11TH EDITION

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FOREWORDS
I am very pleased to endorse the 2023 MUMUS Rural Placement Guide. This guide provides perspectives from both medical students and the Monash Rural Health (MRH) team 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 try out the amazing recreational activities that regional Victoria offers.

MRH has two cohorts of students that commit at Admission to complete the majority of their medical school training in rural Victoria. We have the Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) for students in the direct entry program. In the graduate entry program, we have the rural end-to-end cohort. We take 60 students into our rural program each year 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 the medical training in rural if they wish.

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

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

Through our Regional Training Hubs, we can provide you with information and connections with the medical Colleges, young doctors and senior mentors that enable you to consider the opportunities for internship and postgraduate training in regional and rural Victoria.

Upon choosing the rural option, we look forward to welcoming you and providing you with a world-class training experience within our vibrant School.
Welcome to the 2023 MUMUS Rural Guidebook!

Monash Medical School is one of the largest medical programs in Australia, and this is reflected in the multitude of locations available to us for rural and regional placements. We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to immerse ourselves in such a wide variety of beautiful locations and communities. This is a great chance for Monash students to get a taste of what rural medicine is all about and spend some time in some of the most beautiful areas of Victoria!

This guidebook has been carefully curated by your wonderful MUMUS Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) Representative, Jayatee (placed in Gippsland), and MUMUS Gippsland Rural Representative, Andriy (also placed in Gippsland), to provide you with the best insider information, tips, and tricks to help you make the most of your time in rural and regional Victoria!

It is well known amongst medical students that a rural placement offers opportunities that most students at metro hospitals would not have the chance to experience. Students on rural placements are well-integrated into their clinical environment, become essential members of the treating teams, and are exposed to endless opportunities to practice invaluable clinical decision-making and hands-on procedural skills; the level of involvement of students on rural placements is truly second-to-none.

Additionally, a rural placement is a great time to make new connections, whether that be with your peers, your clinical team, or the local community (e.g. through a sports club, interest group, or religious group)! It’s a great opportunity to move out with your mates whilst also being properly immersed in an enriching environment and community, and the friendships you forge are second to none!

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

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

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

Jessica Yu
MUMUS 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.

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

- The Matthew Campbell Memorial Evening: In memory of a past Monash University medical student, Matthew Campbell, the evening offers an opportunity for discussion of key issues facing Indigenous Australians.
- Bendigo Ball: The premier social event of the year. Boasting a fantastic location, food and music and company.
- Rural Trivia Nights: Dynamic social events organised for students that promote rural health while fostering collaboration between community and various rural sites. This engaging evening features friendly competition among different rural sites, allowing participants to showcase their knowledge while raising funds for Indigenous charities and creating awareness about rural health issues.
- End of Rotation Events 6 weekly across our rural sites, to ensure regular social opportunities for students.

We aim to support our students to make the most of their time in regional and rural Victoria; in direct practice on placement, academically, by immersing themselves in their community, and with social opportunities among peers.

During 2023, we have put our beautiful rural areas of Victoria in the spotlight, and encouraged all students to get out and explore their own backyards. We have worked to strengthen connections with Indigenous health organisations, provide more events to students which promote Indigenous health and culture, and share the experiences of our amazing up-and-coming Indigenous health workers. We hope over time that our work will have a meaningful impact on the disparities we see in rural and Indigenous health outcomes.

If you have a passion for rural and Indigenous health, and would like to be a part of a group of like-minded people, get involved in WILDFIRE! You can get in contact with us via our website, Facebook, Instagram or email us.
Each year when clinical site placements are released there are always questions regarding the system used to allocate students. The following is an overview of the Faculty’s allocation processes.

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

For Extended Rural Cohort (ERC) and Rural End-to-End Cohort (E2E) students
2024 will see Year 3B, 4C and 5D End-to-End (E2E) rural cohort students undertaking clinical placements across the North West footprint through the School of Rural Health. This doesn’t mean that there are no spots available for other students. We have ample opportunities for non-rural stream students to take up rural placements in 2024.

E2E rural cohort students will undertake their placements primarily in north-west Victoria and are able to preference sites across this region for their full year placements in Year 3B and semesterised program in 4C and 5D.

ERC students will undertake their clinical placements across the School’s footprint in rural and regional Victoria in Years 3B, 4C and a semester in 5D.

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

E2E cohort students in 4C for 2024 will be preferencing SRH sites in North West Victoria. This means that if you were placed in Mildura for 3B, unless you choose to stay on in Mildura for 4C, SRH will endeavour to place you in Bendigo for one semester in 4C for your regional hospital rotation, should you preference in this way. As already mentioned, there are no guarantees. If E2E students completed 3B in Bendigo in 2023, it is an expectation that they will undertake their regional hospital rotation in Mildura, unless they have special consideration with supporting documentation which precludes them from undertaking one semester in Mildura.

The above applies to any student completing a full year placement in Bendigo.

The 4C rural practice community rotations – Murray, Highlands, and Goldfields regions (Swan Hill, Woodend, Gisborne, Maryborough, Kyneton and Castlemaine) – these are all north-west rotations managed by SRH in Bendigo. Even though the Murray region is geographically closer to Mildura, it is still considered a Bendigo-managed rotation, as are the more proximal Highland and Goldfields regions. As such, E2E students who were placed in Mildura in 3B, although they will most likely be allocated a semester in Bendigo should they preference in this way, have an equal likelihood of being allocated for their other semester in the Murray region as they have to being placed in the Highlands or Goldfields regions (preferences are taken into consideration).

For all students preferring regional/rural placements
Faculty-approved special consideration cases are allocated first and foremost, followed by students who might be repeating a year and need to be at the same site as the previous year.

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

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

After provisional rural site allocations are published you can apply for a direct 1-to-1 swap. Applications must be received by the published deadline and you will be notified of the outcome of your application.

**Special requirements**

For 2024, if you have special requirements that need to be considered for your clinical placement year, you may lodge them at the first stage (when you make a choice about opting into Rural (both 3B and 4C) or Peninsula (4C) programs through InPlace or when you are submitting your rural site preferences through InPlace. 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 to InPlace or emailed through to Laura Major at laura.major@monash.edu otherwise, your request will 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 problem/s 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 (through Centrelink) for a sick relative or dependent.
- Being part of the Team Monash Elite Student Performer Scheme requiring location in a particular area.
- Severe financial hardship.

The following circumstances are not considered in allocation decisions:

- Lack of access to a motor vehicle or inability to drive
- Work schedules
- Relationships without dependents
- Ownership or rental of accommodation in a particular location
- Other accommodation issues
- Existing or planned research commitments
- Requests received after the closing date

**Supporting documentation**

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

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

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

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

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

With best wishes,

**Laura Major**

RURAL HEALTH EDUCATION MANAGER, MONASH SCHOOL OF RURAL HEALTH
STAFF DESCRIPTIONS
Bendigo is a large regional city (population 125,000), situated 153 kilometres from Melbourne. It offers a contemporary lifestyle with many cafes and restaurants, Bendigo Art Gallery, Ulumbarra Theatre and a range of sporting clubs. There are two main hospitals, Bendigo Health and St John of God Bendigo. The new Bendigo Hospital opened in January 2017 with new facilities: 372 inpatient beds, 72 same-day beds, 11 new operating theatres, a regional cancer centre, an 80-bed integrated mental health facility and a mother-and-baby unit. The hospital has a helipad and accepts time-critical and high-acuity trauma and cardiac patients from the region. St John of God has also undergone extensions and has increased capacity by 50 percent. There is also an extensive range of community health services. All students will be expected to comply with all Hospital protocols, including wearing masks and vaccination requirements and demonstrate community leadership in these areas.

Curriculum
Year 3B
Year 3B students with Monash Rural Health (MRH) Bendigo are based at Bendigo Hospital for the full academic year. Monash University Year 3B students study alongside University of Melbourne Year 2 MD program students as part of 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, O&G and psychiatry. The platform for integrating and embedding specialist knowledge and skills is the one-day-per-week GP placement with parallel consulting alongside the student’s GP supervisor. This allows for consolidation and integration of these disciplines. Students have learning opportunities with paediatricians, obstetricians and gynaecologists, psychiatrists and GPs, and the teams of practitioners, nurses and allied health professionals who work with them. During the rural rotation students are allocated to hubs either in the Goldfields (Castlemaine or Maryborough), the Highlands (Gisborne or Woodend) or Murray region (Swan Hill).

Students are immersed into a busy and intensive general practice setting where they will have the opportunity to see their own patients both in the general practice and with clinicians in the hospital and community setting. This longitudinal experience provides the opportunity for students to gain continuous hands-on experience in primary care practice while reinforcing their learning in children’s health, O&G and psychiatry in a different healthcare setting.

Year 5D
MRH Bendigo offers the core Year 5D rotations
as well as a range of specialties at Bendigo Health. Year 5D students operate in an intern shadowing role and are offered a comprehensive simulation program. The focus of the program is to transition to practice as an intern in 2025.

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

**Lifestyle**
Bendigo’s location in central Victoria means that it has prime positioning to all that the state has to offer. It is two hours drive to Melbourne or the beach or the snow.

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

CHRISTIAN HOLMES
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF MONASH RURAL HEALTH
DEPUTY HEAD OF BENDIGO MONASH RURAL HEALTH
themselves continuously in the clinical environment, where they can integrate their foundational and clinical science knowledge acquired in Year 1 and 2 or Year A within a real context. The cohort is divided into two groups, with each group assigned to three six-week placements per semester. These placements include general surgery/orthopedics, general medicine, and rotations such as Anaesthetics, Emergency Department (ED), General Practice (GP), and Indigenous Health.

Throughout the entire year, placements generally consist of four half-days per week, allowing students to gain extensive clinical experience while embedded in teams. Under the direct supervision of interns, registrars, and consultants, students develop their clinical and decision-making skills. Complementing the clinical experience, students receive 2 to 4 hours of skills-based training each week in the simulation laboratory. This training encompasses a procedural skills mastery program and small group simulated scenarios utilizing Sim-Man 3G. The program aims to familiarize students with equipment usage, enhance safety, and develop procedural skills mastery. By engaging in this challenging yet rewarding training, students gain confidence and improve their assessment performance.

The year-long clinical simulated scenarios offered to Year 3B students cover high-yield conditions outlined in the 3B matrix. These scenarios tackle important presentations such as asthma, COPD, PE/DVT, AMI, and trauma. The additional exposure to simulated settings further enriches students’ knowledge and prepares them for real-world medical challenges.

Year 4C: Specialty Rotations in a Supportive Environment

Monash Rural Health Mildura welcomes up to 12 students per semester to complete their Year 4C specialty rotations. These rotations encompass O&G, Children’s Health, and Psychiatry, all of which take place.
at Mildura Base Public Hospital. During their placements, students gain valuable experience in birth suites, theatres, clinics, the emergency department, and the wards. They are embraced as part of the team and benefit from excellent teaching opportunities.

Experienced registrars and consultants provide tutorials that include hands-on scenario-based workshops. Students actively participate in O&G Interprofessional Learning Simulations (WHIPLS) and Obstetric and Neonatal Emergency Simulation (ONE-SIM) programs. Additionally, a comprehensive weekly paediatric simulation scenario program enhances their learning. As previously mentioned in the Year 3B segment, 4C students engage in weekly simulation scenarios using Sim-Man's paediatric counterparts, Sim Baby and Sim Junior. These scenarios cover topics such as neonatal resuscitation and failure to thrive, amongst many others.

Mock OSCEs are conducted at the end of the year, providing valuable feedback on students' performance prior to end-of-year assessments. Previous students have praised their time in Mildura, appreciating the additional experiences available in a small group environment.

Year 5D: Broadening Horizons in Diverse Rotations
In Year 5D, MRH Mildura offers students core rotations in Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, General Surgery, and Aged Care, as well as the opportunity to engage in Scholarly Intensive Projects Placements (SIPs). Specialty rotations aligned with students' special interests, such as Psychiatry, Cardiology, Rural General Practice, Anaesthetics, and Indigenous Health, may also be available.

During their time in Mildura, Year 5D students complete the MED 5103 Patient Safety and Preparedness for Practice: Workshop and Simulation Program. This program not only covers core curriculum content but also reinforces previously taught material from Years 3B and 4C. MRH Mildura prioritizes ensuring students are well-prepared for their future internships, offering every opportunity for success.

FIONA WRIGHT
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DIRECTOR OF MILDURA MONASH RURAL HEALTH
“Where is Churchill?” you may well ask! Churchill is a town nestled in the foothills of the picturesque Strzelecki Ranges and is located 161km to the east of Melbourne in central Gippsland. It is an easy, less than 2-hour drive via the Princes Highway. Churchill is close to the larger regional town of Morwell and the largest city in the Latrobe Valley, Traralgon. Traralgon is the entertainment hub of Gippsland and has a thriving food, pub and club scene.

The first year of the four-year graduate entry medical program, known as Year A, is completed at Monash Rural Health Churchill. This teaching site is co-located with the Gippsland campus of Federation University. The campus boasts a variety of state-of-the-art facilities and student-centred study and recreational spaces. The stunning grounds of the campus at Churchill are renowned for their natural ambience with a backdrop of rolling hills and mountains and resident native wildlife, including kangaroos, koalas, echidnas and kookaburras. Year A students enjoy the on-campus student facilities and social and sporting clubs. A short walk from the campus is a modern shopping complex, leisure centre, parks, hotel, golf club and a lake stocked with fish for recreational fishing. The campus is the perfect base for exploring the Gippsland region. Within easy driving distance are popular tourist destinations, including spectacular beaches, ski resorts, national parks, gourmet deli trails, rail trails, craft villages, country weekend markets, award-winning cafes and pubs, and great walking tracks. In nearby Traralgon, there is a vibrant arts and culture scene. Sporting clubs are the lifeblood of towns in the area, and students enjoy participating in a variety of sporting activities.

**Curriculum**

The contemporary pre-clinical program in Year A is delivered by a dynamic team of content experts, researchers and clinicians via innovative and immersive teaching sessions, including clinical skills teaching and authentic ward simulation. The course develops through theme studies in personal and professional development, population, society, health and illness, the scientific basis of clinical practice and clinical skills. The learning approach has an emphasis on clinical contextualisation, and there is a focus on rural medicine.

Early in Year A, students are immersed in the clinical environment through fortnightly placements in regional hospitals. Professional development is further nurtured through non-clinical placements at community and health support agencies throughout Gippsland. Through working with these agencies and their clients, students get unparalleled, first-hand experience of social, cultural and economic issues that impact health at the community level. Monash students enjoy the best of both worlds, with complete library services offered through both Monash and Federation Universities.

**Accommodation**

Fedliving manages on-campus accommodation at Churchill. Fedliving recognises that students have different living requirements and preferences and offers a range of accommodation options. On-campus accommodation at Churchill is very convenient, being only a few minutes walk to the tutorial rooms! For more information about on-campus accommodation, phone Fedliving at +61 3 51226236 or email fedliving@federation.edu.au and refer to this website: https://federation.edu.au/about-us/facilities-and-services/commercial-services/fedliving/applications.

**Lifestyle**

The campus is adjacent to an extensive park, Mathison Park, with a walking track, lake, all-ages fitness station and BBQ facilities. The adjacent Koori Garden contains plants that the local Gunaikurnai clan have used for thousands of years. There are also totem poles decorated with Gunaikurnai artwork. The Latrobe Leisure Centre at Churchill is conveniently located next to the campus and offers the community everything for health and fitness, aquatics and indoor sports. Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre is a new, state-of-the-art recreation centre and is located in Traralgon. Behind the northern end of Federation University Churchill is Churchill Monash Golf Club, a picturesque 9-hole Par 79 course. For a guide of things to see, do, savour and devour in Latrobe City and surrounds, visit https://visitlatrobecity.com/.

*ChERuCIIIll*

Dr Marianne Tare
Director Monash Rural Health Churchill

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*Dr Marianne Tare*
Director Monash Rural Health Churchill
Monash Rural Health Gippsland has a large geographical footprint that comprises five clinical teaching sites located at Bairnsdale, Sale, South Gippsland, Traralgon, and Warragul, each of which is linked to the regional health services/hospitals, general practices and other community-based health centres.

Year 3B consists of a yearlong placement at Central Gippsland Hospital (CGH) in Sale, Latrobe Regional Health (LRH) in Traralgon, or West Gippsland Healthcare Group (WGHG) in Warragul. The aim of this year is to give the students a firm grounding in medicine and surgery.

In Year 4C, the student year is split into two between the semesters, with one semester in hospital-based rotations of Children’s Health, O&G and Psychiatry, and one semester in General Practice at an affiliated general practice within the region. The psychiatric rotation is at LRH, and the other hospital-based rotations can occur at any of the three CGH, LRH, or WGHG. General practice placements are available across our Gippsland footprint.

In Year 5D, students can join us for one or both semesters. The placement sites are Bairnsdale, Sale, Traralgon and Wonthaggi. Leongatha is a niche possibility for one or two units. Predominantly the scholarly intensive placements are linked to key governance activities, providing a useful grounding in quality assurance to inform future practice and inform future practice, and include a clinical learning component. We are exploring involvement in developing a research project.

Curriculum
Year 3B
The 3B curriculum in Gippsland focuses on the fundamentals of medicine and surgery. The timetable includes structured learning opportunities such as PBLs, pharmacology tutorials, clinical reasoning skill sessions, specialist masterclasses with physicians and surgeons, and 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, as ultimately, the learning involved in becoming a clinician is experiential. We also offer simulation-based learning. Mega-teaching days, masterclasses, and practice Apex provides opportunities for the whole cohort to come together at a single site and to network and renew friendships.

Year 4C
The structure of this year differs from the metro experience as there is an emphasis on an 18-week general practice community-based rotation that would give those interested in a generalist procedure-based career. The hospital component still covers the content required in O&G, Children's Health and Psychiatry. This is a year that offers excellent hands-on learning opportunities.

Year 5D
The Year 5D program is designed to prepare you for your transition to becoming an intern. The emphasis is on you becoming part of the patient care team. Teaching focuses on providing you with the skills required through tutorials, simulation and hand-on experience. We are now using the updated simulation centre at the Churchill campus.

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 snowfields, wilderness, rainforests and beaches. For more information, visit: https://www.visitgippsland.com.au/ https://www.australia.com/en/places/melbourne-and-surrounds/guide-to-gippsland.html https://www.visitvictoria.com/Regions/Gippsland/Destinations/Villages

Rob Dawson
Monash Rural Health Gippsland
Bendigo Health is a newly renovated hospital that provides an amazing hands-on clinical learning experience. There is a fantastic teaching program run by dedicated clinical educators, doctors, and other healthcare staff that make the learning experience both engaging and enjoyable. A significant advantage of the Bendigo Clinical School is its blended program with second-year medical students from Melbourne University. This offers a unique opportunity to collaborate with students from another university and observe how their curriculum works. While the program is blended, and there is a significant benefit to this, both universities have curriculum-specific classes to ensure that all relevant information is covered to help you succeed in your studies.

Teaching at Bendigo Clinical School takes place at two main locations: The Monash Rural Health Building (MRH), and Bendigo Health Hospital (BH). Most lectures and tutorials will take place in the MRH, as well as clinical skills training in the highly equipped simulation labs. This is where all manner of procedures, from ECGs to cannulas, are taught and can be practised on mannequins throughout the year. The MRH is also home to ‘The Good Loaf’ cafe and the student lounge, which has a kitchen and everything you need to store and heat up your food. It is often a hive of activity, providing a great space to socialise, escape the hospital and relax between classes.

The clinical year at Bendigo typically starts off with a two-week orientation. Whilst you may feel ‘behind’ your friends in other hospitals who dive straight into their rotations, the orientation is actually a blessing in disguise. It covers key things that you need to learn to feel comfortable within the hospital environment, consolidating essential skills such as history taking, examinations, and vital signs, whilst also introducing you to important new skills such as surgical gowning, venepuncture, and IV cannulations. This ensures a smooth transition to the clinical environment and enables you to begin your clinical years with confidence.

After this initial orientation, everyone jumps into clinical rotation! There are four overarching rotations in Bendigo that run for eight weeks each: Medicine, Specialty, Surgery, and Ambulatory. Within each rotation, you alternate between different teams fairly quickly, spending 1-2 weeks per team. The highlight for many students is the specialty rotation, where you rotate through specialties such as Anaesthetics, Intensive Care Unit, Renal, Orthopaedics, and the Emergency Department (ED). Another aspect of your hospital teaching is your ED and ward visits, which are run by clinical educators and provide ample opportunity to have procedural skills and other logbook items, such as histories and examinations, signed off.

An average day at Bendigo is highly dependent on your clinical rotation, as well as personal interest and initiative. Your day can start anywhere between 7-9 am with ward rounds, where you will engage with the treating team you are assigned to. This is a good opportunity to identify patients who may be suitable to take a history from or examine later. Depending on your rotation, there is plenty to do after the ward round, such as scrubbing into surgery on surgical rotations or going to the new cath lab on your cardiology rotation. Most rotations also have clinics during the week, which provide exposure to the outpatient element of the patient journey. To supplement time in the hospital, there are also lectures and rotation-specific tutorials to attend. These are taught by specialists within the field and provide an opportunity to consolidate and extend clinical knowledge. Aside from this more formal structured learning, there is also strong peer support from our lovely 5th-year students. All 3B students at Bendigo are assigned a 5th-year mentor who generously gives up their time to run fantastic tutorials. There will also often be a 5th year on your team during your rotations which will show you the ropes and assist where they can.
Accommodation and Lifestyle

There are two main options for accommodation in Bendigo: student accommodation available at Lister House, as well as private accommodation for those that prefer. Lister House is centrally located, with the hospital only a 20-minute walk away. It is situated next to the Sacred Heart Cathedral, and there are two buildings, New and Old Lister, which house the 5D and 3B students, respectively. Rooms in Old Lister are well-equipped with a single bed, desk, armchair, wardrobe and ample cupboard space. They are quite cozy, with great heating and air conditioning that you can run whenever you like. There are communal kitchens, laundry, bathrooms, and showers. Each floor of Lister has four showers and four toilets, which are shared between a maximum of 10 people depending on the time of year, and each kitchen is shared between 6-8 people, with assigned fridges for storage. There is also a communal room with a ping-pong table and brand new TV and sound system, which is a great social space for everyone to hang out, watch movies and host other events.

Given its proximity to Bendigo CBD, Lister House is only a stone's throw away from all your necessities, with Woolies, Coles, and Aldi all within a 5-minute drive. There are also lots of nice restaurants and eateries within arm's reach, such as Harpoon Social Club, Oya's, Okami, and Ms Batterhams. Gyms are an easy walk away, and there are also a plethora of options for exercise, such as yoga, swimming and pilates. Nearby, there are many picturesque places to exercise and relax, such as Lake Weeroona, Rosalind Park and Kennington Reservoir. As a regional hub, there are also plenty of options for social sports and opportunities to get involved in local sports teams.

Although having a car in Bendigo is handy, it is definitely not essential, as everything is within walking distance. As mentioned, Lister is only about 15-20 minutes walk away from the hospital, and there are always people who can offer you a ride if need be. If you’re planning to drive, free all-day parking can be found near the hospital, although the best spots are often taken, and you may still have to walk a couple of minutes. Another popular mode of transport is cycling or skateboarding, and there is also dedicated bike storage for students.

Extracurriculars

All students at Bendigo Clinical School will have the option to volunteer with the Smith Family, where they can tutor students from disadvantaged schools in the area. This takes place on a Tuesday afternoon, and there are plenty of snacks provided. It’s a great volunteering opportunity that the university helps connect you with if you’re interested. There are also opportunities with WILDFIRE, the Monash Indigenous and Rural Education club, which run several events such as trivia night, barbecues, fundraisers, and the yearly Bendigo Ball.

For students at Lister House, four students can apply to be Residential Advisors (RAs), who help the accommodation team with the management of Lister House. In exchange for their work, RAs get a bigger room with a bigger bed, as well as a significant discount on their rent. Many students work casual jobs throughout the semester - this is common and definitely doable. It helps if the work has flexible timings, as the study schedule can be quite busy and change with little notice. For sport and recreation, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved, with a range of social sports, including netball, soccer, basketball, and tennis. There is also the possibility to be involved in the Bendigo Theatre Company, as well as the Bendigo Symphony Orchestra if you’re interested.

Things to do

Get out into the city and explore! There are plenty of hidden gems in Bendigo, from thrift shops that you can only really find by exploring to great restaurants and cafes like Harpoon, Nude Food, Harvest, and Percy and Percy. If you enjoy nature, be sure to check out Rosalind Park and Lake Weeroona, as well as the nearby Macedon Ranges and Mt Alexander. For art lovers, there is the Bendigo Art Gallery, which often has great exhibitions running. While Bendigo may be a regional town, there is still a nightlife scene - get down to the Handle Bar, The Social or Tonic Bar for a good night out, as well as Rifle (Monash night on Wednesdays!) or Dispensary for something a bit more chill. There are also many festivals and events throughout the year, including the famous Easter Festival, lights show and markets.

All-in-all, Bendigo is a great place to spend your first clinical year. With plenty to do both inside and outside of the hospital, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Bendigo thus far and definitely recommend coming here in 3B!
Curriculum

Placement up in Mildura involves three to four half days a week (depending on your rotation). In the mornings, you attend placement, and most afternoons consist of classes. Throughout the year, you will rotate through General Medicine, Surgery and specialty rotations. While niche specialties may not be the selling point of Mildura, the General Medicine and Surgery rotations provide fantastic exposure to a wide range of patients and fundamental conditions (perfect for helping you to learn your R1 matrix conditions). You will also spend some time with Orthopaedics, where you’ll be able to get involved in the fracture clinic - great for learning how to assess and present orthopaedics cases.

You spend six weeks on each placement, which I found to be a good amount of time to practise histories, examinations, and practical skills. Due to small team sizes, you are acknowledged and treated as a team member (they will even remember your coffee order not long into the rotation!). There are also rotating doctors from metropolitan hospitals, such as Alfred and Austin, who are willing to share their breadth of clinical expertise with you.

When not rotating through General Medicine or General Surgery, you will have four to six weeks of ED / Ambulance Victoria placement, three weeks of GP and three specialty weeks. Many 3B Mildura students you talk to will reminisce on their ED experiences and is agreed upon as a favourite among many. The willingness of ED staff to teach and involve you in inpatient workup and care provides for exciting and practical learning. Shifts with Ambulance Victoria give insight into the importance of paramedics in pre-hospital care. The scope of visiting specialists you will have the opportunity to round and attend a clinic with includes Renal, Cardiology, Indigenous Health, Urology, Endocrinology, Rheumatology and Anaesthetics. As the only student on a particular specialty term, you are provided one-on-one consultant teaching.

While Mildura may seem to err heavily on the side of classes, the clinical skills teaching and case-based learning are exciting and provides you with confidence and a strong basis for the transition into the clinical world. Our clinical skills classes are run in groups of eight students by two passionate Nurse Educators, who will ensure you feel prepared before taking your skills over to the hospital. All fundamental skills are taught just after halfway through Semester 1, providing you with ample time to develop your skills throughout the semester. These classes are complemented by a procedural skills lab, open five days per week, allowing you to hone in on each Year 3B skill (including cannulas, venepuncture, catheters, injections, suturing and ECG recording). Optional clinical skills classes are run in Semester 2, allowing you to learn the basics of Year 5D skills, including nasogastric tube insertion and arterial blood gas sampling. Our theory classes (such as Radiology, Patient Based Learning and Pharmacology) and bedside tutorials are predominantly run by Mildura-based GPs, who are fantastic at teaching the content and always have interesting stories to share from rural GP life! Our small class sizes make classes engaging and interactive. Some classes are also run by hospitalists and visiting specialists, such as Ophthalmologists and Dermatologists. We are fortunate to also have refresher classes on history and examination for each system in Semester 1 and early Semester 2, with the opportunity to practise with SIM patients for each session. This allows you to feel confident with
your clinical reasoning and examination skills when with patients at placement and for your assessments. Mildura School of Rural Health is also home to SimMan, a life-sized simulation that we work with to learn Emergency Management skills. The lab is equipped and kitted out to exactly emulate a Resuscitation Bay, and staff control SimMan’s response (both verbally and with changes in vital signs and clinical findings) to management interventions, such as IV fluids and medications, in the control room. These classes occur monthly in groups of four students and allow you to put your theoretical knowledge into practice!

Mildura’s strong focus on procedural skills teaching, clinical reasoning and core conditions knowledge is definitely a highlight and perfect for equipping you with the knowledge and skills needed for a Year 3B level.

**Transport**

In 2023 came, the word on the street became Bonza after the introduction of a new budget airline servicing the Melbourne to Mildura route three times per week. Prior to Bonza, return flights to Mildura would cost you no less than $150, however, if you book early enough and on select days with Bonza, you can score return tickets for $100 (no baggage). Public transport to and from Mildura was also reduced in cost with the price cap that was introduced, meaning that you can travel from Melbourne to Mildura and return for $8.60 as a student. Many people opt to take the overnight bus; however, you can also take bus/train routes during the day. Driving is also an option, and there are many nice stops along the way, including silo art and a pink lake. As it is at least a six-hour trip, the drive is best done with others to keep you company.

In Mildura, public transport is quite limited, and taxis are expensive. The hospital is within a 5-minute drive of each of the houses, and the main town and shops are no more than 5-10 minutes drive from each house. If you do not have access to a car, it is definitely doable to commute everywhere by bike, and Monash has a limited number of you can elect to borrow for the year. There are lots of trail rides along the river and throughout the town, making for an easy and enjoyable ride. Depending on the house you are allocated to, it is possible to walk to the hospital and shops.

**Accommodation**

Accommodation in Mildura consists of 3-4 bedroom houses which are well furnished and have a modern feel. The houses are a 2-8 minute drive from the Hospital, or you can enjoy a pleasant 10-minute walk to placement on sunny days. The houses have central heating/cooling, which is a blessing because Mildura can have hot days and cold nights. The houses deeper within the town are a quick walk away from the River, and the houses in the South end have a wetland nearby. Everything you need, including grocery stores, supermarkets and restaurants, is within a 10-minute drive.

**Things to do**

One thing that worries most people is that Mildura seems very isolated and desolate. However, Mildura is its own little world - everything you need is right here! Numerous gyms, sporting clubs (netball, football, hockey, basketball, etc.) and golf courses are available so that you can continue your hobbies here.

There are numerous restaurants, cafes and wineries to satisfy your tastebuds and keep the weekends exciting. Some of my favourites have been Thairiffic and Seoul Chicken! To enrich the nightlife, there are many bars like the cocktail bar Sip and Fossey’s gin distillery being frequented by students and doctors, and of course, the nightclub Heaven.

There are many regular events to immerse yourself in the community and make friends. For example, weekly social badminton, weekly trivia nights at the Setts bar and fortnightly Farmer’s Market by the river. You really get the community feel. There are plenty of job opportunities around town and some volunteering opportunities too, for example, St John’s Ambulance.

Mildura is surrounded by great sights and tourist attractions. Perry Sandhills is a half an hour's drive into New South Wales and serves an amazing sunset. Mungo National Park, Trentham Winery Estate and even Adelaide make some great road trips!

Placement at Mildura is a great and safe way to experience true rural life. Although you’ll be out of your comfort zone, with supportive staff and a positive outlook, you will really enjoy your time in Mildura!

**Elise MecLeod and Shravan Choudhary**

**Year 3B Students**

**20**
Curriculum

Sale Hospital, Central Gippsland Health (CGH), offers many learning opportunities and rotations and is run by a fantastic team of staff who are caring, approachable, and eager to ensure the highest quality clinical experience possible. Each semester is divided into two 9-week rotations; General Medicine and Surgery.

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

We were exposed to a diverse range of visiting and on-site surgeons and were able to attend clinics. During all the rotations, we felt included and were given many opportunities for hands-on learning, which would likely not have been possible in larger teams.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Things to do**
There are many exciting things to do in Sale. Sharing accommodation and the small cohort size meant that the 3Bs (and 5Cs) became close and often went on group adventures. Some of our favourite things to do included participating in Tuesday and Thursday Trivia at the Star Hotel (we even won a few), playing tennis at the local courts, camping in nearby national parks and watching our four 3B students kick goals for the Sale football team.

If you enjoy beautiful outdoor walks, Sale is the place for you. There are many trails within walking distance of Monash accommodation (Sale wetlands, Sale Botanical Gardens) or only a short drive away (Mitchell River, Tarra-Bulga, Avon River). The Sale Community Garden boasts a wide range of fresh free produce, and we particularly enjoyed snacking on ripe strawberries while watching the sunset on Lake Guthridge. Sale is also fortunate to have both the mountains and the beach close by. The Ninety Mile Beach can be visited at nearby locations like Seaspray, Golden Beach and Lakes Entrance. Mount Bawbaw and Mount Hotham are close enough to allow an easy weekend away from the snow.

If you enjoy wine and fine dining, you can enjoy an evening at some of Gippsland’s finest wineries (e.g., Blue Gables, Lightfoot and Sons) or sit down for a three-course meal at the Tinamba Hotel. For brunch or coffee, the many local cafes provide a variety of options (Portside, Wild Honey, Redcatt). Grab dinner, drinks and a show at the local theatre, the Wedge (you could even opt to join the cast). If you enjoy singing in the shower or jiving to your friends singing, then Karaoke at Jack Ryan’s bar might just be for you. The Gippsland Art Gallery has some beautiful collections and is definitely worth a visit.

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

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**TONI-ANN BLACK**

FORMER YEAR 3B STUDENT
Students at LRH undertake three-week block rotations covering a range of different specialties, including Emergency Medicine, Critical Care Unit, Anaesthetics, Orthopaedics and many more. All students complete six-week block rotations of General Medicine and General Surgery. Since there are only 24 students, the cohort becomes close-knit, and there’s a nice balance of students to patients/doctors, which provides students with multiple opportunities to assist in surgery, examine patients in ED, IV cannulations and much more.

The teaching at LRH places a large emphasis on case-based learning. Every week, students attend multiple PBLs as well as bedside tutorials where they can practice their history-taking and examination skills. All the consultants, registrars, interns and allied health staff are keen to help us learn. The faculty provides lectures from specialist clinicians throughout the year to cover matrix conditions and interesting topics.

**Accommodation**

Monash University guarantees accommodation for all rurally-placed students at a discounted rate in comparison to the Melbourne rental market. Each furnished four-bedroom house comes with all the essentials (beds, kitchen appliances, washing machine etc.). Friendship groups of 2 or 4 are considered when assigning students; however, this is not guaranteed.

Rent is paid monthly directly to the university through the Monash Rural Health website and includes all utilities and internet. Share-housing with peers really enhances the experience of rural placement - studying, exploring Traralgon and surrounding areas, and travelling to the hospital for classes are some of the many things that you can do together with your housemates. All houses provided by Monash are 10-15 minutes from the town centre and hospital. 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 family close by, would like to have pets or want more selection in where they want to live.

**Things to do**

Traralgon 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, Asian fusion at the Little Prince, Italian at Cafe Eviva and all-you-can-eat Japanese at Okami, there is no shortage of delicious food. House of Frank, Story Sixty-One and Food and Co are some amazing brunch cafes in Traralgon, perfect for those wanting a nice break from studying and the hospital cafe.

One of the Gippsland community highlights is the quaint farmer’s market on the 3rd Saturday of each month which has a variety of locally sourced fresh produce and goods. Another highlight is that the community park run is held weekly on Saturday mornings for keen joggers of any calibre, with around 150 people attending almost every week. For any budding gym junkies, the new aquatic centre is perfect with a 50-metre pool, steam room, sauna, full gym facilities and fitness classes, with flexible and affordable student contracts. For those who are looking to test your general knowledge and compete with local champions, weekly trivia at Morwell Hotel is the place to be.

Day trips up to Tarra Bulga National Park, Toorongo Falls and the 19th-century gold mining town Walhalla are a great way to relax over the weekend. For those with regular commitments in Melbourne, the drive to and from Traralgon is beautiful and scenic; alternatively, a V-Line service is available that runs regularly (almost every hour) and is approximately the same time as travelling via car.
Welcome to Warragul! At Warragul, we have a close-knit 3B cohort consisting of 8 students, which offers numerous advantages. One of the key benefits is the opportunity to build strong relationships with your peers and provide support to one another throughout the year. Additionally, the small number of students at Warragul allows for more extensive interactions with consultant doctors and patients, making you an integral part of the medical team. Our friendly and supportive staff are dedicated to ensuring a smooth experience throughout your first clinical year.

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

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

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

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

Warragul offers a unique opportunity to spend a day with a nurse, gaining hands-on experience and insight into their daily tasks. The simulation model lab provides classes with a medical doctor, training you to respond to emergency situations. Additionally, there are monthly classes held in Traralgon. Furthermore, friendly final-year students can arrange tutorials to teach high-yield concepts and provide OSCE sessions to prepare for the end-of-year exams.
Accommodation

For accommodation, most students at Warragul commute, but there are options to live in fully furnished, subsidized Monash rentals throughout the town. These 3- or 4-bedroom houses cost around $110 per week, including utilities. The houses are modern and equipped with the necessary furniture and appliances. Living in these rentals provides proximity to the hospital, and you can even choose to live with your friends. The university takes care of maintenance, gardening, and inspections, minimizing your house maintenance responsibilities. Private rentals in Warragul or nearby towns are also available, although they may be slightly more expensive.

Things to Do

Despite being a relatively small town, Warragul offers plenty of activities. You can join local country sports teams, such as swimming, football, basketball, or netball. The town provides excellent sports facilities, including tennis courts, ovals, swimming pools, and multiple gyms. If you enjoy outdoor adventures, Warragul’s location allows for quick trips to ski at Mt Baw Baw, hike at Wilsons Promontory, or visit wineries in Gippsland. There is a diverse selection of cafes and restaurants in Warragul, including Main Street Café, Frankies, Shed 21, The Courthouse, Siam Pesto, Portelli’s, and Royal Kebabs 88. The Warragul Farmer’s Market, held on the third Saturday of every month at Civic Park, offers live music, food trucks, arts and crafts, and fresh produce.

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

MARK TAY
YEAR 3B STUDENT
YEAR 4C
HOSPITAL
PLACEMENT
Bendigo Health is located in the town of Bendigo, approximately 2 hours from Melbourne in the central North-West region of Victoria. The hospital itself is one of the largest regional hospitals in the state and has a large catchment area across several smaller rural hospitals and towns, including Mildura, Kerang, Swan Hill, Castlemaine and Maryborough. The hospital itself is large and hosts several specialties, including the core specialties for 4C - Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Psychiatry and Paediatrics. However, the nature of Bendigo Health being a regional hospital means the presentations across these specialties are much more varied than those seen in the more specialised wards in Melbourne.

Psychiatry is one of the more relaxed rotations of the year, with very supportive staff and a less intensive schedule. You spend time in the hospital setting across the Acute Adult Unit and Older Persons Acute Unit. You also can sit in on electroconvulsive therapy and Mental Health Tribunal hearings and attend the Parent-Infant Unit, which we all found very interesting and enjoyable. Whilst in psychiatry, you also spend a lot of social and tight-knit and often get together for drinks and socialising (including the renowned Rifle Wednesdays).

Curriculum
Each week you receive teaching from all 3 specialty disciplines plus some general practice content. Teaching is usually in the form of lectures from 4pm until 6-7pm at night after placement during the day, making them long days!

Mondays consist of Psychiatry teaching, Tuesdays are GP, every 3rd or 4th Wednesday is Paediatrics and Thursdays are O&G. The lectures cover approaches to certain presentations and other commonly examined matrix conditions. The paediatric sessions were less formal, consisting of OSCE practice and Kahoot quizzes for consolidation.

Throughout each of your rotations, you also receive more specific psychiatry and paediatric teaching in your ward groups, including case-based discussions, SIMs and PBLs/PEERLS. Teaching outside of formal lectures for O&G was limited in our rotation, but faculty are eager to arrange more teaching in the future. The Sim lab in Bendigo is also open throughout the day for you to practise for your APEX, and the staff were always very helpful in providing feedback.

Placement
The 4Cs are split into three groups which then rotate through 6-week rotations of each specialty. Although the group of you are on the same rotation, you will find you move between different locations, teams or wards every day, sometimes as the only student. At times this can feel isolating and mean it’s more difficult to get to know the teams you work with, but the staff are generally very friendly and welcoming. You also see a fantastic range of presentations across each specialty while moving through various departments and teams, and the lack of other students around you means you can get more hands-on with the team and patients.
time in the community attending community psychiatry clinics and dual diagnosis facilities. Overall, you see a well-rounded range of presentations in acute and long-term settings. Bendigo also offers a Mentor Week, where you shadow a psychiatry registrar or consultant for the week. This can vary in what you do for the week and where you go depending on which Psychiatrist you are allocated to. The only limitation of psychiatry in Bendigo is that you often needed to arrange your own transport to and from community placement offsite, making it difficult if you didn’t have a car or bike as you would often be the only student rostered to that site at that time.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology, on the other hand, is a more intensive rotation with a sizable logbook, long hours and early starts. That being said, I found it to be a rewarding and enjoyable rotation, and as long as you turned up to placement, you generally had no problems with finishing the logbook by the end of the rotation. Unlike psychiatry, you spend a lot of time in the hospital in clinics or in the wards and birth suite. The HMOs and registrars are very supportive and willing to teach throughout your time on placement.

Don’t believe the rumours about midwives – at Bendigo, they were all fantastic and so willing to teach and get you involved! You also have the opportunity to scrub into C-sections and gynaecology surgeries frequently. Like with psychiatry, you have Mentor Week, where you are allocated to a mentor and shadow them for a week during the rotation.

Paediatrics was the most popular rotation by far in my semester. You are primarily based in the hospital for Paediatrics and spend time in the wards (general paediatrics and special care baby unit) and shadowing doctors in the clinic. You also get the opportunity to attend c-sections to care for neonates and conduct baby checks. Rapid Review clinics run on Monday and Friday afternoons were a favourite for all of us, as we were able to see our own patients in student-run clinics supervised by paediatric consultants. These clinics were great for consolidation and revision for our APEX. As students on Paeds, you are also invited to all the paediatric meetings, teaching and case presentations that they run for the doctors. These are great opportunities to further extend your knowledge and consolidate concepts, and make you feel like part of the team.

Accommodation
4C students in Bendigo are allocated to houses located an easy 20-minute walk or bike-ride from the hospital. All the 4C houses are located close together and consist of 3 bedroom houses which are modern and comfortable. You are also a short drive from the centre of Bendigo and close to your local Coles and Lake Weeroosna.

Lifestyle/Things to Do
Bendigo is known for its culture and gastronomy. It has a number of famous restaurants, as well as several hidden gems! There are an abundance of coffee shops, bars and takeaway restaurants to try. Some gems are Out of Order Cafe, The Good Loaf, Peachy’s, Babylon, Handlebar, the Piano Bar, Forage and Old Green Bean. Bendigo also has an art gallery, the Ulumbarra Theatre and the Chinese Dragon Museum. If you are lucky enough to be there over Easter, there is also their famous Easter Parade. Bendigo is also an active town, with lots of opportunities to get involved with local sporting teams and the community, such as boot camp, basketball, netball and the rowing club. Some local gyms also offer discounts or short-term contracts to students.

If you are open to travelling a little, then the surrounding towns are also worth visiting. The historic towns of Marong, Castlemaine and Kyneton are short drives from Bendigo, and the wine region of Heathcote is worth visiting if you are into your vino!
Mildura

Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) is a great regional hospital which offers many opportunities for 4C students to conduct their studies. Mildura is a small regional city located far north west in Victoria on the Murray river, with a population of approximately 30,000 in the town itself, or around 50,000 when combined with small neighbouring towns like Wentworth. Mildura will offer students a true rural experience, given it is located more than four hours away from the nearest tertiary hospital in Adelaide, or 6 hours from Melbourne. MBPH offers 4C students the opportunity to undertake specialty training in Psychiatry, Paediatrics and O&G.

This year Mildura had a tight-knit cohort made up of 12 4C students, with a split of both undergraduate and post graduate students. Throughout the semester the cohort became very close and enjoyed many day/weekend activities together making the Mildura experience one to remember. There are also plenty of staff at Monash Rural health who will be your surrogate guardians for your term, making your experience run smoothly. MBPH also hosts around 16-year 3B students and 6-8 5D students, in addition to international medical students, making the cohort quite large, which was very good for social occasions, and inter-peer teaching.

Most students would spend their weekends doing day trips to various locations around Mildura or going to the local markets. This year 5 students played football for South Mildura Football club and a handful played at the local tennis club, which was fantastic to engage with the community and make friends outside of the med bubble. I would recommend trying to play with a sports team or club as it’s a great way to meet new people. It was often these sporting friends that we would go out with on the weekends, and we loved enjoying their company.

Curriculum & Placements

Psychiatry
Hands down, the Psychiatry program at Mildura for year 4C students are second to none, and every single student in our rotation loved and enjoyed the classes, even if psychiatry was not their special interest. Our Program was run by Dr Hieu Pham, who is an extremely charismatic educator, making classes comedic, fun, interactive and, of course, educational. Everyone in our cohort looked forward to Dr Pham’s classes as they offered so much insight into psychiatric conditions whilst being lighthearted and enjoyable. Dr Pham has now retired from teaching, with Dr Michael Kean taking over. Dr Kean also ran multiple classes from us, and his style of teaching is very similar to Dr Pham’s; hence I’d imagine future students will have similar experiences to ours.

In terms of placement, they consisted of Community Psychiatry, Aged Psychiatry, Client liaison and In-patient acute psychiatry. The team of Doctors at MBPH for psychiatry are all super nice and get students involved. At times the placements can be slow-paced compared to other specialities, but this provides us with the opportunity to have individual tutorials with a Psychiatrist or go off for self-study. To make the most of your placement, I recommend finding your case study early (Dr Maddie and Dr Pham are the best people to ask) and trying to spend some placement days with Dr Pham; you won’t regret it.

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

**Pediatrics**
The Paediatric program for 4C students is great at Mildura, with a good mix of clinics, wards, lectures and simulations. Of the four students in Paediatrics, one would be placed in the Specialist Clinic, where they could see ADHD and ASD assessments alongside reviews of chronic medical conditions. The other three students would be placed in the wards, where we would be exposed to acute paediatric conditions. The ward students would round in the brand new 8-bed paediatric unit, in addition to the special care nursery and review ED presentations. At times paediatrics could be very slow, as it is a seasonal specialty, with the students doing their rotation in summer having less exposure compared to the students in winter. However, each week there would be 3-4 hours of Paediatric lectures, and usually a practical simulation. Every student found the simulations very educational and hands-on.

**Overall Tips for Placement and MBPH**

**Psychiatry**
- Get your case early – Dr Pham/Dr Maddie is the best person to ask.
- Try to get more exposure in the Inpatient unit or with Dr Pham if Community placements are slowed pace or have few patients.

**O&G**
- Ask your Reg/Consultant what the theatre lists are at the start of the week and try to scrub in. Dr Amen always lets students scrub, and so does Dr McCully for public patients.
- Work with the Midwifery lead in order to figure out birth suite arrangements (they won’t let you just rock up at any time for a birth). So try and ask them the best times for you to arrive/help out.

**Utilize the Private hospital for theatre log book requirements – however, the Private hospital will not let students be involved in procedures, so if the public has similar lists, then go to the public instead.**

**Paediatrics**
- Get involved and hands-on with helping the team - they appreciate the help, and they often will let you do more if they know you're keen!
- Try to organize with the Day Registrar if you can go to the ED with them or prior to see acute presentations and get your log bog signed off.

_BILLY QUIRK_  
YEAR 4C STUDENT
SALE

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

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

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

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

Children’s Health classes are usually scheduled on Wednesdays with only two classes being in person and the remainder on zoom. The in-person classes are a great opportunity to use the theory learnt into practise with a Paediatric Emergency Simulation in Churchill and Practise OSCE’s in Traralgon. Classes on zoom are a mix between lecture style classes and group discussions that do require some preparation beforehand. There are heaps of practise multiple choice questions during these sessions, which is great in preparation for end-of-year exams.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology classes are also usually scheduled on a Wednesday, with half the classes being in person at Churchill and half being via zoom. The in-person classes at Churchill provide a great opportunity to learn the core skills of Obstetrics and Gynaecology as well as work as a team during Obstetrics Emergency Simulations. The online classes are a great opportunity to cover the Obstetrics and Gynaecology matrix, as each student is tasked to research a matrix topic and present notes and test their peers with some multiple-choice questions.

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

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

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

Obstetrics and Gynaecology are also completed at Sale Hospital, with your time split between the ward, birth suite, theatre and consulting suites. Some students found it difficult to complete aspects of the logbook at Sale Hospital, especially observing births. At times students have needed to stay overnight to observe births to complete their logbook, which is likely not a Sale specific problem due to competing for births with the midwifery students. There are lots of opportunities to scrub in for theatre, and the doctors are more than happy to teach during the procedure. During clinic days, you will get the opportunity to perform a lot of antenatal examinations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Breanna Teo
Year 4C Student
Rotation

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

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

Curriculum

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

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

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

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

Placement

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

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

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

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

**Accommodation**

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

**Lifestyle**

Warragul is packed with things to do to keep you busy on your weekends. The town is gorgeous (and flat), making it perfect for nice weekend walks, and the café scene is very strong. There is a range of local sports, and the Voyage Fitness gym offers student rates that are very affordable to help you stay fit.

The restaurants in Warragul are fantastic, in particular, I have to recommend Warragul Thai. On top of this, it is nestled amongst a group of other lovely small towns within half an hour, including Drouin, Neerim, and Yarragon, which all have lovely places to visit and fun events.

**Joel Findlay**

**Year 4C Student**
YEAR 4C GP PLACEMENT
Clinic and Curriculum overview

I was placed at Campaspe Family Practice in Kyneton in Semester 1 2023 with two other students. It is a large practice with around 20 GPs. Each GP has their own room and patients and you get assigned to one of the GPs for the day. You have different GPs everyday, I got to be with around 6 different GPs by the end of the semester. This might seem bad because you might not be able to build rapport with one GP but after a few weeks, you get to be with the same GP from time to time so it works out. Every student had a GP they were most with and were closest to by the end of the semester. You can also ask the admin staff which GP you want to be with after you see them. Everyone had their favourite by a few weeks and we asked most of the time. That being said, the admin staff is probably the nicest people you’ll meet. They are so accommodating and always there to help you with anything.

There is a medical student room at the clinic but it is small and there’s no patient bed. Most of the time, if you ask admin, they will let you know which doctor room is free as the doctor might not be there that day and you can just use that room for the day. I went to the clinic on Thursday and Friday 9-5 with another student. One out of the three went to the clinic on Monday and Tuesday. There is an occasional Melbourne uni student there as well but they’re only there for 6 weeks. Each GP teaches well, you get to do parallel consults as soon as you want. Each doctor has a patient list for the day and they’ll ask you to go see this patient while they see another. You do your history and relevant exam and write it up on Best Practice. The doctor will usually read your notes after they are done with their patient and come over to your room to either find a plan together or ask you questions on how to manage the patient. If a doctor has about 15 patients for the day, you will probably see 6 of them. The GP clinic is also connected to the Kyneton Health hospital. Thus, the GPs occasionally go to the hospital to see inpatients and ED patients so you will go to the hospital at times as well.
Accommodation and lifestyle

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

DANIEL LEE
YEAR 4C STUDENT
Highlands is a very picturesque area only 1 hour from the Melbourne CBD. There were 3 students allocated to Gisborne Medical, 1 at Neal St Woodend, 2 at Brooke St Woodend, 1 at Ranges and 1 at Neal St Gisborne. All GP clinics offered opportunities to do parallel consulting.

**Curriculum**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ranges Medical Centre is located in Gisborne. You will be parallel consulting from very early on: appointments are set for 60 minutes, and the supervising doctor is happy to join within 5 minutes or 45 minutes, depending on when you finish or need help. At Heyfield Medical Centre, you are given a lot of dermatology experience. You will also get a lot of opportunities to practise procedures, including skin excisions and biopsies (so you will be able to get parts of your O&G logbook completed early if you are scheduled for GP in semester 1).
Accommodation
If you choose to live in Monash accommodation, you will be assigned to one of the houses in Gisborne or Kyneton. These are three and 6-bedroom houses, respectively, that you may share with other 4th-year medical students.

Things to do
Within Highlands, there are many cool things to see and do! The Kyneton Botanical Gardens are home to several species of trees and have a beautiful walk along the Campaspe River. Turpin Falls are nearby too, which is a very nice swimming spot. Botanik is a Melbourne-esque cocktail bar that sells plants, too, Animus is a stylish gin distillery, and there are also a handful of very sweet Italian restaurants that make up the little town that is Kyneton, which is truly beautiful! The Kyneton pizza restaurant is also awesome.

Around the town centre, there are lots of places to eat and spend time when not at placement. If you have the time, try to check out Thursday night trivia at Major Tom’s (great burgers too). Baringo in Gisborne is very nice for dinner or even brunch! Mt Macedon is close by, as is Hanging Rock.
While far away from the city, Swan Hill is a delightful little town and sure to become your home away from home for 18 weeks on GP. Truly the definition of a community town, the people in Swan Hill make the town special and memorable with heaps of opportunities to get involved in the community, you will feel the warmth of Swan Hill both metaphorical and literal in the summer.

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

After the first week you see patients who specifically book in to see you under the supervision of a GP, and there is no better experience in regards to learning all the GP conditions and improving your clinical reasoning. You’ll see patients ranging from simple matters of repeat scripts to thorough history and exam, all the way through to managing complex patients with assorted mental health and even intellectual disabilities. This experience, while daunting at times, allows for exceptional growth in regards to your ability to become a good clinician with problem solving abilities and understanding of the nuances with medicare, the PBS and referrals alongside some of the struggles that patients face in the rural setting.

The Clinic itself is right across the road from the hub where all the classes happen. All the staff, GPs, receptionists and nurses are an absolute pleasure to be around and make going to clinic a great time. It’s an extremely supportive environment where you feel like you can undertake opportunities such as suturing, giving injections and undergoing wound care with the confidence and support required. The practical skills went all the way from cleaning wounds to removing skin cancers with wide excisions, with students spending whole days in the excision room specifically for skin cancer removal allowing for a really good practical experience. The clinic starts at 9 and ends at 5, with opportunities to come in on the weekend if you are so inclined.
Now it isn’t just 18 weeks of hardcore GP consulting. There are two weeks each assigned to the Midwifery ward and Emergency Department. This provides a great opportunity to get lots of the O&G logbook signed off and experience births and gynaecological/antenatal clinic as a student, as well as providing a small break too. The placement in the Emergency Department allows for a good change of pace and a way to bring back lots of the year three knowledge and keep you sharp in terms of hospital management as opposed to outpatient care. In Swan Hill, if you are keen to get involved in anything specific, whether it be surgery or seeing patients at the local high school, you’ll be able to get involved easily. With numerous visiting specialists, there are heaps of opportunities to attend their clinics or scrub into the theatre. Along with joining them in seeing patients, they often run after-hours education sessions on a variety of topics that medical students and doctors alike attend, such as talks on acute kidney injury and ENT emergencies, helping review and learn core topics.

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

**Accommodations and Things to do**
The eight students were split across two very nice and spacious houses.

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

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

*Kiran Kottakkal*
*Year 4C Student*
Regarding things to do in Swan Hill, there are heaps of ways to make your time here really memorable. Not only is the river right by the town centre, making it a beautiful running and walking spot, there are loads of small towns nearby that are great for camping and walking. Every Saturday, there is a park run at Lake Boga full of lovely people who welcomed us with open arms. Within Swan Hill, there is a 24-hour gym along with another gym/swimming pool and centres for everything ranging from pilates to jiu-jitsu. There are local sports clubs for netball, AFL, soccer and hockey, along with regular badminton sessions at the stadium. If sports aren’t particularly your thing, there is a library and loads of different arts centres nearby, as well as regular weekend markets in Swan Hill and in the nearby towns. There are a fair few places to grab a good meal too. I’d recommend Niko Niko, the Japanese restaurant, but there are places for lots of different cuisines. If you want a drink or a night out, the Commercial Hotel is great, while being a close walk to at least one of the Houses.

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

AKHIL SAHNI
FORMER YEAR 4C STUDENT
South Gippsland is a gorgeous region 1 hour 45 minutes east of the Melbourne CBD with GP clinics in Leongatha, Korumburra and Wonthaggi. In Sem 1 2022 there were 6 students allocated to the clinics and all offering the opportunity to undertake parallel consulting.

**Curriculum**
A typical week of GP consists of clinic from 9am - 12:30pm in the morning, an hour off for lunch and an afternoon session from 2pm – 5pm. Clinic is typically 3 days a week, with Wednesday allocated as a teaching day. Teaching will cover a system each week, with high yield content, case studies, examination skills, practice questions and OSCEs covered. Reinforcement of common GP presentations is a strong theme in order to quickly give you a strong foundation to make the most of your time parallel consulting. The final day of the week will be occupied with one of two activities, this being either self-directed study or a community/speciality placement. These include paediatrics consulting, gynaecology consulting + theatre, optometry, audiology, specialist school day and maternal health nurse. Additionally through the semester you will attend Med Law & Ethics tutorials.

**Clinics**
Leongatha Healthcare is a super supportive clinic where every single GP, nurse, and admin staff member will welcome you in as a member of the team. Each day you will be scheduled with 2 GPs (one for the morning and one for the afternoon), with each having a preference as to how your sessions are run. These often consist of a mix of solely observing the consult, spearheading the consult yourself with the GP observing or independently seeing the patient yourself. The GPs will often ask you for your differentials, investigations and management plans, which is great OSCE prep. They are also very willing to spend time answering any questions you may have, and have no qualms in going over the 15 minute appointment allocations to ensure you, as the student, are able to have a fulfilling experience. More specialised

- Leongatha Healthcare (2 students)
- Korumburra Medical Centre (1 student)
- Wonthaggi Medical Group (2 students)
- South Gippsland Family Medicine (Wonthaggi – 1 student)
consults can also see you assisting with pre-anaesthetic checks, antenatal and obstetric cases and skin lesion excisions/biopsies. You will also get the opportunity to perform many clinical skills from the nurse station also, including ear syringes, endless vaccinations and wound management. Leongatha Healthcare sees a huge variety of patients, and time spent there will see you exposed to all the aspects of GP you need to pass 4C, and so much more.

**Korumburra Medical Centre** is a truly phenomenal place. The environment is incredibly supportive, quickly taking me from feeling a little nervous and apprehensive to genuinely joyful about going in each morning. The staff are all very keen to see you engaged with the world of general practice and learning the principles of primary care, and they are genuinely proud to see you develop through your parallel consulting experience. The town of Korumburra is gorgeous, too, with grassy borders of streets lined with towering trees making an excellent change over lunch for a walk down the street to get a meal. The clinic has left a lasting impression on me, and I’ll certainly be returning in the future to continue my medical journey.

**Wonthaggi Medical Group** is a large GP clinic located in the centre of Wonthaggi, a mere 5-minute drive from the student accommodation. There are over 25 GPs and GP registrars who work at the clinic, with an incredible team of nurses who are super welcoming and will always help you out. You’ll be rotating through 8 - 10 supervising GPs, and parallel consulting from your own room early on. Your appointments are booked for 45 minutes, seeing up to 8 patients a day, with the option to call the GP at any stage in the consult. The supervising GPs are willing to provide as much or as little assistance as needed, which creates an independent yet supportive learning environment. There are also a number of visiting non-GP specialists who also consult from the clinic on a regular basis, which provides the opportunity to sit in with them if you wish. Many of the GPs have procedure days, where they’re keen to get you involved, particularly with skin biopsies, excisions, and suturing.

**South Gippsland Family Medicine** is located right in the middle of Wonthaggi and is about a 5-minute drive from Monash housing. The team there are extremely accommodating to your learning pace and will let you parallel consult extremely early on if you feel up to it. Parallel consults consist of taking a patient history, performing any relevant examinations and then reviewing your provisional treatment plan with the supervising doctor. From there, you will be able to learn how to print prescriptions and organise investigations for the patient. Otherwise, there are lots of opportunities to observe consults as well as take part in assisting with skin procedures and flu clinics. You will also get the chance to attend several sessions to consolidate/learn specialty rotations, including specialist clinics, gynaecology theatre and community placements.

**Accommodation**

Monash accommodation consists of a three-bedroom, one-bathroom house
in Leongatha, which takes on the students placed in Leongatha (a 2 minute drive from the clinic) and Korumburra (a 10 minute drive away) and a 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom house in Wonthaggi, less than a 5 minute drive from the two GP clinics. You’re likely only to be living with fellow 4th year medical students on GP. Included in the weekly rent is gas, electricity, water and WiFi.

**Things to Do**
The South Gippsland area contains a plethora of scenery and cool places to visit. The pristine Wilson’s Promontory is just a short drive away and has endless stunning beaches with mountains and coastal bushland lining the entire drive (so gorgeous it’s difficult to keep your eyes on the road!). Venus Bay and Inverloch also have areas of beach great to swim at while the weather permits. The best take away in the region can be found at Rainbow Palace Korumburra, with an extensive menu of Chinese food, while Lyon & Bair café in Leongatha offers delicious coffee and more. The rail trail is a scenic, well maintained track great for running, walking or cycling. Finally, both Leongatha and Wonthaggi play host to a Coles, Woolies and Aldi each, so whichever faction of the supermarket wars you choose to identify with, you’ll be covered.
West Gippsland has numerous GP clinics located around Warragul, which is only an hour drive from Melbourne. 4C students get the option to choose which clinic they'd like to be allocated to and are all within 15-20 minute distance from Warragul.

Curriculum
A typical week for West Gippsland GP students involves two full days of placement (Tuesday and Thursday) at the clinic which usually goes from 9am-5pm with the 1-2 hour lunch break. Curriculum teaching occurs on Wednesday morning in person at Monash Rural Health building at Warragul, often going though case discussions, presentation of matrix topics and CPEG teachings as well. The tutors are Dr Paul Brougham (Lead Discipline of GP curriculum in West Gippsland) and Dr Jacobs Lee who are both highly experienced and knowledgeable. There are also opportunities to learn and revise clinical skills ranging from MSK examination, BLS training, ENT examination etc.

Other forms of teaching also include COGs which delve into O&G which occurs on a Friday, and other occasional teachings for ethics and med law tutorials on Fridays over zoom.

Students are also offered the opportunity to partake in additional placement either based in Warragul or Traralgon which includes optometry, audiology, maternal and child health service, palliative care and specialist school.

Banks Place Medical Centre is the closest clinic to Warragul, being just 10 minutes away and a normal day ranges from 9-5pm. Students usually sit in with one of the 4 regular supervising GP’s alternating each day. Two of the GPs are also GPO’s so you get to see a lot more obstetric and gynaecology cases with them and one other specialises in chronic management which delves into quite complex cases - a great opportunity for learning. The GPs often like to have 4 weeks of observing consults and 14 weeks of parallel consulting for the 18 week semester. The 4 weeks of

- Bank Place Medical Centre (Drouin)
- Neerim South Medical Centre (Neerim South)
- Yarragon Medical Centre (Yarragon)
- Trafalgar Medical Centre (Trafalgar)
- Latrobe Community Health Service (Morwell)
observation may seem long, but you still get a chance to take a history and do examinations as well partially. During parallel consults, you get to run almost the entire consultation yourself, taking the history, doing an exam, ordering investigations, alongside preparing a management plan. After this, the GPs usually come into the room to check and consolidate what you’ve done, which is also a great time to ask questions that you may have. Additionally, there are also procedural skills to partake in, including skin biopsies, Mirena implanon insertion and removal, and speculum exam. All of the staff 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.

**Accommodation**

Students opting into Monash Rural Health Accommodation are often placed in houses (2-5 bedrooms) with other 3rd-5th year students. Houses are often 5-minute distances from WGHG hospital and within very close distance of local shops.

*KIRAN KOTTAKKAL*  
YEAR 4C STUDENT
East Gippsland has all the best parts of being rural on offer, the lakes, mountains, the ocean, the snow. In 2023, 4 students were placed in East Gippsland first semester for their GP rotations.

### Curriculum/Teaching

Teaching was delivered on Fridays in person at MRH Bairnsdale. Monash Gippsland provided a website with links to the designated pre-reading for each tutorial. Each week had a focus on different segments of the GP matrix with tutor Dr Kathy Brotchie. Sessions called Clinical Reasoning were also held with different doctors to improve out real world and Monash paper exam consultation skills. COGs tutorials were also a staple which ran almost in a ICL style, with each student being assigned a case and presenting on it to the other students. The COGs included 4 O&G Health and Paediatric Case Discussions conducted by Dr Antoinette Mowbray and Dr Kathy Brotchie respectively. There are also opportunities for skill sessions which were highly beneficial held at the advanced clinical skills lab in MRH.

### Placement

All GP placements in East Gippy offer lots of opportunities, with parallel consulting from the first day in Lakes Entrance. The Bairnsdale clinics are relatively big, and you will have the opportunity to work with most of the GPs there. With both clinics having GP Obstetricians and GP Anaesthetists who work as VMOs at BRHS.

The Lakes Entrance clinic services a very large portion of East Gippsland and is composed of GPs, Nurse Specialists, and a multitude of other allied health professionals (podiatrist, physiotherapists, diabetes educator etc.). GLCH placement also includes outreach days on Wednesday where students will go to either Bruthen or Nowa Nowa for the first half of the day followed by a delicious practice provided lunch and GP meeting giving greater insight into the workings of the practice. The GPs all have different interest such as sexual health, mental health, skin cancer and geriatrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale Medical Group (Bairnsdale)</td>
<td>1 student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macleod Street Medical Centre (Bairnsdale)</td>
<td>1 student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland Lakes Community Health (Lakes Entrance)</td>
<td>2 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbost Medical Clinic (Orbost)</td>
<td>2 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is also a clinic triage section which you will be assigned to for half days or full days, here you see more acute presentations. The clinic triage develops your skills on wound care, ECGs and emergency management/stabilisations and vaccinations. The doctors also guide you through procedures such as cancer excisions/biopsies and stitching to make you competent and able to perform them yourselves. Each clinic gave one study day for the week, which in Lakes Entrance was the Monday enabling us to extend our weekends to 3 days with the Friday being a teaching day with no placement.

**Accommodation**
The Bairnsdale 4th year house is a 4 bedroom house 5-10 mins away from the two GP clinics and the hospital. This was shared by the 2 students placed at Bairnsdale GP clinics and the other 2 rooms were kept empty for the students placed at Lakes Entrance Medical Clinic so they could drive down to Bairnsdale on Thursday night and stay in Bairnsdale for Friday classes.

The Lakes Entrance house is a 2 bedroom house 3 minute drive away from the GP clinic and a 5 minute walk from the 24hr gym.

**Things to do**
East Gippsland offers many hiking and biking trails such as the East Gippsland Rail Trail that conveniently starts in Bairnsdale and ends in Orbost. The Buchan caves and Winery, to name a few are also at your doorstep and easily doable as day trips or even after tutorials on Fridays. If you enjoy going to farmers/producers markets, there will be one on almost every Saturday and Sunday in East Gippsland. My Housemate and I went the beach in Lakes entrance every day for two weeks straight as it was right outside our house about 5 minutes walking distance. We also took advantage of a long weekend and drove up to NSW as it was so close to go camping. You can also take advantage of your proximity to the snow and enjoy a ski trip.
Central Gippsland is 3 hours from Melbourne with GP placements in Sale, Maffra and Heyfield. This year, there were 6 then 7 students in Central Gippsland each semester. All students had the opportunity to parallel consult and gain experience in procedural skills.

**Curriculum**
A typical week involves clinical placement from Monday-Wednesday 9-5pm. Each clinic varies with how they organise your time. Some students parallel consult every single day whereas others will observe or be given allied health opportunities during the week. However they choose to organise it, let them know what you are interested in and how you would like to spend your time to make the most of your placement, they do their best to accommodate so do tell them. Additionally, there are a few 1-day scheduled allied health experience for all students (eg. optometry clinic, maternal child health clinic).

Thursdays are a private study day and tutorials run for half a day on Fridays at the hospital. Sometimes there are additional Friday afternoon classes, these are typically on zoom with a wider cohort and will usually be Ethics of Med Law. The tutorials every week will go through different systems (cardio, resp, etc). There is always pre-reading for every class with a topic that needs to be prepared by every student to present. Classes will include OSCE practice, case discussions and some examination practice in the clinical skills lab. Some weeks will be dedicated to O&G or Paediatric cases to help you prep/revise your specialty matrix.

**Clinics**
Clocktower Medical Centre is located in Sale right in the town centre. There are 6 different supervising GPs who you rotate through. Parallel consulting begins in week 3 after 2 weeks of observation. You have your own room (with your name on the door and at the front entrance!!) and your own list so patients book appointments with you. At the start you will see 6 patients per day but this will go up to 8 when you begin to feel more confident. Your time is allocated to 1 patient per hour which includes your consult with them then calling in your supervisor to present your findings and plan.
If you have some free time between patients, feel free to self-study or go see the nurses for some vaccinations, ECGs, ear washouts and other experiences. There is plenty of procedural experience available too, especially if you make your interest known. They organise time slots to be blocked out for you to be assigned to a GP doing procedures so you can assist with excisions and suturing. The clinic is so friendly and very welcoming, they really make you feel like part of the team.

**Inglis Medical Centre** is the largest GP clinic in Sale, located right opposite the hospital. For each session, you are scheduled with a different GP, and so what you will do every day can vary. Some prefer you to observe but perform all examinations and discuss differentials and management. Others encourage parallel consulting, which involves you taking a history, performing an examination and preparing a provisional management plan with the patient before taking them to the supervising GP whom you will present the case and discuss your findings and plan. There are 15 different supervising GPs, so there is lots of exposure to different types of practice. The clinic also has in-house allied health staff (e.g. podiatrist, diabetic nurse educator, dietician) who you will get the opportunity to sit in with. There is a visiting psychiatrist who you can sit in with as well. Some of the GPs have procedural days, and they are very keen to teach and give you the opportunity to be involved. By the end of my time there, I was performing excisions and suturing by myself! The doctors are very friendly and approachable and there is a lot of flexibility in choosing how you want to spend your time at the placement.

**Sale Medical Centre** is located right next to the Gippsland Centre with a new addition of a clinic in Maffra which you will get the opportunity to visit. At the start of your rotation, you will observe every GP for two weeks before beginning to parallel consult. Patients are booked in with the GP, but some are also booked in to see you 15 minutes prior to their official consult. During this time, you will take a history, do an examination, and write investigation and management plans which you can discuss with the GP afterwards. You have your own room and will see eight patients per day, one every hour. Some GPs will require you to observe for the rest of that hour until your next appointment, whilst some will offer this time for self-study. You can also attend nursing home visits and sit in with the nurses or dietician. There is an opportunity to observe and assist with procedures but a limited chance to perform them solo under supervision. All the staff are very friendly and understanding of your university requirements and studying.

**Maffra Medical Group** is a 15-minute drive from Sale. Parallel consulting starts very early at this clinic, with observation for only 1.5 days. You have your own room and your own booking list so patients can book in to see you. Appointments are scheduled for 30 mins with you, where you will take a history, do an exam and plan some management before you take the patient with you to see your supervising doctor, where you will present the case and discuss management. You are booked with six patients per day, and this amount does not change. You will have one main supervisor but will still rotate through the other doctors. There are some procedural days scheduled for you to observe, and you have the opportunity to assist with some suturing.
This clinic is very aware of your university requirements and is very proactive in getting these completed. They often schedule time with your supervising doctor weeks in advance for you to get your OCEs done. Maffra is lovely with knowledgeable GPs who are very keen to help you through your time here.

**Heyfield Medical Centre** is a 30-minute drive from Sale. As per below, there is an opportunity to live in Heyfield to be closer to the clinic, but you will still need to drive back to Sale for classes and to see other students. It is a great clinic with very friendly staff and patients. It is attached to Heyfield Hospital, a 10-bed acute hospital, with a 50-bed aged-care facility which you have the chance to go to. You parallel consult from day 2, after one day of observation. Appointments are set for 60 minutes, and the supervising doctor is happy to join whenever you need (so long as they are available). As the semester progresses and you become more confident, appointment times can shorten to 30 mins. You are given a lot of independence in this clinic; you are able to input prescriptions, and order pathology and imaging yourself, provided you have approval from your supervisor, which allows you to gain more experience as a ‘working GP’. There is a limited chance to be involved in procedural skills, but make sure to show eagerness and take the opportunity if it arises. The doctors are all very supportive, and this is a great clinic to strengthen your GP knowledge and skills.

**Accommodation**

If you choose to live in Monash accommodation, you will be assigned to one of the houses in Sale. There is no official Monash Rural Housing accommodation in Maffra or Heyfield, but they sometimes give the option to rent privately at ~$140/wk (compared to $110/wk in Sale). There are 2 – 5 bedroom houses that you share with other medical students from the 3rd – 5th year (including the 4th year medical students placed at the hospital).

**Things to do**

Sale is a lovely little town with a population of about 15,000 people. There are many great things to do here and in nearby towns. There are lots of pretty sights in Sale, Lake Guthridge has a nice running track, and the botanical garden has peacocks! There is Thursday night trivia at the Star Hotel and live music Friday night at the Gippsland Hotel. There are lots of local sports to get involved in, nice gyms and a swimming pool. Sale and the surrounding towns also have some great food choices. Sale and surrounding areas. Some student faves in Sale include Grab n Go Kebabs, Khati’s Curry Lounge and Viet Kitchen. If you head to Stratford (15 mins away), they also have a great HSP and a lovely cafe, Badger & Hare. In Rosedale (20 mins away). Cafe 3847 and Smokehouse 81 are fantastic. Traralgon, Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance has great food and scenic areas, too for a nice weekend road trip. There are also hospital speciality students placed in Sale, so plenty of people to hang out with and explore these things together.