

*Medical team in Manila*

# Surgery restores hope for children

THE smile of a grateful mother is the reward Dr James Gaffield gets for performing life-changing surgeries in the Philippines.

Dr Gaffield, a Bundaberg-based plastic surgeon, is preparing to make his second trip to Manila where he will join a medical team that has donated its time to address health issues among the impoverished people.

Dr Gaffield's specialty is the treatment of cleft palate and cleft lip birth defects.

"The resources at their disposal in the Philippines are grossly inadequate to meet the needs... what we do makes an enormous difference," Dr Gaffield said.

"It is not so much confronting

to me, but disappointing that a person can have their life so negatively impacted for the sake of what can be a one-hour operation.

"There are children there who have been socially isolated all their life."

The medical team drawn from around the world works under the banner of Operation Restore Hope and it will be the second time Dr Gaffield has been involved after a similar one-week visit in 2003.

"The results I see are very happy mothers. This does change the lives of their children," Dr Gaffield said.

Joining Dr Gaffield as part of Operation Restore Hope for the first time is Bundaberg registered



**ON A MISSION:** Friendly Society Private Hospital's plastic surgeon Dr James Gaffield and registered nurse Sacha Hall are visiting the Philippines to help fix the bodies and minds of the locals. Photo: FOMA RICHARDSON/face0802b

nurse Sacha Hall.

Ms Hall said she expected the trip to "open my eyes".

"This is just something I have wanted to do. I believe it will make a difference," Ms Hall said.

The need for corrective surgeries is not abating in the Philippines, with Dr Gaffield expecting to see about 120 patients, up from 75 on his 2003 trip.

Dr Gaffield said cleft palate and cleft lip defects affected about one in 500 children in Asia, almost twice the rate of Caucasians.

USA-trained Dr Gaffield has been in practice at Bundaberg Friendly Society Private Hospital for the past eight months, with two years prior at Bundaberg Base Hospital.

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**This does  
change the lives  
of children**

— DR JAMES GAFFIELD