

Cultural Diversity and Community Advisory Committee Member Profiles

Mr Jim Asimakopoulos OAM



Mr Jim Asimakopoulos lives in the City of Melton. He works as the Coordinator for the Abilities and Disability Awareness program in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Mr Asimakopoulos has cerebral palsy and has had other medical issues for which he has been treated as a patient at both Sunshine and Footscray Hospitals. He has worked as a strong community advocate for people with disability for over 25 years and was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 2006 for his community service, his commitment to working in schools to inspire younger people, and his dedication to raising community awareness related to disability issues.

Ms Cuc Lam



Ms Cuc Lam left her whole family behind when she fled from Vietnam in 1978 with her husband. Since arriving in Australia Cuc has been an active member of the Vietnamese community and has had many leadership roles both within her community and in the broader Australian community. A former Maribyrnong City councillor, Cuc now works at Centrelink and continues supporting her family in Vietnam.

Ms Cecilia Gomez-Benitez

Cecilia has been a resident of Sunshine for about eleven years after migrating to Australia from El Salvador, Central America as widowed with her two daughters. Currently she is Coordinator of the Latino-Women's Association in Victoria. In previous roles Cecilia has worked at the Sunshine Family Relationship Centre, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Migrant Resource Centre North West Region. Cecilia has also worked at the Electorate Officer for Sang Nguyen MLC, Member for Melbourne, West Province and for George Seitz MLA, Member for Keilor, as well as Electorate Officer for Telmo Languiller MLA, State Member for Derrimut. Cecilia has a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Advertising, Bachelor of Arts in Community Development (Australian Stream), a Graduate Diploma in Modern Languages and is presently studying for a Masters Degree in Aged Care Services Management. Cecilia is also a member of a number of community groups including President of the Foundation Salvadorian Communities in Australia, Brimbank Active Seniors, Maribyrnong Family Violence Working Group, Member of Emily's List of Australia, Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition, and the Feedback Committee of City West Water. She is fluent in both English and Spanish.

Ms Norma Serrano



Norma migrated to Australia in November 1988 with her husband and their two children, she finished her Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology from Centro Escolar University in the Philippines. Norma is a very successful Independent Mary Kay Sales Director for 24 years. Norma has a vast community work experience spanning over 20 years and an active volunteer in the Filipino-Australian community. She is an awardee of Victoria's Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2012- Community services and Leadership Excellence Award from Filipino Communities Council of Australia (FILCCA). Ex-officio Chairperson of Philippine-Australian Foundation Inc., Ex-officio Chairperson of the Filipino Community Council of Victoria(FCCVI), Elected twice as Chairperson of the Filipino Community Council of Vic. 2007-2011, Elected treasurer of FCCVI in 2006, Board member FILCCA 2009-2011, Chairperson-Philippine/Australian Princess of Vic. Inc 1996 and 1998 , Norma has helped raised funds in the procurement of the Filipino-Australian Multi Purpose Centre located at 93 Cowper Street, Footscray, Victoria, Active member of The Filipino Community Welfare Services of Victoria , The LUZVIMINDA Filipino Women's Group and Founder/Servant leader of the Power of Devotion Prayer Group for fourteen years. Norma is currently employed as part time Centre/Aged Care Manager of FCCVI. Her accomplishments, coupled with her great

love for voluntary community service and unquestionable dedication for the cause of the families, youth, the disabled and the ageing regardless of ethnicity are her strongest points.

Ms Rosemary Ellen Madden



Ms Madden has lived in the Western Health catchment for over a decade and is currently employed as Community Engagement Officer with Centrelink. Based on her personal and professional connections Ms Madden feels that she is able to represent the voices of a range of consumers including the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Intersex (GLBTI) community as well as, people who experience financial hardship, mental health substance addiction. Ms Madden is a member of a number of community groups and volunteers for organisations in the West.

Mr Eamonn O'Toole



Mr O'Toole has been a member of the Western Health Consumer Information Review for the past two years. He is originally from Ireland and has live in Australia for the past 10 years. He has worked as a registered nurse worked in the UK and Ireland. Mr O'Toole is currently employed with the Red Cross and manages services which support disadvantage communities across Victoria. He currently volunteers for Altona Lifesaving Club and is also a school council representative. Mr O'Toole brings his clinical experience and experience of working with disadvantaged communities to the Committee.

Mrs Carolyn Rowan



Carolyn has lived in the Melton since 1978, and has raised her family in the West. Carolyn has worked in Medicare for 27 years and is now retired and gives her time as a consumer representative for Western Health as a member of the VCCC. Carolyn also divides her time between Walter and Eliza Hall Institute at Melbourne University as a "Buddy", and as a member of the CAC for Djerrwarrh Health Services acting on their Quality and Safety committee.

As Carolyn comes from a European background, and is deeply interested in Health Literacy.

Carolyn has been a member of the Cultural Diversity and Community Advisory Committee since July 2016

Mrs Elleni Bereded-Samuel ME, Post-Grad DIP Counselling, BA Foreign Language & Literature. (Western Health Board member and Chair)



Elleni Bereded-Samuel was born in Ethiopia and has focused her life's work on strengthening education, training and employment for Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in Australia. Currently, Elleni is the Community Engagement Advisor and Coordinator at Victoria University.

For six years Mrs Bereded-Samuel served on the Board of Directors of the Women's Hospital and chaired their Community Advisory Committee. She served as the inaugural member of the Australian Social Inclusion Board and is a Director of the SBS Board & member of the Community Engagement Committee. Form 2005-2011 Mrs Bereded-Samuel served as the first African Commissioner appointed to the Victorian Multicultural Commission. In 2012, she was appointed as a People of Australia Ambassador.

Mrs Bereded-Samuel is Chair of the Cultural Diversity and Community Advisory Committee and Member of the Education, Research and Development Committee.

Ms Colleen Gates BA Chemical Engineering, GAICD (Western Health Board Member)



Colleen was initially raised in Geelong, Colleen Gates has resided in and been passionate about Melbourne's west for the last 20+ years. She has regularly participated on various State, Local Government and not-forprofit committees and stakeholder groups and actively contributed with respect to financial sustainability, community capacity building and

continuous improvement initiatives. During this time Ms Gates has also advocated for social and economic improvements to public transport and infrastructure, disability services/access, mental health, environmental sustainability and affordable housing. More recently, Ms Gate's professional knowledge and strategic focus have been of great benefit in regard to information gathering and accountable decision-making in her role as an elected Councillor at Hobsons Bay and as the Manager responsible for the environmental performance of Fonterra's Australian manufacturing operations. Ms Gates is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee and a member of the Cultural Diversity and Community Advisory Committee. Appointed July 2016