

NZRDA. Hospital REVIEW



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Introduction

The RMO Viewpoint

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to NZRDA's annual Hospital Review. This is a subjective and unofficial assessment of the hospitals distributed across our beloved country. It's written by RMOs for RMOs.

We hope that this publication will give you an insight into what you might expect before commencing work. It might also help you choose where to work – given that you will shortly choose your allocations.

To all the Trainee Interns out there, please see the information on the facing page about RDA membership and indemnity insurance. We are here to help, so let us know if you have any questions.

And if you have further queries about working at a particular hospital, the first points of call are your delegates (your RDA representatives working across NZ). You can find out who your delegates are by heading to our website (www.nzrda.org.nz).

Alternatively, get in touch with us here at the RDA office and we will assist you!

In producing this document, RMOs were asked to comment on 10 categories, but also to contribute any other thoughts and comments they considered relevant.

To all those RDA delegates and RMOs who contributed their time and effort to the production of this review – a big thank you. If you have any feedback on or questions about the content of this review, we'd be happy to discuss.

Review Criteria

RMO Unit

The helpfulness, friendliness and support (or otherwise) of RMO Unit staff.



MECA Compliance

Frequency and severity of non-compliance; ease of solving disputes, etc.



Daily Workload

How reasonable for a first year?



Rosters

Never get to see your children (or make any)...?



RMO Lounge

General comfort and proximity to key work areas; kitchen facilities, lounge area, natural light; status of phone lines to enable responsiveness.



City Living

Things to do (night life etc.), cost, transport, proximity to other places etc.



Cafeteria

General comments including cleanliness, accessibility; meals including options, quality, availability, and restrictions.



Car Parking

Space availability, safety and security, proximity to main entrance for nights, alternative arrangements if appropriate.



Acute Demand

On long day work volume, work quality and experience.



SMO Support

Educational opportunities/academic support; industrial support.



Trainee Interns

Written by RMOs for RMOs

TI RDA Membership is Free

Beginning your first year as a house officer is always daunting. As well as coming to grips with being a doctor, you also need to understand what it means to be an employee.

The RDA is here to help you deal with "all that contract stuff" and more. Membership for TIs is free!

Just visit the Membership page on our website at www.nzrda.org.nz/join, fill in the form, and it's done... but there is a catch! To remain a member once you start work as an RMO, you will need to pay a subscription fee - but not until your first pay cheque! After this, it's \$40 per month.

We do encourage TIs to join; we produce regular updates dedicated to TIs, which provide "things you need to know" especially as the time approaches when you will start your working life as a doctor.

What is the NZRDA?

The NZRDA (New Zealand Resident Doctors' Association) – or the RDA for short – is by far the largest organisation in New Zealand representing RMOs (Resident Medical Officers, which includes house surgeons, senior house officers and registrars) and of course TIs.

We are a union: a group of employees who come together to achieve strength and safety in numbers. We are run by resident doctors for resident doctors. Our main purpose is to look after and promote the interests of our members. This includes taking care of doctors' rights and interests at work, within the health sector and in the wider community.

The philosophy of the NZRDA is based on community, support and union principles such as a democratic structure and service delivery.

What do we do?

The RDA negotiates and enforces members terms and conditions of employment, and we work to ensure your employment contract is honoured.

We also work to protect and enhance RMO

training, work-life balance and wellness. We represent individual members who get into difficulty, and promote good change.

Indemnity Insurance

The RDA supports indemnity insurance through NZMPI, a wholly New Zealand-owned insurance company. This is **indemnity insurance**: a guaranteed contract of cover for you if you get into difficulty, which (without trying to make you gloomy) you probably will - despite all the training, you are human after all! This is free for RMOs: just tick the box usually called "RDA insurance" or "NZMPI" when filling in the form for DHB employment. This insurance remains available to house officers and registrars, and continues into SMO and GP land when you get to that stage.

To sum up

We actively lobby for our members' interests, comment publicly when appropriate, and communicate with other medical organisations in New Zealand and overseas. We work with politicians, government, and the private sector. Through the RDA you have the opportunity to have your say and influence decisions that affect your future and the future of healthcare in NZ!

Disclaimer

This review is intended to provide an honest, provocative and irreverent commentary on the state of New Zealand hospitals from the points of view of RMOs. All commentary is opinion only, and we have been careful not to overly edit or dilute the voices of our members in their assessments. Even when the commentary seems to be stated as fact, it isn't; it is opinion – but educated opinion, informed by the real life experiences of doctors working within our District Health Boards.

The NZRDA is always happy to discuss the opinions that appear in our Hospital Review; if you have thoughts or comments, feel free to contact us at ask@nzrda.org.nz

In producing this document, RMOs were asked to comment on the aforementioned 10 review criteria categories, but also to contribute any other thoughts and comments they considered relevant.



"There is a range of specialties with great collegiality amongst SMOs and Registrars in most departments."





Northland

Whangarei Hospital

Known for its beaches, the North welcomes new arrivals. Whangārei itself is a small town with a reasonable cost of living and working at the hospital as a first year is an enjoyable experience. The workload is overall manageable, there is good schedule ten compliance and rostering that supports a healthy personal life. There is a range of specialties with great collegiality amongst SMOs and Registrars in most departments.

But, the educational support from SMOs is best described as "passable" and understaffing is a significant issue in most departments impacting safety especially at night.

Facilities are adequate. The RMO lounge is located on the roof top near the Helipad. It is small but has natural light and there are adequate sleeping arrangements. Food is above average however there are limited

vegetarian and vegan options and food runs out quickly. Car parking is up to standard in terms of location and security.

The District Health Board and RMO unit in particular are under resourced. Communication between the Unit and RMOs has significant room for improvement. It often feels like management does not listen to RMOs. There are ongoing MECA compliance issues around annual leave, lieu days and failing to adhere to other requirements.

Whangarei is only a little over two hours away from Auckland, but Whangarei itself is more of a quaint small town than a city. The cost of living is fair, and it's perfect for those interested in outdoor activities. Surf beaches are forty minutes from the town, there are multiple mountain bike routes, and ready access to Poor Knights Marine Reserve.

Waitemata

North Shore & Waitakere Hospital



North Shore Hospital

North Shore Hospital's proximity to Auckland CBD and the beautiful northern beaches, make it a much-desired residency for RMOs. On the whole, members feel that North Shore hospital is a great place to work. Respondents are generally happy with the RMO unit, which have shown that they try to do their best at solving disputes. There is an above average workload that has become more manageable as their technology becomes more advanced.

"The perennial problems when dealing with the NRA affect this DHB also..."

The rostering situation at North Shore is generally good, allowing for life outside of work while also following schedule 10 compliance. There is good collegiality, educational opportunities and industrial support from the SMOs. However the perennial problems when dealing with the NRA affect this DHB also.



Waitakere Hospital

Waitakere hospital is a mere 40-minute drive from some of the best beaches the Auckland Region has to offer. While the hospital is well known for being friendly and providing great opportunities to learn, the Waitakere RMO unit is pretty average.

"There is exceptionally good collegiality and education opportunities, with supportive SMOs."

MECA compliance out of Waitakere has been overall good, with average difficulty in resolving disputes. The daily workload is also reasonable, but the rostering makes it hard for RMOs to have a life outside of work. Thankfully the Schedule 10 compliance is good. There is exceptionally good collegiality and education opportunities, with supportive SMOs.

The lounge and kitchen setup are good with a great location and decent natural light. However, it could use some more phone lines and there is a lack of beds in the sleeping quarters. The cafeteria itself is very clean and accessible however the food options are very limited and of poor quality.

There is very good car parking with adequate security. The Shore has an average cost of living and provides plenty of things to do on your time off. There can be some troubles with transport when heading to other parts of Auckland.

The RMO unit is not physically located in the building which has caused some difficulties. The RMO lounge is too far away and not of a good standard. The kitchen and lounge both have decent natural light and a good number of phone lines. The sleeping facilities are not up to scratch. The cafeteria food is of okay quality with a decent selection; however, the cafeteria opening hours are short. The car parking has a good number of parks at a good price, but security is lacking.

The cost of living is average across the board.

Auckland

Auckland Hospital & Starship



Auckland Hospital

The people at the RMO unit itself are nice enough, however, the off-site Northern Regional Alliance (NRA) people are untouchable. They are free to ignore your emails and phone calls unless you are prepared to drive to Penrose. There are so many staff there also, and no directory/who to ask what questions. Some RMOs have found they can ignore you even after 20 emails.

"Schedule ten compliance is average to above average with most rosters allowing a life outside of work."

The rostering is disorganised. Two relievers frequently turn up to cover someone who has taken leave, while someone else had been declined leave on that same day. Or worse, relievers turning up to cover someone who had apparently "taken leave" but were still there working. Both frequency and severity of non-compliance with the MECA is average to high and solving disputes is difficult. This fits with comments that working through the bureaucracy is difficult. Schedule ten compliance is average to above average with most rosters allowing a life outside of work. The workload is manageable but this is very dependant on the run you're doing.

There are some issues around first years not being given the opportunity to think for themselves. Acute demand on long day is highly dependant on the run and some nurses can ask too many questions which leads to a high workload.

SMO support is high, and collegiality and appropriateness scores very well.

The lounge and kitchen facilities are average in comfort and proximity but there are insufficient phone lines and natural light.

The napping facilities are in the average to above average range. Although in the bunk room you wake everyone up if your pager goes off, so no one uses this facility.

The food selection in the cafeteria is good particularly the salad bar, however the consensus is that there should be more vegetable options. The car parking facilities are below average. Working nights this is less of an issue but in the day many RMOs park on side streets or in the Domain.

Auckland generally has plenty to do in terms of night life etc. And is surrounded by natural scenery and locations but proximity is an issue. The cost of living is high but is somewhat countered by the fact that there are lots of things to do in the City.

Overall the environment at Auckland Hospital is supportive, however, both the DHB and NRA tend to be unhelpful.

Starship Hospital

Like Auckland Hospital, there is quite a bit of confusion with relievers frequently turning up when they are not required, or people not being granted leave despite a reliever being available to cover. It should be noted that rostering for Starship it is done by the Chief Resident who is a registrar doing a kind of clinical governance year and for Children's ED it is done by a Fellow.

This creates a conflict of interest among RMOs as all leave requests, sick calls and stat days go through them, as well as cross cover and additional duties claims. Generally they are pretty fair with balanced rostering that is not too bad with 1 long day per week, a few weekends and nights per rotation. In fact, the relief rostering is excellent and you will often receive your roster several weeks in advance allowing you to plan your life - obviously it is subject to change, but it rarely does. The off-site Northern Regional Alliance (NRA) people however, are difficult to communicate with due to a lack of clarity around who can answer questions.

MECA compliance is average but solving disputes is usually okay. The most notable recent issue has been around compliance with the STIL day clause in the MECA.

The daily workload is considerable but manageable, with oncology being

the busiest. Schedule 10 compliance is above average and acute demand on long days is reasonable to high.

SMO support is great as is collegiality, support and educational opportunities. Starship is a friendly hospital that strives to minimise hierarchy. There is lots of teaching but it is not protected time.

The kitchen facilities are average, the sleeping and napping facilities are above average the RMO room has undergone a recent refurbish and is above average. The cafeteria is satisfactory, but more could be done to reduce the amount of waste produced. The car parking facilities are well below average with security and availability being the main concerns. This is especially bad on shift days.

Overall Starship hospital is a good place to work, however, more can be done to tackle sustainability.





Counties Manukau

Middlemore Hospital

The RMO Unit is very helpful in what is a tough job especially as they are understaffed. The frequency and severity of MECA non-compliance is quite high but ease of solving disputes is okay. Issues quite often require escalation above managers but they do eventually get sorted.

"The daily workloads are very high, which gives good experience but can be very difficult when understaffed."

There are ongoing issues with schedule 10 for registrars but overall schedule 10 compliance is good. The daily workloads are very high, which gives good experience but can be very difficult when understaffed. The rosters are below average to average in terms of allowing for a life outside of work but this does depend on the run. Large workloads provide for a lot of opportunities but can feel unsafe overnight. Collegiality ranks well but SMO support is average albeit generally seen as approachable.

There is general unhappiness amongst RMOs with regards to lounge and kitchen facilities. Both are too far away, there are not enough phones or computers and there seems to be a persistent flea problem. Sleeping and napping facilities are also well below average with a shortage of beds and the aforementioned flea problem. The Cafeteria is above average in terms of quality and selection but disappointment about the recent loss of the wrap station and worries that cost-cutting could lead to further losses. The baked goods at the cafeteria are popular.

The car parking facilities are adequate, however, concerns around security are prevalent.

As part of the Auckland region the cost of living is high but is a good place to live with the proximity to the central city from Middlemore via train a real benefit.

Overall the workload at Middlemore is heavy, but there are very good opportunities for hands on experience of complex cases and a good set of colleagues.



Waikato

Waikato Hospital

Waikato has had its fair share of bad press over the last few years but while it is still far from perfect there have been many changes to improve the experience of RMOs. There has been a lot of staff turnover to the RMO unit but most rosters are now fully staffed which means more relievers and leave availability. The RMO unit will try their best to aid with any issues and items such as leave requests or reimbursement claims are processed quickly.

Some of the systems at Waikato are unfortunately still outdated such as the lack of electronic prescribing or referrals (almost everything is still fax). There have been improvements such as the "task manager" phone system that is used on call which has greatly enhanced the on call experience by allowing tasks to be seen and prioritised without being hounded by your pager.

The RMO lounge is large, has comfortable lazy boys, sky tv (including movies and sport) and computers. There is a kitchen with basic facilities and frozen meals are kept here for nights on call. There are a number of sleep rooms with beds but these can be snatched up quickly by others on night shifts.

"Being a large hospital there are enough staff this means usually not having to give up too many of your evenings/weekends/nights."

The cafeteria has mixed reviews. Some of the criticisms includes lack of food selection for people with dietary requirements and no drink options for RMOs other than milk. However, the cafeteria staff are friendly and there is a good selection including a salad bar with many choices- sandwiches, baking, hot meals and a short order menu for burgers, toasted sandwiches and other specials.

On site parking facilities have room for improvement, it is often difficult to find a spot and security is minimal. If you would rather not pay for parking there are usually parking spaces available on the street within a 10 minute walking distance.



With many departments receiving increased numbers of RMOs the workload is now very manageable across the board including on calls.

Being a large hospital there are enough staff this means usually not having to give up too many of your evenings/weekends/nights. There is a good sense of collegiality and you will get to know most of your work mates particularly amongst the house officers (aided by a great social committee!). Compared to other large DHBs most SMOs are quite relaxed and approachable and in many specialties you will work closely with them as a house officer. The DHB offers all of the subspecialties and an excellent variety of interesting cases that are transferred from the whole midland region (including BOP DHB, Lakes DHB and Tairāwhiti DHB). You will be able to gain a wide range of experiences and have access to training in most disciplines. Most departments are well supported during the day and out of hours with registrars/consultants being approachable.

Hamilton, the city of the future, is a largely underrated city; it has much cheaper living costs than other large cities like Auckland or Wellington. There are a great variety of places to eat out or grab a drink. Nice walks around including the river and the lake. However its proximity is Hamilton's greatest strength. Locations like the Coromandel, Mount Ruapehu/Tongariro National Park, Rotorua, Taupo, Auckland (including the airport which is very handy) are all within a few hours drive, and Raglan is only 40 minutes away.

Waikato DHB has come a long way and is going to continue to improve, we look forward to welcoming you to your new home!

Bay of Plenty

Tauranga & Whakatane Hospital



Tauranga Hospital

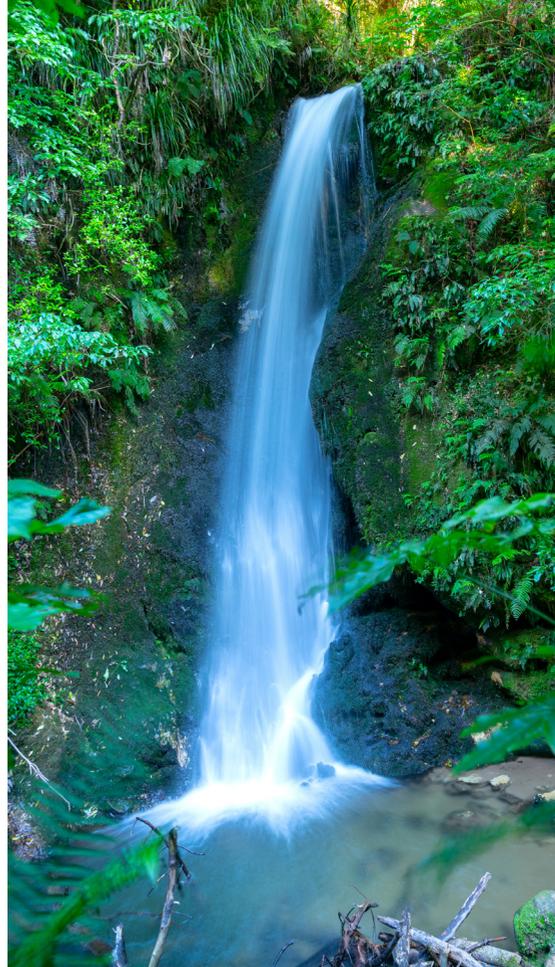
The feedback about Tauranga Hospital's RMO unit has been mostly positive, however, sometimes it is necessary to send multiple emails and to be 'quite assertive'. Interactions are mostly pleasant but – and this is a big but, the RMO unit also doesn't seem to be very familiar with the MECA, and disputes go unresolved for fear that pushing an issue will affect future opportunities.

The daily workload is manageable but is very dependant on the run. Schedule ten compliance is below average, however most respondents believe the current rosters allow them a life outside of work. Acute demand on long days is fairly good and there is high satisfaction with quality of work. SMO support is well above average in a very collegial hospital with good educational opportunities.

"Members feel that their colleagues are supportive, and that working at the Tauranga Hospital provides training opportunities that wouldn't be available elsewhere."

The Lounge is great but the same can't be said about the kitchen, with inadequate food available during night shifts. The sleeping and napping facilities are average.

The cafeteria is above average and has a good salad bar, However there are very few vegetarian options and the cafeteria is perhaps slightly overpriced.



Past break-ins have led to a concern about the lack of security in the car parks, however overall the quality and accessibility of the car parking facilities are good.

Tauranga is a good city to live in with a fair amount to do. The night life is decent, it has great natural scenery and is in close proximity to a number of beautiful beaches.

Accesibility to public transport is good and the cost of living, average. The general feedback is that Members feel that their colleagues are supportive, and that working at the Tauranga Hospital provides training opportunities that wouldn't be available elsewhere.

Whakatane Hospital

Whakatane is a small rural town by a beautiful beach with a variety of great outdoor activities. The city does not have much of a nightlife, but on the plus side- Rotorua and Tauranga are nearby.

"Whakatane Hospital is a small hospital, this means that everyone knows each other and therefore are able to build good relationships with fellow staff members."

There is poor MECA compliance in Whakatane. They have a history of not following meal provisions, changing shifts without asking or informing and not creating opportunities for annual leave at times. The daily workload can be challenging, however this is dependant on the run. The rostered long days can be stressful, with only one House Officer for the entire hospital. Overall however, rostering at Whakatane Hospital is good.

In terms of SMO support, there are few educational opportunities and industrial support is not too good. There are however, opportunities for procedural skills and theatre time.

The RMO lounge and kitchen has adequate access to pagers but lacks basic comfort and hygiene. The sleeping arrangements are also not up to scratch. The cafeteria has below average food, with minimal selection. They have however introduced vegan friendly options which is good to see. The RMO lounge is well stocked with food and coffee available for after-hours shifts. There are a good number of carparks, but the security provided is poor with incidences of cars being broken into, and staff being threatened by perpetrators.

Whakatane Hospital is a small hospital, this means that everyone knows each other and therefore are able to build good relationships with fellow staff members.

Whakatane is a great little rural beach town, and those who enjoy outdoor activities like surfing, mountain biking, tramping and being at the beach will feel right at home here.



Lakes

Rotorua Hospital & Beyond



For the most part RMOs are very happy with the RMO unit. They go out of their way to accommodate requests and whilst MECA compliance is average, most feel that it is an okay process to achieve compliance once issues are raised.

"The volume and quality of work on a long day is above average but the SMOs are highly supportive, approachable and engaged in teaching all of which is highly appreciated."

The daily workload can range from manageable to high, but generally there is a feeling of being supported and looked after. Current rostering provides good work-life balance and schedule 10 compliance is above average – Lakes DHB were the first to go live with safer rostering (woohoo – thanks guys). Both the volume and quality of work on a long day is above average but the SMOs are highly supportive, approachable and

engaged in teaching all of which is highly appreciated (thanks to you guys also).

Unfortunately the lounge and kitchen are not so stunning and cleanliness is an issue. On the up side there are adequate phones available and the facilities are in close proximity to wards. The sleeping facilities are good, secure and there are plenty of beds available.

The food in the cafeteria is above average quality but not enough choices are available especially for vegetarians. The car parking facilities are in good condition and very good proximity however, there are concerns about security.

There is a great range of things to do in Rotovegas: it is a tourist town and is a great place to live if you like the outdoors. The cost of living is reasonable and the people are nice. The one downside is the nightlife (or lack thereof), the other down side is that it might be difficult to find rental properties initially (something NZRDA is working on), but you will eventually be able to find good accommodation.

Hastings

Hawke's Bay Hospital



"Both RMOs and SMOs report feeling unsupported by the DHB hierarchy but on the upside collegiality among RMO peers ranks highly as does industrial support."



The RMO Unit at Hastings is generally helpful but the high turnover of staff in the unit makes things difficult. MECA compliance is average but on the up side it is fairly easy to sort out non-compliance.

The average daily workload is improving with the DHB recently increasing staff levels for weekend shifts (thanks for that – whew). Rostering processes are poor but ironically schedule 10 compliance is well above average. With regards to acute demand on long days, the general consensus

is that the hospital needs to increase the number of beds as it is becoming difficult to cope in winter. SMO support is below average with some allegations of bullying and equally concerns about SMOs leaving due to their relationship with management. Both RMOs and SMOs report feeling unsupported by the DHB hierarchy but on the upside collegiality among RMO peers ranks highly as does industrial support.

The lounge is satisfactory as are the new phones, but proximity is something of an issue. The kitchen could do with improvement. Sleeping/napping facilities are below average; there are no beds for house officers who are unhappy about having to sleep on couches. Registrar's on overnights have good facilities by contrast.

The Cafeteria has average options and food quality. Food often runs out quickly and getting dinner after 6 can be an issue. The car parking facilities are inadequate and poor with break-ins "common". Reserved parking is dependent on your specialty.

Hastings is a good place to live despite the fact that it is not close to a big city. The region is beautiful and has excellent weather, wine and activities. There is plenty to do and living costs are very reasonable. It's also becoming increasingly easier to get away for a short holiday as flights are becoming more frequent and affordable. During the summer there is always something on- concerts, wine and food events, and the natural scenery is a highlight.

Midcentral

Palmerston north Hospital



The RMO unit are approachable and do their best however whilst on the face of things they are kind they can also be unhelpful. It appears to depend on the issue and the day!

"There is good collegiality, learning opportunities and SMO support. However there have been a few difficulties with a few SMOs and when issues have been raised there is a lack of support from the DHB."

MECA compliance is good to above average with few severe breaches and it is generally easy to sort out obvious compliance issues. Daily workload is manageable but varies between runs and there is good support overall as well as learning opportunities available. The current rosters have room for an okay work-life balance and Schedule 10 compliance is above average.

but again with good support. BUT look out: IT is outdated which can make the workload difficult to manage.

For the most part there is good collegiality, learning opportunities and SMO support. However there have been a few difficulties with a few SMOs and when issues have been raised there is a lack of support from the DHB.

The lounge and kitchen, sleeping and napping facilities are all average with notably insufficient beds that are not private enough. The cafeteria is below average, with a lack of options and they do not cater to dietary requirements well. Most park on the street as this is closer than hospital parking and security in the hospital car parks is a concern.

There is a lack of things to do in the city, especially at night, but the close proximity to other hubs that allow for better entertainment makes up for this – Wellington is down the road and ski fields up the same state highway. The cost of living and ease of finding properties for rent in

Taranaki

Taranaki Base Hospital



Taranaki Base Hospital can be found on the marvellous west coast of the North Island. An ideal town for people that enjoy costal walks and scenic ocean views, Taranaki is lively coastal town cost of living in Taranaki is just above average, with a number of things to do in the city and the hospital being in good proximity to them.

The number of patients is slowly but surely increasing at Taranaki hospital. Generally, people are well supported and not overworked.

"The MECA is normally well complied with. If any issues arise, the RMO unit are generally well receptive to any concerns."



Medicine runs generally have a more consistent workload throughout the day whereas surgery is often variable and you may just need to stay for the afternoon ward round.

Most bosses are supportive. MECA is normally well complied with.

If any issues arise, the RMO unit are generally well receptive to any concerns. The rosters at baseline are pretty good but there are calls for "additional" to cover roster gaps a little too frequently with pressure to pick these up.

"The RMO unit are in general very good at being MECA compliant and work hard to ensure RMOs are looked after, get leave, go to courses, have time off together if they're a couple etc. They have been recently re-staffed to appropriate levels and are now working far more effectively than last year."

Generally you'll work one long day every weekend usually one or two weekends per quarter. The RMO unit are in general very good at being MECA compliant and work hard to ensure RMOs are looked after, get leave, go to courses, have time off together if they're a couple, etc. They have been recently re-staffed to appropriate levels and are now working far more effectively than last year. Covid has meant that many departments have had to change their way of operating with roster changes and the like. The RMO unit has worked hard to rewrite rosters short notice to accommodate changes required. Covid has also disrupted teaching significantly but hopefully as we come out of lockdown things will get back into a routine. There are lots of opportunities to learn and gain experience as there is only one night house surgeon for medicine and surgery. On long days, there's one surgical and one medical. Teaching for first years is generally well done. Semi-regular practical teaching sessions in addition to the weekly HO tutorials.

The RMO room is a bit out of the way, so is mostly used at night. There's plenty of natural light during the day. The kitchen is simple, there's a fridge, microwave, and simple drink making facilities. Recently a toastie machine and toaster have been added to the repertoire in the RMO room put in by the kind RMO unit. The couches are comfortable and the TV is small with freeview. There are beds for every on duty RMO at night.

The food is generally good as far as hospital cafes go and there's a large juice selection. There is also a small salad bar and sushi available. Contrary to what the RMO office might say, there is no restriction on amount or type of food. Sleeping facilities have recently been renovated with comfortable, single rooms. There are showers and toilets nearby. There are plenty of free car parks available at Taranaki. There's usually a security guard in the carpark at night near home-time, but they sometimes finish before RMOs if you have to stay a little late.

Taranaki is on the coast, on the way to nowhere, around 4-5 hrs drive from both Wellington and Auckland. Taranaki itself has a lot to offer, from beaches to the mountain. WOMAD is the event of the year, and concerts happen throughout summer in the park. There's lots to do if you're into tramping, surfing etc. There are cafes and places to go out for dinner/drinks, but if you're a nightclub fiend, it's not the place for you.

There's amazing collegiality between the friendly group of RMOs at Taranaki hospital that is fostered year on year as people often stay for two/three years in Taranaki

Whanganui

Whanganui Hospital



"You will quickly gain a lot of hands-on experience. Working at Whanganui Hospital will suit people who are self-motivated and ask for help when they need it."

Whanganui is beautiful, has a strong café culture, is in close proximity to beaches, has a lively weekend river side market, and is a great place to start working as a PGY1.

You will quickly gain a lot of hands-on experience. Working at Whanganui Hospital will suit people who are self-motivated and ask for help when they need it. It's a very friendly hospital with great camaraderie between RMO's and other staff. It is not a hospital you can stay at forever but it is not a bad place to start. The Whanganui RMO unit is generally friendly and supportive but not always responsive to concerns until they are escalated to involve the RDA or higher management.





MECA compliance out of Whanganui is average to say the least. The hospital struggles to resolve disputes, has issues with pay categories and run reviews have taken a long time to resolve. The daily workload is slightly over the average with some runs being more exhausting than others.

Whanganui's rostering is satisfactory. We usually finishing on time, and leave is approved if requested well in advance. However, there are more frequent long days and more weekends rostered than many other hospitals. Medical long days can sometimes be too busy to manage but other RMO's are willing to help out, even so these days are the busiest and most

tiring. There is an average amount of support and interaction from the SMOs.

The RMO lounge and kitchen are in dire need of some improvements and the proximity to key work areas is very poor. There is little natural light and a lack of phone lines to enable appropriate responses to pagers. The Cafeteria is regularly unclean, and accessibility remains an issue. The food while generally tasty has very poor selection and is not particularly healthy. There is ample parking available with a good amount of security.

Wairarapa

Masterton Hospital



Masterton is the largest town in the Wairarapa region. It is not exactly known for its city living, but has a good amount of family-friendly activities, a lot of which are either cheap or free to do. Surrounding areas like Castlepoint are nice to visit and Wellington is a mere 1.5 hours drive away.

"The MECA compliance from Masterton is generally average, but the ability of the RMO coordinator to solve disputes makes up for this."

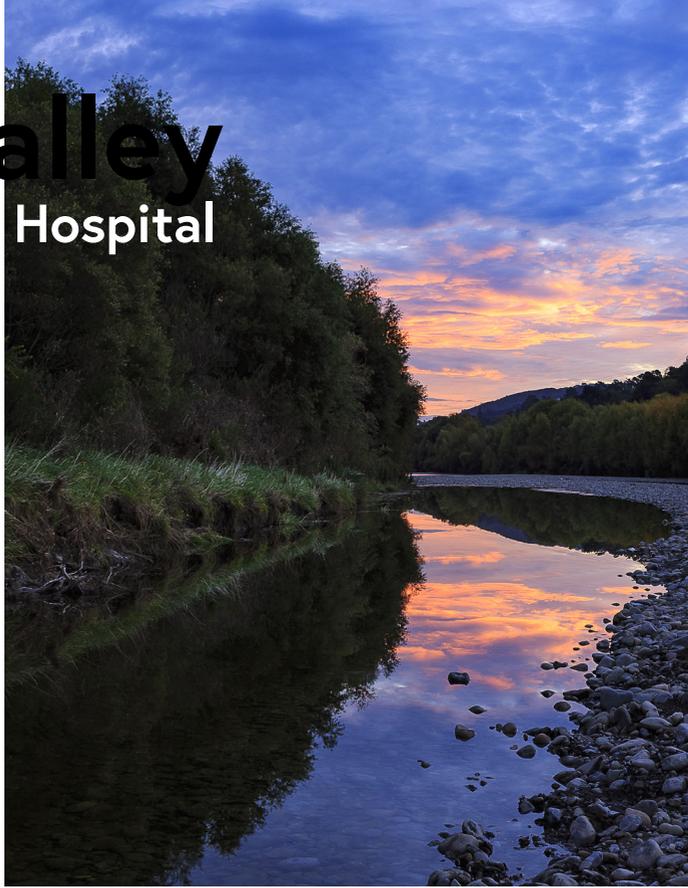
Masterton Hospital has a single RMO coordinator who is a bit overworked but overall very good and settles disputes efficiently.

The MECA compliance from Masterton

is generally average, but the ability of the RMO coordinator to solve disputes makes up for this. The daily workload is reasonable. Rostering allows for a good amount of free time outside of work and continuously complies with schedule 10. The SMO support provides for adequate educational opportunities with an average level of collegiality.

The lounge and kitchen are set up well with ample natural light and very good access to telephone lines. The sleeping arrangements are satisfactory with a good amount of privacy. The cafeteria at Masterton is almost always clean, the meals are of high quality and the food selection is diverse. There is ample well lit carparking with an appropriate amount of security. The cost of living in Masterton is very affordable with many activities available in your spare time. However, there is a lack of convenient transport and proximity to other areas outside the hospital's main hub.

Hutt Valley Hospital



There is a general feeling of unhappiness with the RMO unit at Hutt. It is difficult to get leave and people feel judged when they ask for sick leave. MECA compliance and ease of solving disputes is average to poor. On the up side rostering is done well and schedule 10 compliance rates very highly.

The daily workload is average but nights are very difficult compounded by a lack of technology and staff. Acute demand can be challenging and can get very busy, which doesn't allow for good learning opportunities. There is however excellent SMO support as well as from colleagues and educational opportunities are also very good.

Both kitchen and lounge facilities are subpar, antiquated and very hard to access (AKA "crap"). Sleeping/napping facilities are

(AKA "crap"). Sleeping/napping facilities are also very poor, again too far away and very isolated raising safety concerns for RMOs as well as those we care for. The cafeteria is poor: there aren't enough options and what few options there are sell out very quickly.

Both availability and security in the car parking facilities are average. There are some concerns about break ins but you generally feel safe walking to your car.

Most working at Hutt live in Wellington and commute, so for life outside of work... read the Wellington review. The cost of living is high.

Overall there is a feeling that the supportive SMOs and really nice colleagues make up for a lot of other flaws at Hutt hospital.

Capital & Coast

Wellington Hospital

The RMO Unit role in Wellington is "satisfactory", they respond in good time and deal well with leave requests. However, there are some areas that do not abide by the MECA and are hostile when disagreements arise.

The "satisfactory" possibly demonstrating a "Jekyll-and-Hyde" scenario. Both frequency and severity of MECA non-compliance is average to high and solving disputes considered difficult, but it is discipline specific. There are particular problems with ED and

surgical roster compliance where it feels like a waste of time trying to get the DHB to comply with the MECA. Whilst the surgical department is extremely unsatisfactory, on the good side the medical roster co-ordination is regarded as fantastic.

The daily workload is manageable but again this is very dependant on the run you're doing, and there is good support in most runs. The rosters allow for a life outside of work, and whilst ED is tricky it's not impossible.



"Teaching opportunities are very dependant on run. ED ironically scores well (thanks to our FACEMs for this) whereas paediatrics not so much. Unfortunately collegiality rates average again reflecting the variation experience between runs."

The recently renovated kitchen and lounge is good, especially the cellphones provided however a lack of natural light isn't ideal. The napping facilities are in the average to above average range but there is a lack of beds and bedding (ya what?). The cafeteria is generally above average with a good food selection. There was a lot of concern about possible cutting back of selections but thanks to the RDA that proposal got revised!

Car parking facilities are well below average with waitlists to get a park ... long ... and parking itself ... expensive. If you park your car in the surrounding suburbs, which is something that many have to do, poor lighting becomes a security concern.

The general consensus is that Wellington is a nice place to live with plenty to do - a vibrant cultural and art scene, great coffee, even better beer and a good night life. However, the cost of living is a big issue with rentals scarce and expensive. At Wellington DHB you can feel like a 'number' rather than a person and being treated poorly by management is not uncommon. Cost cutting is a big problem at the hospital and there is a fear of speaking out.

Acute demand on long days is fairly average and again depends on the run: this is a busy hospital which provides good learning experiences most of the time, but in winter it can become overwhelming.

As for SMO support, again teaching opportunities are very dependant on run. ED ironically scores well (thanks to our FACEMs for this) whereas paediatrics not so much. Unfortunately collegiality rates "average" again reflecting the variation experienced between runs.

Nelson Marlborough

Nelson & Wairau Hospital



"Overall, Nelson is above average in its willingness to communicate and comply with the MECA. The workload is reasonable by any standard and with exceptionally good schedule 10 compliance"

Nelson Hospital

Situated in the heart of Tasman Bay, Nelson boasts many vineyards and caving exploration sites; and its proximity to the beautiful Abel Tasman National Park make it a good option for those with an affinity towards the outdoors.

The RMO unit is in good shape and most are generally happy with their efforts. In terms of MECA compliance, issues can sometimes be difficult to address, especially regarding payroll responsiveness to enquiries.

Overall, Nelson is above average in its willingness to communicate and comply with the MECA. The workload is reasonable by any standard and with exceptionally good schedule 10 compliance that gives employees adequate time for life outside of work. In winter however, demand for medical services increases greatly, occasionally to the point of being unmanageable. Industrial support from the SMO' is bleak however there are some great educational opportunities.

The RMO lounge and kitchen is decidedly average. There are enough phone lines but could definitely do with more regular cleaning. The sleeping and resting quarters are somewhat of a relic, in serious need of an update.

The cafeteria is of a high standard, good quality as well as a great selection for people of all dietary requirements. There is ample car parking in safe areas.

For those who enjoy the outdoors, Nelson offers mountain biking trails, tramping tracks, parks, beaches, lakes, ski slopes and vineyards.

From transport, to food to entertainment

Nelson's cost of living sits at the national average across the board making it an overall good option.

Wairau Hospital

Wairau is a friendly place to work with good support structures in place for those who need it. The helpfulness and accommodating nature of Wairau's RMO unit is great and they almost always allow leave requests. The RMO lounge and kitchen are both above average in quality, with good proximity to the wards and adequate phone lines. The sleeping arrangements are up to scratch but could really do with at least one more bed.

By contrast, the cafeteria at Wairau is not up to scratch, in dire need of more vegetables and a wider selection. There are good parking facilities with adequate security.

The cost of living for Wairau is about average and there are many things to do if you like outdoor activities, however not much of a night life to speak of.

Wairau is fairly good with MECA compliance, with great ease of communication making dispute resolution an easy process. The workload requirements are slightly above the average which creates a learning environment for first years. Wairau rosters are up to scratch with schedule 10 compliance, which enables life outside of work. There are exceptional educational opportunities provided by SMOs and above average collegiality support systems.

Wairau isn't exactly known for city living, however, it boasts numerous vineyards and breweries, and, like Nelson, the lifestyle is second to none for those who enjoy spending time outdoors.



Canterbury

Christchurch Hospital

Christchurch offers a lot both in terms of night life, and natural scenery and location.

The RMO unit is generally satisfactory but there remains still too much favouritism in the system and it's taking a while for things to change. There is good compliance with the MECA and issues are resolved quickly and, for the most part, easily. The current rosters are satisfactory and Schedule 10 is adhered to allowing for a life outside of work. However there are rosters with 2 long shifts (> 10 hours) in a row which is extremely draining.

The daily workload is manageable but

also dependent on the run you are doing. Acute demand on long days is OK but this again depends on the run. While the workload is manageable for the most part, certain times of the year such as winter do cause issues. There is good support for first year House Officers however overall SMO support is average and SMO workplace politics have them feeling unsatisfied (the SMOs not the RMOs).

Both the lounge and kitchen facilities are poor albeit with variation in facilities between the various hospital sites.

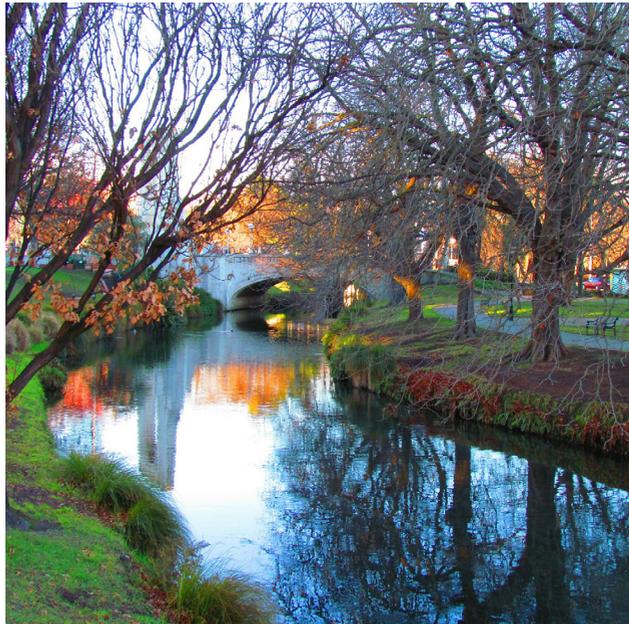


In Christchurch Hospital there is in particular a lack of phones and natural light and the napping facilities are lacking as well. There is inadequate privacy or bedding and having lazy boys in place of actual beds is unsatisfactory.

The food selection and quality in the cafeteria is good but there is concern about a recent reduction in options. And if you haven't already heard, be warned the car parking facilities are awful. It is almost impossible to find parking, especially if you're working long shifts. Many catch public transport or bike to work to avoid having to find a park.

Overall Christchurch is a good place to live. The recent rebuild following the earthquakes has been impressive and the council puts on a number of free events. The cost of living is considered affordable by most. Some feel that there is a lack of leadership in some areas of the DHB and that it is less personal than smaller hospitals, but generally things are "OK" at Canterbury DHB.

"If you haven't already heard, be warned the car parking facilities are awful. It is almost impossible to find parking, especially if you're working long shifts. Many catch public transport or bike to work to avoid having to find a park."





South Canterbury

Timaru Hospital

Timaru, an incredibly quiet, quaint little town on the east coast of the South Island, is a great place to gain confidence in your role and valuable working experience.

The management team is very separated from the day to day going-on's of the hospital. The RMO unit is good in almost all aspects, however it could do with a few more staff members. The MECA compliance has been good, and the RMO unit for the most part can be relied upon to sort out most issues. Rostering at Timaru hospital allows for a life outside of work and is up to scratch with schedule 10 compliance.

There is an above average workload and responsibilities for first years, and remember.... there are no registrars. SMOs present a range of personalities as you would expect, rating highly on the collegiality stakes and whilst some SMOs are approachable, others not so much. Formal learning opportunities are not so flash.

The lounge and kitchen areas have been recently improved and are in a good central location within the hospital but internet access in these facilities does seem to be an issue. By contrast the sleeping and resting arrangements are extremely poor. There is only one bed with little to no privacy.

The cafeteria boasts good staff who go out of their way to cater to dietary requirements. The food selection could be better but overall the food is tasty and of a decent quality. There is very accessible parking which is close to the hospital and with plenty of spaces and the carpark security is good.

The cost of living in Timaru is average, with not very much going on in the town. However the people are friendly, the ocean views are gorgeous and Timaru is in close proximity to central locations like Christchurch. The public transport could use some improving and there have been issues raised around the quality of rental housing.

Southern

Dunedin & Invercargill Hospitals



Dunedin Hospital

Dunedin is an often-under-rated city on the east coast of the South Island. The Hospital and University bring more services, opportunities, entertainment and culture than would be expected in cities of a similar size. There are plenty of restaurants, bars and cafes to explore. Paired with the proximity of the vineyards, mountains and ski fields of Central Otago, the beaches of the Otago Peninsula and the numerous surf point/beach breaks surrounding the city make it an excellent jumping off point for outdoor activities.

Dunedin Hospital is a tertiary level hospital of 400 beds located in central Dunedin. It services the City of Dunedin, the wider Otago Region and will receive some referrals from Southland.

Despite the selling points of Dunedin City, there is a general dissatisfaction with DHB management and the RMO unit.

The feeling is that while they are outwardly nice people, achieving change and

MECA compliance is a slow and arduous process. Leave requests must be made far in advance and communication around these is often lacking. The RMO office has had to be reminded not to send stock "decline the leave" emails.

MECA compliance issues will not be spontaneously resolved and require RDA supported RMO input – engagement from management can be difficult to achieve.

The DHB does however support a number of initiatives to allow RMOs to try to achieve change and deal with the communication difficulties which have become apparent in some specialties. These are namely the RMO committee, the Speak Up initiative and a Mentorship programme. The effectiveness of these will hopefully be seen in time.

If you're after city living without the traffic or high cost of living, Dunedin might be the place for you. It is an affordable place to live, the houses are of reasonable quality and the city is home to many cool bars and cafes. It is also in good proximity to Central Otago for weekends away.



"A recent overhaul of the house officer teaching program has significantly improved the once-a-week protected teaching time scheme. There is also a brand new education centre which hosts the Sims suite and has a lot of great teaching sessions throughout the year."



Invercargill Hospital

While Invercargill is an isolated city, it is in great proximity to some hotspots like Stewart Island, Queenstown and central Otago; and has unmatched access to outdoor activities... People can spend years in this area and never get through all the sightseeing, skiing and tramping.

The RMO unit is above average. Southland is very good with its MECA compliance, and when a problem does surface the RMO unit is quick to act. Leave is generally granted. The daily workload in the medical department is generally reasonable. However, surgical runs can vary. The rosters in Southland are good overall. But we have been experiencing some short staffing issues due to difficulty recruiting in the region. The work volume on a long day varies a lot as a consequence of being a smaller hospital. Generally, it is very manageable. The biggest advantage is that as a smaller hospital you will be more involved with deteriorating patients, which is excellent experience.

There is an array of SMO support at Southland hospital with frequent learning opportunities on the medical roster, and some form of teaching most days. By contrast this is limited on the surgical services (general surgery and orthopaedics). A recent overhaul of the house officer teaching program has significantly improved the once-a-week protected teaching time scheme. There is also a brand new education centre which hosts the Sims suite and has a lot of great teaching sessions throughout the year.

The RMO Lounge and kitchen areas are lacking in comfort and natural light. They do, however, have good access to phone lines. The sleeping arrangements are poor with beds currently being limited to lounge couches. These couches are in desperate need of a clean. Members are currently working on getting the RMO unit to fund a couple of foam mattresses to be available for night shifts. The cafeteria has recently been redesigned, it is setup in a very comfortable and appealing way. The staff are super friendly and provide a good range of quality food options. The limitation of this being for vegan and dairy free dietary requirements, for which there are not many options. There is a vast amount of on-site carparking. At most you'll have to walk about two minutes to the hospital. The carparking is also free which is one of the great perks of Southland Hospital. The cost of living in Invercargill is extremely low.

Being a small hospital there is really good camaraderie amongst the RMOs at and everyone works together to get through the workload and home on time.

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