

**CENTREPIECE**



Celebrating freedom from fear on World Refugee day are (from left) Anike Akello, Jane James and Joice Achen. Pictures: DAVE NOONAN

# Residents support the world's refugees

TOOWOOMBA residents have a reputation for being generous and this was acknowledged recently at the celebrations of freedom from fear on World Refugee Day.

Dr Mark Copland, executive director of the Social Justice Commission for the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, said the Garden City had welcomed people from Vietnam, Latin America, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Iran, Iraq, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

"We already know that Toowoomba is a generous place in terms of support for charities," he said.

"It is also generous in terms of the welcome provided by community groups, schools, service clubs, individuals, churches and a range of other



Enjoying the celebrations are (from left) Mwamvua Msambya, Zaina Msambya, Hibiba Gwonya and Yvonne Nyandwi.

agencies.

"People from a refugee background help to create a diverse and rich cultural community in Toowoomba.

"In many ways they contribute to our community and show us what is possible when you don't

take the gift of freedom for granted."

The celebrations were attended by Toowoomba Regional Council's Mayor Peter Taylor, and the festivities included speakers, dancers and drummers.

**SLICE of LIFE**

## Artist opts for earthy, industrial tones in work

ARTIST Steven Dix is an anti-perfectionist.

In his own words, he has "the opposite opinion to the way we see art and real life" — so don't expect picture-perfect still life or traditional landscapes.

"I like an earthy, industrial, weathered look to my art," he said.

The boy who grew up on the, almost, wrong side of the tracks (near the yeast factory and hospital in Toowoomba) and who failed year 12 art at Centenary Heights State School, is happy if his work looks a bit cracked and falling apart.

"I take experiences or things I've seen and paint a version of that," he said.

Vibrant colour, a penchant for buildings and his own style of abstract expressionism and impressionism are bringing Steven's work to the attention of many.

In an exciting move, Trade

Queensland is sending a catalogue of his art to Korea and Hong Kong, where its representatives will seek interest.

"I want to show them art that reflects how wonderful this country is," he said.

He aims to create a style of art so that he will be remembered, in years to come, as an Australian artist with an Australian context.

Steven is excited about art and said his work can be "unexpected".

"I painted what we know and love — with a Steve twist," he said.

A recent feature in Queensland Homes magazine, shows two of Steven's privately commissioned works — large works for corporate clients — but he is equally at home creating art for home owners and art lovers in general.

And there is plenty of scope for inspiration around his home



Trade Queensland is testing the art market in Korea and Hong Kong for interest in the work of artist and former Toowoomba resident Steven Dix.

in Teneriffe, Brisbane with its refurbished factories and wool store — a blending of the old and new, a concept which Steven obviously enjoys exploring in his work.

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