

Rural Generalist Pathway

Name	Emily Vagg
Post Graduate Year	4
Position Title	Senior Medical Officer (Provisional Fellow)
Location	Weipa
Advanced Skill	Anaesthetics



I was born in Mt Isa and up until this year, I had called Townsville home. I applied for medical school in 2003 because I wanted to be a rural doctor. I knew then that I did not want to be a specialist nor did I want to be an urban GP who sat in an office seeing colds and flus and writing prescriptions. I wanted to be the old-school one, that worked hard and did a bit of everything; I wanted to relocate fractures, perform a spinal anaesthetic for a caesar and practice medicine out of the back of a 4WD in outreach communities.

I was quick to sign up for the Rural Generalist Pathway after graduating in 2009 and spent the first three years working at the Townsville Hospital. During this time I completed my prevocational training, which included a country relieving rotation, six weeks of which was at the Weipa Hospital. This was the start of my love affair with Cape York. I finished my AST in anaesthetics in 2012 and despite many people encouraging me to take a position that offered regular anaesthetic practice, I decided that I wanted Weipa; red dirt, blue skies, excellent fishing and shooting prospects and a young community that would be perfect for starting a family.

For the last five months, I have been living the dream; I am currently working as a senior medical officer in Weipa. I am one of four doctors and enjoy a broad scope of practice that encompasses general practice, emergency medicine, aged care, chronic disease and indigenous health. I primarily work at the Weipa hospital and spend some time at the local indigenous outreach clinics which are located at Napranum and Mapoon. I practice anaesthetics every two-three months through a visiting surgical service that includes dental, endoscopy, ophthalmology and ENT lists. The hospital is new and the people I work with are passionate about the health service that we deliver. On my days off I enjoy camping, fishing and playing golf.

I hope to continue working in Weipa and plan to complete my rural generalist training in the next three years.

Broad scope of practice, a challenging work environment, and a sense of community service were the things that drew me to a career in rural and remote medicine