10th edition

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WILDFIRE
MONASH RURAL HEALTH
3  Foreword
   • Monash School of Rural Health
   • MUMUS
   • WILDFIRE

10  Preference and Allocation

14  Staff Descriptions
   • Bendigo
   • Mildura
   • Churchill
   • Gippsland

26  Year 3B Student Descriptions
   • Bendigo, Mildura, Sale, Traralgon, Warragul

44  Year 4C Hospital Descriptions
   • Bendigo, Mildura, Sale, Traralgon, Warragul

60  Year 4C GP Descriptions
   • Goldsfields, Highlands, Murray, South Gippsland, West Gippsland, East Gippsland, Central Gippsland, Latrobe Valley
I am very pleased to endorse the 2023 MUMUS Rural Placement Guide. This guide provides perspectives from both medical students and the Monash Rural Health (MRH) on the Monash medical course rural experience. We are the oldest and among the largest rural clinical school in Australia. Monash Rural Health was established in 1992, so in 2022 we are celebrating our 30th Anniversary year.

As students will tell you, our School supplies students with exceptional hands-on learning experiences that will provide valuable preparation for postgraduate training and professional practice. 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 and other activities and try out the amazing recreational activities that each region 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 also invites students who are not part of the rural cohorts to do all or part of the medical training in rural if they wish. Through our Regional Training Hubs we can provide you with information and opportunities to consider if you would like to continue your postgraduate training in regional and rural Victoria.
All MRH sites boast exceptional educational facilities, with provision for hosting students across Years A, Year 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, all with the aim of increasing the rural medical workforce, improving the health and access to health care of regional and rural communities. You have the opportunity to get involved in research within the rural setting through your Scholarly Intensive Placement, a Summer/Winter research scholarship project, 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 and Berwick.

If you would like more information about our programs feel free to contact our Rural Health Education Program Office at rural.health@monash.edu who will assist with any queries and questions you might have about the training experiences offered at MRH.

Upon choosing the rural option, we look forward to welcoming you and providing you with a world-class training experience within our vibrant School.

Professor Shane Bullock

Associate Professor and Head of School, Monash Rural Health
Welcome to the 2022 MUMUS Rural Guidebook!

Monash Medical School is one of the largest medical programs in Australia, and this is reflected in the multitude of locations available to us for rural and regional placements. We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to immerse ourselves in such a wide variety of beautiful locations and communities. All students will complete at least one rotation at a rural clinical site at some point during med school, and this is a great chance for Monash students to get a taste of what rural medicine is all about!

This guidebook has been carefully curated by your wonderful MUMUS rural representatives Mykelti (ERC/North-West) and Mathew (Gippsland) to provide you with the best insider information, tips, and tricks to help you make the most of your time in rural and regional Victoria!

It is well known amongst medical students that a rural placement offers opportunities that most students at metro hospitals would not have the chance to experience. Students on rural placements are well-integrated in their clinical environment, become essential members of the treating teams, and are exposed to endless opportunities to practice invaluable clinical decision-making and hands-on procedural skills; the level of involvement of students on rural placements is truly second-to-none. Having completed Year 4C in Gippsland, I can personally attest to the quality of the rural placement experience! The numbers don’t lie – it is no surprise that Year 3B is typically oversubscribed for rural placements!
Additionally, a rural placement is a great time to make new connections, whether that be with your peers, your clinical team, or the local community (e.g. through a sports club, interest group, or religious group)! You end up becoming very close with the students on your rural placement; some of my fondest memories of med school involve playing Catan and tennis with my housemates in Traralgon and going to the beach on the weekends! It’s a great opportunity to move out with your mates whilst also being properly immersed in an enriching rural environment and community.

As your student society, we’re proud to support you and to help make your rural site a home away from home. Your site and rural reps work hard to advocate on your behalf and to meet your needs, whether that’s through keeping the rural sites stocked with supplies or running events! Don’t hesitate to let us know if there are any additional ways that we can support you so that you can make the most of your rural placements!

I strongly encourage everyone to embrace and seek out rural placements. I guarantee that you will develop skills and have experiences that you wouldn’t be able to have on a metro placement!

This guidebook developed by Mykelti and Mathew will give you wonderful insights into what our rural placements have to offer. All the best for the adventures ahead!

Calvin Lu
MUMUS President 2022
WILDFIRE

WILDFIRE is Monash University’s Rural and Indigenous Health Club. We have a large membership base of student members across medicine, nursing and allied health. WILDFIRE, through our working relationships with Monash University School of Rural Health and the National Rural Health Student Network (NRHSN), aims to:

1. Foster relations between students and health professionals interested in rural and Indigenous health and culture.
2. Facilitate discussion, action and reporting on rural and Indigenous health amongst the student body and with our affiliates.
3. Develop and maintain a multi-disciplinary approach.
4. Support continued learning about the varied strengths and challenges of rural and Indigenous health.
5. Encourage a long-term commitment to living and working in rural areas of Australia.

As a student-led organisation with a central council and five dedicated sub-committees in Clayton, Bendigo, Mildura, Gippsland, and Parkville, we ensure we have a strong presence at each of our rural clinical sites, alongside our 2 metropolitan hubs. We run numerous social, fundraising and academic events annually across Victoria. Some of our major events include.

- The Matthew Campbell Memorial Evening: In memory of a past Monash University medical student, Matthew Campbell, the evening offers an opportunity for discussion of key issues facing Indigenous Australians.
- Bendigo Ball: The premier social event of the year. Boasting a fantastic location, food, music and company, it is a night not to be missed!
- Rural Internship Information Evening and Guidebook: Written by interns and junior doctors, the guidebook aims to help medical students make decisions around applying for internship in regional and rural Victoria. In conjunction with this we also held an information evening.
- End of Rotation Events 6 weekly across our rural sites, to ensure regular social opportunities for students.
We aim to support our students to make the most of their time in regional and rural Victoria; in direct practice on placement, academically, by immersing themselves in their community, and with social opportunities among peers.

During 2022, we have put our beautiful rural areas of Victoria in the spotlight, and encouraged all students to get out and explore their own backyards. We have worked to strengthen connections with Indigenous health organisations, provide more events to students which promote Indigenous health and culture, and share the experiences of our amazing up-and-coming Indigenous health workers. We hope over time that our work will have a meaningful impact on the disparities we see in rural and Indigenous health outcomes.

If you have a passion for rural and Indigenous health, and would like to be a part of a group of like-minded people, get involved in WILDFIRE! You can get in contact with us via our website, Facebook, Instagram or email us (wildfire.president@gmail.com).

Shankar Seevanayagam and Samantha Congdon
Wildfire Presidents 2022
Preference and Allocation

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 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.

For Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) and Rural End to End Program (E2E) students 2023 will see Year 3B and 4C End-to-End (E2E) rural cohort students undertaking clinical placements across the School of Rural Health’s footprint. ERC students will undertake their clinical placements across the School’s footprint in rural and regional Victoria in Gippsland or in the north-west of the state in Years 3B and 4C.

E2E rural cohort students will undertake their placements primarily in north-west Victoria and are able to preference sites across this region for their full year placements in Year 3B and semesterised program in 4C.

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

E2E students in 4C for 2023 will be preferencing SRH sites in North West Victoria. This means that if you were placed in Mildura for 3B, unless you choose to stay on in Mildura for 4C, SRH will endeavour to place you in Bendigo for one semester in 4C for your regional hospital rotation, should you preference in this way. As already mentioned, there are no guarantees. If E2E students completed 3B in Bendigo in 2022, it is an expectation that they will undertake their regional hospital rotation in Mildura, unless they have special consideration with supporting documentation which precludes them from undertaking one semester in Mildura.
The 4C rural practice community rotations – Murray, Highlands, and Goldfields regions (Swan Hill, Woodend, Gisborne, Maryborough, Kyneton and Castlemaine) – these are all north-west rotations managed by SRH in Bendigo. Even though the Murray region is geographically closer to Mildura, it is still considered a Bendigo-managed rotation, as are the more proximal Highland and Goldfields regions. As such, E2E students who were placed in Mildura in 3B, although they will most likely be allocated a semester in Bendigo (should they preference in this way), have an equal likelihood of being allocated for their other semester in the Murray region as they have to being placed in the Highlands or Goldfields regions (preferences are taken into consideration).

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, followed by 4C students who have committed to 24 months in the same region.

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 familiarise yourself with the information in this guidebook to better understand all sites on offer.

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 all in your friendship group select the same site preferences and provide each other’s names, otherwise friendship group requests cannot be taken into consideration. It’s also a good idea to let the School 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 with your friend.
Special requirements

If you have special requirements that need to be considered for your clinical placement year, you will need to lodge them at the first stage (when you make a choice about opting into Rural (both 3B and 4C) or Peninsula (4C) programs. Special requirements are considered at all stages of the placement allocation process. You can submit special requirements even if you’re not opting into Rural or Peninsula Programs. Supporting documentation relevant to special requirements MUST be uploaded during this first stage, otherwise, your request cannot be considered. An application for special requirements does not constitute automatic guarantee of first preference in allocation of a placement. It is merely one component of the consideration that is given in allocating that student.

The following circumstances will be considered in allocation decisions:
- Major health problems requiring frequent and ongoing specialised treatment that is only available in certain locations.
- Being a parent of a dependent child or children.
- Being a registered carer for a sick relative or dependent.
- Being part of the Team Monash Elite Student Performer Scheme requiring location in a particular area.
- Severe financial hardship.

The following circumstances are not considered in allocation decisions:
- Lack of access to a motor vehicle or inability to drive.
- Other transportation issues, including time and costs.
- Relationships without dependents.
- Ownership or rental of accommodation in a particular location.
- Other accommodation issues.
- Employment and other extra-curricular activities. Existing or planned research commitments.
Supporting documentation
Students will need to provide supporting documentation for special requirements to be considered. This may be:

- Letter from your treating doctor/health practitioner.
- Registration letter from Monash Elite Performer Scheme.
- Evidence of being a registered carer via Centrelink.
- Birth certificate of child.
- Letter from a mental health professional (counsellor, psychologist, mental health nurse).
- Bank statements showing a reduction of income/a report from a financial counselling service.
- Any other evidence you have to explain your circumstances.

Every effort is made to accommodate documented special requirements. However, due to capacity limitations, in some circumstances, the School may need to place students in a clinical placement location that they have not opted in to.

We understand that travelling to and from your allocated clinical placement when you don’t have a driver’s license or access to a car can be challenging, as students can be expected to arrive early in the morning and travel to/from rural sites to attend scheduled learning activities. There will be a free text box on InPlace where you can provide information about your level of access to transportation. It is important that you provide accurate information, so that this can be taken into consideration. This information will be carefully considered, however we cannot guarantee that you will be placed within your preferred area due to the number of available clinical placements. If you don’t have a car, your clinical site will put you in touch with fellow students to arrange car-pooling.

It’s important to note that the process of regional/rural site allocation is complex and is handled in a completely transparent manner, free of all external influence, personal or otherwise. The online placement system algorithm is programmed to allocate students to their highest possible preference, and the allocation results are fixed, notwithstanding the need for manual allocation for Faculty approved special consideration cases.

With best wishes,

Laura Major
Rural Health Education Manager, Monash School of Rural Health
Staff Descriptions
Bendigo is a large regional city (population 124,000), 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.

Curriculum

Year 3B
Year 3B students with Monash Rural Health (MRH) Bendigo are based at Bendigo Hospital for the full academic year. The program is integrated with the University of Melbourne’s Year 2 MD program to form the NVRMEN (Northern Victoria Rural Medical Education Network) Foundation Clinical Year. 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.
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, women’s health 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, women’s health and psychiatry in a different health care setting.

Year 5D

MRH Bendigo offers the core Year 5D rotations (emergency medicine, aged care, general medicine and general surgery) as well as a range of specialties and electives at Bendigo Health. Year 5D students operate in an intern shadowing role and are offered a comprehensive simulation program.

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. Considering joining a club? Consult the City of Greater Bendigo’s community or ask any staff member what is available locally. Many of the faculty and the clinicians who are your teachers also belong to community organisations and will be happy to share contact details. For more ideas follow this link:
https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Things-To-Do

**COVID-19 implications**

MRH Bendigo has maintained clinical placements for all medical students throughout the peaks of COVID-19 infections, including acute hospital wards and regional GP hubs, and ongoing medical student clinical education has been fully supported by the Hospital Executive. While COVID-19 continues to engender change in infection control protocols, the education programs have adapted in line with hospital requirements. All students will be expected to comply with the Hospital protocols, including wearing of masks and vaccination requirements, and demonstrate community leadership in these areas. Clinical skills and simulation training have been adapted and continue across the year. The lessons learned from the COVID crisis has resulted in an effective and well received education program for all students, and the program continues to be adapted to respond to changes in local requirement to ensure students receive the most effective education and learning going forward.

Associate Professor Chris Holmes

**Director, Monash Rural Health Bendigo**
Mildura

Mildura is a larger regional city than you might think (population approx. 60,000), situated 542 kilometres from Melbourne.

Monash Rural Health (MRH) Mildura has earned an excellent reputation for providing hands-on clinical experiences to medical students, as well as excellent student outcomes in terms of assessment. MRH Mildura is located adjacent to Mildura Base Hospital, allowing easy access to clinical placements for students. The hospital itself has 165 beds, with recent upgrades to ED and Midwifery Services and has over 30,000 admissions per annum. It provides a wide range of specialty services including: Cardiology, Community and Inpatient Mental Health Services, Chemotherapy, Day Surgery, Dialysis, Emergency Services, ENT Surgery, Facio-Maxillary Surgery, General Medicine, General Surgery, Gerontology, Hospital in the Home (HITH), Intensive Care, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Oncology, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Rehabilitation Services and Urology. Comprehensive Pathology, Imaging, Pharmacy and Allied Health Services are also available on site. Mildura Base Hospital is a training site for interns and registrars, and runs a comprehensive education program for these doctors. Medical students are encouraged to participate in these sessions that include weekly teaching in radiology, ECG interpretation, grand rounds, intern tutorials and discipline-specific meetings.

Year 3B

Year 3B at Mildura is a small cohort of up to 16 students. Students participate in a range of small group learning activities that include clinical skills and bedside teaching, ward and operating theatre experience, modified PBLs, didactic and theme-based teaching.

Year 3B is the first opportunity for students to work continuously in the clinical environment where they can consolidate the basic and clinical science knowledge that has been developed in Year 1 and 2 or Year A in a real context. The cohort is split into two groups with each group rostered to 3 x 6 week-placements per Semester to each of general surgery/Orthopaedics, general medicine and ‘electives’ which can include Anaesthetics, ED, GP and Indigenous Health.
Placements are generally for 4 half-days each week throughout the entire year. This provides students with a great deal of ‘up close and personal’ clinical experiences, embedded into teams, and allows them to develop clinical and decision-making skills while under the direct supervision of interns, registrars and consultants. The hands-on learning experience at MRH Mildura and Mildura base hospital is second to none!

The clinical experience is complemented by 2 to 4 hours per week of skills-based training in the simulation laboratory each week, incorporating both a procedural skills mastery program and small group simulated scenarios with Sim-Man 3G. This program offers students exposure in the simulated setting to become familiar with equipment and its use to improve safety and mastery of procedural skills, with the aim to increase student confidence and improve assessment performance in an involved and challenging way. This knowledge is tested in a procedural mock OSCE day, to give students an opportunity to refine their skills in a supervised environment, in addition to being able to readily access equipment whenever they are on campus.

The clinical simulated scenarios run throughout the year are offered as an additional and exclusive opportunity, tackling high-yield conditions outlined in the 3B matrix and beyond, including trauma and important presentations such as asthma, COPD, PE/DVT and AMI.

Each year, up to 2 Year 3B students who have been on placement at Mildura and who have demonstrated exceptional community engagement and dedication to rural health will be offered an exchange with Pennsylvania State University in the USA. Rural Health Mildura will provide flights, accommodation, insurance and will ensure students have an interesting observational experience at Hershey Hospital.

**Year 4C**

Up to 12 students per semester are able to complete their Year 4C specialty rotation at Monash Rural Health Mildura. Students spend 6 week rotations in Women’s Health, Children’s Health and Psychiatry, undertaking placements at Mildura Base Hospital.
While on placement, students will spend time in birth suites, theatres, clinics, in the emergency department and on the wards. Students are made to feel part of the team and are exposed to excellent teaching opportunities.

Tutorials are provided by experienced registrars and consultants and include a number of hands-on scenario-based workshops. Students take part in Women’s Health Interprofessional Learning Simulations (WHIPLS) and Obstetric and Neonatal Emergency Simulation (ONE-SIM), as well as a comprehensive weekly paediatric scenario program.

As mentioned in the above 3B segment, 4C students are also involved in weekly simulation scenarios with Sim-Man’s paediatric counterparts. These scenarios are largely centered around paediatric scenarios and tackle presentations surrounding neonatal resus and failure to thrive, allowing students to test and apply their knowledge in small teams.

Mock OSCEs are held at the end of the year and are useful in providing feedback on each student’s performance prior to the end of year assessments. Previous students have provided excellent feedback about their time in Mildura and have enjoyed the extra experiences available in a small group environment.

**Year 5D**

MRH Mildura offers Year 5D students core rotations in Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, General Surgery, and Aged Care, as well as offering SIPs. Speciality rotations can be offered according to students’ special interests and can include Psychiatry, Cardiology, Rural General Practice, Anaesthetics and Indigenous Health.

During Year 5D students will complete their MED 5103 Patient Safety and Preparedness for Practice: Workshop and Simulation Program whilst on rotation in Mildura. We pride ourselves in delivering not only core curriculum content but also offering additional sessions to reinforce content previously taught during Years 3B and 4C. Students will be given every opportunity to be well prepared for internship.
Monash Rural Health Gippsland comprises five clinical teaching sites located at Bairnsdale, Sale, Traralgon, Warragul and Leongatha, each of which is linked to key regional health services and hospitals, general practices and other community-based health centres.

Students can complete Year 3B at Sale, Traralgon or Warragul, spending a year on placement in one of the regional hospitals: Central Gippsland Hospital (CGH) in Sale; Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) in Traralgon; or with West Gippsland Healthcare Group (WGHG) in Warragul, where they are exposed to a wide range of adult medical and surgical presentations that link to the curriculum matrix.

In Year 4C students can spend a semester at one of these teaching hospitals (Sale, Traralgon and Warragul) to complete their hospital-based disciplines, Children’s and Women’s Health and Psychiatry; and a semester in general practice at an affiliated teaching general practice within the region. General practice placements are available in Central, East, South and West Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley.

In Year 5D students can complete all six rotations at each of our placement sites: Bairnsdale, Sale, Traralgon, Warragul and Wonthaggi. Scholarly intensive placements can be linked to key governance activities, providing a useful grounding in quality assurance to inform future practice, and include a clinical learning component.

Curriculum

Year 3B
The 3B curriculum in Gippsland focuses on the fundamentals of medicine and surgery. The timetable includes structured learning opportunities such as PBLs, and pharmacology tutorials, clinical skills sessions and specialist masterclasses with physicians and surgeons, and supported bedside tutorials as well as time for study and self-directed learning. Students are encouraged to spend as much time as possible on placement, developing, extending, and consolidating their clinical skills. Mega-teaching days provide opportunities for the whole cohort to come together at a single site and to network and establish and renew friendships.
Churchill

Year A, the first year of the four-year graduate entry medical program is delivered at Monash Rural Health Churchill. Churchill is nestled in the foothills of the picturesque Strzelecki Ranges. Monash Rural Health Churchill is co-located with the Gippsland campus of Federation University. Churchill is located in the Latrobe Valley and is an easy, approximately 2-hour, drive from Melbourne. Apart from being a great location to begin your medicine journey, there is an abundance of things to see and do when you need a well-earned break from study or to just chill out. Lifestyle is on your doorstep at Churchill! Just a short walk from the campus is a modern shopping complex, parks, hotel, leisure centre, golf club, and a lake stocked with fish for recreational fishing! Koalas, kangaroos, and echidnas are frequent visitors to the campus!

The campus is within easy driving distance to popular tourist destinations including gourmet deli trails, national parks, ski resorts, incredible beaches, and great bushwalking tracks. Nearby in Traralgon there is a vibrant arts and culture scene. In Churchill and Traralgon there are local sporting clubs and associations, and on campus there is Federation University Sport and Recreation. Federation University offers onsite accommodation. Monash students enjoy the best of both worlds, with complete library services offered through both Monash and Federation Universities.
Curriculum
The contemporary pre-clinical program in Year A is delivered by content experts, researchers and clinicians via innovative and immersive teaching sessions including clinical skills teaching and authentic ward simulation. The course develops through theme studies in personal and professional development, population, society, health and illness, scientific basis of clinical practice and clinical skills. The learning approach has an emphasis on clinical contextualisation, and there is a focus on rural medicine. Early in Year A students are exposed to the clinical environment through placements in regional hospitals. Professional development is further nurtured through non-clinical placements at community and health support agencies throughout Gippsland (Covid-dependent).

The campus is within easy driving distance to popular tourist destinations including gourmet deli trails, national parks, ski resorts, incredible beaches, and great bushwalking tracks. Nearby in Traralgon there is a vibrant arts and culture scene. In Churchill and Traralgon there are local sporting clubs and associations, and on campus there is Federation University Sport and Recreation. Federation University offers onsite accommodation. Monash students enjoy the best of both worlds, with complete library services offered through both Monash and Federation Universities.

Associate Professor Marianne Tare
Director, Monash Rural Health Churchill
Year 4C
The Year 4C program involves regional hospital rotations for the hospital-based semester and general practice community-based rotations for the rural practice semester. Dedicated discipline-based teaching is provided that complements the excellent hands-on learning opportunities offered by the hospital and general practice placements.

Year 5D
The Year 5D program supports students to further expand and develop their knowledge and skills within a pre-internship model allowing students to work as the junior members of their placement teams. Teaching focuses on developing competencies for practice and opportunities to learn with your peers and from experienced clinical educators are provided in the simulation-based learning facilities.

Accommodation
Clean and comfortable fully furnished 4-bedroom share houses are available for 3B and 4C students and located in close proximity to the hospitals or general practices. Students need only to supply their own linen and food. 1000GB of Wi-Fi per month is provided for each house. Accommodation is also available for Year 5D students near their placements.

Lifestyle
Gippsland is the south-east corner of Australia, and within the region there is something for everyone: history, beautiful scenery, good food, and interesting things to do, see, and try. Bairnsdale, Sale, Leongatha, Traralgon and Warragul are the towns where our sites are located and all boast the full range of dining, social, sporting, entertainment and community facilities e.g., sporting and cultural amenities. There are many award-winning wineries in close proximity to the towns and the region is renowned for its easy access to the snowfields, wilderness, rainforests and beaches. For more information visit:
https://www.visitvictoria.com/Regions/Gippsland/Destinations/Villages

Associate Professor Catherine Haigh
Director, Monash Rural Health Gippsland
**Accommodation**
Students at Mildura live in modern fully furnished housing. All houses are within close distance of MRH Mildura and the hospital. Secure off-street parking and wireless internet access is available at all houses. Everything is supplied, you only need to bring your own bed linen including towels and doonas.

**Lifestyle**
Students are supported by our Community and Student Support Officer (CSSO) whose role is to help the students settle into the community. The CSSO organises one-on-one interviews with students at the start of each rotation, and is available during staff hours to support the student body. Additionally, they can put you in touch with local sporting clubs, groups of interest and assist with part-time job opportunities. A network of local businesses provide discounts to students by ways of discount offers etc. so shopping local is an even better experience.

Student feedback about their experience at Mildura has been excellent. The standout feature of the Mildura experience is the small group size that means lots of hands-on clinical exposure, whichever year you are in. As a bonus, student results in assessments are also excellent.

Although Mildura is far from Melbourne and many students are initially worried about being so far from home, quite soon into their placement they have settled into the brilliant accommodation and have formed many enduring friendships and consider Mildura their home away from home.

**COVID-19 implications**
MRH Mildura has been very fortunate to have been able to maintain and offer clinical placements throughout the current COVID-19 pandemic for students. Since the outbreak began students have generally been offered ongoing placements in both Mildura Base Public Hospital and Mildura Health Private Hospital as well as community settings. Clinical Skills teaching and simulation training has also continued with COVID precautions in place.

We look forward to welcoming you to Mildura!

Associate Professor Fiona Wright
Director, Monash Rural Health Mildura
Year 3B Placements
Bendigo Health is a newly renovated hospital that provides a great hands-on clinical learning experience, with teaching by dedicated clinical educators, doctors, and other healthcare staff that will give you a fantastic learning experience in your foundational clinical year.

A large advantage of the Bendigo Clinical School is its blended program with the second-year medical students from Melbourne University, offering a fantastic opportunity to network and work together with students from another university. We also get access to Melbourne University resources, such as lecture slides and notes. While the program is blended and we benefit from this, both universities supplement the blended classes with their own curriculum specific classes to ensure all the relevant information is covered to help you succeed in your studies.

Teaching at Bendigo Clinical School takes place at two main locations: The Monash Rural Health Building (MRH), and Bendigo Health hospital (BH). Most of your lectures and tutorials will take place in the MRH, as well as clinical skills training in the highly equipped simulation labs, where all manner of procedures, from ECGs to cannulas can be practiced on mannequins. The MRH is also home to ‘The Good Loaf’ cafe, and the student lounge, which has a kitchen and everything you need to store and heat up your food, as well as plenty of space to spend time with friends.

Bendigo Hospital on the other hand is where you will be rotating through different teams, attending ward rounds, and interacting with patients, doing things such as taking histories, performing examinations, as well as procedures such as venepuncture.

The year starts off with a 3-week orientation. This is unique to Bendigo, as most hospitals have a shorter orientation, if any, however while you may feel that you are behind your friends who are going straight in and doing things in the hospital, it is actually a blessing in disguise. The orientation covers all the things that you need to learn to have a strong start in the hospital environment, refreshing your memory of key skills such as history taking, examinations, and vital signs, while also teaching new skills such as surgical gowning, venepuncture, and IV cannulation.
This orientation ensures that you are up to speed with your clinical skills and can begin your clinical years with confidence.

After orientation, it's right into clinical rotation. There are four rotations at Bendigo that run for 8 weeks each: Medicine, Specialty, Surgery, and Ambulatory. Within each rotation, you will alternate between different teams, spending 1-4 weeks per team. The highlight for many students is the specialty rotation, where you rotate through specialties such as Anaesthetics, Intensive Care Unit, Renal, Orthopaedics, and Emergency Department (ED). Another aspect of your hospital teaching are your ED and ward visits, run by clinical educators that can sign you off for procedural skills and other logbook items such as histories and examinations.

An average day at Bendigo depends on your clinical rotation, but typically your day starts between 7-9am with ward rounds, where you will engage with the treating team you are assigned to, after which depending on your rotation you may do things such as helping and observing the team as they go about their day, scrubbing into surgery on surgical rotations, or going to catheterisation lab on your cardiology rotation. Some rotations also have clinics that you can visit, which provides exposure to the outpatient elements of medicine rather than just inpatient hospital experience. Along with your time in the hospital, there are also lectures and other classes to attend, often from midday onwards, with our days often finishing from 2-6pm.

Aside from structured learning, there is also strong peer support from our lovely 5th year students. 3B students at Bendigo will be assigned a 5th year mentor, these mentors are amazing people who are often keen to run tutorials for the 3B students when they have time. Aside from these mentors, there will often be a 5th year on your team during your rotations, who will often take you under their wing and help you out where they can.
Accommodation and Lifestyle
There are varied options for accommodation in Bendigo. There is student accommodation available at Lister House, a popular choice for many students in Bendigo, as well as private accommodation for those that want it. Lister House is walking distance from the main streets of Bendigo, a 15-minute walk to the Bendigo train station, and about a 20-minute walk from Bendigo Hospital.

It is situated next to the Sacred Heart Cathedral, and there are two buildings, New and Old Lister, which house the 5D and 3B students, respectively. Rooms in Old Lister are quite simple, having a single bed, a desk, an armchair, and a wardrobe and cupboard space. They are quite cosy, with great heating and air conditioning that you can run whenever you like.

There are communal kitchens, laundry, bathroom, and showers. Each floor of Lister has 4 showers and 4 toilets (shared between maximum 10 people depending on time of year, and each kitchen is shared between 6-8 people, with assigned fridges for storage. There is also a communal room with a ping-pong table and a TV, where people can hang out and make friends, as well as a study room for OSCE practice. All communal areas are cleaned regularly. Being so close to Bendigo CBD, Lister is very close to all your necessities, with Woollies, Coles, and Aldi being within a 5-minute drive. There are also lots of nice restaurants and eateries nearby, such as Harpoon Social Club, Oya’s, Okami, and the Beechworth Bakery.
Snap fitness is also a 5-minute drive away, and Anytime Fitness is not too far away either. There are also options for other exercises, such as yoga and Pilates.

Nearby, there are also plenty of nice places to exercise, such as Lake Weeroona, and parks such as Rosalind Park which is wonderful to walk through. There are also plenty of options for social sport, being in a regional hub.

One of the great things about Bendigo is that while it has lots of things to do, having a car isn’t always necessary (although it helps, especially getting to hospital quickly for rounds). If you’re planning to drive, parking must also be considered, as free all-day parking can be hard to come by near the hospital. Luckily, most places are within walking distance, and walking from Lister to the hospital takes about 20 minutes. Another popular mode of transport is cycling, which takes 5-10 minutes (there is also dedicated bike storage for students), and I’ve even seen a student rollerblade to hospital, so it’s flexible and you can do whatever suits.
Extracurriculars

All students at Bendigo Clinical School will have the option to volunteer with the Smith Family, where they can tutor students from disadvantaged schools in the area. This takes place on a Tuesday afternoon, and there are plenty of snacks provided. It’s a great volunteering opportunity that the university helps connect you with if you’re interested.

There are also opportunities with Wildfire, the Monash Indigenous and Rural Education club. Activities that you can get involved with from Wildfire include the trivia night, barbeques, fundraisers, and yearly Bendigo ball.

For students at Lister house, 4 students can apply to be Residential Advisors (RAs), these RAs help the accommodation team with management of Lister house, and get a bigger room, with a bigger bed, as well as cheaper rent, in exchange for the work they do. Many students work casual jobs throughout the semester, this is common and definitely doable. It helps if the work has flexible timings, as the study schedule can be quite busy at times.

For sport and recreation, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved, with a range of social sports including netball, basketball, and tennis to be a part of. There is also the possibility to be involved in the Bendigo Theatre Company, as well as the Bendigo Symphony Orchestra if you’re interested.
Things to do

Get out into the city and explore! There are plenty of hidden gems in Bendigo, from thrift shops that you can only really find by exploring, to great restaurants like Harpoon, Oya’s, Harvest, and Ghosty Toasty. If you enjoy nature, have a look around Rosalind Park and Lake Weeroona. Another must see is the Golden Dragon Museum.

For arts lovers, there is the Bendigo Art Gallery, which is an amazing experience to visit, it also often has exhibitions running that are great to visit if you have the time.

While Bendigo may be a regional town, there is still a nightlife scene. Have a look at Handle Bar and Tonic Bar for a good night out, and The Rifle (5 minute walk from Lister), and The Dispensary for something a bit more chill.

For recreation, there are many places to go, but some of the ones that are popular are the Faith Leech Aquatic Centre, tennis courts at the Bendigo Tennis Association, Queen Victoria Oval, Rosalind Park, and Lake Weeroona for exercise.

All-in-all, Bendigo is a great place to spend your first clinical year. It’s in a regional centre with lots of things to do, and the education is top notch. I definitely recommend considering coming here for 3B!
Mildura

Curriculum
Placement up in Mildura involves 3-4 half days a week, attending placement in the morning and then with classes in the afternoons. The general medicine and general surgery placements up here are fantastic – the niche specialties are not available in Mildura, which means that these general specialties manage a wide variety of patients and conditions (perfect for those R1 matrix conditions). There is also an orthopaedics team, where you’ll be able to get involved in fracture clinic – great for learning how to assess and present orthopaedics cases.

You spend 4-6 weeks on each placement, which is a great opportunity to become one of the team and get plenty of teaching opportunities and plenty of opportunities to practice hands-on skills. In Mildura there’s also an ED and GP placement on offer, which are fantastic to get a glimpse into 4th and 5th year. There is the opportunity to undertake placements with some of the specialists up here, including anaesthetics, cardiology, rheumatology, endocrinology, renal and indigenous health placements.

With the exception of ethics, pathology, and EBM, all of the classes up in Mildura are run in person. Most of the teaching is done by local GPs who are fantastic at teaching the content as well as the real-world applications of it.

The clinical school also has two nurse educators who teach procedural skills, as well as being lucky enough to have a dedicated procedural skills practice room, as well as SimMan. SimMan is used in emergency simulations where you get to put what you’ve learned into a simulation with other students (no patients harmed) – probably the most exciting class, and the best practice of an emergency scenario you’ll get as a 3B student. Visiting specialists also take classes, including classes in endocrinology and ophthalmology. Because of the small class size, the classes are a very inclusive environment where everyone can chip in.
There are PBLs (similar to year 2 ICLs) on each of the core matrix conditions, and there is dedicated surgical teaching once a fortnight. Ultimately, although missing out on some of the specialist teaching, the classes in Mildura are perfect for what is needed at the 3B level, with the focus on real-world skills rather than niche content making Mildura arguably (argued by me) one of the best 3B sites.

**Transport**
Driving is the easiest way to get to and from Mildura, as flights will set you back at least $150 each way. The drive is pretty nice, even though it is 6 hours, and there’s heaps to see and do on the way – pink lakes, silo art and the world’s smallest mountain are just some of the highlights. Alternatively, there’s an overnight coach or coach and train if you want to sleep the whole way. Once you get into Mildura, public transport is very limited, but everything is within a 5-10 minute drive. If you’ve got a bike, definitely bring that with you as this opens up the city, and there’s nice trail rides along the river – just don’t forget heavy duty tubes. Depending on which house you’re allocated, it’s also possible to walk everywhere.

**Accommodation**
Accommodation in Mildura is in 3-4 bedroom sharehouses. All of the houses are modern and fully furnished, and have central heating/cooling – a bliss, as Mildura can get very hot in the summer, and very cold on winter nights. The houses in the south end of town are close to walking trails along a wetland, and the ones closer into town are walking distance from the river. It’s about a 5 min drive / 10 min cycle from each of the houses to the hospital and clinical school, and pretty much everything else in Mildura is within a 10 minute drive.

**Things To Do**
Mildura’s isolation is its biggest weakness, but also a strength. Yes, it’s 600km from Melbourne, but this means that everything you need is right here. The tyranny of distance means that most people choose to stay in Mildura each weekend, and there’s heaps to explore – cafes, restaurants, wineries, bars, walking trails, markets and the list goes on. Perry Sandhills and Mungo National Park are fantastic to check out, and Mildura is close enough to have a cheeky road trip to Adelaide, the Barossa Valley, or Broken Hill for the weekend. One of the ways to make the most out of your time up in Mildura is to join a community sporting group, with options such as parkrun, footy, netball, soccer, and hockey.
There’s a couple of golf courses and heaps of different gyms, as well as numerous volunteering organisations such as St John’s Ambulance. There are also markets on every second weekend down by the river, and once a month in nearby Red Cliffs.

The cafes and restaurants in Mildura have heaps of options for brunch and dinner, ranging from straight out of Melbourne to cute little shipping containers beside the river. You’ll soon be very familiar with Nash Lane, arguably the best coffee in town.

There are heaps of restaurants, with Andy’s Kitchen and Seoul Chicken being some of the favourites, as well as the recently opened 400 Gradi. In terms of nightlife, there’s plenty of bars, with the cocktail bar Sip and Fossey’s gin distillery being well visited (by both us and the doctors), and the infamous Heaven nightclub.

All in all, if you’re up for an adventure and are ok with living away from home, Mildura is a fantastic place to undertake your first clinical year. Everyone is super supportive, and if you come with an open mind and are comfortable being out of your comfort zone, you’ll be able to make the most of your placement here.

Mitch Roberts
Year 3b
Sale

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 9-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 in 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 not have been possible in larger teams.

Under the guidance of medical staff, we were able to regularly perform procedures including the insertion of cannulas and catheters, intubating patients, giving injections, and writing patient notes. There are only ten 3B students in Sale and consequently there were lots of 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, passionate, worked to provide 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 for 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 in 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 often joined our friends for dinner if we had late classes.

All the Monash accommodation in Sale is less than a five-minute drive to the hospital. The 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 and even quicker bike ride to the hospital meaning that and you can wake up 30 minutes before ward rounds start and still make it with plenty of time. The surrounding shops are also in 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, simply 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.

If you enjoy beautiful outdoor walks Sale is the place for you. 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 sun set 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. Mount Bawbaw and Mount Hotham are close enough to allow an easy weekend away at the snow.

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 would highly recommend visiting the modern, spacious Sale Library with views overlooking the Port of Sale. Other fun things to do include watching a movie at the local cinema; entering into 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…

Toni-Ann Black  
Year 3B
Undertaking 3B at LaTrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) is quite possibly one of the best decisions I have ever made, and it is easy to see why. From the fantastic support that staff offer, to the numerous clinical opportunities on offer, I’d definitely recommend it to all!

Curriculum
The students at LRH experience three-week block rotations of different specialities, anything from general medicine to aesthetics, orthopaedic surgery, emergency, critical care and many more. This system allows students to be exposed to a variety of specialties over a short period of time. With only 24 3B students, the ratio of students to patients/consultants and registrars is incredible, allowing students to get the most out of their clinical placement. Whether that is scrubbing in to assist in surgery, suturing in ED, or IV cannulas in aesthetics, there is no shortage of clinical opportunities. There is a large emphasis on teaching at LRH, with everyone from the consultants down to the interns being extremely keen to teach and support your learning.

The faculty provides lectures from specialist clinicians throughout the year to cover numerous conditions and interesting topics. Students also get the opportunity to work in small groups with a consultant to see real patients on the wards and receive clinical feedback regarding history taking and examinations. The faculty also holds a few practice OSCE days to help students prepare for end of year exams.
Accommodation
Monash University guarantees accommodation for all rurally-placed students at a significantly discounted rate in comparison to the Melbourne rental market. Each four bedroom house comes furnished with all the essentials (beds, kitchen appliances, washing machine etc.), and friendship groups of 2 or 4 are taken into consideration when assigning students (but are not guaranteed). Rent is paid monthly directly to the university, and includes all utilities and internet, so no need to deal with a real estate agent or organise your own WiFi. All houses are within a 10-15 minute drive to the hospital and city centre. Driving/having a car is highly recommended but not necessary; public transport, riding a bike and other friendly 3B students are more than enough to get you where you need to be.

Monash supportive accommodation is not mandatory, and the option exists for students to arrange their own accommodation in Traralgon. This option is perfect for those who have pets or want more selection in where they want to live. With an accessible first-time renting market, there is something for everyone.

Share-housing with peers has played a pivotal role in what’s made the Traralgon experience so special this year - I’d highly recommend it to all who are interested!

Things to do
Although Traralgon is located two hours from Melbourne, it is the central hub for all of the Gippsland region. With fabulous restaurants such as the best Thai food in all of Gippsland at Zaab Zaab (a must try), Asian fusion at the Little Prince, and all-you-can-eat Japanese at Okami (a cohort favourite), there is no shortage of good food. Finding decent coffee is not a problem either for all you Melbournites - House of Frank, Story Sixty-One and Food and Co are all great spots, and the brunch is pretty decent too.

There is a quaint farmer’s market on the 3rd Saturday of each month that has a variety of locally sourced fresh produce and goods. A great community park run is held weekly on Saturday mornings for keen joggers of any calibre, with around 150 people attending almost every week.

For any budding gym junkies, the new aquatic centre is perfect with a 50 metre pool, steam room, sauna, full gym facilities and fitness classes, with flexible and affordable student contracts.

If you are looking to unwind after a long day on the wards, weekly trivia at House of Frank is a rite of passage for 3B students, and barefoot bowls is a great way to spend a summer afternoon.
Day trips up to Tarra Bulga National Park, Toorongo Falls and the 19th century gold mining town Walhalla are a great way to relax over the weekend.

For those with regular commitments in Melbourne, the drive to and from Traralgon is beautiful and scenic, alternatively a V-Line service is available that runs regularly (almost every hour) and is approximately the same time as travelling via car.
Welcome to Warragul! With a tight knit 3B cohort of 8 students at Warragul it provides many advantages such as being able to get know all your peers and support each other throughout the year. Moreover, the small number of students at Warragul provides more opportunities than other hospitals to interact with consultant doctors, patients and be a more important aspect of the medical team. We are also accompanied by small team of friendly and supportive staff who will ensure all aspects of your first clinical year run smoothly. The hospital at Warragul, West Gippsland Hospital, has a great hospital environment with dedicated doctors and healthcare staff that are friendly and are always keen to teach medical students.

Curriculum
During the year, students rotate through several different disciplines including surgery, general medicine, theatre, Emergency Department, endoscopy, oncology, radiology, and haemodialysis. Unlike most metro placements which have more specific medical rotations, Warragul have more ward rounds allocated to general medicine or surgery.

This is great as you get continual exposure to common patient presentations which are often high yield year 3B knowledge. Typically, placements are three half days each week, with classes scheduled most afternoons. In addition, due to the small number of students at Warragul, there are lots of opportunities to improve your hands-on clinical skills. If you can get to know the medical team such as the doctors, interns, or nurses, you can very easily tick off the required skills that must be completed for the year (e.g., history taking, examinations, cannulations, catheterization).
At Warragul, you are also given the opportunity to visit the surgical consulting suites where you can sit in with the surgeon’s consults with patients. The surgeons will often allow students who are keen to scrub in after being with them in the clinic. Also, there is an allocated day in which students get to attend a spirometry clinic in Drouin, where they are taught the fundamentals of spirometry tests by a respiratory specialist. Mondays are reserved solely for teaching where we start the morning with PBL tutorials taught by a medical doctor. The PBL tutorials are a student-led process where each student gives a presentation on a specific allocated topic which allows further understanding of the patient case. These tutorials are very useful as they encourage self-directed learning as you create your presentation. During these tutorials you are also tested on your current knowledge with a weekly quiz and sometimes the class will go over end-of-year exam style questions which are very helpful for exam revision.

During the year you will also get to know your Clinical Skills Educator well as you are continuously taught each clinical skill in the labs. There are allocated sessions with the Clinical Skills Educator where a specific clinical skill is taught, and this skill must be performed and signed off as competent by the educator before practicing on real patients. Moreover, students are welcome and encouraged to visit the lab to practice their clinical skills. In this way, it allows all students to have confidence with their skills before performing certain skills on patients in hospital.

Warragul also includes an allocated day with a nurse which allows for amazing hands-on experience as well as gaining a greater understanding of the daily tasks of a nurse. Another valuable experience includes the simulation model lab. Here, students have classes with a medical doctor and are trained to respond to emergency situations. There is also a full day of classes in Traralgon around once every month. Lastly, you can also arrange some tutorials to be run by the friendly final year students who can teach you high yield concepts and OSCEs sessions in preparation for the end of the year exams.

**Accommodation**
Most students at Warragul commuted, however there were a few students who elected to live in the Monash rentals located in various locations throughout the town.
These rentals are fully furnished 3- or 4-bedroom houses which are subsidised by university and are around $110 per week with all utilities included.
The houses are relatively modern and equipped with furniture and required appliances. The rentals are around 6 minutes’ drive to hospital. You can also choose to preference your friends if you are planning on living together. Also, maintenance, gardening and inspections are all organised by university which leaves little work for house maintenance. There are also options to rent privately in Warragul or other nearby towns, however it would be slightly more expensive (around $300-$400 per week in addition to bills).

**Things To Do**

Whilst Warragul is a relatively small town compared to other options for 3B students, there is plenty to see and do. Warragul is a town with many activities to offer. There are local country sports teams including swimming, football, basketball, netball etc. There are great sports facilities with tennis courts, ovals, swimming pools and multiple gyms. Warragul is also in a great location if you are up for some adventures outdoors as with a quick trip you can find yourself skiing at Mt Baw Baw, hiking at Wilsons Promontory, or drinking at the wineries at Gippsland. Additionally, there is some great food and spots to eat out at Warragul. There are plenty of cafes to try out including Main Street Café, Frankies and Shed 21.

If you’re looking for dinner, some student favourites include The Courthouse, Siam Pesto, Portelli’s or Royal Kebabs 88. There is also the Warragul Farmer’s Market at Civic Park which is held on the third Saturday of every month. Here, there is entertainment such as live music, food trucks, arts and crafts and fresh fruit and vegetables.

Overall, Warragul is a great choice for your foundation clinical year due to the small cohort size, greater involvement within the hospital and top-quality food and places to explore.

Maheesha Gamage

*Year 3B*
Bendigo

Bendigo is a fantastic place to complete your speciality rotations in year 4C, providing a great clinical experience inside the vibrant and modern hospital, as well as plenty of exciting places to explore in and around the regional city. With 724 beds, it is the largest regional hospital in Victoria, meaning you will have no trouble meeting all your logbook requirements. 4C in Bendigo features small rotation sizes and small group classes, providing the perfect base for delving into the mysterious and fascinating worlds of psychiatry, obstetrics & gynaecology and paediatrics.

Rotations

Women’s Health/Obstetrics & Gynaecology:
Bendigo provides a great and diverse experience for your O+G rotation. Unlike other hospitals in which you may have to compete with other students to watch births and do procedures, you will have plenty of dedicated time in wards, births and clinics, where you will get to witness the miracle of childbirth, complete speculums and CST examinations, and be first assist in c-sections and gynaecological procedures in theatre. Bendigo also offers the unique opportunity for a mentor week, in which you will be on call with an Obstetrician for a week, and may get to travel to other locations such as Castlemaine or Echuca for a true taste of life as a rural doctor. You’ll also get bought plenty of delicious coffees from the hospital’s many cafes, making those early mornings well worth it. Women’s health classes run weekly throughout semester on Thursday afternoons, which cover all major matrix conditions as taught by highly experienced clinicians.
**Paediatrics:**
Paediatrics in Bendigo is delivered through a blend of wards, clinics, community placements, bedside tutorials, case discussions and simulation sessions. Highlights include the special care nursery for neonates, a day at the Bendigo Special Development School, as well as a weekly student-run paediatric clinic under the supervision of the lovely Drs Anna and Joel, which provides a great chance to practice your clinical judgement and communication skills. You will get the opportunity to admit patients in the ED, and practice minor procedures like cannulation on the wards, as well as learn how to hold, feed and change babies! You will also get to attend specialist clinics in topics such as paediatric diabetes and MSK clinics, helping to solidify your learning. Paediatrics teaching is completed whilst on the rotation through a combination of small group discussions, simulation sessions and radiology tutorials.

**Psychiatry:**
Psychiatry at Bendigo is a varied and fascinating rotation, in which you’ll hear eye-opening stories and gain a deeper understanding of the issues affecting those living in regional areas from a psychological perspective. Your weeks will be as varied as the patients that you’ll see on the wards – each day you’ll be rostered to something different. You’ll spend a lot of your time in the Acute Adult Unit, seeing patients experiencing psychosis, mania, depression or aggression, and learn about major conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. The Older Persons Acute Unit provides the opportunity to learn about conditions like delirium and dementia, while the Extended Care Unit is home to patients with long-term ongoing admissions. Community placement is also an extremely valuable part of this rotation, enabling students to understand the step up/step down approach to psychiatry through placements at rehabilitation centres, youth facilities and headspace clinics.
If you’re interested in the ethical and legal side of medicine, this rotation provides the opportunity to attend tribunals and family meetings as well. Classes run weekly on Mondays throughout the semester as well as throughout your rotation.

**Accommodation & Lifestyle**

Bendigo arguably has the best accommodation around for 4C students. You will live in newly built, double story 3-bedroom townhouses located within close proximity to one another, making it easy to coordinate events with your fellow students. The beautiful Lake Weeroona is a short walk away, which is the perfect place for a picnic or run at sunset, and the hospital is a 5 minute drive from the houses.

The city is home to multiple award-winning restaurants, and as a major regional tourist hub you will have no shortage of things to do. Bendigo is a city of arts and culture, home to museums, galleries and attractions such as a talking tourist tram, the Golden Dragon Chinese Museum, Bendigo Art Gallery, and the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion (an impressively large Buddhist temple), and the Central Deborah Gold Mine. The beautiful Rosalind Park is home to a fantastic Poppet head lookout which pays homage to the town’s rich gold mining history.

Previous students have enjoyed dining out for brunches and dinners at the variety of restaurants and cafes that populate the town. Favourites include Okami, an all you can eat Japanese restaurant, The Boardwalk, a brunch café with beautiful views of Lake Weeroona, and Borchelli Italian which feels like it’s straight out of Lygon Street, Melbourne. The city also has great nightlife, with a variety of bars and clubs scattered around the main streets.

Anita Date
Year 4C
A rotation far from Melbourne can be daunting for some, but many students considered this one of the best rotations of medicine to date. Certainly, one of the best reasons for going to Mildura is the Monash team and clinicians assigned to teaching, as well as the access to clinical skills resources. Its size can sometimes limit the number of paediatric and psychiatric presentations seen compared to other locations, however, these are compensated for by the teaching available.

Mildura fosters a close cohort, including with the 3B and 5D students, and will likely also include social activities with the clinical teams as well. Of course, as with any rotation, the people in your cohort and the medical teams are the most likely factors that will influence the enjoyment of the rotation so potentially there is an element of luck here.

Given its distance, Mildura also provided some insight in demonstrating the challenges in deciding when to transport patients by road or air and considering the availability of healthcare resources for its surrounding regions in doing so.

**Curriculum**

All psychiatry, children’s and women’s health teaching is taught concurrently throughout the semester.

Psychiatry consisted of weekly 2-hour afternoon classes with Dr Pham. He is very enthusiastic and focused on understanding and distinguishing key principles in psychiatry. These were very enjoyable and thought-provoking classes.

Children’s health had one full day per week of classes. Mornings consisted of academic teaching on approaches to various presentations, largely focused on the matrix. Afternoons consisted of simulated sessions using MRH Mildura’s significant clinical skills area and were a highlight of Mildura.
These sessions were a great opportunity to practice responding to simulated paediatric emergency presentations; learning how to work as a clinical team constructing differentials and management plans with fellow students; and explaining diagnoses to simulated parents.

Women’s health had 2 hour classes one afternoon per week, in addition to two longer sessions focused on clinical skills and obstetric emergencies. There was a good amount of repetition throughout the semester to help you remember different topics, and focus was placed on explaining the logic of each conducting each test or intervention.

**Things to do**
Mildura is a large town surrounded by vineyards with a selection of high-quality restaurants, wineries and bars/pubs. Located on the Murray, there are tracks available for walking and bike riding. Summer is hot, but there is a swimming pool (indoor and outdoor). Some of this cohort were involved in AFL and theatre groups. Staff at MRH were also very keen to find out and put people in touch with local groups with specific interests. I would strongly advise getting to know the Nash Lane café staff to make coffee and brunch stops a good time.
There are some opportunities for day trips outside of Mildura, such as the Perry sandhills, Mungo National Park and Menindee.
Placement

The structure of all rotations evolved during placement with ongoing feedback from students and doctors from the hospital. Rest assured the Monash team are extremely supportive, flexible and interested in students having the best experience they can, and regularly check how the rotations are going. There is one paediatric team, so the whole 6-weeks is spent with the same doctors. How the team operates would likely vary the student experience, and it could be ‘feast or famine’ depending on the day for what presentations could be seen. My experience was that two students were allocated to morning rounds which saw inpatients, special care nursery and any ED presentations from overnight. One would take an evening placement to increase the likelihood of seeing ED presentations. The fourth would be in clinic, either with registrars or consultants. Each student would rotate. There were ample opportunities for baby-checks, however, completing the logbook could be a challenge at times and did require starting early and jumping on every opportunity.

Women’s health similarly divided four students between maternity ward, birthing suites and clinic. Mildura has four birthing suites. Although it could be challenging at times to complete logbook hours given that midwifery students are also on placement. Evenings and weekends are most likely required to maximise chances of seeing births, so it is a busy rotation. Psychiatry involved one student following one registrar or consultant each week, covering the acute inpatient unit, community psychiatry, and consultant-liason psychiatry. There was ample opportunity to practice MSEs and Dr Pham and registrar Maddi were fantastic for making the rotation interesting and enjoyable. Find a case for the psychiatric written case report early, but otherwise the logbook is very manageable for this rotation.

Accommodation

4C accommodation consists of 3 houses with 4 students in each. Each included one queen room with an ensuite, and three singles with a shared bathroom. All are located within 2.5km of the hospital, hence possible to ride to the hospital, though I would strongly recommend a car, given the heat. Cars are also needed to access the main town and supermarket. Mildura is a case of everything being close within a 5-15 minute drive, which could also be an hour’s walk. 3B and 5D houses are also scattered around. Taxis are available but can be an expensive option (~$25 for the 10 mins into town).
Sale

Sale is a regional city situated 200km south-east of Melbourne and is Gippsland’s first city (as it proudly mentions on the road sign into town!)

Curriculum
As with all 4th year rural sites, you will spend 18 weeks on your specialty rotations; paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, and psychiatry, each lasting six weeks. Of the three specialties, you will undergo paediatrics and obstetrics and gynaecology at Sale Hospital and you will move to LaTrobe Regional Hospital in Traralgon for your psychiatry rotation.

At Sale Hospital, the paediatrics and obstetrics and gynaecology teams share a ward so you will get to know the medical team but also everyone else on the team very well! Your time on paediatrics will consist of a week on the wards and then a week at the clinic and then repeat. Each experience offers a totally different set of patients. When on the ward you will be mostly following the HMO as they do their jobs. The vast majority of patients on the ward are neonates which leaves plenty of opportunities to do baby checks. And who knows what else might come up to the ward so you might get lucky and see something interesting (or unlucky if you look at it from the patient’s perspective!) Time in the clinic will be spent sitting in with the consultants as they consult on a wide range of general paediatric patients, ranging from eczema to ADHD.
Obstetrics and gynaecology is a busy rotation as you rotate through theatre, the ward/birth suite and clinics both private and public. You get plenty of exposure to the antenatal care process and the consultants are really happy to have you scrubbed in to assist in theatre if that’s your thing!

Psychiatry is conducted with the rest of the specialty students in the Gippsland region at LaTrobe Regional Hospital at Traralgon. Don’t worry about the travel - you can choose to stay at Traralgon for this rotation if you would like. Whilst there, you will rotate through a mixture of inpatient acute and aged psychiatry and outpatient clinics where you will have plenty of practice doing MSEs!

The staff are also lovely and are all super welcoming. Prue is also an amazing academic coordinator and is more than happy to hear you out and help out if things aren’t going how you might like it to!

**Accommodation**

Whilst in Sale, you are offered to stay in fully-furnished housing provided by Monash University. These are all placed within a reasonable walking distance from the hospital. The local shopping centre is a little further for some though so a car or a friend with a car is definitely useful! There’s a Woolworths, Coles and an Aldi so you should be set for at least your basics! A special shout-out as well to Fiona who is great and is willing to help out at a moment’s notice if there is anything wrong with your house!

**Things to do**

Sale is a quiet rural town but there is plenty to do if you go looking for it! If nature is your thing, there are two lakes and a botanical garden in Sale that are very close-by to the houses and great places to exercise or just to relax! A little further out, the Sale wetlands are also beautiful! It is still a wetlands area though so watch out for any flooding! If you’re willing to go out a bit further the Blue Pool in Briagolong is a 40-minute drive from Sale and is beautiful and a bit of a local secret! There’s also the Tarra Bulga National Park and 90-mile beach if that peaks your fancy.
Don’t fret if you base your personality on brunching in Melbourne because there are some wonderful cafés in Sale too! Hunting Ground and Mister Raymond are both lovely if coffee and poached eggs are for you! There are other dining options too such as Santos’ fried chicken, Portside, the Star Hotel or the Criterion for whatever you’re in the mood for. Every Thursday night, the Star Hotel also does some trivia if that’s up your alley!

For some exercise after all that eating, there are a number of gyms around Sale that offer differing membership fees. If you want to go swimming, there is also a pool right next to the hospital!

If you come to Sale, I hope you enjoy it! The staff here are absolutely lovely and I’m sure they will welcome you with open arms. If you have any questions about Sale, please do get in touch with me!

Kevin Cheung
Traralgon

Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) is situated just under two hours from Melbourne and is always a popular and well-liked placement for students. It is a major teaching hospital for the region with medical services including elective surgery, emergency care, aged care, obstetrics, mental health, pharmacy, rehabilitation, and medical and radiation oncology. Despite the regional location, LRH services most of Gippsland as the 'last stop' for regional patients before heading metro, so don't be naive in thinking you'll only see one thing all day. This placement allows the opportunity to see cases which are more rare, but also appreciate the decision making and services involved in transferring people out when cases are not manageable. Hospital staff are keen for students to be on placement and showing eagerness early on will reap rewards.

Traralgon has a close-knit cohort consisting of 6-7 year 4C students, meaning you'll get to know each other really well. There are plenty of opportunities to socialise with the year 3Bs (usually 24 of them) and rotating 5Ds. Monash staff were always receptive to our feedback during each rotation, making changes to the way the program was delivered throughout the three block rotations.

Curriculum
All specialties excluding GP are run concurrently throughout the semester in three six-week blocks. Classes for each rotation run for a half day once a week with students from Warragul and Sale, mostly on zoom. However, staff are pushing for classes to be held face-to-face at Traralgon more often.

Women's Health teaching was scheduled on a Wednesday afternoon, mostly based around case discussions. Two classes were face-to-face to go over clinical skills using the simulation labs, covering basic examinations to obstetric emergencies. Co-Discipline lead Deidre sends out weekly reminders of what we should aim to have done, and was always available for us to contact with questions or concerns.
Children's Health teaching was scheduled on a Wednesday. The morning was normally split into two halves, with the first being a group case discussion and the second a more directed lecture style teaching session, usually from a pediatrician local to Warragul, Traralgon or Sale. The content changed between rotations so not everyone experienced the same content, but this was not a hindrance to our overall learning.

Psychiatry teaching was scheduled on a Friday morning with a mix of face to face and zoom sessions. With content being lecture style delivery, the information was relevant to clinical skills and the major assignment for the rotation.

**Placement**

Students are expected to be on placement four days a week, with different activities scheduled for each student. There are usually 2-3 students on each rotation, and these are split between time on the wards and consulting/community clinics, so you are often on your own, which means all the opportunities are offered to you!

Women's Health was split equally between ward/birth suite, theatre, and consulting clinics. LRH has four birth suites and one operating theatre dedicated to OBGYN cases, with plenty of opportunities to scrub in and be involved. Notably, male students struggled more to observe births, however I assume this is not a Traralgon specific problem. Despite its regional location, LRH allows exposure to most conditions on the matrix particularly as it is the last major hospital for the Gippsland region.
There is also one night shift allocated to this rotation, but if there's not much going on that night (i.e. no one admitted) hospital staff are nice and let you go home a bit earlier.

Children's Health was divided between the paediatric ward, nursery, ED and consulting clinics. There is plenty of opportunity for hands-on examinations of children aged from newborns to adolescents, and ED is often very busy with paediatric presentations.

The consulting clinics are less hands-on, and often quite repetitive with a lot of developmental and behavioural cases, but nonetheless if you let your consultant know (Reji Thomas is amazing!) you are keen, then your day won't be entirely observational.

Psychiatry is a very mixed bag in terms of placement location, with students rotating through community care (child, adult and aged), acute in-patient ward (adult and aged) and clinical liaison (lots of trips to ED). It is probably one of the most difficult rotations to get through with a lot of community placements. Whilst there are case managers present, home visits are really dependent on the client, and the centre doesn't have wifi so you can expect a day of studying off your own data. The acute in-patient ward and clinical liaison weeks are the highest yield with the opportunity to be as involved as you'd like with interviewing patients.

**Accommodation**

Houses are mostly in Traralgon, with one in Morwell. They are all reasonably spacious and within 5-10 minutes of the hospital. You will live with other year 4Cs at the hospital, as well as 1-2 students doing their GP placement in the Latrobe Valley region.

Public transport is not great around the area, so having a car would be beneficial, particularly as your placement schedule is different to your ward buddy, which makes carpooling difficult.
Things to do/lifestyle

Traralgon has many activities to entertain your weekend! It boasts an abundance of brunch cafes (Food Co. On Franklin is a favourite!), including a volunteer run not-for-profit cat cafe (Grounded Paws Cat Cafe) which makes an excellent hot chocolate. Once a month there is a Farmer’s Market which sees plenty of fresh produce available as well as lots of yummy lunch options (and plenty of dogs to pat!). From Victory Park to Tara Bulga National Park, there are plenty of places for hiking, bike riding or just having a simple picnic around some glorious waterfalls. If you're lucky to be around on a warm summer’s day, check out Inverloch for a day at the beach or make the extra drive to Wilson's Promontory and climb Mount Oberon and take in the spectacular views.

Rachel Sultana
Year 4C
Curriculum & Placement
In Warragal, our placements are done at the West Gippsland Hospital (WGHG) and there are two students on each rotation together so you have a buddy to go through it all with! All speciality rotations in rural are 6 weeks long!

O&G (Women’s Health)
Placement: On placement, you get to rotate around birth suite, theatre and both antenatal and gynaecology clinics. As a student, you get given many opportunities and there is always lots to do and see! I was even given the opportunity to first assist in few caesareans and there’s always a chance to scrub in and assist in procedures! It is a busy, full-on rotation but is heaps of fun and you learn heaps on the job!

Teaching: Teaching is done on Wednesdays. This year, there were two in person clinical skills tutorials at Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) in Traralgon which is about a 45 minute drive down the freeway from Warragul. The other weeks were all on zoom for us. We get a variety of content with case discussions, presentations and OSCEs.

Children’s Health
Placement: In this rotation, students get to go to ward rounds every morning as well as the opportunity to attend the paediatric clinics! We are very involved in ward rounds and learn lots of skills on the job by doing things such as writing notes, history & examination, new-born baby checks and presenting back (handover). You see paediatric patients admitted to the ward and ED as well as neonates in the postnatal ward and special care nursery. Clinic is also a lot of fun!

Teaching: Teaching is on Wednesdays in paediatrics. Similar to Women’s, there are a few weeks of tutorials at LRH and other weeks on zoom. The tutorials mainly consist of case discussions and working through high yield presentations.
Psychiatry
Placement: For this rotation, approximately 4 out of the 6 weeks is held at LRH which has a psychiatric ward. The other weeks you get to do community placements in Warragul. At LRH, you are given the opportunity to join the consultation liaison team, geriatric psychiatric team as well as the main inpatient ward with both adult and paediatric patients.

Teaching: This was done on Fridays, again with a mix of zoom and in person teaching at LRH.

Accommodation & Lifestyle
In Warragul, Monash offers subsidised accommodation. There are a few houses here, all of which I have seen/heard are comfortable to live in. As there are quite a few students here and you live with other medical students, I found that we got the opportunity to socialise, have fun and build close bonds with fellow students! There is heaps to do around Warragul with lots of nature to discover. There are also great restaurants, cafes and convenient stores in the town. Plus, it is quite close to metropolitan Melbourne with Clayton only being about an hour drive from here.

Right up the street from the hospital, there is also the big new Monash Rural Health building which has many tutorial rooms and a nice lounge/kitchen with accessibility 24/7! It is a great spot to relax and study.

My experience:
I loved my experience in Warragul. Every rotation I truly felt I was a part of the team I was with and was given so many opportunities. I know that this can sound a bit daunting (I was quite nervous about this coming from 3B) but it has helped me so much to not only learn and develop my skills but also given me much more confidence to push myself and give things a go. I have no doubt that if you come to Warragul, you will thrive!

Bianca Premanand
Year 4C
Year 4C GP placements
Goldfields

Curriculum:
In Goldfields, students attend two days per week in their GP clinic and have one hub day (usually on Wednesday) at Castlemaine Hospital. On the hub days local GPs give lectures covering many of the big GP topics, as well as Women’s and Children’s health conditions. Most weeks the hub days also include a Women’s or Children’s health case discussion, for which students will have to prepare a presentation about their assigned topic. Most of the GP lecturers are friendly and approachable so these case discussions are very low stress and can be great learning opportunities!

GP placement at Maryborough is like no other: if you’re keen for immersive and hands-on placement with parallel consulting from day 1, look no further than Clarendon Medical Centre! As a GP student here, you’ll have your own student room to run your own consults, ensuring you’ll get plenty of exposure to a wide variety of patient presentations from all ages. This helps you gain confidence quickly and you’ll be a pro by the time exams and OSCEs roll around at the end of the year!

Maryborough is well known for the opportunities to do procedures in the GP clinic – you’ll soon get excellent at suturing, excising lesions and skin cancers, taking biopsies and giving local anaesthetic injections. The adjacent Maryborough Hospital also provides excellent opportunity to get involved. The hospital is staffed by the clinic GPs, so you’ll be able to see your own patients in the ED, while practising your management plans and reporting back skills. Both local and visiting surgeons and anaesthetists are always happy to have students in theatre, providing opportunities for cannulation, intubation and ventilation practice. If you’re keen you’ll be first assist in procedures such as hernia repairs, skin cancer removals and c-section deliveries.
Alongside GP placement, students will also attend approximately four community placements throughout the semester, including maternal and child health clinics, community mental health, antenatal clinic and inpatient rehabilitation.

**Placement: (Campaspe)**

Campaspe Family Practice is a busy practice, with many GPs whom students will be assigned to sit with on their placement days. All the staff, including doctors, nurses and reception staff are incredibly welcoming, making settling into placement very easy. Usually around 6 weeks into placement students will start parallel consulting, however if you’re particularly keen you could probably start earlier if you asked! The GPs also look after all patients who come into the local emergency department, which is attached to the practice, so students are exposed to a variety of clinical presentations. Many of the doctors have special interest areas, including in skin, so students get to see and assist in procedures such as excisions and shave/punch biopsies. The practice also has a treatment room run by nurses in which they do immunisations, plastering, venipunctures and cannulas. Students start placement at 9am and usually finish by 5pm, but it can often be earlier if the GP you’re assigned to finishes early!

**Accommodation**

In Castlemaine there is a 4-bedroom house with 1 shared bathroom, which is less than a five minute walk from Castlemaine Hospital making it very easy on hub day! Each bedroom has a single bed, a desk, a bedside table and its own reverse cycle air conditioner. The house is fully furnished and has crockery and other cooking equipment is provided. The house is located right next to the botanical gardens, which is a nice place to go for a walk or a picnic, and the local IGA Maxi (which is the largest supermarket in town) is about a 5-minute drive away. You should be warned that the space is not very big, so definitely don’t bring too much stuff with you.

The accommodation in Maryborough is fantastic: a modern, spacious and welcoming town house which is a 15 minute walk from the GP clinic. It is fully equipped with kitchen and laundry supplies, central heating and impressively fast wifi. There are 2 bathrooms and 3 bedrooms to be shared between 2 students, each with comfortable double beds, and a double garage. Stores are all within walking distance – Coles, Woollies, ALDI and IGA, as well as the local library, main street and fast food restaurants. You’ll soon feel very at home in the accommodation in Maryborough!
Things to do

Castlemaine is a tourist hotspot, so it has some artsy shops you can visit as well as a variety of nice cafes you can go to for lunch. The Botanical gardens is a beautiful place for a walk, and for runners there is a 5km park run around the gardens every Saturday morning. There is also a local farmers market on the first Sunday of every month that you can visit!

Maryborough is located in the beautiful central Victorian goldfields, meaning it’s a great place for those that like the outdoors. There are several beautiful lakes and natural reserves around town, and day trips to waterfalls, national parks and hot springs, as well as markets in neighbouring towns such as Daylesford, Maldon and Talbot. Although Maryborough may seem like a quiet town, there’s plenty of ways to get involved if you look hard enough. If you befriend the very friendly locals you might get to go dirt biking, roller skating, horse riding or even fly in a plane! Previous students at Maryborough have played for local football and netball teams, attended park runs, volunteered at op shops, community meal programs, church youth groups and disability support groups. There are also lots of hospitality jobs going in town for some further experience outside of medical school.
Welcome to the highlands, an easy hour-long drive from the CBD. The highlands are spread across Gisborne, Woodend and Kyneton. A typical day consists of two GP days, in person teaching on Wednesdays and 1-2 community placement days.

Curriculum
The GP clinics include Ranges Medical (New Gisborne), Brooke Street Medical Centre (Woodend), Gisborne Medical (Gisborne) and Neal Street Medical (Gisborne). GPs will often encourage you to see your own patients allowing you to develop your communication and critical thinking skills. Not to mention that each experience is great practice for OSCEs. Patients welcome the opportunity to converse with medical students and encourage their learning and development.

Community days range from surgical days at the Kyneton hospital to community nursing to allied health clinics. Over the year, most students will have approximately 15-20 community days across the semester. These days give students a window into the daily lives of the community members they will be caring for.

Teaching days are self-directed and facilitated by Dr Candice Baker. Candice is a lovely GP and one of the friendliest people you will come across. Each week students are allocated a topic which they will then present to their peers.

Lifestyle
Most, if not all people who live in the Highlands, from staff to patients, are some of the kindest and happiest people you will meet. Staff are willing to go out of their way to ensure you have a positive, enjoyable educational experience. The patients living in the Highlands come from all walks of life.Whilst on placement you will have the privilege of meeting people and guiding them through all stages of life. Population demographics range from young families to happily retired couples. Patients often welcome the opportunity to speak to medical students and are a joy to be around.
Things to do
The Highlands are full to the brim with activities, restaurants, and sites to see. Hanging rock, the Wombat state forest and the farmer’s market are just a few of the ways you can choose to spend your weekends. Kuzu, Canteena, The Flying Pigeon offer amazing dining experiences. The Country Cob bakery in Kyneton is also home to Australia’s best pies.

Accommodation
Accommodation is spread across Kyneton and Woodend. Each room comes with its own ensuite and is fully furnished. The Highlands can be a tad cold, and central heating keeps the accommodation nice and toasty all year round. Shared living spaces are large and can comfortably accommodate you and your housemates. The Highland’s truly are a peaceful way for you to spend your GP rotation. The area is quiet, traffic is non-existent, the community is diverse and evolving, and the people are simply lovely.

Namik Perera
Year 4C
While far away from the city, Swan Hill is a delightful little town and sure to become your home away from home for 18 weeks on GP. Truly the definition of a community town, the people in Swan Hill make the town special and memorable with heaps of opportunities to get involved in the community, you will feel the warmth of swan hill both metaphorical and literal in the summer.

**Placement**
During the 18 weeks of GP placement you get placed in the Clinic roughly 4 days a week, seeing between 8-10 patients a day through parallel consulting. The consults are around 45 minutes each with a 2 hour relaxing break for lunch, leaving you with plenty of time to be thorough and get proper supervision and feedback from the GP after each patient.

After the first week you see patients who specifically book in to see you under the supervision of a GP, and there is no better experience in regards to learning all the GP conditions and improving your clinical reasoning. You’ll see patients ranging from simple matters of repeat scripts to thorough history and exam, all the way through to managing complex patients with assorted mental health and even intellectual disabilities. This experience, while daunting at times, allows for exceptional growth in regards to your ability to become a good clinician with problem solving abilities and understanding of the nuances with medicare, the PBS and referrals alongside some of the struggles that patients face in the rural setting.
The Clinic itself is right across the road from the hub where all the classes happen. All the staff, GPs, receptionists and nurses are an absolute pleasure to be around and make going to clinic a great time. It's an extremely supportive environment where you feel like you can undertake opportunities such as suturing, giving injections and undergoing wound care with the confidence and support required. The practical skills went all the way from cleaning wounds to removing skin cancers with wide excisions, with students spending whole days in the excision room specifically for skin cancer removal allowing for a really good practical experience. The clinic starts at 9 and ends at 5, with opportunities to come in on the weekend if you are so inclined.

Now it isn't just 18 weeks of hardcore GP consulting. There are 2 weeks each assigned to the Midwifery ward and Emergency Department. This provides a great opportunity to get lots of the Women’s health logbook signed off and experience births and gynaecological/antenatal clinic as a student, as well as providing a small break too. The placement in the Emergency Department allows for a good change of pace and a way to bring back lots of the year 3 knowledge and keep you sharp in terms of hospital management as opposed to outpatient care. In Swan Hill if you are keen to get involved in anything specific, whether it be surgery or seeing patients at the local high school, you'll be able to easily get involved. With numerous visiting specialists, there's heaps of opportunities to attend their clinics or scrub into theatre. Along with joining them in seeing patients, they often run after-hours education sessions on a variety of topics that medical students and doctors alike attend, such as talks on acute kidney injury and ENT emergencies helping review and learn core topics.

Curriculum/Content
The dedicated hub day is on Tuesday and tends to be a big day of teaching every week. The morning is run by Dr Hession who is both extremely kind and a good laugh. He teaches about GP topics along with specific women’s health conditions throughout the semester helping cover the matrix. We later had tutorials regarding surgical and acute presentations learning about heaps of gastrointestinal and high yield topics getting taught by the surgical registrar on rotation to Swan Hill. Later in the day and in the afternoon we had GPs cover topics in all the main systems helping us effectively cover the matrix with minimal studying, ranging from men’s health to renal issues all the way to skin conditions there was very little that wasn't covered in class. We had special sessions run by the Geriatricians and other specialists covering other major topics such as delirium, parkinsons and any topic we felt we were unsure of. Anne who is the site coordinator is lovely and can help rearrange the class topics and schedules to best match what we need in terms of learning, which allows for arguably one of the best teaching sites available to go to in Monash.
Accommodation and Things to do

The 8 students were split across two very nice and spacious houses.

The McCrae Street house, while a bit older, was exceptionally close to the clinic, the hub, and the main town centre with all the shops and restaurants nearby. The house has lots of crockery and furniture along with individual heaters, central air conditioning, washer and dryer. The only downside of this house was that there was no tupperware so be sure to bring your own.

The Cutri drive house was definitely more modern and sleek, however was around 2-3km away from the school, making it important to have a car or transport to make the 5 minute drive or 30 minute walk to clinic in the morning. Otherwise the house had central heating along with a massive living area that you won't know what to do with. This house also has everything you could need except tupperware.

Regarding things to do in Swan Hill, there are heaps of ways to make your time here really memorable. Not only is the river right by the town centre, making it a beautiful running and walking spot, there are loads of small towns nearby that are great for camping and walking. Every Saturday there is a parkrun at Lake Boga full of lovely people, who welcomed us with open arms. Within Swan Hill there is a 24 hour gym along with another gym/swimming pool and centres for everything ranging from pilates to jiu-jitsu. There are local sports clubs for netball, AFL, soccer and hockey, along with regular badminton sessions at the stadium. If sports aren’t particularly your thing, there is a library and loads of different arts centres nearby, as well as regular weekend markets in Swan Hill and at the nearby towns. There are a fair few places to grab a good meal too. I’d recommend Niko Niko, the Japanese restaurant, but there are places for lots of different cuisines. If you want a drink or a night out, the Commercial Hotel is great, while being a close walk to at least one of the Houses.

Overall

In summary, Swan Hill is a beautiful place to go and an experience you will love. From exceptional teaching to highly involved placement, all your academic needs are really well covered. Once you meet the lovely locals and people who work there, you’ll fall in love with the place, as everyone is intent on making you feel welcome. If you have any questions don’t hesitate to shoot me a message or email. Best of luck and Hope you enjoy your time in Swan Hill.

Akhil Sahni
Year 4C
South Gippsland

- Leongatha Healthcare (Leongatha)
- Korumburra Medical Centre (Korumburra)
- Wonthaggi Medical Group (Wonthaggi)
- South Gippsland Family Medicine (Wonthaggi)
- Foster Medical Centre (Foster)

Being only a short drive from Melbourne, South Gippsland has so much to offer. A placement in South Gippsland entails living in either Leongatha, Wonthaggi or Foster and being placed at a GP clinic in one of these towns or in Korumburra, a 10 minute drive from Leongatha. GP placement here really embodies the idea of ‘rural generalism’ and if you have the right attitude, you can truly become part of the team at your clinic. Think taking out and suturing up skin excisions, performing CSTs and helping insert Mirena’s, embarking on home visits PLUS heaps of extra experiences in the hospital too.

Curriculum
A typical week of placement in South Gippsland consists of two to three days at your GP clinic, one day of teaching and a day off. There were occasional extra activities spread out across the semester too, with day visits to gynaecology clinic/theatre, a paediatrics clinic, visiting a local specialist school and time with different allied health professionals.

The core teaching in South Gippsland is held on a Wednesday in Leongatha. Teaching is mostly provided by Dr David Iser, a GP based in Foster, who is one of the nicest people you will ever meet (he is likely to invite you all over for dinner one night too!) Some tutorials call on other local GPs such as for women’s health case tutorials or skills workshops. These workshops are also held in Leongatha at the small simulation lab there. One of the best parts about the South Gippsland site is the table tennis table, perfect for some lunchtime competition.
The opportunities of South Gippsland don’t stop there. The local hospitals’ birth suites are very accommodating of medical students, and extra theatre time can be arranged – many of the GPs also work in the hospital so they can help you! At Leongatha and Foster hospital, you can spend heaps of time in the hospital too. In Leongatha, I got to scrub in for a caesarean section, assist in multiple births, and cannulate people for the weekly scopes list. My women’s logbook was already half-done by the end of my GP placement :)

**Accommodation**

All the South Gippsland houses are fully furnished and located close to the GPs and local hospitals. The Leongatha house is a three bedroom house, the Foster accommodation is a two bedroom, two bathroom unit, and the Wonthaggi house is a four bedroom house that you may also be sharing with a fifth year.

**Things to do**

There’s a good reason that the South Gippsland area used to be called ‘Southern Beaches’. South Gippsland has much to offer in each of the placement towns and their surrounding areas. South Gippy is renowned for being a beautiful part of Victoria and it will definitely not disappoint you. Be sure to check out the stunning 70km ‘rail trail’ that stretches from Korumburra, through Leongatha and Foster, all the way down to Port Welshpool.

**Leongatha & Korumburra**

Leongatha is a beautiful town with much to offer. Forage and Grind is perfect for a coffee, McCartin’s is a Melbourne-esque pub and Wakachi is a great sushi shop. Popular destinations in nearby Korumburra include the Burra Brewing Co and The Borough Department Store. Other nearby towns include Koonwarra, home to the incredible Milly & Romeo’s (this is a MUST visit, all their food is home-made and incredible – especially their chocolate brownies!!!), Meeniyan, with its own art gallery and delicious bakeries, and Loch, a town that boasts the Loch Brewery and Distillery.
**Foster**
Foster is the furthest from Melbourne of the three towns, however it is the closest to Wilson’s Prom! It boasts free Poker on Wednesday nights at The Exchange Hotel, The Foster Hot Bread Shop, Gurneys Cider, a cidery situated just outside of town with gorgeous views looking out towards the Prom. The team here is super friendly and will often invite you down for pub nights with them too!

**Wonthaggi**
Wonthaggi is the largest of the three towns and the closest to the beach. In town, Folks Café, Wolf on Murray and The Cape Tavern are perfect for a meal. Along the coast are some beautiful destinations such as Kilcunda and Cape Paterson. Inverloch is a popular coastal town close to both Wonthaggi and Leongatha as well.

Overall, South Gippsland is a fantastic place for your GP rotation and you will be provided with an absolutely amazing placement and living experience. If you have any questions feel free to reach out!

*Mara Kyranakis*
*Year 4C*
The leafy and peaceful town of Warragul serves as a hub for students undertaking their GP placements throughout West Gippsland. The drive is just over an hour away from Monash Clayton campus, with an easy drive straight down the Princes Hwy. Warragul is perfectly situated for quick weekend trips to the city and for exploring deeper into the Gippsland region.

The site is made up of four GP clinics, each with their own nuances and specialty interests which creates an entirely unique rotation. All clinics are conveniently located within a short 20-minute drive from Warragul, meaning there is more time to relax, study and explore instead of sitting in traffic!

**Curriculum**

Throughout your semester in West Gippsland, you will be joined by the students placed within Latrobe Valley who will be undertaking their GP rotations in two clinics in Traralgon. This creates a small group of approximately six students who you will engage in the teaching curriculum with.

All students are expected to attend their respective clinics on Tuesday and Thursday, however there may be additional days you may be required to attend depending on the individual clinic. You are given a few days/weeks to settle in and become familiar with the clinic and expectations before commencing parallel consulting (seeing your own patients, creating a plan, and presenting it to the supervising GP). Appointments and structure will vary, but usually run for ~30 minutes to allow plenty of time for history and examination before your supervisor reviews the patient with you. With one student placed at each clinic, you will have abundant opportunities to practice clinical skills e.g., excisions with suturing, ear syringing, immunisations, and cryotherapy. You truly are a valued and supported member of the clinic, and the experiences you gain will boost your confidence and clinical acumen.
Teaching takes place on Wednesday mornings, alternating fortnightly between Warragul Regional Hospital, and Latrobe Regional Hospital (40-minute drive). These classes are run by Dr. Paul Brougham and Dr. Jacob Lees, who are passionate GPs from the region. For the most part, you will have a two-and-a-half-day week, with additional community placement on some Mondays or Fridays (optometry, audiology, palliative care, and specialist school), various specialist classes and Ethics and Med Law which are conducted via Zoom. Look forward to being welcomed and more supported than ever by the amazing Monash Rural Health team who will ensure the semester runs smoothly.

A snapshot from each town;

Yarragon
Yarragon is located 10 minutes east from Warragul. This medium sized clinic has 4 consulting rooms and a treatment room, and you will have your own room to parallel consult for 30-minute appointments. With the range of doctor’s specialty interests, there is a wide variety of patients. Typical consults range from neonatal check-ups and immunisations to women’s health, antenatal care, lactation consults, dermatology, and chronic disease. You will have abundant opportunities to practice your clinical skills, including giving childhood vaccinations and other injections, excision biopsies, skin flap techniques and suturing. Café Piccolo is your go to coffee and lunch spot. – Kyle Williams

Trafalgar
Trafalgar is located 20 minutes east from Warragul. In this larger clinic, parallel consulting starts in the first couple of weeks of placement. You usually get half a day of parallel consulting and half a day of observing. Each session of parallel consulting consists of 4 patients, with each patient getting 45 min of appointment time. You also get your own room. You’ll get to practise a lot of clinical skills, such as giving injections, skin biopsies and suturing. Patient demographic depends on your supervisor, but will range from elderly patients to women’s health, mental health, and dermatology. The best coffee spot in town is Coffee Life. – Alice Song

Drouin
Drouin is located 10 minutes west from Warragul. At Bank Place Medical, parallel consulting begins in Week 5-6 as opposed to straight away, allowing you to ease into it better and feel more comfortable. After this, you pick patients you want to see then call the GP in to review. There is plenty of opportunity for examination skills and practice of procedures under supervision. Given the main supervisor’s focus is women’s health and paediatrics (great for 4C!), you’ll see plenty of antenatal visits, simple gynaecology procedures and paediatric consults. Civic Park is a great spot to visit, and there are so many cafes to choose from within walking distance. – Aaron Badwal
Neerim South

Neerim South is located 20 minutes north from Warragul. The small clinic has lots of opportunities to parallel consult in your own room where you formulate a management plan with the GP and explain it. There is a high volume of dermatology, with opportunities to help with skin excisions and practice suturing. The local Milk Bar is a great place for a quick lunch. – Mitwa Joshi

Accommodation

All students are provided accommodation in either the 2-bedroom unit, or one of the two 4-bedroom houses, which are all located within a 5-minute drive to the town centre. Houses come fully furnished, with all utensils and utilities included. Some students placed in West Gippsland, particularly Bank Place Medical in Drouin, commuted daily from Melbourne given the proximity to the metropolitan eastern suburbs.

Things to do

There is plenty to do in Warragul with something to suit everyone’s interests. It’s a sizeable town boasting a town centre full of cafes, restaurants, fast food outlets and all your everyday essentials. Grocery shopping can be done at either Aldi, Woolworths, or Coles. You’ll find all major fast-food outlets and the popular HSP van to grab a quick dinner. As far as eating out goes, crowd favourites are The Bank, Warragul Thai, The Courthouse and Frankie’s. You won’t run out of coffee shops either.

Explore the many parks, basketball courts and walking/running trails around, and for gym-goers, your options include Snap Fitness, Anytime Fitness and Voyage Fitness along with the Recreation Centre with indoor and outdoor pools. Surrounded by nature, there are many other small hikes around Warragul, and if you’re keen Wilsons Promontory can be conquered in a day trip. For the warmer months, Inverloch beach is a scenic one-hour drive away through the rolling Strzelecki Ranges. Make sure you visit the nearby towns where the other clinics are – every town is unique and has something worthwhile visiting.

With Warragul, you have the best of both worlds with its proximity to Melbourne whilst being far enough away to escape and get involved in rural life. Given all students live in the one town, you will form great connections with the four students living in Warragul, as well as the GP students in Central Gippsland whom you share classes with and the students on hospital speciality rotations. The other bonus is the generous amount of protected study time and free time, which is most welcomed in an otherwise hectic Year 4C, giving you a chance to unwind and enjoy the experience of rural placement even more.
East Gippsland

- Bairnsdale Medical Group (Bairnsdale) - 1 student
- Macleod Street Medical Centre (Bairnsdale) - 1 student
- Gippsland Lakes Community Health (Lakes Entrance) - 2 students
- Orbost Medical Clinic (Orbost) - 2 students

East Gippsland has all the best parts of being rural on offer, the lakes, mountains, the ocean, the snow. In 2022, 6 students were placed in East Gippsland each semester for their GP rotations.

Curriculum/Teaching

Fridays are usually teaching days for East Gippsland. All 6 students would attend tutorials in person at MRH Bairnsdale (Bairnsdale Regional Health Service). We have pre-recorded lectures (updated every year) delivered by all of the GP tutors in Gippsland as pre-reading to prepare us for our GP tutorials that focus on a different segment of the GP matrix every week with tutor Dr Ruth Chandler. We also have 4 Women's Health Case Discussions with Dr Antoinette Mowbray over the semester. This is supplemented by Children’s Health clinical reasoning sessions. There are also opportunities for skill sessions with registrars from BRHS as well.
Placement

All GP placements in East Gippy: You will have lots of opportunities (most of your GP placement) to parallel consult if you wish!

BMG & Macleod Street: Bairnsdale’s clinics are relatively big and you will have the opportunity to work with most of the GPs there. Both clinics have GP Obstetricians and GP Anaesthetists who work as VMOs at BRHS.

Gippsland Lakes Complete Health: The Lakes Entrance clinic services a very big portion of East Gippsland and is composed of GPs, Nurse Specialists and lots of other allied health professionals. You will have the opportunity to work with a lot of the staff and get to see different types of consultations. There are outreach clinics to Bruthen and Nowa Nowa on Wednesdays. The GPs all have different interest such as sexual health, mental health, skin cancer and geriatrics. There is also a clinic triage section where you get to see patients with acute presentations. (They also provide a free lunch on Wednesdays!) (I was also given the opportunity to do skin procedures (e.g. BCC excisions) by myself from start to finish if that’s your jam!)

Orbost Medical Clinic: Similarly to the other clinics in East Gippsland, the GPs have a wide skill set and therefore, you will get exposed to more as well. There are opportunities to build knowledge and experience on skin cancers, obstetrics and anaesthetics. The clinic also runs an outreach bush nursing clinic at Cann River.

Accommodation

Bairsndale: The Bairnsdale 4th year house is a 4 bedroom house 5-10 mins away from the two GP clinics and the hospital. This was shared by the 2 students placed at Bairnsdale GP clinics and the other 2 rooms were kept empty for the students placed at Orbost Medical Clinic so they could drive down to Bairnsdale on Thursday night and stay in Bairnsdale for Friday classes.
**Lakes Entrance**: The Lakes Entrance house is a 4 bedroom house 5 mins away from the GP clinic and the gym and swimming pool. As 2 of the rooms are not occupied by 4th year Medical students, there may be other students who will stay for usually a short period of time while they are placed at the same clinic!

**Orbost**: The students placed at the Orbost clinic were put in a beach house in Marlo. This is a 2 bedroom house.

**Things to do**

East Gippsland offers many hiking and biking trails such as the East Gippsland Rail Trail that conveniently starts in Bairnsdale and ends in Orbost. There are many good fishing spots that will provide you with delicious roast whiting dinners (if you know how to fish, or have amazing housemates who do). The Den of Nargun and Raymond Island, to name a few are also at your doorstep and easily doable as day trips or even after tutorials on Fridays. If you enjoy going to farmers/producers markets, there will be one on almost every Saturday and Sunday in East Gippsland. You can also take advantage of your proximity to the snow and enjoy a ski (or in my case, toboggan) trip! Legend also has it that Big Bears Donuts at Lakes has the best donuts in Victoria...

*Samantha Congdon*

*Year 4C*
Central Gippsland is a lovely area around 3 hours from the Melbourne CBD with GP placement opportunities in Sale, Maffra and Heyfield. In 2021 there were 5 students allocated to Central Gippsland GP with 1 student at each of the clinics listed above and all GP clinics offered opportunities to do parallel consulting.

**Curriculum**
The typical week of GP in Central Gippsland consists of clinic from 9 – 5pm with a 2 hour lunch break from 12 – 2pm (the time can vary between clinics) on Mondays – Wednesdays, Thursday is a private study day, and Friday tutorials at Central Gippsland Hospital often from 9 – 1pm however on some weeks there are extra tutorials on Friday afternoons (e.g. Med Law, Ethics). Each week tutorials are often spent going through a different system (e.g. dermatology, ENT, neurology, etc.) via cases and practice OSCE’s in order to get a good grasp of common GP conditions. There are also some tutorials aimed at practising clinical skills (e.g. ear/eyes examination, speculum, vaginal 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 1 day placement at the optometry clinic in Maffra and 1 day placement at the audiology clinic in Sale.

**Clinics**
There are 5 clinics in Central Gippsland, 3 in Sale, 1 in Maffra and 1 in Heyfield.

**Inglis Medical Centre** is a few minutes drive from all accommodation options in Sale (or even walking distance for some!) 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! Inglis also has many allied health staff located directly in the clinic that you can spend time with to get a well-rounded approach to healthcare. All of the doctors are very friendly, approachable, knowledgeable, and eager to teach.

Clocktower Medical Centre is also located in Sale and a very quick walk from the town centre. At this clinic you will see patients via wave consults; you will be booked up to 8 patients a day who you will see in your room. You will then be able to call in your supervisor to discuss the case. These are often on the day appointments so you will get to see a mix of acute cases and also long-term patients. You will be given opportunities to watch and hopefully assist with procedural skills such as CSTs and suturing. All of the staff at Clocktower 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.

Sale Medical Centre is located in Sale also very close to the town centre, and will only be a few minutes drive from anywhere in Sale. At this clinic you are scheduled to come in from 8:30am – 5:30pm. Each day you will be booked patients to see on your own for 15 minutes, and then you will have another 15 minutes afterwards to see the patient with the GP that you are with for the day. 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) however there is limited opportunity to assist with these procedures. All the doctors are lovely and welcoming and very keen to teach.

Maffra Medical Group is a lovely clinic around 15 minutes drive from Sale. All the staff, including the more than 10 doctors, are 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.
You will see 6 patients a day; each patient is booked in for a 30-minute consultation with you, followed by a consult with the supervising doctor. In addition, 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.

Heyfield Medical Centre is a scenic 30-minute drive from Sale. It is an amazing clinic attached to Heyfield Hospital, a 10-bed acute hospital, with a 50-bed aged-care facility. 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 independence, for example you are able to input prescriptions yourself (as long as you get the GP to check) which is very handy for consolidating your management skills. You will also get a lot of opportunities to practice 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). One of the senior doctors runs a weekly tutorial for all the junior doctors and medical students which is a great opportunity for learning.

**Accommodation**
If you choose to live in Monash accommodation, you will be assigned to one of the houses in Sale. These are 2 – 5 bedroom houses that you may share with other medical students from 3rd – 5th year (including the 4th year medical students placed at the hospital).

**Things to do**
Within Sale, there are many cool things to see and do! The Sale Botanic Gardens are home to several peacocks that are always cool to spot (including an albino peacock)! There are also free tennis courts here that were a main social activity for the 2021 students. There is also a running track around the Lake Guthridge which offers a scenic view to daily morning exercise routine! 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 and the Star Hotel (it is free!) and karaoke at Jack Ryan’s Irish Bar; Thursday nights are often a good social night for all the medical students! In terms of dining options, Portside Food + Wine and Viet Kitchen offer a range of good food, but most places in Sale are quite nice!

Samantha Congdon
Year 4C
Placement and Curriculum
The cohort in semester 1 of 2021 was considerably smaller than the year prior with just two students a part of this group. Due to this, teaching was combined with those in the Warragul group, alternating between Warragul Hospital and Latrobe Regional Hospital for weekly tutorials. alternating between Warragul Hospital and Latrobe Regional Hospital for weekly tutorials.

The placement opportunities were very similar at both clinics; we attended twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays (although, be warned; the SRH faculty are very keen to increase this to a three-day standard across all locations). Placement days are generally 9-5 although you will definitely come to learn that some days may finish a fair bit later depending on how busy it is!

There is typically at least a two day (or two week) ‘easing in’ period where you sit in and observe consultations with a GP in your clinic before you begin to parallel consult. If you’re lucky, they will ask you to participate in these encounters to warm you up for handling your own consultations. At Breed St Clinic – where I was placed – I scheduled patients in the system, so I was able to see patient files and attempt to anticipate what they would be presenting with. However, at Tanjil Place, the GP supervising you for the day or session is more likely to choose certain patients who they think would be a good clinical experience for you. All in all, you will see roughly 8 patients a day.

The curriculum is fairly standard across all of SRH although with COVID, certain things may have changed in the last couple of years in terms of delivery. Every week, we had GP tutorials on a Wednesday morning before which, we had a pre-recorded lecture to watch, revolving around the weekly topic. The tutors, Dr Brougham and Dr Lees are both incredible tutors (and also are both GPs at Breed St Clinic!). On alternate Fridays, we would have zoom tutorials with all Gippsland GP students for Law or Ethics.
**Accommodation and Things to Do**

You will be placed at accommodation either in Traralgon or Morwell, either with fellow GP students or with those placed at LRH. These typically are 4-bedroom households with fully equipped kitchen and laundry facilities. If you do not have a car, please do highlight that to the staff when you are acquainted, prior to commencement of the semester. That way you can hopefully be placed at an accommodation that is walking distance from your clinic (for example, I was a 30-minute walk from Breed St).

As long as we are not still in lockdown (knock on wood), there are great brunch and dinner places around Traralgon including Three Little Birds, Momo, Food Co and Stellina. Special shout-out to Bodhi Café, a couple minutes walk from Breed St Clinic, that is a bookstore and café in one. The staff are lovely, and the coffee potentially even greater. Make sure to spend at least one Wednesday night at House of Frank for the weekly trivia night. If trivia is not your thing, Star Bar has karaoke on the same night every week. It would be remiss for me to not mention the Farmer’s Market that occurs during the last Saturday of every month from 8am-1pm; enjoy a great selection of fresh produce, meats, jams/ spreads, food and live music.

Noyona Dutta