

# **WILDFIRE PARKVILLE 2023**



## **RURAL PHARMACY INTERNSHIP GUIDEBOOK**



# About WILDFIRE Parkville

**WILDFIRE** is Monash University's Rural and Indigenous Health club. WILDFIRE was established in 1993 by the Monash University School of Rural Health (SRH) and is a branch of National Rural Health Students Network (NRHSN), a multidisciplinary Network aiming to increase the health workforce and health outcomes for Australians living in rural and remote areas.

## **WILDFIRE aims to**

1. Foster relations between all students and health professionals interested in rural and indigenous health and culture;
2. Facilitate discussion, action and reporting/research on all rural and Indigenous matters amongst the student body and with our affiliates;
3. Develop and maintain a multi-disciplinary approach;
4. Support students during their educational life span through their rural and Indigenous experiences; and,
5. Encourage a long term commitment to living and working in rural areas of Australia.

WILDFIRE engages with members, both staff and students, from numerous faculties, including outside of medical, nursing and allied health faculties, through a number of events throughout the year.

The 2023 Rural Internship Guidebook was compiled by WILDFIRE Parkville committee members of 2023. The original guidebook was put together by Leon Polychronopoulos, WILDFIRE Parkville President of 2020. Some information from the 2020 guidebook have been re-introduced in this guidebook (with permission from Leon) as they were still relevant and helpful tips to many students. This year, we have also added a few more stories from 4th year Monash pharmacy students who attended hospital or community placements in rural areas. This guidebook can be a great source to any year level students to introduce opportunities for placement and internships in the future.

Great thanks to the interns, pharmacists and pharmacy students who volunteered their time to share their valuable experiences and information about their rural internships and placements.

**Wildfire Parkville Team,  
Chief Editor Jungmin Lee and Soobin Lee  
and Coeditor Talia Raman**

*Please note this guidebook is an unofficial guide collated by students.*

Please get in contact with us via our facebook page or email ([wildfire.parkville@gmail.com](mailto:wildfire.parkville@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.

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# Acknowledgements

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Thank you to 2020 Wildfire Parkville President Leon Polychronopoulos for creating first ever version of internship guidebook and allowing for the creation of revised version of 2023 pharmacy internship guidebook.

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# Albury Wodonga Health Service

2020 Intern

Amanda Wong and Kate Guy

## **Intern positions in 2024: 2 DHHS funded positions**

Albury Wodonga is a unique border town of 89,000 residents, it has everything you need to set up as a non-resident. Both Albury and Wodonga each have a campus to make up two sites of Albury-Wodonga Health. Albury campus has medicine, surgery, psychiatry and paediatric units, four theatres, ICU, day surgery and ED. Wodonga has acute medical, rehab, AGEM, close observation unit, maternity and women's surgery, two theatres, dialysis, day surgery unit and ED

### **Positives**

Albury Wodonga Health has a welcoming and incredibly friendly team that makes interning less stressful. The pharmacy department is close knit and always willing to listen and provide support. Tutorials are run every week where you are able to request what you want to learn in these one hour sessions due to the small number of interns.

Ward staff are supportive and are willing to teach interns new skills specific to working on a medical ward. Due to the smaller size of the pharmacy team, interns have more opportunities to practice in new roles.

You get to work in a team environment with other health professionals, such as doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and nurses.

So much of Victoria to explore in the area including bushland, mountains, smaller towns and wine regions Traffic is minimal and everything you need is close by!

### **Challenges**

Some may feel isolated due to the distance from home if you are based in Melbourne. Wards and rotations are not as varied as metro hospitals.

Interns are located at different campuses, so do not have the opportunity to work together Limitations in food choices

### **Advice to those who are considering applying to this program:**

Be prepared to work hard and have responsibility as an integral part of the pharmacy team at Albury Wodonga Health. Have good communication skills, with patients as well as other health professionals.

Be open minded in the tasks you can take on in your internship, as an intern pharmacist we're not just confined to our duties but can also cooperate with almost every other health professional we work with.

As much as we focus on our study and clinical skills, an important part of this program is knowing how to make connections with the people we work with, so introduce yourself to everyone! You'll be surprised at how friendly everyone is :)

# Bairnsdale Regional Health Service

BRHS Clinical Pharmacist  
Nathan Le

## Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded positions

### Town

Bairnsdale is a medium-sized rural town in East Gippsland. It's filled with a friendly, inclusive community and located close to popular retreat/camping holiday destinations like Lakes Entrance and Metung.

### Hospital

**Bairnsdale Regional Health Services** is well known for their services in specialties of general medicine, general surgery, rehabilitation, dialysis, and oncology services to name a few.

Due to being a smaller hospital with fewer resources, pharmacists will generally have a more diverse workload requiring strong time management skills to ensure all goals are achieved by the end of the day. Strong communication skills are also required as there is a large part-time workforce in the pharmacy department.

Roles taken on as a **junior clinical pharmacist** include:

- Dispensing inpatient and outpatient medications
  - > Servicing and supplying medication to up to 70 active beds, several bush nursing centres and a handful of satellite hospitals
- Managing day-to-day medication related enquiries
- Taking accurate medication histories
  - > Patients on average take 14 regular medications and have poorer health literacy compared to those in metropolitan areas
- Reconciling inpatient medications and ensuring appropriateness of medications in hospital and for discharge

#### Challenges while working

- Relocation and moving to rural setting from metro
- Fewer resources than a typical metro hospital can require creative thinking in certain clinical situations

### Internship

- The internship would cover - projects, audits, operational, inventory
- You'll be completing your internship with a closely-knit team
- the hospital offers a challenging patient population where hyperpolypharmacy is expected, and medication problems will need to be solved on a daily basis, ensuring that there is plenty of learning opportunities for learning interns

#### To whom would you recommend to apply?

Anyone wanting the opportunity to diversify their skillset as a clinical pharmacist, those willing to challenge themselves to a different work environment, or those looking for opportunities to locum around Victoria/Australia in the future. This position will provide a variety of opportunities to work in a fast-paced environment where teamwork and good communication are highly valued assets.



Pictures from a rural town from occasional visits BRHS does to promote pharmacy related health

#### Any advice to pharmacy students?

Make the most of rural placement opportunities. It can greatly open your perspective as to what kind of work and opportunities lie ahead. Work in the rural setting can equip you with skills that may take longer to develop in a metropolitan environment.

## **Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded positions**

In the heart of East Gippsland, Bairnsdale is a beautiful town with long deserted beaches on one side and the magnificent Snowy River Wilderness on the other. Given Bairnsdale's location, you get the chance to do both sailing and skiing on the same day and maybe even camping in the Alpine National Park.

### **Positives**

In BRHS, you are able to work across different pharmacy areas, including oncology and dialysis, palliative care, and high dependency unit, rather than just being limited to a single specialty. You get to be much more involved in the whole patient journey, rather than just dispensing prescriptions in the pharmacy and perhaps never seeing the person again. You get to know the patients, understand and appreciate the broader picture of their healthcare journey, and it is very rewarding.

- Bairnsdale has a very supportive pharmacy team that has taught me how to focus on being a safe and patient-centred pharmacist. The team members are very helpful and it will inspire you to pay it forward and be nice to people too. Growth and development is encouraged.
- Senior doctors that I have worked with are approachable and it definitely helps in building confidence as an early career pharmacist.
- You have all the essential shops in town. This town is self-sufficient - unless you need something very specific from Asian grocery shops.
- Work life balance – you are able to explore the stunning wilderness of the Mitchell River National Park, just a few km's away. During summer there are water sports like kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding in Lakes Entrance. You may hang out with friends in the vineyards or farmers market on the weekends too.

### **Challenges**

- BBRHS is still using a paper-based system which means finding folders and writing/reading notes and medications can be tedious.
- 3-3.5 hours driving from Melbourne can be tiring. Alternatively you may take the V-line and it is quite convenient – direct train to Southern Cross.
- No shopping malls around so don't expect something fancy. Online shopping usually takes 5-7 working days to arrive (during COVID period).

### **Advice to those who are considering applying to this program:**

Bairnsdale is a great choice if you prioritise work-life balance. You will be surrounded by wonderful people and will always have support from the senior pharmacist. This small and ambitious health service is definitely a great place for young pharmacists to begin their career.

## Intern positions in 2024: 6 DHHS funded positions

### *Town*

Geelong is Victoria's second largest city. It has a great combination of city facilities, mixed with a relaxed attitude and is only a short drive from the Surf Coast & the Great Ocean Road.

### **Positives**

Geelong provides a great opportunity for work-life balance. Most of Barwon Health's interns chose to move to Geelong, which means being able to make the most of the local recreational opportunities outside of work.

The intern year is structured to allow you to first form an understanding of important processes and learn about the different aspects of hospital pharmacy, before challenging you with ward rotations to help expand your clinical thinking and knowledge.

As an intern at Barwon Health you are surrounded by an excellent support network. This includes having a 'mentor' - a junior pharmacist who helps you through your intern journey by offering help and advice whenever you need it. Weekly intern meetings are held with clinical pharmacists or guest speakers. Interns are supported in their preparation for written and oral exams. I really value the support we have throughout this challenging, but rewarding year.

### **Challenges**

The intern year can be one of the most difficult years in your life – pairing full-time work and ensuring you meet the AHPRA requirements for passing your intern year. I am currently enrolled in the Monash University Intern Training Program (ITP) and Intern Foundation Program (IFP), as well as having to meet some of Barwon Health's specific intern requirements. This can be quite overwhelming, however, our preceptors at Barwon Health are always promptly available for any support.

By 2020 Intern, Ella Mullins

### *Placement*

- Wards I was on: ED, Cardiothoracics, Paediatric, Mental Health, Geriatric
- Preceptor: Teagan Van Der Drift Major supervising pharmacists throughout included Anne Marie, Angie and Teagan
- In terms of overall experience, this hospital placement was really good
  - Friendly learning environment, felt safe to have a go at speaking to patients
  - Staff were very nice and this ties into the point above
  - Staff were professional in conduct and we never felt that we were doing something wrong / illegal - we were able to learn A LOT here and this has given us ideas on what to do post-grad
- The only Con i can think of is public transport to McKellar was a bit of a pain but that's not really anything to do with the hospital. The placement was so good I cant find anything to comment on

By 4th year pharmacy student from Monash University, Long Viet Tran

### **Advice to students applying to this program**

Barwon Health's program is incredibly rewarding and I would encourage anyone considering applying to go for it! I never doubted my decision to make Barwon Health my first preference.



# Bass Coast Health

2019 Intern pharmacist  
Myca Alba

## Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded and 1 hospital funded position

### *Town*

Wonthaggi is a coastal town under 2 hours east of Melbourne. There are beautiful beaches and nice cafes around. It is only 30 minutes from the popular Phillip Island. Bass Coast Health has the following wards: acute medical, subacute GEM/rehab, ED, surgical, maternity, dialysis and oncology ward.

### *Hospital*

Major public healthcare provider providing a range of acute, sub-acute, haematology, oncology, ancillary medical, aged care and ambulatory care services within the Bass Coast Shire in South Gippsland.

Bass Coast Health also offers specialist medical, surgical, obstetric services that includes orthopaedics, ophthalmology, gynaecology, cardiology, urology and rehabilitation.  
(SHPA, 2023)

### *Internship*

Major public healthcare provider providing a range of acute, sub-acute, haematology, oncology, ancillary medical, aged care and ambulatory care services within the Bass Coast Shire in South Gippsland.

Bass Coast Health also offers specialist medical, surgical, obstetric services that includes orthopaedics, ophthalmology, gynaecology, cardiology, urology and rehabilitation.  
(SHPA, 2023)

### **Positives**

- You become familiar with everyone who works at the hospital and everyone is very friendly with many beautiful beaches and walks nearby
- Not too far from Melbourne/Eastern suburbs
- One-on-one learning time with the preceptor

### **Negatives**

- Less exposure to specialties that would be available at larger metropolitan hospitals
- As you are the only intern it can be a bit difficult, however, the pharmacists here are very understanding of the demands of the intern year

### **Advice to those who are considering applying to this program**

Although this hospital is smaller, I do not feel disadvantaged. As an intern I am extremely well-supported and I am still exposed to a wide range of clinical conditions which enhance my learning. Once you get to know familiar faces around the hospital, it provides a really great environment to work in.



(Aussie Towns, 2023)



(Bass Coast Health, n/a)

# Benalla Health

**Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded positions**

## ***About Benalla Health***

Benalla Health is a health service providing services to the town of Benalla which has a population of around 10,000 and to surrounding areas. It provides some types of health services, e.g. eye surgery, to patients from outside the Benalla area. Benalla will be partnering with Northeast Health Wangaratta to deliver a joint program.



## ***Internship***

Rotations: 80% at Benalla Health and 20% at Northeast Health Wangaratta

- Benalla Health includes working in Acute Ward (mixture of general medicine, geriatric, cardiac, acute & subacute care), Perioperative Services and Urgent Care Centre, and medication distribution
- NHW: Medical, Surgical, Critical Care + Perioperative Care Clinic + Inpatient Mental Health



## **Positives**

As Benalla is situated on the main road and railway between Melbourne and Sydney, these major Australian cities are quite accessible. Close working relationships exist with all types of healthcare workers in the town. Cooperative relationships also exist with other pharmacies in the region. Motor sport and gliding are strong in the area. The town has an annual outdoor street art festival.



## **Challenges**

Limited contact with medical and surgical specialties.

***Any advice to those applying for an internship this year?***

*What's stopping you?*



Benalla - Photo Credit: Angela Lawrence

# Bendigo Health

Clinical Coordinator & Intern Training Program Coordinator  
Melanie Jones

## **Intern positions in 2024: 2 DHHS funded and 2 hospital positions**

### ***Town***

Bendigo is a vibrant region city jam-packed with creativity, great food and bevies, happening festivals and shopping. Bendigo has been recognised by UNESCO as a City of Gastronomy and has a very diverse food culture with many great places to eat.

If you like the outdoor, there's ample hiking, bike riding and sporting events around and of course the central Lake Waroona for a nice stroll.

### ***Hospital and Internship***



Bendigo Health has most of the major specialties and we have a catchment area of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the state of Victoria. As a junior pharmacist I have had a lot of broad experience managing a very wide range of patients and opportunities to be a part of a rapidly expanding hospital and pharmacy team. As a teaching hospital, we also have an opportunity to be a part of the training of a wide range of health professionals too!

#### **What would the internship cover?**

At Bendigo Health we have rotations covering dispensary, oncology and clinical pharmacy services, having the opportunity to work with a wide range of pharmacists. In 2024 we will also be expanding our intern program to have a small number of patients the interns will be responsible for and rotate through. We also have allocated project time, weekly tutes and frequent exam preparation.

#### **What would make this internship position different to other positions?**

The pharmacy department is located on the first floor with lots of windows and light. We have a well established intern training program, with most of our pharmacist remaining working in our hospital or transitioning to other hospitals. We also have a lot of technology at our hospital, with a complete electronic medical record, a pharmacy robot and PYIX medication cabinets on the ward which are all integrated with each other.

#### **Any advice for pharmacy students?**

The work life balance in a regional area is fantastic! You can often have lots of opportunities to progress your career while still having lots of adventures outside work hours!

## **Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded positions**

### ***Town***

Sale is a town of about 15,000 located 2.5 hours east of Melbourne. Sale is a nice relaxed town with plenty to do. It is a short drive from the beautiful Gippsland Lakes, 25 minutes from the 90 Mile Beach and close to the alpine regions of East Gippsland. Sale offers a friendly community with many great cafes, sports clubs, and parks. Sale is also home to the Roulettes who fly out of RAAF base at East Sale.

### ***Hospital***

Central Gippsland Health encompasses hospitals in Sale, Maffra and Heyfield, community services and three aged care facilities. The hospital provides 100 acute beds, covering Medical, Surgical, Critical Care, Maternity, Paediatrics, Neonatal Special Care, Emergency Department, Renal Dialysis and Day Oncology patients.

The Pharmacy Department located at Sale Hospital and delivers a clinical ward service to all areas, inpatient and outpatient dispensing, oncology pharmacy services, education for clinical staff and community groups and clinical service to Yarram and District Health Service. Sale hospital has an active social club, free parking and discount gym memberships.

### **Positives**

Relaxed town outside of the busy-ness of the city, but still close enough to easily visit.

Close proximity to the Gippsland Lakes, with great fishing, camping and other outdoor activities.

CGHS has an experienced and friendly pharmacy team. Working in a small hospital means you get to experience a lot of variety within your role.

CGHS Social Club runs regular events for hospital staff, which makes it very easy to make friends across the various departments in the hospital.

### **Challenges**

With a relatively small-sized pharmacy department, flexibility in covering different roles within the department is required.

Intern year is a busy year, and living away from family during such a busy year can be a challenge at times. CGH only host one intern which can be challenging. The pharmacy can facilitate opportunities to collaborate with interns at community pharmacies in Sale and hospitals in Bairnsdale, Latrobe and Bass Coast.

### **Advice to those who are considering applying to this program**

Going to a rural area for your internship gives you the opportunity to get out of your comfort zone, but also challenges you and improves your ability to problem solve, while also allowing you to get to know your patients and colleagues on a much more personal level.

Junior pharmacist 2020

## **Intern positions in 2024: 2 DHHS funded positions**

### ***Town***

Echuca is a tourist town, with wine and music festivals being a big part of the local calendar. It's a tourist town, because we are the point of the Murray river closest to Melbourne. Echuca is a beautiful town on the river that offers many outdoor activities and dining experiences. Echuca also has several grocers, gyms and shops.

### ***Hospital***

The hospital has been recently renovated and boasts initiatives such as MedChart, an electronic charting system that reduces Echuca Regional Health's environmental impact and streamlines medication reconciliation. Echuca Regional Health also uses MedDispense which is an electronic imprest system designed to reduce the risk of medication misadventure.

### **Positives**

- There are many positives of this town, the river being the main attraction. There are many activities to do on the river such as the cruising café that allows diners an uninterrupted view of the river whilst dining and festivals throughout the year by the river.
- The staff in the pharmacy department are always willing to help and answer any of your questions.
- Doing a regional internship allows for a more intimate and individual internship training program. You get more one on one time with preceptors, doctors, and patients. We have the ability to tailor internships to what each individual intern pharmacist wants to achieve, and what supports they need.
- We are the regional training hospital for a number of medical programs, including Austin and Bendigo hospital, so our interns find they have a lot in common with the medical intern doctors, new graduate allied health physiotherapists, nurses, and other allied health.
- We're incredibly lucky at Echuca Regional Health; we have a supportive executive team who have supported us to branch into exciting pharmacy services, including partnered pharmacist medication charting, electronic charting and imprest services, and we have a newly renovated hospital and pharmacy department.

### **Challenges**

The only challenge I have faced whilst working here is going back to visit my hometown, mostly because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

### **Advise to those who are considering applying to this program**

A rural internship allows you to explore the possibilities and range that pharmacy has to offer. I would definitely recommend considering a rural internship as it has extraordinary benefits.

Runu Hann, intern pharmacist 2020

# Goulburn Valley Health

Merry Joy Melbourne, Intern 2020

## Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded and 1 hospital positions

### ***Town***

Greater Shepparton is the fifth largest city in regional Victoria with a growing population of more than 60,000 people. It is located on the floodplain of the Goulburn River, just 2 hours away from Melbourne, and is surrounded by beautiful countryside, native forests and fertile farmlands. The area has a rich dairying, fruit growing and agricultural region making it renowned as Australia's "food bowl". The city is also well known for its cultural diversity, magnificent food and wine, glorious weather and amazing natural attractions such as the Australian Botanic Gardens, Lower Goulburn National Park, Dookie Rail Trail, Kyabram Fauna Park and Cactus Country. Not to worry, we also have McDonald's, KFC, Hungry Jacks, Schnitz, Zambrero, Subway, Domino's, Pizza Hut, Nando's and multiple Thai and Italian restaurants to meet your food needs... and BUBBLE TEA!!!

### ***Hospital***

#### **What would the internship cover?**

Goulburn Valley Health (GVH) is one of the major hospitals in the Hume region which offers 280 beds for multiple services including a 24-hour Emergency Department, Surgery, Medical, ICU, Women's and Paediatric Services, Rehabilitation, Palliative care, Mental Health and Outpatients, and provides services to smaller district hospitals such as Tatura and Rushworth as well.

#### **Positives**

- Friendly, supportive pharmacy team: the pharmacy team at GVH includes 9 pharmacists, 1 intern and 3 pharmacy technicians. They are a fun, welcoming team who are easygoing and eager to teach and support. Being a sole intern, you are lucky to have 9 pharmacists to help you grow and pass your intern exams! Greater independent experience and exposure: whilst there are not as many ward rotations available at GVH, this also means you're able to experience more of what the medical, surgical, rehab and other wards have to offer for a longer period of time and develop your skills. Furthermore, you have more opportunity to work independently as well which will help you to develop your clinical pharmacy skills faster.
- Possible opportunity to fill a pharmacist position: Over the last year or two, GVH Pharmacy has struggled to attract and maintain suitable pharmacists. With redevelopment projects to expand the hospital, it is likely GVH will be looking to recruit more pharmacists as well, hence there may be opportunities beyond just internship at GVH for you!
- Country hospital charm: all staff and patients are extremely down to earth and friendly. You'll never walk down the street or halls of the hospital without a hello or g'day from a fellow smiling passerby.
- Other Hume region hospital connections: there is an opportunity to work alongside other preceptors and interns from other hospitals in the Hume region such as Albury/Wodonga Hospital, Warranga and Echuca Hospital to fill in any gaps that GVH may have. I found this very helpful with the Intern Training Program and Intern Foundation Program as well as the APC written and oral exams.
- Others: cheap/affordable rent, close to Melbourne (2 hours by drive, 3 hours by V-line), wide variety of food options, minimal traffic (you can always find a car park!), other interns from different professions you can bond with about the stress of intern life!

# Goulburn Valley Health

Merry Joy Melbourne, Intern 2020

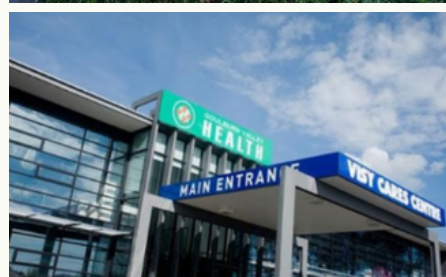
## Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded and 1 hospital positions

### Advise to those who are considering applying to this program

I highly encourage you to apply at GVH! There is an amazing team here to support you and although it is not a major metropolitan hospital, there is still plenty of learning and hands-on experience to gain! Get to know a little bit more about Shepparton and GVH as this will likely help you with your application/interview. More importantly, consider this as an opportunity to experience the beauty of Australian regional life! All the best!

### Challenges

- Limited specialty and subspecialty exposure and ward rotations: like most regional and rural hospitals, GVH does not provide specialties such as cardiology, neurology etc. and most patients requiring specialist care are transferred to bigger hospitals in Melbourne.
- New pharmacists: some pharmacists are relatively new to hospital pharmacy. On the downside, this means they may not be able to teach you a lot of clinical pharmacy. On the upside, they are fresh from intern exams or have valuable community experience to offer you for that oral exam.
- Paper-based documents: the system at GVH is still mostly paper-based so be prepared to decode some handwritten notes from doctors!
- Expensive and limited food options: there are only 2 cafes available in the hospital and food prices are in the range of \$8-10. Luckily the town center is only 5 minutes away by drive.



St John of God Ballarat Hospital  
Photo Credit: Carol Kelly



Shepparton. Photo credit: Merry Joy Melbourne

## Intern positions in 2024: 6 DHHS funded positions

### *Internship*

- Campuses where pharmacy interns will work: Based at Grampians Health Ballarat (Base Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Campus)
- Also includes 6-8 week rotation to Grampians Health Horsham and potential rotation to Grampians Health Stawell.

### **Rotations**

- General clinical rotations (including general medicine, neurology, cardiology, oncology, general surgery, urology, gynaecology, orthopaedics and subacute services (including rehabilitation, geriatrics and palliative care))
- Specialty clinical rotations including ICU, ED, Paediatrics/Neonatology, Mental Health
- Cardiology and renal ambulatory care outpatient clinics
- Inpatient, outpatient and oncology dispensaries (Ballarat Regional Integrated Cancer Centre)
- Extemporaneous and aseptic manufacturing
- Medication safety, Antimicrobial Stewardship & Hospital Admissions Risk Program (HARP)
- Elective rotations to other services including dialysis, mental health, clinical trials, BHS at Home (hospital in the home) and medication guidelines and smart pumps

### *Hospital*

Grampians Health Ballarat (GH-B) is the largest regional health service in the Grampians region, serving its purpose as the principal referral hospital for the region. Area of service extends from Bacchus Marsh to the South Australian border; an area of 48,000 square kilometres.

Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, Stawell Regional Health, Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services is now together with Grampians Health. This new partnership has resulted from years of strong relationship and collaboration between these four health services, aiming to deliver better healthcare, enhance services and advance careers, closer to home.

Grampians Health Ballarat comprises two campuses including acute medical and surgical (224 beds), psychiatric services (67 beds), aged care assessment, palliative care, psycho-geriatric and rehabilitation (70 beds). The wide range of services available includes Emergency, Oncology/Palliative Care, Paediatrics and Neonatology, general and specialty Medical and Surgical services, Maternity and Outpatient clinics, Hospital in the Home and a broad range of community care strategies such as vaccination programs and outpatient clinics.

Grampians Health Horsham and Dimboola hospitals (90 beds) have an Emergency department, Operating Theatre, acute medical and surgical beds, obstetric and maternity beds, paediatric beds, and sub-acute beds. With an Oncology/dialysis and palliative care department servicing many patients of the Western Victorian State. (SHPA, 2023)



# Grampians Health

## Wimmera Health Care group

### Intern positions in 2024: 6 DHHS funded positions

#### ***Town***

Horsham is a regional city in the Wimmera region of western Victoria, Australia, located on a bend in Wimmera River. It is approximately 300km from Melbourne (~3-hour drive).

In June 2018, Horsham had an estimated population of 16,514. Campuses in Horsham and Dimboola service an area of 61,000 square kilometres and a population of approximately 54,000.

Attractions Located on the banks of the Wimmera River, Horsham is ideally located to explore the region's nearby natural attractions. Green Lake, Grampians National park Wartook Valley, Mackenzie falls, Halls gap, Halls gap zoo, Pink lake and Arapiles Ararat (Aradale Ghost tours), Great Western, Horsham regional art gallery



Horsham - photo credit: anon

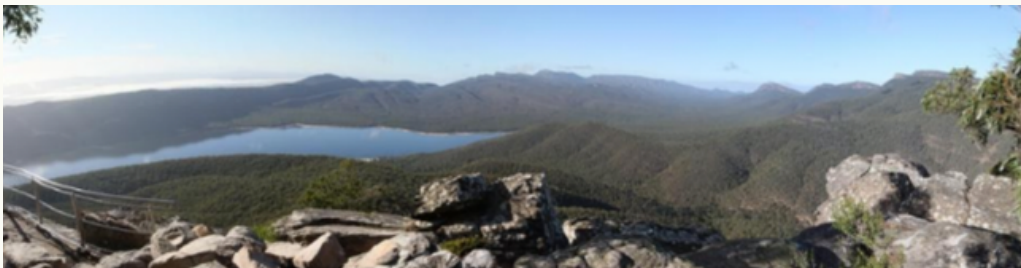
#### ***Hospital***

Every year Wimmera Health Care Group treats more than 10,000 inpatients, 16,000 emergency patients and 123, 000 outpatients. Wimmera Health Care Group plays an important role in the education and training of health professionals.

Working at the Horsham Hospital offers many unique opportunities and a different experience compared to metropolitan hospitals. There is potential for more flexibility, develop problems solving skills and opportunities to engage with local community pharmacies.



***Please note, Wimmera Health Care Group is now together with Grampians Health***



# Latrobe Regional Health

Senior Clinical Pharmacist & Intern Coordinator  
Michelle Kua

## Intern positions in 2024: 3 DHHS funded positions

### *Hospital*

- Main referral hospital for mental health and cancer services in the Gippsland area
- Offers cardiac catheterisation, mental health services, radiation oncology services not available to other hospitals in the area
- Has a developing research unit offering access to clinical trials for patients in the Gippsland area
- Regional pharmacy service offered includes attending and providing pharmacy service to smaller hospitals in the area without a pharmacy department



### *Pharmacy Department*

- The hospital's regional location means more turnaround time is sometimes required for stock procurement, often meaning a minimum of 1 working day for deliveries is required
- Being in a big catchment area (~42,000km<sup>2</sup>) requires extra consideration in caring for the medication needs of the patient as it can take the patient hours to travel to the hospital
  - e.g. providing esky, ice packs for refrigerated medications for patients travelling back home
  - e.g. ensuring outpatients travelling to the hospital for specialist appointments can get their hospital rx dispensed the same day



### *Internship*

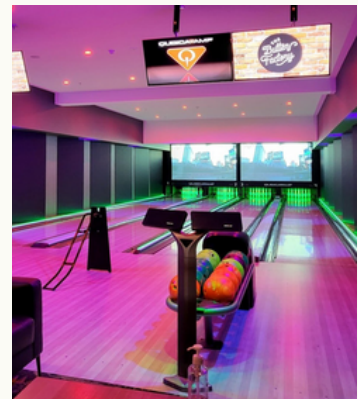
The hospital participates in Monash University Intern Training Program (ITP) and Intern Foundation Program (IFP), with support for audits and research projects for interns undertaking the IFP.

Internship will be covering clinical, and operational pharmacy rotations throughout all areas of the hospital. This includes regular dispensary shifts to maintain and build dispensing and counselling skills.

The hospital is unique within the area that it offers cardiac catheterisation, mental health services, and radiation oncology services not available to other hospitals in the area, allowing interns to get a regional hospital experience while also being able to experience and work with a good range of services.

The regional pharmacy services offered at the hospital includes a pharmacist rostered to attend and provide pharmacy service to smaller hospitals in the area that do not have a pharmacy department, and interns do get to participate in this service as one of their rotations.

The internship program involves a 2-week community pharmacy placement, which allows interns to experience a different work setting and practice their OTC and S3 medication knowledge. The program also includes weekly tutorials covering various topics for learning and for registration exam preparation, and participation in the department's educational activities through continuing education or journal club presentations.



#### **To whom would you recommend to apply?**

Apply to join LaTrobe Regional Health if you're interested in a regional hospital pharmacy experience and being part of a supportive and friendly department!

# Latrobe Regional Health

Clinical Pharmacist  
Kayla Gallert

## Intern positions in 2024: 3 DHHS funded positions

### *Town*

Traralgon is a thriving regional centre, and is less than a 2 hour drive from Melbourne. It is central to many other towns around Gippsland, with many coffee shops, restaurants, and bars.

Traralgon is also home to the recently upgraded Gippsland Regional Sports and Aquatic Centre, as well as the newly build Gippsland Performing Arts Centre.

It is closely located to scenic rail trails, and many fun activities including berry picking in the summer and snow season destinations in the winter.



### *Hospital*

Latrobe Regional Health is an expanding teaching hospital that currently services 289 inpatient beds within a range of departments including the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre, radiation oncology, dialysis, paediatrics, maternity, emergency department, medication inpatient units, and mental health unit. LRH pharmacy also provides regional pharmacist services to several other regional hospitals as it is the major regional health centre for Gippsland catchment.

The LRH pharmacy department has approximately 40 staff, consisting of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy interns.

LRH is currently in the middle of an expansion, with new buildings and renovations set for completion in late 2023.



(Latrobe City, n/a)

## *Role as a pharmacist*

The location of the hospital allows me to become more of a generalist pharmacist compared to metropolitan positions; allowing me to become more flexible in my knowledge. As a pharmacist in a regional hospital, some of the roles include the following.

- Admitting patients via performing best possible medication histories
- Supplying hospital medical chart requisitions
- Reconciling patient medication charts and patient prescriptions
- Dispensing medications for both inpatient and outpatient supply
- Counselling patients on discharge medications
- Checking for safe usage of medications i.e. checking medication charts for interactions or unsafe prescribing
- Liaising within the multidisciplinary health care team to deliver best patient centred care
- Supervising and training newly employed pharmacists, intern pharmacists and pharmacy students
- Delivering medication safety presentations to outpatient allied health clinics
- Preparing extemporaneous/compounded products as required
- Undertaking on-call shifts

# Latrobe Regional Health

Clinical Pharmacist  
Kayla Gallert

## Intern positions in 2024: 3 DHHS funded positions

### *Internship*

#### What would the internship cover?

- Rotations across various areas of the hospital as well as regular dispensary duties to allow integration into the clinical pharmacy service and the development of pharmacist skills
- Support for learning and intern training program tasks, including practice exams
- Each intern is assigned to an individual preceptor throughout the year for support and guidance
- Weekly intern tutorial sessions which cover a range of clinical, legal and OTC topics
- 2 week participation in a community pharmacy placement to consolidate OTC and clinical skills
- Interns are encouraged to participate in regular clinical and case presentation meetings to build and extend knowledge in a team environment

#### What would make this internship position different?

- Pharmacists within the department are supportive, making for a great learning environment
- There is the opportunity to rotate through many different wards and other pharmacy services, including general medical, orthopaedics, general surgery, paediatrics/maternity, rehabilitation, geriatric, mental health, emergency department, critical care unit, chemotherapy, HITH, dispensary and regional pharmacy services
- Dedicated pharmacy intern tutorial time with preceptors on a weekly basis
- The ability to establish rapport with local patients is very rewarding
- Free parking and minimal traffic is a major benefit

#### What advice would you give to current pharmacy students?

Latrobe Regional Health may be smaller compared to metropolitan hospitals, but this does not mean that the opportunities are any less. Intern pharmacists at LRH experience many unique areas and get support from the other pharmacists in the department to achieve their learning goals.

#### To whom would you recommend to apply?

To those always willing to learn new things, put in 110% and not afraid to participate within the multidisciplinary healthcare team. As the hospital is regional, some may find it difficult to adjust from the metropolitan lifestyle, however there are so many opportunities to advance your career as a pharmacist within a regional area.

#### Internship TIP!

You will be working full time and studying, so make sure you have a good work to life balance

# Mildura Base Hospital

Clinical Pharmacist (2022 Pharmacy Intern)

Katherine Freeman

## **Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded position** ***Town***

Our town has been called an oasis in the desert, we are truly the food and wine region of Victoria with a bustling and contemporary cafe culture. Mildura really is the epitome of work-life balance.

We are a community of multi-nations and we foster the integration of all cultures into our beautiful home. We are connected to NSW alongside the Murray River that provides many wonderful nature walks and home to an array of wildlife.

## ***Internship***

Mildura Base Public Hospital is a vibrant regional tertiary hospital, who are community focussed and driven. The hospital has a team of pharmacists with a wide range of skills, providing you with expertise and experience during your internship.

The internship includes chances to work across all hospital areas - including medical, surgical, rehabilitation, palliative care, paediatrics, mental health, intensive care, and emergency.

You may also get the opportunity to work in more specialised areas - oncology, haematology, AMS rounds, working alongside the HITH team in long-term antibiotic and warfarin titrating patients. The range of experience available allows the interns to see a variety of cases, and develop their clinical knowledge for exams and for general registration.

### **What would make this internship different?**

Being credentialled for Monash University's IFP, allows interns to gain further feedback from the pharmacists and continue developing skills required for registration as a pharmacist.

If you complete the IFP, you will have the opportunity to conduct your own research project, on a topic that you have chosen and find interesting. The flexibility in this allows you to identify an area which is requiring improvement and make change happen.

Alongside the pharmacists within the department, you will also be supported through the year by the clinical education team, consisting of two pharmacists with the extensive knowledge they're exceptional at sharing with interns.

### **Does the location of the hospital affect the roles you perform as a pharmacist?**

Being so far from any metropolitan centre means there is a range of services available to ensure patients can get the appropriate acute treatment. This includes telehealth consults with metropolitan sites and STROKE Victoria and frequent consults with Alfred Health specialists for complex cases. Working in a rural or regional area doesn't affect the variety of cases that present to our hospital, with enough difference each day to keep you engaged and continually learning.

### **Challenges**

It can be challenging working within a smaller team. As our only intern, you play a big role throughout your year with us and our team trusts and relies on you more as your experience develops. Our team will ensure you feel comfortable and confident in what you do day to day, while continuing to offer support and back up. Even since my internship finished, our team has grown rapidly, and will continue to grow.

### **What advice would you give to current pharmacy students?**

For those who have lived in a metropolitan area for all, or most of their life, moving so far away from what you've known can be daunting. The welcoming community of regional and rural pharmacy will ensure that you don't feel isolated, and the familiar faces of all the staff will make you feel included and at home.

[Mildura Base Public Hospital Facebook](#)  
[Visit Mildura](#)



### **To whom would you recommend to apply?**

Everyone should consider applying for this position! The support you will receive from the department, the other staff throughout the hospital and local community is fantastic!

# Northeast Health Wangaratta

**Intern positions in 2024: 2 DHHS funded and 2 Hospital funded positions**

## ***Town***

Wangaratta is a small town in the Northeast of Victoria an hour from Albury/Wodonga. It is surrounded by a multitude of smaller towns such as Beechworth, Myrtleford and Milawa that are great for exploring, so you're never bored. There is a lovely atmosphere within Wangaratta and Northeast Health Wangaratta itself. Everyone is very friendly and happy to talk with you, and really helpful if you ever have any questions.



## ***Hospital and Internship***

### **What would the internship cover?**

Rotations: Medical (1/3 of the year), Surgical (1/3 of the year), 3 weeks each in Emergency Department, Critical Care+Perioperative Care Clinic+Inpatient Mental Health, Rehab/Geriatrics+Paediatrics+Acute Respiratory, Dispensary+Hospital in the Home, Oncology, and 1 week at Yarrawonga Heath/Community Pharmacy, Beechworth Health/Community Pharmacy, Benalla Health. Medical & Surgical rotations include working with the Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist.



### **What would make this internship position different to other positions?**

There is a real emphasis on learning and teaching, and many staff are eager to answer questions and help develop your knowledge. Almost all the pharmacists at NHW are Monash-credentialed Clinical Pharmacy Educators. There is lots of trust and responsibility, allowing us to develop our careers and learn how to become a competent and successful pharmacist. You get to know everyone you work with really well, so it's really easy to work with people and ask questions if you need – including community services such as local pharmacies You can be on holidays in northeast Victoria every weekend – mountains & snow or vibrant arts & culture precinct with food & wine everywhere.

### **Challenges?**

Can sometimes be limited in terms of services available to us due to rural location e.g. lack of specialists Miss my family and friends from Melbourne All 4 seasons – temperatures between -5C and 45C from winter to summer. Plenty is accessible if you have your own transport, a bit more challenging to see the region if you're on foot. Easy train ride or freeway drive to Melbourne.

### **Any advice for pharmacy students?**

Take the risk as you might find it to be very rewarding There is lots of opportunity to progress your career, therefore, will be professionally advantageous to you You can always travel back to visit family/friends as you need – not completely isolated

# South West Healthcare Warrnambool

Deputy Director of Pharmacy at South West Healthcare  
Gavin Flett

**Intern positions in 2024: 1 DHHS funded and 2 hospital funded positions**

## ***Town***

Warrnambool is a large regional centre located on the coast, a 3 hour drive west of Melbourne. Despite having a population of over 35, 000 people, it still feels like a small town; you can't go anywhere without bumping into someone you know.

There are lots of amazing beaches, as well as day trips to explore in the nearby area. In terms of services, the town is big enough to have many major retailers and plenty of options for food. Everywhere in town is close and traffic is non-existent compared to the city. In summer, you wouldn't want to be anywhere else, but be prepared for cold and wet winters.



## ***Hospital and Internship***

### **What would the internship cover?**

The intern year covers a lot of general areas including:

- Outpatient/dispensing/operation
- Clinical (wards include general medical, palliative, surgical and rehabilitation)
- Aseptic and cytotoxic manufacturing
- Antimicrobial stewardship
- Audits



### **What would make this internship position different to other positions?**

Overall, most hospital internships will have large degrees of similarities in what is covered due to the nature of the requirements of the ITPs. It is our intent that our interns are well-rounded individuals who could work in any given area. Our program may be slightly more general in nature than the larger metro hospitals as we don't have specialist wards such as neurology, cardiology or respiratory, however this allows for the chance to develop a well rounded skill set and experience.

Being a smaller site, it is probably more intimate than many other hospitals which can make for a more relaxed environment. The hospital has a Regional Cancer Centre affiliated with it where oncology services are provided including chemotherapy and radiation.

### **Any advice for pharmacy students?**

Have an open mind when it comes to selection of intern training location/workplace. In interviews, be yourself and be natural – don't overly rehearse or appear stilted.

Ensure you're well rounded both from work experience (make sure you spend some time working in a pharmacy during uni) and with extra-curricular activities.

# Hervey Bay/Maryborough Hospitals, QLD

Intern Pharmacist 2023

Nadia Zamri

**Intern positions in 2024: 1 position (open for international students as well)**

## Town

Absolutely lovely, especially for nature lovers. Beautiful beaches within cycling or driving distance, and great lushes of greenery internwined with wisps of road and cars. It was initially a retirement haven, so many community members are individuals of older age. The pacing is calmer compared to its city counterpart. In terms of food, its location offers many fantastic seafood dishes! Additionally, there are always options for those with food restrictions such as vegetarian, vegan, or even halal. All in all, a beautiful place to settle down in.

## Internship

### What would the internship cover?

- Pharmacy rotations: surgical, medical, oncology, renal, ICU, mental health, home in the hospital (HITH), AMS and others
- Exposure to pharmacist roles in correctional centre the hospital services
- Exposure to inventory, procurement, operational roles
- Edicational sessions, and exposure to clinical research via oncology rotation

### Tell us more about your role at the hospital

- Working at two different base hospitals allow for diverse work experience. Clinical cases encountered are different from larger metropolitan hospitals, but role you'd undertake are not different.
- You would cultivate the same skills as those in other hospitals; including performing medication reconciliation, obtaining medication action plan, or facilitating discharge.
- Both hospitals are paper-based hospitals, meaning physical charts and notes are still utilised, so the work flow may be different to when using an electronic-based system.
- As they are regional hospitals, the facility and offered services are smaller in scale. Besides that, due to the smaller workforce, the workflow may slightly differ compared to larger hospitals. Nonetheless, it is a fantastic learning groun to build your foundation as a future pharmacist!



*Hervey Bay Hospital (Ranbury, 2023)*



*Maryborough Hospital (Queensland Health, 2022)*

### Did you face any challenges?

: My challenge was relocating from Melbourne to Hervey Bay, QLD. I also struggled to change my mindset from that of a student to a pharmacist-to-be. But I found the journey exciting and fun! Amazing colleagues, friendly seniors, and the stimulating environment certainly helped settling in.

### What advice would you give to current pharmacy students?

: Enjoy the time as a student, and be proactive in finding your next adventure. Don't be afraid of the change; instead, have fun and embrace the new possibilities. Keep trying, keep learning, and keep developing yourself regardless of where you are in your intern year. You can do it!



# Hervey Bay/Maryborough Hospitals, QLD

Intern Pharmacist 2023

Nadia Zamri

**Intern positions in 2024: 1 position (open for international students as well)**

## ***Interstate internship application process***

### **Differences in application process**

In Queensland, you would apply to the health service the hospital is under, for example

- Wide Bay Hospital And Health Service - Hervey Bay and Maryborough hospitals
- Metro North Health Service - hospitals such as Princess Alexandra and Redlands hospitals

In Queensland, because you apply directly to individual hospitals and health services, most of the time, as long as you have a valid working visa, they may consider international students.

The normal request would be to submit your resume and CV through the stipulated platform as well as a short response to their selection criteria. Then, it will lead to an interview process which would often be done in one round to select the candidates

### **Differences in internship requirements**

There are separate programs and requirements for hospital interns in hospitals that are under Queensland Health.

Requirements include:

- Monthly education (e.g. VTE, surgical, renal and more)
- Audits
- Specific intern training tasks that need to be completed

## ***Advice to current pharmacy students***

To anyone interested in trying something different! It's a wonderful opportunity that will certainly push you out of your comfort zone and allow you to explore yourself in greater depth!



Fraser Coast Island (Caravanning Australia, 2016)



Whale watching at Hervey Bay (Discover Hervey Bay, 2023)

# Broken Hill, NSW

4th year student  
Giovanni Farag

## Town

### THE TOURISM

So much to do! Mine tours, camel riding, Silverton Hotel (an icon), Lookouts, camping areas, museums, artworks, aboriginal communities and education. Always something to do.



## Placement

It is never easy to transition to a new remote placement for full-time work. There are many stumbling blocks that affect this transition, from different legislations and laws between Victoria and NSW, to a new pharmacy/environment where you struggle to find even the most basic equipment. This however is a short-term obstacle.

The Broken Hill community is incredibly wholesome and welcoming. They know it can be challenging for a city boy like me to transition to the outback and thus they have immense patience, and thoroughness that allowed me to gel into the team and ultimately remove the “rookie” label swiftly.

My 6 weeks involved a mix of community placement and Aged care home visits, with the latter being an opportunity that not many student pharmacists in my position would experience. People usually think remote pharmacy services a small number of people. On the contrary, Broken Hill runs a huge operation, serving at least 1500+ patients daily in multiple towns (5 towns), covering an approx radius of 300km! I thoroughly enjoyed and consider it an honour to have worked at the first heritage-listed town in Australia.



## Highlights

Hands down the community!  
Very different demographic to Metro.  
The different working mentality in BH. Yes its always about grand profit in the end, but ultimately Patient care, even social care (pharmacists running trivia nights in the PM, building patient rapport outside of work) trumps any attempts made in Metro. I am definitely more likely to discuss my health issues with a pharmacist I have a social relationship with rather than strictly professional. A huge advantage to patient care and treating ailments quickly before escalation.

## Challenges

The Role of a pharmacist in a remote town does differ slightly to Metro. Doctors are a lot less available, many short-term locums, no rapport and history building with patients (RFDS Royal flying doctor's service assists regularly), hospitals are extremely understaffed, and specialists are booked out till 2024. Thus the pharmacy is the only readily accessible health service. A remote pharmacist would have a lot more responsibilities than a metro pharmacist. Responsibilities include vaccinations, soon-to-be prescribing pharmacists, lack of referral promptness and thus remote pharmacists have to manage more complex cases (can't handball to GP). This includes managing the adverse effects of medications until a GP is seen which can be extremely tricky. Additionally, home Medicine reviews may be at least 2.5 hours away!

# Carnarvon, Western Australia

4th year student  
Vicky Pham

## Town

The community comprises of approximately 40% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the rest include retirees, the local and travellers mostly from Europe. It was an interesting little town with amazing people and beautiful scenery. The student accommodation offers the best sunset view in town and overlook the fascine with trees, waves and waters. On the weekend, a 2 to 3 hours road trip takes us to serene and dazzling beaches with white sand, coral and tropical fish.



## Placement

### Pharmacy name: Pharmacy777

During my placement, I spent majority of time at the main community pharmacy and worked along side pharmacists to offer health solutions to the community.

I was involved in compounding medication (made Magnesium capsules), completing a HMR with the accredited pharmacist, completing Medscheck and Diabetes Medscheck, and organising Easter events for the children in town.

Apart from that, I spent some time at the Aboriginal Medical centre to learn about Aboriginal Medical Services which entail providing subsidised pharmaceutical benefit items. This had given me the opportunities to interact with the Aboriginal communities, understand the barriers and how best to provide health services to improve their health outcomes.

### Positives

Practicing pharmacy in rural areas offered me slightly different learning opportunities compared to within metropolitan Melbourne. I was given the opportunity to learn and practice clinical yarning which can assist in providing better health solution to the Aboriginal community, in which, I know how to communicate better by having cultural awareness.

### Challenges

As it's a rural town so not much going on. For example, not many food or entertainment places. However, in saying that, I enjoy my quiet 6 weeks very much.

### Most memorable experiences (one from placement, one from the town)

- Doing Medscheck and Diabetes Medscheck with patients was probably my most memorable experience from this placement. Talking and listening to patient health and personal journey inspired me to study well to strive and be a good pharmacist when I'm registered. I felt valued because they appreciated my time and effort.
- The road trip to beautiful beaches and building friendship will forever stay in my heart. I was in awe of the beauty of nature: clear and breathtaking ocean, various catchy tropical fish, dolphins, sea turtles, colourful corals bed and the red dirt of Australian outback. I am thankful for the opportunity and experience.

### To whom would you recommend this position?

To all third year students who will be in fourth year next year, consider this opportunity! The thought of living away from home for 6 weeks could be scary but the experience might be one of the most treasurable memories in the life time. For myself, not only this placement ignite my passion for pharmacy but also open my eyes to amazing Australian outback scenery for someone like me who only know the life in the city.

# WILDFIRE PARKVILLE 2023



WILDFIRE WISHES YOU ALL THE  
BEST OF LUCK WITH 2024  
INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS

