

Rural Hospital Medicine - Ashburton Hospital

Welcome to Ashburton Hospital! We are located 90km south of Christchurch and serve a growing Mid-Canterbury population of ~38,000 people. Ashburton Hospital is the largest Secondary Rural Hospital in New Zealand and accredited with the Division of Rural Hospital Medicine (DRHMNZ) for registrar training.

The 48-bed Hospital includes a modern acute assessment unit (AAU), general and rehabilitation wards, a primary birthing unit, outpatient clinic rooms and an operating theatre for visiting specialists. We currently see ~30-40 patients/day in the AAU - a mix of ambulance transfers, GP referrals and self-presentations.

Working in Ashburton Hospital gives registrars exposure to a broad range of patients and conditions and allows them to be involved in patients' assessment and management from presentation to discharge. We have eight Rural Hospital Medical Specialists who work part- or fulltime and provide 24h SMO cover. There are three medical teams consisting of two to three RHMS, one registrar and one house officer. We have a dedicated AAU house officer and two relievers to provide night and leave cover. Patients admitted under a medical team stay with that team until discharge, teams therefore manage their patients across the hospital.

After-hours shifts are based in the AAU and there are opportunities to be involved in resuscitation in illness and trauma situations, and perform fracture manipulations, chest drains, lumbar punctures and other procedures. The SMOs are happy to be guided by your learning needs and stage of training in their supervision practice, allowing increasing autonomy in patient management for those nearing the end of their training programme. We enjoy a trusting and supportive relationship with Christchurch Hospital Specialists, and the Ashburton rural registrar rotation can be combined with Health New Zealand Canterbury District's dedicated ED and/or ICU rotations for registrars on the rural hospital training programme.

Ashburton Hospital's model aspires to rural clinical and academic excellence. The Hospital is home to the Rural Health and Academic Centre Ashburton (RHACA) from which the University of Otago local undergraduate rural medical immersion programme, postgraduate rural academic residentials and interprofessional training and emergency simulation courses are run. Four SMOs hold University of Otago appointments and three are certified APLS and/or EMST instructors. Our generous community has funded high-fidelity mannequins (adult, child and baby), used frequently for simulation activities in our weekly RMO teaching sessions.

Ashburton is a great town to live in. The tennis courts and sports grounds are next door to the Hospital and the local pool and gym complex is a ten-minute walk away. There are excellent Japanese, Thai, Taiwanese, Indian, gastro pub and fine-dining restaurants, among others. There is seasonal skiing at Mt Hutt, hot pools in Methven, watersports at

Lake Hood and local hiking and biking tracks around (and just out of) town.
Christchurch isn't too far to drive if it's nightlife or an airport you're after!

Shared accommodation is provided for the RMOs on the Hospital site free of charge.
RMOs find sharing their experience with a small group of doctors they get to know well one of the highlights of their time in Ashburton.

Ashburton Hospital has vacancies for three six-month rural hospital registrar rotations in both Q1/2 and Q3/4 in 2025. This is a MECA (Schedule 10) compliant roster.

If you would like more information please contact below and feel free to visit if you're ever close by!

Enquiries

Dr John Lyons

Clinical Director

Email: John.Lyons@cdhb.health.nz

Liz McCallum

RMO/SMO Support

Email: Elizabeth.McCallum@cdhb.health.nz