

## **A Life Less Ordinary: Experience Working in the Top End**

### ***Anaesthesia Provisional Fellow, Royal Darwin Hospital***



Do you want an ordinary, uneventful job doing an easy, repetitive list every week? Do you enjoy freezing cold winters and endless days of drizzly rain? Do you look forward to your long commute to work in congested traffic?

If so, then Darwin is not the place for you!

Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH) Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine is seeking enthusiastic PFYs in Anaesthesia, commencing in August 2020, or Feb 2021 for 6-12 months. We encourage Anaesthetists to apply whom thrive on challenging medicine, cultural diversity and feeling like they've really made a difference in patients' lives. Our dynamic, friendly department is comprised of a group of easy-going but highly motivated Anaesthetists. We are proud of our collegial, supportive culture and strive to provide a healthy work-life balance. The workload is often very busy, frequently unpredictable and sometimes a little chaotic; but always rewarding.

Royal Darwin Hospital is one of the most geographically isolated tertiary hospitals in Australia (and possibly the world). It is a 370 bed hospital servicing a population of over 180,000 people, covering a massive catchment area of over one million square kilometres (larger than New South Wales, Texas or France – take your pick). Around 14,000 operations are performed per annum between Royal Darwin Hospital and day surgery at the recently opened satellite campus at Palmerston Regional Hospital. Case-mix includes most surgical specialties in adults and paediatrics including neurosurgery, upper gastrointestinal surgery, head and neck surgery and vascular surgery. Approximately 15% of the caseload is paediatric and there are approximately 2200 obstetric deliveries with a significant proportion of high risk cases.

A substantial proportion of cases are for emergency surgery including a high trauma burden. RDH is the home of the National Trauma and Critical Care Response Centre and has been heavily involved in several mass casualty disasters including the Bali bombings, Ashmore Reef and East Timor crises as well as international deployment after natural disasters in Philippines, Vanuatu, Fiji and Solomon Islands.

Patients in the NT face extraordinary challenges including a high burden of chronic disease, high levels of social disadvantage and extreme geographic isolation. Half of the NT population live in remote or very remote locations, mostly in small communities or outstations. The NT is one of the most linguistically diverse areas in the world with over 100 Aboriginal languages and dialects spoken. Around 27% of the NT population are Aboriginal but make up approximately 50% of hospital inpatients.

The Royal Darwin Hospital Anaesthetic Department runs an Acute Pain Service and is developing a Perioperative Medicine service including early assessment and optimisation of high-risk patients. There is optional involvement in the Hyperbaric Medicine Unit and in Anaesthesia Outreach visits to regional hospitals in Gove and Katherine. Out of theatre anaesthesia services are provided for Radiology diagnostic and interventional procedures, Cardiac Electrophysiological ablation procedures including complex 3D mapping and Electroconvulsive Therapy. Clinical support services include an 18 bed ICU, Level 3 NICU, Radiotherapy centre on-campus, MRI, CT and PET scanning.

Provisional Fellows will find working at Top End Health Service a rewarding experience, with a chance to develop skills and knowledge to transition to Specialist practice. PFYs will run many lists independently, as well as being involved in the 1<sup>st</sup> On-call roster (with Consultant supervision). Fellows are involved in teaching more junior trainees, and we encourage involvement in quality assurance projects or research. There are multiple opportunities in this area with a growing perioperative medicine service, unique opportunities in remote medicine and surgery, trauma and high-risk obstetrics. There are pre-determined PFY positions approved by ANZCA in the areas of Simulation/Education, and Perioperative Medicine, as well as multiple Generalist positions.

Darwin has a very attractive lifestyle – most staff enjoy a 10 minute bike commute to work along the foreshore; but for those who still prefer cars, traffic congestion is almost non-existent. The relaxed tropical life is great for young families, couples and singles alike. There is a

childcare centre on-campus of the hospital as well as several in surrounding area. The city has excellent public and private schools at both primary and secondary levels. Darwin is the tourism gateway to some of Australia's largest and most spectacular National Parks and is on the doorstep to Asia with short flights to Bali, Dili, and Singapore (when border restrictions ease!).

Relocation assistance will be provided and short-term subsidised hospital accommodation is available on-campus. Leave provisions are generous with 6 weeks recreation leave and 10 days Study Leave per annum, as well as the many additional Public Holidays during the beautiful Dry Season in the NT.

Enquiries can be made to: Dr Sandy Smirk, Specialist Anaesthetist, Supervisor of Training (SoT) [Sandy.Smirk@nt.gov.au](mailto:Sandy.Smirk@nt.gov.au)

Applications are open for positions commencing August 2020 via the following website closing 22/06/2020: <https://jobs.nt.gov.au/Home/JobDetails?rtfId=188849>

Applications are open for positions commencing February 2021 via the following website closing 07/07/2020: <https://jobs.nt.gov.au/Home/JobDetails?rtfId=188651>

