

Tammy Shepherd

Physiotherapist, Cotham Private Hospital



Where do you work, what is your role and how long have you been there?

I have worked at Cotham Private Hospital for the past six years as a physiotherapist, and prior to that I worked at Knox Private Hospital.

You recently volunteered for Hohidiai in a remote area of Indonesia, are you able to explain what sort of work Hohidiai does?

I was recently privileged to travel to Halmahera, a remote island in Indonesia to volunteer for two weeks. Hohidiai is a place where a lack of resources is compensated by lots of love, hope and care.

Hohidiai provides a home for abandoned children, a school teaching English and Indonesian, a medical outpatient clinic, a small teaching hospital, and a long term rehabilitation unit for patients with HIV, tuberculosis and leprosy.

The medical clinic treats 8,000 patients each year and offers free general medical, optical and dental care. These patients are amongst the

poorest and many have been rejected by their communities, some of them travel up to 20 hours for treatment at the clinic.

What was your role with Hohidiai?

My role at Hohidiai was to empower the nurses with the knowledge of some basic skills including the concept of assessment, identifying problems, setting goals and reassessing. The nurses were all extremely eager to learn and patients diligently undertook the suggested exercise routines.

What was your favourite highlight from this trip?

The highlight of my trip was meeting Brillman, a father of seven who was burnt when one of his sons attempted to burn down their family home.

Brilman was sent to Hohidiai from another hospital for palliative care as he was not expected to survive with 77 per cent full and partial thickness burns.

Brilman not only survived but 18 months later, had almost completely healed by secondary intention. Despite the staff's best efforts, Brillman developed contractures in one knee and elbow and will now require surgery in a surgical hospital as there are no facilities available at Hohidiai.

It was inspirational to see Brillman enthusiastically take on the strengthening and functional exercise program that I prescribed him, doing so independently after only one session.

Brilman progressed from his previous wheelchair mobility to using a walking frame independently for the first time in 18 months on our last day. The joy in the ward was palpable and I am not sure who was more excited, Brillman, the nurses or me!

Would you travel overseas again to volunteer?

Later this month, I will be travelling to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the third time to teach local physiotherapists and treat patients. [PH](#)