



Colleen Furlanetto OAM

Founder of 'Respect Matters'

An advocate in the fields of disability and inclusion.

Bringing the concept that 'Diversity is a Fact, Inclusion is a Choice' into all my volunteer and business endeavors, I wholeheartedly believe that 'Access and Inclusion are a Human Right'.

I strive to ensure that all people have the opportunity to engage in active citizenship in their local communities and the wider world.

While I am a person living with disability who identifies as a woman, I refuse to be defined by any inherent social prejudice.

Instead, I choose to live a life of service, advocating strongly for connection, support, and inclusion for people with a disability.

My 20+ years of nursing experience in the areas of disability support, aged and acute care, and disability and community nursing, have given me valuable insight and a unique skill set that I apply to all my work through 'Respect Matters'.

I'm not out to 'reinvent the wheel'

Rather, my strategic planning experience enables me to 'connect the rim with the hub' - bringing awareness, kindness, and inclusion to the people of rural and suburban Victoria.

Awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2020 for Service to Community, Disability and Health, I have held various disability portfolios along with extensive committee roles regarding safety and inclusion for Victorians with a disability.

Working actively as a CFA volunteer, I also help to raise awareness with Person-Centered Emergency Preparedness. Bushfire planning for people with accessibility needs
The 'right to respect and safety' is a whole of community responsibility. Continued.....



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My work with varied and significant networks across Victoria, including Local and State Government agencies, organisations, and departments, continues to address this core belief.

An ardent advocate for the concept of 'Help, Support, Protect, Inform', I encourage people to recognise the power of embracing diversity. Particularly enjoying being a grandparent, my involvement with my loved ones, family business, local community, and wider network gives me many opportunities to be an active citizen, as well as a loyal and trustworthy contributor in diversity representation.

Diversity is having a seat, inclusion is having a voice, belonging is being heard.

Currently a Board member with organisations providing services in

- Health Service delivery
- Disability
- Aged Care and Community Development
- Advocacy Diversity and Inclusion
- Regional Development

Current membership roles in:

- NDIS Advisory
- Volunteer Emergency Services

Examples of previous and current community service roles also include:

- Inaugural Disability Commissioner Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria
- Victorian Disability Advisory Council (Former Chair)
- Elected Representative at the Shire of Strathbogie (including terms as Mayor and Deputy Mayor)
- Various Committees at the Municipal Association of Victoria
- Women's Health Goulburn North-East (Deputy Chair, Board member)
- Institute of Community Directors Australia (Diversity in Local Government Program)
- Disability Leadership Institute (Member)
- Women with Disability Victoria (Member)
- Institute Community Directors Australia (Member)

Awards/Honorarium:

- OAM recipient for service to Community, Disability and Health
- Australian Human Rights Commissioner Inspire Award
- Brenda Gabe Award for Women with Disability Victoria