



Dr Teena Downton

FACRRM FRACGP FARGP DRANZCOG Adv DCH

GP Obstetrician



Tell me a bit about yourself and where you work?

My interest in human biology in high school motivated me to pursue a medical career. I studied Medicine at the University of Wollongong. Positive experiences with my University Rural Health Club, the National Rural Health Students' Network, the John Flynn Placement Program, and the NSW Rural Doctor's Network Cadetship Program opened my eyes to the many exciting personal and professional opportunities that a rural health career could offer. I completed my internship & residency in Tamworth, before moving to Orange to do my DRANZCOG Advanced training. I then moved to Cowra to complete my GP registrar training. I completed my training last year and have chosen to continue working in Cowra as a GP Obstetrician.

What range of situations do you have to deal with?

In my job, every day is different. My clinical time is spent doing community general practice, nursing home visits, and hospital work. As a Visiting Medical Officer at Cowra District Hospital, I participate in the obstetric and emergency on call rosters, and provide inpatient care. I also supervise students and junior doctors.

I can see anything and everything in my job. The combination of emergency and non-acute medicine means that I'm continually working to maintain a broad skill set applicable to any situation.

How do you handle the range of work?

Acknowledging that I'm not going to know everything and asking for assistance from colleagues (in Cowra and the regional referral hospital) early when needed. Attending workshops and courses has helped increase my confidence to manage the wide range of clinical scenarios that might come through the door.

Why did you become a Rural Generalist?

I became a Rural Generalist motivated by a desire to help rural communities maintain access to quality and safe health care close to home. I was also motivated by the attraction of Rural Generalist medicine offering the greatest clinical variety and flexibility of any medical career.

On balance, what do you most enjoy about it?

I enjoy the clinical diversity and being able to offer patients ultimate continuity of care by caring for them in both community and hospital settings. I find it a true privilege to be working in obstetrics, caring for women and their families at such a special time.

What do you find hard?

Seeing the influence of social determinants on my patients' health. Not having enough hours in a day to do everything I want to get done inside and outside of work.

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What keeps you going?

The reward that comes with helping patients with their medical problems. Supportive colleagues and mentors. Amazing support from my family & partner. Staying in touch with friends. Going on a holiday at least once a year. Balancing my time outside work with hobbies including soccer and music.

What do you think a national Rural Generalist Pathway will mean for you?

More Rural Generalist colleagues to work alongside in the future. Maintenance of obstetric, anaesthetic, surgical and emergency services in small district towns. Better recognition of the valuable role Rural Generalists play in the provision of quality and cost-effective care in rural communities.

What advice would you give the next generation of doctors about Rural Generalist careers?

If you are after a rewarding career that offers the greatest variety, flexibility and clinical challenge to continually motivate you to become a better doctor, then a Rural Generalist career might be for you.

