



co.as.it.  
community  
services



# *Annual* **REPORT**

**2018 - 2019**



## Our MISSION

To offer choice, value and consistency to people with diverse needs.

## 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 the study of the Italian language and culture.

## Our VALUES

### **Dignity:**

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

### **Sensitivity:**

Meeting the consumer's needs by being supportive, responsive, adaptive and innovative and supporting consumers in their choice of care and lifestyle.

### **Honesty:**

Acting with Integrity, being transparent, exercising stewardship and governance while being responsive 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:**

Striving for a high standard of consumer satisfaction and to excel in all that we do.

# Board

## OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVES



### **CHAIRPERSON/PRESIDENT**

Cav. Nereo Brezzi

### **VICE PRESIDENT and SECRETARY**

Cav. Antonio Giovanni Palella

### **TREASURER**

Antony Brown

### **DIRECTORS**

Peter Accornero

Joe Bonica

Joe Chisari

Massimo Ficca (till January 2019)

Frank Cotroneo (till April 2019)

Angela Filippello (till December 2018)

### **CEO**

Dina Ranieri

### **ASSISTANT CEO**

Tanina Softa



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# President's REPORT

A major change to our corporate structure took place on 9th July 2018 when we became a Company Limited By Guarantee from an Incorporated Association. The new structure allows more flexibility but also imposes a challenge to the Board to operate continuously in full observance of Corporate Governance processes. To that end, special training organised by and conducted by the Governance Institute was held in January 2019.

The Board again met for its annual planning meeting in January that enabled us to review how we continue to deliver our programs and services in the context of our vision for the Co.As.It. of tomorrow.

I wish to sincerely thank the Directors, the CEO and her staff for their tireless contributions during a very active year.

Our language program through the Italian Language Centre continues to be successful in reaching thousands of students in Qld, adult students in Brisbane and promoting the Italian Language and culture constantly. This year saw our ongoing major participation in the 24th annual 'Studitalia' scholarship and the inaugural Queensland State Language Championships. ILC's Professional Development program forms the basis for advancing the standards of Italian teachers in Qld. The success of ILC would not be possible without the financial support of the Italian Government and generous personal involvement by the Italian Consul and the

Education Adviser at the Italian Embassy, Dott.ssa Anna Rita Tamponi.

After a long period of development, in September 2018 we met with other Co.As.It.s in Australia to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that envisages greater cooperation and mutual assistance in areas of common interest with obvious focus on Italian teaching and aged care service delivery. The MOU was witnessed by the Italian Ambassador in Melbourne during the celebrations of Co.As.It. Melbourne's 50th year of activities.

In November we were saddened to farewell the Italian Consul for Qld & NT, Ludovico Carlo Camussi. Dott. Camussi had been with us for 4 years and made significant and lasting contributions to the Italian community and to perceptions of Italians in the broader community.

In January, we were able to welcome his successor Dott. Salvatore Napolitano who quickly displayed his energy and positive commitment to continuing the excellent work of his predecessors.

The year saw us receive some generous donations to enable us to continue and expand our activities. The Scalabrini Village (Brisbane) donated \$100,000 to support our Dementia Services and Resources. The Sicilian Association (Qld.) Inc. once again donated a generous \$5,000.



■ It gives me great pleasure to present this report which marks another successful year of accomplishments in Co.As.It.'s 40th year of serving the community. ■

Collaboration and the support of partners are always vital in accomplishing united positive outcomes for our clients and community members. I would like to acknowledge our valued partners who have supported our vision.

The dedication and contribution of our staff and volunteers is invaluable, and the Board once again expresses their sincerest appreciation. Our exceptional CEO, Dina Ranieri leads the organisation with a resolute direction for growth and sustainability in our programs.

I am grateful for the on-going support of the whole Board. Together, we are excited by the challenges and opportunities of the coming years and we are confident our continued vision will guide us in the advancement of our programs.

**Cav. Nereo Brezzi**  
**President**

# Ceo's REPORT

Celebrating 40 years of community services in late 2018 also highlighted my personal milestone of 31 years with the organisation. It gave me time to reflect on how far we have come and how much our landscape has changed over that period.

I commenced in Co.As.It.'s 9th year of services. Being involved until its 40th anniversary I have witnessed many changes and relied constantly on the guidance of our Management Committee and now Board and the commitment and dedication of our staff and volunteers.

The organisation has evolved to become a provider of choice for many CALD members of our community. It has kept its allegiance to the Italian community but has embraced many other CALD communities that make up the fabric of our society in Australia.

Every person who comes into contact with our organisation is treated as a family member, we are committed to being alongside every client, supporting them and their family members in their journey. They become part of our everyday focus and contribute to the growth of the organisation.

During this financial year we continued to increase our footprint in the five regions across South East Queensland, we improved internal efficiencies, and

increased client satisfaction - a key priority area. Our commitment to our community, providing excellent services that are consistent and value for money will continue to be our focus.

After decades of operating as an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation, Co.As.It. transitioned to a company limited by guarantee in July 2018 and a new three-year Strategic Plan was outlined by the Board of Management to meet our organisation's future vision. The Board is gratefully acknowledged for their on-going voluntary commitment, leadership and resoluteness. As we venture into greater programmatic, financial and administrative strategies to establish a balanced portfolio, we appreciate the efforts made by the Directors to attain long-term financial viability and sustainability of our vision.

The announcement of the Royal Commission into aged care provided us with an opportunity to review policies and procedures and identify the benefits of continuous improvement. We are constantly aligning our practices and policies with the new aged care standards and are refining the client's experience through service delivery, communication and meeting of their desired goals. The clients' satisfaction surveys have been exceptional, evidence that we are achieving our goals in placing the client at the centre of care.

The documented feedback is an attestation to our



“ It is with great satisfaction that I present our achievements over the last financial year. ”

funding bodies that Co.As.It. has rightly earned its strong reputation for excellent service provision that consistently makes positive contributions towards client wellbeing and independence.

The Home Care Packages program has continued to grow over the last year. We continued our efforts in finalising our clinical guidance framework as we increased the clinical and allied health teams within the organisation. We know that we respond quickly to client's needs and our systems and staff are flexible and agile, valuable assets that will enable Co.As.It. to remain competitive in the market.

Concerned with the long waiting times for a home care package, we continued to provide feedback to Government in reference to the increasing amounts of unspent funds sitting in providers' accounts and the frustration of seeing people forced into aged care facilities unnecessarily, because these funds have not been allocated for package care. Advocating for those

who cannot speak for themselves and for those who are most vulnerable, we continue to urge the Government to address this disparity.

Well into the 4th year since the opening of the 'My Aged Care' portal, we are still confronted with older people and families having difficulties in navigating the system. There are confusing entry points, multiple assessments and numerous information sources that bewilder English speakers but it is totally incomprehensible to older members of the CALD communities. Our staff, many of whom are bilingual, are laboriously involved on a daily basis explaining processes and supporting people confronted by its complexities. There is still a very serious barrier for older CALD people needing to access services and support.

To succeed in this changing landscaping it is important to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, viz. Australian Federal and State Government, Italian Government representatives, Education Queensland, Italian Embassy, Brisbane North PHN, consortium members, local providers, CALD Network group members and all other agencies involved in improving the lives of our community members and supporting language teaching in the State of Queensland.

Co.As.It. through its history has always had an important role in the promotion of the Italian language and

culture. It is part of our past, present and future and we will always be connected to our roots, be this through the Italian language programs taught in schools throughout Queensland or through our service programs.

Co.As.It. will always be committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture that values diversity and inclusiveness. We value the unique skills and the multitude of languages spoken by our staff and volunteers, abilities that nourish meaningful and relevant relationships to add value to the ways we support clients.

Through the Italian Language Centre division, we continued to promote Italian language and culture through a variety of programs and initiatives, supporting well over 24,000 students across the State. ILC continued to be pivotal for students wishing to learn Italian as well as teachers of Italian, accessing contemporary professional development opportunities and resources to ensure Italian programs delivered in schools across Queensland were of a high standard and inspired future study of the language.

To those committed and passionate Italian teachers who initiate interest and impart knowledge in the classrooms, we thank you for your outstanding efforts and we appreciate and give special thanks to our staff

and volunteers who have been instrumental in building our sterling reputation, it is they who constantly commit to our community every day.

Together with our Board of Management, I look forward to the year ahead with great enthusiasm and passion for making a difference.

**Dina Ranieri**  
CEO







## SERVICE CENTRES

### **BRISBANE:**

#### *Main Office*

35 Dover Street, Albion

#### *Italian Language Centre*

1st Floor, 42 Newbery Street, Newmarket

#### *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

#### *Bracken Ridge Centre*

Bracken Ridge Road, Bracken Ridge

### **SOUTH COAST:**

#### *South Coast Office*

34 Thomas Drive, Chevron Island

#### *Italo-Australian Club*

18 Fairway Drive, Clear Island Waters



*Bracken Ridge Proposed Multi-Use Facility*

# *Personnel*

## **2018/2019**

<b>3</b>	<b><i>Management</i></b>
<b>7</b>	<b><i>Finance</i></b>
<b>13</b>	<b><i>General Administration</i></b>
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Regional Assessment Team (RAS)</i></b>
<b>55</b>	<b><i>Aged Care and other Community Services</i></b>
<b>10</b>	<b><i>Allied Health</i></b>
<b>10</b>	<b><i>Nursing Staff</i></b>
<b>391</b>	<b><i>Care Staff</i></b>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>ILC Staff</i></b>
<b>8</b>	<b><i>Teachers</i></b>
<b>74</b>	<b><i>Volunteers</i></b>

# The

## PAST YEAR

The past year has been both an exciting and a challenging time for us as providers as we continue to see trends changing in service provision in the aged and community care sector.

Already working with clients who are baby boomers, we acknowledge their recurrent capacity to contour demographic changes, not only socially and economically but more significantly, in aged care services. We have identified this upcoming older generation has greater expectations on the quality of care, how they want it provided, more wealth, wider choices and preferences and a better knowledge of online interfacing. Our service provision to them, as well as their parents, of whom they are often custodians, is continually showing us that the baby boomers' ageing process is altering the pattern of aged care services and how we deliver them. This generation's shifting attitudes to growing older instigated positive changes in our organisation over the past 12 months. Had we not, we would not have kept up with their determined rally into ageing.

This strong individualism in our clients is matched by our staff who champion client choices and motivate them rather than doing for them. We celebrate the 'Everyday Heroes' - the people who grasp life with gusto, resilience and courage, who do not perform one mere act of courage or bravery but who live with these attributes daily.

In this past year, we continually modulated our practices to facilitate goals and outcomes for staff and clients. There was great satisfaction knowing that our backing enabled clients to pursue practical and sometimes audacious activities that bestowed long term fulfilment, happiness and joy in life - like 85 year old daredevils Betty who jumped out of a plane to celebrate her birthday or 87 year old Eleanor who went to I Fly recently and despite also enjoying hang gliding, has told her family she will be trying parachuting next!



Our people - the spirit of our organisation, make us proud to be in the service delivery industry and we see them regarding their day to day duties less as a job and more as a vocation. The improved quality of life in our clients is directly attributable to their skills and we are privileged to have a workforce of capable, enthusiastic and compassionate people who focus on supporting our clients with person-centred care. The benefit of having a regular and familiar care worker means that our clients have consistency in their care but most importantly our people are considered like members of an extended family and are emotionally invested in ensuring that their clients remain a priority. We have been fortunate to attract workers with a genuine interest in helping others. This altruistic trait is reflected in every facet of their care and their interaction with clients and they perform their roles with energy, kindness and expertise. The organisation has expanded training online so that staff can expand their knowledge base and not just complete mandatory training, but also attain further qualifications and we encourage them to expand their knowledge base.

With over 40 years of experience in the community we have always been at the grass roots level of emerging needs and we welcome the opportunity to trial new methodology that may improve access to community services and their delivery. We were delighted to be



the first community-based organisation to take part in the 'Launch Into Work Program' partnering with Electus Recruitment and AMC Training funded under the State Government's Department of Jobs and Small Business. Twelve job seekers will be attaining a Certificate III in Aged Care resulting in a job within our organisation. We will continue to nurture this mutually beneficial collaboration to promote recruitment and employment for more people within our industry. Co.As.It. was also selected to test the new on-line payment portal for the Home Care Packages program through the Department of Health, another successful initiative.

The widely publicised negative influences in aged care last year saw the introduction of the Royal Commission into Aged Care and the launch of the Aged Care Complaints and Safety Commission early in January 2019.

The new Aged Care Quality Standards and Aged Care Charter of Rights by the Australian Government in consultation with the aged care sector was announced early in 2019 with a commencement date of July 1, 2019. This has meant apprising and reviewing Co.As.It.'s policies and procedures to ensure we operate in synergy with the improvements. This fortified framework for all residential aged care, home care, flexible care and services under the Commonwealth Home Support Program, will define the parameters under which

providers are to deliver high quality care and services and place the client at the centre of care. Choice, independence and dignity underpin the heart of the standards, with a strong focus on outcomes for residents and clients. We look forward to the promotion and implementation of these new standards with our clients.

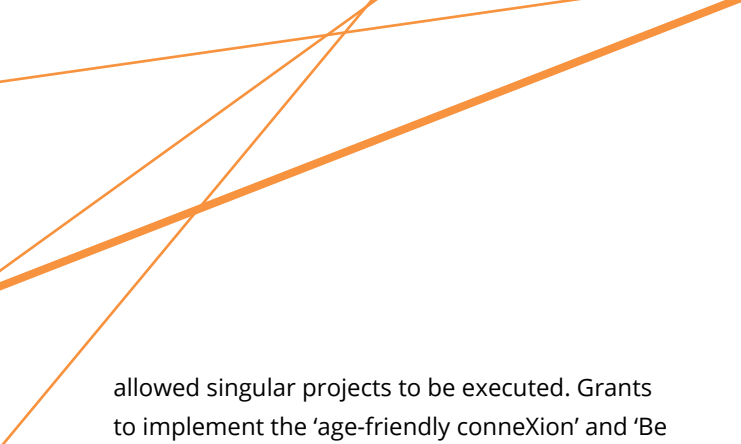
As in preceding years, strong collaboration was nurtured with our consortium members and partners that leveraged our potential to deliver value for money. These partnerships expanded service delivery across regions, we have focussed on preserving our integrity of service delivery whilst consolidating development and sustainability. We were successful in being the leading organisation in a tender application under the new Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS) to provide services with two Consortium members; the Islamic Women's Association and GOC Care. This new program will target people aged under 65yrs who are ineligible for NDIS or other community support but who live with long term disability, chronic illness, mental health or other conditions that impact on their day to day functional capacity and ability to participate in the community. We are working to integrate this new program seamlessly as those currently accessing the 'Community Care' program are transferred into the new QCSS program.

We continued to implement Regional Assessment

Services (RAS) and CHSP under contractual agreements with PHN Brisbane North. We secured a five year contract for the Community and Individual Support program funded by the Queensland State Government and Co.As.It. entered into the NDIS with the successful registration, recruitment of staff and commencement of services.

There has been a considerable increase from last year particularly within the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities of clients requesting counselling, dementia support and other services related to mental health. Our counsellors have been overwhelmed with cases as they assist clients to clarify their issues, explore options, develop strategies and increase mental well-being. This higher demand for services is reflected in other programs and higher client numbers required the creation of new key roles within the organisation to ameliorate service delivery, information transmission, communication and training - especially within the Allied Health and Nursing teams. To ensure timely and effective service delivery for clients, we continued to evaluate our systems and processes and reviewed new software to improve client management systems. Two in-house IT specialists constantly monitored our digital technology to enable it to respond efficiently in this dynamic work environment.

Small grants and one-off funding were a highlight that



allowed singular projects to be executed. Grants to implement the 'age-friendly conneXion' and 'Be Connected' allowed the purchase of sufficient laptops to run IT classes in Brisbane and the Gold Coast; another grant for the acquisition of tablets for volunteer visitors enabled new interfaces between home-bound and residential-care clients and their volunteer visitors and we also received a grant from Ergon-Energex to hold electrical safety education sessions for CALD members of the community.

Plans are proceeding for the construction of our new service centre in Bracken Ridge, a multi-hub centre that will offer a diversity of activities that will meet the social, educational, aged, community and disability needs of many in that area. We look forward to the establishment of this facility in the near future.

Ending decades of working individually for common goals, Co.As.It. entities in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth signed a MOU to work collaboratively as a national consultative body in aged and community care and in the teaching of Italian language and culture in Australia. The MOU will fortify applications for national funding for various projects and will market a national Co.As.It. identity across states.

In the past 12 months our satellite office at the Gold Coast continued to thrive and further consolidate its

presence in that region, not only through excellent service delivery but also by active and enthusiastic participation in the community via Aged Care Expos, events and exhibitions.

The Gold Coast office has established a sound reputation for surpassing the expectations of their clients and in meeting their needs with client-centric innovation and responsive sharing of resources.

The Italian Language Centre continued to uphold its distinction as a peak Italian language authority and provider of professional development and curriculum support for teachers of Italian throughout Queensland. The research and creation of language resources, training and consultation for teachers in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns and the Sunshine Coast saw the staff travel widely this year including a short sojourn in Italy to participate in a professional development course specifically aimed at teaching Italian as a second language. The strategies learned will be incorporated in future Professional Development opportunities for Queensland teachers of Italian.

The inaugural performance of Milan's International 'La Scala' Ballet Company in Brisbane at QPAC sought ILC staff as interpreters for their performers on their preliminary visit as well as during their short stay in November 2018.

The introduction of Italian reading books for the Queensland Premier's Reading Challenge 2019 saw Italian reading books introduced on the Premier's Reading List for the first time and ILC was sought to select, purchase and translate 52 Italian books suitable for students from Prep to Year 6.

ILC staff was involved in organising events, activities and competitions that promoted the love of Italy and its language and culture. It expanded its knowledge base to respond to a corporate request for an intensive Italian lesson program based on business acumen, accounting principles, taxation, asset protection, risk management, wealth creation and superannuation. In between all of these on-going and demanding activities, ILC staff still supported learning for over 24,300 students Queensland wide.

Funds from the Italian government (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) provided curriculum support within Catholic, State and Independent schools and supported the Italian language programs in Queensland as well as in other states. ILC and Co.As.It. were once again proud sponsors of the StuditaliA 2018 scholarship program run in conjunction with the Italian Consulate and the Department of Education-International Services.



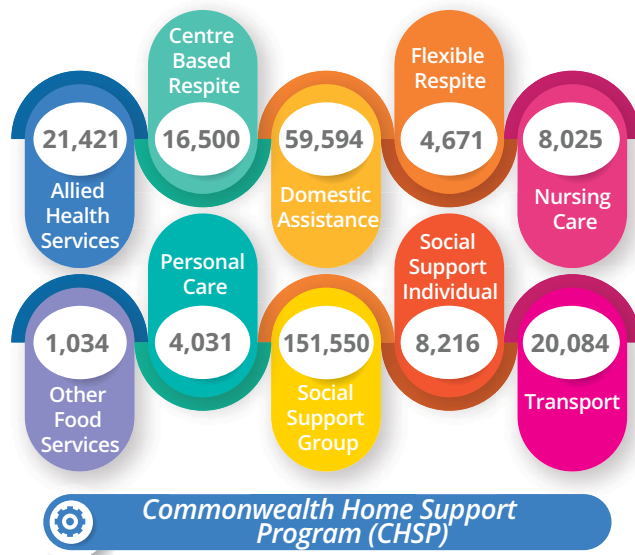




# Aged CARE PROGRAMS

*"Total clients across all programs"*  
**5330**

*"Total service hours across all programs"*  
**465,539**



The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) is funded by the Dept. of Health and supports eligible persons who are 65 years and over. As we continued to focus on client-centric care, we proudly maintained a strong commitment to meet our clients' goals with dignity and respect. Flexibility and adaptation within service delivery ensured we provided support that was responsive and appropriate to changing health conditions but also fostered personal satisfaction and sense of attainment.

As an 'entry level' program the CHSP is designed to provide relatively low intensity (small amounts) of a single service or a few services for frail older people who need only a small amount of assistance or support to enable them to maintain their independence, continue living in their homes and participate in their communities.

CHSP services are delivered on a short-term, episodic or on-going basis with a strong focus on activities that support independence and social connectedness taking into account each person's individual goals, preferences and choices.

Over the year we concentrated on reviewing our clients' care plans, sought feedback on services and reassured clients of our commitment to their care needs and supporting their re-ablement goals. Even

with a large number of CHSP clients we were still able to schedule services at a time convenient to them with a worker familiar to them. This freed up their waiting times, allowed clients to plan around their service and pursue other things rather than be left waiting all day for a worker to arrive.



# Miguel and Maria

## **Miguel and Maria's Story CHSP clients**

At the time of intake, Maria advised that her husband Miguel had recently been diagnosed with cognitive decline. He was depressed, apathetic and lacked motivation. He was also heavily dependent on his wife's presence for reassurance and found it very stressful when she was not with him. This dependency made it very difficult for Maria to attend to her own needs, and correspondingly, Miguel became very isolated as he rejected socialising with others.

Miguel was resistant to the idea of attending a social activity centre and did not want to venture far from his home. It would be another six months of Co.As.It's encouragement before Miguel felt confident enough to join the vibrant Latino group which meets weekly. Miguel and his wife are from the Philippines and do not speak Spanish, yet this was a strategic decision on the part of the Coordinator. She knew that the warm and welcoming group of people would make Miguel feel secure and safe. It was a sagacious decision that has made a remarkable enrichment to Miguel's life. Both now attend on a regular basis and with genuine enthusiasm, the neighbours have



commented that Miguel eagerly awaits the bus every Monday always dressed in his 'best'.

It is rewarding to see the marked improvement in Miguel and his establishment of meaningful social interactions in an environment that he originally thought intimidating. He has made connections with other men there and has totally embraced his role in the group where he is now a pivotal member. Maria says "It's like a transformation ....." Miguel has more confidence and now loves socialising and he is also more comfortable with being separated from Maria for short periods of time.

Much consideration was given to placing Miguel in a safe and inclusive group environment despite his not sharing the same linguistic and cultural background with the group. Decisions like these demonstrate our staff's commitment to understanding the client on a personal level. It was definitely true 'that actions speak louder than words' and Miguel has found affirmation, reassurance, encouragement and a sense of belonging with his new friends.

## **Gloria and Cliff's Story CHSP clients**

Gloria and Cliff have been CHSP clients since 2015 requiring only a fortnightly service that has bolstered their autonomy at home.

During a recent review, they were asked how everything was going, Gloria was very quick to say "We couldn't be happier with your services and we are grateful for the care we receive and the lovely Community Care Worker that comes to us". She stated that their worker certainly went above and beyond her duties, was very caring and attentive to their needs.

Last year when her husband had surgery after a fall, on returning home from hospital, the care worker noted that he was not feeling well. With their permission the CCW contacted the Coordinator to report on his condition and if anything else could be done to assist them during his recovery time. Gloria was very appreciative that the care worker had identified a change in their circumstances and had referred her concern for further support under the CHSP program.









# Clinical

## AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES



Co.As.It. has highly qualified registered nurses who are deeply committed to best practice in clinical care. Without their services, greater numbers of clients would have been admitted into residential care or would have remained in hospital because of their high, complex clinical needs. In the past 12 months, five additional registered nurses and two administrative support personnel were employed as well as two team leaders to facilitate the underpinning of essential nursing and allied health services for clients.

Co.As.It. had offered some of the allied health services under brokerage agreements which were significantly more costly and Co.As.It. was not represented at service delivery - last year, Co.As.It. increased its allied health staff by employing podiatrists and occupational therapists to add to their team. This resulted in considerable value adding to the program and increased client satisfaction by being able to respond to their needs quicker. The close collaboration and integration of services between the teams has led to outstanding health and well-being improvements for our clients. These are directly attributable not only to the comprehensive expertise across both teams but also to their genuine compassion and interest in helping their clients.





# Elspeth's Story

## Clinical Client

One of the most prevalent conditions requiring on-going attention from our clinical staff is lower leg ulcers in older clients, wounds that are so painful for sufferers that many become housebound, isolated and unable to carry out even simple tasks.

Elspeth was 83 years old when she was referred to our nursing services. Suffering from peripheral vascular disease, her lower legs were covered front and back with chronic leg ulcers that did not respond to treatment by a series of antibiotics prescribed by her doctor. The chronic ulceration was dreadful with open, inflamed wounds. It was identified early on in our visits that Elspeth was unable to resist scratching the painful lesions and she had introduced bacteria that lead to infections, making the care of her legs more complicated. However, it wasn't just the physical discomfort that affected Elspeth, she was also depressed, lonely and very isolated, as she had not been able to attend her much loved social groups with another provider because of the intense pain she suffered. It was truly disheartening to see that so much had been done to try to help her but that Elspeth's behaviour of scratching had gone undetected for so long.

Our nursing staff began services three times a week to care for her wounds. To stop her from scratching, compression stockings were recommended and Elspeth was trained to raise her legs for better circulation. It took some months of meticulous care but gradually the nurses' visits became less frequent as the ulcers finally began to heal. Elspeth was finally able to return to her regular activities but to this day is adamant that Co.As.It.'s nurses saved her life.



# Jennifer's Story

## Allied Health

Jennifer resides in a complex for over 50yr olds on the Gold Coast and has had no family support since her mother passed away a few years ago. Jennifer first commenced services with Co.As.It. through the Commonwealth Home Support Program in 2017. Asserting from the first intake that she did not wish to enter residential care but to remain living independently in her own home, we began support services to ensure that Jennifer achieved this goal.

An assessment by our Occupational Therapist recommended that mobility ramps and other assistive equipment be constructed around her home not only for safety but also to promote ease of movement and build Jennifer's confidence. Hindered by sciatic pain, our Physiotherapist commenced physiotherapy to improve her mobility. Weeks passed, Jennifer's confidence increased, to further consolidate her wellness, our Physiotherapist suggested she use the pool at

# Bert's Story

## Allied Health

Bert was 90 years of age at the time that Allison our Physiotherapist visited. Bert had experienced an acute episode of low back pain at the end of 2018 which landed him in Wesley Hospital, but prior to his back pain, Bert was a regular at the local gym, participating in gentle classes suitable for his age and level of fitness. "By the time I met with him he had rested for a few days but he was afraid of moving" said Allison. He was missing his walk to the shops and there was still some pain. The original goal was to help him progress his wellness so he could go back to the gym. After 5 physio visits, Bert was walking to the shops and back, a round trip of nearly 2 kms.

the complex to extend her exercises. Despite her concerns about her lack of swimming ability, Jennifer gamely agreed. Specialised support was provided with a safety vest and shoes organised through our Allied Health team and our social worker, Jennifer took to the water with confidence and it wasn't long before her sciatic pain was completely resolved.

Jennifer was later approved for a Home Care Package and transitioned to this program which allowed greater levels of support, accessing in-home domestic assistance, physiotherapy and attending the social activity groups weekly.

Co.As.It. staff embraced a multi-disciplinary care plan that holistically enhanced Jennifer's lifestyle choices. Seamless integration of services through our occupational therapy, social worker, physiotherapy

and personal care workers ensured that Jennifer's social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs were met and that she continued to be a valued member of her community. This strengths-based approach to service provision ensured the client's determination and individual resiliency was supported and encouraged. We actively disregarded deficits and identified and nurtured Jennifer's capacities to optimize her tasks of daily living. Jennifer has flourished under this approach, with a wonderful sense of humour and positive outlook on life. Jennifer is grateful for the assistance and now has an increased sense of calm and confidence that she can remain living independently in her own home with the support provided.





# Community

## CARE PROGRAMS

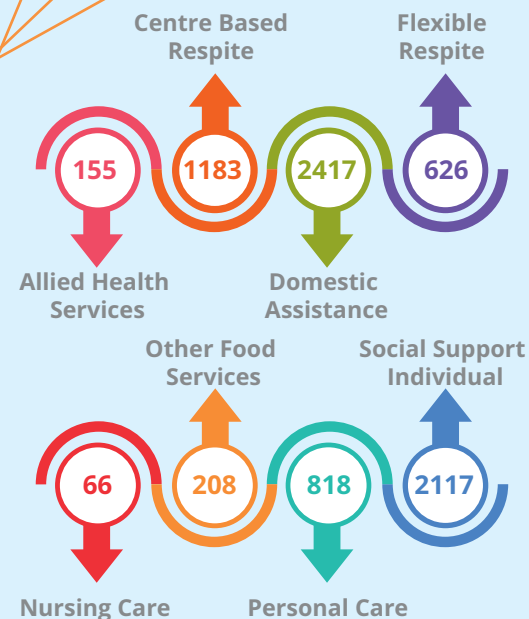
The Community Care Program specifically catered to clients under 65 years of age who required basic, low-level care and support to enable them to live independently at home.

Our staff encouraged dignity and autonomy by facilitating self-management of tasks where possible, offering positive reinforcement in their belief of the client's capacities and they worked collaboratively with the clients in a mutual desire to meet their goals.

Working closely with each client provided not only insight into their personal aspirations but it also allowed each client to take a dynamic and decisive role in the planning of their services and how they wanted to access these. Client satisfaction was very high and it was gratifying for the organisation as a whole, as well as for our care staff singly, to be supporting clients to mobilise their resources and amplify their potential.

Funding changes for people accessing these services prompted Co.As.It. to submit a tender in a consortium agreement with the CALD Network members. The tender was to provide services under the government's new initiative the Qld. Community Support Scheme. This program replaces the Community Care Program from July 2019. Co.As.It. as leading partner, received notification of

its tender approval in April and the restructuring of this program within our organisational infrastructure began immediately. It has also meant briefing and training our staff to ensure that smooth transitions for clients already accessing the old service model would not have their service delivery interrupted during the changeover. Due to the reduced funding amount received, only 2 other CALD partners joined Co.As.It. in the Consortium i.e. GOC Care and Islamic Women's Association Inc.





# National Disability Insurance Scheme **NDIS**

*Co.As.It. has registered and attained approval status to operate this specialised service. We have adopted the integration of this program into our framework slowly as we become more apprised of the parameters to deliver these specialised services as well as the very specific needs of clients. The past six months have been dedicated to recruiting a formidable and highly qualified taskforce with the experience and competencies to bring this program to the fore.*



## Nicole's Story

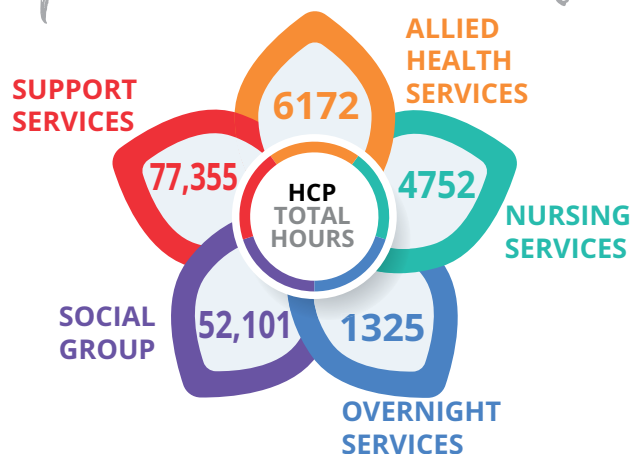
Nicole, a confident and talkative young woman, lives with visual and intellectual impairments and has only been accessing NDIS for a short period of time. Care staff support Nicole four days a week between Monday and Thursday and are heavily invested in capacity building to expand her individual skill set. Nicole is receiving support to develop the confidence and knowledge to make and undertake autonomous travel, do her own meal preparation and cooking, laundry and house cleaning.

In the meantime, care staff is providing transport to and from her place of work as well as providing her with transport to access community engagement viz. tennis, swimming, bowling and shopping. Nicole tells our workers that she is very happy with the support she receives and she shows great interest in becoming proficient in managing her own lifestyle.





# Home Care Packages



The Home Care Package Program funded by the Federal Department of Health is crucial for older, frail people who require access to more complex services provided on a weekly basis. The increased waiting time for a home care package over the last year contributed to many clients having to make do with a lower level package which was insufficient to meet their care needs. Often family members needed to supplement the package until the higher level package was assigned by My Aged Care. The issues with the number of home care packages approved and not assigned continued to create inefficiencies in the aged care system. Continued bottlenecks were created where the client could not continue to live at home and in certain situations, forced clients and families to seek residential care.

Close integration of our services and strong cooperation between our program teams allowed stress free

transitioning to a HCP and our clients continued to be cared for within their homes. Co.As.It's policy in recruiting staff with a Certificate III in Aged Care and their ability to work across all aged care programs encourages continuity and reassurance for clients as they move from one program into another – taking their care staff with them.

The ability to have free choice continues to be of paramount concern to older people. We identified that extended family members often made decisions for loved ones from a CALD background without consultation with them. This was partly a cultural facet and done with the best of intentions but it disempowered the older person who was left bewildered and often dissatisfied by their lack of decision making. As CALD care advocates, Co.As.It. actively recruited administrative and care staff who could communicate and deliver every facet of care within culturally and linguistically appropriate frameworks. Co.As.It. successfully engaged and provided services to clients from 95 different cultural backgrounds in the past 12 months. Our support staff, 85% of who speak a second language, identified with their CALD clients' linguistic and cultural background and successfully delivered care plans and home support in a familiar, culturally relevant and personalised way.

We commended staff using common sense as well



as astute professional judgement in maximising clients' access to assistive technology and other aids requested out of their packages. We were aware of our moral obligation to monitor client requests for items that were not directly linked to their care services and outside the scope of a home care package, most times this was related to general home maintenance. Our responsibility to maintain the care for the client according to their needs was our priority.

Our insistence on person-centred care meant that all care plans for Level 3 and 4 packages were formulated by registered nurse together with client and family members. This assured that clients at this level received the care and support to safely remain living in their own home. This extra service was provided at no cost to the clients.





# Antonio's Story

Antonio is an 88yr old widower, after surviving a stroke he now lives with his two adult daughters who share his full-time care.

Antonio has vascular dementia and was constantly asking his daughters to take him to the shopping centre so that he could sit and talk to the other men there. He was feeling lonely and isolated and out of frustration, when his daughters could not accommodate to his needs, he began exhibiting difficult behaviours that they found challenging to manage.

His daughters struggled to meet his constant demands whilst simultaneously meeting working deadlines and managing day to day tasks. Despite wanting to make

their father happy, they were at a loss as to how they could achieve this, both were also in need of emergency respite.

During a home visit it became evident that a considerable amount of support was needed. Appreciative for the support, they were however very reluctant to accept help because they felt their father's behaviour would have been a problem for staff. The fact that he ate poorly and only consumed one type of food was another problem they felt we could not manage.

After assurances that staff was highly trained in adapting to the numerous needs of clients and that we provided dementia specific support, Antonio began attending

centre-based respite twice a week. This made a significant improvement to Antonio's well-being, he had more social contact, two outings a week and his daughters were able to rest or focus on work in his absence. His daughters were also able to access information and resources through our dementia support officer and they looked forward to a break from the constant attention their father needed. Antonio loves going to the centres, we were able to provide him with the meals he preferred and sent photos and videos of him enjoying his day at the group. The daughters expressed how overwhelmed they are to see how happy and how much fun their father is having.

# Sandy's Story

Sandra (Sandy) had a lot of medical conditions that impacted her everyday life - like all independent people, Sandy was very resistant to accepting help but the day she could no longer make her bed, she knew it was time to get assistance.

She was originally with another provider but she had to wait all day for her service and never knew who was going to turn up at her front door. Through the My Age Care website, Sandy found us and after looking into our background as an organisation, she decided to 'try and see how it goes.'

Initially she received support under CHSP, most importantly, her service could be scheduled on a particular day and time and she could have the same worker Karin who always made sure she was ok. "She was fantastic with the housework but she was always checking if I was ok as a person. When I received my Home Care Package everything became even better. The reality is that I can't

live without you, which is upsetting but you have made my life better."

Sandy used to attend many hospital and specialist appointments which were far away, costly and at times unsafe for her to attend on her own, staying in hospital overnight was the only option as she had no transport home. Now with our support, Sandy is assured of getting to and from appointments. "As sad as it is that my health has gone backwards, you have been able to meet the challenges and make my life a lot easier.... it's fantastic knowing you guys are in the background helping me."

With hydrotherapy sessions Sandy has regained the ability to walk in her own home with the new walker provided in her package rather than using the wheelchair. She is currently working with our Occupational Therapist to achieve her goal of continuing to cook for herself. They are looking at suitable kitchen aids that will facilitate chopping, slicing and other tasks safely and without pain.





# Community

## AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES (CISS)

The Community and Individual Support Service (CISS) contract was renewed for a further five years with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. Staff responded directly to identified and emerging needs of the local community prioritising vulnerable individuals, families and groups.

Service delivery was flexible, culturally inclusive, and integrated a mix of quality programs and activities that built skills, imparted knowledge, nurtured personal development and community participation, promoted physical well-being and created and sustained social networks.

Throughout the year, this program met a wide range of identified needs via strategies and projects approved by the Department. Often the projects are annual calendars composed from contributions from the community and editions have incorporated recipes, safety hints or other useful information. This year's calendar took a further step outreaching to the community by having interviews of contributors transmitted on radio 4EB through its Community Voice segments. The interviews are also available online through Co.As.It.'s Youtube channel.

A number of projects implemented under this program continued to make positive impacts on the identified target groups. These were:

- Playgroups
- Technology Classes
- Community Cinema Days
- Card Days
- Events
- Community Voice
- Insieme Magazine (Quarterly editions also available on Co.As.It.'s website)
- Counselling





# Other COUNSELLING

***(Co.As.It. funds this service delivery directly because of the recognised need. It has also employed part-time Dementia Support Officers to alleviate and provide counselling and resources for carers living with a person with cognitive impairment.)***

There has been an increase in the need for counselling in the past 12 months that has brought to light a new and unrecognised need - counselling people as they age because for the majority of people, it is traumatic. Counselling older persons has been increasing steadily for our professionals and as the population continues to age, it is expected that higher numbers of elderly will require compassionate support to live fuller lives.

The media often associates 'ageing gracefully' with images of white haired elders who spend their time 'keeping busy' with hobbies, socialising with other 'oldies', planning the next holiday or cruise. The reality is that ageing brings multiple losses and these losses have been identified as profoundly affecting our clients' spiritual and emotional health.

Ageing brings losses that include physiological changes; loss of mobility; financial strains with decreased income; death of loved ones; onset of

cognitive decline but more significantly, it highlights a shortening of the chronological time line. Closely associated with losses of any kind is grief which plays a major role in our older clients' daily lives especially where multiple losses can create depression, anxiety and other mental health issues.

In the past year, counselling staff focussed on the relationship between loss and grief, supporting clients to make the connection that grief has become a tangible part of daily existence because of their experienced losses. Whilst ageing cannot be arrested, the counsellors sought to provide strategies for them to see this stage of life through courage, hope and acceptance. Our counsellors stressed the importance of building resilience and staying connected which can significantly improve lives, irrespective of the level of co-morbidities, personal issues or other losses they have sustained.

We are proud of our counsellors who provide on-going feedback about issues that impact the people we serve. As an aged care provider we continued to offer tailor-made services to alleviate, often lessen and most certainly improve the emotional and spiritual lives of our clients.



# Community

## ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

### *Community Visitors Scheme*

The program is funded by the Dept. of Health specifically to cater to Italian and other CALD residents in residential aged care and people living at home supported through a Home Care Package. CVS is a vital link for clients and residents, by creating new friendships with volunteers, isolation and alienation are alleviated and the person's quality of life is enriched. Our valued volunteer visitors come to us with diverse life experiences, interests and a wealth of knowledge, they also have a genuine desire to enrich someone else's life. We value their presence within this program and the lasting contributions they bring to those they visit.

CVS brings mutual benefits to all the participants; increased self-esteem and wellbeing, less depression, anxiety, loneliness but more importantly for CALD people living in aged care homes, a visitor from the same background helps to bridge the separation they experience from their community, one where they are no longer active participants.

Following recruitment, volunteers receive orientation and training and these are reinforced on a quarterly basis through networking functions and small events. The ability to see themselves as valuable resources within a wide volunteering arena is also made possible

through significant events like National Volunteer Week celebrations, International Volunteers' Day and other volunteering occasions.

Maintaining visitor numbers to support demand is always challenging as a volunteer's commitment can be influenced by age, health or personal reasons.

The launch of the 'Adopt a Nonno or Nonna' promotion at the start of the year created overwhelming interest in the Community Visitor Scheme (CVS) - a program that has changed little since its inception over 24 years ago. The name was instrumental in changing the perceptions of younger people from just visiting old folk in nursing homes to embracing an older person as a pseudo - grandparent.

The CVS coordinators received a record number of applications for new volunteer visitors after an intensive advertising campaign, from this a younger demographic aged between 20-40yrs now represents one fifth of our volunteer visitors. These younger people have greater energy, more enthusiasm and are more mobile. We will continue to develop this program in innovative ways that continue to attract volunteering in this age group.





## CALD Activity Program

The CALD Activity Program receives no formal funding and is supported by the aged care facilities where it is implemented and by Co.As.It. The program's genesis was to meet the socio-recreational needs of older Italian residents living in nursing homes who felt disassociated from the facility due to linguistic barriers and who could not engage in diversional therapy because the activities were considered to be culturally inappropriate.

CALD residents were not engaging in the daily life of the facility and were especially isolated and excluded when diversional therapy activities often deemed to be work were presented to them. Activities such as crotchet, embroidery, sewing, gardening and knitting were seen as necessities to them and were part of daily life for many in the older Italian CALD community. Their bewilderment in misunderstanding the purpose of these activities meant many were refusing to become involved further and excluding them from the home's community. It became imperative to create culturally appropriate diversional therapy sessions that would cater to their needs.

The program was rebranded last year as the CIAO Program (Cultural Italian Activity Opportunity) which continued to provide linguistic and culturally appropriate diversional therapy activities for Italian CALD residents. It currently operates in 10 aged care facilities across Brisbane with activities planned around significant calendar dates, traditional events and celebrations. Discussion groups, reminiscing about cultural traditions and themes, recreational games such as Tombola, gentle exercises, balloon and bowling games that strengthen

hand eye coordination are very popular. However nothing is as striking as the aroma of freshly brewed Italian coffee of which the sharing is a vital part of Italian etiquette.

Many aged care homes recognise the benefits that the group sessions bring for their CALD residents and work with Co.As.It., residents and their families to provide a high level of care and support. In collaboration with activity officers, two facilities organise a monthly Italian lunch as part of the CIAO program, inviting the residents, their family members and friends to attend, participate in the activities and share a meal together in a social atmosphere that is characteristic of a village gathering. In the past year over 150 sessions have been implemented in collaboration with the aged care facilities, and more than 115 people have accessed this service, we are grateful to the facilities for embracing the program that brings joy to the residents.

## Dementia Support Services

Dementia support aims to advocate for the client living with dementia by supporting the families and the carers. Over the past 12 months the counsellors and the Dementia Support Officers (DSO) have worked collaboratively to provide as much support as possible to carers. The Officers also work in close collaboration with Carers Qld, PalAssist, Dementia Australia, Dementia Support Australia as well as other dementia care organisations.

Through home visits the DSOs identify the individual needs of the client and support the emotional and physical wellbeing of both client and the carer. Education is given regarding the disease process of dementia and how quality of life can be improved by giving support, validation and strategies that may contribute to a supportive environment. Person-centred care is encouraged because as with all humans - there is no 'one size fits all' solution.









# Wider Social AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

*Since its inception, Co.As.It. has worked diligently on diverse projects that extend community participation and encourage inclusiveness. It is well recognised for the large events, exhibitions and concerts organised in celebration of culture, language, education, and community solidarity. Attendance at all of its organised events is high and we are proud that we are supported by the community we serve. In the past 12 months a number of community initiatives generated wider social participation and connectivity for people of all ages.*

## **International Womens' Day**

The 7th International Women's Day event 'Harmony And Delights' held on March 9th, 2019 saw the community again come together to support this annual gathering that celebrates women and their contributions to their societies. Hosted by Sunshine Coast newsreader Rosanna Natoli, the event offered guests the opportunity to make new connections and refresh old ones, learn some tips on resilience and well-being and enjoy traditional high tea in a stunning event space.

Inspirational speaker Marcus Pearce, encouraged over 300 attendees to relentlessly challenge themselves to be

## **Community Harmony Day**

Partnering with The Community Place Kalinga, Co.As.It. organised an inclusive morning tea that was shared with new Australians and recent migrants as well as local residents. Over 60 guests from many diverse cultures participated in the celebration that highlighted Australia as one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world. Our heritage of migration has provided us with a rich tapestry of community life where we can all enjoy the diversity of culture, language and traditions - right on our doorstep!



their own person, their own 'scientific researcher', their own creator of health, to live their life on their own terms and not someone else's and to make the rest of their life the best of their life!



Harmony Day was attended by Trevor Evans MP, Member for Brisbane, and the event highlighted inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural or linguistic background.





## Co.As.It.'s 40th Anniversary

Co.As.It. celebrated its 40 year lifespan in 2018 which was reported in the 2018 annual report. The organisation began as a tiny agency that first employed Fiorenza Jones OAM in 1978 and later an additional worker Nella Alba-Calabrese in 1980. These two early staff members paved the way for continued growth through funding applications, advocacy and identification of unmet community needs. In comparison to other long-term providers with highly organised national infrastructures, Co.As.It. was a community initiative that grew out of a force of circumstances and an urgent necessity to assist Italian migrants and their families. To witness its transition into a peak aged care provider that now employs over 500 employees who are supporting over 5,300 clients per week is a testament to its effectiveness.

Many clients became involved with Co.As.It. when their children were babies either through playgroup, vacation care programs or Italian classes, they now receive support services for themselves. This continuity of care within our client base champions our ability to continue to positively affect people as they move through different life stages. More heartening, their grandchildren and great children are now beginning new relationships with Co.As.It.



A legacy that we hope will continue for many generations to come.

The organisation's growth is by virtue of the strong stewardship of its CEO Dina Ranieri, the Board of Directors as well as senior personnel who with great foresight and ambitious programs, shaped the direction of the agency.

The milestone was commemorated with an inspirational Anniversary Gala Dinner attended by over 330 people including numerous dignitaries and special guests from around Australia.

It was also imperative to share this milestone with the people who matter the most, our clients. So many of our clients have shared our growth with tenacity, have embraced our diverse programs in all their iterations and have lived through numerous adaptations to service delivery because of changes in Government policies. The organisation was privileged to have celebrated this milestone with more than 400 clients at a special lunch. We are grateful for the support of everyone who contributed in making our organisation a premier aged care and community service provider in Queensland.





## Community Forums

Public community forums were beneficial not only for us as service providers but also to the consumers who attended these events in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Over 300 attendees were present at the two forums held in the past 12 months. Run as part of Seniors Week the community forums allowed the gathering of valuable feedback through consultation with the public as well as provided attendees with contemporary information on numerous issues on ageing. Whilst the forums intended to celebrate the presence and values of seniors within our citizenry they were also crucial in providing insight into their perceptions of ageing. The forums also allowed us to evaluate our presence within the community, how our services were perceived and how improvements could be made for better client satisfaction.

## Intergenerational Engagement

This year, the clients in the social activity groups in Brisbane once again enjoyed regular visits from children in the nearby kindergarten. The relationships formed by these multi-generational interactions have long term benefits for both children and adults, especially when sharing activities like making gnocchi! There is a reciprocal learning process and the transmission of traditions and cultures in these exchanges that assist in maintaining connections between disparate age groups whilst also promoting healthy attitudes on ageing.



## Volunteers

Along with our paid staff, our volunteers are a rich resource that provides us with high-level skills and expertise. We are genuinely grateful for the selflessness that they bring to their tasks and how they contribute to our vision. Volunteers are involved in many areas of our organisation from administration and office duties to supporting Co.As.It.'s social activity groups in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. They collaborate with our CALD Activity Officers

running sessions in aged care facilities, visit house-bound and isolated residents in nursing homes within the CVS program and enjoy engaging with our clients at the weekly social groups and on the monthly social outings.

As funding issues continue to threaten not-for-profit organisations, now more than ever, our volunteers are complementary assets. There is no doubt that volunteers struggle with duties to family and friends and also try to attain an equilibrium between social, work and other life commitments, yet they still offer their time and energy with little expected in return. It is also possible that they are unaware of the value they bring to our organisation.

Co.As.It. acknowledged the outstanding work performed by our volunteers over the past year by organising formal and informal events and making their presence more visible within our organisation and the general community by articles in local and national media. In the CVS Program, annual Participation Certificates from the Department of Health were presented during a social event whilst individual recognition ceremonies were held for those volunteers involved in group work. A special ceremony for volunteers of five years is held to confer the Co.As.It. Medal of Appreciation.









# Social Centre

## ACTIVITIES AND RESPITE

This service remained as one of the most crucial within our program portfolio delivering 221,334 of social and respite hours in the past 12 months. Five activity centres in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast provided not only respite for carers engaged in full-time care, the groups also facilitated greater socialisation for the people for whom they cared.

Our specialised dementia specific groups operated in four respite centres – Stafford Heights, Acacia Ridge and Narangba and South Coast. Specially trained coordinators incorporated activities that made positive impacts on their clients' wellbeing by responding and stimulating their visual, emotional and experiential senses rather than focussing on physical or verbal interactions. Our ethos continues to encourage novel or innovative ideas when working with clients. This has generated best practice in communicating with people living with dementia where support staff and volunteers employ name tags, prompts and images at the centres to facilitate memory recall. Huge smiles from our staff, warm greetings and positive reinforcement relayed meaningful interactions that families stated were carried

through even when the client returned home. We are proud of our staff who treat these clients with respect, dignity and comprehension and we praise them for their expertise in making the client feel as a valued participant in everything they do.

Carer fatigue is a well-documented co-lateral factor in caring for a person long-term and for extended periods of time without respite. The economic value of replacing informal carers was \$60.3 billion.\* Without the respite services provided at the centres by organisations such as ours, carers would not be able to continue in their important role. It was identified that additional centre-based respite care would be required to meet the burgeoning incidence of dementia care over the next 10 years. Co.As.It. is renovating a new facility at Bracken Ridge that will bring under one roof, an interdisciplinary set of services that will continue to help carers and families in subsequent years.

\*Deloitte Access Economics 2015





### ***Social Activity Centres - Feedback***

During a recent service review we were delighted to receive this feedback:

*Mrs Taraborrelli attends Casa Serena twice a week and says "I don't know what I would do without your service. It's like a big family gathering, the staff is wonderful and the food is delicious. They come and pick me up and bring me back home. There are so many activities to choose from such as bingo, dominoes, craft and much more. It really is a fantastic service and we are so lucky to have it."*

Mrs Taraborrelli also mentions that she has met two other ladies at Casa Serena. They have developed a lovely friendship and organize catch-ups during the week, as the review was finishing up, the two ladies arrived. The lovely smiles on their faces made the atmosphere in the room one of pure joy.

# Karam's Story

Karam was referred to Co.As.It. for social support. As a medical practitioner in Syria with his own practice for decades, Karam fled Syria when civil war broke out in 2011 but had to leave his wife, daughter and granddaughters behind at the time of his escape. Like many refugees, in one painful life event, he lost his family, friends and his livelihood. When he speaks of Syria it is with "Pain in his heart that life has betrayed him and he is a broken man with no worth."

An intelligent and cultured man, Karam had no family here, he was very lonely and was becoming depressed, he wanted to regain human contact and engage in conversations and activities that would stimulate him mentally as well as help him become part of a community.

Karam began attending one of our social activity centres on a weekly basis. Coordinators were very supportive and monitored his spiritual and emotional health closely. It was with genuine pleasure that they saw Karam make tentative friendships despite being quite reserved. By the third week he had learned new

games that he said 'challenged his brain' and he has now created his own little group for his preferred activities.

Thankfully, some of his sorrow was assuaged by his being a member of this little community, the social group has put worth back into his life and he says his attendance gives him something to wake up for and look forward to. He has made many new friendships and has met a friend who shares his own beliefs which has provided linguistic, cultural and religious connections for them both.

Karam is happier and has expressed his thankfulness to Co.As.It. and staff for supporting him. He constantly prays to be with his family again one day soon, we hope that his dream can soon be realised.



# Simon's Story

Simon is a 69 year old gentleman referred to Co.As.It. for a Home Care Package and attendance at our social activity centre. He was struck by tragedy six years ago when a car accident left him with a brain injury and in a coma for 3 months. The brain injury left Simon forgetful and unable to care for himself.

After his accident, his situation became more dismal, his wife left him and despite engaging a lawyer to help him with a compensation claim for his injury, he was not awarded any money for his care. Simon has stated that he would have been better off to have died in the accident. He was suffering from depression, apathy and hopelessness after being refused services from other organisations.

When we met Simon it was very evident that he wanted someone to talk to and be treated 'as normal'. He wanted to be taken out for a change of scenery, be given a good meal and be treated as a valued human being.

Due to his brain injury and the fact he kept forgetting

from day to day, Simon had trouble understanding what services we were offering, it took time and many calls to motivate Simon to come to a social activity centre. He did attend a few times but stated it was not for him, however, the Coordinator identified that he was genuinely in need of social contact, he was lonely, isolated and becoming apathetic about his own personal care. She continued to call often, incite interest in what was happening at the centres and energising Simon to try to attend again while still being positive and supportive in his decision-making. Through the Coordinator's persistence, Simon tried again and found a new purpose in coming. He now attends on a weekly basis and because of his memory difficulties, is called the day before to remind him.

Simon now cannot wait for Tuesdays, he has something to look forward to and is more conscious about his personal care. The positive dealings with staff, other clients and volunteers there have reinforced his self-esteem and worth as a valuable participant.

We are very proud of our Coordinator's judgement, her commitment in trying to enrich this client's life and to her perseverance where others failed.









# Social Outings

Social outings continued to be a significant component of the social support services implemented under the Commonwealth Home Support Program. Held in Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Caboolture region and at the Gold Coast on a fortnightly basis, they revitalise community participation and foster a sense of belonging to a wider citizenry. Regular attendance nourishes the formation of on-going friendships and we encourage clients to expand their social circles by organising outings and activities outside of the program.

Outings are planned to appeal to a broad range of interests and participants demonstrate enthusiasm for new experiences, especially for members of the CALD community for whom recreational pastimes were a secondary consideration when they were younger and busy carving a life in their new country. Now in their older years, they are happily indulging themselves in outings that cultivate confidence, keep them young and engaged with others.

The social outings have reduced isolation and increased affiliations with the community at large, many attendees reported that they felt happier and more engaged in outside activities and that they had an increased awareness of activities available to them should they wish to undertake these independently.

Numerous monthly adventures were enjoyed in the past year from sailing on the Noosa River to picking fresh strawberries, 'city-catting' around Brisbane, having weekends away at Montville and learning how rum was made at the Beenleigh Distillery. All of which are propped by the sharing of great food and equally great friendships.







# Investing IN OUR STAFF

The 'Launch into Work' initiative provided some funding for a pre-employment program offering a direct pathway to work in the aged and community care sector.

Twelve participants received 5 weeks of extensive theory, soft skills training and valuable on-the-job work experience. The work experience comprised of work placement in both the Social Activity Centres and with a community care worker buddy performing In-home services.

Commencing in May 2019, participants who completed the program and met all key criteria with Co.As.It. would be offered employment from June. While working in the industry by October 2019 they would be able to attain a Certificate III in Individual Support.

This initiative was welcomed by the CCW buddies and clients, feedback indicated from stakeholders indicated they were pleased to have been able to contribute towards opportunities for the participants to gain meaningful employment in the future.

## ***Above And Beyond Awards***

Co.As.It. continued to focus on building a strong and coordinated internal workforce. This year, Management continued to support a peer voted award for team members to be acknowledged for extra effort over and above the duties and responsibilities that were assigned to them. The quarterly awards night called the "Above and Beyond Award" continued to be very well received by team members with participation rates growing each time the event is on. The event includes a two course dinner and the presentation of a trophy that remains in possession of the recipient until the next awards ceremony.

## ***On-Going Contact With Our Care Staff***

Regular bi-monthly meetings were organised throughout the year in the Caboolture, Brisbane North, Brisbane South and Gold Coast region for care staff to acquire increased knowledge about policies and procedures as well as opportunities for staff to interact with peers, discuss client care and future training needs.



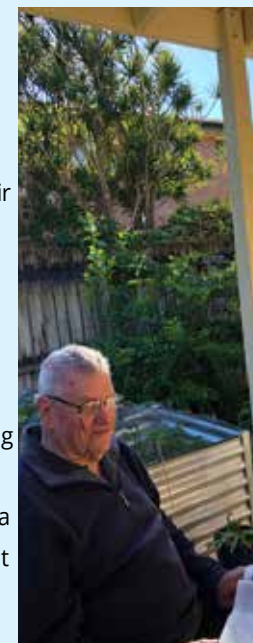
## **CLIENT FEEDBACK - PAULINE**

Pauline has been a client of Co.As.It. for the last two years, in a recent visit to Pauline she wanted to share with the Coordinator how much of a difference our assistance has made to her life. In May Pauline had a procedure on her knee and needed domestic assistance. This service was added to what we had been currently doing for her. Pauline was extremely grateful for not only the "caring assistance" we were able to give her but also the worker she has. To quote Pauline "If not for your assistance I would not be able to stay at home."



## **CLIENT FEEDBACK - PETER**

"Dad and Mum made the decision to downsize from their large family home. Dad missed his veranda and vegetable gardens. He and Mum have planted a garden in the small space in their courtyard and allowed room for a sitting area. He has not been able to utilise this space as it is terribly sunny and desperately needed shade. Dad now enjoys his mornings, his favourite time of the day, reading his morning paper and having his coffee in the shaded area. The awning gives Dad an 'outdoor room' to relax in. Dad's Home Care Package funding has really created a positive impact on his well-being and enjoyment of life. Thank you for all you do to support his individual needs."



# Community

## SUPPORT AND DONATIONS



### *Sicilian Association of Queensland*

Co.As.It. has benefited from a number of generous donations from the Sicilian Association of Qld. In September 2018, Co.As.It. was the recipient of a generous donation of \$5,000 from the Association.

The donation was proudly presented to the CEO by committee members who visited the Co.As.It. offices and saw first-hand the breadth of work undertaken by over 80 staff on a daily basis. The Co.As.It. Board and staff are genuinely grateful for the Sicilian Association's continued support over the years.



### *Scalabrini Village Brisbane Donation*

Co.As.It. was also the recipient of an outstanding \$100,000 donation from the funds collected to build a proposed nursing home by the Scalabrini Village Brisbane Committee. The announcement was made during the evening of the Co.As.It. Gala Dinner held in October 2018. Unfortunately, the proposed nursing home will no longer proceed and the donations provided by the community for this project were passed on to other community organisations involved in the care of the aged. Co.As.It. was indeed grateful for the generous donation that will be used to expand access to services for aged people through the proposed new facility at Bracken Ridge. The Scalabrini Village Brisbane Committee is gratefully acknowledged for their generous donation and it will make a difference in the lives of many carers who struggle on a daily basis whilst caring for loved ones diagnosed with dementia.



### *Lasa Award Nominee*

In March 2019, Co.As.It. was proudly nominated as a state finalist competing against a number of other key organisations in the community care industry. Members of staff attended the presentation ceremony at the Gold Coast. Management was proud to be nominated as a finalist and it is a credit to the many dedicated staff members who care with heart on a daily basis.





## CHANGE OF ITALIAN CONSULS

The Italian community has been fortunate in the calibre of Italian diplomats who have made Brisbane home. Dott. Ludovico Carlo Camussi, Italian Consul for Italy and the Northern Territory was farewelled in December 2018 after his three year posting in Brisbane. Dott. Camussi's collaboration, support and presence in the Italian community will be long remembered. We wish him the best in his new position in Rome.

We welcomed a new Consul Dott. Salvatore Napolitano in January 2019. Dott. Napolitano arrived from his last posting as First Secretary at the Italian Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he served from 2014 to 2018. We look forward to another three year term of strong collaboration between the Italian authorities and we wish him resounding success in his new position.







# Italian Language Centre



## Overview of the Past 12 months

ILC is proud to be able to support over 24,300 students of Italian language and culture across Queensland as well as directly implementing Italian language classes in Brisbane. It has established a strong reputation for excellence throughout its programs and is a recognised and valued educational entity to the Department of Education and Training and the Italian Government funding authorities.

The ILC - a division of Co.As.It. Community Services has successfully carried out numerous projects in the past 12 months, the highlights of which are outlined in the following sections.

## Supporting Italian language programs in Queensland schools

Curriculum support is provided through funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI – Ministero Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale).

ILC 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*





*“ There were nine Italian language courses offered this year for children to adults and beginners to advanced levels. ”*

### ***Offering professional development opportunities for teachers of Italian in schools across Queensland***

ILC streamlined opportunities for teachers of Italian to maintain their language proficiency in order to ensure a high standard of lesson delivery. Considerable work was undertaken by ILC staff in creating training at workshops that improved competency for teachers in the classroom. New resources, books and access to online learning technology ensured that teachers can access diverse learning styles that cater to the individual student.

Languages morph constantly through the use of neologisms and idioms, these dynamic changes are often not adopted by teachers and speakers who live outside of the country. To ensure linguistic currency and relevancy, in February 2019, staff attended a 2-week professional development course at Campus Magnolie (Castelraimondo) in the region of Le Marche, Italy. The course was specifically designed for teachers of Italian as a second language and strategies learned were integrated into ILC's on-going training workshops for Queensland teachers.



### ***Adult Italian Language Classes***

A total of 212 enrolments were received from adult students attending group classes and private lessons.

### ***Girotondo Playgroup***

Twice-weekly playgroup sessions for children aged 3-5 years were run with 57 enrolments over the last year. This program was based on themed activity booklets supported by relevant Italian songs, vocabulary, props and toys.

### ***After School Italian Program***

Qualified native-speaker teachers ensure students are positively engaged in learning language through a range of activities in an after school program. In the past 12 months, 48 school-aged children attended after-school classes at locations in Brisbane's north and south whilst an additional 48 students took part in group and private lessons after school hours.





## *Italian Summer School*

Italian Summer School Intensive courses have operated for a number of years for students before their return to school in January. The four day course with a packed program of activities catered to 14 students.

## *Italian Immersion Days for Schools*

One of the best and most engaging programs is the Immersion Days where students communicate for a day speaking only in Italian. Teachers booked a total of 115 students for school excursions to ILC to be immersed in the Italian language and culture for a day. Students participated in tasks and activities designed to hone reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The highlight was a hands-on cooking activity to make Ricotta Gnocchi from scratch – to be later enthusiastically eaten.



## *Corporate Activities*

ILC's expertise is valuable in delivering innovative and specific learning programs that meet individual needs and requests. In the past year, ILC was instrumental in designing and delivering a corporate program of Italian lessons based on business principles; including accounting, taxation, asset protection, risk management, wealth creation and superannuation. The six 90 minute sessions were delivered over September and October 2018.

## *Organising events, activities, competitions that promote the love of Italy and its language and culture*

ILC is heavily involved in the proliferation of the Italian language and culture within the educational community. It is an advocate for language competitions that inspire students and teachers to excel. In the past 12 months, ILC staff has been instrumental in the continued implementation of the following Italian speaking competitions:



## *3rd Brisbane Region Italian Speaking Competition*

Held in August 2018 at ILC with the support of MLTAQ (Qld Modern Language Teachers' Association), this 2-day event, for students in Years 2- 12 attracted 163 participants. Mother-tongue teachers from ILC, Dante Alighieri Brisbane and Griffith University generously volunteered to judge.

Co.As.It. Community Services sponsored the Italian sections and provided judges for Language Speaking Events in regional areas:

- MLTAQ Cairns All Languages Speech Contest
- MLTAQ Sunshine Coast All Languages Speaking Competition
- Townsville and District Italian Speech Contest
- MLTAQ Gold Coast All Languages Speech Competition





### *Italian Language Qld State Championship*

As part of XVIII *Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo* in October 2018, 38 students from Yrs 10 - 12 who were finalists from the Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regional Speaking Competitions were invited to take part in the inaugural Queensland State Championship organized by ILC.



### *Queensland Premier's Reading Challenge 2019*

This annual event was promoted by the Qld Dept of Education with the goal of encouraging students to read. Italian books were introduced on the Qld Premier's Reading List for the first time in 2019 and ILC's was instrumental in the selection, purchase and translation of 52 Italian books suitable for children in Prep-Year 6.

### *ILC Calligram Competition 2018*

This annual event is open to all school students of Italian across 5 categories (Prep-Yr8). This year's theme '**Casa e Cose**' attracted 186 entries with winning and highly commended entries placed on display at ILC premises, winners received certificates, medals and gifts.



### *Book Club Italiano*

Commenced in February 2019 and conducted by ILC literature expert Giovanna Amatruda this new program was not only an enjoyable activity for a Saturday afternoon but attendance by registered teachers allowed this to be included in their obligatory CPD hours.



### *Studitalia Prize 2018*

The Studitalia Prize Competition is a highlight of the Italian language programs for secondary schools. This annual competition organized by the Qld Department of Education (DoE) under the patronage of the Italian Consulate in Brisbane is sponsored by Co.As.It. Community Services.

The prize recognises excellence in Italian achieved by year 12 students who are each awarded a fully paid one-month scholarship at an Italian school. ILC was once again invited to serve on the selection panel which followed a rigorous selection process to choose seven winners.







### ***Interpreting Services***

Requested by QPAC on the occasion of La Scala di Milano's preliminary visit to Brisbane in June, ILC provided 2 interpreters.

An additional 4 interpreters from ILC were requested on rotation (day/night) when La Scala returned to Brisbane in November 2018 to stage their highly acclaimed signature ballet performances 'Don Quixote' and 'Giselle'.

### ***Italian Ambassador's Visit***

Chairman Nereo Brezzi and CEO Dina Ranieri hosted a welcoming function at ILC in November 2018 for the newly-arrived Italian Ambassador H.E. Dott. Stefano Gatti and Mrs Gatti. At the time, technology classes were in operation and the students were delighted to meet the Ambassador as well as the Italian Consul for Queensland and Northern Territory Dott. Ludovico Camussi.

### ***End-of-semester celebrations***

At the end of second and first semesters in 2018/2019 respectively, adult students who demonstrated keen dedication and high achievement during their courses were formally recognised during two separate celebrations at restaurants. Almost 100 attendees enjoyed the Italian atmosphere and cuisine before gifts were presented to students with unblemished attendance records.

### ***Cultural Events at Cairns School of Distance Education (CSDE)***

The bi-annual week-long school camp and other activities were aimed to offer students of Distance Education (and their parents), the opportunity to meet and socialise with their peers.

### ***CILC Subscribes to Education Perfect (Language Perfect)***

This popular online learning resource is used by thousands of mainstream schools around the world. The incorporation of EP online activities as part of the Adult classes enrolment package has lifted the profile of ILC, placing it at the forefront of language learning innovation.



### ***Art Celebration Day***

ILC was invited to present culturally appropriate workshops in December 2018 which incorporated Italian-themed cooking workshops for a catered event the following day. Other engaging activities included Making Mosaics with multi-coloured pasta; Modern Mona Lisa and Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man with a twist!

### ***Cultural Wellbeing Day***

ILC was again invited to present an Italian-themed cultural cooking workshop at CSDE in May 2019.

### ***Australian Language Forum***

In December 2018, CEO Dina Ranieri was invited by the Italian Embassy in Canberra to attend a day-long conference headed by the Ambassador and the Director of Education Anna Rita Tamponi, to discuss the future promotion, teaching and learning of Italian language and culture in Australia.







# Strategic

## DIRECTION

### ***Diversify revenue streams***

We will enhance our financial viability by ensuring that income is received from a diverse range of sources including private fees, government funds and rental income.

### ***Respond to community needs***

We will continue to deliver services that respond to the diverse needs of our community across Queensland.

### ***Improve governance systems***

In keeping with our growth to become a large charitable organisation, Co.As.It will upskill our board with the necessary structures, resources and training to ensure effective governance.

### ***Develop systems and resources to respond to an increasing workforce***

We will continue to recruit and upskill a productive and professional workforce and ensure that they have access to the appropriate resources to deliver quality services.

### ***Secure business growth from existing and new sources and partnerships***

We will continue to grow the business, research and identify new partnerships and embrace new technologies to deliver cost effectiveness and efficiency.



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