

The rural appreciation weekend on Shannon Nott's property in Dunedoo was fantastic. Not only did I have a relaxing and enjoyable time, but I also learnt much about the rural environment and practicing medicine therein. The allied health students from Wollongong were friendly and open, and their presence and involvement was much appreciated. The other medicine students from UNSW were also warm, the trip seemed to have attracted an easy-going and amicable crowd. Shannon and his family facilitated a tremendous line-up of things to do, helping me to embrace the setting. In addition to the great community of people, the entertainment and the general learning (about farm life, aboriginal culture and snakes), I was very interested in the talks from two remote working doctors.

These two doctors told of their personal experience of remote medicine, highlighting the differences between working in the country, as opposed to the city. Their points raised were very pertinent. For example, your proximity to work, and subsequently your physical closeness to your family at home. That is, you could be at work, then in your lunch break, drive home to your family, whereas in the city, you could easily be 40 minutes away. Also, the nature of the work was shown to be quite different. Remote medicine requires a far greater breadth of skills, and the confidence to employ them in situations perhaps beyond those expected. Finally, hearing about the community in which rural doctors work, with regard to both patients and fellow medical workers, was truly inspiring.

I got a lot out of the weekend. In the short term, it was a really nice break to get away from the city and enjoy the more peaceful setting (with perfect weather). Everyone could have a laugh together, sharing some stories and experiences. In the long term, I made some solid friends whom I will be sure to keep in touch with for years to come. The another main lasting gain from the weekend, was the combined effect of the activities, people and the doctors' accounts. Where previously I was pondering whether to spend some time working in rural/remote medicine, I am now positive that I *will* work in rural/remote medicine, it is just a matter of for how long. Thank you RAHMS for the opportunity.

Ed Roper
Happy Camper