

Clinical missionaries: Avondale students model the value of nursing

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A fifth annual visit by Avondale nurses to a hospital on Malaita in the Solomon Islands demonstrates to local nursing students the value of the profession.

A partnership between Atoifi Adventist Hospital and Avondale College of Higher Education saw nine final-year students from the Faculty of Nursing and Health return with lecturer Kerry Miller to the island, July 12-25, 2014.

The purpose of the trip: to serve as a clinical learning experience in a developing country and as an introduction to medical-focused mission.

The students served on all wards with those from the hospital's School of Nursing. They assisted with the care of a boy with burns to more than 80 per cent of his body, diagnosed and treated outpatients with machete injuries, malaria and ulcerated wounds from insect or snake bites and observed the birth of babies.

"We all have great memories we'll never forget," says Brittany Charters. "And most importantly, great friendships." Several of these formed around classmate Melissa Byrne's guitar. "I asked the children if they'd like to sing and they all screamed, 'Yes,' so I started playing 'Jesus Loves Me.' All the children came over and started singing. They were so beautiful."

Kerry describes the willingness of the students to build relationships with the staff, students and children on the hospital campus as "heartening." It may even be career defining.

"Many students in the Solomons choose nursing as one of the limited post-secondary avenues for education and may not see nursing as their primary occupational goal," she says. "By showing that the Avondale students have chosen nursing despite the plethora of alternatives available to them, the Atoifi students can gain a greater sense of the value of this kind of professional service. **TEACH**

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Avondale students react to Atoifi hospitality on a Vanuatu visit.