



DR SHIJU MAMMEN

SWAN HILL MEDICAL CENTRE

Five hours from home, away from my husband and a town I knew nothing about, Swan Hill Medical was a daunting option for GPT1 and GPT2. Looking back I am grateful for having taken the challenge. I was pleasantly surprised to join a very friendly and supportive environment in a town that loves the novelty of a new face. Apart from passing exams, personal satisfaction should be one of the most important aspects of a registrar's progress through the training program. At Swan Hill Medical I have been pleasantly surprised by the flexibility from a clinical and non-clinical level.

From a clinical perspective the work environment picked up as soon as I was prepared to get going. I chose my pace, and I chose to start slow. As I felt comfortable I increased my patient load and slowed down again when I needed. As a GP registrar you will always be booked out and in three months I had regular patients. The clinical environment involved a good mix of paediatrics through to geriatrics. There was great supervision with teaching guided by the areas I wished to cover and blocked out on the roster. If interested, there is also great scope for minor procedures. In my second week I started doing excisions and later started inserting and removing Implanons. There are also financial benefits as you increase your patient load and opportunities to exceed billings or the to become a VMO for Swan Hill Hospital, located across the road.

From a non-clinical perspective the clinic is very understanding of personal commitments and flexible with the roster. I highly value the ability to have some time off to visit family in Melbourne or to attend courses for example; in fact the supervisors encourage this. This includes having a 3 day weekend if you can make up the hours at another date. There is another clinic in town who also have an intake of GP registrars which makes the experience more enjoyable. The town, albeit appearing to be small, has a movie theatre, a number of small restaurants and pubs, more than one gym with group fitness classes, monthly farmer's markets, a winery and even hosted the International Comedy Festival Roadshow this year.

The travel between Swan Hill and Melbourne is comfortable with frequent V-line trains and with the station being a 5 minute walk from the clinic. The clinic also offers secure underground parking so no need to worry about your car. Whilst in Swan Hill there are plenty of local sights to explore. Some of my favourites being the Silo Art Trail, the salt flats at Lake Tyrrell, night photography and crossing the border to NSW.

Swan Hill Medical Group is an outstanding option for those looking at working in a friendly, professional and supportive environment whilst making the most of your time as a GP registrar.