



co.as.it.  
community  
services



2014 | 2015

ANNUAL REPORT



## OUR VISION

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.



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# GOVERNANCE

A background image of a modern conference room. It features a long, dark wooden conference table with several black leather office chairs arranged around it. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and a large window on the right side, letting in natural light. The overall atmosphere is professional and clean.

## Executive

Cav. Nereo Brezzi | President  
Cav. Tony Palella | Vice-President  
Tony Brown | Treasurer  
Pina Carpenzano | Secretary

## Committee Members

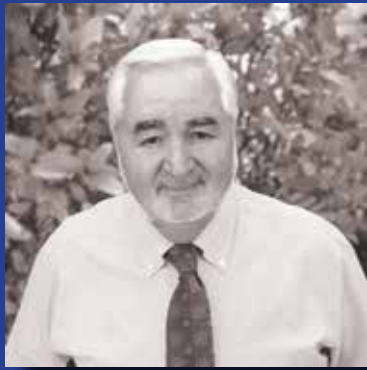
Peter Accornero  
Joseph Bonica  
Joe Chisari  
Frank Cotroneo  
Massimo Ficca  
Angela Filippello  
Luisa Rose

## Fundraising Committee

Trina Bechley  
Carmel Paolino  
Carmen Bonica  
Dina Ranieri  
Stefania Di Lione  
Connie Riga  
Anna Di Vincenzo  
Nafiye Scacheri  
Anna Muscio  
Tanina Softa

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

[Cav. Nereo Brezzi, President]



It has been very stimulating to be associated with people of such high integrity, vigour and generosity of spirit...

Once again I am delighted to report that 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, our efforts in language teaching were again solid and we were pleased to implement a range of successful community events.

As always, the dedication, hard work and diligence of all our staff and volunteers were very evident and 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 (formerly Medicare Local), the Brisbane Catholic Education Office the Townsville and Cairns Dioceses and the Italian government.

With respect to the last, we were honoured to be invited to participate at functions to welcome the Italian Prime Minister in November during his stay in Australia for the G20 summit.

We also welcomed the new Consul for Queensland and Northern Territory, Dott. Ludovico Carlo Camussi in late September.

The year however, also confronted us with a number of challenges due to the anticipated (and now being implemented) changes to service delivery in aged care underpinned by the introduction of the "My Aged Care" system by the federal government.

All service providers are affected by this development and it is hoped that teething problems will be addressed as a matter of urgency to avoid possible serious impacts on elderly clients.

The Management Committee's vision continues to be:

- Ensuring the continuation of a safe, co-operative and up-to-date working environment;
- Enabling the Director and her team to operate with maximum flexibility;
- Co-operating closely with important associates such as the Italian Embassy, the Consulate, other 'Enti Gestori', Com.It.Es. for Queensland and Northern Territory and Intercomites.

We hold an annual planning meeting to assess and review our vision, policies and strategies that will drive our activity over the coming years.

Finally, I wish to make special mention of a number of people for their outstanding contributions to Co.As.It. over the past year. The generous donations from the Piemonteis Association Qld, The Sicilian Association Qld and many other members of our community are gratefully noted.

Mrs Dina Ranieri has continued to demonstrate her dedication and leadership. The Assistant Director, Tanina Softa was able to show her managerial capacity when deputising for the Director.

All members of the Management Committee made considered and valuable contributions to policy. I offer special thanks to the Secretary Mrs Pina Carpenzano, to the Vice-President Tony Palella and to the Treasurer Tony Brown.

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, Italian language and culture.

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

[Dina Ranieri, Director]



It has been a year of many achievements, challenges and excellent results in service provision.

We were proud to finally re-open our newly constructed Casa Serena at Stafford Heights in August 2014. Many clients who had been placed on waiting lists are now able to attend the weekly social groups at the Centre. The modern structure and fully equipped centre is able to cater to the needs of many more clients living in the Brisbane North area.

The successful application of 66 extra Home Care Packages in Brisbane North and Brisbane South regions allowed many clients requiring a higher level of package of care to commence services to suit their needs.

Coordinators and other staff members across all the regions worked tirelessly in signing up new clients and concurrently transition all existing Home Care Packages to a Consumer Directed Care model.

There have been significant reforms in the aged care landscape. The Federal Government's consultations and draft guidelines have provided Co.As.It. with an opportunity to speak on behalf of community members on changes that would seriously affect the way they access services, the costs involved in receiving care and the special considerations required with reference to the CALD elderly person.

The proposed commencement of operations of My Aged Care portal from 1st July 2015, necessitated a concentration of our efforts throughout the 2014/15 year in setting up IT systems to facilitate acceptance of referrals, training of specific staff to handle these referrals and a restructuring of processes and procedures to suit this new model of service access and placement.

We received excellent feedback from our clients, their family members, local hospitals, government departments and other service providers.

The complex changes in aged care during the last 18 months have really tested our adaptability, skills and resilience and we are proud to have made the transition in accomplishing these changes so successfully.

The tender process for the RAS (Regional Assessment Service) was an important part of Co.As.It.'s future plans in ensuring continuity in assessment of clients' needs. Announcements in April 2015 allowed Co.As.It. to undertake this assessment role through a Consortium model of seven agencies undertaking assessments on behalf of Partners4Health and sub-contracted arrangements with Feros Care - both being RAS leading agencies.

Increased funding was also received from the State Government in providing services for younger persons in need of support and care. Co.As.It. has been actively involved in the numerous information sessions and workshops throughout this period that will ensure that organisations are ready for the transition to NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) which will commence in July 2016.

Co.As.It. participated in a Quality Review for the Home Care Packages program and the Home and Community Care program across Brisbane North and Brisbane South which resulted in meeting 100% of the Home Care Standards. Our Day Care Respite Services also scored highly in their last Safety Food Audit by Brisbane City Council resulting in a 5 star rating.

As a community based service organisation, we continue to strive for value for money without compromising quality. We have been effective in upskilling current staff as well as attracting new staff thus allowing the growth of our services to



respond to community needs. We received excellent feedback from our clients, their family members, local hospitals, government departments and other service providers.

The Italian Language Centre has provided wonderful opportunities for adult learners wishing to experience the learning of the Italian language. Staff have been creative in selecting various cultural activities which resulted in an increase in student participation and interest whilst instilling a new found passion for everything 'Italian'.

We were fortunate to have Dott.ssa Ignazia Nespolo (former Education Advisor for the Italian Consulate in South Australia and Queensland) as our guest speaker leading the Professional Development sessions for Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Cairns and Townsville.

Training is an integral part of maintaining Italian teachers' language proficiency at a high level as well as providing an opportunity to share and exchange ideas with all teachers of Italian in Queensland.

Our relationship with the Italian Consulate in Brisbane, the Italian Embassy in Canberra, the Brisbane Catholic Education Office, the Dioceses in Cairns and Townsville as well as the Department of Education and Training continue to strengthen and increase collaboration amongst other stakeholders which contribute to the expansion of Italian programs in State and Catholic schools throughout the State.

I recognise that our wonderful results would not be possible without a team that is visionary, creative, responsive and respectful. I thank our management committee for their insight and forward planning, our extraordinary staff and our volunteers who donate their valuable time to Co.As.It.

## PERSONNEL

Management	3
Finance	5
Special Projects	2
Program administration	30
Aged Care administration	11
Care staff	223
Allied Health	5
Nursing staff	6
Volunteers	46
ILC staff	3
Teachers	6

## DAY CARE RESPITE CENTRES

### Brisbane:

Casa Serena  
1 Lanchester Street, Stafford Heights

Casa Aurelia  
79 Sussex Road, Acacia Ridge

Cleveland Baptist Church Hall  
240 Bloomfield Road, Cleveland

### Co.As.It. South Coast:

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

## TRANSPORT

Coasters	2
Minibus	6
Cars	20

## ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

### Brisbane:

35 Dover Street, Albion

### South Coast:

34 Thomas Drive, Chevron Island

## ILC-ITALIAN LANGUAGE CENTRE

42 Newbery Street, Newmarket

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Our ageing population faces a common and significant challenge: the need to maintain a level of wellness that will sustain their current level of independence.

Co.As.It.'s ultimate goal is to continue to deliver a person-centred care model that will enhance independence, connect people, expand resources and enrich quality of life. If this also places Co.As.It. at the forefront of innovation and responsiveness to the growing and changing needs of the community we serve, then our goals will have been realised.

By so doing, Co.As.It. will stand as a peak organisation well braced to meet the needs for the reality of an ageing population. In the past 12 months, there have been significant reforms in the aged care landscape. Federal Government's consultations and draft guidelines have provided Co.As.It. with an opportunity to speak on behalf of the community members on changes that would seriously affect the way they can access services, the costs involved in receiving care and the special considerations required with reference to the CALD elderly person.

The commencement of operation of the My Aged Care as from July 1, 2015 concentrated all our efforts in setting up IT systems to facilitate acceptance of referrals from My Aged Care, identifying specific staff to handle the referrals, restructuring processes and procedures to suit the new model of service access and placement. Our 37 year experience has indicated that it is only at times of crisis that people will actively seek support services, the majority do not have a formulated contingency plan for their future health and aged care needs.

Whilst this may have sufficed in the past, with the advent of Consumer Directed Care, Co.As.It. must ensure that the elder population (especially its CALD members) is educated and well equipped to make

informed choices about their aged care and lifestyle choices well before a crisis occurs.

This is vitally important because life-changing decisions made under stress often generate long term impacts that do not always correspond to the individual's life choices and best options for care.

We have worked resolutely to minimise this happening whilst increasing opportunities for our elder community members to continue to thrive as they age.

By good planning and increasing their knowledge base we aim to ensure that the services they access will continue to meet their individual needs now and in the future.

Co.As.It. has had a memorable year with new achievements improvements and successes in its programs. However, rather than becoming complacent, these successes are being used as a springboard for the next trek as Australia's aged care system makes the transition from a provider-based access to services to a nationally controlled assessment and service delivery model.

In the past 12 months Co.As.It.:

- Officially opened the new social activity centre 'Casa Serena' at Stafford Heights.
- Was awarded the Qld Premier's Cultural Diversity Award for Outstanding Community Organisation Greater Brisbane.
- Secured new funding under the ACSIHAG program to coordinate and implement support services for CALD carers.





- Was approved for Expansion Funding to operate Community Visitors Scheme in-home and group visiting.
- Was awarded an additional 66 Home Care Packages for Brisbane North and Brisbane South.
- In March 2015, was selected as one of seven agencies within the Partners for Health Consortium to deliver RAS (Regional Assessment Service) for the new Aged Care delivery model.
- Was selected by Feros Care as a sub-contractor to undertake assessments (RAS).
- Was selected as a finalist in the National Hesta Aged Care Awards - Outstanding Community Organisation.
- Rolled out 200 iPads and technology programs to facilitate community care worker rosters within HACC and HCP programs.
- Received a grant from Kedron-Wavell Services Club to train volunteers in dementia communication.

Most significantly, we have instilled in our workers an ethos of individual 'patronage' for each care recipient. To be encouraged and championed as a capable and independent person has inspired many clients to actively work towards reaching a personal aspiration.

This empowerment has been accomplished through kindness, compassion and a genuine wish on our part to enrich their quality of life. We are intensely proud of the staff, they have conquered many limitations to help people live within their own homes with dignity and autonomy.

However, our ageing population faces a common and significant challenge: the need to maintain a

level of wellness that will sustain their current level of independence.

Although there are great resources and home services that enable them to live in their own environment, there is a need to engage them in meaningful activities that will allow them to age with dignity and respect while continuing to contribute to their communities.

Co.As.It. will continue to strive towards making the ageing process a positive, inclusive and rewarding chapter of life.

### **Italian Language Centre – ILC (A division of Co.As.It.)**

The Italian Language Centre continues to be a significant presence in curriculum support, resources and training for the learning of the Italian language and culture throughout Queensland.

With the valued collaboration of the Brisbane Catholic Education Office and the Cairns and Townsville Catholic Dioceses, it continues to offer professional development training for teachers of Italian throughout Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, Cairns and Townsville.

# COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

[Neighbourhood Centre]



Co.As.It. was able to continue to deliver services under the Community and Individual Support Program funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. During 2014/15 over 200 clients and their families were given support in the form of counselling, advocacy, language assistance, information, referral and social support.

The program seeks to understand individuals and their families, and then work alongside them to help overcome the challenges they face.

In the past 12 months, advocacy has played a major role in ensuring that service provision was relevant to each person's individual needs, support was also provided in the form of social and recreational networks as well as a number of opportunities to share cultural and regional experiences through major community events (Annual Community Concert, International Women's Day).

Language support was provided to assist and develop capacity for independent living in the form of accommodation, work placements as well as legal and Centrelink matters.

Social support and community education activities are particularly important. This year they included eight parenting workshops to promote communication and parenting skills as well as an







information booklet “Welcome to Australia” to be used particularly by students and new arrivals.

Case management including counselling, referrals and information were provided on a wide range of issues according to the client’s needs. On these occasions support was provided in the form of home visits, telephone enquiries, referral, and liaison with other agencies.

Activities and events over the past 12 months have been the staging of an annual Community Concert with over 450 members in attendance, International Women’s Day event attended by over 320 people and three information forums that saw the participation of over 400 members of the community in Brisbane North, Brisbane South and the South Coast.

As service providers we strive to achieve high quality service support in a respectful and professional manner focusing on the fundamental needs, community and age appropriate services, collaborating with other agencies and Government Departments.

The clients being supported are seen and treated with respect, integrity and they are valued and encouraged to be decisively influential in how they wish to be assisted. This quality of service has been achieved by the commitment to continuous improvement and flexibility of services which cater to each individual’s needs.

## SNAPSHOTS

Client contact	1000
Families	150
Advocacy	21
Information/Referral	194



# NATIONAL RESPITE FOR CARERS PROGRAM

During the year 2014/15, the Co.As.It. Respite Options Program has continued to provide essential support and relief for carers from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

The program offers three different types of support services: overnight respite, day care respite centre and emergency/flexible respite.



The Respite Options Program has helped several carers to continue in their carer's role and to overcome demanding situations such as the one Mr and Mrs Stellani\* were facing. Mr Stellani was suffering from emphysema, anxiety and panic attacks, his wife was his main carer.

Mrs Stellani was completely dedicated to making her husband's life as comfortable as she could, however when Mr Stellani's health deteriorated he had to wear an oxygen mask 24 hours a day.

For both of them, daily activities became difficult, especially at night time as the oxygen mask would easily trigger a panic attack.

Both soon became sleep deprived, exhausted, emotionally wrought and physically and mentally





Her deepest anxiety was that she felt she could no longer honour the promise made to her husband to look after him at home.

She feared that the level of care her husband required was so high that the only option left was to place him in a nursing home.

## SNAPSHOTS

Hours of service	
Total hours	11,410
Overnight respite	4,286
Centre-based respite	6,836
Emergency/Flexible care	28

drained. When Mrs Stellani approached the Respite Activity Officer, she was under profound stress, she felt that she could no longer look after her husband.

Her deepest anxiety was that she felt she could no longer honour the promise made to her husband to look after him at home. She feared that the level of care her husband required was so high that the only option left was to place him in a nursing home.

A meeting was arranged to discuss and formulate strategies to ensure the best care possible was provided to assist them to keep Mr Stellani at home for as long as possible.

It became vital to find a Community Care Worker with the same language and culture who would alleviate communication difficulties, especially during

his panic attacks, as well as ensure that his oxygen mask stayed in place overnight.

The benefits of the service became apparent almost immediately. After a couple of weeks both the carer and care recipient reported a dramatic change in the way they were managing at home.

Given the ability to sleep well and regain her energy, Mrs Stellani observed that the overnight respite service had been integral to her being able to continue caring for her husband at home.

Without this program Mrs Stellani would have had no choice but to place her husband in residential care.

(\* names changed)



### HOME CARE PACKAGES - Levels 1, 2, 3, 4

	Clients	Hours of service
Brisbane Nth/Sth	255	42,650
South Coast	85	17,521

### SOCIAL GROUP ACTIVITIES

	Clients	Hours of service
Brisbane North	552	69,003
Brisbane South	564	94,914
South Coast	115	30,113

### HACC IN-HOME SERVICES

	Clients	Hours of service
Brisbane North	1,427	53,552
Brisbane South	901	29,788
South Coast	244	3,676

### COMMUNITY CARE < 65 yrs

	Clients	Hours of service
Brisbane North	216	7,887
Brisbane South	146	8,014
South Coast	10	351

# HOME CARE SERVICES

[Brisbane North, Brisbane South and South Coast]

The teams managing the home care packages have achieved remarkable success in the past 12 months as clients are integrated and transitioned to Consumer Directed Care Packages (CDC).

With the introduction of the new model of services under CDC packages, clients may accumulate unexpended funds to purchase services or equipment, something which was not possible before.

The packages have opened up new possibilities that have made a huge difference to many of our clients and have resulted in a diversified service model that meets each client's wide range of needs.

There have been many rewarding and positive outcomes with this new model of service delivery. It is rewarding in being able to help to enrich the lives of these people by simple yet effective strategies that promote their independence and vitality of life.

**Alberto** uses some of the funding on cleaning services for his swimming pool. He likes to go for a swim in summer however due to failing health, was unable to keep his pool clean anymore. This client now is looking forward to better health and well-being through his regular swimming activities. Joan's arthritis which has worsened significantly restricting flexibility and movement meant that she required assistance with personal care. With funds in her budget this

client has purchased a bidet which has given her back her independence, and dignity.

**Gladys** loves gardening with her husband Norman. Both are on packages but neither can work in their much loved garden anymore. Gladys became particularly overwhelmed by the struggle of trying to keep their garden tidy all by herself. They both feared that they would have to move houses and lose one of their much loved

hobbies. A gardener was organised to assist them for two hours per week in maintaining the garden and in continuing to enjoy an activity that they have both shared for many years.

Most importantly, they can continue living in their home and still maintain their interest in gardening which is an integral part of their life.

**Roma's** family lives in NSW and due to health conditions it has become very difficult for Roma

and her husband Cyril to visit their family regularly.

They don't see their children and grandchildren and all have experienced this lack of contact as a huge loss. With the purchase of a tablet for this couple plus some individual training, both Roma and Cyril have regained family support and networking as well as have an active role in their grandchildren's lives by staying in contact with them via facebook, skype and email.





# HOME CARE SERVICES

[Brisbane North, Brisbane South and South Coast]



## STANLEY'S STORY

Stanley, a devoted husband and father married for decades was devastated by the loss of his beloved wife. He began to remove himself from situations where he saw other folk happy, sharing life with partners. This gradual withdrawal from life, family and friends was another shock to his system.

He soon became depressed, could not muster the motivation to cook, clean nor care for himself. To add to this emotional and mental anguish, a physical infirmity would soon complicate his life further.

Stanley suffered a stroke which left him paralysed on one side of his body.

On discharge, a team of caring workers made the decision with him that he still had a great deal of life left and that they would help him to regain both his physical and his emotional re-engagement with life.

What followed was an intensive program where Stanley was encouraged and supported with services that helped promote his independence and re-ablement.

Weekly physiotherapy in home sessions improved mobility and function and a Community Care Worker was organised to provide support with cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and social support such as shopping twice a week.

The regular contact, chatter and social outings as well as the encouragement and support from the

team gradually saw Stanley looking forward to the visits. It was a few months of intensive work on the part of both the physiotherapist and Stanley before he felt confident to mobilise freely, but his energy and interest in life was taking a positive turn.

The Care Services Coordinator took this as a progressive move forward in his interaction with people and discussed attending the social group located nearby. Stanley was offered the opportunity of attending – which he did. Stanley now loves participating every Monday and Wednesday.

He has found a lovely group of friends and thoroughly enjoys attending each week where he plays cards, bingo and enjoys a delicious home cooked meal by the wonderful cooks at Casa Serena. His Mondays and Wednesdays are full of laughter and chatter with his friends and he enjoys his weekly physiotherapy regime where he really works hard to ensure his mobility constantly improves.

Stanley has regained his interest in life, is now independent, mobilises well and feels like he has a useful role to play in the community. His Tuesdays and Thursdays are also full of activity whether it is shopping, enjoying a coffee or preparing his favourite meals with the help of the Community Care Worker.

Stanley lives life now and is so happy and grateful for what Co.As.It. has been able to help him achieve. We are also proud to have been able to enrich his life and his well-being.



Without this program, many people would be unable to access this type of care unless they were in a hospital environment.



Co.As.It. continues to promote active and healthy ageing by providing services for people with high care needs who would otherwise be living in an aged care residential facility.

Level 3 and 4 Home Care Packages provide a comprehensive level of care that enables our highly expert nursing and allied health staff to meet the numerous complex challenges faced by our clients on a daily basis. Without this program, many people would be unable to access this type of care unless they were in a hospital environment.

Attending the high-school graduation ceremony of her granddaughter was a dream-come-true for a special package care client. After many months of careful planning and with the support and care provided by staff this dream was finally realised. This client's personal goal involved overcoming many obstacles and health issues that would not have been achieved without the person-centred care that was provided by Co.As.It. When we met the client, she was not receiving any support services and was living alone. Carrying out tasks of daily living were difficult due to the symptoms of her Parkinson's disease.

Her continued "freezing", where the whole body would be temporarily paralysed would often result in unsteadiness, falls and hospitalisation. Late last year, Co.As.It. designed an individual and comprehensive care plan that was implemented five days per week with the aim of improving her

health and wellbeing. Tasks of daily living eg. showering were facilitated by staff who supported her independence by laying out toiletries, clothing and remaining nearby whilst she did these tasks independently.

The client's new-found confidence soon inspired her to want to actively work towards her goal. This new attitude influenced all areas of her life and gave her the impetus to plan and look forward to achieving her goal for the future. Improvements in her mobility were achieved through regular physiotherapy sessions, which were then continued by the staff; changes to her diet meant she was eating regularly and healthily and no longer relying on frozen meals.

With this newly positive outlook, the client worked with Co.As.It. staff on all aspects of her life: improving health, running the home, organising enjoyable outdoor activities, attending medical appointments and enjoying visits to hair salon and supermarkets. All of this work finally led to the day of the graduation. Co.As.It. staff were there that morning to help her dress in her finest. Her clothing was laid out beautifully on her bed.

But the final touch of a designer hat was the most special addition to her day. Co.As.It. staff had arranged shopping trips with the client to buy all the materials and colourful beading to have the hat hand-made. It was perfect and summed up all the incredible care the client had received from dedicated Co.As.It. staff.

## CLIENT/FAMILY FEEDBACK



Dear CoAs.It. caring Staff,

I would like to confirm that mum has entered permanent residential care. Mum was discharged from hospital that day. It's sad to see how things have declined for her but we hope once she settles in the home, she will be able to enjoy the 24 hour attention and care. At least my sisters and I can be daughters once again for her.

Unfortunately, she is not walking and she finds it difficult to feed herself, so we have a few challenges in front of us. I just want to say thank you to you all for your wonderful help. We will miss it greatly. Your support and help has been amazing and professional. We have learnt so much about mum, caring and life in general. Your service has been wonderful.

The Sunshine group on Mondays and Fridays has meant the world to Mum. She loved it. Mum would struggle during the holidays and instinctively she knew that it should have been on. The attention, love and care the staff provided was amazing.

Thank you to Laura and Lisa for being great co-ordinators. Lisa, I will miss seeing you and the staff on Fridays, you are doing a great job, it's been a delight having your support. Your team are lovely, friendly, caring and supportive people. I miss you and the team so much, you became our family. Thank you Sandra, I think Mum was a bit attached to you. We will miss the Monday staff that picked Mum up. They were a delight to see every Monday, very positive and professional. It was so nice to know Mum was looked after so well. Now, I'm getting teary. I cannot thank highly enough the carers that we have had. I

want to thank Lecil, you were lovely and Mum loved your calm and caring nature. You showed assertiveness, attentiveness and you had a refreshing approach to caring.

I'm not sure on the right words for thanking Narelle. Narelle, you have been an amazing white haired angel to mum. You have an amazing professionalism and a beautiful kindness that poured out to us every time you were here with Mum. You were able to bring out of Mum her cheeky personality and talent. Your cooking background was an asset for us, as Mum loved the cooking sessions with you.

Mum's love to knead dough was a delight to see as she would eventually knead everything you both cooked - regardless of what you cooked. Your support to me and my sisters was a blessing too.

We always knew Mum was in good hands once Narelle was with Mum. I also need to mention the wonderful support from Rita, Laura and Sarina and Zina. Rita, you have been a wonderful support, especially in the early days. You managed to call me and my sisters at the right time and give out advice that was so critical at times. We valued your advice, thank you for being so professional, friendly and warm. Laura, your love to mum in the early days was beautiful. When you visited us this year in your new role, it was a delight that Mum's mood was lifted when you arrived and remained for the whole time. Your approach is warm and professional.

Please use this letter to thank those mentioned, the staff need to be reminded they are doing an amazing job. It's been a tough journey for us but we are very thankful for your service.

Franca T





# SOCIAL ACTIVITY GROUPS

[Brisbane North, Brisbane South, South Coast]

Our bilingual and bicultural workers are invaluable in delivering a CALD service and expanding services to other languages and cultures.

Age, social isolation, disability and inability to participate in other activities are just some of the difficulties some people face every day.

This service is invaluable to carers who need time out or clients who need to interact or socialize with people from the same cultural background. Social activity centres provide services at five locations throughout Brisbane and one location on the South Coast.

We have provided services to over 14,100 clients this year. Our bilingual and bicultural workers are invaluable in delivering a CALD service and expanding services to other languages and cultures.



The cognitive impairment groups (Sunshine Groups) run 2 days per week and these are very successful in providing support to clients and carers. Activities and resources continue to be developed to aid and benefit clients and staff.

In-house training has been a significant part of this year ensuring that all our staff and volunteers are up to date with the latest trends and changes in the aged care industry.

Our Dementia Resource Officer has provided extra dementia training to staff working with the clients and staff has shown pride and satisfaction when positive results have been achieved with these techniques.



# SOCIAL ACTIVITY GROUPS

[Brisbane North, Brisbane South, South Coast]

We strive to provide a holistic approach to our clients by assisting them to access complementary programs and support services



Clients participate in regular activities which include craft, exercises, games and outings. This year, clients celebrated numerous theme days, some of which were the Italian Republic Day, Australia Day, Melbourne Cup, Bastille Day, Mother's and Father's Day, Gelato Day, High Tea, Clown-around Day, St Patricks, 'Festa Latina' and the ever popular Valentine's Day just to name a few!

Clients look forward to the different activities and eagerly join in. We strive to provide a holistic

service to our clients by assisting them to access complementary programs and support services such as continence aids, allied health, assistive technology and information dissemination.

Collaboration with other service providers such as Volunteering Gold Coast, OzPol, Star Transport and Transit Care has enabled transport agreements to facilitate the movement of clients to and from venues as well as sharing special occasion days with diverse cultural groups.



## CALD ACTIVITY PROGRAM

The program operates fortnightly or monthly in 14 residential aged care facilities within the Brisbane metropolitan area and has been specifically created to bridge the gap between the facility and their Italian CALD residents by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate diversional therapy activities.

The bi-lingual activity officers have the cultural expertise not only to promote interaction and social contact within the aged care facility but also to design and create activities that are relevant and readily achievable for Italian CALD.

Many Italian residents are not able to fully engage in the social/recreational programs at the facilities not only because of linguistic difficulties but also because some recreational pastimes such as embroidery, crocheting, sewing or gardening are too close to the resident's working life to be considered leisure.

The activities, games and tasks prepared by the CALD Activity Officers are culturally suited to the interests and backgrounds of the residents and traditional coffee and music feature strongly. This program is especially vital for those with cognitive impairment where the loss of linguistic capacity means that communication with the nursing staff and other residents is no longer possible. The presence of the CALD Activity Program provides both social contact with people from their cultural background as well as engagement in significant lifetime activities that have been traditionally shared with family and friends.

Although they are no longer able to undertake these independently the valued support of the aged care homes has enabled some wonderful opportunities to recreate these within the facility. Pizza and pasta making, baking, celebration of 'Carnevale' and Italian Republic Day have been widely enjoyed by the residents who look forward to their 'social groups' keenly. Most importantly, CALD activity groups are promoting a sense of connection between the residents where the aroma of freshly brewed coffee is so inviting that many other residents love to drop in and experience the Italian culture as well! Family members are welcome to attend and the valued support from volunteers makes this program genuinely rewarding.



## COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

The program, funded by the Department of Social Services, still remains the only source of contact with the wider community for many Italian residents living in residential aged care homes.

The program provides companionship to people who live in residential care facilities and has been expanded to include those living at home and receiving a home care package.

These clients have been identified as being at risk of becoming socially isolated and would be at a great disadvantage if the CVS program did not offer the social, emotional and spiritual support through its CVS volunteers. The program is specifically funded for the Italian CALD community who are not only socially isolated but also linguistically and culturally isolated.

# SPECIAL PROGRAMS

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

Funded by the Department of Social Services for a two and a half year period until June 2015, this program has made dramatic changes to the way that the older Italian community has managed their well-being as they age.

Over the past 12 months, this project has successfully met the specific care needs of older Italian CALD persons from both an informational and socio-recreational perspective as well as meeting the information needs of mainstream service providers to better cater to the needs of this target group.

Diversity and Inclusion has provided cultural briefings, information sessions, bi-weekly technology classes on computers and iPads in Brisbane and the South Coast, has created linguistically appropriate resources, encouraged linkages with mainstream health, legal and community organisations, promoted liaison for aged care providers and the CALD community and established a wide range of information and socio-recreational sessions that have promoted active and healthy ageing in the target group.

Education and information sessions for the target group were based on identified needs of the community and included a wide range of topics some of which were accessing hearing aid services, planning for future aged care needs, maintaining strong mental health, raising awareness of macular degeneration, participating and recognising the benefits of new activities like tai chi, laughter therapy and zumba. Regular information sessions increased capacity in the target group to make informed decisions about aged care services, their current and future health and ageing needs as well as providing knowledge on accessing mainstream activities within their local community.

The project also responded directly to requests for support and assistance by both mainstream service providers and older persons from diverse backgrounds wishing to access appropriate services for their needs.

This program has proven to be so valuable that Co.As.It. is continuing to fund some of the activities such as technology classes, socio/recreational groups and some information sessions.





# SNAPSHOTS

Information sessions	36
Technology classes	174
Cultural briefings	24
Socio/Recreational groups	152
Client contact	4,018

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Carers are very keen to participate in the group that the carers themselves have called “3 Hours of Peace”

### AVOIDING CARER FATIGUE PROGRAM

Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Carer Support Program was the result of a successful funding application until June 2017.

It is proving to be a valuable and much needed service within the community since its initiation in March 2015.

This program and its staff have already received a high number of emails, praising the counselling, support and socio-recreational activities that have been created specifically to meet the emotional, physical and well-being challenges faced by people caring for someone full-time.

Weekly socio-recreational groups provide the perfect informal setting for sharing individual experiences, and most importantly having time away from caring. A quilting group has been started and carers are very keen to participate in the group that the carers themselves have called “3 Hours of Peace”.

For those carers who must remain at home, specific activities have been arranged to help them network and keep in contact with others who share a common role.

These activities are small get-togethers in their homes or by participating in the “buddy” system that has been created for carers to network through regular telephone calls and home visits.

Information sessions on planning for future aged care, importance of taking respite and cultural briefings for mainstream service providers are also an integral part of this program.

There is a very high degree of collaboration between aged care teams, respite coordinators and other office staff to ensure there is a continuity of services that meet the complexities of everyday living whilst still being a full-time carer.





The worker's ability to 'respectfully sit with him in the silence of his thoughts and the loudness of his pain', had a cathartic effect on him.

# MARTINO'S STORY

Martino is an Italian CALD gentleman in his eighties who within a period of 12 months, lost both his wife and his daughter. Martino had stopped all support services at home because as he stated, *"There is a reason to live as I have a lot of time to kill now that I have no-one to care for: I am just waiting to die"*.

During our first home visit, Martino hesitantly started to share his life journey which also revealed he had witnessed his only son die of cardiac arrest. It was understandable that having lost almost his entire family, Martino was questioning the meaning of life, the meaning of his own existence.

The worker's ability to 'respectfully sit with him in the silence of his thoughts and the loudness of his pain', had a cathartic effect on him. He expressed

his feelings and the opportunity to talk about them enabled him to *"get an insight in my life!"*

With gentle encouragement and a gradual building of trust, Martino has been able to share his pain and learn to cope with the changes of life on his own. Whilst reticent to have people visit him, the worker soon discovered that after a lifetime of caring for his family, having no-one to care for now was the biggest loss to his life.

Martino has now agreed to become a 'phone buddy' for someone who is going through a similar situation and is isolated and lonely. This small task has given him a new interest in life where once again he feels needed and useful. He is also about to join one of our recreational activity groups.





## MAI'S STORY

Mai has been able to break away by joining a weekly quilting group under the Avoiding Carer Fatigue Program.

Mai is a 73 year old woman whose husband is affected by cognitive impairment. Past issues in her marriage and life evidenced emotional/verbal abuse from her husband, a lack of motivation in tasks of daily living and periodic depression.

She had also relinquished all decision making due to high levels of anxiety and fear of retribution.

Feedback from family members has indicated that following counselling and support services through Co.As.It., Mai has become empowered to make dramatic changes in her life.

Mai's children and grandchildren have witnessed a number of changes which have made a significant difference to her life and her relationships with them and her husband.

After decades of being treated as invisible, Mai has had to take the reins and this has been both a challenge and an achievement. They tell us that *"Our intervention has proven phenomenal!"*

Mai has been able to break away by joining a weekly quilting group under the Avoiding Carer Fatigue Program.

At the group she is able to share her feelings and most importantly recognise that there are other women who have also had similar experiences in their marriage and in caring for a person full time.

Mai has recently purchased separate beds to avoid being distressed by her husband's frequent tossing and turning at night.

She has taken the lead in decision making and has involved her husband in weekly visits with one of our community care workers.

We believe this is just the beginning of a new life for Mai as she reaches out to more services, continues to develop positive self-awareness and acquire confidence to make her own decisions about her own life and that of her family's.

COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY [MAKE IT HAPPEN]

...an established tradition that highlights not only the roles of women in today's society but also the achievements of women who continue to overcome challenges in their personal, business, education and socio-cultural lives.







Co.As.It.'s long term engagement with the Italian CALD and now the wider community has allowed the organisation to feature strongly in many community events that have celebrated cultural and linguistic diversity as well as significant international events.

The International Women's Day function has now become an established tradition that highlights not only the roles of women in today's society but also the achievements of women who continue to overcome challenges in their personal, business, education and socio-cultural lives.

Gracefully attended by Teresa Gambaro MP, Grace Grace MP, Com.It.Es. President Mariangela Stagnitti and hosted by Ch 7 Personality Sharyn Ghidella, Co.As.It's International Women's Day has developed into an event that is eagerly awaited each year.

Celebrated by over 320 women each year, this event promotes a sense of connectivity as well as nurturing respect and recognition for past successes of women, especially for the younger generation who attend in large numbers.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Fieritalia became a highly recognised national event that saw the participation of over 20,000 patrons each time it was staged.

## FIERITALIA FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL



Co.As.It. has staged significant Italian community festivals since 2007. The festivals celebrate the Italian culture and the many lasting contributions made by Italian migrants to Queensland's many fields such as commerce, construction, lifestyle and the arts.

Fieritalia became a highly recognised national event that saw the participation of over 20,000 patrons each time it was staged.

In 2014 the festival took on a new identity as a boutique Italian food and wine event that was held on October 12th at the Brisbane Racing Club and attended by 3,000 participants.

Special guests such as the Italian Consul for Queensland and Northern Territory Dott. Ludovico Carlo Camussi, Cr Vicki Howard and Cr David McLachlan also attended.

Celebrity chefs Karen Martini from Better Homes and Gardens and Dominique Rizzo from the Lifestyle Channel were two well-known chefs and personalities to grace the event.

Sharyn Ghidella and Damien Anthony Rossi from Ch7, as well as Greg Victor from Magic 882 Radio, hosted the day's activities that included culinary creations and demonstrations by nationally recognised chefs.

Participants were also able to try their hand at traditional Italian fine food creation such as sausage filling, pizza making and wine tasting.

Most importantly the aroma of fragrant Italian coffee permeated through the stands of delicious Italian displays and food. This smaller boutique event allowed patrons a genuine 'hands on' experience with all things Italian.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The event was a significant occasion linked to the traditional spiritual presence of the Italian community in the area.

## COMMUNITY CONCERT

Co.As.It. Community Services under the patronage of the Italian Consulate for Queensland and the Northern Territory was again proud to stage another Community Concert on November 29th, 2014.

Held at the old site of the Italo-Australian Centre which has now been renovated and refurbished by the Multicultural Community Association, the event was a significant occasion linked to the traditional spiritual presence of the Italian community in the area.

As the lights dimmed, Master of Ceremonies Damien Anthony Rossi warmly welcomed the community and

special guests before calling Co.As.It. President Cav. Nereo Brezzi, to address the audience. Highlighting Co.As.It.'s 37 year history and its ability to meet the needs of so many in the community, Cav. Brezzi thanked the audience for their continued patronage of the event before introducing Dott. Ludovico Carlo Camussi, the Italian Consul for Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Dott. Camussi conveyed his thanks to the assembled local and state representatives: Cr Kim Marx (representing the Lord Mayor), Cr Vicky Howard (Brisbane Central) and Mariangela Stagnitti (Com.It.Es. President) for their support and







cooperation. A wonderful array of talented entertainers created a festive atmosphere for over 380 spectators.

Skilled dancers from the Baila Conmigo Dance Group (Club 50/50) performed the tango amongst other well known dances and interstate performer Nata Forte flew in especially for the event. Of particular enjoyment were soprano Leslie Martin-Nightingale and tenor Raffaele Pierno.

Raffaele's a cappella rendition of 'Nessun Dorma' by special audience request, brought the audience to its feet in enthusiastic appreciation. The ever popular

Italian-Australian tenor, musician, songwriter and composer Alfio Bonanno who jetted in from New York gave emotional performances of favourites 'Chitarra romana', 'Il mondo', 'Non pensare a me', and 'Il nostro sogno' that brought tears to the eyes of many.

His final song 'Con te partirò' was a huge crowd pleaser with many spectators crowding around him after the event for signed CD's and photographs.

Co.As.It. also thanks its many supporters, community organisations and individuals for the continued support of this annual event.



COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

The annual celebration  
is also the platform for  
the recognition of  
Co.As.It. volunteers  
who have volunteered  
for a period of five years.



ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY





Co.As.It. Community Services once again commemorated the Italian Republic Day by its annual festive event held at the Brisbane Abruzzo Club on Sunday 31 May, 2015.

Over 200 people and a number of distinguished guests attended, amongst whom Dott. Ludovico Carlo Camussi (Italian Consul for Queensland and Northern Territory), Mr Peter Russo MP (Member for Sunnybank) representing the Premier of Queensland Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk MP, Mrs Grace Grace MP (Member for Brisbane Central) representing the Hon. Shannon Fentiman (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs), Ms Mariangela Stagnitti (President of Com.It.Es. for Queensland and Northern Territory) and Councillor Norm Wyndham (McDowall Ward).

This event has been held for a number of years and is a popular community occasion for many first and second generation Italians and their families.

Italian language teacher Alfredo Ferranti charmed the audience with his young students from Rainworth State Primary School who delivered the Italian and Australian anthems before also singing the well known song of the Resistance fighters "Bella Ciao".

President of Co.As.It. Cav. Nereo Brezzi spoke briefly about Co.As.It. before introducing the Italian Consul, Dott. Ludovico Carlo Camussi.

Dott. Camussi addressed the guests, highlighting the significance of this special occasion and the many contributions made by the Italians to their new country.





Co.As.It. was grateful to the Consul for attending the event especially since there were a number of functions celebrated throughout the Brisbane and Gold Coast region in occasion of the Republic Day.

Councillor Peter Russo conveyed warmest congratulations to the achievement of the Italian Republic on celebrating the 69th commemoration of this significant period in Italian history.

Expressing similar sentiments, Ms Grace Grace MP shared anecdotes from both her personal and public life as a second generation Italian and as a politician.

The annual celebration is also the platform for the recognition of Co.As.It. volunteers who have volunteered for a period of five years. This year the Co.As.It. Appreciation Medal and Certificate was

awarded to Fiorella Glover who has tirelessly given of her time to both clients and staff. As guests were entertained by interstate singer Alfredo Malabello, a four-course meal was enjoyed by all and the celebratory mood of the day continued well into the afternoon with raffles, music and dancing by Walter Morellato from the 'Two Cappuccinos'.

The success of the event is attributed to the generous contributions by valued sponsors Fil D'Arro from Italiquire, Luigi Borgo from Borgo Smallgoods, Alf and Diane Sorbello from Heart of New Farm Merthyr Village, Black and White Home Services and Co.As.It. staff who also donated prizes.

Co.As.It. is both proud and grateful for their continued support.

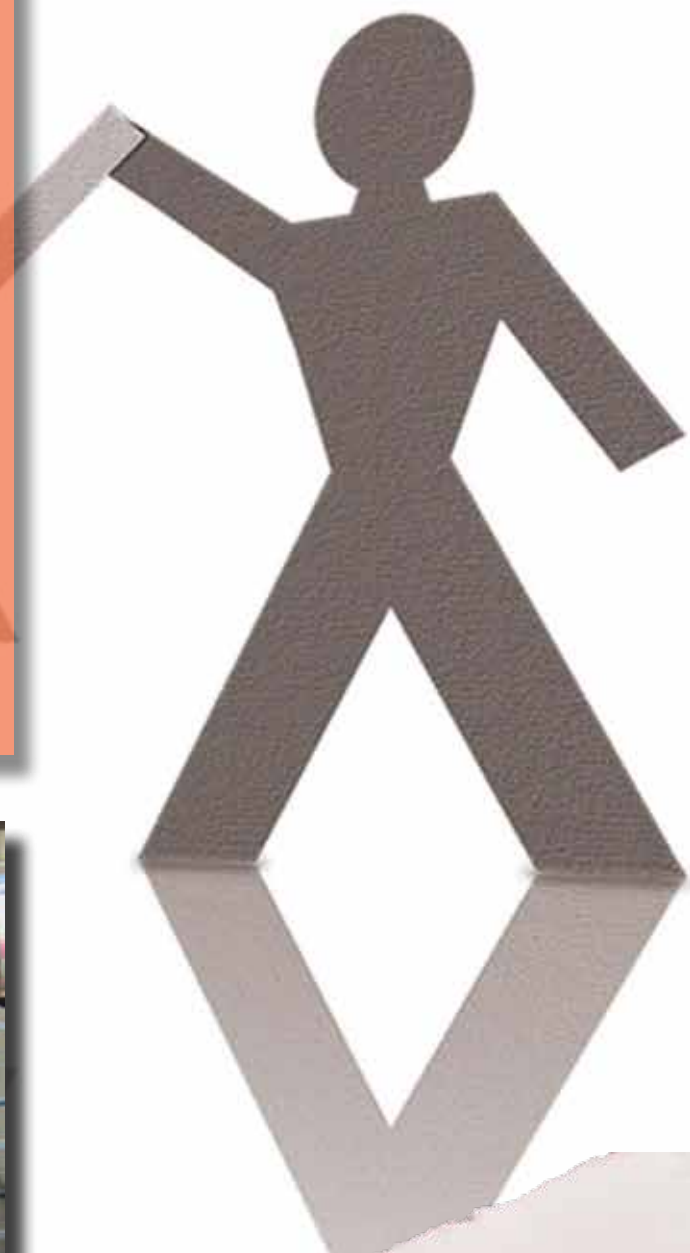
# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND DONATIONS

Co.As.It. is deeply thankful for the continued support of the community especially for the generous donations received from other community based organisations that acknowledge and support its many aged care programs.

On Saturday 25th October, Director Dina Ranieri attended the AGM of the Sicilian Association of Qld where President Mr Joe Politi and his committee presented Co.As.It. with a generous donation.

Other community organisations have also pledged their financial support and it is with gratitude that donations were received from the Italo-Australian Pensioners Association on 23 September, 2014 and from the Piemonteis Association Inc. on 24 February, 2015.

These donations were utilized to supplement the restructuring of the Social Activity Centre Casa Serena which can now cater to the needs of over 150 persons per week, as well as purchase much needed equipment for physiotherapy services.



Thank you...



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.

Language courses span a wide range of applications from playgroup, insertion and immersion classes to after school, adult and travellers courses. Insertion classes within Queensland schools are a result of partial funding provided by the Italian Government for the promulgation of the Italian language and culture and close collaboration with Catholic Education Offices in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville.

## **GIROTONDO PLAYGROUP**

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 and parents are welcomed to participate and engage in activities.

## **AFTER SCHOOL HOURS ITALIAN PROGRAM**

Mother-tongue teachers ensure students are positively engaged in learning language through a range of hands on activities.

Primary aged children may attend after school hours classes at various locations in Brisbane's north and south.

## **ADULT ITALIAN CLASSES**

Italian language courses are offered from beginners to advanced for adults and also cater to the needs of travellers who need basic communication skills to enrich short trips to Italy.

These courses also incorporate regular viewing of contemporary Italian films, the staging of pizza, trivia and tombola nights where fun and interactive language use become a living and dynamic experience.





## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### 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. Students also took part in the Language Perfect World Championships in May 2015, achieving one silver and two bronze awards.

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.

### ITALIAN IMMERSION DAY AT ILC

School excursions were promoted in mainstream schools teaching Italian, providing the opportunity for teachers to book an exclusive Italian experience for their students at ILC. On 6 May 2015, twenty Year 9 students from St Columban's College Caboolture took part in ILC's Italian immersion program.

### ITALIAN INSERTION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

Curriculum support: The Italian Language Centre supports Italian programs within Catholic, State and Independent schools and this support is formalised by annual renewal of a number of Memorandums of

Understanding with the following entities:

- The Italian Government
- Brisbane Catholic Education Office
- Catholic Education Services (Dioceses of Cairns and Townsville)
- North Lakes State College

### COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS

Open to all students of Italian across five categories (Prep-to Yr9), ILC launched a Calligram competition in October 2014 with over 200 students participating. Winners and highly commended entries were displayed at the StuditaliA Award ceremony on 21 November 2014. ILC was once again invited by the Department of Education and Training (DET) to serve on the StuditaliA 2014 selection panel to select high achievers in Italian language classes.

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

- MLTAQ All Languages Speaking Competition Cairns (Aug 2014)
- Italian Speech Competition Townsville (Aug 2014)
- MLTAQ Speech Competition Sunshine Coast (Aug 2014)



## SNAPSHOTS

Total Students Queensland wide	19,600
Girotondo playgroup Students	48
After School Hours Italian program	37
Adult Italian Language classes:	231
Professional development seminars	8
Teacher attendees	143

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ILC provided a range of opportunities for teachers of Italian to maintain their language proficiency.

Dott.ssa Ignazia Nespole ((former Education Advisor for the Italian Consulate SA and Qld) was invited to present a series of Italian Proficiency Days in Brisbane (9 Oct 2014), Sunshine Coast (11 Oct 2014), Townsville (13 Oct 2014) and Cairns (15 Oct 2014).

ILC was invited to present two Italian workshops at the 'All Languages Teachers Professional Development Event' organised by Brisbane Catholic Education and Independent Schools Queensland in February 2015 at Griffith University South Bank.

ILC Italian proficiency days for teachers were presented at the following locations:

- Sunshine Coast (2 May 2015) in association with Department of Education Regional Manager Curriculum Support
- Cairns (18 May 2015) in association with Catholic Education Services
- Townsville (19 May 2015) in association with Townsville Catholic Education Office







## INTERNS

Co.As.It. has had a long standing collaboration with Ca'Foscari University in Venice that enables university students to undertake a three-month internship with Co.As.It. and ILC.

## STUDITALIA 2014

ILC was once again involved with DET (Department of Education, Training and Employment) as panelist judges for the Studitalia statewide competition between Italian language students.

A scholarship program to which ILC is an active contributor allows the winning students a month long sojourn in Italy and the opportunity to attend an Italian college in Cividale del Friuli.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES – ADULT CLASSES

ILC staff members regularly attend and implement social functions that not only allow for student interaction outside of the classroom but also for students to exercise their language skills in an informal setting with teachers and members of the wider Italian community.

The most popular events are the pizza and film nights closely followed by end of semester dinners at classic Italian eateries and restaurants.





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