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Greymouth is a town on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island, with a population of approximately 13,300. Grey Hospital is a 100 bed hospital that provides services such as General Medicine, General Surgery, Orthopaedics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Psychiatry, Paediatrics, Geriatrics and Anaesthetics. During the two weeks at Grey I was able to attend clinics such as Orthopaedics, Cardiology, General Medicine, Endocrinology and Paediatrics. I spent time on the Medical ward and was able to assist the House Surgeons in many tasks and gain great experience seeing both common and rare conditions.

Although Grey hospital is of comparable size to Central Gippsland Health Service, it services a much larger geographic area with a diverse patient demographic. The exchange program enabled me to appreciate the unique challenges that can affect health care, both from the perspective of comparing the differences in procedures and policies from an international viewpoint, as well as from a rural/metropolitan stance. Although the hospital has a few resident Consultants, the majority of specialist health care is provided by Liaison Consultants who travel from Christchurch on a regular basis. Greymouth is a rural town that can be quite isolated when access roads to Christchurch are closed due to snow (as they frequently can be during winter). This imposes some unique challenges regarding transporting critically ill patients to a tertiary care hospital. It was not uncommon for patients to be flown in one of the helicopters or in the fixed wing aircraft, even for semi-urgent investigations such as an MRI.

While on exchange I was fortunate enough to experience some of New Zealand's breath taking sights. From the Canterbury Snow Fields to the spectacular train ride across the coast-traversing plains, high-country, alpine ranges and rain forests- to the Glaciers and beaches of the West Coast. The experience provided a fantastic and unforgettable learning experience that has greatly added to my professional development and interest in both global and rural health.

Cassie