opportunities to receive on-floor training, perhaps to a higher degree when compared to our metropolitan counterparts. The teaching you receive on the wards and in theatre is truly unmatched, and coupled with classroom-based teaching, students are well set for exams. Fifth year students also provide small group mentoring sessions with which you can consolidate classroom/hospital learning or soak up their wisdom and perspectives on balancing medical school with other aspects of life.



The weekly classes typically focus on 'Matrix' conditions which are included in the end-of-year exams, these involve, Practice Based Learning Sessions (similar to ICL completed in pre-clinical years), variable classes run by specialists in their respective fields, bedside tutorials with consultants where you can practice histories and exams on willing patients, and QUASI bedsidings (which run through case presentations from admission to discharge). Although, don't get too comfortable, bedside doesn't mean pyjama attire...

## Accommodation & Transport

If students become a part of the School of Rural Health, Monash University assures subsidised accommodation for all students if requested. In Traralgon, this means a furnished, four-bedroom house with two bathrooms (one of which is for the lucky master bedroom resident!) The rooms are randomly allocated, but students get the opportunity to prefer one friend to live with. Each house is located approximately 10-15 minutes from both the hospital and the town centre, and whilst there is public transport in town, a car is required to get you to and from the hospital, or... another very kind 3B student willing to drive you.

It is the perfect time to be placed at Traralgon as the recent expansion has provided new operating theatres, a new ICU, a new women's and children's unit, more inpatient beds, and an enhancement of the existing mental health services. The facilities are incredible, and it has truly been a pleasure to experience Year 3B at Latrobe Regional Health.



# WARRAGUL

By Mark Tay  
Former Year 3B student

Welcome to Warragul! At Warragul, we have a close-knit 3B cohort consisting of 8 students, which offers numerous advantages. One of the key benefits is the opportunity to build strong relationships with your peers and provide support to one another throughout the year. Additionally, the small number of students at Warragul allows for more extensive interactions with consultant doctors and patients, making you an integral part of the medical team. Our friendly and supportive staff are dedicated to ensuring a smooth experience throughout your first clinical year.

## Curriculum

Warragul's curriculum offers rotations through various disciplines, including surgery, general medicine, theatre, the Emergency Department, endoscopy, oncology, radiology, and haemodialysis. Unlike many metropolitan placements that focus on specific medical rotations, Warragul provides more ward rounds dedicated to general medicine or surgery. This exposure to common patient presentations is highly beneficial for acquiring essential year 3B knowledge. Typically, placements consist of three half days per week, with scheduled classes in the afternoons.

Due to the smaller student population at Warragul, there are abundant opportunities to enhance your hands-on clinical skills. Building relationships with the medical team, such as doctors, interns, and nurses, allows you to easily fulfil the required skills for the year, including history taking, examinations,

cannulations, and catheterization.

In addition, you'll have the chance to visit the surgical consulting suites, where you can observe surgeon consultations with patients. Surgeons often allow interested students to scrub in for procedures after accompanying them to the clinic. Another valuable experience is the spirometry clinic in Drouin, where you'll receive instruction from a respiratory specialist on the fundamentals of spirometry tests. Mondays are dedicated to teaching, starting with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) tutorials led by a medical doctor. These tutorials encourage self-directed learning as each student presents a specific topic related to the patient's case. Weekly quizzes and end-of-year exam-style questions further enhance your knowledge.

Throughout the year, you'll develop a close relationship with your Clinical Skills Educator, who will guide you through learning various clinical skills in the labs. Each skill must be performed and signed off as competent before practising on real patients. The lab is also available for additional practice, ensuring that all students gain confidence in their skills before applying them in a hospital setting.

Warragul offers a unique opportunity to spend a day with a nurse, gaining hands-on experience and insight into their daily tasks.

The simulation model lab provides classes with a medical doctor, training you to respond to emergency situations. Additionally, there are monthly classes held in Traralgon. Furthermore, friendly final-year students can arrange tutorials to teach high-yield concepts and provide OSCE sessions to prepare for the end-of-year exams.

#### **Accommodation**

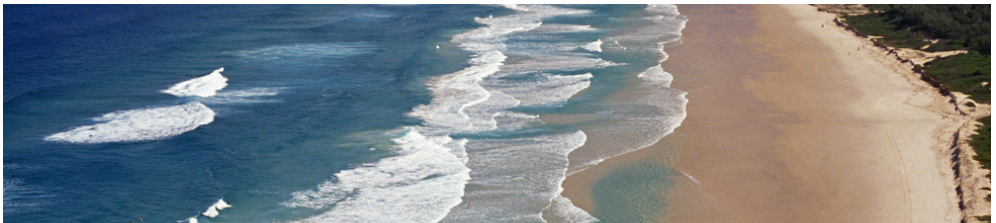
Most students at Warragul commute for accommodation, but there are options to live in fully furnished, subsidized Monash rentals throughout the town. These three or four-bedroom houses, including utilities, cost around \$110 per week. The houses are modern and equipped with the necessary furniture and appliances. Living in these rentals provides proximity to the hospital, and you can even choose to live with your friends. The university takes care of maintenance, gardening, and inspections, minimizing your house maintenance responsibilities. Private rentals in Warragul or nearby towns are also available, although they may be slightly more expensive.

#### **Things to do**

Despite being a relatively small town, Warragul offers plenty of activities. You can join local country sports teams, such as swimming, football, basketball, or netball. The town provides excellent sports facilities,

including tennis courts, ovals, swimming pools, and multiple gyms. If you enjoy outdoor adventures, Warragul's location allows for quick trips to ski at Mt Baw Baw, hike at Wilsons Promontory, or visit wineries in Gippsland. There is a diverse selection of cafes and restaurants in Warragul, including Main Street Café, Frankies, Shed 21, The Courthouse, Siam Pesto, Portelli's, and Royal Kebabs 88. The Warragul Farmer's Market, held on the third Saturday of every month at Civic Park, offers live music, food trucks, arts and crafts, and fresh produce.

Overall, Warragul is an excellent choice for your foundation clinical year, thanks to its small cohort size, active participation within the hospital, and a variety of high-quality food and exploration opportunities.



# Sale



By **Toni Ann-Black**  
Former Year 3B student



## Curriculum

Sale Hospital, Central Gippsland Health (CGH), offers many learning opportunities and rotations and is run by a fantastic team of staff who are caring, approachable, and eager to ensure the highest-quality clinical experience possible. Each semester is divided into two nine-week rotations: General Medicine and Surgery.

The General Medicine rotation included time in Critical Care, Emergency (we enjoyed it so much that our co-ordinator kindly arranged an extra week in Semester 2), Chemotherapy, Dialysis and Rehabilitation. During the General Surgery rotation, we attended surgeries and were often able to scrub in. Some of the common surgeries we were able to see included appendicectomies, hernia repairs, Hartmann's procedures, and cholecystectomies. In addition, we were allocated time for endoscopy, the day procedure unit, and anaesthetics.

We were exposed to a diverse range of visiting and on-site surgeons and were able to attend clinics. During all the rotations, we felt included and were given many opportunities

for hands-on learning, which would likely have been impossible in larger teams.

Under the guidance of medical staff, we performed procedures regularly, including inserting cannulas and catheters, intubating patients, giving injections, and writing patient notes. There are only ten 3B students in Sale. Consequently, there were many opportunities to interact with patients and improve history, examination, and procedural skills with no competition for participation. Another benefit of the smaller cohort size is that it allowed familiarity between staff members and students. This year, along with sharing life advice, the consultants, registrars, interns, nursing, and allied health professionals have provided us with bedside teaching and tutorials on requested matrix topics.

Most of our teaching this year was in the form of PBLs (similar to ICLs in Year 2 and CAPs in Year A), clinical reasoning tutorials, Zoom and in-person classes on various specialties.

The specialty classes were often

attended by the entire Gippsland cohort, including some in-person classes, which were hosted in La Trobe Regional Hospital, Traralgon. We also had skill workshops where we learned to perform procedures and had access to the skills lab, where we were able to practice procedures in simulation until we felt comfortable enough to practice in the ward. Our classes were run by a wide range of health professionals, including consultant physicians and surgeons, GPs, pharmacists, and nurse educators. All our tutors were very experienced and passionate, worked to provide an excellent education in the hospital and classroom, and on request, tailored classes to our areas of need.

At the hospital, we had a spacious common room which was not only a great place to play some table tennis and share lunch (the hospital cafeteria has delicious options, is affordable and even has a free coffee machine!), but also served as a space or group study, student-run OSCE, case nights and 5th year teaching. The Hospital library is well stocked and is an excellent place for silent study or to chat to our friendly and very experienced



librarian (she kindly ordered all the newly released medical textbooks and student guides we requested).

### **Accommodation**

A few of us already lived rurally and chose to commute to Sale. The many shared events and opportunities ensured we always felt included, and if we had late classes, we often joined our friends for dinner.

All the Monash accommodation in Sale is less than a five-minute drive to the hospital. Parking at the hospital (and almost everywhere) is free and plentiful at all hours. A few of us didn't have a car, and we found it very easy to manage. The hospital is a short walk away, and even quicker bike ride to the hospital means that you can wake up 30 minutes before ward rounds start and still make it with plenty of time. The surrounding shops are also within walking distance. The Monash accommodation provided for students is large and comfortable, with generous living areas. It is fully furnished and well-maintained by the university. Monash provides gardening and repair services. If there's anything out of order, let one of the Monash staff know, and they will do their best to have it fixed promptly.

### **Things to do**

There are many exciting things to do in Sale. Sharing accommodation and the small cohort size meant that the 3Bs (and 5Cs) became close and often went on group adventures. Some of our favourite things to do included participating in Tuesday and Thursday Trivia at the Star Hotel (we even won a few), playing tennis at the local courts, camping in nearby national parks and watching our four 3B students kick goals for the Sale football team. There are many trails within walking distance of Monash accommodation (Sale wetlands, Sale Botanical Gardens) or only a short drive away (Mitchell River, Tarra-Bulga, Avon River). The Sale Community Garden boasts a wide range of fresh, free produce, and we particularly enjoyed snacking on ripe strawberries while watching the sunset on Lake Guthridge. Sale is also fortunate to have both the mountains and the beach close by. The Ninety Mile Beach can be visited at nearby locations like Seaspray, Golden Beach and Lakes Entrance.

If you enjoy wine and fine dining, you can enjoy an evening at some of Gippsland's finest wineries (e.g., Blue Gables, Lightfoot and Sons) or sit down for a three-course meal at the Tinamba Hotel. For brunch or coffee, the many local cafes provide a variety of options (Portside, Wild Honey, Redcatt). Grab dinner, drinks and a show at the local theatre, the Wedge (you could even opt to join the cast).

If you enjoy singing in the shower or jiving to your friends singing, then Karaoke at Jack Ryan's bar might just be for you. The Gippsland Art Gallery has some beautiful collections and is definitely worth a visit.

If you are looking for somewhere quiet to study, we highly recommend visiting the modern, spacious Sale Library, which has views overlooking the Port of Sale. Other fun things include watching a movie at the local cinema, entering a snooker competition, attending a fun run, joining one of the local gyms, yoga classes, or pools, going to the farmers' market, volunteering with Central Gippsland Health, and the list goes on.



# **YEAR 4C SPECIALTY PLACEMENT**

# BENDIGO

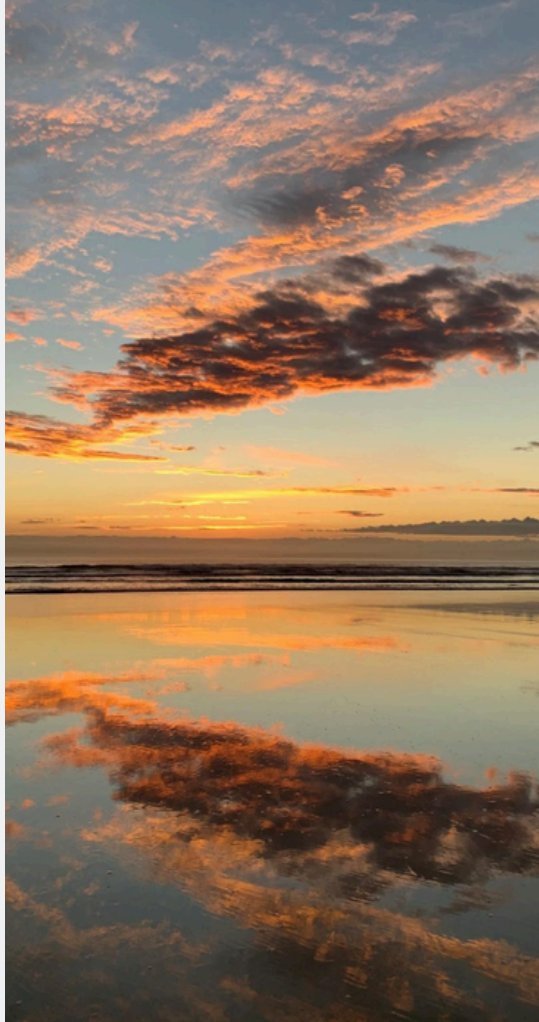
By Sola Miakhel  
Year 4C Student

The 4C cohort at Bendigo Health is divided into three groups that rotate through 6-week blocks in psychiatry, paediatrics, and obstetrics and gynaecology. Although students are placed on the same rotation, each is typically assigned to a different team, meaning most of us undertook the experience independently. Some of my peers found this enhanced their learning, as it allowed them to freely take up opportunities without depriving a partner, while others found the experience isolating and rather daunting. However, due to our aligned timetables and shared teaching sessions, most of us eventually formed close bonds with others in our group.

The staff across all disciplines were incredible, and we were consistently treated as valued and capable members of the team. Compared to testimonies from students at other sites, it appears our cohort was more actively involved in procedures and consultations.

During my semester, placement days were spread across the week, offering something new to experience each day. It's worth noting that although most of our placement took place at Bendigo Health, several days were spent off-site. As someone without a car at the time, I found public transport sufficient for most journeys, though commuting between multiple sites in a single day could be challenging. We were expected to be on placement for a minimum of 7-8 hours each day, and teaching sessions were scheduled most days.

Psychiatry was primarily based on Level 1 of Bendigo Health, where the Older Persons, Adult, and Parent-Infant units are located. We also attended the Dual Diagnosis Unit and the John Bomford Centre to gain exposure to community-based care. These sites were within a 10-minute drive of the main hospital. PBLs and communication workshops for this group took place on Mondays, alongside cohort-wide psychiatry teaching. Teaching across all disciplines was diverse, with health professionals from Bendigo and beyond delivering engaging lectures on their areas of expertise.



Our paediatrics rotation included time on the wards on Level 3, in outpatient clinics on Level 1, and occasional visits to the Bendigo Special Developmental School. Teaching and small group tutorials for paediatrics were held on Wednesdays, with less whole-cohort teaching compared to the other disciplines. It was the general consensus among my cohort that paediatrics provided a more dynamic and participatory experience than psychiatry, while being less demanding than obstetrics and gynaecology, making it a well-balanced and enjoyable rotation overall.

Obstetrics and gynaecology is widely regarded as the most challenging rotation, due to the extensive logbook requirements, longer clinical days, an oral case presentation at the end of the block, and a notoriously difficult APEX. Personally, I found this rotation to be incredibly rewarding because of how involved I was. I rarely felt like a passive observer and found both staff and patients to be welcoming and eager to support student learning. If you're able to manage your time effectively, this is a rotation I would genuinely look forward to.

Outside of the hospital, Bendigo offers plenty of opportunities for leisure and social connection. I highly recommend visiting the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, catching a show at the Ulumbarra Theatre, and enjoying a meal or drink at one of the many restaurants lining Pall Mall, the heart of Bendigo. The CBD truly comes alive at night, offering ample opportunities to socialise and unwind. For arts and culture, the Living Arts Space, Bendigo Art Gallery, and Golden Dragon Museum are essential visits. During my stay, the town bloomed with colour, dressed in vibrant tributes to the Frida Kahlo exhibition at the gallery. For a breath of fresh air, Rosalind Park and Lake Weeroona provide tranquil, scenic escapes, perfect for recharging after a demanding hospital shift.

What truly sets Bendigo apart is its sense of community. As is often the case in regional towns, this strong community spirit made the experience especially memorable. Most of our cohort either found employment, volunteered, or joined local sporting clubs, which not only enriched our lives outside of clinical placements but also fostered a deep sense of connection and belonging within the local community.





# MILDURA

By Lois Beloved  
Former Year 4C student

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Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) is a great regional hospital which offers many opportunities for 4C students to undertake specialty training in Psychiatry, Paediatrics and O&G. Mildura is located 6 hours from Melbourne and 4 hours from Adelaide in the far northwest in Victoria on the Murray river, with a population of approximately 60,000.

This year Mildura had a tight-knit cohort made up of 11 4C students, with a split of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Throughout the semester the cohort became very close and enjoyed many day/weekend activities together making the Mildura experience one to remember. There are also plenty of staff at Monash Rural health who will be your surrogate guardians for your term, making your experience run smoothly. MBPH also hosts around 16-year 3B students and 6-8 5D students, in addition to international medical students, making the cohort quite large, which was very good for social occasions, and inter-peer teaching.

Most students would spend their weekends doing day trips to various locations around Mildura or going to the local markets. Lots of students got involved with the local community events including park runs, volunteering, sports (netball, badminton etc), which was fantastic to engage with the community and make friends outside of the med bubble. I would recommend trying to play with a sports team or club as it's a great way to meet new people.

## Curriculum

### Psychiatry

The Psychiatry program at Mildura for year 4C students is really great, and every single student loved and enjoyed the classes, even if psychiatry was not their special interest. We had weekly classes run by Dr Michael Keem and most often our classes were more like discussions than lectures, he made our classes educational and interactive. Everyone in our cohort looked forward to Dr Keem's classes as they offered so much insight into psychiatric conditions whilst being lighthearted and enjoyable.

In terms of placement, students rotated through the following teams: Aged Psychiatry, Consultation-Liaison, Inpatient unity, Acute Community Intervention Service (ACIS) and Continuing Care Team (CCT). Students also had the opportunity to visit community psychiatric facilities if they had time

including the Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC), Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CHYMS) and Headspace.

The team of psychiatrists and registrars at MBPH are all super nice and get students involved when possible. At times the rotation can be slow-paced compared to other specialties, but this provides us with the opportunity to have individual tutorials with a Psychiatrist or go off for self-study. Each student gets a consultant psychiatrist as a personal mentor that they can consult with throughout their relationship. To make the most of your placement, I recommend getting in contact with your mentor and ask for their help in finding your case study and also practising APEX skills.

### Obstetrics & Gynecology

O&G is by far the heaviest rotation of the year, with respect to both the Matrix and logbook requirements, and can be a very busy rotation. MBPH offers both Obstetric & Gynecology services, allowing students to experience both aspects of the specialty. In terms of placement, there would be three or four students at a time on each rotation, with students split across obstetrics/gynaecology theatre, birth suite, antenatal and gynaecology clinics. The consultants are very engaging and let students assist in the theatre. In the birth suite, it can be difficult at times with multiple midwifery students allocated. However, every student was able to meet their requirements. MBPH also had theatre lists that students could observe – helpful to see the laparoscopic procedures and hysterectomies. Brian McCully, the director of O&G, would run classes on a weekly basis.

### Pediatrics

The Paediatric program for 4C students is great at Mildura, with a good mix of clinics, wards, lectures and simulations. Students rotated through the specialist clinic, where they could see ADHD and ASD assessments alongside reviews of chronic medical conditions. The other students would be placed in the wards, where we would be exposed to acute paediatric conditions. The ward students would round in the brand new paediatric unit, in addition to the special care nursery and review ED presentations. Each week there are 3-4 hours of Paediatric lectures, and also a practical simulation based on the content learnt that week. Every student found the simulations very educational and hands-on.

# SALE

By Taylor Miller

Former Year 4C student

Sale Hospital (CGHS) is situated just under 3 hours from Melbourne and contains a small cohort of six hospital speciality students. It is a small hospital with a combined Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Paediatrics ward where you will spend 12 weeks of your hospital rotations. There is also a critical care unit, emergency department and operating theatres that you will visit from time to time as a Year 4C student. As Sale Hospital services most of Central and East Gippsland you will see a lot of interesting cases before they are transferred to Melbourne. The medical and nursing staff are very friendly and love to teach students, so there will be lots of opportunities to learn and practise your skills. The staff are also aware of logbook requirements and try to help you complete this during each rotation.

Having a car or being placed on the same rotations as someone who does is vital to placement in Sale, as a lot of travel is required during the 18 weeks, especially during your Psychiatry rotation. However, there are regular train or coach services from Sale, so returning to Melbourne should not be a problem if you do not have a car.

## Curriculum

Classes for Psychiatry, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Children's Health are run for all hospital specialty students in Gippsland in a mixed format of zoom classes and in-person classes. In-person classes can be either in Traralgon or Churchill. All rotations included practise OSCE's that are run in the last week of each rotation. Each rotation in 2023 also included an in-person APEX in week 5 of the rotation, with up to one resit during the rotation if required.

Psychiatry classes are usually scheduled on Fridays with half the classes being on zoom and half being in person at Traralgon. Whilst this requires students at Sale to travel just under an hour to attend class for three Fridays, it can be used as an opportunity to visit friends or family in Melbourne for the weekend since Traralgon is situated just under 2 hours away from Melbourne.

Children's Health classes are usually scheduled on Wednesdays with only two classes being in person and the remainder on zoom. The in-person classes are a great opportunity to use the theory learnt into practise with a Paediatric Emergency Simulation in Churchill



and Practise OSCE's in Traralgon. Classes on zoom are a mix between lecture style classes and group discussions that do require some preparation beforehand. There are heaps of practise multiple choice questions during these sessions, which is great in preparation for end-of-year exams. Obstetrics and Gynaecology classes are also usually scheduled on a Wednesday, with half the classes being in person at Churchill and half being via zoom. The in-person classes at Churchill provide a great opportunity to learn the core skills of Obstetrics and Gynaecology as well as work as a team during Obstetrics Emergency Simulations. The online classes are a great opportunity to cover the Obstetrics and Gynaecology matrix, as each student is tasked to research a matrix topic and present notes and test their peers with some multiple-choice questions.

### **Placement**

Students are expected to attend placement a minimum of four days a week during each rotation. Each student will have an individualised roster that will split your time between clinic, theatre, wards and community services. It is expected you attend ward rounds each day you are rostered, with Paediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology handover starting at 8AM at Sale Hospital.

Psychiatry is the most demanding rotation for students placed at Sale, as you will be required to commute for four days of placement each week at Latrobe Regional Hospital, for five out of the six weeks. This can involve up to two hours of travel per day, so it is important to carpool with your ward buddy if possible! The Psychiatry rotation at Latrobe Regional Hospital will include time on Flynn Ward (adult inpatient psychiatry), Macalister Ward (Aged Psychiatry), Agnes Ward (Maternal and Baby Unit) and Consultation Liaison. Handover usually starts between 8:30-9AM depending what ward you are on. As part of your rotation you will also spend a week at the Community Mental Health Service at Sale Hospital. This week is often a mixed bag for students, with some students doing lots of home visits and seeing acute presentations in the emergency department, and other students seeing very little throughout the week. There is plenty of down time in the day during your Psychiatry, so there is heaps of time to study.

The Children's Health rotation is completed at Sale Hospital and will divide your time between the Paediatric Ward, special care nursery, emergency department and consulting suites. There is also one day of Paediatrics surgery when there is a visiting Paediatric Surgeon at Sale Hospital. Children's Health at Sale Hospital is very hands on, with lots of opportunities to examine children and perform baby checks both on the wards and in clinic. Often you are asked to take a history before ward rounds begin and to present your findings to the consultant. Each week, the two students on Children's Health rotate between clinic and wards, so you will get three weeks on clinic and three weeks on the wards. On clinic weeks you will spend one day at Fitzpatrick House, where you will see a lot of developmental and behavioural cases.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology is also completed at Sale Hospital, with your time split between the ward, birth suite, theatre and consulting suites. Some students found it difficult to complete aspects of the





logbook at Sale Hospital, especially observing births. At times students have needed to stay over night to observe births to complete their logbook, which is likely not a Sale specific problem due to competing for births with the midwifery students. There are lots of opportunities to scrub in for theatre and the doctors are more than happy to teach during the procedure. During clinic days you will get the opportunity to perform a lot of antenatal examinations.

### **Accommodation**

Houses are all within a 5-minute drive of Sale Hospital, with some students electing to walk each day to placement. In 2023, there were three Year 4C houses in Sale, with a combination of General Practise and Hospital Speciality students living together. Each house has 4-5 bedrooms and is well furnished.

The shopping centre and supermarkets are also within a 5-minute drive of each house. There is a Coles, Aldi and Woolworths in Sale. Sadly there is no Kmart or Big W, but there is a Target (or you can go shopping after your Psychiatry rotation in Traralgon).

### **Things to do**

Whilst Sale is a small town, there is still heaps to do over the weekend! If you love eating out there are options such as Wild Honey and Raymond's Café for brunch or Viet Kitchen, the Criterion and the Star Hotel for dinner. If you are like me and start your day at the gym, there are a few options such as Aqua Energy (Pool/Gym), Anytime Fitness, F45 and Parkrun every Saturday! If you are looking for a day trip you can't go past Blue Pools in summer, which is a great way to cool off over a hot weekend. Other options for day trips include Tarra Bulga National Park, Den of Nargun, Ninety Mile beach and Mount Baw Baw. There are also numerous farmers markets in Central Gippsland so keep an eye out for that!



# WARRAGUL

By Joel Findlay  
Former Year 4C student

## **Rotation**

Warragul Hospital (WGHG) is a fantastic place to do your 4C specialty placement. Located just under 90 minutes from Melbourne, WGHG is one of the smaller hospitals in Gippsland, but this in no way impacts your exposure to cases. The wide catchment area of the hospital means that you see a wide range of presentations, as well as getting a chance to observe transfers remote care for complex cases. There is plenty of interesting things to see and fantastic learning opportunities available for the 18-week semester, and all of the hospital staff are more than welcoming to medical students, providing plenty of opportunities for students passionate about specific specialities.

The cohort at WGHG is small, about 5-6 students, but all of the classes are run for the whole of Gippsland meaning you'll have plenty of interactions with students from Traralgon and Sale students on the same rotation as you. There's also the chance to bump into students of other year levels on the wards, and with the small cohorts at WGHG, it's easy to know everyone who's on placement there.

## Curriculum

The 4C specialty block for rural students is run as an 18-week semester consisting of 6-week blocks of paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, and psychiatry. Each rotation will have a half day of classes every week that will alternate between face to face and online. The classes are facilitated by the very talented local clinicians and discipline leads and are very well designed to get you quickly orientated and comfortable in each rotation. Each rotation also has a day dedicated to practice OSCEs to help find areas to improve before you finish the rotation.

Paediatric teaching was scheduled on Wednesdays and consisted of a mix of case-based discussions and some more lecture-based teaching from local paediatricians. There is also the opportunity to get some time in the sim lab to practice clinical skills.

Obstetrics teaching was also on a Wednesday and mostly involved case discussions, making it a very interactive set of classes. On top of this there were several days booked in the sim labs to practice clinical skills specific to obstetrics, and to help prepare for the APEX's. The Co-discipline lead Deidre is very well organised and sends out weekly checklists to help make sure you know what tasks need to be done.

Psychiatry teaching was on a Friday morning and alternated between zoom and face to face. It was mostly lecture-based content but still with opportunities for interaction. There is also the opportunity while on placement to be involved in the junior doctor teaching as the consultants are more than happy to have medical students sit in.

## Placement

With one day of classes, it is expected that you will spend the other four days of the week on placement. With few students on each rotation, placement never feels over-crowded, and you will each get plenty of opportunities and exposure while you're at the hospital.

Paediatric placement is split between the ward and the paediatric clinic located on hospital grounds. Both students will present before the morning ward round, and you are both expected to take a history and perform an examination which you will then present to the consultant in the morning handover, which is a fantastic way to practice these skills. Following handover, you will both follow the morning ward round, before one of you follows the consultant of the day over to clinic. In clinic you will get to sit in with the consultant of the day and observe outpatient appointments. On the ward, you will stay with the registrars and residents and help them with the daily jobs including admissions and discharges.



Obstetric placement is divided between the birth suites and theatre on alternating weeks. For the birth suites you will work with midwives and doctors caring for patients coming in to give birth or for routine antenatal care. There is plenty of opportunity to get observe births and get involved, in fact a highlight of my time at Warragul was being able to assist in a birth in my first week of rotation! On theatre weeks, you will usually attend the morning theatre list where you can observe and assist with various gynaecological and obstetric procedures. Following this you will then spend your afternoon in the specialist clinic with the consultant you worked with in the morning. Also, as part of the rotation you will get one night shift allocated on the birth suite which is an amazing opportunity.

Psychiatry at Warragul does have some challenges, mainly that there is no inpatient psychiatry at Warragul hospital. Because of this, you will have to spend most of your rotation travelling to Traralgon. However, it's only a 40-minute drive and it gives you some great time to chew through podcasts if that's your style. The 40-minute drive is well worth it though as the psychiatric unit at LRH is a fantastic learning experience. With a catchment area from the Bass Coast all the way up to the eastern border of Victoria, there is a huge range of presentations to be seen. Whilst at LRH you will rotate through the acute adult ward, the aged ward, the clinical liaison team, and even get a day in theatre observing ECT. On top of this you also get some time on community psychiatry both in Warragul and Traralgon.

### **Accommodation**

There are multiple houses in Warragul that are really lovely. You will live with a mix of speciality and GP students and most houses are within 5 minutes of WGHG (which is very handy for the early mornings on obstetrics!). Public transport is somewhat limited so having a car is very handy, particularly as your placement schedules will likely differ to other students on rotation.

### **Lifestyle**

Warragul is packed with things to do to keep you busy on your weekends. The town is gorgeous (and flat) making it perfect for nice weekend walks, and the café scene is very strong. There is a range of local sports, and the Voyage Fitness gym offers student rates that are very affordable to help stay fit. The restaurants in Warragul are fantastic, in particular I have to recommend Warragul Thai. On top of this it is nestled amongst a group of other lovely small towns within half an hour including Drouin, Neerim, and Yarragon which all have lovely places to visit and fun events.



# TRARALGON

By Breanna Teo  
Former Year 4C student

## The Hospital

LRH (LaTrobe Regional Hospital) is located approximately 2 hours from Melbourne. The hospital is one of the largest in Gippsland and has many specialist rotations as well. It's a great place for Year 4C placement with a small cohort of approximately 8 students split across 3 rotations (paediatrics, O+G, psychiatry). However, other 4C students based in Sale and Warragul also travel to Traralgon for their psychiatry placement and so there's also the opportunity to see other members of your year level.

## Rotations


As a 4C student, each rotation is 6 weeks long and in one semester you will complete O+G, paediatrics and psychiatry with your GP semester rotation happening in the other half of the year. Classes are run on one day of the week and often go for half the day. Whilst most classes are run online over zoom, there has been an ongoing push for more face to face teaching and this has definitely started to be implemented. The teaching is often presented by consultants and leading GPs who specialise in the field who are all lovely and happy to answer any questions that you may have. There is a strong emphasis on clinical learning and skills and thus OSCE practice is often a part of each weekly class which is extremely beneficial for end of year preparations. Despite how content heavy the matrixes are for the specialty rotations it is amazing how much you can learn from being a part of the treating team and whilst intense, is definitely possible to cover most of the matrix during each 6 week term.

However, most conveniently most of the housing in Traralgon is within the town centre and only a 7 minute drive approximately to the hospital. This is particularly great during birthing suite days on an O+G rotation where handover is 7:00 am. However, most of the other rotations start at 8:00 am for handover and some rotations on psychiatry require you to only clock in at 9:00am.

## Things to Do Outside of Rotation

There are many restaurant, coffee spots and places to go on your days off! I particularly loved Bodhi – which is a small café that is great for studying but also just to have a small snack and coffee. Alternatively Food and Co is another very popular spot for brunch. Every month there is a market that holds many small arty stalls, food trucks and fresh produce stalls that is very popular with the town locals. Some of the popular places for hikes / walks and picnics include Tara Bulga National Park and there are other nearby national parks which host waterfalls and walking tracks.

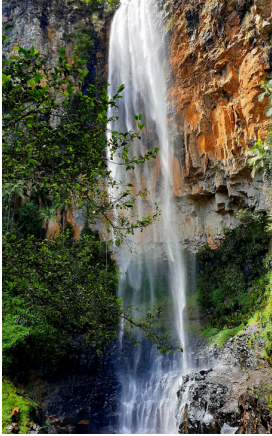


A scenic view of a lake with reeds in the foreground and a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

# **YEAR 4C GENERAL PRACTICE PLACEMENT**

# GOLDFIELDS

By Daniel Lee  
Former Year 4C student



## **This includes:**

- Maryborough
- Castlemaine
- Kyneton

## **Clinic and Curriculum overview:**

I was placed at Campaspe Family Practice in Kyneton in Semester 1 2023 with two other students. It is a large practice with around 20 GPs. Each GP has their own room and patients and you get assigned to one of the GPs for the day. You have different GPs everyday, I got to be with around 6 different GPs by the end of the semester. This

might seem bad because you might not be able to build rapport with one GP but after a few weeks, you get to be with the same GP from time to time so it works out. Every student had a GP they were most with and were closest to by the end of the semester.

You can also ask the admin staff which GP you want to be with after you see them. Everyone had their favourite by a few weeks and we asked most of the time. That being said, the admin staff is probably the nicest people you'll meet. They are so accommodating and always there to help you with anything. There is a medical student room at the clinic but it is small and there's no patient bed. Most of the time, if you ask admin, they will let you know which doctor room is free as the doctor might not be there that day and you can just use that room for the day. I went to the clinic on Thursday and Friday 9-5 with another student. One out of the three went to the

clinic on Monday and Tuesday. There is an occasional Melbourne uni student there as well but they're only there for 6 weeks. Each GP teaches well, you get to do parallel consults as soon as you want. Each doctor has a patient list for the day and they'll ask you to go see this patient while they see another. You do your history and relevant exam and write it up on Best Practice. The doctor will usually read your notes after they are done with their patient and come over to your room to either find a plan together or ask you questions on how to manage the patient. If a doctor has about 15 patients for the day, you will probably see 6 of them. The GP clinic is also connected to the Kyneton Health hospital. Thus, the GPs occasionally go to the hospital to see inpatients and ED patients so you will go to the hospital at times as well.

## **Accommodation and lifestyle:**

I was placed at the accommodation in Castlemaine. There are two resident houses up a hill, 5 minute walk from Castlemaine Health. Each house has four bedrooms and a bathroom. It is isolated at the top of the hill of the Castlemaine Health complex so there's nothing much around. The house itself is like a camp house. It is not the best house you can get but it is alright. You get your own AC in each room and see occasional kangaroos outside. You will need to drive to the city centre as it is around 2km away. Otherwise, you can walk to the nearby cafe and park. You get access to the Castlemaine Health gym so you can walk there if you gym.



# HIGHLANDS

By Devangna Tangri  
Former Year 4C student

Highlands is a very picturesque area only 1 hour from the Melbourne CBD. There were 3 students allocated to Gisborne Medical, 1 at Neal St Woodend, 2 at Brooke St Woodend, 1 at Ranges and 1 at Neal St Gisborne. All GP clinics offered opportunities to do parallel consulting.

## Curriculum

The typical week of GP consists of clinic from 9 – 5pm with a 1 hour lunch break from 12 – 1pm (the time can vary between clinics) on Mondays and Tuesdays. Wednesday is a teaching day at the hub, which is in Brooke St Woodend from 9 – 3pm. Each week tutorials are often spent going through different conditions (e.g. dermatology, ENT, neurology, etc.) via peer led presentations. There are also some tutorials where you are able to practise clinical skills (e.g. ear/eyes examination) to make sure that you are well prepped for your parallel consulting!

In addition to the regular placement at the GP clinics, students also receive allied health experience with a day placement at the optometry clinic in Kyneton, one day with the resident expert radiologist and a day with maternal health nurses in Gisborne.

**Brooke St Woodend** is a 13 minute drive from the Kyneton house. Each day you will be scheduled with a different GP who you will sit with and you'll also get to see some of their patients that day. The GPs at the clinic all have their own preferences for how to run your sessions with them. The usual is a consultation (for however long you like) with the patient, after which you will go with the patient to the GPs room to present the case. They usually like to ask for your differentials, investigations, and further management which really helps with preparing for OSCEs. Some of the GPs also have procedural days where you will get the opportunity to assist with skin excisions and biopsies and you may even get the opportunity to do the whole procedure yourself!

**Neal St Woodend** is also located in Woodend, across the road from Brooke St, and a very quick walk from the town centre. At this clinic much like Brooke St, it depends on the GPs you're with as to how you want to go about it - whether it is parallels or sitting in and starting the consult and then leaving it up to the GP to finish it. Patients don't book in to see you so it remains very flexible, and sometimes you may even end early if the GP has a few documentary consults at the end of the day. You will be given opportunities to watch and hopefully assist with procedural skills such as CSTs, skin excisions and suturing. All of the staff at Neal St are welcoming and take a keen interest in teaching you, and it is a great place to get the most out of your GP placement. Make sure to have lunch with the team, talk to Audrey and Tiff about animal crossing, Carl about his young daughter, and Abdu about his new home!



**Neal St Gisborne** is located in Gisborne. At this clinic you are scheduled to come in from 9-5pm, with a one hour break. Each day you will be booked patients to see on your own. Each GP has a different method of running consults, some will come into your room whenever you are ready to present the patient to the GP and some will ask you to come back to their room after 15 minutes. You will also have the opportunity to watch some procedures (e.g. skin excisions, biopsies, Implanon insertions). All the doctors are lovely and welcoming and very keen to teach.

**Gisborne Medical** All the staff, including the more than 10 doctors, super friendly, helpful, and invested in making your experience at the clinic memorable and productive. You will have your own room and start wave consulting right away. On a busy day you will see 12 patients a day; each patient is booked in for a 15-minute consultation with you, followed by a consultation with the supervising doctor. You will also have the opportunity to be involved with procedures for example skin excisions and biopsies. This clinic is very aware of your university requirements and are quite proactive in making opportunities for you to complete these. Importantly, the doctors are keen to teach you and mould the experience to what your interests and needs are. Furthermore, the nurses are wonderful for teaching skills such as wound care and management. There are visiting specialists at the clinic if you have any particular interests let Wendy know she can organise for you to sit in on these. Overall, my experience at Gisborne Medical Centre was amazing- all the doctors are extremely knowledgeable and enjoy teaching, as well as the nurses and the administration help ensure you have the best experience possible.

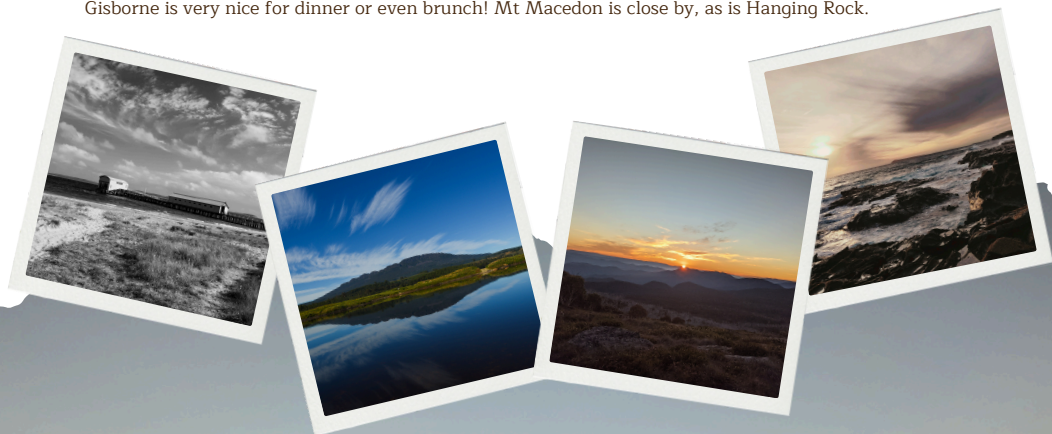
**Ranges Medical Centre** is located in Gisborne. You will be parallel consulting from very early-on; appointments are set for 60 minutes, and the supervising doctor is happy to join within 5 minutes or 45 minutes depending on when you finish or need help. At Heyfield Medical Centre you are given a lot of dermatology experience. You will also get a lot of opportunities to practise procedures, including skin excisions and biopsies (so you will be able to get parts of your Women's logbook completed early if you are scheduled for GP in semester 1).

### **Accommodation**

If you choose to live in Monash accommodation, you will be assigned to one of the houses in Gisborne or Kyneton. These are 3 and 6 bedroom houses respectively that you may share with other 4th year medical students.

### **Things to do**

Within Highlands, there are many cool things to see and do! The Kyneton botanical Gardens are home to several species of trees and has a beautiful walk along the Campaspe river. Turpin falls are nearby too, which is a very nice swimming spot. Botanik is a Melbourne-esque cocktail bar that sells plants too, Animus is a stylish gin distillery, and there are also a handful of very sweet Italian restaurants make up the little town that is Kyneton, which is truly beautiful! The Kyneton pizza restaurant is also awesome. Around the town centre there are lots of places to eat and spend time when not at placement. If you have the time, try to check out Thursday night trivia at Major Tom's (great burgers too). Baringo in Gisborne is very nice for dinner or even brunch! Mt Macedon is close by, as is Hanging Rock.





# MURRAY

By Ethan Mgucken

Former Monash student



Swan Hill, situated on the mighty Murray River, is a delightful town that will surely become a core memory in your medical school experience. The incredible charm and amazing pull of this placement is in its location - situated 4 1/2hrs from Melbourne, you are guaranteed to get an authentic, hands on rural GP experience!

## Placement

Over the 18 week placement, you will spend roughly 3-4 days per week in the GP clinic, parallel consulting the entire time. Patients knowingly book in with the students, and you are given a generous 45 minutes per consult to perform a thorough work up, testing your history and exam skills. Almost uniquely to Swan Hill, you call in your GP when you are ready, meaning that you can create a management plan for every patient and have the chance to present it to your supervisor. This really gives you an authentic GP experience, allowing you to test your own clinical reasoning and diagnostic skills prior to your GP seeing the patient. Whilst daunting to begin with, you get the incredible opportunity to grow as a clinician and leave Swan Hill with a

level of confidence and clinical competence that no other site can facilitate.

Over the course of a GP day, you see 4 patients in the morning and 4 patients in the afternoon, separated by a generous 2hr lunch break. This provides a very relaxing opportunity to reset after the morning session, giving you ample time to enjoy a long lunch and time during the day to study. In saying that, the hands-on nature of the Swan Hill placement means that studying outside of the 9am-5pm placement days is rarely necessary, thereby giving you the rare opportunity in med school to develop a consistent routine, giving you a great taste of work life balance.

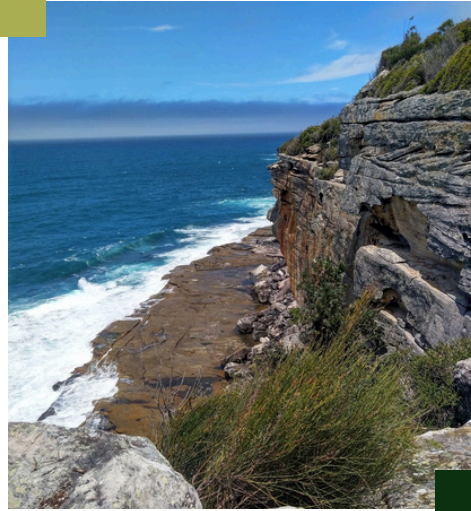
In addition to your GP days, every week you experience Hub Day, a



day dedicated to teaching 4C students a wide variety of clinical concepts and skills to reflect the vast breadth of knowledge that GPs use day to day.

Under the tutelage of the esteemed Associate Professor Ernan Hession, you can look forward to the most up to date medical education on topics relevant to all 4C disciplines, ensuring that you leave Swan Hill ready to tackle hospital placements or exams with ease.

Another incredible experience available in Swan Hill is the exposure to placements at Swan Hill District Health, a rural hospital that gives you real insight into the true experience of rural medicine. Availability of rotations can change based on the placements of Charles Sturt University students, but there is scope for GP students to get exposure to ED, Gen Med, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and other specialties that visit Swan Hill District Health. This can be a great opportunity to widen your exposure to acute medicine in ED, adding a layer of triage and emergency skills to your GP consulting. It can also give some 4Cs an opportunity to tick off some of the many O&G logbook items before Sem 2, or



consolidate the skills they learnt in Sem 1 in a rural setting. Expressing your interest early to Anne Wattie is crucial to securing some of these placements, but they provide a great opportunity to broaden your exposures and really see the scope of healthcare that a true rural hospital provides.

Importantly, all of the GPs and nurses are extremely kind and supportive to students. They have been teaching medical students for years and as such, have very realistic and achievable expectations, ensuring that placement is a very safe learning environment. Anne Wattie, the Monash staff member currently in Swan Hill is like everyone's Mum away from home, and she is extremely eceptive and accommodating to any concerns that you may have. With support from both clinical and administrative staff, Swan Hill will be a placement where it is easy to thrive in a very supportive and enjoyable environment.

#### **Accommodation and things to do**

All students placed in Swan Hill live across 2 houses, McCrae and Cutri. Each house has different pros and cons but both houses will provide a comfortable stay while in Swan Hill. The McCrae house, whilst a bit older, is very close to the town and to the clinic, so residents of this house will enjoy a <3 minute walking commute to Hub day and to the Hospital. Cutri is a 5 minute drive away but makes up for it with its spacious yard, more modern interior and open planned design. Both houses will become a home away from home, and we enjoyed many wonderful social activities across both of them over the semester.

# East Gippsland

By Issac Hui  
Year 4C Student

Includes Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Orbost

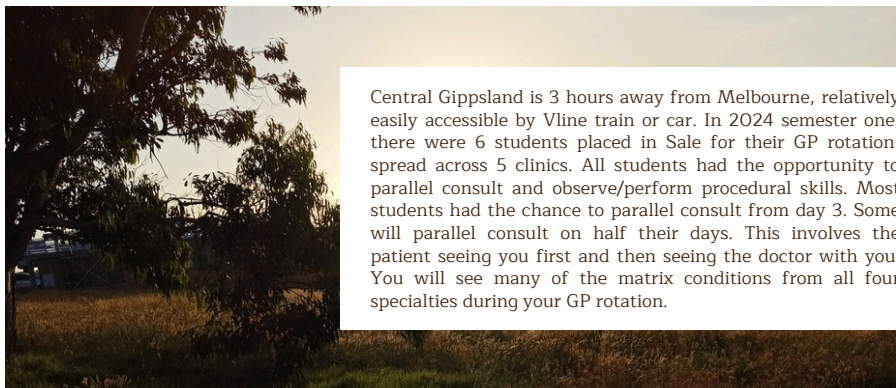
There were 5 students placed in East Gippsland for their GP rotation. One of the students was placed at Macleod Street Medical Centre in Bairnsdale, and two of the students were placed at Orbost Medical Clinic. The other two students were split across Bairnsdale Medical Group (Bairnsdale) and Gippsland Lakes Community Health (Lakes entrance), meaning they did two days a week at Bairnsdale Medical Group and one day a week at the clinic in Lakes Entrance. The two students placed in Orbost shared a small house in Orbost. The remainder of the students had accommodation in Bairnsdale - I was one of these students and the house was very nice.

A typical week would consist of three days of GP placement (9-5pm) and a class on Friday morning at the Monash Health Building in Bairnsdale (occasionally in Sale). Usually the students in Orbost would stay with the other students in the Bairnsdale house on Thursday night to avoid the 70 minute drive in the morning. Everyone got one day off a week, this was a Monday for most people.

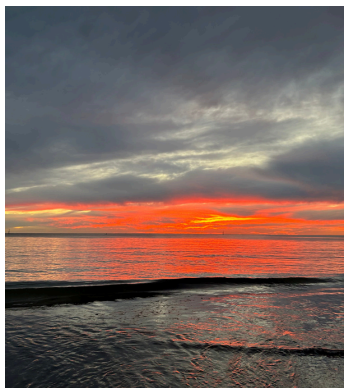
On the weekends there are plenty of coastal towns to explore such as Paynesville, Metung, Lakes Entrance, Marlo and Raymond Island. If one enjoys fishing this is absolute paradise. Using prawns at the Silt Jetties on a running sinker was often quite successful. For those who want to commute back to Melbourne every week, the journey is 3 and a half hours by car. Thankfully, the V line runs three trains a day to Bairnsdale, a great option for those who don't like driving.

# Central Gippsland

By Hasna Kazi, Lachlan Kesting, Izac Grantham, Anikait Anilkumar Patil & Sophie Chan



Central Gippsland is 3 hours away from Melbourne, relatively easily accessible by Vline train or car. In 2024 semester one, there were 6 students placed in Sale for their GP rotation, spread across 5 clinics. All students had the opportunity to parallel consult and observe/perform procedural skills. Most students had the chance to parallel consult from day 3. Some will parallel consult on half their days. This involves the patient seeing you first and then seeing the doctor with you. You will see many of the matrix conditions from all four specialties during your GP rotation.



You also get the opportunity to do a few days of extra clinics in the area - this includes maternal and child health placement, optometry, antenatal/gynaecology clinics, paediatric community clinic. If you're keen, you can also ask about doing extra days of this.

Because you have 18 weeks on GP, make sure you take the time to start learning the other matrices as well. Some of the Friday classes are dedicated towards paediatric/women's health cases to ensure you learn all necessary conditions. You are also invited to the grand rounds at Sale hospital which sometimes have relevant sessions for our matrix.

It is likely that you will be able to sign some logbook items from your women's logbook (antenatal examination, cervical screening tests, clinics), so make sure you take the opportunities if they arise.

### **Clocktower Medical Centre:**

Right in the heart of town, Clocktower is a wonderful place to do your GP rotation. Patients are booked in to see you, and you often get to spend 30-45 minutes seeing them before you call in your supervising doctor. You will start wave consulting by day 3, and you have your own student room. The team are lovely, with lots of experience, and they enjoy teaching. The nurses are always happy to teach you skills as well, including cervical screening, suture removal, wound dressing, ECGs, vaccination etc. You will get the opportunity to sit in with the diabetic nurse educator a few times, which is a useful experience when counselling patients with diabetes. The doctors perform skin cancer excisions or biopsies in the clinic, and you will be able to practice your skills with them if you show that you are keen!

### **Heyfield Medical Centre:**

The GPs, nurses and staff at Heyfield Medical Centre are very friendly and supportive. The system is set in such a way that you are able to order tests, imaging and write referrals under supervision from the very start. Being a little more out of the way, the GP clinic can at times function more like an ED, giving you exposure to a wide variety of presentations.

### **Sale Medical Centre:**

Sale Medical Centre is located close to the centre of Sale and should only be a quick drive away from any accommodation within Sale. There is also a clinic in the scenic Loch Sport, a small town 45 minutes away from Sale, where you'll spend one day a week (think about the beach-side lunch breaks!). At the start of your time at the clinic you'll sit in with a few GPs before you begin parallel consulting.

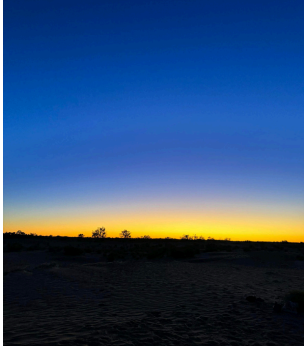
You'll start off with 6 patients per day, but that quickly changes to 8 patients. Patients are booked with your supervising GP of the day, and you'll generally see them for 15 minutes, and then sit in with the GP for the official consultation. There are also opportunities to sit in with the nurses and the dietician. There are plenty of opportunities to observe procedures, but this will often be limited to assisting. You switch between supervising GPs each day, which has the perk of being able to see a wide range of patients. Every GP that I've had was lovely and very supportive in their teaching.

### **Maffra Medical Group**

Maffra Medical Group (MMG) is a gem of a clinic. It's a place where you really feel a part of the team. The Doctors here cater to the needs of a student and they really make sure that your time there is both practical and informative (allowing for input from the student if any changes are necessary). Wave consults start in the second week of placement, with the supervising GP on any given day usually being one of the 5 partners at the clinic. The styles of the practitioners you wave consult with all differ from one another, which really allows you to find your own unique method that works for you. Although it is a 20 minute drive away from the accommodation in Sale, MMG is Definitely a practice you won't regret going to

### **Inglis Medical Centre**

I am placed at Inglis Medical Centre which has 16 doctors as well as a number of allied health services, including a mental health nursing service next door. I've loved being so involved with procedures - I do half days performing skin biopsies and steroid injections! You're suturing from day one and parallel consulting from Week 3. This gives you great opportunities to develop clinical



reasoning and patient communication skills. The admin staff are great, they are very flexible with your schedule (changing around days is easy if you need a long weekend in Melbourne) and I've been able to preference supervision from doctors I get the most learning from.

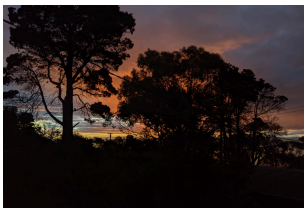
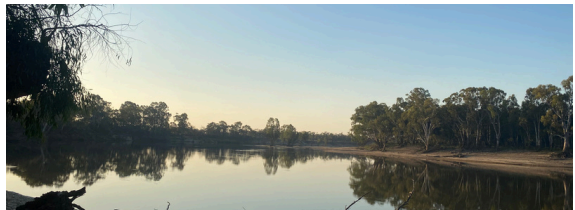
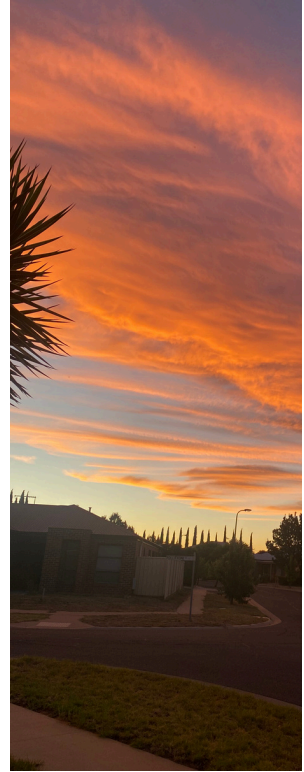
**Accommodation and Logistics:**

All accommodation in Sale is very close to the town centre. There is one house situated nearby the main shopping centre, which is an 8 minute walk to Clocktower medical centre. The other houses are closer towards the hospital and the beautiful lake. All houses fit between 2-5 people and come fully furnished. The administration team is super lovely so don't hesitate to reach out to them if

you have specific logistical questions. If your clinic is in Maffra or Heyfield, there is no Monash accommodation in those areas. You can either rent privately or stay in Sale at the Monash accommodation. If you like to head back to Melbourne, there is a VLine station in Sale with 3 trains a day running in either direction. You will need to book online/obtain a paper ticket (as you are travelling from past Traralgon), so make sure you plan ahead.

**Lifestyle/Social Activities:**

Every Thursday at 8PM there is trivia hosted at the Star Hotel, and Karaoke at Jack Ryan's Bar across the road. There's a tennis club in Sale near the lake with beautiful views. The lakes have walking tracks that are very popular, and you will see many dogs on your walk around the town. Aqua energy is the local gym that many people in Sale signed up to. If you are interested in gymnastics, there is a club in Maffra. There is a yoga space, karate, taekwondo all in the heart of Sale as well.





# WEST GIPPSLAND

**By Farajin Shahshahani**

Includes Warragul, Trafalgar, Drouin, Yarragon, Morwell

West Gippsland presents a variety of GP clinics, all within a reasonable driving distance from Warragul. Located just an hour from Melbourne, Warragul serves as a convenient hub for medical students, and despite its accessibility, studying in West Gippsland maintains all the advantages of a rural setting, such as close-knit community interactions and a broad spectrum of patient presentations. In addition to each clinic adhering to the foundational framework of GP education, each clinic is distinct in the sub-specialty care that they provide; for instance, Trafalgar Medical Centre specialises in women's health. This diversity, paired with the opportunity of students to preference desired clinics, allows students to engage in education that also aligns with their medical interests.

### **Curriculum/Rotations**

A typical week during the placement consists of a community placement on Monday, GP placements on Tuesday and Thursday, and a dedicated teaching day on Wednesday. The GP tutor leads are Dr Paul Brougham and Dr Jacob Lees, who are very approachable, knowledgeable, and lead exceptional tutorials. The community placements were diverse, encompassing experiences in paediatric clinics, palliative care, audiology, optometry, and maternal child health clinics, alongside a thorough 7-week involvement with the Gippsland Public Health Unit.

### **Clinical Experience**

I've had the privilege of being placed at Neerim South Medical Centre. I've thoroughly enjoyed this experience.

The daily 20-minute drive from Warragul to Neerim, a town with a population of 2500, unfolds through breathtaking, green, and winding landscapes, offering a soothing start to the morning. The clinic mirrors this scenic atmosphere; the consulting rooms are easily double the size of metropolitan counterparts. Each room's window features a view I can best describe as reminiscent of the iconic green hills from the Windows Microsoft wallpaper.

This warmth extends within the clinic as well. The nursing team, receptionist, GPs, and even the patients make you feel welcomed from day one. The doctors are seasoned and empathetic. They are very accommodating and parent—and student-centric. Esteemed figures such as John Murtagh have been close colleagues with the doctors at this clinic, and needless to say, the primary care that is provided is excellent—many of the patients have been seeing these doctors for over 30 years.

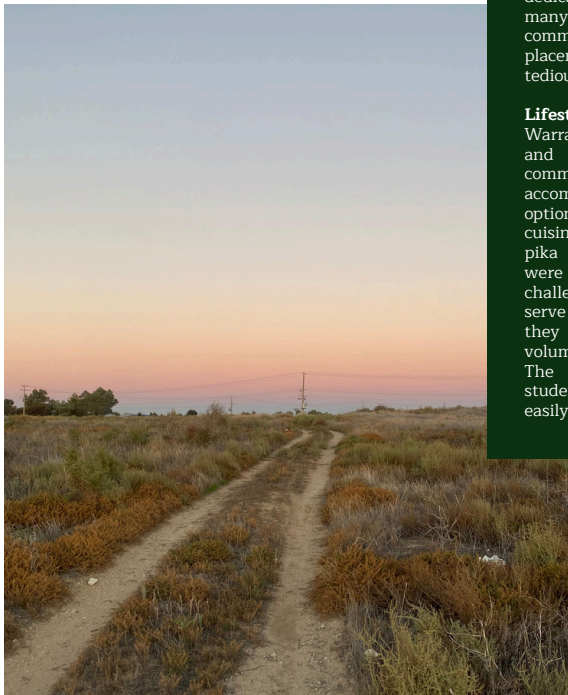
This clinic emphasises hands-on clinical experience. From day one, I was assigned my own room and started parallel consults. I was expected to see patients independently, obtain a history, perform an exam and brainstorm investigations and potential management plans. Afterwards, the GP would enter the room and consolidate my notes and recommendations with the parent. Whilst I found this to be initially intimidating, I was surprised by how quickly I eased into it, thanks to the insights and guidance provided by the doctors, and I ultimately found it to be an invaluable experience.

The cases at Neerim's clinic are often more complex and urgent than those seen in metropolitan clinics. As a student, these presentations bolstered my clinical knowledge and opened my eyes to the real-world complexities of medicine.

This rotation was one of the first in medical school where I felt as though I was part of the treating team, rather than just an observer. I can confidently say that this has been the most enriching and enjoyable 18 weeks of medical school so far!

### **Accommodation and Logistics**

During my stay, I stayed at one of the student accommodations with a cosy 4-bed. Whilst not being very modern, the house was very spacious and well-kept. Given the big block of land, wifi connectivity issues were rampant, but the lovely admin team at Warragul has kindly provided us with a wifi extender. Overall, the accommodation provided a very comfortable living space. Two of the six GP placements are in Traralgon, but students can acquire accommodation if they wish.



As previously mentioned, Mondays were dedicated to community placements, many situated in Traralgon. The 45-minute commute from Warragul to these placements posed a challenge, being both tedious and fuel-intensive.

### **Lifestyle/social activities**

Warragul boasts a lot of Ethnic diversity and anyone can feel at home. The community is both polite and accommodating. Naturally, culinary options are plentiful, offering a variety of cuisines. For me personally, white grain, pika sushi and the various kebab shops were a standout. On a lighter note, I challenge anyone to find a Maccas soft serve bigger than the one in Warragul, they are undefeated in their texture and volume.

The Voyage fitness gym provides a student discount, and I found the facilities easily rival the top gyms in Melbourne.

# South Gippsland

By Phumeena Balasubramaniam



South Gippsland is a gorgeous region 1 hour 45 minutes east of the Melbourne CBD with GP clinics in Leongatha, Korumburra and Wonthaggi. In Sem 1 and 2 2023 there were 6 students allocated to the clinics and all offering the opportunity to undertake parallel consulting.

## Curriculum

A typical week of GP consists of clinic from 9am - 12:30pm in the morning, an hour off for lunch and an afternoon session from 2pm - 5pm. Clinic is typically 3 days a week, with Wednesday allocated as a teaching day. Teaching will cover a system each week, with high yield content, case studies, examination skills, practice questions and OSCEs covered. Reinforcement of common GP presentations is a strong theme in order to quickly give you a strong foundation to make the most of your time parallel consulting. The final day of the week will consist of either self-directed study or a community/speciality placement (i.e. optometrist, audiology clinic, paediatrics consulting, gynaecology consulting + theatre, and maternal health nurse).

## Clinic

The team at Leongatha Healthcare is very supportive and welcoming from day 1, whether it be the GPs, nurses and admin staff. Each day you will be scheduled with 2 GPs (one for the morning and one for the afternoon), with each having a preference as to how your sessions are run. These often consist of a mix of solely observing the consult, spearheading the consult yourself with the GP observing or independently seeing the patient yourself. The GPs will often ask you for your differentials, investigations, management plan, and are genuinely invested in teaching! Some of the GPs in Leongatha Healthcare also specialise in anaesthetics, obstetrics, dermatology, mental health, etc. When paired with them, you can also assist with pre-anaesthetic checks, antenatal and obstetric care, where you can practise performing ultrasounds, and skin lesion excisions/biopsies, where you can practise your suturing skills! Since Leongatha Healthcare is also attached to the Gippsland Southern Health Service- Leongatha Hospital, you will also get the opportunity to attend birthing suites, and shadow GPs in theatre (i.e. for C-sections, or while they are the anaesthetist) and/or urgent care. At Leongatha Healthcare, you will undoubtedly see a diverse range of patient presentations and develop the skills needed to exceed in 4C.

## Accommodation

Monash accommodation at Leongatha consists of either a three-bedroom or two-bedroom, one-bathroom house, which are both walkable distances from the GP clinic and hospital. You will share your accommodation with another 4C student on GP, or an allied health student completing their placement at a nearby hospital. Gas, electricity, water and WiFi are all included in the weekly rent.

## Things to Do:

South Gippsland is home to many scenic escapes, including Wilson's Promontory, which contains some of the most stunning beaches with mountains I've seen, as well as Inverloch, a pristine beach perfect for swimming (if the weather permits). The rail trail is also a scenic, well maintained track great for running, walking or cycling. Leongatha also has Woolies, Aldi and IGA and even hosts monthly farmer's markets for all your grocery needs! Leongatha also has wonderful cafes for your caffeine needs!