



# Social Justice Commission

## Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba

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### **Oakey Strengths and Needs Analysis Released**

The Oakey Reconciliation Group has committed itself to another year of celebration of culture and closing the gap with the release of the strengths and needs analysis “A Sense of Hope – A Sense of Belonging”. The theme for 2010 for the Oakey Reconciliation Group is One Mob One Community. This is reflected in the analysis which shows that many of the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in Oakey are facing all Oakey residents.

In 2009 the Oakey Reconciliation Group commissioned Dr Mark Copland from the Social Justice Commission to conduct a Strengths and Needs analysis of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The report was officially launched by Toowoomba Regional Councillor Bill Cahill on the 14<sup>th</sup> February as a way of celebrating the second anniversary of the Australian government’s apology to the stolen generations.

Oakey Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents make up more than 9 percent of the population. The population has grown by 47 percent over the last ten years. The Oakey Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is a very young one with 54 percent under the age of 18 while the wider community has 27.4 percent under the age of 18. Some of the strengths identified in the community include the Cuddly Bears Childcare Centre, the work of the Primary and High Schools and local artists and musicians.

Some of the challenges include: youth support, transport, access to services, education and employment. “I have been constantly surprised and inspired by the work of people in the Oakey community, stated Dr Mark Copland. “This year’s NAIDOC theme is 'Unsung Heroes - Closing the Gap by Leading Their Way'. For me these phrases sum up the Oakey Reconciliation Group.”

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To read the full report go to: [www.tsjc.org/oakey-strengths-and-needs/](http://www.tsjc.org/oakey-strengths-and-needs/)

The report will also be available from  
[www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/oakey-strengths-and-needs/](http://www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/oakey-strengths-and-needs/)

“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel.” **Justice in the World: Synod of Bishops, 1971**