

Welcome from the Clinical Director

DR HELEN WEIR

Clinical Director Anaesthesia



"Welcome to Southland Hospital - a modern, 181-bed hospital situated in Invercargill, New Zealand.

We are currently seeking to appoint two Anaesthetists with a broad range of ability to work in our secondary-level provincial hospital. In addition to a generalist background, Anaesthetists with an interest in intensive care, obstetrics or chronic pain, also have the opportunity to develop these interests within our hospital.

Southland Hospital is a fantastic new facility with an excellent layout and a pleasant working environment. The hospital is the ideal size in that you see a wide variety of cases and have access to an impressive range of diagnostics, yet it is small enough that you can still get to know the staff.

As a team, we are friendly and approachable. Many of our staff have personal interests in multi-sport activities and the outdoors, including the Speights Coast to Coast, cycling, skiing and tramping around the world.

Servicing a population of 108,000, the Anaesthesia team sees a broad range of elective and acute work that is clinically challenging, but the workload is manageable and well organised.

Our department has a supportive team environment, where we are able to do our job well and where we can develop our interest areas.

Southland offers superb opportunities for a lifestyle change with skiing, tramping (hiking), fishing, hunting, and stunning natural, unspoilt scenery right on your doorstep. Families are able to settle quickly into this community with the support of excellent schools and the wider hospital staff taking care to welcome and involve you in the community. Invercargill City is an easy place to live and our close proximity (2hours) to holiday destinations such as Queenstown, Stewart Island, and Fiordland make it easy to get away for a break without the prospect of a long trip in the car.

This is a friendly, welcoming hospital with good collegiality amongst departments. If you are an Anaesthetist keen on the outdoors and seeking a change in lifestyle and working environment,, then this opportunity is for you. We look forward to talking to you further about the professional and personal opportunities that Southland Hospital can offer you."



Southland Hospital – opened October 2004 – situated in Invercargill City, New Zealand.

Contact us with your questions

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Southland Hospital Anaesthetics

Southland Hospital is a brand new 181-bed secondary level base hospital, which opened in November 2004, in Invercargill City, New Zealand - servicing a population of 107,000. The hospital includes state-of-the-art technology with PACS digital radiology, 1.5T MRI, 16-slice CT and i.PM electronic patient administration system .

The Anaesthetic department consists of 10 Anaesthetists, supported by 5 registrars, providing services in the following areas:

- General Surgery
- Orthopaedics (including some Paediatric work)
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Ear Nose and Throat
- Urology
- Dental
- Ophthalmology
- Radiology (MRI, predominantly children)
- Intensive Care Unit
- Paediatric General Surgery (visiting tertiary specialist)

As a provincial, secondary-level hospital, the Anaesthetists see a wide range of work, dealing with an average 5,500 cases per annum. Of interest there are approximately 430 obstetric cases and 800 paediatric cases (under 15 yrs) per annum.

Whilst tertiary cases are transferred to Dunedin, Christchurch (spinal) or Auckland (Starship children's hospital), Southland Hospital Anaesthetists are involved in the management of trauma patients until transfer can occur.



Southland Hospital services a large geographical area, with trauma cases traveling some distance to the base hospital. Retrievals are undertaken by ambulance and rescue helicopter services.

The department runs with a Registrar on call each night and an Anaesthetist works on call 1 night per week and one weekend every 5 or 6 weekends. During weekends, the on call Anaesthetist picks up Intensive Care, Emergency Department and the obstetric epidural service (for the level 2 obstetrics unit). After hours cover is also responsible for the Intensive Care Unit, as we do not have a 24-hour Intensivist service. Care for these patients is shared between the admitting surgeon or physician and the Anaesthetist. Rosters are well organised and Anaesthetists are not rostered for any duties after night duty.

Southland Hospital's theatre suite offers four spacious, modern and well equipped theatres and an upgrade of anaesthetic machines is due to take place in early 2008. A modern endoscopy and colonoscopy suite is co-located within the theatres suite.



The department organises lists in a way that helps to build up regular surgeon and Anaesthetist teams, together with the nursing and Anaesthetic technician staff. Every effort is made to accommodate people's requests for leave and their personal interests. Pre-admission clinics are run by the Anaesthetists, enabling them to have a consultation with each of their patients during the weekly clinic. As many patient cases are complex, these pre-admission clinics have proven to be very effective in managing patients.

Opportunity exists to develop a chronic pain service as well as supporting the sole Intensivist in the Intensive Care Unit. To further strengthen the department, there are plans to introduce an antenatal obstetrics anaesthesia clinic; a chronic pain service; and a joint forum with the Emergency Department to further facilitate this relationship and linkage.

Intensive Care Unit

The Intensive Care Unit has 6 beds and is a combined High Dependency/Critical Care/Intensive Care facility with state of the art monitoring for ventilators. Invasive monitoring, including cardiac output monitoring is provided. The unit does not provide renal replacement therapy, nor does it provide care for neurosurgical patients or head injuries, which are instead transferred to Dunedin Hospital. There is close liaison with the Dunedin Intensive Care Unit for support.

The sole Intensivist, looks after high dependency and ventilator patients and provides the day to day management of the unit's patients, who are admitted under the care of the physician or surgeon. Unlike larger hospitals, care is jointly provided by the Physician/Surgeon and the Intensivist, with the Physician/Surgeon having overall responsibility of care. Supporting the Intensivist and the admitting Physicians/Surgeons, are a team of highly skilled and very dedicated nursing staff who execute decisions and look after the patients. The wider Anaesthesia team provides cover for the Intensivist during weekends.

National Representation

Nationally, the department has a high profile with representation on key bodies, including:

- **Joe Sheriff** is on the New Zealand National Committee of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA)
- **Claudia Schneider** is on the Executive Committee of the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (NZSA) and is also a Fellow of the Joint Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)



Accredited Training Programme

Southland Hospital is a teaching hospital and the Anaesthesia department provides teaching for 5 Registrar positions – all of which are recognised by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists.

Of these Registrar postings, 3 are part of the South Island training rotation that sees placements rotating through Southland Hospital, Christchurch Hospital and Dunedin Hospital.

The remaining 2 Registrar positions are filled directly by Southland Hospital and are suitable for candidates keen to gain experience in this specialty or who wish to gain an introduction to anaesthesia. Registrars gain a very good grounding of the specialty, with the opportunity to touch on nearly all sub specialties whilst working at Southland Hospital. Teaching also takes place in support of the Anaesthetic Technicians.

Ongoing Education

The department has a monthly Morbidity meeting, providing a very good departmental review. To facilitate these sessions, the department logs all details of anaesthesia cases onto a computer programme with comments to highlight cases of complexity or interest. These are then reviewed at the monthly meeting and discussed to reinforce or evolve processes and techniques. Grand rounds take place each Friday and the Registrars are encouraged to be involved and to present during these sessions. Journal clubs are also held. The department gets good support for attendance at courses and conferences, including worldwide conferences.

All staff have 24-hour access to a supportive on-site health science library, which has a range of on-line journals and resources and a highly experienced health science librarian who is very supportive.

Private Hospital Work

There is every opportunity for private work in Southland and the Southern Cross private hospital in Invercargill offers modern facilities for routine elective work.

What Our Anaesthetists Are Saying

“It was very easy to fit into the department on arrival. I’ve had great peer support here – the staff have been very accommodating.”

“There is a variety of anaesthesia work here and covering ICU has also helped to keep my skills up.”

“I enjoy working here – it is flexible and challenging, without being arduous.

“Moving here my wife and children had very good support from the hospital – we were put up in a hospital owned house and provided with a vehicle on arrival .

“There is so much to explore in the region – the wildlife, the rural towns. tramping and skiing and Queenstown.”

“There is genuine team work in the hospital not a hierarchy – the surgeons are happy to listen to your suggestions and to work together to re-think a case.”

Southland Lifestyle



Southland offers a fantastic lifestyle with a low cost of living, excellent schools and a range of outdoors activities right on your doorstep and within 2 hours drive. Southland District Health Board's affordable staff holiday homes in Queenstown, Te Anau and Arrowtown make it easy to get away for weekends with family and friends to explore the region.



Invercargill City is a modern city with facilities including NZ's only indoor cycling velodrome; a modern sporting complex (netball, tennis, squash, gym etc); Rugby Park; the Splash Palace swimming centre. Beautiful Queens Park is ideal for running, cycling, walking or a round of golf. Oreti Beach is 10 minutes from the city and there are plenty of cafes, a movie theatre, restaurants, new cocktail bars, pubs and shopping to keep you entertained.

Excellent schools; free tertiary education at the Southern Institute of Technology; cheap house prices and short commute times in a friendly, safe community, makes Invercargill the place where you really can enjoy the good life.



Southland offers excellent road cycling, as well as the indoor cycling Velodrome. Mountain bike tracks are located around the city including Sandy Point, Bluff Hill and Forest Hill. Rowing and kayaking are available on flat water of the Oreti River, whilst white water rafting can be enjoyed at the Waiau River in western Southland.



Queenstown is just a two hour drive from Invercargill and is situated at the foot of the Remarkables Mountains where the majestic Lake Wakatipu sparkles. Snowboarders and skiers can access 3 ski fields from here, including Coronet Peak, the Remarkables, and Treble Cone over in Wanaka. Known as the adventure capital of New Zealand with its Bungy Jumping, snowboarding and white water rafting pursuits, Queenstown is also home to fantastic wineries, stunning scenery, and a vibrant resort town atmosphere, especially during tourist peak times. Staff holiday homes in Queenstown and Arrowtown make visiting easy. Dunedin is just over 2 hours drive away and Christchurch is a 1 hour flight from Invercargill.



Surfers can enjoy the waves along the natural beauty of the rugged coastline of Colac Bay; whilst trampers and nature lovers have easy access to scenic walking tracks - including those on Stewart Island, stunning Fiordland and the Catlins. Hunting is also popular with good access to duck shooting and deer stalking, whilst fly fishing enthusiasts are also well catered for.