



# annual report 2017 - 2018



40 years of community services





1978 - 2018

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## MISSION STATEMENT

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

### SENSITIVITY

Meeting the client's needs by being supportive, responsive, adaptive and innovative and supporting clients 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 client's expectation and financial capacity to receive the best possible care

### DIGNITY

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

### EXCELLENCE

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

## board of directors and executives



# LEADERSHIP

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### EXECUTIVE

Cav. Nereo Brezzi | President  
Cav. Antonio Palella | Vice-President  
Antony Brown | Treasurer  
Luisa Rose | Secretary (until June 2018)

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Cav. Peter Accornero  
Joseph Bonica  
Joe Chisari  
Frank Cotroneo  
Massimo Ficca  
Angela Filippello

Dina Ranieri (CEO)  
Tanina Softa (Assistant CEO)

# president's report

Co.As.It. has experienced its best year of operations with successful growth within the context of ongoing changes across our aged care and community services sectors.

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

Co.As.It.'s diversity in services and its people have helped the organisation embrace new challenges, creating future opportunities for our clients.

Our annual planning meeting in December enabled us to review, improve and refine the way in which we deliver our program and services to continue our vision and action for a Co.As.It. of tomorrow.

Throughout the year the Management Committee worked with a specialised legal firm to change its corporate structure from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited By Guarantee. This was finalised on 9 July 2018 and will enable the organisation to operate in a broader corporate environment.

The Management Committee will now be a Board of Directors and the Director will have the new title of Chief Executive Officer. The Board will continue to uphold its vision:

- to ensure the continuation of a safe, co-operative, rewarding and up-to-date working environment

- to enable the CEO and her team to operate with maximum flexibility, and
- to co-operate closely with important strategic partners in all our operational areas.

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.

Funding from the Italian Government continued at the previous year's level and allowed the Italian Language Centre to progress with both enrolments and professional development for Italian language teachers.

We continued in maintaining our strong community presence by hosting a variety of community events and activities with particular focus and support for those community members from a CALD background. The dedication and contribution of our staff and volunteers is invaluable, and the Management Committee once again expresses their sincerest appreciation.

I am grateful for the ongoing support of the whole Management Committee. 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. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding

contributions made by the following people in our organisation over the past year:

- Our exceptional Director (now CEO) Dina Ranieri who leads the organisation with a resolute direction for growth and sustainability in our programs.
- The Management Committee Executive, Cav. Antonio Palella (VP), Antony Brown (Treasurer) and Luisa Rose (Secretary) who have supported and encouraged the organisation's continued development. Sadly, due to domestic and other work constraints, Mrs Rose resigned in June and the Committee wishes her all the best for the future.



[Cav. Nereo Brezzi - President]

# treasurer's report

Co.As.It. Community Services traded as an Incorporated Association for the 2017/2018 financial year and was audited as such.

Total revenue for the 2017/2018 financial year was \$20,199,450 with expenses totalling \$15,920,539, leaving a surplus of \$4,278,911.

Co.As.It.'s balance sheet shows a very strong position with total member funds (net assets) of \$13,857,768.

The total figures represent all funded programs combined and all output targets were met as contracted by government funding.

I make the following notes in addition to the auditor as at 30 June 2018:

## **Auditor**

Unfortunately Co.As.It. Community Services needed to replace the auditor after the end of the financial year, just before the 2017/2018 auditing commenced.

We received communication in mid-August from the appointed auditors that they were unable to meet their obligations.

The management committee at the time assigned the responsibility of finding and interviewing replacement auditors, to the CEO and the Treasurer. The outcome of interviews was presented to the Management Committee and Anthony Bryant was chosen.

## **Balance Sheet**

Co.As.It. holds open a loan facility with Westpac and can draw down \$800,000 at any time to cover additional or unforeseen expenses.

The loans payable under liabilities are vehicles by way of 60 month term purchase arrangements. We now have over 40 vehicles in the fleet.

The 'Other Liabilities' listed on the balance sheet represent the Home Care Package clients unspent funds.

## **Administration**

Co.As.It.'s general division receives a contribution from all funded programs to cover the costs of administration.

The administration or "general" division then pays all of the overhead expenses instead of having to spread these costs over the individual programs.

The administrative cost for the year was less than 10% of the total income.

## **Community Home Support Program**

Co.As.It. was fortunate to be granted extra funding for the financial year as well as rolled over funds from the previous year.

All target outputs were achieved and slightly exceeded for the year.

Unfortunately some of this funding was one-off and the total funding is expected to be less the next financial year.

### **Community Care Program (under 65)**

The target outputs were achieved and slightly exceeded for the year.

Some participants will transition to NDIS and some will remain going forward under a new contract arrangement.

### **Home Care Packages**

All funds received on behalf of the client are placed directly into the balance sheet as a liability as they remain with them or are returned to the Government once the client ceases the package. Package numbers continue to increase due to our strong reputation in the community.

### **Primary Health Network (PHN)**

The Primary Health Network contract is an agreement with a consortium of providers to deliver CHSP services to the Brisbane North and Cabool regions. The contracted outputs were exceeded and the program remains profitable.

### **Regional Assessment Services (RAS)**

The RAS program allows us to continue to screen and assess elderly clients under My Aged Care ahead of entry into CHSP services.

This program runs lean but it is important that we are involved and seen to be participating. This gives us insight into government direction with CHSP.

### **Italian Language Centre**

The funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues at the same level as last year with a small supplement granted.

Co.As.It. has a long history of language teaching and it continues to believe in its significance within the goals and objectives of the organisation. It also raises our profile when dealing with departments in relation to CALD funding.

### **In general**

Co.As.It Community Services continues to grow in

aged care and its strength is recognised from peers and the Government sector. To further strengthen this growth Co.As.It. has transformed from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

One of the most important factors that ensures our survival in the ever evolving industry is the ability for organisation and all the staff to embrace changes and adapt quickly.

The Management Committee (now Board of Directors) is mindful of this and empowers and enables the CEO to keep Co.As.It. ahead of the industry without placing unnecessary roadblocks in the way.

We are as always mindful of the corporate governance required by a company and work with the CEO to help reduce the workload that could flow from that while still meeting our responsibilities and obligations as a Board.



**[Antony Brown - Treasurer]**

# ceo's report

The highlights for our organisation this year have been the celebration of our 40th anniversary of community services, an important milestone which has been captured in the printing of a commemorative booklet and a photographic exhibition depicting the organisation's growth and achievements throughout the last four decades.

It has also been gratifying to complete our organisational structural transition from an Incorporated organisation to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Over 2018, we have continued to experience growth in service provision. Whilst embracing this growth it was ever so important this year not to forget the history of our organisation and the reasons for supporting a community that was struggling with language barriers and cultural identity.

We continue to support those members who face those barriers every day and we improve their access to much needed services.

The aged care services have continued to be the central force of our existence. The Government's changes to funding models have provided Co.As.It. with an opportunity to showcase and deliver services in wider geographical areas no longer limited by the boundaries of the previous funding model.

Co.As.It. continues to invest in strategies in order to be a competitive player in this new client-directed

market. Our goals over this financial year has been to identify our strengths, improve our technology, invest in our care management systems and restructure our teams to focus on building relationships with clients and families.

This change has resulted in the retention of strong operational capital allowing us to fund services for the community which are not funded by the Government.

Two of these are the Dementia Support and the Counselling Programs that are funded solely by Co.As.It. - vital initiatives that have contributed to better outcomes for our clients and carers alike.

We are constantly faced with competition on our doorstep. Attracting new clients and keeping our current clients is of serious commercial importance yet we are sustained by the knowledge that we offer a specialised service that clients are willing to wait for.

The ever-changing environment in aged care continues to challenge the energy and enthusiasm of many staff, but greater attention has been placed on emotionally supporting office staff by organising training that gave strategies and ways of dealing with deadlines and ongoing contact with clients.

This resulted in teams working well together and producing incredible outcomes for clients and families on a daily basis - and receiving very positive

feedback from members of the community. During this 12 month period we have been concentrating on setting up a clinical team that provides nursing services now also on week-ends.

This has allowed us to reduce a number of brokered agreements and increasing cost-saving measures for the organisation.

This strategy was recognised by the Dept of Health which manages the Commonwealth Home Support Program which made an offer to increase funding for these services.

It allowed us to double the number of hours in the five aged care regions and reach a larger number of elderly in those areas.

With the aim of increasing our presence in the Caboolture region, the Management Committee purchased a property at Bracken Ridge with the intent to renovate and offer social group activities for everyone including week-end respite for participants on NDIS or other participants that are needing to re-connect with the community as well as alleviate some of the pressures felt by parents/carers of people with a disability.

We are happy to announce that the property will be undergoing renovations in the upcoming months.

The increased level of satisfaction for our services has provided a greater awareness amongst the

mainstream community members of our brand and the quality of services that they can access. Word of mouth continues to be our best marketing tool.

Co.As.It. has commenced the journey towards registration with NDIS.

This has been a steep learning curve for us and we have executed our progress with moderation, addressing concerns and risks in this field and signing up small number of participants on the scheme.

It is hoped that by progressing conservatively, it will enable us to identify areas that require greater attention.

It is however exciting to be providing services in a new field and promoting our brand to a community that is very new to Co.As.It.

We continue to collaborate with our partners: Primary Health Network - Brisbane North (PHN), CALD providers, RAS (Regional Assessment services), local hospitals and GPs and Consortium members in the delivery of in-home services.

With the announcement of the Royal Commission in aged care it is almost certain that we will be facing more changes in this landscape.

We continue to be confident that our staff will respond positively to these changes and management together with the Board of Directors will ensure that

greater support is provided to staff and volunteers to ensure Co.As.It. will conclude next year with excellent results and increased number of clients.

Co.As.It. continues to align itself with the teaching and promotion of the Italian language as part of our evolution.

The Italian Language Centre (ILC), a division of Co.As.It. Community Services, continues to collaborate and provide support for the teaching of Italian.

The ILC team has been busy this year running professional development courses and being involved in a number of learning initiatives that have benefitted students and teachers.

They continue to extend the activities and services such as intensive courses for professionals, agencies and commercial businesses, interpreting and translations as required, immersion cooking classes, summer language classes and Italian movie nights.

We have also welcomed the new Italian Ambassador H.E. Stefano Gatti who is passionate about improving the relationships between Italian businesses, the community and government departments.

This year a number of educational authorities from Italy visited Australian schools and colleges with the aim of signing agreements for student and Principal exchange programs, a process facilitated by the

Italian Embassy's Education Advisor in Canberra Dott.ssa Annarita Tamponi.

The funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues but is not a guaranteed funding component for the teaching of Italian.

In this last year we were fortunate to have received a slight increase in our funding and this was shared amongst the Italian language courses delivered state wide.



[Dina Ranieri - CEO]

## growing presence

### **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

#### **Gold Coast Italo-Australian Centre**

18 Fairway Drive, Clear Island Waters





Our care staff go above and beyond  
to treat each client with DIGNITY.

The pleasure to make a person feel like  
family is at the heart of what we do.

## co.as.it. @ a glance



STAFFING: 352

VOLUNTEERS: 50

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS: 5,463

TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICES: 621,289

TOTAL REVENUE: \$20,199,450

VEHICLES: 42

ITALIAN LANGUAGE CENTRE:  
22,000 students statewide learning  
Italian

## our richest resource - asset: our staff

It is with genuine pride that we recognise our staff as the nucleus of our organisation.

They are our richest resource and their contributions and hard work have continued to enrich our programs whilst supporting our ethos of care.

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.

Whilst the aged care industry moves into a more commercialised model of service delivery, we are highly focused on training our people to individualise every facet of the client's care plan to ensure they fulfil the emotional, social, physical and spiritual well-being of the communities we serve.

Concurrently, we support them in achieving higher qualifications, expanding their knowledge base and maintaining their capacity to engage with our clients with energy, kindness and expertise.

Without their commitment to our clients, we would not be able to implement our services and they continue to be an inspiration for us and more significantly for their clients.

Co.As.It. offered a wide range of services and integrated into every person's care there is a team of people - from volunteers who visit at home,

respite carers, other support staff, nursing and allied health professionals and of course the support of administrative, financial, managerial staff and Board members who work in the background of the organisation.

However, to our clients, they see the same worker and health professional each time, thus allowing them to form genuine relationships that build trust and friendship and our staff also get to know their clients and identify emerging or changing needs.

We are genuinely proud of our organisation - one that orients services to furnish the intrinsic human rights:

- Dignity and respect of each person's life experience
- Empowerment in their choice of personal lifestyle decisions
- Maintenance of independence and healthy ageing
- Inclusion of family, friends and carers in lifestyle plans
- Participation in social and community systems as part of a wider citizenry.

### 2017/2018 staff [as at June 30, 2018]



MANAGEMENT	3
FINANCE	8
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	10
REGIONAL ASSESSMENT TEAM (RAS)	6
AGED CARE AND OTHER	44
COMMUNITY SERVICES	
ALLIED HEALTH	9
NURSING STAFF	7
CARE STAFF	252
ILC STAFF	4
TEACHERS	9
VOLUNTEERS	50




Staff training and strong communication skills are vital in an organisation as large as Co.As.It.

Often it is not only sound administrative techniques that are required to do a job well. Human relationships and emotions are an integral component of the way we relate to others and it is vital that staff are upskilled in learning to adapt and react to any situation at work and at home.

Of particular reference was a training session that had staff laughing their way through a wonderful workshop highlighting the dynamics of relationships at work and at home.

Training focussed on the importance of learning on how to be the best they could be - no matter what situation faced them.

It was one of a number of training sessions that empowered our staff to keep on doing the superlative job that they do and we will continue to provide training on personal growth and development on a regular basis.



# the year in review

Service providers continue to face challenges as the spotlight of scrutiny remains on highlighting the standards of care being provided in the aged care arena.

Coupled with on-going restructuring of government programs and initiatives, 2018 has been a year of change and sharpened focus on ensuring our quality of care is of a premium standard and that it aligns with both regulatory bodies and client expectations.

We have also concentrated on facilitating access to services, especially for those in the community whose first language is not English, and in enhancing our brand and market presence within an increasingly competitive environment.

We have continued to collaborate with our partners and consortium members to enable more expansive service delivery across a number of local planning areas and underpinning our growth, development and sustainability under the new organisational structure as a benevolent charity.

Under contractual arrangements we continue to implement Regional Assessment Services for people wishing to enter the aged care service portal. Staff are compassionate and understanding and have a profound sense of responsibility of the impact of the assessment on the person's future wellbeing.

With the deregulation of the Home Care Package Program (HCP) in February 2017, we saw a growth

rate of 40% and this success is directly attributable to new strategies of retaining and acquiring new clients in response to the reforms as well as our service delivery model of Consumer Directed Care (CDC) where the client is supported in making personal and informed decisions about their care plan and the management of their package.

A parallel growth in services has also been evidenced in the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) where successful growth funding was approved late in 2017, with the inclusion of transport services for the first time, this has ensured our clients remain socially and geographically connected to the wider community.

The acquisition in Bracken Ridge of a new property has been another positive expansion. Once the centre is completed it will meet the diverse needs of a growing number of people needing support through aged, community and disability support programs. There has been a shortage of suitably qualified staff in the aged and disability support workforce and we anticipate that we will experience significant shortages in this area in the future.

Learning partnerships have been established with TAFE South Bank and Griffith University to enable students in aged and community care studies to have placements within our organisation which may ultimately lead to long-term employment. The need to attract greater numbers of students in this field is a genuine preoccupation for all service providers

in their daily operations and we have collaborated with these educational and RTO institutions to create recruitment strategies for vocational training and referral pathways in this industry. The increased growth in services and client numbers has necessitated the introduction of on-line training for staff through the Aged Care Channel allowing staff to pursue training at a pace that is appropriate and suitable to each individual.

Additionally, increased care staff supervision and support have been required for the large number of employees and the creation of new key roles within the organisation have improved information transmission, communication and training and has kept our field workers in regular contact with their team leaders.

Our regular system reviews have indicated a need to improve our client management systems and related software and we are actively pursuing alternatives to enhance quality assurance, risk management and client satisfaction in our ever-changing work environment.

In the past year, Co.As.It. has also augmented counselling and dementia support services for the swelling number of carers and families who have the care of a person living with cognitive impairment, particularly for the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities. Our community engagement projects, information forums, social events and activities continued to bring the community together

in large numbers and the demand for social outings outstripped the desire for any other activities.

The need for connectivity, inclusion and social contact is a focal point for services aimed at bridging gaps in involvement and participation within the community strata.

The **South Coast office** has had an equally productive year. During the Commonwealth Games, negotiations with statutory bodies, transport companies and Games organisers ensured that strategies were designed and implemented to ensure our clients enjoyed service continuity in the midst of the hundreds of thousands of visitors coming through the city.

At the end of the previous financial year the **South Coast team** were notified of being granted funding for domestic assistance under the CHSP, in addition to existing social activity, centre based respite, nursing care and allied health services.

In the past 12 months, the number of care staff has doubled from 15 to 33 and the Home Care Package Program has seen a 15% growth that the South Coast office. This is in spite of the number of service providers operating on the **South Coast** increasing significantly from 47 in 2017 to now over 100 HCP providers. It is gratifying to see that despite such intense competitive business activity, Co.As.It. maintained and in fact expanded its presence in the region.

This is no doubt due to the diligent work undertaken by staff in networking, exhibiting at aged care expos and care staff taking a genuine interest in the community they serve.

This past year also continued the valuable work carried out by staff in the **Italian Language Centre (ILC)** which operates under the banner of Co.As.It. This institution holds a highly respected reputation as a provider of professional development and curriculum support as well as language resources, for teachers of Italian in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns and the Sunshine Coast. In this 12 month period, the **ILC** supported over 22,000 students Queensland wide, an increase of over 5,000 students since last year.

Funds from the Italian government support many of the Italian language programs in Queensland and interstate and it has recently been confirmed that Australia has the highest number internationally, of students currently studying the Italian language and culture (347,000). **ILC** and Co.As.It. were once again proud sponsors of the StuditaliA scholarship program run in conjunction with the Italian Consulate and the Department of Education International Services.

**ILC** has continued to partner with Venice University Ca' Foscari to offer students three-month internships in Brisbane. These students are heavily involved in resource development and delivery of presentations in schools where their language currency is valuable and educational.

## aged care

### snapshots aged care

TOTAL CLIENTS ACROSS  
AGED CARE PROGRAMS:  
5,208

TOTAL SERVICE HOURS:  
418,233



## aged care commonwealth home support program

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) is funded by the Department of Health and supports clients who are 65 years and over.

In the past twelve months this program has once again gone through some significant changes, despite these taxing adjustments, our staff still managed to provide premium service delivery.

We upheld our strong commitment to providing our clients with individual care that is both responsive and adaptive to their changing health conditions and provided care that fostered a sense of personal growth and achievement.

By streamlining administrative procedures we have been able to cater to extended client numbers whilst concurrently applying our service delivery to embrace the “wellness and re-ablement” models of care.

Our organisation was in fact instrumental in creating awareness of this model of care for our workers by implementing a pilot study in 2012 that focused on supporting clients to be responsible for their own well-being and since then, the pilot study has been adapted and utilised where appropriate.

In maintaining the momentum created by the pilot study, we have evidenced significant and measurable differences in how our clients welcome their support staff who assist them in achieving positive outcomes in their lives - outcomes that they themselves have planned and identified. With the focal point of our support from “doing for” to “doing with”, our clients are achieving greater levels of satisfaction in their daily lives and in their independence.

Care staff and coordinators encourage personal involvement and choice in identifying specific goals and achieving these identified goals with support.



By increasing their quality of life and enhancing self-esteem and independence, this program is fostering confidence in more clients and increasing their ability to take control in their life. What further contributes to the success of this program is the ability for the client to schedule a service on a day and time that they prefer rather than wait all day for a support worker.

Care plans are designed in consultation with the clients, their lifestyle choices and desired results may be supported by integrated Allied Health services and other professionals who also inspire self-reliance. The coming year we will be focussing on continuing to provide quality services and educating our clients about what we can do to assist them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

# aged care

## home care packages (hcp)



Funded by the Department of Health, HCP continues to be a vital program for older, frail people wishing to continue living at home with access to high quality, client-centred services that maximises independence, healthy ageing and community engagement.

These services were responsive to changing needs as clients aged in place and they integrated a range of support that enabled clients to live fulfilling and satisfying lives in their own homes. There has been increased clinical support due to the larger number of clients on a high level package and this trend will continue in the future as additional high level packages are funded by government.

Our focus continues to be directed at and the quality, care and safety of all clients.

The loss of control over the right to choose is often identified as the one most debilitating factors of ageing.

Reliance and dependence on others to achieve tasks of daily living e.g. shopping, paying bills, attending medical appointments etc. eventually divests the older person of their dignity, independence and self-esteem.

With relevant others, HCP clients were actively involved in designing a care plan that suited them, their services, their preferences and most importantly their individual time slots.

Every care plan was unique and designed by the Coordinator in consultation with the client, their loved ones and relevant health professionals.

As CALD care specialists, clients were matched with support staff who identified with their language and cultural background and could successfully deliver in-home support in a familiar, culturally relevant and personalised way.

Home Care Packages are fundamental to the well-being of our clients and our services address their dreams, goals and aspirations, not only fostering emotional, spiritual and physical comfort but also confidence and self-esteem in their own capacities.

Coordinators and staff in this program participated in a number of Service and Aged Care Expos, attended training workshops with LASA (Leading Aged Services Australia), as well as Advocacy and PHN Forums to ensure workers were upskilled and able to handle the challenges of multi-layered service delivery.

## case study

Giuditta\*, one of our Level 4 package clients living on the Gold Coast, is a lovely lady with advanced dementia, she lives with her son, his wife and their 3 children who are in their early 20s.

Giuditta is physically quite well, moves independently (although she is very confused and finds it difficult to remember where things are such as the bathroom) and Giuditta requires assistance with all tasks of daily living: showers, her meals, getting dressed, etc.

A conversation cannot be held with Giuditta anymore, she has reverted back to Italian and speaks incoherently.

Giuditta's son and his wife haven't been on a holiday for years due to their on-going care for his mother. Providing full-time care for a person with advanced dementia is not an easy job, yet the family does not feel comfortable placing Giuditta in residential respite care.

This year the couple celebrated 30 years and wanted to celebrate it with an overseas holiday. The overriding concern was "What do we do with mum?"

Their children all have their own commitments during the week including university and work but every weekday someone could be at home by 5.30pm.

Giuditta had accumulated funds from her Level 4 home care package and the team at the **South Coast** were able to organise care workers to provide full-time day care for 3 weeks for Giuditta. Through Giuditta's package, a tablet to be able to listen to Italian music with her was purchased. Giuditta responded well to Italian music and even started dancing. A beautiful moment!

The tablet was also used to look up Italian short video clips and pictures of Italian scenery and villages from the time Giuditta lived in Italy. The son has promised to upload photos of Giuditta's past for our community care staff to connect with her.

Her son and his wife were able to celebrate their anniversary with a well-deserved holiday in the knowledge that Mum was being provided with the best possible care in their absence.

\*Name has been changed



giuditta

## aged care

### centre based respite



The centres perform a variety of services from centre-based respite for people requiring high level care, support and respite for dementia sufferers and creating social connectivity through socio-recreational activities.

With the heightened occurrence of cognitive impairment within our older community members, the centre-based respite form the bastion of support for carers and families who have the full-time responsibility of care.



Specialised dementia specific groups operate across all centres and incorporate programs that are based on emotional and experiential memories that invoke a sense of satisfaction and happiness in our clients.

Carers of high level care clients also take advantage of centre-based respite not only as a means of relief from their caring but also as an avenue to increase the social contact, integration and connectivity for the person they are looking after.



Carer fatigue is a well-documented collateral detriment of caring for a person long-term and for extended periods of time.

Without the respite care provided carers would not be able to continue in their important role. The centres provided over 18,000 hours of centre-based respite services.

# clinical and allied health services

## clinical services

### snapshots



### clinical services

TOTAL NURSING  
CLIENTS:

669

TOTAL SERVICE HOURS:  
8,930



Clinical services continued to grow throughout this year and nursing staff provided valuable and essential nursing treatment to over **650 people**. The growth in services necessitated the employment of three new nurses and their commitment and dedication has enabled more clients with high and complex needs to be discharged a from hospital and remain in their own home rather than being admitted into aged care.

In the past 12 months, the focus of the now larger team has been the underpinning of essential nursing support through interconnected services that allow a broader range of flexibility and care for clients.

The close collaboration team work has led to outstanding health results which are directly attributable to our nursing staff's expertise and their profound compassion to alleviate the distress and often chronic conditions of their patients.

Due to the commitment from the nursing team, many clients are able to remain in their own home rather than enter residential aged care.

In 2018 the nursing team focus has been on supporting each other in becoming a cohesive and supportive team with strong evidence based practice.

## case study



### the nursing team

*Chronic leg ulcers are a distressing and very painful condition for older people. On two occasions our nurses have been referred clients with extensive and very debilitating ankle to knee ulcers. These ulcers had been receiving non-responsive treatment from other organisations for over 12 months. Both ladies were in severe pain, were distressed and unable to enjoy any quality of life with the horrific wounds.*

*For our nursing staff, just treating the wounds was only part of the comprehensive care that was required to support and heal the ulcers. They also needed to assess why they were not recuperating after concerted efforts by other organisations had been made to assist the clients.*

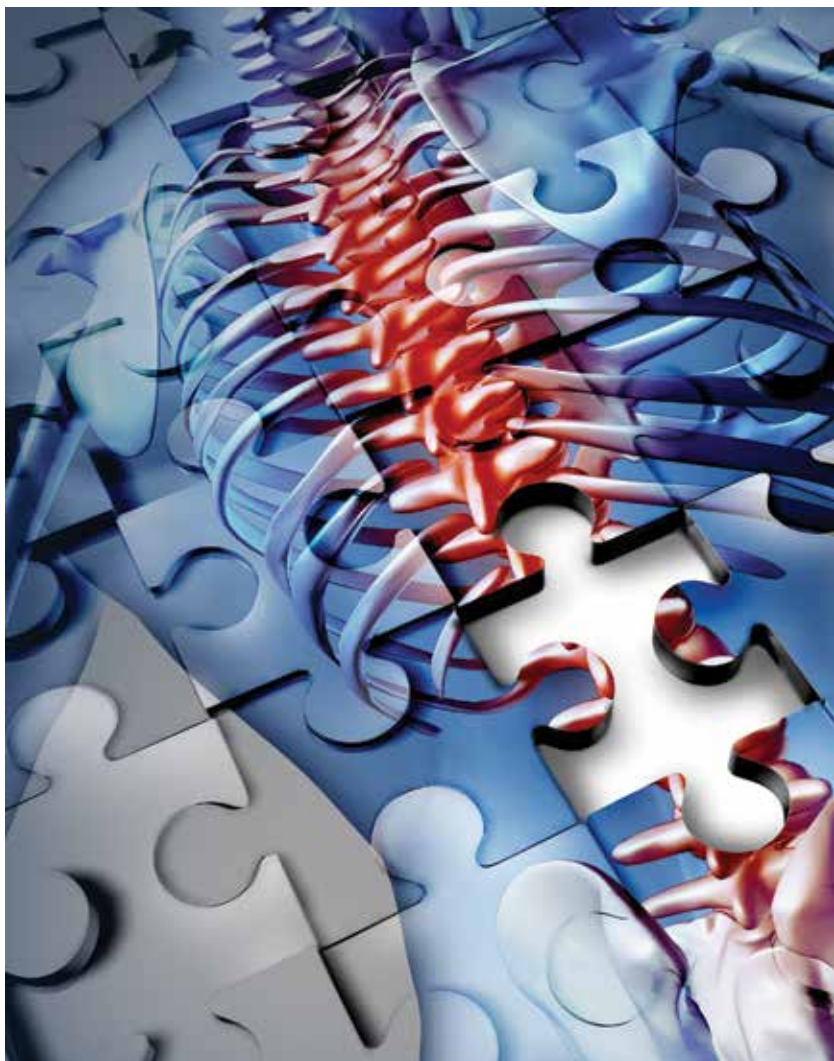
*The nursing team created an optimal environment for multi-faceted restorative treatments for each lady and within a few months, both leg ulcers were healed successfully to the joy of the clients.*

*This enabled them to resume their participation in family events, tasks of daily living and wider community events and without chronic pain, were able to regain some quality of life.*

*It is cases such as these that are deeply satisfying and they invigorate our staff to pursue innovative and responsive solutions in helping to care for wounds and other conditions.*

# clinical and allied health services

## allied health services



Following additional funding obtained through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), the allied health section of our organisation has seen a much-needed growth of staff and service provision.

New staff on the team included our first 'in-house' Podiatrist, a full time Allied Health Assistant (AHA) and an additional part time Physiotherapist, bringing the total number of staff in the team to eight.

A high degree of advertising, networking and widening of awareness of the service was communicated to RAS assessors, clients, other organisations and the general public of our range of services.

Referral numbers increased dramatically. The new AHA has greatly facilitated delivery of programs to HCP clients following the growth in requests for services.

The Allied Health team has managed a wide range of conditions from clients who had recently been discharged from hospital, to the management of chronic pain and disability.

Treatment is aimed at supporting the whole person, optimising their mobility, function, level of independence and sense of well-being.

### snapshots



### allied health services

**TOTAL ALLIED CLIENTS:**  
1,808

**TOTAL SERVICE HOURS:**  
24,910

## case study



*When Liberata (87yrs) contacted Co.As.It. and arranged for 8 weeks of physiotherapy sessions, she already had a plan of action in mind for when she had finished her treatment – a long plane trip to visit her home country of Uruguay.*

*She started her weekly treatment sessions with this goal firmly in her mind and our physiotherapist worked with her to achieve this much desired outcome.*

*Focused on manual therapy of the lower back, electrotherapy and a general strength and exercise program, after 8 weeks of intensive support, Liberata managed to improve her overall mobility and exercise tolerance significantly.*

*One objective measure in particular - the TUG (Timed Up and Go) test improved by over 20 seconds! A great result indeed!*

*By having the physiotherapy sessions, Liberata was able to be comfortable for the duration of the long-haul flight and was even able to do some of the home exercises mid-flight!*

*Thanks to her physiotherapy intervention, and a home program that she could manage even when overseas, Liberata was able to travel a very long way and enjoy every minute of her four-week adventure to see her sister.*

*Liberata*

## case study



Olga was born in NSW in 1919 and moved to Queensland when she was two. She has resided in her current home for the last 69 years. Her lifetime hobby has been 10 pin bowling, achieving both Queensland State Ladies Champion and Doubles Champion in 1973 and many numerous club awards over the years.

Olga only stopped playing 10 pin bowling last year at the tender age of 97 after she had a fall in the kitchen. An awkward turn and landing on her back resulted in a fractured spine and a three week hospital stay. When she returned home, she was too weak to climb the steps into her house.

Being effectively 'house-bound', Olga's goal on commencing physiotherapy was to be mobile enough to get out of the house to watch her favourite game - bowling of course, and to "cheer the girls on". Olga commenced re-habilitation and in only six weeks, she was mobile enough to once again climb her back steps.

Olga was a diligent patient and practiced her exercises daily - she reached her goal to get out of the house again. At her age, such marked improvement is quite an achievement and it is due to her persistence and tenacity. We are pleased to see that on recent follow-up visit, Olga is still doing her exercises daily.

olga

# community care program

## snapshots



## community care program

**TOTAL CLIENTS: 171**

**TOTAL SERVICE HOURS:  
12,041**



The Community Care Program aims to assist people under 65 years of age who are in need of basic, low-level care and support to enable them to live independently at home.

The objective of the program is to maximise people's capacity and to enable them to retain dignity and as much self-sufficiency as possible.

While receiving the care and support they need through a range of basic support services, the clients are also strongly encouraged to take an active role in the planning of services and in what they would like to achieve as life goals during the year.

The program's strength and success lies in the close collaboration with clients who identify their aspirations and work collaboratively with their coordinator and care staff to achieve these. It has been a privilege to be an integral part of their progress in achieving these important goals during this past year.

There have been numerous changes and excitement with the NDIS coming on board for many of our community care clients in the last 12 months and many more clients to be a part of NDIS in the next 12 months. We have worked and learnt together with clients to understand and maximise the help available with really positive outcomes.

We were inspired by many clients who, no matter the situation or adversity, aided by this program have excelled and continued to live as independently as possible.

A close-up portrait of a man with a red cap, smiling. The man has light skin and brown eyes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

## case study

My name is Jenny and I have a son Michael, aged 46, who has the onset of frontal lobe dementia. Michael retired from the workforce in February 2011 due to his illness and my husband Trevor, Michael's father and myself cared for him until someone told us about Disability Services.

Through DS we were able to get some caring for him through a Service Provider, which enabled Trevor and myself to have some time together going out for a few hours once a week. We also had carers 24/7 for 2 weeks in January to visit our family in Canberra and a weekend in October to attend Trevor's reunion.

The Service Provider we had at the time did not really give the caring that we required for Michael and it was thanks to a neighbour who has ties with Co.As.It. that we were able to contact Co.As.It. direct.

This is where we met Sharon and Paola who both came out to introduce us to Co.As.It. This was 3 years ago last May and we have never looked back since. They both went through everything with us and included Michael in all the interview

michael

process, which he could understand properly back then and assigned our wonderful Sonja to us as Michael's Thursday carer.

What a wonderful 4 hours a day they had each Thursday. What we would have done back then without Paola and Sonja I don't know.

Sonja would take Michael down to the beach at Sandgate and they would go for long walks and chat to people with dogs and check each week on a particular tree for birds and their babies, then when they got back home Sonja would write a little piece about what they did into the book that we had for Michael.

Unfortunately for us and very fortunate for Co.As.It. Sonja was offered a position in the office, so along came Tiffany. She and Michael hit it off straight away and it is still ongoing to this day each Wednesday.

Unfortunately 2 years ago Michael fell and fractured his hip which has slowed him down a bit now with walking and his mind has also deteriorated slightly.

When Trevor and I have been visiting our family in Canberra over the years and his reunion get together it has been very costly for us, as Michael being under 65 there was not a lot of funding available.

Thanks to our wonderful Paola she was always able to source some funding from outside which has been of a great help to us. Now that Brisbane has come onto the NDIS and Michael has been accepted by them, it is much easier for us now.

On the subject of Paola, 2 and a half years ago Trevor had major heart surgery and I was at a crossroads as to what I was going to do with Michael to allow me to be at the hospital for Trevor. It was emergency surgery for him.

Paola went over and above her duties to source carers for me - being under 65 there is very limited places where these people can go.

Michael is physically very well thank goodness, but needs to have carers like Co.As.It. people who can be with him and understand his mental disability. He can be very challenging at times as I know, but the people who we are blessed to have handle him with so much caring it makes life so much better for Trevor and myself.

Candice was later employed in Paola's role and has been wonderful to us since she came to Co.As.It. I don't know what I would have done without her when we were transitioning to the NDIS. She was there with me every step of the way, over and above what she was required to do, but nevertheless she was always just an email or phone call away.

When we went away in September for 4 days Candice was so thoughtful in picking carers for Michael as has been done for us over the past 3 and a half years.

Since being on the NDIS we have been able to access extra time each week which has been good for both Michael and us, as it enables Michael to go out more and us to have more time together.

All of these people are just wonderful to Michael and it shows the commitment from Co.As.It. and their staff just how much easier it is for people in our position.

Michael is in very good safe hands with Co.As.It. and it is all thanks to the dedicated people who work with him and many others. Without Co.As.It. we would be in the same boat as we were before, with people who just don't understand people with special needs.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone at Co.As.It. who we have had the pleasure of dealing with over the past few years and hopefully many more to come. We are so very grateful to you all.

You are all very, very special to us.

Trevor, Jenny and Michael.

## residential support services

### community visitors scheme

This is one of our favourite ‘feel good’ programs that focuses on the building of friendships that are genuine, meaningful and caring. We are fortunate to have a skilled group of volunteer visitors with diverse life experiences and interests, they share a wealth of knowledge with our clients and display such kindness and respect for the people they visit that it is a privilege to have them as part of our team.

The purpose of our Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is to alleviate social isolation in older CALD people living in residential aged care homes or clients living at home and in receipt of a Home Care Package.

The majority of volunteers speak another language and are familiar with the culture and life experiences of the target group.

This program yields major positive effects on both sides. Both client and visitor experience increased self-esteem and wellbeing; diminished feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness and isolation. More importantly for CALD people living in aged care homes, there is an increased sense of connectedness to their culture and identity and inclusiveness in a community in which they no longer can actively participate.

The program also falls well within the expectations of visiting and maintaining respect and relationships within the local community. Following recruitment, volunteers are supported and assisted by the CVS coordinators through orientation, regular training

and social networking functions. The ability to see themselves as valuable resources within the larger volunteering arena is also made possible through functions such as National Volunteer Week celebrations and other volunteering events. Volunteers of five years dedication are presented with the Co.As.It. Medal of Appreciation for their efforts and contributions to the organisation and are also featured in the organisation’s quarterly magazine. However, the program does experience some problems.

As the number of elderly being placed in care steadily grows, the recruitment of bi-lingual volunteers continues to become more difficult, older volunteers have their own health issues and are caring for younger members of their extended families e.g. grandchildren.

It is worthwhile noting that over the last 12 months, there has been a growing trend of younger volunteers wishing to join the CVS program with ages ranging from 18 to 45 years.

Demographically, these groups are not traditionally able to volunteer due to full time study, pursuit of careers or caring for older family members. If this trend continues, the outcomes for the program are very promising. The attraction of the younger volunteers is no doubt a result of the successful recruitment by coordinators and their fostering of higher levels of satisfaction and achievement in their volunteer cohort.



# cald activity program

As the older CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) community ages, the expectations of being cared for at home are no longer viable as families struggle to maintain a healthy life, work balance.

The inability to care for their elderly at home may see Italian CALD elderly admitted into aged care facilities where the language, culture and environment are alien to them.

The CALD Activity Program works collaboratively with aged care facilities on either a fortnightly or monthly basis and **over 110 Italian CALD residents** participate regularly in the planned activities. It is directly funded by Co.As.It. and the **11 facilities** that access the service.

The program originated with a recognition that CALD residents were not participating fully in the daily life of the facility and were especially isolated and excluded from diversional therapy activities that were often deemed to be tasks they performed during their working life such as crotchet, sewing, gardening.

The inability to understand the purpose of these activities meant that many were reluctant to be involved and were missing out on social interaction.



Hence there was an identified need to create culturally appropriate diversional therapy sessions that would cater to these needs. The CALD Activity program creates activities that incorporate language, culture and life experiences and the team work closely with the aged care residential communities.

Important Italian themes and religious celebrations are planned that include all of the other residents and many theme days have been organised in coordination with existing diversional therapy schedules, e.g. Italian National Day, All Souls Day, Easter and Christmas.

Italian food products and meals are a highlight of each session and the brewing of Italian coffee fills the facilities attracting numerous non-Italian speaking residents: always a wonderful excuse to nurture friendships and connections within the facility.

Volunteers are an integral part of this program and their valuable support allows for the implementation of numerous activities on an individual level.

Informally, family members also 'volunteer' as they engage with their loved ones in the games, conversations and music that are integrated into the sessions.

## case study

*Curled up in a ball on her bed when the team arrived for a Christmas activity, Rosina was painstakingly assisted to get out of bed, to dress, and have her hair done with a lovely bow. She was then gifted with a floral arrangement and very long lengths of ribbon. The CALD Activity team took the time to learn that Rosina had been a florist in her early years and the activity was created just for her. It is this attention to detail that makes the efforts of the staff so rewarding.*

*She gathered the items in her small hands and concentrated on what she was doing - her transformation was breathtaking, she gently wrapped the flowers with ribbon for hours keeping each stem perfectly in place and winding the ribbon tightly and neatly. The enjoyment on her face was obvious as she relived her experiences from her youth. Care staff were continually surprised by the difference in her when she was addressed in her own language, heard songs from her past and given the opportunity to feel the texture, scents and have a purpose in doing familiar and loved tasks.*

*Residents may not be verbally communicative but the tapping of feet and nodding of heads to music is a clear indication that not all responses need to be verbal, the ability to interact in a physical way and remember the feeling of contentment is more valuable and more memorable for them than words could ever be.*



rosina

## social activity centres and outings

We continue to provide and maximise opportunities for our clients to meet, greet and define their own social connectivity.

The social group activities and outings are part of the Commonwealth Home Support Program which is funded by the Department of Health.

This service is invaluable to carers who need time out or to clients who need or want to interact and socialise with people from the same cultural background.

The centres provide services at four locations throughout Brisbane and one on the Gold Coast at Clear Island Waters

**We have provided services to approximately 450 clients per week attending 6 hours per day.**

At a time where increased services are helping people to remain living longer at home, it is imperative that recreational and social linkages widen and promote greater community participation to minimise isolation, alienation and apathy.

These social connections are an integral component in the home care support programs offered by Co.As.It. both in Brisbane and as far as Caboolture and the South Coast.

Between the social outings and the social activity groups **more than 20,000 transport trips** were undertaken in the past year.

The outings not only have worth in terms of social inclusivity, they also generate powerful positive psychological impacts that are critical to a person's physical and mental health.

Being able to select and attend social activities cultivates a sense of autonomy and freedom that is perceived as a locus of control in their lives.

This in turn, fosters a sense of independence, which make leisure and recreational activities a vital modality for optimising a client's satisfaction in life and in maintaining freedom of choice.

**More than 600 clients** have attended social outings held over the past year with hundreds of attendees who have enjoyed new experiences and relived old outings from their youth like visiting Stanthorpe and the Granite Belt, buying plants from nurseries, enjoying strawberry fields and ginger plantations and generally being adventurous tourists whenever and wherever the coordinators take them.

There are never empty bus seats and the opportunity for great company, new friendships and memorable experiences continue to draw people out.





# social connections

Co.As.It.'s presence within the community is highly visible and the community entrusts us with the confidence to organise events and activities which are always well-attended and often eagerly anticipated.

With pride we recognise the trust placed in our staff and in their organisation of events that continued to contribute to the wider community's fullness of experiences and lifestyle choices.

In the past 12 months a number of community initiatives generated great participation and connectivity across a wide range of ages.

## COMMUNITY CONCERT

Held at the end of each year it is not uncommon to have **over 350 people** attend this annual concert which is sponsored by local businesses and institutions. This is a high-profile event within the local community and engagement and involvement are a key that brings the community successfully together.

In December 2017, the concert was held at the Old Museum Building under the patronage of the Italian Consulate in Brisbane and we were honoured to have a number of distinguished guests in attendance.

Individuals, community members, businesses and Co.As.It. staff pledge their continued support in the form of raffle prizes, products and time.



# social connections

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Co.As.It. is a strong supporter of women and their valued contributions to the economic, social and cultural framework that binds our society. In the past ten years it has advocated for the celebration of women and their achievements through an annual International Women's Day event that **always attracts over 300 people**.

This year International Women's Day was attended by the Lady Mayoress Ann Quirk and other distinguished guests and it was the perfect opportunity to shed light on the global issues affecting women and fostering a wider interest in women's problems worldwide.

Every year the function accentuates the collective strength of women, the need to become more aware of gender parity and employment issues as well as create an opportunity for information exchange and the nurturing of younger girls to take positive action in support of other women.



## FESTITALIA 2017

This large community festival is a highlight of the cultural, linguistic and spiritual traditions that bind the Italian community together.

It is also one of the most successful cultural festivals in Brisbane that invites and unites the wider community in all things Italian whilst celebrating the contributions of the Italian presence in Queensland.

Co.As.It. has been an integral participant since 2006 and continued to support this community initiative with the 2017 edition which saw a **participation of over 10,000 patrons**.



# community connections

## MAQ AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

In October 2017, Queensland Multicultural Affairs Minister, The Hon Grace Grace MP, inducted the State's very first representatives of the Multicultural Queensland Ambassador Program at Parliament House in Brisbane.

Over 80 organisations supported this initiative and we were very proud that Co.As.It. was a member of the Multicultural Queensland Ambassador Program. This is a powerful statement to our clients, staff members, stakeholders and potential clients that our organisation not only values multiculturalism but is also proactive in advancing the tenets of multiculturalism for all Queenslanders.



## COMMUNITY FORUMS

To understand and identify emerging needs at the grass roots level, annually Co.As.It. holds a number of public community forums as part of Seniors Week celebrations. These forums are our direct link to future service users as well as current clients and intelligence gathered is critical in the analysis of our service delivery and in making recommendations for improvements.

The forums have a dual purpose - apart from celebrating the contributions and strengths of seniors in our community the forums are ideal for disseminating information on legal, health and other services as well as providing us with valuable data for our programs. Over 200 attendees were present at each of the two forums held in the past 12 months.



### INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

It has been identified that multigenerational contact has definite social and emotional gains, not only for the very young but also the elders in the community.

At both ends of the life cycle, it is not unusual to note that the very young and those nearing the end of their lives have much in common.

They are in tune with a different drum beat that is not responsive to the urgency of modern, everyday life.

They have the luxury of time to engage, listen, absorb and learn about simple pleasures.

It is these deeply satisfying interactions between the generations that are a valuable exchange for both groups and we regularly foster these 'meet and greets' at the social activity centres.



# case study

Every so often, a telephone call from the Director of the nearby kindergarten advises the Coordinator that the children are wanting to visit the 'nonni'.

There is general excitement all around when the news is conveyed to the participants. The children bring such simple joy to the older folks that they look forward to the visits with real enthusiasm and become actively engaged in deciding what they will do during their stay. The anticipation of having the tiny guests for the day is always great incentive for the groups to plan what activities they will provide and of course the first item for discussion is always food – something that the littlies seem to enjoy greatly as well.

The visits have resulted in a number of magical days for the elderly and the children who share their wonder at the Italian culture, learn about and taste new foods, share stories and do fun activities with the 'nonni' – from beading to puzzles to dancing!

The adults become so engaged with teaching the littlies that it is with genuine reluctance that they allow the tots to return to their own centre down the road.

The relationships formed by these multi-generational interactions have long term benefits for both children and adults, such as the reciprocal learning process with the transmission of traditions and cultures.

Furthermore, these interactions assist in maintaining connections between disparate age groups whilst also promoting healthy attitudes on ageing.

visit to the «nonni»



# community connections

## community and individual support program

The CISS Program continues to be energetically involved in community education, playgroups, information dissemination, technology classes and the establishment of networking events that improve access to legal, health, financial and future planning for clients. Support was provided to 104 clients with a total of 728 hours. Funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, this program offers the following activities:

### GIROTONDO PLAYGROUP

Recent studies carried out over the importance of a second language as a boost to cognitive, memory and listening skills are impacting many parents who decide to enrol their young ones in second language classes.

“Girotondo” Playgroup is a learning environment for young children who are engaged in proactive activities. These reasons are in many cases coupled with our CALD parents’ renewed interest in their family history and ancestry.

They also see the importance of a second language (in this case Italian) to create and nurture the rapport between their children and their grandparents.

### TECHNOLOGY CLASSES

Co.As.It. has identified the need for older members of our community to maintain linkages in a rapidly changing technological environment. The risk of being left behind while technology races ahead has



been the incentive to establish technology classes that are extending their social and practical reach such as communication, research, paying bills etc.

The program follows a simple step-by-step approach, from a gradual introduction to computers, tablets and smartphones to the description and use of some of the most famous social media programs available.

These new technology users can now stay in contact with friends and families through Facebook, Skype and Whatsapp and maintain connections with their younger generation through social media.

### COMMUNITY MOVIE DAYS

Movies have always been significant forms of entertainment and provide insightful comment on



society, relationships, health and the world and these monthly events are well attended. The movies are selected for their historical, cultural or social impact and their importance is hotly debated after each session much to the enjoyment of the viewers.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

The involvement of this program with the Italian group of Radio 4EB continued on a weekly basis.

Choosing the right channels and venues for information dissemination is particularly important when the target audience may experience little or no exposure to mainstream channels hence the local radio and community events continue to be a significant form of information dissemination especially within the older CALD community.

### CARD DAYS

Every first Wednesday of each month, several members of the Italian community meet at the Chermside Library to share the events from the previous weeks, talk about current affairs and to interact with each other by playing cards - the rules of which are always heatedly contested!

### INSIEME NEWSLETTER

Co.As.It.'s official quarterly magazine is a digital as well as a hard copy edition of news, information and communication about the organisation's programs and events that maintains vital linkages with clients, students and the wider community - especially as some of the articles are in Italian.

The editions are available online and more than 300 copies are mailed and the remaining copies distributed through the social activity groups in Brisbane and the South Coast, aged care facilities and the language classes at ILC.

### COUNSELLING SERVICES

This activity is jointly funded by Co.As.It. and the State Government. It provides support to clients within our service profile who are suffering from social isolation, grief and depression. Most users of this service have multiple and complex needs that can involve their extended families.

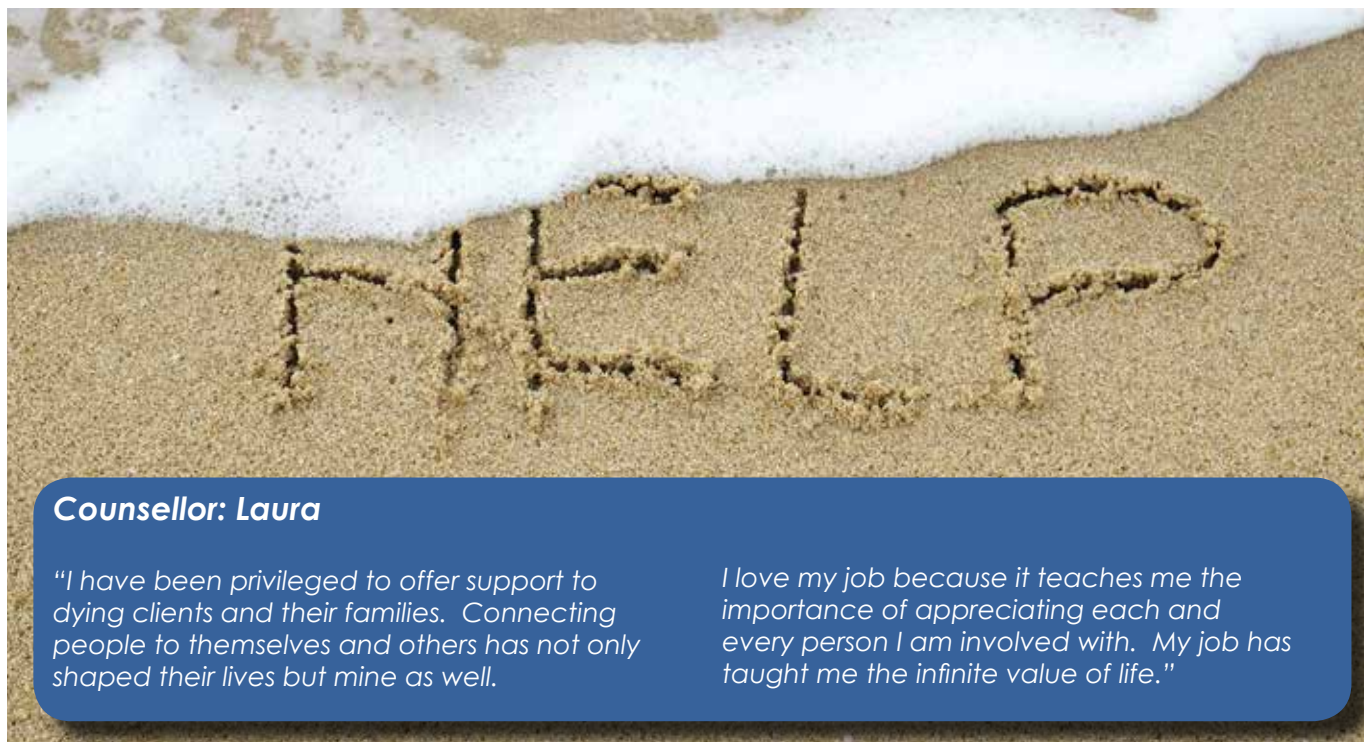
Sadly, there are high numbers of users who no longer see themselves as valuable members of society and our qualified counsellors have often worked outside

work hours to offer their support through family therapy, grief counselling and other services.

The counsellors are also heavily involved in teaching new techniques that promote self-care, self-growth and increase motivation. In many cases strategies are also taught that simply allow a person to be still and look from within for ways to become independent healers themselves with

positive outcomes in their lives. There are many successful stories where supported clients have been able to make peace with estranged members of their families, or have significantly reduced social isolation, or increased their mental and physical health.

Most of all, the service has given clients hope and confidence to look forward to a better future.



#### Counsellor: Laura

*"I have been privileged to offer support to dying clients and their families. Connecting people to themselves and others has not only shaped their lives but mine as well."*

*I love my job because it teaches me the importance of appreciating each and every person I am involved with. My job has taught me the infinite value of life."*



## case study

*Adnan is a refugee from a war-torn country where his family is still waiting for him to be settled before they can join him in Australia.*

*He shared how he lost everything during the civil war in his country, and how now, in a new country he had no hope for the future. He had lost his appetite due to his PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) suffered from agoraphobia (fear of open spaces) and has not one family or social connection in this country.*

*Adnan was invited to consider visiting agencies that provided support to refugees and after exploring a number of these, he gratefully accepted the support from an organization that connected him with a community from his country of origin and also provided him with information on the immigration process to reunite him with his family.*

*He has recently stated, "I have hope for the future, and I am confident that my family can have a new start in this country. I also know that slowly the wounds from war will be healed".*

*Adnan has happily joined one of our social groups and continues working on his wellness recovery action plan.*

*adnan*

# volunteering for co.as.it.

Our volunteers are an incredible resource that we never undervalue. Without them many of our programs would not run as efficiently or be as meaningful to our clients. Money does not mean much to them, their involvement with us is to simply help and make a difference to others and this altruistic trait enriches the days of many of our clients in countless ways.

Volunteers support Co.As.It.'s social activity groups in Brisbane and the Gold Coast as well as the CALD activity groups held in aged care facilities and the volunteers are active in the monthly social outings.

Our administration and offices also benefit greatly from volunteers and their skills and life experiences,

they facilitate the completion of small jobs that take time away from our coordinators and other personnel and allows them to dedicate more time to our clients. Co.As.It. recognises and acknowledges the dedication of these volunteers in various ways.

For the Community Visitors Scheme an annual presentation of Participation Certificates from the Department of Health and a morning tea has become a valued tradition, for other volunteers individual celebrations within their groups are a welcome end to the year.

They are also awarded a 5, 10, 15 and 20 year certificate and gift for their dedication to volunteering.

We are very grateful to each volunteer for giving so selflessly and for bringing their life experiences, skills and compassion in everything they do.

We understand the overriding commitments to family, in balancing life, work and social obligations, yet they continue to devote and make time to enrich our volunteer programs and the benefits are multidimensional.

Benefits are not localised only on the recipient - like a stone thrown into a pond, the benefits ripple on to affect recipients' partners, family members and others with whom they come into contact.

## co.as.it. celebrates 40 years



In an aged care environment that has seen myriad of changes since aged care services were introduced in Australia, Co.As.It.'s 40-year survival is a testament to its ability to adapt, redirect its programs, services and workers to meet each challenge head-on.

This 40-year history is accompanied by long-term employees who have sound knowledge and continuity of intellectual capital that has been successfully developed and created by strategies to expand and safeguard the long-term existence of the organisation.

They will continue to address the dynamic processes that emerge as the approaching decades once again metamorphose to the changes in funding.





What will never change for us is the intrinsic aspiration to care for people - this will always remain at the core of our organisation.

This client-centricity will continue to define the wellbeing of the individual by the individual.

To commemorate this milestone, a gala dinner was attended by more than 300 people and a historical booklet (**our past, your memories**) was presented to each guest on the history of Co.As.It. and the Italian community presence in Queensland.

An evocative documentary video featuring Co.As.It.'s first welfare worker Fiorenza Jones OAM, together with past and present committee members and employees who shared their experiences of Co.As.It.'s 40-year journey, was shown during the event's proceedings.

Co.As.It. CEO Dina Ranieri said she was *"honoured to witness this amazing milestone and be a testament to the positive impact our organisation has made on the community"*.

# language teaching



The Italian Language Centre (ILC) is a highly respected Italian language learning institution that operates under the umbrella of Co.As.It. Community Services.

ILC's vision is to be the focal point in Queensland for the promotion and study of Italian language and culture.

ILC aims to achieve this through a two-pronged approach: nine levels of Italian language courses from children to adults and curriculum support to Italian language programs in Queensland schools.



## ILC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ILC language programs delivered a wide range of individual and class learning situations:

### Adult Italian language classes

A total of 198 adult students attended classes and private lessons in the past 12 months.

### Girotondo Playgroup

A total of 59 playgroup sessions were held in Italian for children aged 3-5 years. Resources were activity booklets supported by relevant Italian songs, vocabulary, props and toys.

### After School Italian Program

School-aged children attend after school classes at locations in Brisbane's North and South: a total of 55 students attended in 2017/2018.

### Italian Summer School

Prior to the start of the 2018 school year, two Italian Summer School intensive courses were held for 30 students. (Yrs 10-12)

### Italian Immersion Days for schools

School excursions to ILC may be booked by teachers to provide their students with an opportunity to be immersed in Italian language and culture for a day.

These immersion classes regularly integrate an Italian cookery class which is a favourite activity.

### Corporate life/workplace balance

The corporate telecommunications giant OPTUS requested a 6-week block of weekly team building ILC Italian activities for 16 employees.

### Italian diversional therapy activities

Three blocks of ILC weekly Italian activities were organised through the Diversional Therapist at Villa Maria Aged Care Facility in Brisbane.

## ILC SUPPORT FOR ITALIAN PROGRAMS IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

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

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

### Professional Development for teachers of Italian

ILC was invited to provide a range of opportunities for a total of 89 teachers of Italian to maintain their

language proficiency to ensure a high standard of lesson delivery.

Six proficiency seminars were held over the past 12 months in the Townsville, Cairns, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane areas.

#### Teacher information meetings

Approached by Modern Language Teachers' Association Queensland (MLTAQ), information meetings for teachers of Italian were held regularly to update teachers about ILC events and activities such as calligram competition, speaking competitions, immersion days, Planet Commando excursion.

### ILC COMMUNITY EVENTS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

#### Pizza-Movie Nights

Exposure to native speakers greatly assists students in improving their listening skills. Held quarterly, the pizza-movie nights were **attended by over 120 students** who broadened their exposure to the language and culture of Italy.

#### End-of-semester celebrations

The end of semester celebrations are an additional way of socialising and improving skills learned through the semesters. With **over 80 people attending** these events, the celebrations are a noteworthy addition to the courses.



## ILC INITIATIVES PROMOTING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ITALIAN IN QUEENSLAND

### ILC subscribes to Education Perfect (Language Perfect)

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

### ILC Calligram Competition

This annual event is open to all school students of Italian from Prep to Yr 8. The winning and highly commended entries selected from over 250 submissions were on public display at Festitalia 2017 and at the StuditaliA 2017 awards ceremony.

Winners received certificates, medals and iTunes gift cards.

### StuditaliA Competition

Co.As.It.-ILC provides sponsorship for this annual event organised by the Queensland Department of Education (DoE) under the patronage of the Italian Consulate in Brisbane. The prize rewards excellence in Italian achieved by year 12 students.

ILC was once again invited to serve on the StuditaliA 2017 selection panel and winners were awarded scholarships to study in Italy for a month.

### Italian Speaking Competitions

Organised with the support of MLTAQ, ILC celebrated XVII Settimana della lingua italiana. The competition, open to students in Years 2 - 12 studying Italian in the greater Brisbane area, attracted 124 registrations.

Mother-tongue teachers from ILC, Dante Alighieri Brisbane and Griffith University generously volunteered to judge the competition which was also staged in Cairns and on the Sunshine Coast.

### MIUR Delegation visit to Brisbane

The visit took place subsequent to the 2017 signing of the Statement of Intent between the Brisbane Italian Consulate and the Queensland Department of Education.

The delegation of officials, high school principals and their deputies from the Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR - Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca) were accompanied by the Italian Embassy's Education Officer to Brisbane where ILC and DoE (Department of Education) hosted networking opportunities to set up partnerships for the promotion of mutually beneficial student, teacher and school principal exchanges.

The Italian Delegation visit to Brisbane of Italian Principals and teachers was hosted by DoE (Department of Education). Co.As.It.-ILC CEO Dina Ranieri attended the official welcome and ILC interpreter Simona Albanese shadowed the group



from 18-19 February in Brisbane and during their trip to visit Stanthorpe State High School and the Queensland College of Wine tourism. ILC also set up two meetings and provided an interpreter for two Principals who visited Brisbane Grammar School and Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie).

### XVII Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo 2017

An annual global celebration of the Italian language with the theme this year being 'L'italiano al cinema, l'italiano nel cinema'. To mark the event, the Education Officer from the Italian Embassy in Canberra organised the 3rd National Conference for Australian teachers of Italian in Canberra, attended by ILC personnel.

### Festitalia 2017

ILC hosted the Co.As.It. exhibition of Venetian masks and Renaissance fashion and held entertaining and engaging mask-making activities for children.



**the future is in our hands**



The Board and its Directors are steadfast and excited about the evolution and future of Co.As.It. and its position within the aged care and community sector, one which is assured of continual growth in the Australian economy.

By 2054, 23% of the Australian population is forecast to be 65 years and over and Co.As.It. aims to be present to provide services in this new era.

We will be chasing and implementing improved management systems, well qualified staff and organisational developments in accordance with the Aged Care Quality Standards.

We are supported by the loyalty of our clients who expect our high-quality services.

In accordance with the projected changes in government standards, we will be resolutely working towards excelling in the quality of the care we provide.

This will be achieved through rigorous and committed training and a recalibration of our systems and operational standards so that we maintain our established reputation.

Co.As.It. does however, acknowledge the challenges facing us and other service providers and is proactively working to ensure that our service delivery remains as a first choice for clients whilst it continues to invest heavily in new programmatic directions.

Evidence of studies on ageing identify changing patterns of disease within the aged as well as increased longevity and these factors will result in more complex care needs that we will need to address through integrated care offerings.

In our organisational culture, we will be expanding the platform for staff recognition in exemplary service and conduct and we will be encouraging our staff to upskill and maintain expertise and currency by positively supporting their training.

Already, we are aware that many clients opt to wait for our agency workers rather than accept packages and services from other organisations.

This client behaviour supports the transitioning of the aged care industry to a market-based business model, one which we will continue to embrace and modify to ensure we are a leader in the field.

With the spectre of inadequate financial security in aged care funding in the future, we recognise the need for retention of our existing funded programs but we must also establish structures that support our financial sustainability for future needs where we can be less dependent on statutory funding.

Co.As.It. has worked diligently to secure longevity and endurance for its services and employees and it will continue to collaborate and partner with other organisations, consortiums and educational institutions to enable its continued progression.

The advent of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) introduces us to a new field of support services and our teams will be focussed on being a service provider that continues to anchor the client's needs as a priority.

The renovation of a recently acquired facility at Bracken Ridge will not only cater to the needs of this target group but will also integrate a wellness centre that will be integral in promoting functional capacity and wellbeing across a wide span of clients.

As the demographics of our target group change, specifically the baby boomer generation, we are

cognisant that this group will be demanding greater lifestyle choices and amenities and they will possess the financial ability to fund a standard of living similar to their younger, more independent years.

With baby boomers' greater wealth and income to leverage choice of services, it is expected that we will need to have a wider variety of services for people living in independent arrangements and supported by community care.

This centre will provide appropriate social activities and excursions that will keep this newly ageing group in close connectivity and in better health to pursue their choice of services.

With the increased numbers of baby boomers already acquiring retirement age, their capacity to access digital technology will play a more significant role in aged care service provision in Australia.

The ability to go online and access websites that review service providers, fee structures, facilities

etc. as well as assistive technology, smart watches and other devices are a powerful incentive to further develop this sector of our business.

We are also acutely aware of the benefits of technology to enable faster processing of administrative tasks that will allow more quality time to cater to clients.

New digital technology made available to all of our staff will continue to streamline our processes and we will augment and provide additional technological practises that will facilitate both service delivery and accountability for our clients and employees.

While we have been busy dealing with the growth over the last year, our focus in the new year will be to review our governance and accountability systems as the organisation adjusts in operating as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

We will continue to concentrate on staff retention, recruitment strategies, qualifications and

certifications. We will provide study opportunities for staff in order to increase skills which will help us to provide best possible care for our clients. As part of its history, Co.As.It. will always encourage Italian language teaching and in future focus on increasing cultural activities to generate interest in the learning of the language.

Recent data released identifies that the number of people speaking Italian is decreasing in Australia.

It will be our aim to advertise the value of knowing another language and the importance of maintaining the language in our community.

With the ongoing support from the Italian Embassy in Canberra, Co.As.It. will ensure that the language programs taught in Queensland Schools will continue to increase in the future.

The delivery of professional development for Italian teachers will ensure that the teaching of Italian will always be of a high standard.



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