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Foreword
I am very pleased to endorse the 2021 MUMUS Rural Guidebook. This guide provides perspectives from both medical students and Monash Rural Health (MRH) on the Monash medical course rural experience.

As students will tell you, our school provides 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 to try out the amazing recreational activities that each region offers.

MRH was established in 1992. We are the oldest and among the largest of the rural clinical schools in Australia. 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 End-To-End Rural Cohort. In all, 60 students rotate around our rural footprint and 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 their medical training rurally 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, 2, 3B, 4C and 5D. The School is committed to the delivery of excellent rural and regional health education and research programs across the healthcare sector in a vibrant and exciting rural and regional environment, all with the aim of increasing the medical workforce and improving the health and access to healthcare for regional and rural communities. You have the opportunity to get involved in research within the rural setting through your Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP), 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 south-east at Warragul, Traralgon, Sale, Leongatha, 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 you 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 2021 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 these unique communities and learn from the local people, industries and landscapes to shape our practice as a future medical professional.

Whether you’re a member of the Extended Rural or End-to-End Rural Cohorts, or you’re keen to learn about the different rural rotations available in your clinical years, this guidebook compiled by our colleagues will 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 past students that a rural placement offers experiences like no other. Rural students are well-integrated into the clinical environment, become an essential member of the treating team, and are exposed to endless opportunities to learn and practice invaluable clinical decision making and hands-on procedural skills. Furthermore, a rural placement is a great time to make new connections; whether that be with your peers, your clinical team, with the local community (through a sports club, orchestra or religious group), our Monash staff or with the local landscape and nature. I hope every student has the chance to complete a rural rotation and take away with them not only fond memories of their experiences, but also new skills both within and beyond the world of medicine.

As your student society, we’re proud to support you and to help make your rural site a home away from home: with regular funding towards common rooms and student events across Gippsland and northwest Victoria. Let your site or rural representatives know if we can provide any amenities or supplies to help improve your day on placement. A move to a new clinical site is also a great time to connect with a regular GP (our Get-A-GP guide also includes sections for all rural schools). Despite COVID-19 wreaking havoc on our day-to-day lives, we are hopeful to bring as many events (both social and academic!) as possible to regional and rural Victoria. Please let us know if you have any ideas or are looking for support for a new initiative!

I hope you all have an incredible rural placement and come back busting to share your experiences with our peers and future students. All the best for the adventures ahead!

Madeleine (Maddi) Tse
MUMUS President
First of all, you’re about to see an incredible collection of photographs and insights from both staff and students across the School of Rural Health, which is due to the incredible work of the two editors this year, Melanie Power and Mykelti Kotzur!

Rural placement is elusive to some who never experienced it and adored by those who have. The following reflections from students prove that hesitancy about your future rural placement, be it because of distance, teaching experience, first time out of home or just the unknown, is a common experience among students (even for those who preference it). However, when you keep reading beyond the opening concerns, you’ll see the incredible experience that inspire the words written here. You’ll be painted a picture of the adoration for the clinical school staff, appreciation for their clinical tutors and an immersion into the local sites and eats. If you’re someone who appreciates smaller class sizes and intimate integration into the treating team, then keep on reading! Rural might be the perfect fit for you! With schools across Victoria there is undoubtedly a site that will be a perfect fit for your lifestyle, speciality interests and teaching needs – it’s now the difficult decision about which one!

Alternatively, if this wasn’t the outcome you were hoping for, rest assured that this guide will help you through the site preferencing for Year 3B, 4C and even 5D! There’s key information about the culture, teaching, research opportunities and attractions at each site to help you make the most of the situation. Ultimately, like most clinical placement, being in a rural or remote site is truly what you make of it, and really can become the incredible experience students have drawn on in this publication. Where you can think of the bright sides; gorgeous surroundings, bespoke teaching, (hopefully) less covid and a constant sleepover with your best friends!

While there are numerous benefits, if you do find that through the year that things aren’t looking or feeling as positive for you as they once were, reach out as soon as you notice! There will be incredible faculty to help you feel your best. In addition to the incredible students within WILDFIRE and MUMUS – specifically those who will sit in the Graduate Vice President, Gippsland Rural Representative and Extended Rural Cohort Representative roles – who will be able to help and advocate on your behalf!

Look after yourself and others! Enjoy the country air!

Madeline Collings
MUMUS Graduate Vice President
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.

We are a student-led organisation, with a central council and six dedicated sub-committees in Clayton, Bendigo, Mildura, Gippsland, Parkville and Peninsula, who ensure we have a strong presence at each rural clinical site. 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. This year the event theme is ‘COVID-19 in community’.
- **Clinical Skills Weekends**: Held in both Bendigo and Gippsland, the clinical skills weekends provide preclinical medical students an opportunity to develop procedural skills such as cannulation, suturing, plastering and intubation. They also get to explore our beautiful regions, and see what rural placement might be like.
- **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.

We aim to support students to make the most of their time in regional and rural placements; in direct practice, academically, and by immersing themselves in their community.
During 2021, we have put our beautiful rural areas of Victoria in the spotlight, and encouraged all students to get out and explore your 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).

Love, your 2021 WILDFIRE Co-Presidents,
Keisha Nash and Meghan Taylor
Preference and allocation
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

2022 is the first year of clinical placement for students in the Rural End to End program. All students going into Year 3B, including those in either the ERC or E2E programs, will be able to preference School of Rural Health (SRH) sites in North West Victoria and Gippsland.

However, ERC students in 4C for 2022 will be able to preference SRH sites in North West Victoria only. This means that if you were placed in Mildura for 3B, unless you choose to stay in Mildura for 4C, the School of Rural Health 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.
The 4C rural practice community rotations – Murray, Highlands, and Goldfields regions (Swan Hill, Woodend, Gisborne, Maryborough, Kyneton and Castlemaine) – these are all northwest 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, ERC 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 preferencing regional/rural placements

Faculty-approved special consideration cases are allocated first and foremost, followed by 4C students who have committed to 24 months in the same region, followed by students who might be repeating a year and need to be at the same site as the previous year.

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

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 & 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 NOT 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.

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 Carer registration via Centrelink
- Birth certificate of child
- Letter from Monash Disability Support Services
- Letter from a registered Counsellor

Finally, the process of regional/rural site allocation 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.

Mark Woodfield, on behalf of
Laura Major Rural Health Education Manager, Monash School of Rural Health
Staff Descriptions
Bendigo

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, 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.

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, gynaecologists, psychiatrists, general practitioners, 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 essentially all medical students across all clinical years throughout the peaks of COVID-19 infection in 2020 and 2021, including acute hospital services and regional GP hubs. Travel for all students has been minimised where possible, both for the safety of all students and for the local community, however the ongoing engagement of medical student education on the clinical wards at Bendigo Health has been fully supported by the Hospital Executive. Clinical skills and simulation training have been adapted and continued across the year. The lessons learned from the COVID crisis gives confidence that clinical training in Bendigo will continue without major interruptions going forward.

Associate Professor Chris Holmes
Director, Monash Rural Health Bendigo
Mildura is a larger regional city than you might think (population 32,738), 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, facilitating 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, Gen Med, Gen Surg, Gerontology, Hospital in the Home, ICU, 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. hospital is second to none!

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 alternatively to the disciplines of general surgery and general medicine at Mildura Base Hospital for a dedicated 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 clinical experience is complemented by 2 to 4 hours per week of skills-based training in the simulation laboratory, 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 15 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.

**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, in a program designed by paediatrician Geoff Solarsh. These tackle presentations surrounding neonatal resus and failure to thrive, and allow students in small teams to apply their knowledge.

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 and limited speciality rotations taking into consideration students area of interest and availability. 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 remediate content previously taught during Year 3B and 4C. Students will be given every opportunity to feel well prepared for an internship.

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. As of 2021, staff have started providing each household a $100 entertainment fund, to spend on board games and activities.

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 stand out 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 been offered continued placement in both Mildura Base Public Hospital and Mildura Health Private Hospital alongside community settings. Clinical Skills teaching and simulation training has also continued with COVID precautions in place.

Associate Professor Fiona Wright
Director, Monash Rural Health Mildura
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 one 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 one 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 core 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.
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.

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.visitgippsland.com.au/

Associate Professor Catherine Haigh
Director, Monash Rural Health Gippsland
Churchill

Monash Rural Health Churchill delivers Year A of the four-year graduate entry medical program. Co-located with the Gippsland campus of Federation University, Monash Rural Health Churchill offers complete library services, onsite accommodation, clinical skills teaching, ward simulation, as well as close ties with practicing clinicians and regional hospitals for clinical placements. We also have partnerships with health and community support agencies throughout Gippsland. The campus is located at Churchill in the Latrobe Valley, just two hours from Melbourne at the foot of the Strzelecki Ranges.

The town population at the last census was 4,783 people. The campus is within easy driving distance to a number of popular tourist destinations that offer beach, snow, bushwalking and gourmet food activities. Tourist destinations include Victoria’s Wilson’s Promontory, Gippsland Lakes and Mt Baw Baw ski resort.

Curriculum

Year A is the sole pre-clinical year in Monash’s graduate entry medicine program. Basic professional, biomedical, social and behavioural concepts are introduced and developed. The content and learning have an emphasis on clinical contextualisation and there is a particular focus on rural medicine. Clinical and communication skills are developed with experienced clinicians and educators. Students undertake early clinical placements in hospitals within a few weeks of starting the course and also complete a non-clinical community placement during the year (Covid-dependent).
The Year A program embraces an active learning approach. There is a mix of discussion-based, online and face-to-face, large- and small-group learning activities. The timetable allows for class preparation and revision time. Students are encouraged to form informal study groups to facilitate learning, especially with regard to content quizzesing each other. Senior medical students in the region are keen to support Year A students in their learning through mentoring and student-led tutorials. Students are required to travel to the Clayton campus monthly throughout the year, making their own travel arrangements. Classes at the Clayton campus include anatomy, histology, ethics, and medical law as well as other selected areas of content.

**Accommodation**

Students studying at Monash Rural Health Churchill have access to, and are encouraged to apply for, accommodation provided by Federation University Australia at Churchill. The campus accommodation facility is known as FedLiving. FedLiving recognises that everyone has different living requirements, preferences and tastes. At the Gippsland Campus, a number of accommodation choices are available, with an option to suit everyone. For more information on FedLiving, phone +61 3 5122 6236 or email: fedliving@federation.edu.au and see Frequently Asked Questions. There are also off-campus rental accommodation options available.

**Lifestyle**

Close to Churchill is Mathison Park, with walking tracks around Lake Hyland. The Lake continually has fish added to the ecosystem for recreational fishing. Close to the campus is the Latrobe Leisure Centre with a swimming pool, basketball court and gym.

In the township itself there is the Churchill Football Netball Club Churchill, Senior Basketball Association as well as Federation University Sport and Recreation on the campus.

More information on local activities including art galleries, public transport and faith based activities is available in Latrobe City Council’s Thrifty & Fun Activity Guide and What’s On – Latrobe City Council. There is the newly opened Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre in Traralgon featuring indoor and outdoor heated pools, water slides, gymnasium and coffee shop.

*Doctor Margaret Simmons*

*Acting Director, Monash Rural Health Churchill*
Year A
Curriculum
The Year A curriculum is fairly intense, and you'll essentially be covering a significant amount of the undergraduate years 1 and 2 in a single year, so it's important to stay organised because it's easy to get behind on the content.

The content is organised into 4 themes, which have lectures and tutorials under each every week: Theme I (Personal and Professional Development), Theme II (Society, Population, Health and Illness), Theme III (Scientific Basis of Clinical Practice) and Theme IV (Clinical Skills). The course utilises a flipped-classroom approach. There are relatively few traditional lectures, instead there is a focus on tutorials and workshops in which students work through practice questions. This is a great way to move from memorising content to understanding it and one of the best parts of the Year A program.

Finally, the Year A cohort is tiny, so this fosters a tight knit group in which everyone supports one another and gets to know each other well!
**Accommodation**

There are a few places to live; Halls of residence A and B, North, West and off-campus. Halls A and B are the newest and biggest buildings, which all have great facilities and cleaners who come in on Monday and Thursday mornings. There's a huge common room with multiple fridges and at dinner time everyone comes out to cook and eat together. We party in the common room after exams and the halls have a specific key to enter which is only given to students and Fed Uni staff, so it's nice and safe. People stay up till all hours, so you really have a lot of freedom and independence in how you choose to spend your time. The rent is most expensive with an ensuite in Halls, and goes down if you pick a room without an ensuite. This year, I shared a bathroom with about 4 other kids and we had no issues!

North is a little far away and there are houses of about 4-5 people, slightly older in style but still very clean and cozy. West is the same, but is positioned right next to Halls so is a bit closer to travel to.

**Events and things to do**

To start off with, we have an amazing leisure centre right in our backyard, the Latrobe Leisure Centre. You'll be sure to always bump into a friend here given the range of facilities including gym, swimming pool, basketball stadium, group fitness classes and badminton courts. There is something for everyone and is a great way to destress and stay healthy throughout the year. The super cheap membership prices are an added bonus!

There is also FedUni Social Sport - sign up to a team and be a part of the weekly social netball, soccer or ultimate frisbee competition that a lot of students get involved in.

If you’re looking for nature, Churchill is the perfect place for some lovely walks. Lake Hyland (Mathison Park) is a popular walking and running track amongst students to step away from studying and get active! It's very close to campus and is an easy morning run. Tarra-Bulga National Park (35 minutes away) has a 1 hour walk through the national park and has an awesome suspension bridge for those Insta pics. Morwell National Park is a nice little walk and Wilson’s Prom isn’t too far away!
The Churchill Hotel is located right in the heart of town, and is the Tuesday night hotspot for medical students to socialise and grab great pub meals, including their famous pot and parma specials. The Churchill Plaza shops have all your essentials covered, including a good Asian restaurant and bakeries. Morwell and Traralgon are only a short 10-15 minute drive away from Churchill where you can find really cute cafes, restaurants, bars and stores for all your needs, and even a few good op shops. Morwell even has a WynCity where we had our first ever bowling and laser tag event, which was a heap of fun! There are many things to explore in Churchill and Traralgon, so get out there on the weekends or after classes and make sure you experience it!

We went out a few times at night in Traralgon, they have some fun bars and restaurants to go out at night! There’s House of Frank, MOMO, Little Prince, Arcadia, Star Bar, and more places to make a night out of! For transport, we pre-booked a maxi taxi to and from, as taxis and Ubers are a rarity in these parts.

Other events to look forward to are the Gippsland Ball, trivia nights and movie nights at Halls. There’s no shortage of fun things to do together, so make sure you get out there!

Devangna Tangri, Year A Social Representative
Mark Shane, Year A Academic Representative
Year 3B
Placements
Your exposure to hands-on clinical experience and real-time teaching from dedicated doctors and other health staff will be unparalleled at Bendigo.

Uniquely, you will be part of a blended program with University of Melbourne students. This is a great opportunity to meet students from ‘the other’ University and access some of their excellent lectures and online resources. Nevertheless, Monash specific assessment and curriculum are never neglected and both Universities run their own separate teaching when appropriate.

Both at the Monash School of Rural Health Building adjacent to the Hospital and at Bendigo Health itself you will be ideally placed to learn heaps in a supportive, welcoming environment. Every day is different and if you show even a little enthusiasm you will find a line of people eager to help you on your learning journey.

As well as doctors, nurses, and academics, living and studying in close quarters with older year levels make Bendigo an ideal site for facilitating peer mentoring and teaching. Final Year students especially have been consistently keen to run tutorials both in the hospital and even in the evenings in our accommodation’s common rooms as everyone lives very close by. The student lounge in the Monash building, as well as having everything you need in the way of food prep, is often a hub of inter-year level activity during lunch breaks.
The year begins with 3 weeks of orientation, the longest of any site. While it is natural to feel you are falling behind as you hear of your friends diving straight into the clinical environment, this choice is actually very well considered by the clinical school. As well as easing you into what is no straightforward year, the orientation is packed with clinical skills teaching by highly experienced educators such as surgical scrub up, venepuncture and cannulation. This way when you hit the hospital you can do so confidently and unhindered by a lack of experience. In fact, you are not allowed to practice most clinical skills on real patients until you have been signed off as competent by an educator so conducting these sign offs efficiently at the start of the year is beneficial in maximising your time with patients. You will get to know your Clinical Skills Educators very well as these skills are taught continuously in the highly equipped labs throughout the year. Students are welcome and encouraged to visit the labs when they have free time to practice too.

After orientation, you jump right into hospital life. The hospital itself is newly renovated as of 2017 and you’ll find it purpose built for the people staying and working within its doors. It is an impressive, modern building which is laid out logically so learning your way around in the first frightening weeks is very doable. Not to mention you will engage with patients in sunny, clean rooms each with an enviable view. You will find this comfortable environment is important in no small measure for the holistic care of the health service’s patrons.

The rotations are split into four groups; Specialty, Medical, Surgery and Ambulatory. Each rotation lasts for 8 weeks and within each rotation you will spend 1-4 weeks with different teams. For example, you will experience ICU, Anaesthetics, Emergency, Renal and Orthopaedics in the Specialty rotation. Another unique aspect of Bendigo is that throughout the year you have allocated time with a Clinical Skills Educator on the wards and in the Emergency Department, which allows for unreal hand-on experiences as well as makes signing off logbook entries a breeze.

Your day will start somewhere between 7-9 am with ward rounds (the lack of commute comes in very handy on early surg days!). Depending on your rotation, you will have the chance to scrub into surgeries, take histories and examine patients at outpatient clinics or otherwise shadowing and helping members of the team as they go about doing many varied and fascinating duties. You will then have lectures and tutes which start around midday. Our days can finish anywhere between 3-7 pm.
During COVID 2021, placement continued almost without disruption although with obvious restrictions on rotations with vulnerable groups. Students had to self-regulate numbers on ward rounds and at times were limited in their opportunity to scrub into theatre due to PPE shortages. Also, if there was ever a lockdown in Melbourne we were asked not visit or if we were already there then we were prohibited from coming back until the restrictions were lifted.

Student support is genuine at the School of Rural Health and it was very reassuring to see that the staff truly cared about our experiences in and out of the hospital. We are encouraged to come talk about any issues we may be facing. Additionally, there are bulk billing GP clinics to be found in Bendigo and free, professional counselling available to SRH Bendigo students specifically.

**Accommodation and Lifestyle**

Most of the Monash 3B students will stay at Lister House, although you can organise your own private dwelling if you choose. The accommodation is a 5-minute walk from the main streets of Bendigo and a 15-minute walk to Bendigo train station. Right next to the picturesque Sacred Heart Cathedral. There are two buildings, Old and New Lister, housing year 3s and year 5s respectively and a courtyard perfect for backyard cricket or a chill in the sun (keeping in mind sunny days will be a rarity in the winter months).

When living in Old Lister, you will have your own room with a single bed, study desk, armchair and ample cupboard space. The rooms are by no means flashy but spacious and comfortable. Showers, Kitchen and Laundry facilities are communal with 4 showers and 4 toilets per floor of about 10 people depending on the time of year (allied health students move in and out due to their changing rotations). Each Kitchen is shared by 6-8 students and all communal spaces including bathrooms are cleaned regularly.

The large common rooms and adjoining shared kitchens make for a fantastic social space to get to know your fellow students very well. If you arrive with an open mind, there is no doubt you will make lasting friends and memories. There is also a dedicated study room making study groups and OSCE practice easy to organise.

Coles, Woolies and Aldi are within a 5-minute drive. McQuinn’s gym is a 2-minute walk down the hill (you’ll find Lister is built at the top of what I believe is the steepest road in Bendigo so enjoy walking back after leg day) and students were offered a discounted membership for $9.5/week (may need to pay for the months you want upfront though). Snap Fitness, boxing at Bendigo Hit Factory and yoga is also an option in Bendigo.

If you head away from the city centre, the quiet side streets of Bendigo are wide, leafy places that make for relaxing walks and runs. And if you are after good cycling trails or hikes take a step into the Visitor’s Information centre on Pall Mall where they will be happy to point in any number of excellent directions.
Having a car in Bendigo will make life easier but you don’t need one to get around. It’s a 5-minute drive to the hospital from Lister, but all-day free parking is hard to get after 8 am (Flood or Niemann St. usually pull through though). I cannot recommend cycling to the hospital enough, it’s an approx. 6-minute ride (5 if you’re speedy) through the park and you can lock up right on the doorstep – no parking dramas. Lister also has a dedicated bike storage. Many people also chose to walk to the hospital which will take around 15-20 minutes.

Extra-Curricular
Four students staying at Lister house will have the opportunity to be Residential Advisors, where you will help the accommodation team with managing Lister House. Benefits include cheaper rent and a bigger room. There are also several roles available as part of Wildfire, Bendigo’s Rural and Indigenous Health Club. The committee will regularly organise trivia nights, barbeques, fundraisers and some of the year’s most anticipated events; the Bendigo Clinical Skills Weekend and Bendigo Ball!

The Rural school is very supportive of students volunteering with The Smith Family, which involves tutoring disadvantaged VCE students on a Tuesday afternoon – a great way to give back to the community. Tutoring and other casual jobs are certainly doable, but harder if you plan on going back to Melbourne on the weekends.
Like many rural and regional towns, sport is living and breathing in Bendigo. We joined social basketball and mixed netball leagues to get in on the action. And there is a lot more on offer. For the creatively inclined, there is also the opportunity to join the Bendigo Symphony Orchestra and the Bendigo Theatre Company, with regular performances put on by both organisations.

**Things to Do**

For sport and recreation look no further than Faith Leech Aquatic Centre (with the legendary Hoobee Tubee water slide), Queen Victoria Oval and Rosalind Park which are all within walking distance.

We are also a stone’s throw from the city’s chic Arts precinct which is kitted out with two galleries (the Bendigo Art Gallery is not to be missed) and an array of unique stores and eateries.

Bendigo is graced with an impressive number of op shops, hidden laneways (look out for Chancery and Victoria Lane), and cafes to discover. Some stand out restaurants include Harpoon Social Club, El Gordo, Harvest and Tap House. We also have the Good Loaf inside the School of Rural Health, where you will regularly find yourself enjoying a coffee and meal with your team. Other cool attractions are the Greenhouse and the Flying Foxes at the Fernery in Rosalind Park, the Chinese Gardens Reserve, ‘Book Now’ the second-hand bookstore and Lake Weeroona.

If you’re looking for a good night out, have no fear you will get it. Give Handle Bar and the Tonic a try for a boogie. Or Yard Bird (you will be the only ones younger than 40 but they have some great live music on Friday and Saturday nights), The Rifle (which for some became a Wednesday arvo tradition, especially those ambitious enough to try joining their ‘100 Pint Club’) and The Dispensary for something a bit more laid back.

Year 3B at Bendigo makes for a truly exciting and memorable year both in and out at the hospital and I encourage all to consider it!

*Sahar Shavit*
Welcome to the rural city of sunny Mildura! With a close-knit cohort of 16 students both undergrad and postgrad, friendly and supportive faculty members, a great hospital environment and plenty to see and do, Mildura is a fantastic place to undertake your first clinical year.

**Placement**
Throughout the year, students rotate through a number of different disciplines, including General medicine, Surgery, Orthopedics, Emergency and General Practice. Typically, you attend these placements four half days a week, with classes scheduled most for afternoons. Wednesdays are reserved solely for teaching which offers a nice break from the early mornings of placement, which start between 6:30 and 9am, depending on the rotation. Students spend time attending ward rounds with a designated medical/surgical team, as well as time in theatre or optional clinics with locum specialists including anaesthetics, cardiology, rheumatology and endocrinology. Unlike most metro placements which have specific medical rotations, Mildura students spend most time in general medicine or surgery which is fantastic for continual exposure to patient cases central to high yield year 3B knowledge. Additionally, due to the small number of students there is lots of hands-on experience. Befriend an intern and you’ll find yourself actually contributing whilst ticking off your required skills - history taking, examinations, cannulations, venepuncture, suturing and catheterisation to name a few.
Many of the doctors in Mildura are locums from Melbourne hospitals like the Alfred or Austin, who rotate in and out every few months. This provides a great opportunity to meet a variety of doctors and learn from their different approaches to patient care. Consultants and registrars in particular are often very willing to teach and often take their own time to explain cases and answer questions. You might also get given homework tasks as they genuinely care about your education. Plus, there are two fantastic cafes (including the famous Nash Lane) that teams frequent for breaks, where you’ll not only score free coffees but impromptu tutes from your team.

**Classes**

If you find in-person classes much more engaging than zoom tutes, Mildura is a great place to be due to substantial amounts of designated teaching time. The staff always push for face-to-face classes, and practical clinical skills teaching generally goes ahead throughout the whole year. These in-person, small group size classes are great for being able to contribute to the group as well as asking questions and getting feedback. Your teachers know your name (and sometimes your coffee order), and it’s great not getting lost among a sea of blank screens on zoom. Students in Mildura have access to a designated clinical skills tutorial room, which contains equipment for all 3B clinical skills.

A highlight includes the simulation models, which respond to any medical interventions administered. This allows students to practice examinations, auscultating heart and lung sounds. The model itself is also used in simulation scenarios in which students are trained to respond to emergency situations. These sessions are always fantastic and highly recommended. The tutors themselves are doctors who work in the area, so you’ll not only see them during placement but maybe also at markets, shops and at brunch on Saturdays. Between classes you can hang out in the student common room, which is well stocked with tea, coffee and board games. It’s also a great place to interact with other year levels, with year 5 students often running relaxed tutorials in the student building.
**Transport**

The distance from Melbourne to Mildura can initially seem very daunting for students, however there are many solutions available. What other placement would guarantee you relaxed country road trips with friends? Alternatively, there is an overnight coach where you can sleep the entire journey away, which is particularly useful if you are travelling alone or don’t have a car. Flights are available, although as these rarely drop below $200 one-way, most students find other means of transport. It can feel somewhat isolating at times, so remember to nurture your connections back home. However, due to the long travel times most people stick around on weekends, meaning there are always people to explore town with (or study/practice OSCEs with!).

Transport within Mildura is also very doable. Although there is very limited public transport, the hospital, supermarkets and restaurants are all within a 5-minute drive of your accommodation. Depending on which house you are in, it is very possible to walk or cycle everywhere you need to go.

**Accommodation**

All the houses are relatively modern and equipped with all the furniture and appliances you could need. The main living spaces are perfect for lounge-room cinemas, and some backyards are great for barbeques. If you’re lucky enough to get the master suite, you will also have an ensuite and walk-in-wardrobe. The houses provide more personal space and a very different dynamic to other college-style accommodation. You can also preference to live with your friends if you all plan to come to Mildura together. Houses at the south end of Mildura are situated close to lakes which are perfect for evening walks to check out the stunning Mildura sunsets, and houses at the north end are conveniently located close to the action of town. As you share rent within houses of 2-4, your housemates become your family away from home.

**Things to do**

Mildura offers a great blend of climates and landscapes, with plenty of beautiful scenery to discover and a thriving food scene. The Murray River is a spectacular location for walks, picnics, and a weekly community parkrun on Saturday mornings. There are several national parks located relatively close by for day trips and hikes, notably Perry Sandhills and Mungo National Park. There’s also plenty to do outside of uni, and most students are involved in community sports and classes – netball, gyms, golf, horse riding, jiu jitsu, volunteering and even a highly-recommended pole studio!
Our favourite spots to eat or study include some very trendy cafes that feel like they’re straight out of Melbourne - Blk Mlk has a great vibe and Nash Lane serves the best coffee in town. Restaurants include Cafe 1909, perfectly situated on the picturesque riverfront, the rooftop Langtree Bar/Cafe, as well as a variety of cuisines - Seoul Korean Chicken, Thairiffic, Andy’s Kitchen and Mr Banh Mi are a few of our favourites. Mildura nightlife includes plenty of atmospheric bars such as The Corporate Moose, Secret Garden, Sip and the Office. It’s also home to several nightclubs (you’ll soon be too well acquainted with Sandbar and its accompanying Heaven nightclub). Being a prominent farming area, Mildura is also home to several wineries and distilleries - with its free wine tasting and beautiful scenery, Trentham winery is not to be missed, and Fossey’s Gin distillery offers incredible flavoured gin which makes for a perfect touristy gift to take back home.

Overall, while Mildura is the furthest placement site from Melbourne, the small class sizes, personal involvement within the hospital and community, top quality cafes and restaurants make Mildura a great choice for your foundation clinical year.

Mykelti Kotzur, Anita Date and Marina Li
While we were on General Surgery, we also spent time in Endoscopy and Anaesthetics. During each of these rotations, we felt like valued members of the team 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 got to scrub in and assist during surgeries, regularly perform procedures including the insertion of cannulas and catheters, intubate patients and write patient notes.

As the Year 3B team in Sale consists of only 10 students, there are plenty of opportunities to interact with patients and hone our history, examination and procedural skills with no competition for participation. Another benefit of such a cosy cohort size is that staff members get to know you as a person rather than just another student. This year, along with sharing life advice over coffee, our lovely consultants, registrars and interns have provided us with bedside teaching, tutorials on requested matrix topics, baked goods and some even came along to trivia!
We received the bulk of our teaching in the form of PBLs (similar to ICLs in Year 2 and CAPs in Year A), clinical reasoning tutorials and Zoom classes on various specialties. We were also provided sessions to practice performing procedures such as catheterisation in the skills lab (which is open to students at all times for practice). Our classes have been run by a wide range of health professionals including consultant physicians and surgeons, GPs, and nurse educators. All of our passionate and experienced tutors have worked to provide excellent education both in the hospital and the classroom. Student-run OSCE and case nights as well as weekly 5th year teaching were also wonderful opportunities to consolidate our learning. At the hospital, our spacious common room is a great place for downing some food (the cafeteria at the hospital is not only inexpensive but yum, and has a free coffee machine), some friendly table tennis between students (and sometimes surgeons), or study between classes.

Unlike many other sites, we were fortunate to undertake all of our Sale classes in person except during lockdown (however we were still allowed on placement during these times).

**Accommodation**

One of the best things about placement in Sale is that the hospital is less than a five minute drive from all Monash accommodation (and the parking at the hospital is free and plentiful at all hours!). If you don’t have a car, you can ride a bike or take a lovely walk in the fresh country air through the botanical gardens to the hospital. This practically non-existent commute means you don’t have to wait in traffic every morning (and you can even wake up 20 minutes before ward rounds start).

The Monash accommodation provided for students is large and comfortable with generous living areas. It is fully furnished and services are well-maintained by the university, including gardening and repairs. 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 in no time.
Things to do
Where to start? There is no shortage of exciting things, both indoors and outdoors, to get up to in Sale. One of the benefits of having 10 students is that we all get to know and support each other throughout the journey of Year 3B. We can all easily fit around the one dinner (or trivia) table, or pile into two cars to head out and explore!

Explore one of the many trails within walking distance of Monash accommodation (Sale wetlands, Sale Botanical Gardens) or only a short drive away (Mitchell River, Tarra-Bulga). Consider saying hello to the friendly peacocks that freely roam the Sale Botanical Gardens, grab some free fresh local produce from the Sale Community Garden or watch the sunset over Lake Guthridge. Sale is also fortunate to have both the mountains and the beach at its doorstep. Check out the Ninety Mile Beach at nearby locations like Seaspray, Golden Beach and Lakes Entrance, or take a day trip to the snow (Mount Bawbaw, Mount Hotham) or Wilson’s Prom. Enjoy the sights and sip away at some of Gippsland’s finest wineries (e.g. Blue Gables, Lightfoot and Sons) and don’t miss the Tinamba Food and Wine Festival for a feed and a boogie to some live local artists.

If brunch is more your thing, check out one of the many local cafes (Portside, Wild Honey, Jack Ryan’s bottomless brunch) and Melburnians, don’t stress - there is decent coffee! Grab dinner, drinks and a show at the local theatre, the Wedge, or hit up Thursday night trivia at the Star Hotel, or karaoke at Jack Ryan’s bar.

If you’re keen for some quiet time to study, visit the modern, spacious Sale Library with views overlooking the Port of Sale, and while you’re there check out the Gippsland Art Gallery (the only place in Victoria to display this year’s Archibald Prize). Catch a movie at the quaint local cinema; join a local sports team; attend a fun run; work up a sweat at one of the local gyms or pools; go to a farmers’ market; volunteer at a nearby aged care facility... the list of things to do in Sale goes on and on!

Piyumini Weerakoon and Sofia Carter
A placement at Traralgon (Latrobe Regional Hospital, LRH) is arguably one of the most sought after rural placements in 3B, and it is easy to see why, from the fantastic supportive staff to the numerous clinical opportunities and specialist ward rounds, why would you go anywhere else?

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 the aim of limiting the impact of covid lockdowns if they occur. 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 a number of 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.

**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. I personally recommend the freshly baked bread and French pastry stall (the raspberry and pistachio croissants are AMAZING).

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 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 right 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.

Maddy Bender
Curriculum
In 2021, the Warragul 3B cohort consisted of eight students, providing a great opportunity to get to know all your peers and support each other through the year. This group is supported by a small team of staff who will go above and beyond to make all aspects of your year, from classes to accommodation, as smooth as possible. At Warragul, you will have the opportunity to rotate through the hospital's main specialities, including surgery, general medicine, theatre, ED, endoscopy, oncology, radiology and haemodialysis. You will also have the chance to visit the surgical consulting suites (the surgeons will often let you scrub in after being with them in the clinic) and a spirometry clinic.

On these rotations you will quickly become a member of the treating team, which will most often include a consultant, registrar, intern and occasionally a year 5D student. You'll find that within your first few months you are the one taking the patient notes on rounds, placing the cannulas, taking bloods and a host of other clinical skills as you learn them. The slower pace of some rotations at Warragul allows impromptu teaching on the wards, so you will often have the chance to practice your history taking and physical exams with the interns or year 5Ds.
Medical and surgical rotations are two weeks long and all other rotations are only 1 week long, so you will be rotating through the hospital very quickly. A strong element of the Warragul 3B placement is the clinical skills educator. This is a practicing nurse who will first teach you the essential 3B clinical skills through simulations before taking you into the hospital for a one-on-one practice session. Given the small cohort of students, you will have no competition and find it quite easy to complete your logbook requirements.

The classes provided for Warragul students are run by local doctors who genuinely have an interest in your education. You will have bedside tutorials with real patients, run by experienced doctors regularly. These bedsides are often done in pairs with a fellow 3B student and provide a great chance for one-on-one time with consultants and registrars. You will also participate in weekly PBLs, clinical reasoning classes and regular case presentations, which provide a very inclusive and comfortable learning environment to ask questions.

You are generally required to attend the hospital three days per week, however, this is very flexible. If you feel you are benefitting a lot from being in the hospital, you are more than welcome to spend all day there. If you have other commitments or need time to study, the staff are more than accommodating and are happy for you to leave after a couple of hours. It should be noted that in the past, Warragul students were required to travel to Traralgon once every fortnight for some classes, however, this has not been the case in 2021.

**Accommodation**

Most students at Warragul elect to live in the Monash rentals which are located in various locations throughout the town. These rentals are fully furnished 3- or 4-bedroom houses subsidised by the university and come to around $110 per week, with all utilities included. Gardening, maintenance, and inspections are all organised by the university, so there is very little actual work you need to do. In 2021, both of the Monash 3B student accommodations were about a 6-minute drive from the hospital, a 4-minute drive to the centre of town and were close to local parks and footy ovals. So if you don’t want to go house hunting and enjoy the convenience of Monash rentals, then this is possibly the option for you. You will get the chance to nominate preferences for housemates, however, there is no guarantee you will get everyone you want.
There are many options if you want to rent privately in Warragul or any of the nearby towns. This will give you the freedom to live where you want and to choose who you live with, however, it is likely to be slightly more expensive (around $350-$400 per week plus bills for a 3-bedroom house). Warragul is generally a pretty safe place, however as a general rule, the closer to town the better.

**Things to do**

Warragul might be a relatively small town compared to some of the other options offered to year 3B students, however, there are plenty of things to sink your teeth into. For a start, you can’t beat the local country sports teams, including football, swimming, badminton, tennis, basketball, netball and more. The town also has great sporting facilities, including multiple 24-hour gyms, tennis courts, ovals, a velodrome, swimming pools and isn’t far from some scenic biking routes. Voyage Fitness is a go-to for many students since they have a rather nice deal for hospital staff, it is always interesting running into nurses and doctors at the gym.

Warragul has some quality food. If you are all about the cafes, then there are plenty to try out including Frankies, Main Street Café, Shed 28 and more. If you’re looking for dinner, some student favourites include Siam Pesto, The Courthouse, Portelli’s, Royal Kebabs 88 or Indian food from the Shell servo. If you’re looking for a loud evening The Bank turns into a club on Saturday nights, or if you’re looking for a quiet night in, the local Woollies, Coles and Aldi have you covered.

The Warragul Farmer’s Market at Civic Park is held on the third Saturday of every month, and has all sorts of food trucks, arts and craft, fresh fruit and veg, baked goods and even live music. Go and explore the local towns, you’ll also find that Yarragon and Rokeby have similarly enjoyable markets, as well as plenty of bakeries and natural attractions.

If you are more of the outdoor type, then Warragul is an ultimate location. With a quick trip in the car, you could find yourself skiing at Mt Baw Baw, hiking at Wilsons Promontory, or drinking your way through the wineries of Gippsland. Or if you’re missing home, with a quick trip up the freeway or on the V/Line you will find yourself back in Melbourne within an hour. Offering the best that the country has to offer, without disconnecting you from the activities in metro Melbourne.

Lucas Neumaier
Year 4C
Hospital Placements
Curriculum
The Bendigo specialties semester is divided into three rotations of psychiatry, children’s health, and women’s health. Each rotation is for six weeks with dedicated teaching for each rotation throughout the semester.

Psychiatry
Psychiatry placement at Bendigo is split between hospital and community settings, with dedicated communication/debrief sessions and peer-lead discussions on Mondays. Hospital-based placement is split between the inpatient units: adult acute unit (AAU), older person’s acute unit (OPAU), parent infant unit (PIU), extended care unit (ECU) and enhanced crisis assessment team (ECAT). Community placement is spread between sites such as the dual diagnosis unit (DDU), Headspace, youth and adult prevention and recovery centres, and other community-based teams. I would highly recommend practicing MSEs whenever you’re observing a clinician interview a patient – the staff are very happy to hear you practice reporting back, and it’s very useful for developing a greater understanding of the terminology involved in psychiatry.

Children’s Health
Paediatric placement is primarily hospital-based, with scheduled sessions with community-based services such as maternal child health clinics and Bendigo Special Development School (some of which were cancelled or rescheduled due to COVID-related lockdowns). Hospital placement is focused on the child adolescent unit (CAU) and special care baby unit (SCBU) – the team also travel down to ED for admissions and attend many vaginal births and Caesarean sections. There is significant time allocated to both public clinics at the hospital and private clinics in the paediatricians’ consulting rooms offsite. Rapid Review Clinic is a student-lead clinic run on a Friday afternoon: students see their own patients, and present the history, examination findings, present proposed investigations/management to the paediatrician, and complete patient notes by writing referrals and letters to GPs. It is a very supportive environment and a great opportunity to get feedback and complete OCEs.
Women’s Health
The women’s rotation is a challenging but extremely worthwhile experience. Five weeks are divided between birthing suite, theatre, and a range of clinics: gynae, CST, COLP, family planning, antenatal, and lactation. One week is dedicated to mentor week – this involves shadowing a consultant for a full week and may include on-call shifts overnight or over the weekend and travel to surrounding towns. A lot of time is spent on the wards during birth suite, so bring some study to do to pass the time if you’re not directly involved in the labour (this is a better way to spend time and build rapport with the labouring person and their team).

Tutorials
Teaching is scheduled from 4-7pm three days a week: psychiatry on Mondays, GP on Tuesdays, and women’s health on Thursdays. Children’s health teaching occurs on Wednesday afternoons during the six-week paeds rotation, which includes small group tutorials, bedside tutorials, and simulation sessions. More often than not the classes will finish before 7pm, with a very comprehensive excel spreadsheet or two listing the topics for each week.

Accommodation
Monash 4C students are provided with four share houses – two in East Bendigo and two in North Bendigo, roughly 2.2km and 1.9km from Bendigo Health respectively. The houses are new and fully furnished, with sufficient kitchen equipment, couches, TVs, washing machine, tumble dryer, and heating/cooling. The bedrooms have a king single bed, desk, bedside table, and lamp, with the master bedrooms having an ensuite.

Things To Do
The Greater Bendigo area is home to nearly 120,000 people and is never lacking in things to do (except during lockdown!). There are many clubs and groups to get involved with and quite a few events and festivals throughout the year to get fully immersed into the Bendigo community. There are museums, wineries, art galleries, lakes, and botanical gardens to fill in your “spare time” – I would highly recommend getting a Bendigo Ambassador Pass to get free entry into many of these venues. The best coffee at the hospital is at The Good Loaf Café in the Monash building. Grounded and Old Green Bean have the best coffee in town. It would be remiss of me not to recommend Ghosty Toasty for incredible toasties and fresh bagels, and Harvest Food and Wine make to-die-for almond croissants on Saturday mornings.

Nicole Moon
**Curriculum**
The hospital semester in Mildura split into three rotations: Psychiatry, Women’s Health and Children’s Health. Depending on the length of the semester, these are 5 or 6 weeks each. Teaching of all three subject-areas is semester-long and usually occurs in the afternoon, leaving most mornings free for ward rounds. A typical week of teaching looks like:

**Monday**: GP revision tutorials with the lovely Dr Paige Thompson/online dermatology tutorials. Dr Thompson is a great tutor with lectures structured in a concise series of case examples - perfect for exam revision.

**Wednesday**: Morning paediatric lectures and afternoon simulation lab sessions. Dr Dan Ki’s teaching is outstanding so make sure to ask any and all questions, and don’t be afraid to really lean into the simulation experience. These teaching days are invaluable opportunities to consolidate matrix topics and gain practical experience and feedback.

**Thursday**: Psychiatry with Dr Pham (psychogeriatrician). It’s hard not to gain an interest in psychiatry with Dr Pham’s teaching. His classes cover the absolute essentials of psychiatry (‘the fish bones’) and give you a great footing for your rotation. He is a kind and approachable mentor and very much a performer in his teaching style. To get the most out of his lectures, doing a little pre-reading is essential so you can anticipate the direction of discussion (no note-taking in these sessions!).

**Friday**: Women’s health with Dr Wendy Hughes. Dr Hughes is an expert in her field and these sessions are very useful for picking her brain about any and everything you may not fully understand about women’s health. However, they can be longer in duration and require a bit of stamina.
**Paediatrics**

This is the most loaded rotation in terms of logbook requirements, so the best advice is to take any and every chance to take a history, do an exam or a baby check - even if you don’t feel entirely confident. The consultants and teams are very accommodating and aware that we have a heavy workload, so they have provided fantastic (and much needed) support on the wards. Take particular advantage of Dr Ki’s weeks as the ward consultant. He always has great teaching points and strives to help you get the most out of your time in paediatric wards. Another good tip would be to return to the ward after afternoon classes/during lunch time to occasionally catch new admissions and discharges.

The only downside to paediatrics in Mildura is the small ward size. Often, there are not many patients, but all the more reason to seize every opportunity (hopefully COVID rules will relax and you will gain access to ED). Always remember to ask early for help or an extension if you are struggling to get things signed off or to find a case for your presentation.

**Psychiatry**

This is the most relaxed rotation out of the three, both in terms of workload and contact hours. Yet it is invaluable to learn and understand psychiatric conditions, and these will most certainly reappear in every future area of clinical practice.

Review starts at 8:30 am and ends around noon. Consultation-liaison/client reviews with Dr Pham or other consultants start later. The team is brilliant and the pace on the ward is rather relaxed. There are no formal logbook requirements so it is the perfect rotation to be fully engaged in every conversation and extract as much as possible from the registrars and consultants wealth of knowledge. Of course, it’s good to also fit in some study, and it is definitely refreshing to have exposure to disorders of mental health after many years of anatomy and physiology.

Some students can find interaction with certain patients troubling, and listening to their trauma can be a heavy load to carry as you begin your rotation. Always remember to prioritise your own mental well-being above all: Leave the room if you feel uncomfortable and always trust your gut feeling if you feel unsafe.
Women’s Health
As with most rotations, getting involved with the team will help you to learn and experience the maximum amount that women’s health has to offer. The director of O&G (Dr Brian McCully) is incredibly attentive to both staff and student welfare, making sure that everyone gets the most out of their time in the department. The entire team was incredibly welcoming with almost-daily teaching on various topics (don’t ever hesitate to ask a question).

Don’t be alarmed if you are asked to leave a birth suite when a midwifery student is given priority. It is not a logbook requirement to witness a birth, however, it is one of the greatest joys of obstetrics and a valuable experience.
In addition to birth suite, there are also ward rounds/post delivery reviews, antenatal clinics, gynae clinics, and theatre lists for both gynae and obstetrics patients. If you are assertive and inform your supervisors in advance, it is quite easy to sign of logbook tasks for this rotation.

Accommodation
There are many joys of living in Monash accommodation with fellow meddies – be sure to lean into these friendships and ask logistical questions of the students that have done a rotation before you. The houses are well-furnished and easy walking or cycling distance to the hospital – but a car is recommended if you hope to venture much further than this.

Things to do
There is so, so much to see outside of the hospital. Being a considerably large town, Mildura lends itself to an excellent range of eateries, entertainment, and utilities. Particular foodie favourites include Nash Lane, Indian Taste Makers, Fossey’s (gin) distillery, and Seoul Chicken and Beer. You may be lucky enough to be invited to a dinner with your hospital team – joining these social events is great for mentorship/career advice as well as general bonding with the team.

For the sunny Mildura days, Apex Beach is great for swimming in the Murray river. ParkRun operates along the River from Lock 11 and there is a superb Farmer’s Market once a fortnight. There is beautiful green grass along the riverfront in town which is perfect for afternoon picnics and naps. Be sure to intentionally get involved from the first weeks of your rotation, as the weeks will fly past faster than you realise.

Carolin Cao & Georgia Maroske
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 Year 4C 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 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

Curriculum
At Traralgon, you’ll spend 18 weeks at Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) rotating through obstetrics/gynaecology, paediatrics and psychiatry. These rotations are 6 weeks long, and are really hands on to enable you to learn a lot.

Women’s health
In this rotation you will split time between the ward, consulting clinics and theatre. On the ward there is the opportunity to see births and practice procedural skills such as venepuncture and cannulation. In theatre, there is the chance to see/assist in caesarean sections and a range of gynaecological procedures. It’s a good idea to make friends with the midwives on the ward early on in your rotation, as this will help in seeing births on the labour ward.

Paediatrics
The time in this rotation is split between consulting clinics and the ward. Being on the ward means you will get to see patients in ED, attend caesarean sections with the neonatal resuscitation trolley, examine babies in the special care nursery, as well as children on the ward. Consulting suites is an opportunity to see plenty of behavioural presentations.

Psychiatry
As well as being on the aged/inpatient psych ward, you get to spend time in community mental health services - such as Child & Youth, Adult or Acute Crisis Intervention. This rotation is very different from the others, but you get to mix with students from Warragul and Sale which is fun.
Accommodation
There are a few houses in Traralgon and one in Morwell, this is fine though as LRH is in the middle of the two towns. It is approximately a 10 minute drive in both directions. The houses vary from 2-4 bedrooms and (I think) all have double beds. They are fully furnished, with plenty of crockery, cutlery and cookware. The rent is $110 per week, which includes everything except food.

Transport
A car isn’t required but is really helpful considering people on different rotations start at different times of the day, and depending on the day, will finish at different times too. However, there is plenty of public transport, taxi and bike lanes if you are really keen.

Things to do
There are heaps of things to do in the area, with plenty of restaurants/cafes and outdoor fun. Some great places to eat at are MOMO, House of Frank and The Vault on Church. Some places you could visit are Tarra Bulga National Park, Yarragon, Inverloch (for the beach!), and Toorongo Falls. For those who have commitments in Melbourne, it is less than a 2 hour drive from Traralgon but is still considered "regional Victoria" for when those pesky lockdowns hit.

Ashlea McCallum
Warragul

Warragul is the closest Monash rural site to Melbourne, being about an hour from Clayton. The hospital serves a huge catchment area, with many patients preferring Warragul to other hospitals near them. Monash Rural Health has a great new building just above the hospital with tute rooms, a skills lab and a lounge to serve the year 3B, 4C and 5D students lucky enough to be placed at Warragul.

Curriculum

Children’s Health
Warragul has a five-bed paediatric ward, four Special Care Nursery beds and many postnatal beds. This may not sound a lot, but they are kept very busy, with patients coming from all over west and south Gippsland. The small team of residents and senior registrars run the show during the day, with an on-call consultant at the nearby rooms of West Gippsland Paediatric Group. You can get heaps of hands-on experience on the ward and in ED helping manage more acute presentations ranging from asthma to seizures and more. You also get lots of baby checks! The consulting rooms are a great insight into outpatient paediatrics with some very complex cases locally managed by the amazing paediatricians. Teaching during the rotation was on Wednesday mornings via Zoom with the students from Traralgon and Sale. There are generally only 2-3 students at each site.

Psychiatry
Psychiatry placements throughout all of Gippsland take place at Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) in Traralgon, and accommodation is offered for Warragul and Sale students at a house on the edge of hospital grounds for that rotation. It’s a great house only a two minute walk from the ward and a short drive from the community clinics.

Women’s Health
Warragul Hospital sees hundreds of births each year across its five birth suites. As a student you have the opportunity to rotate through birth suites, theatre and both obstetric and gynaecology clinics. In theatre, you have the chance to practise a variety of clinical skills and assist in procedures! Teaching was on Wednesday afternoons with Traralgon and Sale students via a combination of Zoom and in-person teaching at Traralgon, which is a 40 minute drive from Warragul.
Accommodation
Monash offers subsidised accommodation in multiple houses across Warragul. These vary in size and number of residents and are all very liveable. Warragul is also home to 3B, 5D and 4C GP students so there’s plenty of people around to socialise.

Things to do
Warragul sits just outside of metropolitan Melbourne and is a perfect place to explore the wonders of Gippsland. It has glorious views of Mt Baw Baw and is within driving distance of rainforests, mountains, ski resorts and beaches. It’s an easy drive or V/Line into Melbourne (at this point it’s basically just an outer suburb).

Warragul has all the big shops and a great range of cafes and restaurants. It is worth noting that Warragul Hospital does not have any barista made coffee on or near hospital grounds, but I am reliably assured that the coffee in town (all of four minutes from the hospital) is excellent.

I recommend Warragul to anyone wanting the opportunity to really get involved in their hands-on learning. You learn the curriculum, and by becoming a part of the team, you also learn and practise the skills to becoming an intern and beyond. And all while living in a beautiful part of the world.

Barton Lowe
Year 4C GP Placements
Goldfields

Clinics
- Campaspe Family Practice (Kyneton)
- Botanical Gardens Health (Castlemaine)
- Lyttleton Street Medical Clinic (Castlemaine)
- Mostyn Street Clinic (Castlemaine)
- Clarendon Medical Centre (Maryborough)

Curriculum
As part of the Goldfields rotation, students will be allocated to two full GP days and one hub day (usually on Wednesday) at Castlemaine hospital every week. The timetable for hub day is organised in advance to try and cover a broad range of conditions across all matrices by the end of semester. The teaching is largely conducted by local GPs in Castlemaine, who have great knowledge in the fields they teach, but other doctors from neighbouring areas (such as Bendigo) are also invited to teach on occasion. Not only is theoretical knowledge a focus, but a more hands on experience will also be employed through simulated scenarios and suturing lessons!

Clinical Reasoning Tutorials, WHCD (Women’s Health Case Discussions) & CHCD’s (Children’s Health Case Discussions) are also conducted throughout the semester. The week before each session, a scenario will be distributed with tasks allocated to each student. Students must then research their task and prepare a presentation highlighting key points.

Finally, there are community placements intertwined throughout the rotation which include visits to maternal and child health nurse services, inpatient rehabilitation, community mental health, palliative care, community nursing and pre/antenatal days with Dr Richard Mayes.
Placements

Campaspe Family Practice offers many opportunities for medical students to interact with a wide variety of patients with different presenting complaints and practice vital clinical skills. It is a very large GP clinic with multiple consulting rooms (even a dedicated medical student consulting room) and a large nursing station. The clinic will allocate you to different doctors with different special interests so you will be able to observe how they consult and eventually when you feel confident, you may begin parallel consulting yourself. Sometimes you will be allocated to the nursing station where you will be given the opportunity to perform procedures such as immunisations, venepunctures and cannulas, learn how to clean wounds and apply dressings, and so much more.

When you are allocated to doctors with a special interest in skin, you will also be given the chance to perform shave/punch biopsies, cryotherapy and even suture. So, when you are not parallel consulting make sure you head down to the nursing station and get friendly with the amazing nursing staff for a plethora of opportunities! Or instead, head to the staff room for a nice cup of coffee or tea. Furthermore, because the clinic is directly attached to the local hospital, you will often get to see patients in the emergency department, oncology, palliative care and even some surgical patients. All the staff at the clinic are extremely welcoming and friendly, as well as the patients so you will settle in very comfortably.

Accommodation

The student accommodation is a six-bedroom house, each with a double bed, bedside table, desk, wardrobe, and most importantly, an en suite bathroom! The house comes fully furnished and crockery and other cooking equipment is provided. It is only a 5-minute walk away from the clinic (ask for directions to the secret shortcut door) and a 5-10 minute drive into town for groceries at the local Woolies!
Castlemaine

Placement
Castlemaine is an extremely warm and welcoming place to enjoy your GP semester placement. If you are placed at Lyttleton Street Medical Practice, you most probably will be paired up with Dr Richard Mayes, a local GP/O&G at Castlemaine hospital and an extremely friendly and knowledgeable doctor. In clinic, you will be given a great number of opportunities to both observe consultations and carry out your own parallel consulting. From the very beginning they give you the option to either see patients on your own, or sit and watch how their consults are run. Depending on which clinic you are placed in you will also have lots of opportunities to watch and take part in skin excisions, vasectomies, steroid injections, and vaccinations, which provide invaluable and hands-on experiences.

Accommodation
The student accommodation is a four-bedroom house (although there are usually only 3 students residing) with one shared bathroom. The house comes fully furnished and crockery and other cooking equipment is provided. It is only a 5-minute drive to Lyttleton and Mostyn, and within 5-10 minutes walking distance to Botanical Garden. Furthermore, it is only a 5-minute walk away from the hospital. The IGA Maxi (which is the largest supermarket located in Castlemaine) is only a 5-minute drive or 30-minute walk away.

Things to do
Castlemaine is an artsy, vintage, yet modern little town. There are numerous quaint, vintage book shops and art galleries which contain beautiful art pieces painted on site. Along with this, there is delicious food from Cafes like Saff’s to enjoy. The Mill is also a great place to do some thrift shopping as well as to try out the local draft beers. If you are looking for a nice place to walk/run, head down to the Castlemaine Botanical Garden which boasts stunning scenery.
Maryborough

Placement
Maryborough offers an incredible clinical experience that is very interactive and allows amazing opportunities for medical students to practice their craft. You will spend most of your days parallel consulting under the supervision of the local doctors. When you are not consulting patients, you will be in the nurses station completing skin excisions, punch biopsies, cryotherapy, as well observing and assisting the doctors performing more specialised tasks. When you are not confined to the GP practice, you are involved in the local aged care facilities and the hospital across the road, where you will assist on ward rounds, sit in on surgeries and conduct interviews and examinations on ED arrivals. The staff are very welcoming, the doctors are great teachers and incredibly generous in their time and the patients are friendly and allow plenty of student-orientated appointments.

Accommodation
The accommodation is a modern townhouse with three bedrooms that is located in a safe and comfortable area. The house comes fully furnished and crockery and other cooking equipment is provided. There is a small backyard and a garage that can store two cars. The house itself is only 700m from Princes Park and 1.5km from the General Practice.

Things to do
Within Maryborough there are three supermarkets, a Kmart, cafes, pubs, clothing stores and more, meaning you will not go without essential items whilst in Maryborough. For those who enjoy daily exercise there is Princes Park that provides a place to run, walk and bike ride. Lake Victoria in Princes Park also provides some scenic surroundings. There are local sports clubs that are part of the broader Bendigo leagues (which is great if you spend half a year in Bendigo also). Maryborough is also a very central location allowing you to travel to Bendigo, Ballarat, Castlemaine and Daylesford in under an hour and is only two hours away from Melbourne.

Hannah Teo, Goldfields & Kyneton
Felix Wang, Castlemaine
Harrison Monk, Maryborough
Highlands

Clinics
- Campaspe Medical Practice (Kyneton) – 1 student
- Brooke Street Medical Clinic (Woodend) – 2 students
- Ranges Medical Centre (New Gisborne) – 1 student
- Gisborne Medical Centre (Gisborne) – 3 students
- Neal Street Medical Clinic (Gisborne) – 1 student

Curriculum
The Highlands Hub is spread across five clinics in the Macedon Ranges, located an easy 1-1.5 hours’ drive/train-ride to Melbourne. The week is divided into two full days of consulting, one day of teaching at Brooke Street Medical Clinic, and one day of community placement. The Hub Day is largely student-run, with each person presenting a topic every week. The 18-week semester is a good opportunity to study not only the GP curriculum, but to get ahead on the specialty curriculum, which is facilitated both by the Hub Day topics, as well as community placement.

Placement
All clinics had some aspects of parallel/wave consulting from early on. However, the amount of parallel consulting depended on the clinic. For example, at Gisborne Medical you have your own room and a list of patients booked in specifically for the students, while at Neal Street you were allocated a GP which involved a mixture of sitting in and parallel consulting, depending on whether there were suitable patients. Most clinics have a ‘treatment room’ where you can do ECGs, immunisations, suturing, wound care etc., where the GPs will be happy to involve you if you ask, as well as visiting specialists and allied health if you’re keen to sit in with them. All the clinics have a friendly environment and team, and were happy to accommodate your learning as long as you ask!
There are additional community placements that make up about one day a week. These included a day each of gynae surgery, acute nursing and a psychiatry clinic at Kyneton hospital, as well as with the maternal and child health nurse, a pharmacist, sonographer, the district/palliative care nursing team and a child psychiatry assessment. I found all of my community placements extremely useful, with healthcare workers who were happy to teach and have you involved, though it should be said that student experiences vary, as with every site.

‘Hub Day’ is the teaching day at Brooke Street every Wednesday. It’s mostly student run, which means that you will likely have to present 1-2 topics every week, facilitated by one of the three GPs that run our teaching. This is a great opportunity if you learn from teaching others but not ideal if you prefer didactic teaching from clinicians.

Logbook: Really easy to get GP logbook signed off. I also got some of my 3B and 4C women’s logbook signed off.

**Accommodation**

Students placed at a Gisborne clinic can stay in a 3-bedroom house in Gisborne, within walking distance (15-25 minutes) of all the Gisborne clinics and ~5 minute walk to Coles. The house has one master bedroom with an ensuite and two other spacious bedrooms with a shared bathroom. All beds are king singles, and the house comes with a dishwasher and dryer. Also make sure to introduce yourself to the lovely neighbours in Unit 3.

Students placed at Woodend and Kyneton live in Kyneton, approximately 10 minutes from the clinic. This 6-bedroom house was shared with Goldfields students placed in Kyneton. All 6 rooms have a double bed, desk, cupboards and private ensuite with shower and toilet.
**Things to do**

I was placed at Neal Street in Semester 1, so I lived in Gisborne, and avoided most of the cold weather. Kyneton and Gisborne are similarly-sized, with Kyneton being a bit smaller and more historical. Kyneton Piper Street is well known for its restaurants, cafes and art galleries.

Walks and hikes were the mainstay of my adventures in the Macedon Ranges. From walks in the botanical gardens of Gisborne and Keyneton, the Campaspe River walk, to hiking trails on Mount Macedon, and Hanging Rock.

For the culinary-inclined, The Flying Pigeon and Canteena is great for lunch and dinner, you can find the best pizza at Gisborne Pizza and Pasta, and you can’t beat 3 Little Pigs for your hit of caffeine. In Kyneton, you can’t beat Piper Street, with restaurants including Home Grown on Piper, Duck Duck Goose & Larder, and Donkey Kyneton (which is on High Street, but great if you love fried chicken and a burger).

Both Kyneton and Gisborne also have private 24/7 gyms and 25m heated indoor pools. The hikes, walks and bike trails are also a great way to exercise, as well as local sporting clubs, (with a few of us joining badminton this year!).

Highlands is also a good option if you have frequent commitments in Melbourne. Proximity to Melbourne also meant that while there were no COVID restrictions, our family and friends could come and visit us in our new home in the Macedon Ranges.

*Nisangi Wijesinghe*
Having entered Swan Hill GP placement with some apprehension, I can say that I am so grateful I was placed here. To get the most out of placement and get a variety of opportunities, Swan Hill is an amazing place to be. The 18 weeks are a choose-your-own adventure, with the opportunity to get as hands-on as you want, and the support and guidance of experienced GPs that make you feel comfortable. The people are all down to earth, kind and grateful for your involvement as a student. This extends to the community, where there are opportunities to get involved in sport, art, and nature, among other things.

Placement

The placement gives knowledge that will set you up for your GP content, but also for your specialty rotations, with content for all specialties included.

In terms of placement, you get a well rounded experience from seeing patients wave consulting on 3-4 days a week, and your experiences in the hospital, all of which are irreplaceable. The clinic gives you an opportunity to work under different GPs across your time at the practice. This allows you to see the different approaches of many different clinicians, and learning which strengths from each of them you would like to bring to your own consults. It also means that because they have different interests, you get to learn in detail about many different specialties. Examples of these include chronic disease management such as Renal Disease, Hypertension and Diabetes, shared antenatal care and gynaecology, skin cancer and dermatology, musculoskeletal issues and paediatrics. Immersing yourself in the GP experience at Swan Hill allows you to apply the practical knowledge you have gained in a clinical setting that is supportive, with the opportunity to ask questions and be stumped, knowing there is a helpful mentor that ultimately takes responsibility for your work.

They also give you 45 minutes for consults which is more than enough time, and a two hour lunch break in the middle of the day to relax and have a break from medicine. Interspersed throughout the wave consulting is specialists who come up to Swan Hill regularly, giving you an opportunity to find your interests. Surgically minded students are allocated to theatre, while the visiting paediatricians and cardiologists are happy to have students, so you get to revise and learn from experts when you are interested.
During the rotation here, you also spend two weeks on Midwifery, and two weeks on ED. This gives a break from day-to-day in clinic, but also gives the opportunity to get births and procedures signed off, and the ED experience that most students only get in final year. As the only student in these areas, they get you involved and you get great access to clinicians for teaching. I used the opportunity on midwifery to clarify concepts I was unsure about with the consultant prior to exams, and the time on ED to refresh on the clinical skills taught in Year 3B, like cannulation and suturing, that weren’t necessarily put into practice on the wards during a COVID-affected 2020. Emily Harrison, the head of ED in Swan Hill, is extremely proactive and keen to teach students; you get a crash course in rural generalism in the best way possible. You are also able to organise extra time in ED or clock off early if it is quiet, and get to choose the level you play at. Whether you planned to be or not, you will feel more prepared and comfortable for Year 5D after time in Swan Hill as a student, having been taught in a supportive environment how to do the tasks required.

In terms of content teaching, there is a big hub day of learning once a week. Dr Hession, as the clinical lead, begins the day with teaching of GP content, but also has a focus on Women’s Health topics. Paediatric Surgery Tutorials and Paediatricians zoom in throughout the semester for additional content, and psychiatry content is taught as well, especially relevant skills such as mental state examinations and key conditions. Alongside other GPs who focus on their special interests, there is no doubt that the content learned is Swan Hill will set you up to be a great doctor in the future, and to ace your exams in the short term.

**Accommodation**
Generally eight students are placed in Swan Hill per semester, across two 4 bedroom houses.

The 64 McCrae Street house is within 200m of the GP clinic, amazingly close to town centre and is within walking distance of everything amazing in Swan Hill. The river, places to eat, local gyms and supermarket are all within a hop, skip and jump, and do not require a car to survive and thrive. Though this house is older, it does have newer additions such as portable heating, newer showers, stove tops, washing machines and dryers.

The second house at 16 Cutri Drive is a new Monash property, which we are excited to move into. As of writing (August 2021) we are due to move in by the end of next month, and the house looks very stylish with great amenities and new features. The negative of this house is that you will likely need to drive (approx 30 minute walk from the clinic). Feel free to send me a message on Facebook to find out our verdict on the house. We are super excited to check out our new home.

**Conclusion**
Overall with many opportunities to learn applied medicine, a great community that wants to get you involved, and lovely staff that make you feel at home, I would recommend Swan Hill to everyone. You will gain a lot out of the experience and the community you serve, and feel more prepared for what final year holds.

Shankar Seevanayagam
South Gippsland

Clinics
- 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 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.

Curriculum
A typical week of placement in South Gippsland consists of two to three days at your assigned GP clinic, one day of teaching and either days off or other scheduled activities. These other activities helped to keep the semester interesting as well as to prepare for the speciality rotation/consolidate knowledge. Examples of these activities include gynaecology clinic/theatre, visits to the local specialist schools and time at the ophthalmologist in Wonthaggi.

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 likely to invite you over for dinner one night. 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 thanks to the local GP anaesthetists. In Leongatha, time can also be spent at Urgent Care.
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 is 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.

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 Koonwarra General Store, 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. It boasts free Poker on Wednesday nights at The Exchange Hotel, The Foster Hot Bread Shop and Gurneys Cider, a cidery situated just outside of town. A short trip from Foster and the other locations is Wilson’s Promontory, a breathtaking national park.

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 will provide an amazing placement experience.

Zach Warren
‘West Gippsland’ encompasses a selection of GP clinics around Warragul, which itself is just over an hour’s drive from Melbourne. Of all the GP sites available in Gippsland if not regional Victoria, West Gippsland is the closest to Melbourne. All four towns are within a short drive from Warragul and on the V-line.

**Curriculum**

All students attend their GP for two full days, except for Neerim South, where the option is available to attend for three. Extra placements were also available this year at sites including at a local optometrist, special school, and West Gippsland Community Mental Health.

Thus, a typical week in West Gippsland GP would be two full days of placement (Tuesday and Thursday), with a possible extra placement day at one of the additional sites. Teaching takes place in-person with the two ‘Latrobe Valley’ (Traralgon-based) GP students on Wednesday mornings. The location alternates each week between the hospitals in Warragul and Traralgon. Both tutors who take the Wednesday classes – Dr. Paul Brougham and Dr. Jacob Lees – are excellent. Sometimes, there are additional classes on Fridays for extra topics like Med Law, Ethics and Women’s Health, which are for the most part held on Zoom.

This year, there were four GP clinics included in the ‘West Gippsland’ group. All four sites are located within a 5–20-minute drive from Warragul. With only one student placed at each site. With the ability to parallel consult available at all clinics, there is plenty of opportunity for getting valuable clinical experience, becoming part of the team, and coming into your own as a future doctor.
Accommodation
All students are provided the option of living in 2–4-person Monash student houses with all utilities included. Because of the proximity to Melbourne, driving in every morning from the city is also an option. Private rentals are affordable if you decide to live elsewhere.

Things to do
There’s plenty of down time in your schedule and plenty of things to do. Being in West Gippsland was especially advantageous given the myriad of lockdowns this year. Regional Victoria was either spared or at least had much more to do in their 5km zones. For a touch of nature, the Noojee Trestle Bridge is a nearby landmark. Mount Baw Baw is just a short drive away for those keen on hiking or even snowboarding, skiing or tobogganing in the winter. The Linear Arts Discovery Trail is a great running/cycling track that runs through Warragul itself – and my favourite spot for a leisurely weekend run. Uralla Nature Reserve is another nice hiking spot very close by. If you’re in the mood for a proper expedition, there is of course Phillip Island, Inverloch and Wilson’s Prom not too far away.

In terms of food, there is plenty of choice for all price ranges from fine dining (such as The Courthouse) or a quick cheeky takeaway (a personal favourite being Chris’ Fine Takeaway), and all sorts of cuisines as well – Japanese, Chinese, Italian, Thai...

Small towns nearby offer even greater variety – Luciano’s and Middels in Drouin are supposed to be the best ‘nice’ places to eat around (according to our GP’s who have plenty of money to burn). If you’re interested, there are many options for sport, and fantastic farmers or craft & produce markets in Warragul and the nearby towns every weekend. You won’t run out of things to do.

Best parts
The obvious advantage of West Gippsland to most students would be the proximity to Melbourne. My personal highlight though, was the close-knit group of GP students we formed. The matching generously free schedules and in-person classes were perfect for organising after-class lunches in both Warragul and Traralgon, as well as study groups and weekend or day-off explorations of the local areas and towns.

Warragul itself has everything you need – with all major supermarkets (I count ALDI), shops, parks, hairdressers, and multiple gym and fitness options. The nearby nature reserves, trails and small towns offer plenty to see and explore during your time off. The whole experience was especially rewarding during COVID. Unlike the metro students, we were never taken off or had restricted placement. We often escaped lockdown or harsher restrictions, and enjoyed much greater freedoms than those in Melbourne – great for mental health during a notoriously difficult academic year.

Angela Chen
East Gippsland is full of spectacular scenery including the ocean, mountains, lakes and wildlife. In 2021, there were two students in each of Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance and Orbost (a beach-house in Marlo). V-line goes all the way to Orbost.

**Teaching opportunities**

East Gippsland had Friday teaching sessions in Bairnsdale on Fridays in 2021, reliably a 45 minute drive from Lakes entrance and 1hr 10 from Orbost. All students had the opportunity for seven days of midwifery which was valuable. We also had sessions on Women’s health procedures and simulations.

Bairnsdale had two options: The [Bairnsdale Medical Group](#) was hands-on with gynae and anaesthetics opportunities with obstetricians Dr Euri and Dr Antoinette in theatre. [Bairnsdale’s Mcleod street](#) placement involved hospital theatre days and an Aboriginal Health Clinic (GEGAC) and placements which included our GP tutor Dr Ruth Chandler. (See more *)

Lakes entrance: free lunch on Wednesday, clinical experience and outreach programs.

Orbost: GP skin surgery and anaesthetics once a fortnight, obstetrics and skin-checks once a month. Be proactive about scheduling the outreach bush nursing clinics at Cann river with Dr Sara from Mallacoota, Buchan.
Things to do
Bairnsdale: Den of Nargan forest pools, the Mitchell River walk, Raymond Island koalas., Farmers markets, food places.

Lakes: Ocean entrance walk, Dolphin viewing platform, fortnightly market mini golf, boating, historic walk and other touristy things.

Marlo: safe swimming in the Snowy estery; Cape Conran surf beaches (find someone at the clinic to borrow a board from), rare rainforest walks, honey and a ukulele club in Orbost on Wednesdays.

Extra: Buchan caves, Nowa nowa walk and the rail trail.

*Extra Bairnsdale Macleod street placement info: The teams at GEGAC and Macleod street are wonderful and very supportive and will make you feel very welcome. At Macleod street you will alternate between all the doctors which is a great experience and you will have the opportunity to parallel consult. At GEGAC you will mainly sit with one doctor who is very supportive. While the opportunity to parallel consult is limited, you are very much included in each session. At GEGAC, at least once a month on a Wednesday they have visiting specialists from Melbourne including ENT and Paediatrics. You also have the opportunity to attend ward rounds with Macleod street doctors and attend theatre days (alternating Thursdays) which includes procedures from C-sections to Mirena insertion and vasectomies. At time of writing, Macleod days were Tuesday and Wednesday, while GEGAC is on Thursday, though the clinics are very flexible to swap days so you can attend theatre etc. Overall it was a great experience with very welcoming and helpful staff.

Amber May
Central Gippsland

**Clinics**
- Inglis Medical Centre (Sale)
- Clocktower Medical Centre (Sale)
- Maffra Medical Centre (Maffra)
- Heyfield Medical Centre (Heyfield)

**Curriculum**
The Wellington GP curriculum offers a balanced approach to topics across the whole year, aimed at a GP level. The semester consists of an 18-week schedule that is outlined via google calendar as well as on paper, with changes in scheduling being amended on both. A typical week involves going to your GP clinic from Monday to Wednesday, a full day of teaching on Friday, with Thursday being reserved for additional community placements like optometry and the occasional tutorial. There are pre-recorded lectures to watch ahead of your teaching days, most of which are between 1 to 1.5 hours long. Teaching days usually consist of interactive OSCE led case-based discussions with brief student presentations on their weekly topics afterwards. The teaching for GP is very good, offering a balanced approach between theory and clinical application. However, it is mostly focused on GP presentations and so it is important to focus some of your study time on women’s, children’s, and psych as well to prepare for the end of the year exams.

**Clinics**
The Wellington shire consists of four GP clinics which you can undertake placement at, two of them are located in Sale (Inglis Medical Centre and Clocktower Medical Centre), one is located in Maffra (Maffra Medical Group) about 20 minutes away, and one is located in Heyfield (Heyfield Medical Centre) about 30 minutes away. All clinics allow parallel consulting and offer opportunities for developing hands-on procedural skills.
**Sale**

**Inglis Medical Centre** is a GP clinic that is a short driving distance from most accommodation options in Sale. The GPs at the clinic all have their own preferences for how to run your sessions with them. The usual is a 15–20 minute consultation 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. Most of the GPs at the clinic have special interests ranging from dermatology to obstetrics and gynaecology, and this offers you some exposure to areas you might otherwise not have. Some of the GPs also have procedural days where you can help with skin excisions and biopsies etc. Inglis also has many allied health staff located directly in the clinic and you can choose to spend some time with them as well 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 located in Sale and provides you with consistent hands-on experience with patients through 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. Many of the doctors working at Clocktower offer sub-specialised services and have areas in other specialities such anaesthetics, dermatology, and travel medicine. You will be given opportunities to practice 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.
**Maffra**

*Maffra Medical Group* is a quality general practice to be placed at. All the staff, including the more than 10 doctors, are friendly, helpful, and invested in making your experience at the clinic memorable and productive. Maffra is a beautiful town of around 4.3 thousand people that is located about 20 minutes from Sale. This is an easy drive through lovely countryside. You will have your own room and start wave consulting right away. This means that a patient is booked in for a 30-minute consultation with you, followed by a consult with the supervising doctor. You will have time with multiple doctors, meaning you will be exposed to a range of styles. The different doctors have different interests, including one with further qualifications around dermatology and skin cancer. Time is allocated for you to be involved with procedures including skin cancer excisions. This clinic is very aware of your university requirements and facilitates the necessary opportunities to ensure these are completed in a timely manner. Importantly, the doctors are keen to teach you and mould the experience to what your interests and needs are.

**Heyfield**

*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. Depending on how interested you are in aged care you are welcome to attend morning ward rounds, family meetings and other hospital happenings. This is a lovely clinic with welcoming staff, who are happy to help and answer all the questions you can think of. Your placement will involve parallel consulting, meaning seeing patients first, before your supervising doctor for that day joins you. 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. One of the senior doctors runs a weekly tutorial for all the junior doctors and medical students which is a great opportunity for learning.
Things to do
In terms of gyms, Sale Health and Fitness offers flexible plans and probably gives you the most bang for your buck. You might consider aqua energy if you would like to use swimming pool facilities or early morning classes. Anytime fitness is on the pricey end.

Head down to Seaspray and the 90-mile Beach for some quality beach time. Alternatively, Lake Guthridge is literally at your doorstep – have a stroll around it and see how many wild peacocks you can spot! Sale is a vibrant town that is home to a range of nice food and beverage outlets. Hunting Ground does the best coffees around town, while Mister Raymond, Red Catt and 123 Café are pretty good brunch spots. Pika-sushi makes delicious sushi rolls. Criterion Hotel and Jack Ryan’s Irish Bar are decent options for dining out at night. Make good use of hospital facilities as you have 24/7 access to the library and a coffee machine! The revamped public library also offers ample study space – some even come with a view! Last but not least, make sure to attend the Wellington Cluster meetings at Tinamba Hotel as you are entitled to free GP teaching, and even better, a complimentary decadent two-course meal.

Michael Yousef
Clinics
- Breed Street Clinic (Traralgon)
- Tanjil Place Medical (Moe)

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.

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 was 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 eight 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**
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).

**Things to do**
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*
The School of Rural Health Bendigo and Bendigo Health provide an excellent environment to complete your final year of medicine (or part of it!). Bendigo is a beautiful place to live, and the hospital is a great place to learn and refine your skills in preparation for internship.

There are approximately 30 Year 5D students placed at Bendigo, with Melbourne University MD4 students joining our cohort in the second half of the year. As with all 5D students, rotations are organised into six-week blocks including rotations in ED, surgery, medicine, aged care, specialty as well as a scholarly intensive placement (SIP). You are given preferences for surgical, medical and specialty rotations, with the administration staff doing their best to fit rotations around your areas of interest. At the end of each rotation, you need to get a Pre-Internship Assessment (PIA) signed by one of your supervisors (on PebblePad).

Rotations

**Aged care:** Within aged care, rotations include Geriatric Medicine, GEM on Acute and Orthogeriatrics. The rotation is generally quite relaxed, but great for learning about managing patients with complex chronic medical conditions and polypharmacy. As part of the aged care rotation, you participate in tutorials around the aged care module topics (dementia, delirium, continence, falls and the complex patient) – generally students present cases covering these topics.

**Emergency:** Bendigo Health ED provides a great breadth of presentations, with Bendigo being a major catchment for a large geographic area. You’ll see presentations for chest pain, shortness of breath, DKA, fever, stroke codes, trauma codes, amongst many, many others! You will be allocated a roster for the rotation with three shifts per week. You need to complete a logbook and modules covering key ED presentations.

**Medical:** Medical rotations include Cardiology, Respiratory Medicine, General Medicine and Renal. All provide a really great foundation of work as an intern including writing ward round notes, performing clinical reviews, attending MET calls, learning about prescribing and writing discharge summaries.
**Specialty:** There are a variety of specialty rotations offered including ICU, Anaesthetics, Paediatrics, Women’s Health, Psychiatry, Palliative Care and Radiology (not available in 2021), as well as medical rotations including Infectious Diseases, Oncology, Endocrinology, and Cardiology. There is some online content on Moodle covering women’s health, dermatology and palliative care, along with an essay or creative piece on international health perspectives.

**Surgical:** Surgical areas at Bendigo Health include General Surgery (including Paediatric, Plastics, Thoracic, Head and Neck, Upper GI, Hepatobiliary and Colorectal), Urology, and Orthopaedic Surgery. You are assigned to a team for the six weeks and can divide your time between wards, theatre, and clinic. As part of the surgical rotation, you receive weekly tutorials with a general surgeon; these tutorials are case based on a list of important surgical topics. There is a wound quiz on Moodle that you have to complete during this rotation.

**Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP)**
Students based at Bendigo generally complete a SIP through the School of Rural Health, however students can also complete their SIP through their BMedSci, or projects through SPHPM or DGP. Students completing their SIP through School of Rural Health Bendigo meet with the SIP coordinator and are provided options of SIP projects available. Projects this year have been in the areas of Palliative Care, Rehabilitation, Geriatric Medicine, Psychiatry, Women’s Health and General Surgery. Projects have included literature reviews, systematic reviews, evaluations and clinical audits. As the program is quite new to Bendigo, the options are always expanding. There are also opportunities to complete clinical placement alongside your SIP which is an added bonus!

**Teaching opportunities**
All 5D students complete a back-to-base day on the last Friday of the end of each six-week placement block, as well as a back-to-base week at the end of the year. This was provided over Zoom in 2021. These sessions cover key internship knowledge including safe prescribing, common presentations and ward calls. There is some other teaching delivered centrally (also over Zoom in 2021) including prescribing skills, an interprofessional learning day and palliative care sessions.
In Bendigo, for Semester 1 we had fortnightly simulation or clinical skills sessions including core topics of BLS/ALS, fluids and cannulation, airway management, chest pain, sepsis, and post-operative bleed, amongst others. Semester 2 focussed on our practical assessments (SPA-P). In terms of lectures, we had weekly sessions with Dr John Edington, an anaesthetist at Bendigo Health and our academic lead. These topics covered common topics including IV line, fluids, pain management, nausea and vomiting, amongst many others, and many clinical pearls of wisdom along the way! We also received teaching from the Bendigo Health HMO Society, which provided further teaching on common encounters for junior doctors. Depending on the rotation you are on, you may have additional tutorials, e.g., aged care or surgical tutorials.

**Learning facilities**
The School of Rural Health Bendigo is located in the Bendigo Health precinct. There is an auditorium, along with a number of tutorial rooms and study spaces. Importantly, Good Loaf café in the building provides your caffeine hit and lunch when you’ve got nothing to eat at home. The Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre (CSSC) has great facilities to help refresh or learn new procedural skills, including a simulation lab for practicing common clinical scenarios (with a very life-like dummy). The staff are amazing!

**Accommodation**
In terms of student accommodation provided through the School of Rural Health in 2021, 5D students were spread across share houses and Lister House. Houses were shared between 3-4 students. Bedrooms are generous in size, usually with two bathrooms, a shared kitchen and living area. Lister House is a ‘hall of residence’ with multiple private rooms, with students sharing bathrooms, kitchen and living areas. All options are fully furnished. The accommodation is within 15-20 minutes walk of the Hospital, and generally within walking distance of town.
Things to do

Being a large regional centre, Bendigo has something for everyone – be it nature, exercise, sport, music, the arts, food, or more. To highlight a couple of things I have enjoyed about Bendigo, the city has been recognised as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy meaning there are many foodie locations. Check out Harpoon Social Club, Masons of Bendigo, and Woodhouse as a starting point. I have also loved exploring the surrounding towns. There are some great markets, including the Talbot Farmer’s Market, Daylesford Sunday Market, and Castlemaine Farmers and Artist Market. The great outdoors has a lot to offer as well; the Goldfields Track provides 200km of trail to explore including some beautiful spots such as Dog Rocks, Vaughan Springs, Tipperary Springs, and Sailors Falls.

Overall, Bendigo Health provides a really welcoming environment for students, and as a final year student you feel a true part of the team. The School of Rural Health is really supportive and teaching has been very applicable and hands-on. If anyone has any specific questions feel free to get in touch.

I’ll be interning at Bendigo Health in 2022, hope to see you there!

Meghan Taylor
Mildura

Rotations
Gen Med, Gen Surg, ED, Aged Care (did not run first semester of 2021), specialty (GP, anaesthetics, etc.)

Doctors: The hospital has permanent consultants, however most other medical staff are rotational. JMOs largely rotate from other hospitals or are on locum contracts. The hospital has a number of interns based at the site for the year, while many rotate from Monash, Austin, Alfred and other hospitals.

Gen Med: Being part of one of five medical teams, rounding on patients, performing clinical reviews and completing jobs with the team throughout the day. Patient load is greatly dependent on your consultant, as each team has a specified day they are on ‘take’, with some consultants discharging patients at a greater rate than others.

Gen Surg: There are two Gen Surg teams and a number of consultants. As with Gen Med, you often spend your days completing jobs and seeing inpatients with JMOs, however there are many opportunities to go into theatre. Every Friday there is a Grand Round, where the whole surgical team gets together to have a topic presented by one of the staff, and then they round on the patients, with specified members being tasked with presenting patients; students are often asked to contribute here.

ED: Final year students are encouraged to see their own patients, however at times you may shadow a more senior member if there is minimal patient flow or the ED is bed blocked. Students are also encouraged to ask questions, and escalate cases to more senior members if they are unsure or concerned.

Things to do
Mildura is far from Melbourne, so often students will stay in the area over weekends. While it can feel isolating being away from the city, all students on placement are in the same boat, meaning friendships across year levels and connections to the community are built easily.
- Food: Mr Banh Mi, Pizza Café, Andy’s Kitchen, Mildura Kebab House, Brass Monkey, Blk Mlk, Nash Lane (both locations)
- Exploring: Perry Sandhills, Orange World, Mungo National Park (far away, requires a vehicle which can handle off road terrain)
Rotations
All rotations can be completed at Central Gippsland Health (CGH) – most are in Sale, but aged care is in Heyfield.
- Medicine: general medicine
- Surgery: general surgery with visiting specialists (orthopaedics, urology, ophthalmology)
- Emergency: emergency department
- Aged care: residential aged care facility (supervised by GPs)
- Specialty:
  - Radiology
  - Anaesthetics
  - General Practice

Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP)
Students are involved with hospital audits for quality improvement – you will be able to complete the entire project within the rotation. These projects are usually presented at Grand Round and the Drug and Therapeutic meeting and are likely to make real changes within the hospital. Unfortunately, you don’t get much choice about your topic.

Teaching opportunities
All students are encouraged to join the Grand Round for a weekly presentation (and free breakfast!) and intern teaching for a weekly tutorial. You can often join the weekly HMO teaching too. There are additional weekly teaching opportunities for specific rotations: radiology meetings (medicine and surgery), journal club (medicine) and team teaching (surgery and aged care).
Learning facilities
The Monash Rural Health Building is conveniently located beside the hospital. It includes a fully functioning sim lab (which you'll use during patient safety sessions) and a spacious common room (with lockers, couches, table tennis table and kitchen). There is also a hospital library with textbooks, computers and quieter study spaces. Plus, Helen the Librarian is an excellent source of knowledge.

Accommodation
Monash Rural Health can provide fully furnished and maintained share-houses for students. All houses are conveniently within a 20-min walk / 10-min cycle / 5-min drive from the hospital. Rent is subsided: $70 / week including bills. Alternatively, you can organise your own accommodation.

Transport
Public transport is very limited within Sale and surrounds; however, Sale is small enough that you can walk / cycle around town and the other med students should help you out. If you need to travel to / from Melbourne, you can catch the V-line train. In conclusion, you can survive without a car... but it certainly makes like easier.

Things to do
There are so many things to do and something for everyone! Check out ‘The Middle of Everywhere’ website for more info.

- **Food and Drink:** Cafes – Hunting Ground, Portside, Mister Raymond, Red Catt. Restaurant / Take-away – Santos Portuguese Grill, Thai @ Sale, Inside Out. Pubs – The Criterion, The Star Hotel, Jack Ryan’s Irish Pub
- **Entertainment:** trivia at The Star Hotel on Thursday nights, karaoke at Jack Ryan’s, Picnic on the Green (free annual music festival).
- **Arts and Culture:** Port of Sale (public library & art gallery), The Wedge (local theatre), farmers & makers markets.

Feel free to contact Charlotte at: caoca1@student.monash.edu
Traralgon

Specialty rotations
Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) is the largest health provider in the Gippsland region. It offers a small selection of specialty rotations (Anaesthetics, Orthopedics and Gastroenterology*), however all are excellent with many opportunities to learn and practice.
*Gastro was not available in 2021

Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP)
There were five SIP topics offered this year however students can individualise their projects to suit their preferences. With any particular interests, the supervisors are very flexible and supportive in coordinating with medical staff to accommodate different SIP projects that are available. The supervisors are very responsive and make themselves available with regular follow-up.

Teaching opportunities
If students are interested in participating in a teaching role, there are student-led mentorship programs where 5D students are paired with 3B students. The program focuses on helping 3B students adjust to clinical practice. In your rotations, you will also have 3B students allocated to your teams which can be a good opportunity to teach and revise clinical skills.

LRH also has learning facilities available for when you finish early on the wards. There is a small library in the MRH building with computer access as well as conference rooms. There are also sim labs which are useful to learn to respond to ward calls, with equipment available for practical skills such as cannulation, cauterisation and lumbar punctures. Other opportunities to learn include attending the weekly grand rounds and intern teachings.

Accommodation
There are four houses allocated to 5Ds housing 4-6 students each. The most modern is the one located behind the hospital on Valley Drive which houses 6 people. The others are located around 5-10 minutes drive from the hospital. The town centre is another 5-10 minutes away. The accommodations are well furnished with the essentials except for bedding. All utilities (including heating!) and internet are included in the cost of $70 per week.
**Things to do**

The most commonly visited tourist attraction in Traralgon is the Tarra-Bulga national park located 30 minutes south of the town centre. It has multiple trails to explore and with something to go back to. The trails are well paved, with plenty of greenery and great picnic spots. For those looking to explore further in the region and also get their exercise in, the Gippsland plains rail trail may suit you. You will be able to learn about the history of the Gippsland region by foot or bike as it expands from Traralgon to Stratford. The Traralgon Railway reservoir conservation reserve is a good natural walk that loops around to explore the local fauna and flora. There are also many local sport clubs located in the area. If nothing here interests you, make your own adventure!

*Richard Lau*
Warragul

Specialty rotations
Specialty rotations available at WGHG include extra ED (12 weeks total vs 6), palliative care, or mixed medical. The palliative care rotation involves spending two days a week with a community palliative care nurse, whilst the remainder of the week is spent with the medical team often run by an oncologist. The mixed medical rotation involves one day of cardiology (morning of stress ECGs, afternoon of general cardio clinic), and 1-2 days of gastroenterology scopes & general gastro clinic.

Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP)
WGHG offers a comprehensive range of SIP projects across many faculties. Audits into analgesia use in ED and Tazocin use on the general medical ward have helped inform policy change and practice within the hospital. Further projects include multi-disciplinary approaches to ensuring informed consent for medical procedures is gained. Often these projects will build upon previous projects to solidify knowledge and enact policy changes from the ground up. Unfortunately no clinical SIPs are currently available, and there is no capacity to ‘make your own SIP’ as such.
Teaching opportunities
All final year medical students are encouraged to attend a weekly one-hour intern teaching session that covers a range of high-yield materials including ECG interpretation, management of common ward calls, and approaches to deteriorating patients. Additionally, there is a weekly journal club wherein a medical registrar presents the latest research and engages discussion with clinicians to determine changes over best practice. Final year students are also invited to attend a weekly ED HMO teaching session that includes practicing suturing and plastering. Our clinical skills coordinator Kerry Ginters is also happy to provide any supplemental teaching with procedural skills and simulated sessions upon request.

Learning facilities
24-hour access to the Monash Rural Health building provides a great space for getting stuff done late at night (especially intern applications!). The building has several tutorial rooms and a shared kitchen stocked with plenty of instant coffee (yay?). Inside the MRH building there is access to tools for teaching younger students, including mannequins and equipment for neuro exams. On hospital grounds there is a sim-cottage where teaching can be held, and a library that is rustic yet quiet enough for a solid study sesh.
Accommodation
Accommodation is housed on-site in a simple, yet spacious 5-bedroom house. Two bathrooms are available, and the house is roughly divided into two wings with a central living space. Cooking spaces can be a bit cramped at times, but all appliances and furniture are supplied. Double beds are supplied on each room with a small desk + chair, bedside table and lamp, but BYO mattress protector is advised. At $70 a week, and the convenience of a two-minute walk to the wards, staying on site is a very safe choice. Others have opted to find accommodation in the community, but leases may not be as flexible with timing!

Things To Do
Warragul is situated just over an hour from Melbourne and is a central base for exploring Western Gippsland. In town there is an array of cafes and restaurants (including Mainstreet Cafe, Earth Market Cafe and Frankie’s for brunch, Untitled for scrumptious bagels, The Commercial Hotel for the most extensive parma menu you’ve ever seen, Chilli Bites for yummy Indian food, and of course the famous Warragul Thai) to keep the palate happy. Warragul also boasts a busy weekend nightlife with the Bank Hotel, Euphoria night club, and Bandolier Brewery (catch the regular poker nights that occur here!). Fantastic parks are situated throughout Warragul and there are many great running tracks. A 3-weekly farmers market brings a larger variety of local goods and trinkets. Surrounding Warragul and some amazing day-trip locations, including Korumburra, Loch, Noojee (best parmas and view hands-down), and Yarragon (amazing shepherd’s pies). Wild Dog winery, 5km out of Warragul, also makes for a great afternoon off placement and some idyllic Insta shots.

Alexander Renehan
Teaching and learning opportunities

Final year in Wonthaggi is an experience unlike any other that enables you to see a huge variety of presentations. The hospital is small with approx 50 inpatient beds and services a large patient catchment from Phillip Island to Tarwin Lower (and beyond). Given the size you will quickly get to know most of the staff at the hospital including the CMO’s, allied health and nursing staff. The size also means that staff are very willing to accommodate and adapt your experience to suit exactly what you want to get out of your time in Wonthaggi. Something to be aware of if you’re considering Wonthaggi is that the hospital has a less consolidated ‘teaching culture’ compared to other health services, however given final year is about gaining on the job experience this is something that may not sway your decision.

The Acute Ward (gen med) is staffed by GP specialists and HMO’s (some IMG’s, some on rotation from Austin) so you will quickly become a vital part of the team. Doctors working on the acute ward also cover Hospital in the Home, dialysis and infusion centre patients so you see a variety of cases from admission through to well past their discharge from the ward. Typical admissions include delerium Fi, pneumonia, cellulitis, palliative care, heart failure and medical management of cardiovascular events. With no intern on the team you will effectively become the intern and have many opportunities to help out with ward jobs.

There is a GEM (geriatric evaluation medicine) ward which is staffed by some very knowledgeable consultants who are keen to teach, +/- registrar and HMO. There is a strong focus on multidisciplinary care and holistic discharge planning. You will get a lot of relevant intern experience with many opportunities to help out with ward jobs. The patients are typically very happy to have students involved in their care and have some great stories to tell.
ED is staffed by a number of FACEM consultants who travel down from Frankston or the city, GP specialists and various locum staff. Interns and HMO's rotate out to Wonthaggi from Monash Health. The ED has six beds, two consulting rooms and five short stay beds. All staff in the ED are very keen to teach and very knowledgeable. You get the opportunity to see your own patients and report back to a consultant or SMO, giving you loads of handover and diagnostic practice. There are many opportunities for procedural skill practice also. The roster is flexible with only one student allocated to ED at a time so you are able to choose which shifts (AM or PM) suit you. There is weekly intern teaching which the final years are encouraged to join. At the time of writing the ED is the only department that has moved to EMR with the remainder of the hospital still paper-based.

There are two operating theatres at BCH which host a number of visiting surgeons. The majority of surgeries are elective with no emergency surgery except for some c-sections. There is one surgical HMO who covers all surgical inpatients. Specialties include Gastro (lots of scopes), Ortho (monthly), Urology, Ophthalmology, Breast, Gynae and ENT. You are able to be involved with both anaesthetists and surgeons during your rotation which enables valuable cannula experience. Surgeons are typically keen to have you involved and there are many opportunities to scrub in and assist. Given each surgeon is usually only present for their day of operating it can be difficult to get a personalised reference however staff are aware of this and worked to ensure we all got referees this year. The silver lining of this arrangement is that you see a much greater diversity of surgery than you would anywhere else.
Speciality rotations

Specialty rotations available include;
- Oncology - specialists rotate down from Monash
- Anaesthetics - lots of GP anesthetists to work with
- Ophthalmology
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology - may not be offered in 2022 due to staffing limitations

Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP)

SIP project options were made available at the beginning of the year and students were able to pick from the list which project they would like to do. Projects included mostly audit style options e.g. antimicrobial stewardship, medication safety and surgical outcomes. SIP is well supervised by clinical team members and allows for an experience of research closely related to clinical practice.

Accommodation

Accommodation is in a large modern 4 bedroom house. Every room has a double bed, bedside table and desk. The master bedroom has a walk in robe and ensuite. There is no dishwasher however the kitchen does have a gas stove and large walk in pantry. Given there are only four students placed in Wonthaggi you all live together and will get to know each other very well! There are some Year 4C students in Wonthaggi for their GP rotation however the only time you will see them will be occasionally in gynae theatre. Given the small number of students (and staff) there will be opportunities to go out for dinner and socialise with the interns and HMO’s on rotation.

Things to do

Wonthaggi is a very cute town close to the ocean with plenty of cafes. In your spare time you will be able to go to numerous beaches and enjoy coastal walks. It’s close enough to Melbourne to return to the city for weekends (if restrictions allow) however there are a number of nearby towns to explore as well! Wonthaggi is the closest placement destination to Wilson’s Prom so if you’re interested in hiking or insta content it’s the place to be!

Ella Johnson
Bairnsdale

Specialty rotations
Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS) offers a number of potential specialty rotations in their 2021 rotation guide, unfortunately, not all of these are available in practice, but there are still a wide range of specialty rotations to select from, including General Surgery, Emergency Department, Rehabilitation, Anaesthetics, Radiology and GP (GP placement is in Sale but you are provided accommodation there if you do not want to commute, and often you will have half of the week doing GP in Sale and the rest spent in ED in BRHS). Of these specialty rotations, Gen Surg, ED, Rehab are part of the 6 core rotations in year 5D (other core ones are SIP and Internal Medicine), so if you choose one of these 3 rotations for your specialty rotations, you will have the chance to spend more time in the same department and familiarize yourself with the team and their daily activities. The administration team at Bairnsdale are very lovely and supportive, they always try their best to make arrangements so that you can get the specialty rotation that is higher up in your preference list and offer help whenever you have any concerns or problems.

Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP)
With regards to SIP, we do not get to choose what topics we want to do or know what is available, and the SIP information (such as what the topic is and who the supervisors are) are only provided shortly prior to the start of the first week of SIP. Since SIP is still a pretty new thing, some supervisors may not be very familiar with how the projects work and there are few issues with data extraction, for example going through paper medical records can be quite time-consuming and inefficient. Nevertheless, students who finished their SIPs so far are happy overall, everyone including the supervisors, coordinators, and hospital staff are very kind, approachable and supportive, and you get to learn the clinical and research skills relevant to the topic you are assigned.

Teaching opportunities
During your placement at BRHS, you have the chance to become a part of the clinical teams, with many valuable education opportunities from different team members of different disciplines such as medical, surgical, and allied health, and everyone is very friendly and willing to teach, and you get to learn both clinical knowledge and the intern jobs to prepare for the following year. Moreover, you also have the opportunity to attend the junior doctor education sessions which are usually twice a week, and other hospital teaching sessions such as grand rounds, ED education sessions and presentations.
Learning facilities
The MRH building attached to the hospital is of reasonable size where most of the hospital education sessions take place. There is a sim lab in this building where you can practice and learn clinical skills and the coordinator is super nice and supportive if you ever need help to consolidate any particular skill that you are not confident with. There is also a student kitchen in this MRH building with a ping pong table and well-equipped with microwaves, toaster, sandwich press, fridge, drinks and other necessary utensils. The hospital library is right next to this building with available study spaces and desktop computers where you can access the hospital intranet information.

Accommodation
The university-provided accommodation is a 6-single bedroom house that is under 10 minutes' walk to hospital. The house has two shared bathrooms, one kitchen with provided cutlery and some cooking equipment, and available parking spots. Depending on how many of the four year 5D students opt for this accommodation, you may also share it with Monash Year 4C students and other non-medical students (such as dieticians, speech pathologists etc.) from other universities, although they only have 6-week placements so you will see many different groups of students coming in and out of the place during your stay. Rent was very reasonable at $420 per four weeks, including bills.

Things to do
There are many things you can do here. In terms of food, there are quite a few nice spots for lunch, but if you prefer to cook, local stores and supermarkets such as Aldi, Coles or Woolworths are very nearby. There is also a parkrun every Saturday morning if you want to exercise and meet new people, and if you are interested in sports, there are available local sports teams that you can look into and join. In addition, the 24-hour gym is within driving distance and the Bairnsdale recreation center with gym and swimming pool as well as the movie theatre is also within walking distance. Moreover, this is a very lovely area with plenty of nature to see such as nature walks, beach, hiking and camping places, and if you love skiing, it only takes approximately two hours to Mt Hotham.

Tracy Nguyen