



Dr Joeph Ipsen

Testimony for Applied Surgical Pathway in Rural Environments (ASPIRE Training Pathway)

To anyone thinking of a career or even a short stint at a WACHS site I couldn't recommend it more!

I have spent my internship and first two Resident Medical Officer years in Albany and Bunbury which was the perfect blend of work, lifestyle, and experience. Every day is a 10-minute drive to work where you are a valued member of the team. You get to see an extreme variety of medical conditions and almost all of these can be managed locally by our fantastic emergency and inpatient teams. These are specialist-based practitioners who provide gold standard treatment, but you will never call our surgeons only to find out they only operate on the lower left leg. They give a true meaning to the term 'general surgeon'. The hospital framework closely links junior doctors to consultants and because of this the exposure and learning opportunities are fantastic. You will also get plenty of supported procedural practice in regional sites.

On your weekends off there is so much to enjoy in the great southern or southwest regions for any hobbies. I particularly enjoy camping, getting out to four-wheel drive locations and going to the beach with our dogs. When you only have to drive 15-60 minutes to get to those special places it makes those journeys, that were previously only possible on long weekends your normal weekend. The sense of community in small sites is also excellent and, in both places, I have worked there has been a hospital network that has made networking and meeting people easy.

In general access to leave and Professional Development Leave (PDL) has been very good, although there have been some challenges during the COVID outbreak. As a rule of thumb, the heads of department have gone out of their way to enable PDL and leave when possible.

I was fortunate to be accepted for the WACHS applied surgical placement in regional environments (ASPIRE) program starting in 2022 which I would highly recommend. This program is intended to streamline application for general surgical SET training through additional funding for PDL; access to terms required; maximisation of rural points and education opportunities. I am very excited to continue my career progression with the intent to return to a regional centre as a general surgeon sometime in the future.

If you would like to ask any specifics about working in [WACHS](#), please send me an email on joseph.ipsen@health.wa.gov.au or if you happen to be in the South West, if I'm not at work I'm generally at Dalyellup beach by 5.30pm.

