




ANNUAL REPORT 2015~2016



co.as.it.
community
services



To be a **leader** in the provision of quality, accessible and affordable community care services for the general and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities.

To be the **focal point** in Queensland for the promotion and study of the Italian language and culture.

VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Dignity: creating a working environment in which there is equal opportunity and a profound respect where staff and consumers are understood and respected.

Sensitivity: To meet the consumer's needs by being supportive, responsive, adaptive and innovative. To support consumers in their choice of care and lifestyle.

Honesty: Acting with integrity, being transparent, exercising stewardship and governance while being responsible and accountable.

Value: Aspiring to provide value for money at all times and meet the consumer's expectation and financial capacity to receive the best possible care.

Excellence: Strive for a high standard of consumer satisfaction and excellence in all we do.



04	Governance
05	President's report
06	Director's report
08	Snapshots
09	The year in review
12	Highlights of the year
14	Commonwealth Home Support Program
17	Co.As.It. volunteers
18	Community and Individual Support Services
20	Community engagement
24	Avoiding Carers Fatigue Program
26	Community Care Program
28	Home Care Packages Program
30	CALD Activity Program
32	Community Visitors Scheme
35	Social activity groups
38	Italian language teaching
43	Where to from now

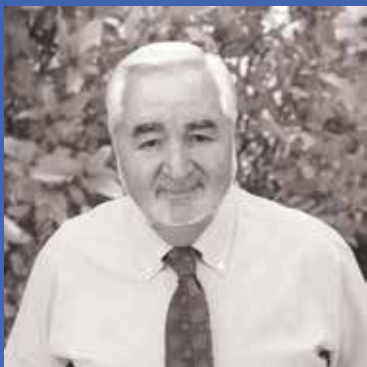
Executive

Cav. Nereo Brezzi | President
Cav. Antonio Giovanni Palella | Vice-President
Antony Brown | Treasurer
Luisa Rose | Secretary

Committee Members

Peter Accornero
Joseph Bonica
Joe Chisari
Frank Cotronese
Massimo Ficca
Angela Filippello
Filippa (Pina) Carpenzano

Dina Ranieri (Director)
Tanina Softa (Assistant Director)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The past year has seen another rise in the levels and high quality of almost all our activities.

Our community services to clients in aged care continued to grow but the challenges foreseen in last year's report have eventuated placing severe strains on our staff and systems.

New challenges continue to confront us and some will peak in February next year when the federal government will introduce more changes to the aged care system.

Efforts in language teaching were again solid, especially for adult classes, but unfortunately the extent of in-school delivery had to be cut back following a 50% cut in funding from the Italian government for 2016.

We again implemented a range of successful community events.

As always, the dedication, hard work and diligence of all our staff and volunteers were very evident at all our operating locations: Albion, Newmarket, Gold Coast, Casa Serena and Casa Aurelia. Everyone's contribution is highly valued by the Management Committee.

We truly appreciate the ongoing strong support from our many valued partners: the Australian and Queensland governments, the Brisbane City Council, Brisbane North PHN, the Brisbane Catholic Education Office, the Townsville and Cairns Dioceses, Department of Education and Training and the Italian government (Brisbane Consulate and Embassy).

The Management Committee's vision continues to be:

- To ensure the continuation of a safe, co-operative, rewarding and up-to-date working environment
- To enable the Director and her team to operate with maximum flexibility
- To co-operate closely with important strategic partners in all our operational areas.

Our annual planning meetings in December enable us to assess and review our vision, policies and strategies that will drive our activity over the coming years.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge a number of people for their outstanding contributions to Co.As.It. over the past year:

All members of the Management Committee made considerable and valuable contributions to policy, its

implementation and to maintaining very high standards of governance.

Mrs Dina Ranieri, who has continued to demonstrate her dedication and leadership.

The Assistant Director, Tanina Softa, who was able to show her managerial capacity when deputising for the Director.

Treasurer Tony Brown, who was especially industrious over the year.

We were saddened that our Secretary, Mrs Pina Carpenzano needed to relinquish her position for family reasons and we are appreciative of her many years' contributions. We welcomed Ms Luisa Rose as Pina's replacement.

We congratulate our Vice -President, Tony Palella on being invested with the honour of Cavaliere by the Italian government.

It has been very stimulating to be associated with people of such high integrity, vigour and generosity of spirit all giving their time to further the progress of Co.As.It. in its excellence as a provider of community services and Italian language and culture.

[Cav. Nereo Brezzi – President]

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



The past year has certainly been one to remember, one of constant change. It has challenged us in our service delivery model and accountability requirements for the Department of Health.

We have been focusing on developing new systems and reviewing existing processes with the introduction of a new program – Commonwealth Home Support in November 2015 and the ending of the Home and Community Care program in October 2015.

This new program aligns specifically with the portal “My Aged Care” and the “Regional Assessment Service” making it a complete centralised system for consumers wishing to access aged care services.

All Co.As.It. aged care programs were introduced to “My Aged Care”, a one stop contact for any elderly member wishing to access aged care services as from 1st July 2015.

It dominated our focus as we were forced to deal with a new way of accepting clients into our services.

Our IT systems were reviewed and tested and continue to challenge us as government continually upgrades the portal to respond to the difficulties of navigating the system.

Co.As.It. was introduced to the RAS (Regional Assessment Service) also a new Government initiative from 1st July, 2015. Sub-contracting arrangements are in place with two government approved RAS agencies.

Our Assessors are undertaking aged care assessments for the Commonwealth Home Support Program in various regions as far north as Caboolture to the South Coast.

The “Avoiding Carer Fatigue” project funded under the Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing continues to be an important support for CALD carers.

With numbers increasing constantly it is hoped that funding will continue past 2017. Data and relevant observations of improved carer ability to cope with their caring role will be gathered as evidence for future funding applications.

Training of care staff concentrated on how to better meet the needs of the client, increase care satisfaction levels, how to cope with increased competition in the aged care service area and how to attract a new client to our services.

In response to the government's changes in quality care, regulation in residential care and in response to greater market competition, Co.As.It. has needed to concentrate on corporate branding and improvements in service delivery, efficiency and accountability.

The adoption of branding across the organisation through uniforms signage on vehicles and a new website has provided us with a recognisable identity.

The tablet technology assigned to all care staff for rostering and updates on client's care plans and service delivery changes has facilitated better communication between staff.

Assessment of these initiatives resulted in increased number of clients, increased queries and service requests directly from our website and greater number of people recognising our logo and colours out in the community

We continue to support new initiatives in CALD social support activities due to the increased referral for this activity. The interaction with new friendships, communicating in own language and involvement in own cultural activities improves wellbeing, health and mental

wellness. It has not been an easy year for our staff due to the many changes implemented by Government but we are proud of what they have been able to achieve and their commitment in providing care to clients without any disruptions.

In order to concentrate on our priorities such as aged care and its effectiveness and responsiveness, Co.As.It.'s Management Committee decided to relinquish the Italian Festival 2016 funding from Brisbane City Council.

Our other priority has always been the promotion and teaching of the Italian language.

This year we have had considerable funding cuts from the Italian Government, obviously a trend which will continue in the future due to the difficulty of the government to sustain these programs.

We faced a 50% cut in our funding, announced after our programs had commenced, thus creating difficulty with budgets.

Some allocations to schools were reduced but overall ILC is focused in continuing to support the language programs with greater emphasis on adult language classes in order to increase our operational capital.

We worked closely with the Department of Education and Training and Catholic Education Dioceses in delivering professional development for Italian teachers

in Queensland. Through these opportunities, our ILC professional staff have been able to respond to issues faced by Italian teachers, create resources and provide them with hands-on material to use in the classroom.

To strengthen the partnership between the Department of Education and Training and the Italian Consulate in Brisbane, a Statement of Intent was signed early in 2016 which will be in place for the next 3 years.

This formalises the existing relationships and recognises the financial support provided by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the office of the Italian Consulate in Brisbane and the Italian Language Centre – Co.As.It.

I wish to thank all the staff, volunteers and Management Committee for their commitment, hard work and passion, it is enormously appreciated and Co.As.It. would not exist without their efforts.

With confidence and great enthusiasm we embrace the new year which will be filled with various challenges and exciting opportunities.

As always we will be focusing on strong business practices and developing strategies that will continue service viability into the future.

[Dina Ranieri – Director]



PERSONNEL

Management	3
Finance	6
General Administration	9
Assessment Team	6
Aged Care and other Community Services	31
Allied Health	4
Nursing Staff	6
Special Projects	3
Care Staff	238
Volunteers	55
ILC Staff	3
Teachers	7

TRANSPORT

Coasters	2
Minibus	7
Cars	20

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

BRISBANE:
35 Dover Street, Albion

SOUTH COAST:
34 Thomas Drive, Chevron Island

ILC-ITALIAN LANGUAGE CENTRE
42 Newbery Street, Newmarket

SOCIAL ACTIVITY GROUP CENTRES

BRISBANE:
Casa Serena
1 Lanchester Street, Stafford Heights

Casa Aurelia
79 Sussex Road, Acacia Ridge


Cleveland Baptist Church Hall
240 Bloomfield Road, Cleveland

Narangba Community Hall
229 Mackie Road, Narangba

SOUTH COAST:
Gold Coast Italo-Australian Centre
18 Fairway Drive, Clear Island Waters

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

9



Co.As.It. is formed on long-standing, traditional values but we are also acutely aware that the world is changing around us.

The necessity to adapt to the Government's ongoing aged care reforms means that the organisation will face many challenges but like many other service providers, these challenges will also create opportunities for growth that will forever alter the face of aged care in Australia.

Changes in numbers of the ageing population and shifting trends in demographics have affected the demand for services and how these services are delivered.

Faced with consumer expectations for more manageable and integrated services, the organisation has in the past year, carried out internal adjustments that align with new funding and program reforms as well as more exigent consumer demands.

Funding and program changes, technology, social media and the informed expectations of younger clients provide new prospects for the organisation to develop creative business plans that make a positive difference to the way that people wish to live.

In 2015/16 this plan has reflected the multi-directional changes in the aged care arena particularly with the advent of consumer directed care which has impacted not only the financial status of the organisation but also on the consumers.

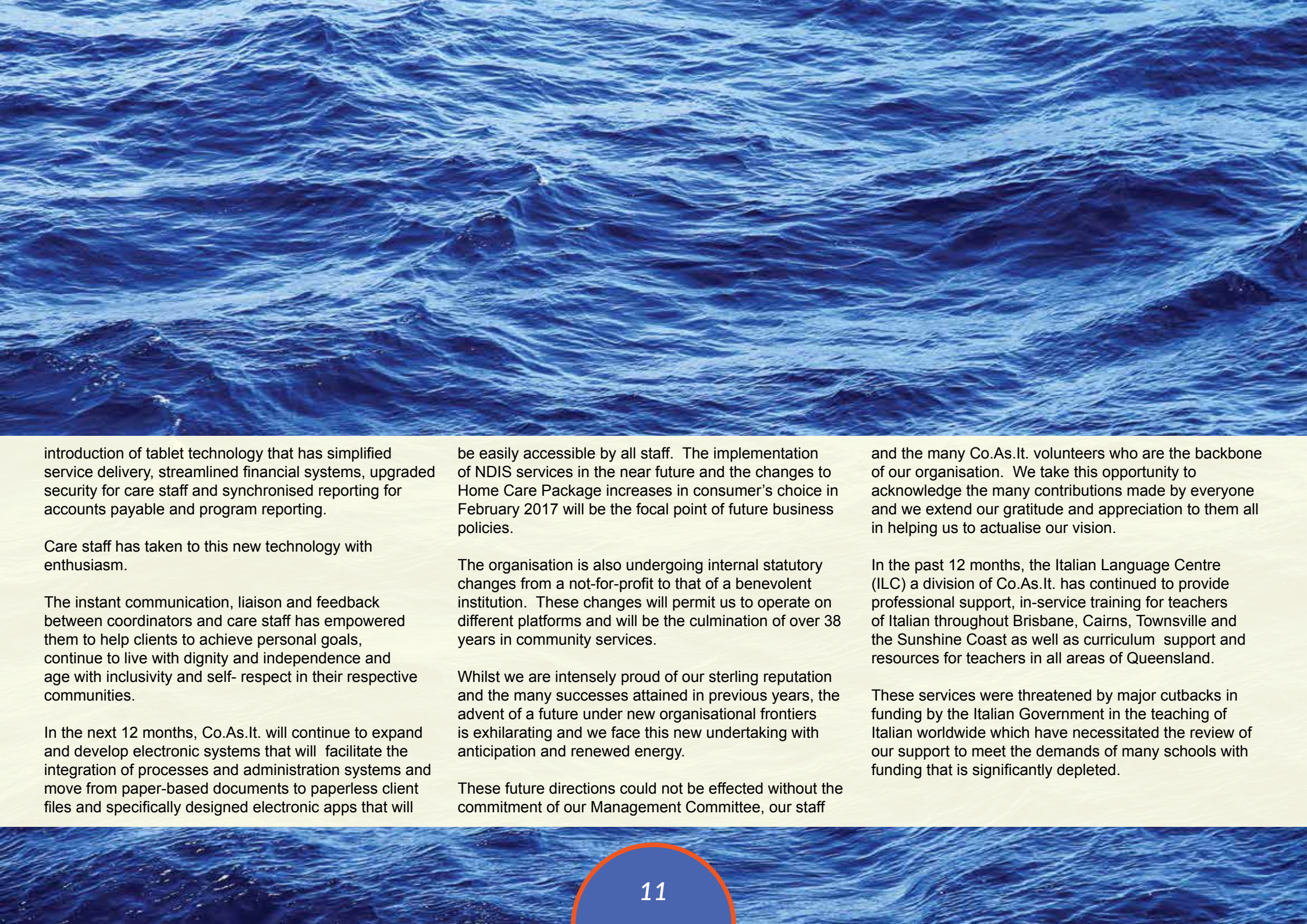
In the past 12 months, Co.As.It. has focused on measuring client needs on a number of levels, analysing

patterns and tracking trends in real time and over time. Feedback from clients has also helped us to design programs and services and this feedback has also been the stimulus to create effective evidence-based solutions.

Collaboration with established agencies, PHN Consortium members and clients at a grass roots level has provided us with the knowledge, breadth and understanding to be able to continue to create responsive solutions to client needs.

With a reputation founded on reliability, flexibility and empathy and a proven track record for achieving successful outcomes for consumers, Co.As.It. will strive to trial new and innovative service delivery models in the future.

From an operational perspective, this past year has realised greater organisational synergy with the



introduction of tablet technology that has simplified service delivery, streamlined financial systems, upgraded security for care staff and synchronised reporting for accounts payable and program reporting.

Care staff has taken to this new technology with enthusiasm.

The instant communication, liaison and feedback between coordinators and care staff has empowered them to help clients to achieve personal goals, continue to live with dignity and independence and age with inclusivity and self- respect in their respective communities.

In the next 12 months, Co.As.It. will continue to expand and develop electronic systems that will facilitate the integration of processes and administration systems and move from paper-based documents to paperless client files and specifically designed electronic apps that will

be easily accessible by all staff. The implementation of NDIS services in the near future and the changes to Home Care Package increases in consumer's choice in February 2017 will be the focal point of future business policies.

The organisation is also undergoing internal statutory changes from a not-for-profit to that of a benevolent institution. These changes will permit us to operate on different platforms and will be the culmination of over 38 years in community services.

Whilst we are intensely proud of our sterling reputation and the many successes attained in previous years, the advent of a future under new organisational frontiers is exhilarating and we face this new undertaking with anticipation and renewed energy.

These future directions could not be effected without the commitment of our Management Committee, our staff

and the many Co.As.It. volunteers who are the backbone of our organisation. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the many contributions made by everyone and we extend our gratitude and appreciation to them all in helping us to actualise our vision.

In the past 12 months, the Italian Language Centre (ILC) a division of Co.As.It. has continued to provide professional support, in-service training for teachers of Italian throughout Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and the Sunshine Coast as well as curriculum support and resources for teachers in all areas of Queensland.

These services were threatened by major cutbacks in funding by the Italian Government in the teaching of Italian worldwide which have necessitated the review of our support to meet the demands of many schools with funding that is significantly depleted.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Co.As.It. Community Services was one of the finalists in two separate Aged Care Awards. The organisation was one of five finalists in the Outstanding Organisation category of the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards, Co.As.It. was also honoured to be nominated for the prestigious ACSA award.

ACSA is the national peak body representing not-for-profit and faith-based providers of residential and community care, housing and support for people with a disability and their carers.

Both Awards recognised agencies in the aged care sector that made an exceptional contribution to improving the quality of life for older Australians, promoting the sharing of good practices and providing effective responses to community needs.

Sixteen staff members travelled to Canberra for the Hesta official awards ceremony where Co.As.It. was recognised for adopting a 'humanistic' approach that has resulted in clients gaining a greater level of independence and control over their daily activities and enabling them to achieve personal life goals.

CO.AS.IT. NEW CORPORATE UNIFORM



Over its 38 year history, Co.As.It. has established a prominent identity within the aged care sector, one that was not adequately represented by the corporate image of our task force.

The introduction of a corporate uniform across all areas of the organisation was a significant milestone for an

organisation which has evolved from a one room office in 1978.

In 2015, the introduction of a corporate uniform instilled an identifiable organisational image that has propelled the organisation into higher community awareness. With over 300 staff the branding of all Co.As.It. vehicles

and the uniforms have become icons that have further increased our community profile.

There have been many collateral benefits - improved team spirit and a sense of belonging and pride in being a part of an organisation that has overcome many challenges throughout its growth.

COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM (CHSP) | 65YRS AND OVER

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) caters to the needs of older people wishing to remain at home in their communities.

It provides a streamlined access to entry-level in home support services and has an increased focus on a restorative approach including wellness and re-ablement.

The strength of the CHSP Program is its philosophy in 'doing with - not for' the client which promotes confidence and satisfaction in the clients and also provides a framework for preventing or delaying inappropriate entry to residential care.

It is also essential in minimising frequent hospital admissions.

The Co.As.It. CHSP program provides services such as: domestic assistance, nursing, flexible respite, social support (group and individual) allied health, personal care and centre based respite.

During the last 12 months there have been many challenges in the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

Some of the challenges were a result of the introduction of the My Aged Care (MAC) portal where a consistent set of problems arose from referrals which were often incomplete, inappropriate or saw numerous providers working on the same case file when another provider had already signed the client for services.

Add to this new system, assessors who may not have had experience in aged care, lack of referral to the correct agency namely the client specifically asking for an organisation only to be referred elsewhere and the transition period to the portal has resulted in many clients missing out on adequate services or foregoing services because it took too much effort to navigate through the assessment process.

This was especially true for clients from a CALD background and clients who had to be referred back to the MAC portal when they wanted to add a service.

There are many positive changes to people's lives through this program but none so dramatic as the confidence and self-esteem that is restored when a person is assisted to better manage their continence.

People without continence problems do not understand the profound misery and isolation faced by those who cannot go out because of fear of being humiliated in public. The support of the MASS program literally changes their lives as clients once again increase their social contact, regain their dignity and confidence and begin to share daily activities with friends and family.

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with light skin and blue eyes. He is resting his chin on his right hand, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a white collared shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

PASQUALE

PASQUALE

Pasquale is 88, active and sharp as a tack, never having had a sick day in his life, he was bewildered when a serious urinary tract and kidney infection left him with the inability to manage his continence.

He is a very private person who greatly values his independence. Despite having a wide group of active friends, little by little Pasquale began to withdraw from invitations to play bocce, cards or share dinners with his family.

Despite having his family express their concern at his unwillingness to socialise, he gave no indication that there may have been a physical reason for his removal from the many activities which he enthusiastically enjoyed.

Over an 8 month period, Pasquale became depressed, lost interest in maintaining his home and car in the pristine condition that he always loved.

In an effort to alleviate the weight of housework that his family believed to be too onerous a task for him, a care

worker was assigned to help him for two hours a week. After the first few times that she attended, she noticed that Pasquale changed his clothing at least 4 times over the two hour period.

After gentle support and encouragement he revealed that he had been unable to go anywhere for months because the cost of continence pads was very high and he did not want to alert his family about his problem in case they thought he could no longer manage at home alone.

The care worker made a referral to the MASS Coordinator who was able to organise affordable continence aids for Pasquale.

This gentleman has regained his enthusiasm for all of the activities he had missed doing and he has increased not only his independence but also his dignity.

To this day, his family is no wiser to the reason behind his dramatic change but they are grateful to see that he has returned to his old self.

SNAPSHOT

	Clients	Hours
Brisbane North	1,495	32,927
Caboolture	749	18,981
Brisbane South	1,142	39,052
Logan Valley	75	2,131
South Coast	249	4,461

*Volunteers
don't get paid,
not because
they are worthless
but because they are
priceless.*

Volunteers are the mainstay of our organisation.

At the close of every year, we acknowledge the incredible work done by so many volunteers in our organisation who manage their everyday affairs, look after families, care for friends, are active participants in the community yet still find the time to spread their good will and support to so many other people in the community.

We thank them for caring enough to make a difference to our clients and our programs.

COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES (CISS)

During 2015/2016, more than 180 vulnerable people and their families were supported in ways that improved capacity to care for themselves and their families.

It is always very sobering to work with people who are genuine casualties of unexpected change in their life.

Dramatic and unexpected adjustments in health, living arrangements, financial circumstances or other life changing situations can bring a person and their family to us for urgent help.

The program strives to create inclusivity in community living and independence in personal living through services that are flexible, responsive and able to effect improvement in fundamental human needs but also on the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs of the person.

During 2015/2016 a number of resources were created that addressed specific areas of concern. These were a handbook for older people on detecting and avoiding fraud and scams in their various forms.

There was also a valuable program of learning to use technology for older members of the community.

Free weekly classes throughout the year about ipads, computers and other mobile devices have been eagerly attended by older community members who now have a wondrous world at their fingertips.

They have learned how to access information, do shopping, pay bills and play online brain exercises games on the internet.

The classes have had collateral benefits for these older students who are now less socially isolated and have formed connections with family, friends and new contacts on-line.

What is surprising is that many of these older persons have limited schooling even in their own language

therefore the successful introduction to technology has been not a significant personal achievement.

Another important community program under CISS was the Effective Parenting course that was run over a ten week period for young parents.

Implemented by a professional facilitator, the course delivered a wide range of strategies that enabled parents to better deal with behavioural concerns whilst instilling confidence and self-esteem in the youngsters.

The CISS program is vigorously involved in establishing regular community events that unite, promote cohesion and help to promote a sense of belonging within the participants. Over the past 12 months, the CISS officer, together with other Co.As.It. support staff, has organised events that draw together people across generations.

The Annual Community Concert and International Women's Day celebrations have been focal points this year that have attracted the combined participation of over 800 people.



SNAPSHOT

Client contact	1,271
Families	188
Advocacy	30
Information/referral	188

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY [MAKE IT HAPPEN]

Annually, the organisation supports women's parity by staging an International Women's Day event in March of each year.

This global event recognises the achievements of women in the social, economic, cultural and political arena and nurtures a collective pride in the achievements of women worldwide.

In 2016, the event raised awareness for public vigilance about domestic violence within the community and over 300 women contributed their time and energy to participate in the morning tea that also saw the presence of many distinguished guests from both the CALD and wider community.

The "High Tea and Fashion Parade" event was jointly compered by media personality Damien Anthony Rossi and stylist/TV presenter Kellie Alderman.

Guest speaker from Micah Projects Kylie Robertson brought the assembled women to a sobering silence as she told the harrowing story of a woman with two young children who had to escape a violent home and an abusive partner.

A donation to Micah Projects was presented by Co.As. It. to assist their work in supporting survivors of domestic violence. Well known author Patsy Rowe also presented her unique perspective on etiquette and women in society and stole the show with her one-liner.

She stated that she often introduced her partner as her "current" husband and that it was a guaranteed way to keep him on his toes!

Special guests were the Hon. Grace Grace, Minister for Employment and Industrial relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Councillor Vicki Howard (Central Ward), Mariangela Stagnitti, President Com.It.Es. for Queensland and Northern Territory and Michele Smith, Manager Community Care, PHN Brisbane North.

The morning tea was concluded with the ever popular raffle that was supported by numerous sponsors from the business community and individuals and we thank them sincerely for their continued support for this event.





COMMUNITY CONCERT



On 14 November 2015, over 400 people streamed into the Multicultural Community Centre at Newmarket eagerly anticipating an entertaining musical afternoon Annual Community Concert which is held under the patronage of the Italian Consulate for Queensland and the Northern Territory.

As the lights dimmed, Master of Ceremonies Damien Anthony Rossi warmly welcomed the assembled audience and invited guests such as Brisbane's Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, the Honourable Teresa Gambaro, Federal Member for Brisbane, Grace Grace MP for Brisbane Central, Norm Wyndham, Councillor for McDowall and Paul Amabile who was representing Mariangela Stagnitti, President of Com.It.Es. for Queensland and Northern Territory.

This year's theme, 'Platters to Popera and Pavarotti', provided over three hours of sublime music which brought back popular hits by the Platters, Broadway hits from unforgettable musicals like The Jersey Boys, Evita and the Phantom of the Opera and some of the world's most popular classical pieces like 'Nessun Dorma' and 'O Sole Mio'.

FORUMS



Community information forums have always been successful collective occasions that are normally held during Seniors' Week in August each year.

In 2015/16 two forums in Brisbane and one on the Gold Coast brought together a total of 300 people who not only celebrated their attainment as seniors but also acquired valuable information on how to continue to live well and in harmony with themselves and the community.

Each forum brought together professionals across the fields of health and well-being, re-ablement and support services as well as providing an occasion to share lunch and activities.

Important topics included the recognition and need for avoiding carer stress, recognising and accepting the impact of ageing and planning for that later period of life where they can discuss and plan now for their future care especially how care is to be administered.

Staging these forums as community projects allows clients to access valuable strategies for wellness, engage in larger community events and enjoy being recognised as seniors who are active, engaged and in control of their lives.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND DONATIONS

Co.As.It. is very grateful for the continued donations provided by a number of community organisations that enable the organisation to furnish additional services outside of the funding granted to help support delivery of the programs and services.

The Sicilian Association of Qld has once again kindly presented a generous donation to help the organisation face the many challenges of providing care for our community.



AVOIDING CARER FATIGUE PROGRAM

As people age, we all know, the body can start to fail. Carers are faced with looking after husbands, wives, mothers and fathers who suffer debilitating illnesses such as Parkinson's disease and dementia.

Most carers do not see themselves as "carers". They see themselves as daughters, sons, wives and husbands who are simply carrying on with their duties as they have for many years looking after their family – outside the home at work or inside the home with domestic duties.

As carers, there are so many more challenges they face keeping their loved ones comfortable, clean, fed and engaged in life as much as possible. It's exhausting but the carers see it as a continuation of the life they chose when they married the love of their lives or being born into a loving family.

The challenges of caring for someone with major disabilities can bring on many health problems in the carers themselves. The problems arise when the carers suffer their own physical and mental health issues which are exacerbated with exhaustion but they continue to carry on regardless.

These problems have the potential to trickle down (or cascade like a waterfall) to the rest of the family.

Listening to carers it is apparent that it's ok to have only 2 to 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night. It's ok to give up hobbies they used to love. It's ok to be invisible to the rest of the family and it's also ok not to go out to spend time with friends or indeed spend time alone. It's NOT ok to ask for help and it's NOT ok to be seen to fail.

It is not until someone tells a carer that help is available, that they start to think about their situation. The Avoiding Carer Fatigue Program is reaching carers, many of whom are from a CALD background, and instilling a sense of pride in their achievement as carers as well as enabling them to continue in their important role.

They learn that it's OK to feel frustrated. It's OK to cry. It's OK to say that life is difficult and they see no way out.

It's OK to share without being judged. It's OK to feel elated and proud when you can share with another carer what has worked to make life just a little easier at home. And it's definitely OK to ask for help.

Over time, with the assistance of the team, carers are learning that they are certainly not alone. There are other wives, husbands, daughters and sons who experience similar challenges.

They are learning that accepting assistance doesn't diminish who they are as carers but enhances the care they provide for the people they love. They learn that it's OK to take a break from the valuable work they do and recharge.

It's OK to learn about themselves and get back a little bit of freedom and self-worth. And it's definitely OK to seek support when the hurdles seem insurmountable. In the past 12 months the ACF program has provided significant support to carers that allowed them to continue in their caring role.

Over 220 small support/recreational groups have been implemented in Brisbane North, 38 in Brisbane south and over 52 outings have allowed carers to unwind and connect with other carers.

The highlight of this year has been the two respite weekends away where carers were able to enjoy pampering sessions of yoga, massage and other rejuvenating activities that enlightened the soul and provided uninterrupted sleep and good nutrition.



SNAPSHOT

Brisbane North contacts
Brisbane South contacts
Gold Coast

Carers
1,061
627
80

COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM (CCP)

SNAPSHOT

	Clients	Hours
Brisbane North	238	11,276
Brisbane South	183	11,066
South Coast	6	950

The Community Care Program maintains a person's well-being and capacity to live independently in their community through a broad range of low-intensity, basic support services.

In 2015/2016 there were inspiring cases of clients who had to adapt to changes in their lives with flexibility and tolerance. In carrying out our work in the community, we often come across people who despite being faced with unyielding adversity, continue their life journey with outstanding courage, empathy and love.

Faced with challenges that are daunting and often unbeatable, we are humbled and greatly privileged to be able to support them as they walk their final pathway. Terrina and her family have been supported by a community care program.

I have had the fortune to have been referred to Co.As.It. over a year ago now and just wanted to let you know of my experience with your service.

As you are aware I took on the long term guardianship of my two nieces when they were babies. Since then they have both been diagnosed with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, have been also identified as children who fit into Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The eldest child suffers intellectual impairment, epilepsy and rheumatoid arthritis. The children find school very tiring and often come home and go to sleep until dinner time.

Since my MS began deteriorating significantly, it has been a godsend having nutritious meals made by a Co.As.It. worker in the freezer to just thaw, heat and serve to the children and myself until I was no longer able to eat. However, the children continue to enjoy these meals.

Because of the children's conditions it is very difficult to teach them about cleaning up after themselves without being asked.

Now I am effectively bed ridden, I am unable to always be there to see when the children make messes and either clean them up myself or ask them to help.

Having a Co.As.It. worker here to give the floors a good vacuum and mop each fortnight helps me immensely, as does the worker changing the sheets on the beds. I always look forward to having nice clean sheets on my bed.

Whilst I have only mentioned a few of the things the worker does around our home to keep it clean and tidy, I cannot express my appreciation for the fact that I only have to pay a nominal amount for this service.

Should I have to pay too much more than this I couldn't ever afford the wonderful service provided on my pension.

I would like to thank Co.As.It. for providing such a wonderful and appropriate service to the community and myself in particular.

Without the assistance I receive from Co.As.It as a 52 year old single carer of special needs children, our home would become filthy and the children would not be receiving the nutrition they require.



TERRINA AND HER GIRLS

Another thing that I must mention is the quality of the Co.As.It. workers.

As I have had three relatively long term workers over the period since your assistance commenced, I can say without doubt that it is clear that the workers are stringently vetted prior to employment and then trained extensively.

All three workers have been extremely caring and compassionate to me on every occasion they have been to our home.

They take the time to have a quick chat to see how I am doing health wise before they commence work.

They remember family members who may pop in to visit and are always courteous and polite to all of us at all times.

I feel extremely lucky to have been referred to your service since my discharge from hospital.

Although my health is starting to deteriorate quite quickly now and a palliative care service will soon become

involved, I know that Co.As.It. will continue to assist and support me.

When the palliative care team will also be available to me, this means that hopefully I won't have to be admitted to hospital at all prior to my passing away which is so very important to me for the sake of the children.

Thank you again for everything your service provides me.

Kind regards, Terrina

HOME CARE PACKAGES PROGRAM

Since July 1, 2015 all Home Care Packages have been implemented under a Consumer Directed Care (CDC) basis. In the past 12 months, the organisation has implemented 255 Home Care Packages for Brisbane North and South and 99 on the South Coast.

The change to consumer directed care has facilitated many new and innovative service deliveries that are co-designed with the client to best suit individual goals and needs, often these services may not be for an activity that was traditionally categorised as a service component.

HCP offers choice, flexibility and encourages as much involvement and participation they would like to have in managing their package.

With the added flexibility of CDC, the coordinators have devised unique services that bring great satisfaction to the clients who are empowered to make decisions about how the services are to be administered and supplied.

The Home Care Packages cover a wide spectrum of support for different needs levels to enable people to live independently and autonomously.

The range of needs span from level 1 for people with low care needs to progressively higher provision of support in Levels 2, 3 and 4 for those with higher needs and services.

The following case study demonstrates the flexibility of the program and how it is achieving higher levels of satisfaction for clients.

Mr Mateusz

Mr Mateusz is a 75 year old gentleman who contacted Co.As.It. for home and personal care assistance to remain living independently at home. A meeting was arranged with Mr Mateusz together with his neighbour who was Mr Mateusz's representative.

The client was from a wealthy Polish family whose father had been employed as an accountant/bookkeeper prior to WWII. During the war, his entire family was interned and spent the last three years of the war in German camps. In 1949, the family migrated to Australia as refugees.

As he was growing up the client developed an interest in art and went on to paint many beautiful landscapes and portraits which now adorn the walls of his house.

Mr Mateusz lives with a disability and was quite reclusive often spending many hours alone in his art room. His wife Antonia passed away recently and Mr Mateusz was quite alone with no family in Australia. Having lost the ability to drive, he was also at risk of becoming socially isolated.

He had never told another person that he had been a POW. This was revealed to his neighbour, when they

were discussing their lives before and after the war. Since then, both gentlemen have been trying to find surviving family members in Poland as well as planning to approach local art galleries to have Mr Mateusz' paintings exhibited.

Outcomes:

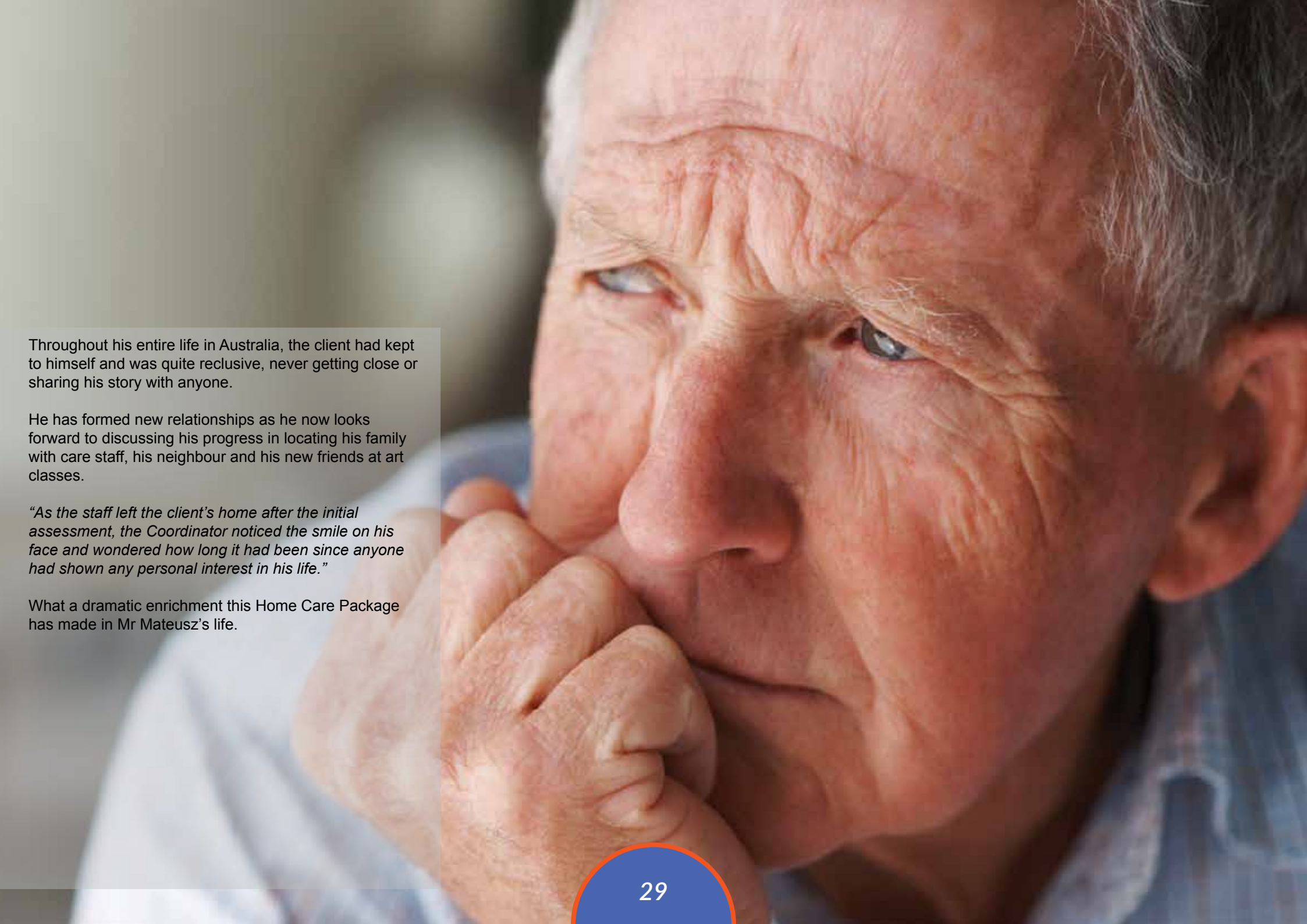
A tailored Home Care Package from Co.As.It. provided Mr Mateusz with personal care, domestic assistance and social support.

Efforts were made to assist him in his search for remaining family members as well as work with him to source galleries willing to exhibit his artworks.

After discussions with community care staff, we were able to roster two hours per week with care staff familiar with ancestry research able to take a computer and assist him search for family connections.

It was arranged for care staff to assist Mr Mateusz to attend art classes for two hours per week where he was able to develop his talents further.

The client also had three visits a week for personal care and domestic assistance.



Throughout his entire life in Australia, the client had kept to himself and was quite reclusive, never getting close or sharing his story with anyone.

He has formed new relationships as he now looks forward to discussing his progress in locating his family with care staff, his neighbour and his new friends at art classes.

“As the staff left the client’s home after the initial assessment, the Coordinator noticed the smile on his face and wondered how long it had been since anyone had shown any personal interest in his life.”

What a dramatic enrichment this Home Care Package has made in Mr Mateusz’s life.

CALD ACTIVITY PROGRAM IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITIES

This program does not receive formal funding but is so valuable that the aged care facilities willingly meet the cost of providing residents in their residences with culturally and linguistically appropriate recreational activities.

The activities always consider the residents' ability to respond and engage in games, discussions, craft activities or other pastimes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

It is interesting to note that many times the activities offered at aged care facilities are considered by CALD communities as work rather than hobbies.

For many older CALD women, needlecraft or embroidery was a paid occupation they were taught as a young girl, as were knitting or crocheting and creative pursuits such as drawing or painting were seen to be frivolous activities that interfered with the main purpose of earning a stable income for their families.

Therefore designing appropriate activities for this group is challenging and rewarding. It is with the support of volunteers that the activities can be run so effectively.

The continued support of family and friends and above all, the energetic and uplifting volunteers who engage so successfully with residents, staff and families are an asset to this program.

The CALD program operates in 13 aged care facilities either on a monthly or fortnightly basis and is integral in helping residents feel included in the socio-recreational life of the home.

"It wasn't that I didn't want to care for him at home " says Alfia "but when I couldn't lift him to get him out of bed in the mornings and I couldn't lift him out of his armchair it meant that many times he would have to sleep in that chair.

I understood that I just didn't have the physical strength to care for him properly- it was not fair to him or me.

Our children were angry when I said that I could no longer manage at home - this created so many arguments.

They didn't want to see their father Paolo in a nursing home but none of them lived close enough to be able to help me when he fell or when he had to be changed because he was incontinent.

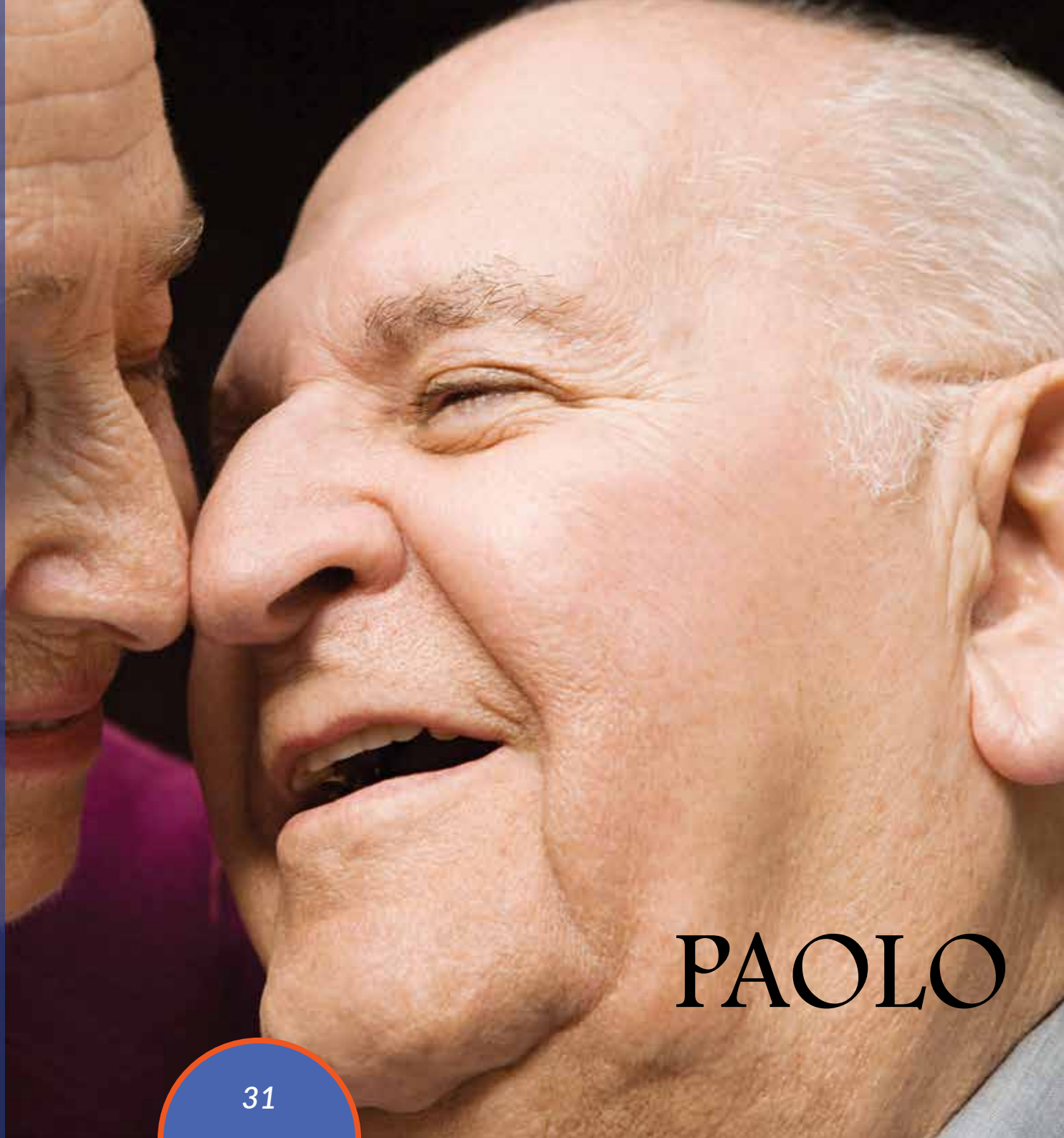
Finally, the decision was taken away from us because the last time he fell, I had to call the ambulance and Paolo was admitted to hospital. There they told us he would need to have more intensive care so he would need nursing home placement. It was a relief in one way and awful in another."

The decision to move Paolo into residential care was difficult – Paolo didn't speak English and the family felt that he would feel isolated and lonely.

The social worker from the hospital contacted Co.As.It. to enquire if there was a facility that already had a number of Italian residents where Paolo would feel some connection to his language and community.

Fortunately we were able to refer the family to a number of facilities that not only had other Italians living there but these facilities were also actively involved in working with Co.As.It. in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate recreational activities through a bi-lingual Activities Officer.

With support from the CALD Activity Program, Paolo has adapted well to his new surroundings and now Alfia is considering moving into the same facility to be near her husband.



PAOLO

COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

FRIENDS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The scheme has been in operation for over 20 years and successfully continues to bridge the gap between lonely older members of the community living in residential aged care and now in their own homes.

The introduction of volunteers who are able to visit within people's own homes has extended the benefits of this program from aged care facilities to the wider community.

People who are housebound have limited mobility and cannot socialise within the wider community.

Thanks to this program, they now have access to a regular visitor who shares the same language culture and often, the migration history.

The visiting has also extended into group visits in residential aged care facilities which foster friendships between the residents as well as providing a traditionally relevant form of interaction between participants.

Home visiting as a service delivery strategy aims to provide a range of supports for isolated and lonely people who live at home.

It is not a simple program - it is a community based strategy for delivering a multiplicity of services such as alleviation of isolation, maintenance of emotional connections to others, promotion of social interaction and nurturing a sense of self-worth through visits from volunteers who demonstrate their interests in firming new friendships that enable many people in the community to live graciously and happily.

The older person does not have to arrange transport to visit a friend, there is a personalised friendship that provides individual attention and rapport building that allows the volunteers to build relationships in ways that may not be possible outside of the person's home.

NICOLA AND PERRY

Nicola lives with Parkinson's disease, it is difficult for him to go out but not at all difficult to welcome in-home CVS visitor Perry who is now a valued friend.

Co.As.It. has a wonderful team of in-home visitors who share many of the same cultural and demographic characteristics as the resident and these features increase both the family's openness to the home visitor program and willingness to engage actively in the service.

It is always delightful to see how quickly friendships develop between our volunteers and their home care resident.



SILVIA AND INGRID

Silvia originally lived in Melbourne but the lure of sunny beaches and the milder climate of Queensland was inviting to Silvia and her husband Frank.

They transferred to the Gold Coast where they lived for over 18 years. Having no children the couple depended on each other for company and support and the recent unexpected passing of Frank was a terrible loss for her.

Her health has now deteriorated and she spends her days at home unable to drive or use public transport.

A high level home care package allows her to enjoy her precious home and the collections that she has lovingly gathered over her life. Her lounge is filled with small bomboniere that hold strong memories of every baptism, confirmation and wedding that she has attended.

Wrapped in tulle (the sugared almonds long gone), Silvia can relate interesting little stories about the people, couples and babies who have helped her live a full life in the company of family, friends and community.

Ingrid, an energetic volunteer has made such a difference to Silvia's quality of life.

They delight in each other's company and often update old recipes into new dishes that they love making together.

Silvia has found a new purpose in her days, she loves looking through old books and magazines and sharing her finds with her new friend.

SNAPSHOT

SOCIAL GROUP ACTIVITIES/CENTRE BASED RESPITE

	Clients	Hours
Brisbane North	415	223,800
Caboolture	71	6,400
Brisbane South	514	97,000
Logan Valley	15	2,160
South Coast	130	31,210

STAYING SOCIALLY CONNECTED

With an increasing number of people able to live at home for longer, there is a corresponding need to provide them with social connectivity as well as inclusive activities at a personal and at a group level.

The social activity centres combine the love of being with friends and socialising as well as providing respite for carers who are caring for a person full-time.

The collateral benefit is that the clients receiving the care have an opportunity to widen their social circle with something interesting each time they attend.

The combination of physical and mental activity with social engagement is effective in maintaining brain vitality and inclusiveness but in many cases the social interaction is more significant and valuable to participants than the activity itself.

These groups are essential respite for full-time carers, they provide outings and new experiences for older persons, social contact and networking for people who live alone at home. They also offer connectivity for residents in aged care homes who like to attend the

groups to keep in contact with their community and lifelong friends.

SOCIAL OUTINGS

An integral part of the home support programs offered by Co.As.it. in Brisbane and on the South Coast is the social connectivity that is enhanced by social outings.

Outings have been held on a monthly basis for people able to get to the point of departures independently in Brisbane North, Brisbane South and Bayside.

These outings are a celebration of good company, new experiences and new friendships that evolve into long term supportive networks between participants.



Over the past year, countless adventures have been enjoyed by hundreds of participants from going to olive groves to buy olive oil, to the emu and tropical fruit farms, the Ginger Factory and dozens of restaurants, cafes and picnics in Queensland's beautiful surroundings.

The groups operate out of five centres located from Brisbane north in Caboolture to the Nerang region of the Gold Coast.

One of the most memorable events held during 2015/2016 was Carnevale at the Brisbane Abruzzo Club. Even though in Brisbane the event of Carnevale is not as prominent, in the Italian community it is still a great

opportunity to get together and celebrate this significant cultural event.

ITALIAN FESTIVAL WOODBURN

Another significant social outing was the attendance of over 50 participants at the Italian Festival at Woodburn.

The historical significance of the Italians and their hardship in this region are well documented and form an important part in the region's heritage.

The day's festivities were wide and varied and the entertainment ranged from opera singers to contemporary folk music, piano accordion and guitar - all thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW



The Italian Language Centre (ILC) is a division of Co.As.It. Community Services and has a long tradition of teaching, supporting and promoting Italian language and culture across Queensland.

In addition to supporting Italian programs in schools, ILC also offers a wide range of Italian language courses from beginners to advanced, from preschoolers to adults.





ITALIAN INSERTION PROGRAM

Curriculum support: The Italian Language Centre supports Italian programs within Catholic, State and Independent schools through MOUs signed each year with:

- Brisbane Catholic Education Office
- Townsville Catholic Education Office
- North Lakes State College
- Selected catholic schools which do not fall under the MOUs
- Selected state schools eligible to receive annual contributions

Professional Development: ILC provided a range of opportunities for teachers of Italian to maintain their language proficiency:

In Semester 2-2015, a total of 68 teachers of Italian

attended ILC PDs presented by ILC staff and held in October 2015 at:

- ILC Newmarket
- Talara Primary College, Currimundi, subsequent to an invitation from Department of Education and Training
- Townsville Catholic Education Office
- Catholic Education Services Diocese of Cairns

In Semester 1 -2016 ILC was invited to present the Italian Workshop at the 2-day All Languages Teachers Professional Development Event organised by Brisbane Catholic Education and Independent Schools Queensland in March at Christie Convention Centre. A total of 30 teachers attended the whole-day workshop.

The Italian workshop was repeated in May and June 2016 in the following locations:

- Townsville Catholic Education Office (TCEO)
- Catholic Education Services Cairns (CES)
- Sunshine Coast subsequent to an invitation from DET North Coast

A total of 36 teachers attended these three events.

INTERNS

Co.As.It. continued its international relationship with a partnership with Venice University of Ca' Foscari. A new student commenced a three month internship in August 2015. Apart from her work at the head office, this student was involved in a variety of activities with schools, as well as assisting in the implementation of Italian Immersion days, creating and presenting topics



as a guest speaker, running activities for Italian Days at the schools, participating in StuditaliA language competition and helping teachers with the creation of curriculum resources.

CALLIGRAM COMPETITION

A Calligram Competition open to all students of Italian across five categories (Prep-Yr1, Yr2-3, Yr4-5, Yr6-7 and Yr8-9) was launched with the theme 'Le Quattro Stagioni' (The Four Seasons).

Winners received certificates, medals and iTunes gift cards and the winning and highly commended entries were displayed at the StuditaliA award ceremony in September 2015.

ITALIAN IMMERSION DAYS AT ILC

Italian immersion days provide the opportunity for

teachers to book an exclusive Italian experience at ILC to extend their students' language learning. Students have the opportunity to sing, dance, cook, practice numeracy and themed vocabulary... all in Italian.

The immersion experiences were enjoyed by:

- ILC adult students
- Year 6 students from St Joseph's Bardon
- Year 11/12 students from Stanthorpe State High School
- Year 9/10 students of Kelvin Grove State College

ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES

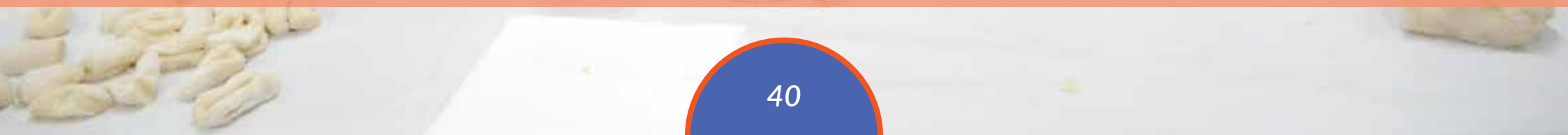
Playgroup for children aged three to five is held twice a week. Lessons are based on themed activity booklets supported by relevant Italian songs, vocabulary, props and toys.

A total of 42 enrolments were received over Terms 3-4 2015 and Terms 1-2 2016. Qualified native-speaker teachers ensure students are positively engaged in learning language through a range of activities.

Primary aged children attend after school hours classes at locations in Brisbane's north and south: a total of 118 primary aged students attended during Semester 2 -2015 and Semester 1- 2016.

Italian language courses are offered from beginners through to advanced: a total of 238 adult students attended group classes and private lessons across Semester 2 2015 and Semester 1 2016.

Student feedback indicated the need for an opportunity to consolidate what had been learned before the start of the new semester.





A summer Top-up course was duly organised between the end of Semester 2-2015 and the beginning of Semester 1-2016.

ILC ACTIVITIES

Student dedication and achievements were celebrated with dinners at the end of semester 2 (November 2015) and at the end of Semester 1 (June 2016), events which were enthusiastically attended by students and management.

Exposure to the language greatly assists students in improving their listening and communication skills. To facilitate greater interaction between students a number of 'pasta and movie nights' were organized over Semester 2 -2015 and Semester 1-2016 to provide adult students with hands-on experiences in conversing with native speakers.

ILC COMPETITIONS

ILC was once again invited by the Department of Education and Training (DET) to serve on the Studitalia 2015 selection panel.

The 6 winners were awarded Studitalia scholarships at a ceremony in September 2015.

ILC was also invited to judge the Italian sector of a number of Speaking Competitions:

- MLTAQ All Languages Speaking Competition Cairns (July 2015) for which ILC provided sponsorship and winners' medals for the Italian sector
- Italian Speech Competition Townsville (August 2015)
- MLTAQ Speech Competition Sunshine Coast (August 2015) for which ILC made a

contribution of \$500.00

- Gold Coast Languages Speech Contest (August 2015) at which ILC handed awards to winning students of Italian

ILC SUBSCRIBES TO EDUCATION PERFECT

EP for languages (Language Perfect) is a popular online learning resource used by thousands of mainstream schools around the world.

Incorporating EP online activities as part of the enrolment package to adult classes has lifted the profile of ILC, placing it at the forefront of language learning innovation.

SNAPSHOT

Total students (Queensland)	19,600
Girotondo playgroup students	48
After school hours Italian program	37
Adult Italian language classes	231
Professional development seminars	8
Teacher attendees	143

WHERE TO FROM NOW

Co.As.It. is well placed to continue to serve our community in the years ahead. With astute financial management and strong forward planning, the organisation has assured its financial sustainability.

It has also adopted and improved on its highly developed information technology systems that will carry with greater efficiency, the vital work undertaken within the community.

Our long term goal is to focus our energies on becoming a prime provider of choice for our clients as well as other providers and on continuing to provide the high quality services for which we are recognised.

These services will continue to be appraised and will respond with greater flexibility, higher levels of caring and greater diversification to ensure that our operational excellence continues to strive for superior client and staff fulfilment.

With imminent changes in home care services and with the advent of the NDIS, it will be necessary to invest in human resources, marketing and up-skill existing care staff to ensure we will be able to give our clients choice and flexibility of care services.

From February 2107, the portability of a home care package assigned to a client will give us an opportunity to expand our Home Care Packages program thus reviewing our existing structure and change systems to respond to the increased number of clients.

There will be a focus on educating the community (especially the CALD community) about the new processes in accessing Home Care Packages through My Aged Care in the future.

Co.As.It. will also need to be up-skilled and already at the forefront of managing service delivery when the Home Care Packages and the Commonwealth Home

Support Programs amalgamate into a single home care program in 2018. With the advent of existing residential care providers able to become in-home care providers, Co.As.It. will also need to harness the business acumen and adapt to a commercial model of service delivery.

What will be imperative for office and care staff is the necessity to retain the personalised and individual contact maintained with clients.

The promotion and the teaching of the Italian language will always be part of Co.As.It.'s role and the goal of the ILC division is to maintain relevance in this field.

To this end, ILC proposes to continue expanding the spectrum of courses on offer to fulfil the Italian language needs of all prospective clients: from beginner to advanced, from toddler to adult, from school to university students.

In addition, ILC will continue offering professional development opportunities for Italian teachers as well as providing a platform for school students to showcase their language learning through activities such as the annual Calligram and Italian Speaking Competitions.



co.as.it. community services inc

brisbane head office
35 dover street | albion qld 4010
po box 59 | albion bc qld 4010
tel: 07 3262 5755 | fax: 07 3262 9985
mail@coasit.asn.au

gold coast office
34 thomas street | chevron island qld 4217
po box 106 | chevron island qld 4217
tel: 07 5527 6481 | fax: 07 5539 9157
gcreception@coasit.asn.au

www.coasit.asn.au

35

