



The AussisBangla Smile team that went to Bangladesh and, above, examples of their work.

Top team's happy holiday

A TEAM of doctors and nurses from Nepean Hospital recently returned from a two-week "medical vacation" in Bangladesh.

The AussisBangla Smile team is a voluntary medical team that has visited Bangladesh for the past three years to perform free surgical operations for underprivileged children and adults.

The patients were born with cleft lips and palates and required facial reconstructive surgery.

The team was led by

It only costs around \$200... in order for a child to be given the chance to smile

—Dr Hasan Sarwar

Bangladeshi-born Dr Hasan Sarwar, who practises at Nepean Hospital.

For Dr Sarwar, a chance to return to his home country and help his people regain their lives was an honour.

"It only costs around \$200, in-

cluding all medical supplies and after care, in order for a child to be given the chance to smile," he said.

The AussisBangla Smile team paid its own way and brought supplies in order to perform 100 reconstruction surgeries at

no expense to patients' families.

Cleft lips and palates are extremely rare conditions in Australia. Most children born with cleft receive plastic surgery almost immediately to correct the condition.

But in Bangladesh people born with cleft palates often become ostracised from their communities because of poverty and a lack of doctors and general supplies.

To assist the organisation go to aussisbangla.org.au/donate.

Grants help create spark

PENRITH Council's Magnetic Places neighbourhood renewal grants program is continuing this year, with \$35,000 on offer.

Applicants can receive grants of up to \$1500 for proposals that creatively address local issues.

Up to \$8000 is available for proposals demonstrating imaginative, cultural and creative engagement strategies to energise public arenas and gathering places.

Applicants can make inquiries by emailing cvandyk-dumlevy@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au or calling 4732 7837.

More details are available at www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au and applications can be made online at penrith.smartgrants.com.au.

Applications close next Tuesday.

Our Oz Day ambassadors

NRL great Mario Fenech and Sydney's Ensemble Theatre artistic director Sandra Bates have been announced as Penrith's Australia Day ambassadors.

The pair will take part in celebrations at the Sydney International Regatta Centre on January 26.

The ambassador program has been running for 22 years and sees ambassadors become special guests at Australia Day celebrations all over NSW.