

# Senior Citizen of the Year 2023

## Marie Sellstrom Acceptance Speech



Mansfield Shire

Mayor James Tehan, Councillors, recent new citizens and my fellow nominees. I'd like to acknowledge the original owners of the land that we are standing on the Taungurung people and their ancestors and descendants. I would also hope that in the years to come that we can all agree on a day for Australia Day that we are all happy about it.

I'd like to thank the Mansfield Council and the community for the enormous honour of Senior Citizen of the Year for Mansfield. It is a wonderful community, a community that works together and supports one another and cares for one another. It is a very great privilege amongst so many inspirational senior citizens to have this award.

One of the issues that I am currently working for is the women of Afghanistan. We have many countries that see Australia as a great example - Africa, Ukraine, the Middle East, Myanmar, and there are the forgotten people of Afghanistan, the forgotten women, the young girls who after Primary School are refused an education. They cannot go to secondary school; they cannot go to university. Women and girls can't have most jobs, it is a cold winter and they are starving. Women who do not have a male relative cannot go out in public, so we are reaching out to these people and we have three single women coming to Australia in a couple of weeks and are they a human rights lawyer, a mother of four children who a family here has sponsored to come to Australia.

When we have asked the Mansfield community for help to help these people and to help people in our community the support they have given us is overwhelming. So I'd like to say to the Mansfield community, thank you this award belongs to you.

