



In this month's 'A day in the life of Rural Generalist' news article, Resident Medical Officer, Dr Philippa 'Pip' Knowler tells us about her exposure to rural medicine in medical school and experiences working in Port Lincoln and Whyalla.

Dr Philippa Knowler

Dr Knowler will be starting training this year with The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) with the view to becoming a Rural Generalist. Pip is from the Adelaide Hills and her long-term career goal is to work in a regional centre as a GP/ Anaesthetist.



Dr Knowler shared with us that she was fortunate to gain exposure to rural medicine through a yearlong rural placement in third year medical school but also through involvement with the medical school rural society and as a John Flynn scholar. Her experiences in rural left a great impression and she enjoyed seeing varied and interesting medical cases, observing the breadth of skill that her supervisors had and the role they played in advocating for their community.

Returning to the city for her internship and resident years gave Dr Knowler a greater understanding of the health system as a whole, and how crucial all the components are.

"However, after some rural placements in my PGY3 resident year, my interest in a career in rural medicine was solidified and I have no doubt now that rural medicine is a great fit for me. As a career, it offers lots of variety, the chance to form deep connections with community and will give me the opportunity to have mixed roles at work, with some that are more consultation based and others that are procedural.

It will also give me the flexibility to be able to incorporate all the other parts of my life that are important to me, and help me be the best person I can be, so that I can give my patients the best possible care."

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More recently, Pip spent August to early November 2021 at the Port Lincoln Health Service working with the GP Anaesthetists in theatres and Whyalla Hospital working with an Obstetrician/Gynaecologist.



As a Resident Medical Officer in a rural setting, Dr Knowler says she performs a lot of 'hands on' work which has helped her to refine procedural and other skills, learn new ones and increase her confidence and autonomy of practice.

This is all done with plenty of supervision and Pip feels that she is also learning and developing good habits early on.

We asked Dr Knowler how she's found living and working in a regional area and connecting with the local communities:

"Being part of a community is so important to me, and I felt welcomed so quickly by the Port Lincoln community. I loved getting to know all the medical and nursing staff on a first name basis and bumping into them outside of work. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved in the local communities, through sport for example and I certainly made the most of those opportunities where possible too."

Pip would give the following advice to trainees considering training in rural and becoming a Rural Generalist:

"Try and get some rotations in your intern year, and seriously consider a RMO Rural Generalist year as it will give you exposure about the realities of what being a Rural Generalist can be like. The more exposure you get, the more accurate picture you are able to build about what the career and lifestyle can offer you."

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