



Above and left, scenes from some of the communities visited by Buckets for Jesus in the past two weeks, a visit which so far has taken in Tacloban, Ormoc, Capiz, North Cebu and Samar.

PHOTOS: MIKE SOH; ERICA YUZON

Perth's plenitude gone in minutes

A local charity is in the Philippines, distributing goods donated by the people of Perth. They say it's a great start, but it's only the beginning.

CLAIMS that the areas worst affected by Typhoon Haiyan were now flooded with international aid have been directly contradicted by a Perth-based couple distributing goods and medical supplies on the ground.

Ruby and Mike Soh and other volunteers from the charity Buckets for Jesus have spent the past two weeks distributing goods donated in Perth and Singapore to people in some of the country's hardest hit and most inaccessible places.

Last month, *The Record* reported that Buckets for Jesus had been overwhelmed with donations after appeals in Perth and Singapore.

Goods from the first three containers were distributed and gone within minutes, Mrs Soh told friends on her Facebook page, so great was the need, but more containers from Singapore had arrived, enabling their outreach to continue.

"Despite strong opposition, both physical and spiritual, our mission team overcame one obstacle after another and never gave up," Mrs Soh wrote.

"Our relief goods, Bibles and gifts missed the boat twice and the list goes on..."

"But nothing prepared us for the scenes of total devastation we've never encountered before.

"Not one building in Tacloban remained unscathed, trees twisted, everything that stood seemed to have fallen and bended, as if the wrath of a monster wrecked these cities apart.

"They still lack food and water, despite claims from so many international organisations that Tacloban is flooded with relief and much needed help," Mrs Soh wrote.

"We came across several tents with international names but they were empty."

The devastating impact Haiyan has had on families, particularly children, has been difficult to wit-



Above, Perth Catholic Ruby Soh is in the Philippines distributing goods donated in Perth and Singapore.

PHOTO: MIKE SOH; ERICA YUZON

ness firsthand, Mrs Soh wrote on December 9.

"After seeing the immense dev-

"I can't hold back my tears wondering why they have to suffer so much at such a tender age, and at Christmas."

astation in affected areas, in Cebu, Ormoc, Tacloban, the scenes sunk in after a few days, but the images of these children haunted me each night.

"Most of them were rendered orphans by Haiyan, or are missing families, just the same. I can't hold my tears wondering why they have to suffer so much at such tender age, especially this Christmas?"

On December 8, the Sohns and Buckets for Jesus' other dedicated volunteers visited a Missionaries of Charity orphanage in Tacloban.

According to one of the Sisters there, the centre was flooded up to the residents' necks a month ago and a few of their resident children with parents lost them in the surge.

Most of the traumatised children were transferred to another MOC centre in Calbayog to allow them to recover from the ordeal.



Harrowing stories are only the tip of