Contents

Contents .................................................................................................................. 1
Thanks for volunteering! ......................................................................................... 2
Our History ............................................................................................................ 2
Our Goals ............................................................................................................... 3
How we select patients ......................................................................................... 3
How we select volunteers ..................................................................................... 4
Fundraising and your Commitment ....................................................................... 5
Getting Ready to Travel ....................................................................................... 7
Getting Ready to Work .......................................................................................... 10
ADRA, Sydney Adventist Hospital and the Seventh-day Adventist Church .......... 12
We’re very social! .................................................................................................... 13
Volunteer Code of Conduct .................................................................................. 13
Child Protection .................................................................................................... 14
Important Policies that apply to you ..................................................................... 15
Post-Trip Evaluation .............................................................................................. 15
Thanks for volunteering!

Welcome to Open Heart International, and thank you for choosing to volunteer with us.

Open Heart International is a humanitarian agency who facilitates surgical best practice in disadvantaged communities so the help we provide last lifetimes. We work in some amazing places, with truly wonderful people.

This volunteer guide is intended to give you an understanding of our organisation, the work we do, and what to expect as a volunteer.

While we have written this guide with the most commonly asked questions in mind, there may be some additional questions you have. Please feel free to contact us at any time and we will ensure your questions are answered.

Best wishes,

Michael Were
General Manager
Open Heart International
michael.were@ohi.org.au

Our History

The Open Heart International story begins 1986 as a response to the overwhelming need for surgery for rheumatic heart disease in Tonga. The organisation was established by Mr Russell Lee, Mr Rudi Morgan and Dr John Wallace as volunteers, who all worked at Sydney Adventist Hospital at the time.

The original plan was to try and organise for a number of patients to be flown to Australia for surgery. When it proved too costly and challenging to organise space in Australian hospitals, it was decided to attempt to provide surgery in Tonga with a travelling team of medical specialists.

Today, nearly 30 years later, hundreds of volunteers
with extraordinary passion and commitment give freely of their time and expertise. Multiple surgical specialties are catered for, and Open Heart International provides hope to thousands living in developing countries. Those patients dream of the quality healthcare that we sometimes take for granted.

You can read more about our history, our projects and our management team on our website (www.ohi.org.au)

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to gift surgical best practice to the most disadvantaged communities on the planet.

We will implement projects that:

• Provide medical treatment for patients in developing countries who do not have access to such treatment owing to a lack of the necessary technical or financial means in their own country, irrespective of their nationality, race, or religion.
• Provide training for local medical, nursing, and allied health staff in the specialist fields associated with different diseases.
• Empower local health professionals and support staff in the countries we visit to deliver enhanced health care.
• Create awareness and support the development of prevention and rehabilitation services in developing countries.
• Facilitate and support Australian healthcare professionals to engage in the health care development processes in developing countries.

Each project we undertake has a specific plan that is customised to the needs of the country. These individual goals will be discussed with you in greater detail, including your role in achieving these goals, prior to your deployment to a particular country.

How we select patients

Patient selection is a complex decision-making process that involves Open Heart International and the local medical team in-country. The actual process varies from country to country.
This partnership ensures that the local and cultural issues are considered and also assists in the training and development of the local staff.

It is the sad reality that some needy patients will likely miss out on an opportunity for surgery as the need usually outweighs what we are capable of achieving.

It is impossible to list all the individual variables that go into this decision making, however generally speaking patient selection takes into account the following:

- The condition the patient is suffering and the complexity of repair.
- The age of the patient.
- The quality of life following their operation.
- The recovery time where resources may be stretched to capacity.
- The training opportunities for in-country medical and nursing staff.
- The limitations based on the hospital infrastructure and on the team. Not all cases that could be performed in Australia are attempted overseas.

This list is reviewed regularly by the team leadership and sometimes changes for reason outside of our control. Changes are communicated to everyone as quickly as possible.

**How we select volunteers**

You may be reading this Volunteer Guide because you have recently been selected for an upcoming team, or you may have just registered to be considered.

Our policy when selecting a team is to first select suitable team members from previous visits to the country. Those team members are invited to return and they have first priority to fill spaces.

Once they have advised their intentions, we know what vacancies exist. We then review our database to find interested volunteers with the right skills and experience.

We are always looking for the best possible staff for our teams, both in terms of clinical experience and also passion and flexibility towards working in the developing world.

The best way to improve your chances of being selected is to ensure your online profile on the OHI website is always current. Update your CV and other attachments regularly, as well as include all upcoming trips and positions that you would like to be considered for.
Fundraising and your Commitment

Overview

While each project’s budget is different, our income is usually derived from the following sources:

- Specific Project Grants
- In-kind Product Donations
- Donors – either from government, individuals, corporates, foundations or service clubs
- Volunteers’ commitments

Open Heart International’s direct project expenditure can be categorised into the following areas:

- Consumable Costs – the cost of purchasing various products that we bring with us, or purchase in-country
- Travel Costs – the cost of travel, accommodation, and meals for volunteers
- Insurance – travel insurance for our volunteers and equipment transportation
- Freight – the cost of sending equipment and supplies to the project country

In addition to specific project costs, Open Heart International has other on-going costs such as equipment servicing and upgrades, compliance and administrative overheads in managing the agency.

Donations made to Open Heart International are tax deductible through our parent organisation ADRA Australia. The most simple and efficient way to donate to Open Heart International is via our website (www.ohi.org.au). Receipts are issued instantaneously.

We also accept cheques, or cash at our office in Wahroonga during business hours.

Your Commitment

As part of volunteering, each person commits to a contribution towards the project they are participating in. This can either be by a personal donation, through fundraising, or a combination of both. The personal commitment required varies per project visit – it is currently between $1,600 and $3,000.

We are regularly asked by volunteers what their commitments go towards. The answer is that your contribution is used to partially fund the project costs listed above.

Open Heart International pays the major travel costs associated with your participation. You do not need to pay your travel costs in addition to a personal commitment. There is more information about travel arrangements later in the
Volunteer Guide.

You will be provided with the information about your commitment at the time of selection.

**Online Fundraising**

One of the most effective ways that you can fundraise your commitment is to consider online fundraising. Open Heart International has an online fundraising hub called GoFundraise. It can be found at [http://ohi.gofundraise.com.au](http://ohi.gofundraise.com.au).

GoFundraise is very quick and easy to get started. The best part is that you do not need to collect any money, receipts are automatically issued and funds remitted to OHI. We continue to be amazed by how quickly volunteers can raise significant funds. The key to success is all in self-promotion!

The OHI office team are happy to assist you in setting up your fundraising pages and getting you on your way. Feel free to call the office on (02) 9487 9295 if you need a hand.

**Alternate Fundraising**

If you are considering other fundraising activities, such as holding an event, on behalf of Open Heart International, it is incredibly important that you tell us first.

By law, any fundraising initiatives must be registered with us. We have additional documentation that you will need to complete, and we can provide you with some assistance or advice on your proposed event.

Our fundraising hub ([http://ohi.gofundraise.com.au/](http://ohi.gofundraise.com.au/)) has all the necessary information to get you started, or feel free to call our office.

**Fundraising Resources**

We have many brochures, videos and other resources available to assist you to fundraise. Please contact our office to organise a supply.
Getting Ready to Travel

Overview

Open Heart International coordinates all travel arrangements on your behalf including payment of these expenses. You are not required to pay for your travel expenses; you only need to make your personal commitment as explained earlier in this guide.

Paperwork

Once you have been selected on an upcoming team, there is some additional paperwork that you will need to complete. We will give you the relevant forms and information you need. The individual requirements may vary slightly based on the country you will travel to:

- **Criminal Check.** As part of our Child Protection policy, all volunteers must complete a criminal records check prior to their first deployment, and every three years thereafter. Open Heart International undertake the checks online. You do not need to visit a police station; all you need to do is complete the application that we provide you.
- **Volunteer Agreement.** You should make yourself familiar with the Volunteer Agreement. It is outlined on our website here: [https://ohi.org.au/volunteer-agreement.html](https://ohi.org.au/volunteer-agreement.html)
- **Visas.** The visa arrangements for each country vary. We will provide you with instructions and the appropriate documentation to complete once you have been selected. In some countries, this may mean you will need to send us your actual passport so we can have the visa stamped in your passport.
- **Medical Accreditation to practice.** The in-country accreditation arrangements for each country vary. We will provide you with instructions and appropriate documentation to complete once you have been selected.

Airfares

Organising the travel arrangements for teams of up to 50 people is an achievement in itself. We would ask for your support in providing us with specific information about your travel dates and preferences as soon as possible. Making changes once you have confirmed your travel dates usually incur fees.

If you would like to travel early or stay on after the visit for the purposes of personal travel we would be happy to assist by booking flights that suit you for this purpose.
You will receive a copy of the relevant ticketing information from us once we have finalised the bookings.

**Travel Insurance**

Open Heart International has a corporate travel insurance policy that covers all our volunteers. Coverage is provided irrespective of what individual policies you may already have in place.

Prior to departure you will be provided with the policy details and coverage summary. If you consider the coverage is inadequate, you may provide additional travel insurance at your own expense.

Adding on some extra travel? In most circumstances, we are able to extend our travel insurance to cover you, provided the extension is less than the length of your involvement in the project visit.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition, there is a risk that the insurer will not pay any claims related to the condition. Prior to departure, you should obtain a letter from your GP/Doctor outlining that you are fit to travel to the intended destination. This will help expedite a claim if anything were to happen.

Where an unforeseen event occurs prior to travel and you are no longer able to travel with the team, there may be cover in place depending on the reason you are unable to travel. In these unique circumstances, it is best to contact our office.

In the unfortunate situation where you need to make a claim, you’ll need to collate evidence such as photos of damage, police reports, airline reports, medical reports, receipts to prove ownership to submit to the insurance company, records of additional expenses. Usually such claims will be handled directly between you and the insurance company, however please contact the OHI office prior to your claim so we can help you with the correct paperwork.

**Accommodation**

The accommodation arrangements vary for each project visit. We will organise accommodation (within budget) that is clean, pleasant, modern and in a reasonably close proximity to the Hospital.

Accommodation is organised on a twin share (same sex) basis.

You will be advised of the actual accommodation details for your project visit prior to deployment.
Meals

The meal arrangements and how payment is facilitated varies in different ways depending on the individual project location, however Open Heart International covers the cost of the majority of your meals.

Central payment, meal credit in hotels, and Per Diem payments are used as different ways we organise meals for you. You will receive more accurate information about the arrangement for your specific project prior to deployment.

The usual arrangement is breakfast at the hotel, lunch at the Hospital, and an evening meal at a restaurant, the hotel, or similar. Alternate arrangements are organised for night shift staff.

There are normally a number of functions for Open Heart International hosted by various groups, and we greatly appreciate the traditional hospitality.

If for some reason (and where it is logistical feasible) you decide to make your own alternate plans for a meal, then you are responsible for those costs.

Ground Transportation

Open Heart International will organise ground transportation on arrival at the airport, and between hotel and hospital.

Security

The safety of our volunteers is of paramount importance to us. To help us manage the risks of travelling in challenging locations we have partnered with International SOS, and we constantly review travel warnings and advice that they provide as well as the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Most (not all) locations that we travel to are considered safe, although not immune from petty theft. Please use common sense with respect to your personal safety and your belongings, keeping them close to you at all times.

For countries with specific security issues such as Papua New Guinea, we will provide you additional security arrangements that you must follow for safety reasons. We will discuss these with you prior to deployment.

Health

Health care should be given on an individual basis, so we highly encourage all volunteers to visit your GP or travel doctor to gain personal health advice before you depart.

Depending on the country of travel, and any health issues or outbreaks, we encourage you to ensure that you discuss the following:
• All your childhood immunisations including Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Hepatitis A & B.
• Typhoid.
• Cholera.
• Malaria. There are a number of different medications available so consult your GP about which one is best for you.
• Yellow Fever (a compulsory vaccination for some African countries with proof required for re-entry back into Australia).

Our partnership with International SOS gives any of our volunteers the ability to access independent and up-to-date personalised health information. As soon as your travel is booked, you will received pre-advisory emails direct from International SOS with details on how you can access additional information.

This information can also be made available prior to your flight bookings by contacting office.

Additional information can be accessed on the Australian Government’s travel advice website, www.smarttraveller.gov.au.

The Zika Virus is a current cause of concern for travellers around the world. Some of the locations that Open Heart International is currently working are considered high risk and have wide spread transmission. For women who are pregnant or plan-to-be pregnant in the near future, Zika should be of concern. It should also be of concern for men planning on starting a family in the near future, as the virus can remain in the body for months.

For more information on Zika, please discuss with your doctor visit the Smart Traveller website, or discuss with International SOS. Feel free to contact our office also if you have concerns about a deployment in an area with Zika risks.

**Getting Ready to Work**

**Equipment and Supplies**

While every project visit is different, Open Heart International usually travels to countries with limited or no access to the type of surgery we are providing.

For many visits, specialised supplies and equipment are freighted prior to departure. You may be asked by your Project Coordinator to attend packing days in our Sydney warehouse.
Most of our capital equipment is ex-demo or has been donated from other hospitals during an upgrade. This means the equipment you will be using is likely one or two models older than what you are familiar.

You may find the brand or specific product we choose to use slightly differs from what you are using in your hospital. We are very grateful to the network of suppliers in Australia that provide us with stock free of charge, or at a considerably reduced price, for our work.

We ask that you be frugal and sensitive to the stock levels. By all means, use what is required to deliver the best possible patient care, but also be sensitive and aware that some supplies cannot be easily replenished when we are in another country!

Rostering and Hours of Work

Rosters and hours of work will be advised to you closer to departure, or even on arrival. Each project works slightly different depending on the project goals and the capabilities of the local team. In many project visits, we staff on a 24-hour basis, so night duty and on-call arrangements are often utilised.

Rostering takes into account a number of factors. At all times we strive to strike a good balance between:

- Experienced Open Heart International volunteers and new volunteers.
- Blended experience levels and areas of experience.
- Volunteers that are sharing rooms to minimise sleep disruption.
- An equal distribution of AM, PM and Night Shifts (where applicable).
- Equal opportunity to attend evening functions or events.

As you can imagine this is a challenge and almost impossible to get exactly correct, so we ask that you are flexible and understanding about the shifts you have been rostered to.

The roster may also need to change during the trip for unforeseen reasons, or to cope with any illness of volunteers.

Work Attire

Your work attire is dependent on which specific area you will work in.

For theatre staff, Open Heart International works on a “BYO” scrubs policy. Please bring at least two pairs of scrubs from your hospital.
For many post-operative environments, scrubs are also required. Specific information about your project will be provided prior to departure.

For the remaining volunteer staff not covered above, you are able to wear smart-casual wear is normally acceptable. Where conditions are warm, long shorts are acceptable.

Ladies, please avoid singlets and any tops or shorts that could be considered too revealing, particularly within the Hospital environment. In the main, most developing countries dress fairly conservatively and we like to respect their culture.

Closed in footwear is compulsory for all team members while working.

**Teamwork**

Being a volunteer with Open Heart International is a hectic, yet rewarding experience professionally and personally.

Managing your own personal fatigue is important, and equally important is that we also look after each other.

The climate can be hot at times and the environment can be challenging and stressful. We all work at our best when we all cultivate a culture of teamwork and working collaboratively together.

All we ask is that you be respectful of others, through your words and actions. By contributing to the camaraderie of the team, you’ll be ensuring a truly memorable trip for yourself and your fellow team members.

**ADRA, Sydney Adventist Hospital and the Seventh-day Adventist Church**

Many people ask how Open Heart International interacts with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Open Heart International is part of ADRA Australia, and we operate as a partnership between ADRA Australia and Sydney Adventist Hospital.

ADRA works within communities in more than 130 countries to bring long-term development programs and immediate emergency relief through an active network of global offices.

Sydney Adventist Hospital, affectionately known as ‘the San’ is an acute-care private hospital with capacity for over 550 licenced overnight beds. It is the largest private and the largest not-for-profit hospital in NSW.

Open Heart International carries a strong respect for the mission of the wider Adventist Church network that both ADRA and Sydney Adventist Hospital are part of. We aim to work collaboratively, if possible, with the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its various entities in the regions we work.

Open Heart International is not involved in proselytizing (proselytizing is the act of attempting to convert people to another opinion and particularly another religion). Care is provided irrespective of a patient’s religious beliefs.

Seventh-day Adventists share common beliefs with most other Christians, including belief in the Trinity and salvation through Jesus Christ. Seventh-day Adventists believe a holistic healthy lifestyle, in the abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and harmful drugs and the need to maintain a balance in work, leisure, rest, exercise, and diet. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes in providing facilities for treatment, healing and health.

As a volunteer of Open Heart International, there is no requirement nor do we expect that your religious beliefs mirror that of the Adventist Church. We ask that you respect the values of the organisation and have a simple understanding of the beliefs.

If you would like to understand more about the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, please visit www.adventist.org.au.

We’re very social!

Make sure you follow, like, tweet and share about Open Heart International on your favourite social media platform.

You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

We expect that our volunteers abide by our code of conduct:

- Provide the best possible care to patients at all times.
- Model Australian healthcare best practice and encourage local staff to continually improve their skills and knowledge.
- Acknowledge that the local staff in the countries we work with will watch and mimic our behaviour.
- Represent Open Heart International in a professional manner at all times – within the hospital environment as well as in the country of travel.
- Be respectful of local culture as well as local healthcare processes and procedures.
• Respect and abide by the decisions made by Project Coordinators and Team Leaders.
• Be on time, attend team meetings, and play an active role in the team. Avoid activities and actions that could disrupt, interfere, or negatively impact on other volunteers.
• Maintain a flexible approach and a sense of humour to adapt to the challenges associated with working in developing countries.
• Strive to create a collaborative and supportive working environment at all times.
• Appropriately manage and minimise your own individual fatigue. Working conditions can be stressful, so proper sleep and rest is paramount for you to be at your best.
• Enjoy the camaraderie and opportunity to network with like-minded professionals from around Australia.
• Be an advocate of the work of Open Heart International in your local community.
• Have a simple understanding and respect for the Christian ethos and values of ADRA.
• Comply with all policies as outlined in the Open Heart International Volunteer Agreement.

Child Protection

Open Heart International takes child protection seriously and has a zero tolerance of child abuse. Working in developing countries has its challenges; however as an organisation we are committed to taking all possible steps to ensure the protection of children against abuse.

As a volunteer it is important that you understand our Child Protection Policy as it applies to you. The full policy can be found here: https://ohi.org.au/child-protection-policy.html

All personnel with Open Heart International agree to abide by the Policy and that they will:

• Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
• Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
• Not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child
including the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences against Children) Act 2010 (Cth) and the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth), the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws;

- Wherever possible, ensure another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- Not invite unaccompanied children into their home, hotel, or a remote or isolated area unless they are at immediate risk or injury or in physical danger;
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children;
- Not use any computer, mobile phones, video or camera inappropriately and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium;
- Refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding their own children);
- Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

**Important Policies that apply to you**

As part of our risk management protection policies, there are a number of additional policies that apply to you as a volunteer that you need to be aware of and abide by:

- **Photographic and Video Image Policy.** This policy explains guidelines and expectations about taking photos for personal keepsake: https://ohi.org.au/photographic-and-video-images-policy.html
- **Social Media Policy.** This policy outlines the expectations of all Volunteers who interact and post about Open Heart International on social media platforms: https://ohi.org.au/social-media-policy.html

**Post-Trip Evaluation**

Shortly after returning home, you will receive an email and an invitation to complete an online post-trip evaluation on your experiences.

We are always interested in your thoughts and experience and your ideas on how we can improve the effectiveness of our projects.
We would really appreciate your assistance in completing the survey, which takes less than ten minutes.