



Year 1 and 2 Rural Health Placements

School of Rural Health



“Your community will have a profound impact on the learning experiences of these students as they prepare for their professional lives.”

A taste of rural medicine

The rural placement program is part of a broad vision to boost Australia's rural medical workforce. Research suggests that students who gain positive rural experiences during their training are more likely to choose a career in rural medicine.

Aims of the program

The first two years of the medical degree are spent at Monash's Clayton campus developing the theoretical base that underpins the final three years of clinical training. The rural placement program begins to set that theory into the rural context in which some students will spend their clinical years.

Medical students are allocated to various sites around Victoria where they take part in a range of community based activities. Each provides an insight into the lives and work of people in rural areas and builds a diverse picture of the meaning of *rural*.

This brochure will give you a picture of the whole program and an introduction to your role in hosting these students.



Your role

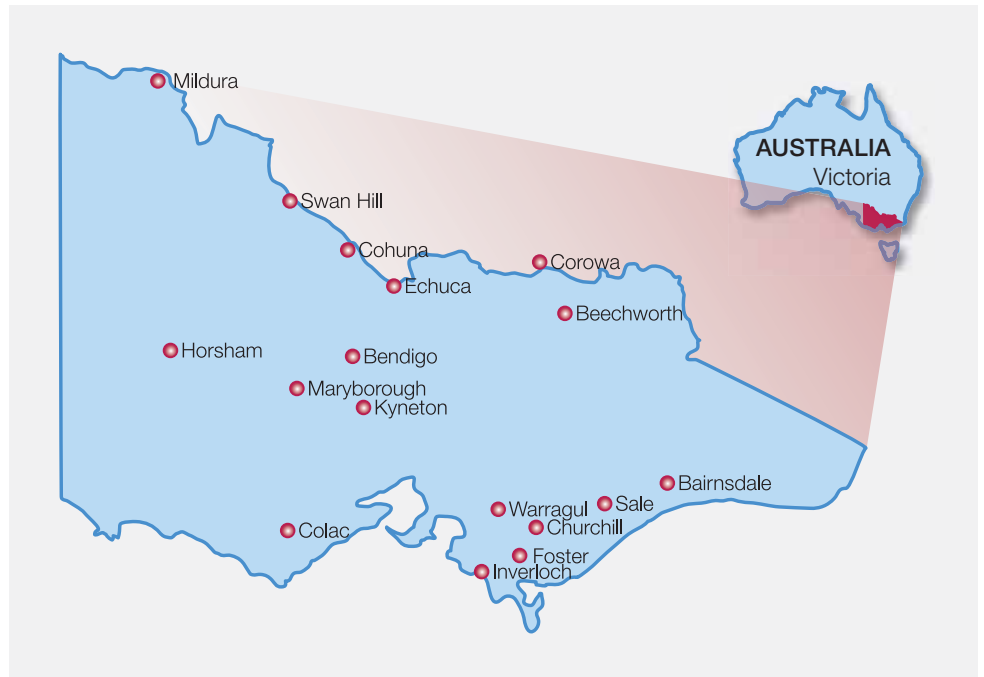
Living in the rural community or working as a practitioner, you play an important role in the program. Your participation helps expose medical students to rural life, the local health and community services, primary industries or the experience of practising as a rural health practitioner. Your community will have a profound impact on the learning experiences of these students as they prepare for their professional lives.

If you would like more information about the program talk to the project officer who approached you or contact:

School of Rural Health
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
Monash University
Clayton campus
Phone: +61 3 9905 1327
Web: www.med.monash.edu.au/srh

Year 1

One-week placement



Overview

The Year 1 rural health placement has been designed to introduce students to different rural contexts. Through their participation in various activities students develop a greater awareness of rural health, practice and communities. These experiences will help students begin to develop a picture of the people who live and work in these communities. During the rural placement week, over 300 students are placed in 17 towns throughout Victoria. The first year program outlined below is delivered at each site.



Objectives

At the completion of their rural attachment students should be able to:

- discuss the importance of contexts on health, illness, injury and health services delivery
- describe the health and illness services and facilities available in a rural location
- appreciate how rural health may differ across gender, age, culture, race and sexual orientation
- compare and contrast medicine in a rural context with their metropolitan experiences to date
- discuss definitions of rural, remote and regional.

Activities

Visits to health care and welfare organisations, hospital and community health service

Students visit rural health care organisations to observe their work. They develop an awareness of the varied aspects of the organisation and the role they play in providing services to the community.

Areas of focus may include:

- how the organisation operates
- the services provided
- the roles and networks of staff
- the nature of rural practice and the contributions of these organisations.

Understanding general practice

Students take part in group discussions with a GP and/or a practice manager in order to develop an understanding of rural practice from both a professional and a personal perspective.

Areas of focus may include:

- how the practice operates
- the roles and networks of staff
- the nature of rural practice
- the experience of being a rural GP
- ongoing professional development.



Photograph courtesy of The Advertiser (Bendigo). Taken by Alex Ellinghausen 060508.

Emergency services forum

The forum brings together a panel from emergency services such as the police, SES, CFA and Ambulance Victoria. Students gain an understanding of the roles, structure and function of emergency services within the region.

Areas of focus may include:

- roles and networks of emergency service personnel
- service provision in a rural setting
- the role of the doctor.

Disability services presentation

This presentation gives students an overview of the way services are provided for people with a disability and importance of creating a more inclusive community.

Areas of focus may include:

- resources for people with a disability in rural areas
- the doctor's role in accessing services and resources to assist in management of people with disabilities
- the implications of having a disability in a rural context.

Visit to a rural industry

Students visit to a rural industry and take part in a group discussion. This activity highlights the importance and effects of rural industry on the rural community.

Areas of focus may include:

- outline of the industry's operation
- the role of people who work there
- occupational, health and safety issues
- the effects of the industry on the community
- national and global connections.

Patient home visit

Students attend a patient home visit in order to gain an understanding what it means to be a health care worker in a rural community as well as a service provider in home settings. Later they share their experiences and insights with their peers.

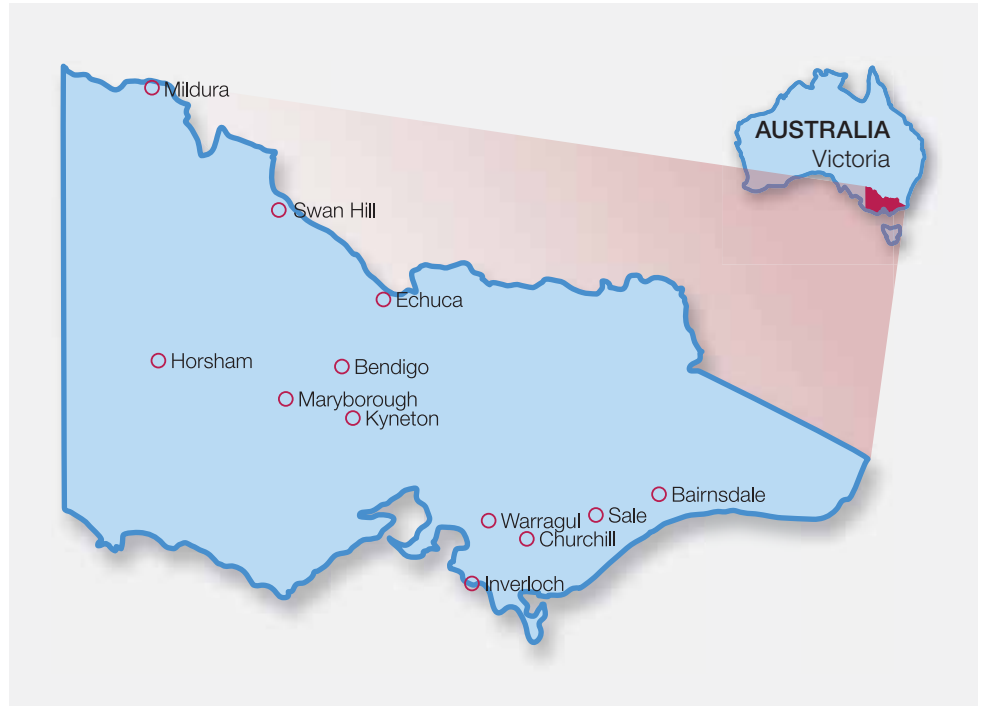
Areas of focus may include:

- the role of the health care worker
- support networks available to the worker and patient
- nature of the patient-practitioner relationship
- issues associated with visiting patients at home.



Year 2

Two-week placement



Overview

Building on the experiences gained in Year 1, the second rural health placement will have a greater focus on clinical practice and involvement in community activities. The student cohort is divided into two groups. Half complete their attachment in first semester (April/May) and the remaining half will complete their attachment in second semester (August/September). Over 150 students are placed in 12 rural towns throughout Victoria each semester. The Year 2 program outlined below is delivered at each site.

Objectives

After participating in the Year 2 rural health placement, it is expected that students will be able to:

- build on the knowledge acquired while undertaking Year 1 rural health placements, particularly focussing on:
 - » how rural contexts impact on the clinical and non-clinical management of patients
 - » how rural diversity can impact on health, illness and clinical practice
- explore the nature of rural clinical practice from a health worker's perspective
- recognise how the links and networks between rural health providers can influence the delivery of rural health service
- gain knowledge of health service issues specifically pertinent to rural communities
- develop a cultural awareness of the local Indigenous people, their language and spiritual connection to the land and how this impacts on their health and well-being.

Activities

Visit to a general practitioner's clinic

Students explore the role of the GP in a rural practice through participatory and observational activities in the consultation room and clinical practice. After spending time with a GP, each student will present a brief case study to their peers. The presentation will encourage the students to develop and use a framework for clinical reasoning.

Areas of focus may include:

- a focused history
- findings of an examination
- suggestions for appropriate diagnostic testing
- possible diagnosis
- identifying the impact of location on presentation.

Hospital visit

Students work closely with a registered nurse for an entire shift to gain an understanding of the roles and networks of different health care professionals. It also gives them the opportunity to observe clinical procedures and the non-clinical processes involved in the care of patients.

Areas of focus may include:

- administrative procedures from admission to discharge including discharge planning, referral, and follow up appointments
- observation of Clinical procedures, eg catheterization, intravenous therapies or wound management
- participation in routine vital sign monitoring
- interaction with the patient to aid the understanding of care from a non-clinical perspective.



Pharmacy visit

Students observe and interact with pharmacy personnel to develop an awareness of the issues related to pharmacy practice in a rural/regional area.

Areas of focus may include:

- the role of the pharmacy in a rural community
- the role of staff and their interaction with customers
- administrative processes, eg processing of scripts
- resources available to doctors.

Ambulance Victoria

Students undertake training towards Certificate 2 in first aid and may attend a presentation on the role of Ambulance Victoria in the delivery of health care to people in a rural area.

Complementary therapy

As part of the hospital, pharmacy, GP, Indigenous health and community site visits, students will have the opportunity to explore the role of complementary therapies in helping people manage their health and well-being in rural settings.

Occupational health and safety including zoonotic diseases

Students attend a presentation by a veterinarian on the transmission and management of zoonotic diseases. They also visit a local farm to gain a greater understanding of the clinical and non-clinical impact of zoonotic diseases on individuals and rural communities.

Areas of focus may include:

- preparatory reading and investigation on the pathology and epidemiology of zoonotic diseases in Australia
- the reasons why occupational health and safety measures need to be implemented on farms and in industry.

Indigenous health

Through a range of activities students develop sensitivity to cultural issues which may impact on the relationship between the doctor and Indigenous communities.

Areas of focus may include:

- insight into health issues and priorities for Indigenous people
- exploration of local health initiatives for Indigenous people
- cultural understanding of the local Indigenous people and language (the name of the community/traditional owners/tribal boundaries)
- experiencing local sites of cultural significance.

Sporting and cultural observation/participation

Students participate in or attend a local community event, such as a sporting, social or cultural activity, to gain an insight into an aspect of rural lifestyle.

Contact

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