



Regional SA Medical Education Officer making a big difference.

This month, we hear from Kirsteen Knevitt, Medical Education Officer (MEO) within the Yorke and Northern Local Health Network. Kirsteen explains the role of a regional MEO, the benefits and opportunities available to prevocational doctors who opt to train in rural and regional South Australia, and shares some of the local sites and attractions that make the region so special.



About Kirsteen

Kirsteen is part of the Medical Education Unit that implements and coordinates the Yorke and Northern Rural Doctor Program (YNRDP). YNRDP is the region's end to end training network designed to support junior doctors pursuing rural generalist training pathways and medical careers. It encourages them to achieve their goals and maximise their potential.



For Kirsteen, one of the most rewarding aspects of her role is its flexibility. She works remotely and travels to wherever junior doctors are based or where support is needed. With 16 sites across the network, each day brings a new destination. Kirsteen embraces the variety that comes with the role – happily hopping on the road and heading out to make a positive difference wherever she's needed.

Kirsteen grew up in a semi-rural setting on a small hobby farm, surrounded by horses, goats, ducks, chickens, dogs, and cats. It was an upbringing that instilled in her a deep love for animals and the outdoors. She is married with three adult children and recently welcomed a new puppy to the family, bringing their total to three dogs.

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Experience and Commitment

Kirsteen has served as a Medical Education Officer for 15 years. She finds that the role perfectly suits her organisational skills and nurturing nature. Each year, she welcomes a new cohort of interns, full of energy, excitement, and a healthy dose of nervousness. Kirsteen loves watching them grow – gaining confidence, embracing the challenges of junior doctor life, and progressing to the next stage of their careers.

‘One of the most rewarding parts of staying in this role for so long is seeing those same interns return as term supervisors. It’s a special kind of joy to witness that full-circle moment and to know that, perhaps, I played a small part in making their journey a little smoother.’

Here’s more from our recent conversation with Kirsteen...



What does a typical workday look like for you?

No two days are ever the same – and that’s exactly what I love about my role. Some days, I’m working from home and others I’m out on the road, travelling across the region helping coordinate practical skills days. There’s really no such thing as a “typical” day, and that unpredictability keeps things fresh and exciting.

What is your favourite thing to do at work within your current role?

I love visiting junior doctors onsite and seeing them in their element. It always puts my ‘mum’ instincts at ease when I can see they’re happy in their environment and thriving within their teams. Plus, I genuinely enjoy travelling between sites – it’s a wonderful way to explore the beautiful towns and landscapes that make up our region.

Tell us a bit about what’s available for prevocational doctors who opt to train in rural and regional communities.

Training as a prevocational doctor in rural or regional areas offers a range of valuable benefits. With smaller medical teams, you’re exposed to a broader spectrum of cases than you might see

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in larger centres, giving you hands-on experience across multiple areas of medicine early in your career. It's an excellent way to build strong clinical skills, confidence and courage.

The sense of community is another major advantage. You work closely with a tight-knit team, which means strong mentorship and plenty of support. Being part of a smaller community also allows you to build meaningful relationships with patients that feel the impact of your care more directly.

Many regional local health networks also offer enhanced training opportunities. In the Yorke and Northern region, for example, we include X-ray licensing, ultrasound training, and monthly practical skills days held across various sites. These sessions are led by passionate educators and provide exciting, hands-on learning experiences.

Overall, rural training is a rewarding pathway that helps you grow professionally while being part of a supportive and welcoming environment.



What has been the best thing for you living and working in rural?

Working in rural settings offers a unique perspective on the incredible talent and versatility of the people who live there. Their skill sets are remarkably diverse, and they're often deeply involved in both community and professional life. There's a strong sense of confidence and a 'can-do' attitude that's truly inspiring – and one of the things I love most about being part of a rural health network.



What are some of your favourite things to do for recreation where you currently live?

I love a good walk – especially along the beach. Whether it's summer or winter, there's something truly special about being by the ocean.

I've also biked the Clare Valley Riesling Trail, complete with a few winery stops along the way, which makes for a fun and scenic day out.

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Camping is another favourite pastime, and in our region, you can do it just about anywhere. Each trip offers a unique experience. And if you're really up for an adventure, grabbing the 4x4s takes it to the next level!

What can you tell us about your region and why people choose to move there?

Our region is incredibly diverse, making it hard to pinpoint just one reason why people choose to move here. From the stunning coastlines of the Yorke Peninsula to the peaceful bushland and walking trails of the Mid North, the renowned wine country of the Clare Valley, and the breathtaking landscapes of the Southern Flinders Ranges – there truly is something for everyone.

Since COVID, many have embraced remote work and opted for a lifestyle away from traffic jams and crowded shops, choosing instead the fresh air and relaxed pace that rural living offers. It's a shift that brings a better work-life balance and a deeper connection to nature and community.

And for those moments when you crave a bit of city energy, Adelaide is just a drive away – close enough to enjoy the hustle and bustle, but far enough to return to the tranquillity and space of home.

What is something you are proud to have accomplished while in your Medical Education Officer role?

In my current role as a Medical Education Officer, we're part of a newly established program (the Yorke and Northern Rural Doctor Program), and simply getting it off the ground and welcoming our first cohort of prevocational doctors has been a huge achievement. I'm fortunate to be surrounded by an incredible team of enthusiastic and talented individuals who've made the development of this program possible. As we continue to grow, I'm genuinely excited about what the next few years will bring and the opportunities ahead.

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What excites you most about the medical education & training opportunities now available in regional South Australia for our junior doctors?

Who knew there was so much possibility? I love how expansive the training space is in regional South Australia. There are opportunities to explore just about anything you can imagine – and if it doesn't already exist, the incredible Medical Education Teams and Educators are more than willing to create it. The flexibility, innovation, and support in this environment make it an exciting place to learn and grow.



What advice do you have for medical students and prevocational doctors considering training in rural and becoming a rural generalist?

Don't be afraid – give it a go! Come and meet the teams, connect with the community, and dive in with confidence. Every day brings something new, and the experience is one you absolutely won't regret.

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