

## Work life balance

Because of under-staffing in regional Australia, regional services may end up making heavy demands on their staff/trainees. Things like longer work hours and more frequent on-call duty are to be expected, but it is nonetheless necessary to be aware of your rights as an employee/trainee and to ensure that the demands of your job do not become onerous.

In a regional hospital, you should pay special attention to:

- Work hours
- On-call arrangements
- Travel and accommodation arrangements
- Safety precautions
- Supervision

If you feel your job/placement requirements are not reasonable, it is imperative that you discuss this with your supervisor or Director of Training. If not properly managed, demanding work conditions can lead to fatigue, which in turn creates health risks. The health and safety of your patients depends on your own health, so you are doing them a better service by looking after yourself.

Although it is easy to become isolated in a remote location, you should make an effort to sustain support networks.

1. Your personal support networks (e.g. family and friends) are valuable. It is important to maintain contacts, as well as involving yourself in social and recreational activities to form new ones.
2. Peers are also an important source of support. This can range from a colleague who you discuss professional issues with, to mentor-style relationships.
3. Formal support networks are also available. However, in rural areas they may be harder to find. Case discussion groups and journal clubs for instance, may operate via email or videoconferencing.