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Surfing helps Brittani Nicholl to forget illness

Crohn's disease in her sights

By Troy Kippen

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A TWEED surfer is part of a national campaign to increase awareness of a disease affecting 61,000 Australians.

Surfer and crohn's disease sufferer Brittani Nicholl, 20, is the face of a national advertising campaign for Crohn's and Colitis Australia aimed at increasing awareness about the disease.

Brittani made a name for herself as a surfer but took time out from surfing to make the trip to Melbourne to film the advertisement.

"It did interrupt the surfing," Ms Nicholl said.

"I usually go out on the water every afternoon after work," she said.

Ms Nicholl said the campaign was important to help support the 61,000 sufferers of the disease by increasing community awareness.

"It's a type of inflammatory bowel disease and it can affect from the mouth to the anus, but it usually affects the colon," she said.

"The body can't tell the difference between foreign materials and the normal body tissue.

"It's basically an overactive immune response and can cause inflammation, fever as well as diarrhoea and constipation."

Brittani was diagnosed with the disease when she was seven-years-old. "I started surfing at the age of 11, but I got real sick," Ms Nicholl said.

"I was determined to get back in the water and give it another go," she said.

"When I get in the water I forget about everything else, about the illness."

The community service advertisement will appear on commercial television stations throughout National Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month in May.

Brittani Nicholl takes her surfboard down to the beach to help her deal with crohn's disease. Brittani is the face of a national TV campaign during National Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month in May.
Photo: John Gass twe020511brit2

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"... in the water I forget about everything else ..."

