

INSIEME



Quarterly Newsletter
Edition 4 - 2025



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.

OUR VISION

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

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A Message FROM OUR CEO

Our support services continued to reach people across the community, offering care and companionship.



Happy New Year!

The final months of 2025 were a busy time at Co.As.It. and we saw people come together, support one another and celebrate the connections that strengthen our community.

The festive season kicked off with our annual art exhibition and Christmas celebration at Amici House, where beautiful artworks from NDIS and the community art classes were proudly shared with the community.

End of year celebrations continued across our social groups, other programs and at ILC.

Our support services continued to reach people across the community, offering care and companionship, while our Christmas hampers brought joy and comfort to many who were financially disadvantaged and/or living with serious challenges.

In this edition, you'll also read about the many educational activities at our Italian Language Centre.

See the 2025 StuditaliA prize winners and view snapshots from our end-of-year gatherings, from our youngest ILC members in the 'Girotondo' classes, to our adult language learners.

We're excited for 2026 and particularly our upcoming International Women's Day event being held in March.

This annual event honours the contributions of women in society and is widely attended by women of all ages. Most importantly it raises much needed funds for our Mind Wellness Program which supports people with dementia and others facing mental health challenges.

Tanina Softa

COPING WITH OUR AUSTRALIAN SUN

Carmelina

For Carmelina, who in 1956 crossed oceans for a new life in Australia, the climate and hard work carried out in our hot country has regrettably contributed to her living with numerous skin cancers.

Having enjoyed many decades in Queensland's hot sun, Carmelina has had more than her fair share of skin cancers to treat.

Nowadays, this lovely mother, and devoted grandmother of 2, pays tribute to Co.As.It. and its Clinical Care team for the support she receives to continue to live in the comfort of her home.

She is very grateful for the Co.As.It. Nursing team who are vital for her health and wellbeing. Each week, our nurses visit Carmelina three times, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to carry out important wellbeing and skin integrity checks.

A long standing client of Co.As.It., Carmelina is among Co.As.It.'s many clients who benefit from our compassionate culturally responsive home health care.

Carmelina began receiving support from Co.As.It. in 1997 with our Clinical team regularly visiting to monitor and nurture Carmelina's progress from healing to health.

"I am so thankful for each and every visit from Co.As.It. nurses, since they began visiting me many, many years ago," Carmelina said.

"It makes my day to see them walk up my driveway to carry out their health and skin checks and most of all, I love having a friendly chat, often in my Italian language."

Whether it's managing a wound, keeping health conditions under control or monitoring the wellbeing of clients, the dedication of our team to provide high quality health care for clients like Carmelina is widely recognised and appreciated.

Carmelina is a testimony to the warm support she receives from family, friends and Co.As.It. If she has fresh vegetables along with some sweet treats, she'll always offer to share these with our nurses. After all, we are like family for her!

SUN SAFETY TIPS FROM OUR CLINICAL TEAM

Our Clinical tips for sun protection apply all year round, even in winter.

Wear sun-protective clothing, hats and sunglasses.

Apply and reapply sunscreen regularly when in the sun.

ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY FROM CHRONIC PAIN TO RECOVERY

THANK *Goodness!*



The clock read 2:47am when Margaret gave up on sleep - again. Sharp, electric pain blazed down her leg like a lightning strike, forcing her to abandon yet another attempt at finding a comfortable position. This had become her nightly ritual, a nightly occurrence that had stolen her rest for far too long.

When Margaret finally made an appointment with our physiotherapist at Amici House, it marked the end of a two-year battle she'd fought largely in silence.

Sciatic pain is merciless - sharp, searing sensations that radiate from the lower back before coursing through the hips and shooting down the legs like an unwelcome electrical current. There is no predicting when it will strike hardest, no pattern to provide even the illusion of control.

The Hidden Cost of Chronic Pain

What those around her couldn't see—what Margaret herself had only begun to fully acknowledge—was how profoundly chronic pain had reshaped her entire existence. Even the smallest elements of daily life that brought joy and meaning had been gradually eroded leaving her feeling diminished and increasingly isolated.

The Path to Healing

As our physiotherapist placed experienced hands on Margaret's leg and applied traditional manual therapeutic techniques, something remarkable happened. The chronic pain that had been her constant, unwelcome companion for so long began to ease. It wasn't a miracle cure—healing rarely works that way—but it was the first genuine relief Margaret had felt in months.

But our physiotherapist knew that hands-on treatment alone wouldn't provide lasting relief. He developed a personalized home exercise program specifically designed for her situation, explaining each movement and its purpose with patience and clarity.



Reclaiming Control

At home, Margaret began her exercises, the routine became a ritual of self-care, a tangible way she could participate in her own healing rather than remaining a passive recipient of treatment.

Week by week, something shifted. The pain that had dominated her existence for 2 years began to diminish. Her range of movement expanded. After several months of dedicated work—both in the clinic and at home, Margaret had achieved significant reduction in pain symptoms in both her lower back and leg.

More importantly, Margaret has reclaimed her life.

Maintaining the Victory

Now firmly on the path to recovery, Margaret's focus has shifted from desperate pain relief to maintaining her hard-won progress.

Margaret's story is a powerful reminder that even chronic conditions that have persisted for years can respond to the right combination of expert care, evidence-based treatment, and patient commitment.

Her journey from sleepless nights and isolation to recovery and renewed engagement with life stands as testament to the transformative power of physiotherapy and the resilience of the human spirit.

For anyone living with chronic pain, wondering if relief is possible, Margaret's experience offers an answer: healing may not be instant, but with the right support, it is within reach.

WOMEN'S WELLBEING IN MOTION



HOW TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE

Every Queensland summer tells a similar story. The sun feels hotter, the days grow longer and Christmas festivities are on the horizon.

Seeing that stores begin advertising Christmas goods earlier and earlier, there seems to be a concerted effort by everyone to get their gear into motion much sooner for the festive season.

Our Women's Wellbeing in Motion project at Amici House however, provided a timely opportunity for participants to pause a moment and focus on self-care before swinging back into their busy activities in the lead up to summer and the end of the year.

Since the project launched in August, happy participants have been embracing practical tips on healthy living.

Finding calm

On 10 October, when a 'Wellbeing, Feeling Good, Finding Calm' talk was held during Queensland Mental Health Week 2025, enthusiasm, warmth and liveliness filled the air.

Everyone enjoyed the presentation by Dr Victoria Vibhakar, Transcultural Mental Health, which was packed with helpful tips on remaining calm even when faced with confronting situations.

While everyone agreed on the importance of embracing calmness, the strategies for overcoming anxiety differ for everyone.

For some it's listening to favourite music or escaping into pursuits, such as, exercising or catching up with friends, and for others, it's all about breathing techniques.

Dr Vibhakar also highlighted the value of self-compassion in treating ourselves with kindness, practicing mindfulness or simply being aware that we are not alone.

Healthy hearts

Our series for the year wrapped up with 'Top Tips for Heart Health' on 26 November.

What a better way to prepare for the festive season then with a helpful reminder of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise.

Everyone who attended was reminded that while there is no single cause for heart disease, it is vital to recognise the risk factors that increase your chances of developing it.

The session provided an opportunity for everyone to explore the risk factors that influence their risk of heart disease and the positive lifestyle changes to lower their risk.

Put simply, a healthy eating pattern, regular physical activity and keeping your blood pressure under control are key building blocks for a healthy heart.



SCAM ALERT

**URGENT!
ACT NOW!
BUY NOW!**

Hold on! These 'unmissable offers' could all be scams.

Our Cybersecurity for Seniors sessions held across Brisbane and the Gold Coast were packed with online safety tips that were helpful in the lead up to Christmas.

For most people, it's easier to log on to the computer, iPad or smartphone to buy gifts and book travel than it is to face the crowds, the carparks and the temptations that can ruin any budget.

Red flags

In hindsight, it's easy for most people to see the red flags. The offers were too good to pass up, the large discounts and the apparent legitimacy of the websites.

When prompted to pay online or provide personal details, the phishing scam begins in earnest.

Three weeks later and there's still no delivery. When you call to follow up, no one answers and the website is 'down for maintenance'.

The message is clear – phishing scams are successful because the people who run them know just which tricks to use to build trust that will lead their victims to share personal information.

Participants in our cyber-crime sessions learned how to recognise the common warning signs: urgent messages, spelling or grammar mistakes in emails, suspicious links,

unexpected attachments and requests for passwords, credit card or social security details.

Security alerts are also among the most convincing email scams. They rely on the fear factor that someone has accessed your account and usually evoke an immediate response.

Creating passwords

During the cybersecurity talks, everyone was reminded that online safety begins with a strong password, for example, Sunshine\$2024Garden!

This password is strong because it has at least 12 characters and a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols.

By contrast, weak passwords are like leaving your front door unlocked. They make it easy for scammers to guess, such as, 'password123' or 'suzy1956'.

Stop. Check. Protect.

Since launching in March 2025, our Cybersecurity for Seniors program has centred around these 3 top tips.

Stop: Do not give money or personal information to anyone.

Check: Who are you dealing with? If you are unsure, never click a link in a message, delete or end the phone call.

Protect: Act quickly, if something feels wrong. Contact your bank if necessary and report to ScamWatch to warn others.

Even the most tech-savvy, sharp witted among us can be duped with cyber-criminals becoming more sophisticated and starting new scams every day.



CYBER CRIME

We all know someone who has been scammed. The good news is, staying safe online is easier than you think!

Join us to learn simple, practical tips to protect yourself from cyber crime.



FREE ENTRY

60-minute sessions

Bring your own device

Hands-on practice on the day

Open to all ages!

Amici House

Tuesday, 17 & 24 March

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

294 Bracken Ridge Rd, Bracken Ridge

BOOK NOW! Call us on **3624 6100**
Visit coasit.asn.au/community-events/

Scan to book online



QLD COMMUNITY SUPPORT *Scheme*



QCSS - are you eligible?

Our QCSS program funded by the Queensland Government, assists people with disabilities, chronic illness, mental health or other circumstances, to live independently and reduce social isolation.

You may be eligible to receive support through QCSS and Co.As.It. if you are under 65 (or 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Contact our Coordinator to find out more and for support through the assessment process.

QLD COMMUNITY SUPPORT *Scheme*

BETTER QUALITY OF *Life*



Clive's journey with Co.As.It. is an inspirational illustration of how the QCSS is providing personalised and compassionate support that has transformed his life.

After being diagnosed with a degenerative disease, our Care Workers have been instrumental in ensuring that Clive, 54, can continue to live independently in the comfort of his home.

Through delivering practical domestic assistance engaging in conversation and supporting his goals, Clive's Care Workers also enable him to transform challenges into reality and enjoy a brighter quality of life.

"My life has become a lot easier through the support of Co.As.It. The house cleaning services alone are really helpful," Clive said. "I don't have to worry about even trying to mop my floors or make my bed, which is almost impossible when you're in a wheelchair."

Through the regular domestic assistance provided within the QCSS program, Clive has the practical support necessary to remain living independently in his one-bedroom unit.

Having relied on a wheelchair since 2019, Clive also benefits from the Community Connection aspect of QCSS to connect within his community, and to further support his social connections. The friendly chats that Clive has with Care Workers when they visit hold as much weight as the practical assistance he receives in reinforcing his health and wellbeing.

Apart from the satisfaction achieved from a tidier house and a freshly made bed, there's the extra energy Clive has to focus on his favourite pastimes. From tapping on his iPad to engaging with his online world, enjoying piecing together giant jigsaws that adorn his home like masterpieces, or enjoying a cuppa in his leafy courtyard, our QCSS program has redefined what is possible for Clive.

National DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Witches, pirates, and creatures of the night, took over Amici House when Halloween cast its spell on 31 October 2025.

The vibrant community hub transformed into a spooky barbecue and disco for Halloween for our NDIS Social Club. As dusk fell and night crept in, surrounded by dangling spiders, scary pumpkins and sweet treats, everyone stuck their fangs into sizzling sausages fresh off the barbecue.

For those daring enough to join us, tricks, treats and eerie delights awaited as the party continued under the stars on the warm spring night.

All of our guests who arrived in their scariest costumes and frightful fashion had a wickedly good time together, glowing in the dark on the dance floor afterwards.

AMICI HOUSE BECOMES GHOULISH



National DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

CREATIVE SPARKS FIRE AT ART GALLERY



Our NDIS Art Class participants set off to the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) for inspiration in adding final touches to their masterpieces for the annual Art Exhibition. To the delight of our NDIS artists, their visit to the galleries at Queensland Cultural Centre in November proved timely with a diverse range of exhibitions showcasing both contemporary and historical art being proudly displayed.

Under the guiding influence of our NDIS and Community Class Art Teacher, and renowned artist, Kerry, our NDIS artists were informed of the artistic techniques and inspirations employed to create the masterpieces at the galleries.

Our artists thoroughly enjoyed the special luxury of being immersed in the uplifting atmosphere of the 2 architecturally-acclaimed galleries, along with being surrounded by exclusive masterpieces admired by art-lovers across the world.

Afterwards, amid the sunshine and warmth of a spring day, our artists travelled back to Amici House while enjoying breathtaking views of the cityscape along the journey. On return, everyone reflected on how 'fantastic' and 'inspirational' the excursion to the galleries had been, and that it was 'perfectly timed' to help them to complete their own artworks for our annual art exhibition in December.



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME



BERNARDO'S GOLDEN YEARS

The Gold Coast has always been a haven for retirees. The pristine beaches, bright sunshine, cafes, restaurants and tourist atmosphere is a great attraction for many golden oldies who still have a yen for vibrant community lifestyles.

Bernardo who is from Uruguay was really enjoying his retirement on the Gold Coast. However like many older people, he was finding that as he aged, many of his connections were becoming eroded due to diminishing mobility, health issues and loss of family and friends, leaving him longing for familiar faces and his former social circles.

Worst of all was the fact that due to language difficulties Bernardo often found it difficult to find new friends, especially Spanish speakers.

ACVVS IS PART OF A NATIONAL PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AT A HIGHER RISK OF ISOLATION AND LONELINESS AND ARE LIVING AT HOME OR IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE HOMES.

Luckily, through our ACVVS team, we were able to recreate a sense of belonging through a delightful volunteer visitor who was fluent in Spanish.

With his new visitor Cecilia, Bernardo now has contact with a person who can converse with him in his own language.

Our visitor program is heavily focused on matching older Australians, (especially those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background), with a visitor from their own language group.

It is with genuine thanks that Bernardo says "I am grateful to have someone to talk to in Spanish and to keep me company".



If you feel that this lovely program would be a great opportunity for you to become an older person's friend or you'd like to refer an older person to be matched with a visitor, contact our team at: acvvs@coasit.asn.au

AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME



LET'S PARTY

Party season was well underway when the incredible volunteers in our visitor program gathered together for Christmas celebrations in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast in December last year, concurrently acknowledging International Day of Volunteers which was on December 5th.

All year round, Co.As.It. welcomes opportunities to thank our dedicated volunteers for giving their time with kindness, compassion and commitment. After all, from the moment they knock on the door of their friend and are welcomed inside for a chat, our ACVVS volunteers are champions at brightening the lives of all of the older people they visit. What better way to thank them than with fabulous Christmas lunches to celebrate their achievements and the meaningful impact they make. During these get-togethers, our volunteers also consolidate their own bonds of friendship while sharing their heart-warming stories of how they are making a real difference every single day.

Although our ACVVS festivities were filled with conversation, laughter and happiness, everyone was fully aware of the sincere reason for their involvement in the program and we are so grateful to have these outstanding volunteers as true community heroes - dedicated to enriching the lives of older people.



HOSPITAL ROUNDS - HUSBAND STYLE!

When Eileen's husband, Peter, walked into his wife's hospital ward, it was a cold winter day in June 2025. A pale shaft of light filtered through the blinds, casting long shadows across the room.

Peter closed the door quietly behind him and paused, steadying himself before approaching her bed. He had learned over the years to read a room in an instant — the hum of machines, the look on Eileen's face, the subtle cues from nurses. This time, he absorbed the gravity of his wife's injuries before speaking.

"It's a patella fracture," he told her gently. For Eileen, it was one of the most traumatic knee injuries she had ever experienced — and that was saying something.

Over the past three years, she had endured multiple surgeries and extended hospital stays. The corridors and wards of the nearby hospital had become almost familiar terrain.

For Peter, too, the routine was well-rehearsed: early mornings, a carefully prepared breakfast, a thermos packed for the day, and the quiet drive to sit faithfully by his wife's side.

With Eileen's latest setback, the couple once again had to gather their resilience. Married for 59 years, Peter and Eileen have built their life on shared strength and constant conversation.

They talk about everything — from family memories to daily headlines, from worries to hopes. In hospital rooms and at their kitchen table alike, they face challenges together.

But as discharge day approached, a new question loomed: what would happen next?

Peter was determined to care for Eileen at home, yet he knew the physical demands would be significant.

Showering assistance, meal preparation, cleaning, transport to appointments — the everyday tasks that once seemed simple had become complex.

Love and devotion were abundant; practical support was what they now needed.

That breakthrough arrived in the form of the Support at Home program (formerly HCP - Home Care Packages) with Co.As.It.

From their first conversations with the team, Peter and Eileen felt reassured. The service was tailored to Eileen's needs and Peter's capacity as her primary support. Since then, their lives have become noticeably easier.

Domestic assistance ensures their home remains comfortable and safe. Support workers help with showering and personal care, restoring dignity and reducing strain. Reliable transport means medical appointments no longer feel overwhelming.

More than just practical help, the service has given them peace of mind.

"We sincerely appreciate how our support services mean we can continue to live independently at home," Peter said with a smile that speaks of both relief and gratitude.

Their beloved cat, Princess, appears to supervise the activity with a famously watchful gaze. She perches nearby during visits, observing each new arrival with what could be jokingly called a "gimlet eye." So far, however, she seems satisfied that her humans are well cared for.

For Peter and Eileen, Support at Home is about more than assistance with cleaning, transport, or meal preparation.

It is about preserving the rhythms of a shared life — morning cups of tea, conversations at the kitchen table, familiar surroundings filled with decades of memories. It is about dignity, independence, and remaining together at home.

Whether it's practical help around the house or simply someone to share a coffee and a conversation, Support at Home makes daily life not only manageable, but meaningful.

BECAUSE TRUE CARE IS NOT JUST ABOUT MEETING PHYSICAL NEEDS — IT'S ABOUT SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE THE LIFE THEY CHOOSE, SAFELY AND CONFIDENTLY, IN THE COMFORT OF THEIR HOME.

About the Support at Home Program

Our Support at Home services are tailored to suit your needs, your goals and the way you want to live.

Whether you need help with daily tasks, health and wellbeing or assistance to stay socially connected, we respect your choices and provide support that helps you live well, your way and in the comfort of your own home.

With a compassionate, person-centred approach, our team is here like your family, listening, supporting, and walking beside you every step of the way.

Co.As.It. is an approved provider under the government's Support at Home program, also offering Restorative Care, Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) and End of Life Care.



And So It Was Christmas

There's something magical about a Christmas celebration.

The traditional Christmas carols, the delicious panettone and sparkling decorations can make everywhere feel festive, happier and brighter.

If seniors in our CIAO (Cultural Italian Activity Opportunity) program had their way, Christmas would be celebrated more often than once a year.

Since Co.As.It. developed the CIAO program in 2014 – a first of its kind to be introduced to residential aged care homes – the program continues to bring joy and comfort to more than 150 Italian residents each month.

This year, when residents in our CIAO program gathered together for festive craft making they were doing more than just singing traditional Italian Christmas carols and creating delicate Christmas gifts for friends and family.

They were engaging meaningfully with their heritage and one another through Christmas activities delivered in their own language and culture.

Together, they carefully and joyfully created colourful wreaths and personalised baubles and delighted in once again forming their very own 'Italian Christmas Choir'.



That sense of belonging – being with friends who know and understand your favourite Italian traditions is central to the CIAO program.

With the sounds of famed Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli playing in the background, everyone enthusiastically and spontaneously joined in with singing much-loved Italian carols.

For the social and spontaneous, quiz games tested their knowledge of Italian history while music sessions with favourite folk songs celebrated festive cultural traditions.

As the year wrapped up, the benefits of the CIAO program activities was clear: Italian residents communicating more freely, expressing themselves more fully and connecting more deeply when activities that honour their linguistic and cultural identity.

So Many Things To Enjoy

Now operating in 10 aged care facilities across Brisbane, we look forward to expanding the CIAO program to support more residents from CALD backgrounds who live in residential aged care.

If your facility would like to join the program contact us on tel: 3624 6100

BRINGING CLOSURE

When Time Becomes Precious

THE REFERRAL ARRIVED WITH QUIET URGENCY.



The referral arrived with quiet urgency.

A concerned Co.As.It. Coordinator reached out to our Mind Wellness team: please contact Trang*.

What the team didn't yet know was that Trang had made a devastating decision in complete isolation.

Recently diagnosed with a terminal illness, she had chosen to cease all medical treatments—a choice made not with loved ones or advisors, but in the suffocating silence of profound despair.

A Life Interrupted

When our counsellor arrived for that first visit, she encountered a woman who had already begun withdrawing from the world.

As their conversation unfolded, the circumstances surrounding Trang's decision began to emerge like pieces of a heartbreaking puzzle.

Trang was carrying the invisible scars of medical trauma. She believed, with quiet certainty, that she had only weeks to live.

Perhaps most devastating of all: Trang had spoken to no one about her fear of treatment. She had received the most catastrophic news of her life and faced it entirely alone.

Reconnecting with What Matters

With our MWT counsellor's support, these conversations became easier, Trang felt strong enough to reconnect with her medical team.

Reclaiming Her Voice

Together with her medical team, they crafted a new approach: palliative treatment that honoured her dignity while managing pain and symptoms.

She had reclaimed her autonomy not by refusing all care, but by insisting on care that aligned with her values.

Finding Peace in the Story

"I want to be able to settle all my affairs," Trang told our counsellor, her voice steady with purpose.

She meant both practical matters and emotional ones: conversations that needed to happen, love to be expressed while it still could be.

These conversations became bridges back to emotional connection with her family, creating opportunities for closure that would have been forever lost.

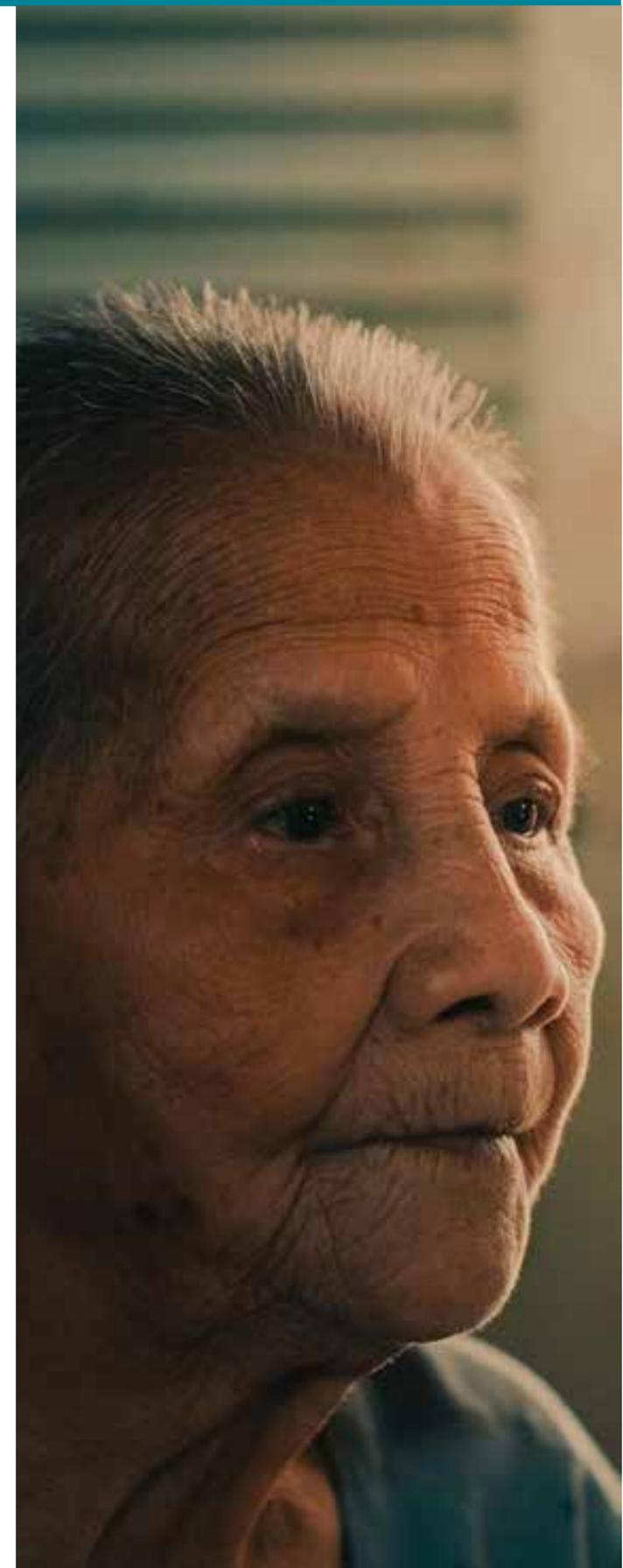
A Different Kind of Healing

Trang's illness remained terminal; her time remained limited. But the quality of that time had been fundamentally transformed.

She embraced her own grieving process, no longer hiding from reality but facing it with newfound courage.

More remarkably, she allowed others to share her end-of-life journey.

**Trang's name has been changed to protect her privacy.*



Out IN THE COMMUNITY

OVER 50's EXPO

In alignment Queensland Seniors Month (1-31 October) activities, Co.As.It. was proud to host an information display for the community. Having a presence at the Over 50's Expo, organised by Centenary North Police Beat Volunteers in Policing the experience was positive for everyone. Were delighted to share feedback from one visitor to our Co.As.It. information display: "It's wonderful to see a team that meets people where they are and makes them feel seen, valued and supported."

Now in its 65th year, Queensland Seniors Month celebrates the many contributions of older people to our community as well as increasing social connectedness for older people. Other celebrations during this month are International Day of Older Persons is honoured on 1 October, followed by Ageism Awareness Day on 9 October and Grandparents Day on 26 October.



BRISBANE DISABILITY EXPO

Co.As.It.'s NDIS and Aged Care teams had a busy day at the Brisbane Disability Expo at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from 31 October to 1 November 2025.

They were approached by prospective clients who stopped by to learn more about our support as well as finding community resources for people living with disabilities.

As a registered NDIS provider, Co.As.It. works together with clients to get the best out of their new or existing NDIS plan. Our expertly trained staff deliver Support Coordination and services to support your health, lifestyle and social goals.



COMMUNITY Connections

B.O.B. (BLOKES ON THE BLOCK) SNAGS, STRENGTH & STAYING SHARP

Twenty-two blokes aged 70 to 94 rocked up to Amici House on November 25th for the inaugural Blokes on the Block (B.O.B.) session, and what started as a simple sausage sizzle turned into something blinking important!

The spring sunshine was out in force as the barbecue fired up, setting the tone for what the lads are calling a game-changer: a men's program built by men, for men—no fluff, just practical know-how and straight talk.

While the snags were cooking, the group got down to business with one of our physio who laid it out straight just like they had asked. "Your bones and joints aren't what they used to be, and ignoring them is a mug's game."

Stiffer joints, dodgy balance, bones that've lost their density—it's all part of getting older, but it doesn't have to sideline you.

THE MESSAGE?

Keep moving. Weight-bearing exercises, resistance training, and balance work aren't just gym-rat stuff—they're essential for

staying on your feet, literally. Regular exercise keeps joints from seizing up and cuts your risk of taking a tumble that could put you out of action for good.

BUILT BY BLOKES, FOR BLOKES

B.O.B. (also going by Men's Health Matters) came together after the lads met up in May and June last year with our Co.As.It. team and identified what was missing: a proper space where men could learn practical life skills, share a laugh, and support each other without any stuffing around.

The first session proved they've struck gold.

The turnout wasn't just there for the free feed!

These blokes were really engaged, asking questions, and already locked in for the next gathering.

Big thanks to Brisbane City Council and a grant from the Lord Mayor's Community Benefit Fund through Cr Sandy Landers for backing the program and making it happen.



Yuletide Magic

There's something about Christmas that fills everyone with anticipation. Maybe it's the excitement of seeing the Christmas decorations everywhere, hearing festive music in stores or simply the sense that another year is nearly over, that makes most of us step away from real life and into precious moments of nostalgia.

During the Christmas season, our hearts also expand and our hands extend to others with small acts of kindness.

In a period of rising living costs, our Christmas hampers brought a special moment of peace, joy and warmth into the lives of many in our community who were facing their own struggles.

Our hampers are not just a collection of nutritious food products, they are designed

to bring a little bit of luxury wrapped in hope and dignity when they are delivered.

Right through until Christmas, our team were knocking on doors and greeting people who we knew were facing their own challenges. A giant hamper filled with so many lovely treats spread the message of Christmas and caring for others beautifully.

The hampers are a reminder that they are not alone and that as an organisation we will go out of our way to ensure they are cared for.

Whether it's the cost of living or family dynamics, seasonal stress or social disruptions, the gestures of kindness and care that our hampers represent are gratifying for many vulnerable people in our community.

"Once the festive season is firmly in the rear view mirror, the Co.As.It. Christmas hamper will remain etched in my memory as the only parcel I could unwrap when I had no other presents under the Christmas tree."

"It lifted my pride and dignity just to be able to let others around me know that I had received a Christmas gift – a hamper filled with delicious food to devour on Christmas day, and that it had been hand-delivered by a special friend."



FUSION OF *ART* AND COMMUNITY

Artists and guests transformed the community hub into a centre of creativity, connection and community spirit for the annual Art Exhibition held in December last year.

In a fusion of artistry and community, original and beautiful artworks from our NDIS clients and Community Art Class participants adorned displays across the centre and café deck.

As conversation and laughter filled Amici House, guests enjoyed delicious refreshments while admiring the colourful masterpieces.

Many also chose to convey their appreciation by adding heart-warming comments on the Full Cups Full Hearts artwork.

During the year, accomplished teacher and renowned artist, Kerry, provided a guiding influence as our artists experimented with mixed media from acrylics to gold leaf and charcoal.

Every painting captured fine detail across varying themes from sparkling seascides to soulful portraits and peaceful landscapes, to name a few, and was a credit to the artists and their imagination.

With enchanting interpretations of their subjects, the talents of each artist's splendid colours, design and imagination was a kaleidoscope of vibrant impact.

For both guests and artists alike, the annual art exhibition and Christmas celebration created not only wonderful memories but a strengthened sense of connection during the festive season.

Artist Anthony said, "Creative Sparks fire all year long during our Community Art Classes at Amici House and the opportunity to display our paintings during the annual Art Exhibition is a delight."



One enthused guest, Alex, said, "I wanted to thank you for a delightful few hours spent at the Art Show today. I always feel that going to Amici House is similar to having a warm, welcoming hug! My friend also enjoyed her time at Amici House today. Thank you again!"

COMMONWEALTH HOME *Support* PROGRAM

COOK-A-WAY

Having joined our Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) program in August 2025, Miriam 82, who lives alone, now enjoys regular meal preparation sessions with her Care Worker.

For Miriam, having delicious meals ready to devour is part and parcel of her daily life but things were becoming a little more difficult for her.

Living with osteoarthritis in both hands and back, and coping with a double knee replacement, Miriam was finding it hard to stand for long periods of time - so cooking was no longer a pleasure.

Thanks to the support she now receives from her Care Worker, she can continue to enjoy healthy and wholesome home-cooked meals.

Miriam and her Care Worker now set aside 2 hours every fortnight to create flavoursome meals together for Miriam to have for the days ahead. With a wide range of recipes, Miriam enjoys a variety of tasty dishes from delicious pasta, meats, vegetables to aromatic mild curries.

Miriam says "I am grateful for how the meal preparation service has improved my wellbeing and I cannot thank Co.As.It. enough for this extra support."

Apart from the joy of cooking again she also says, "With delicious meals ready to eat after a few minutes in the microwave all that I have to do is set the table and wash up afterwards."

For Miriam, having ready meals gives her more energy to pursue her passions of being with family and crocheting teddy bears to display at her craft group.



WHEN THE COMMUNITY *Supports* US BACK

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO THE PIEMONTEIS ASSOCIATION

Thank You



All year round Co.As.It. works tirelessly to achieve a more inclusive community and we know how generous people can be in helping us to deliver services, especially our Mind Wellness program which is funded solely by Co.As.It.

In December 2025, we were honoured to accept generous kind-hearted donations for our Mind Wellness services.

Of those, we especially say a 'big and heartfelt thank you' to the Piemonteis Association of Qld for their generous donation towards supporting essential assistance and resources for individuals and families living with dementia and mental health challenges.

The generous donation of the Piemonteis Association of Qld will directly support this program in addressing the psycho-social health challenges in our community. These services are now more critical than ever.

AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

COOMBABAH STATE HIGH SCHOOL *Visit*

Our Social Group members were delighted to again welcome Coombabah State High School students to the South Coast Social Activity Centre, in November.

During the fun-filled morning tea, our Social Group joyfully shared traditional Italian dishes – pannetone, cornetti and crostoli – to the delight of 15 Yr 8 students and 2 of their teachers.

During the visit, our Social Group explained the significance of the Italian holiday traditions, especially when it comes to Christmas dishes and desserts.

With everyone exuding the season's goodwill they enthusiastically joined for a singalong of classic Italian Christmas carols before having a game of tombola (Bingo).

Calling out the tombola numbers in Italian, the students practiced their Italian and those lucky enough to win were congratulated with prizes of chocolate.

On their way back to school all students were presented with a mini panettone to take home as a reminder of their Italian cultural exchange.

Our South Coast Social Group and Coombabah State High School students have now enjoyed many get-togethers over the years.

Whether it's a cultural quiz, a slideshow of Italian landmarks or a morning tea, extraordinary connections unfold with each visit leaving students captivated by their new learnings of Italian culture and language.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

CHANNELING THE SPIRIT OF *Aloha*



Our Social Groups at Casa Serena and Cleveland may be thousands of kilometres from the sun-drenched beaches, active volcanoes and stunning landscapes of Hawaii but that did not stop them from joining Hawaii Week festivities in October.

Colour was brilliant when everyone happily paraded their swaying skirts and floral leis amid tropical themed décor complete with dangling pineapples.

As Aloha festivals sweep across Hawaii every October to celebrate classic cultural traditions including hula dancing, surfing and the making of leis, our Social Group festivities symbolised appreciation and respect for another culture and their traditions.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

ANOTHER YEAR ANOTHER *Race!*



Everyone loves a Melbourne Cup party especially our social groups who enthusiastically join the day's excitement each and every year.

With everyone happily arriving in their finest attire complete with colourful hats and floral headpieces, the glamorous atmosphere was in full swing at all of our social activity centres to celebrate one of the most famous horse races in the world.

As the celebratory spirit swept Australia for the "race that stops the nation", our social centres were playfully decorated with equine themes and gold trophies to set the scene for an unforgettable day of partying.

Fun activities brought smiles to everyone's faces including mock Melbourne Cup races adding

an extra layer of excitement before nervously watching live broadcasts together.

There were delicious homestyle lunches, bottomless tea and coffee, and each social group comes alive with an air of contentment, celebration and excitement.

While the Melbourne Cup 2025 was won by a horse named 'Half Yours' there was nothing half-hearted about how our social groups joined the celebrations sweeping the nation on the first Tuesday of November.

It was yet another fabulous gathering for our social groups, each filled with friends who share the view that our later years are the golden years especially during spectacular sporting celebrations like the Melbourne Cup.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

CELEBRATING WITH *Babbo Natale*

All of our Social Groups sparkled with conversation, laughter and happiness during numerous awesome Christmas celebrations that wrapped up 2025!

At each of our social centres across Brisbane and the Gold Coast, everyone eagerly arrived full of beaming smiles and cheerful goodwill to revel in the traditions and festivities of the season.

Sing-alongs of classic Australian and Italian carols set the scene for joyous and heartfelt celebrations before the

much anticipated arrival of a bright, bold Babbo Natale (Santa Claus). Full of personality and good cheer, Santa lifted the atmosphere to another level and evoked the fondest of Christmas memories.

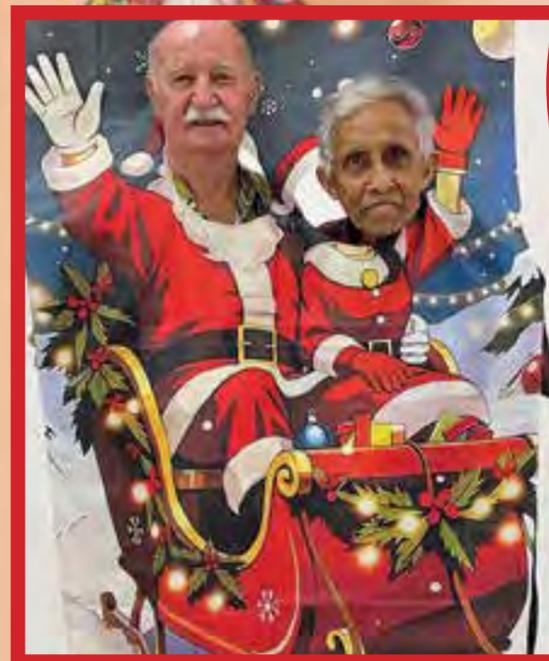
Bringing gifts galore, Santa delighted everyone by handing out ornate angels, which had been proudly created by the Friday Craft Group at Casa Aurelia.

To make things more exciting raffle prizes were drawn with the lucky winners taking home a few luxury items to make the festive season extra special.

As the excitement reached its peak, delicious homestyle lunches along with hot coffees and panettone were a cherished highlight amid all of the activities.

Each group's celebration turned into a long chat among friends who had become like family during the year.

With the magic of the season ushering in moments to both celebrate and reminisce, we were delighted that so many took great joy out of the occasions.



SOCIAL *Outings*

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN RECENTLY?

MINJERRIBAH (North Stradbroke Island)

Twenty-five minutes across Moreton Bay and suddenly the mainland feels like another world. Dunwich welcomes us quietly, but Point Lookout is where Straddie reveals itself — a vibrant hub of good food, cold drinks and salt-kissed air that makes every visit feel like you're rewarding yourself. ... and why not?

When you see the crystal clear cerulean blue waters and the small starfish that dot the sandy beach white beaches, you feel transported out of your daily life into somewhere truly stunning.

The second largest sand island in the world delivers on every front. Unspoilt beaches stretch endlessly, hidden bays beg to be explored, and the wildlife is extraordinary.

Koalas, kangaroos, dolphins, green turtles and dugongs all call this place home — and they're remarkably unbothered by visitors.

As the ferry carries you back across the bay, one thing is certain: Straddie doesn't let you go easily.



NOOSA AND FLAXTON

We started with morning tea at Flaxton Gardens. This cliff-top restaurant with sweeping views to Moreton Island that doubles as one of the Sunshine Coast's most sought-after wedding venues is truly a wonderful vista.

Then off we headed to Noosa, where pure beaches, Hastings Street boutiques and a buzzing surf club delivered everything a perfect Queensland day promises.

The weather was perfect and the lightness and vitality of the people in the area always makes us feel like we're on holiday - every time we visit.

We never tire of seeing these views which are exceptional especially during Spring. We should visit more often because the truth is, this region earns its must-visit reputation year-round.

SOCIAL *Outings*

BOHEMIAN BLISS AT



Byron Bay didn't just live up to the hype — it exceeded it.

The journey kicked off at Tropical Fruit World, where exotic flavours set the tone before lunch at Byron Bay Services Club, where an international menu kept everyone satisfied.

Then the coastal town took over with an identity all its own.

Galleries, boutiques, coastal walking tracks and that legendary laid-back energy made Byron irresistible.

So many things to see and experience in the colourful Bohemian lifestyle reflected through its community, it's a pity that we were not there for the fabulous Sunday markets. We could have stayed for days just enjoying the time slip away but regrettably we had to leave to resume our more frenetic habits.

Just as well that the drive home through hinterland ranges and surf towns was almost as good as the destination itself!



CONGRATULATIONS STUDITALIA WINNERS!



On 3 December 2025 there was an air of excitement at the Queensland Parliamentary Annexe as invited guests began arriving in anticipation of the Studitalia Prize Awards Ceremony.

The annual event is run by Global Engagement at the Queensland Department of Education under the patronage of the Italian Consulate Brisbane. Originating in 1994, the then Italian Consul put forward the idea of rewarding excellence among Year 12 students studying Italian in Queensland schools.

Over the ensuing 30 years, hundreds of successful candidates have been awarded the prize of a month-long all expenses paid trip to Italy with the opportunity of attending an Italian high school. This year's 6 winning students will be hosted at the 'Convitto Paolo Diacono' boarding school in the picturesque town of Cividale del Friuli (near the city of Udine).

In the majestic Premier's Hall, the 6 Studitalia 2025 prize winners took their seats alongside the Consul of Italy, Luna Angelini Marinucci, the Honourable John-Paul Langbroek, Minister for Education and the Arts, as well as illustrious representatives of the Brisbane Italian community, parents, teachers and friends.

The Master of Ceremonies, Susan Brook (A/ Director Global Engagement, Department of

Education), warmly welcomed guests then proceeded to call up the Studitalia recipients and their chaperone, Amanda Kennedy, Senior Italian teacher at Kelvin Grove State College, to receive their awards.

The star attraction at the event was a musical performance by Louise Whittaker who demonstrated her operatic talent by singing 'Si, ma d'un altro amore' by Mozart and 'Ridonami la calma' by Tosti. Louise, herself a former Studitalia winner, congratulated the winners and wished them well as they embark on this life-changing trip.

On behalf of the winners, Leonard Cavallaro of Kelvin Grove State College thanked the organisers and sponsors of Studitalia for continuing to offer such a worthwhile prize and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to further their knowledge of Italian language and culture.

Co.As.It. Community Services and its Italian Language Centre (ILC) division is a major sponsor of the Studitalia Prize.

ILC offers Italian language classes for all ages and levels and supports Italian programs in Queensland schools.

To find out more, visit italianlanguagecentre.org or email enquiries@italianlanguagecentre.org or find us on Facebook facebook.com/ilc.brisbane

ITALIAN...



October marked the 25th anniversary of Italian Language Week worldwide, celebrating the beauty and influence of the Italian language.

Our Italian Language Centre (ILC) was delighted to join the festivities with a series of cultural events.

The celebrations began in late September with a lecture by Professor De Rosa from the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, who guided attendees on a virtual journey through Italy, described as an 'open-air museum'.

On October 10, the highlight event 'Italian...That's Amore' embraced the 2025 theme, Italofoonia: lingua oltre i confini (Italophony: Language Beyond Borders).

The presentation explored Italian's global presence and its evolution in Australia—from the early 'Australo-Italian' spoken by migrants to today's widespread use of Italian words, like cappuccino, gelato and lasagne, in English-speaking contexts.

It was also noted that the rise of a new hybrid language among young Italians on Working Holiday Visas, reflecting the ongoing vitality of Italian abroad.

The evening concluded with an Italian-style aperitif and a welcome speech by the Consul of Italy, Luna Angelini Marinucci, who highlighted the importance of promoting Italian as a language of culture and connection. The event was a heartfelt celebration of Italian language, heritage, and love-truly, That's Amore.



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

CELEBRATING THE END OF SEMESTER 2



ADDING TO THE FUN,
THE EVENING
INCLUDED
A GAME
OF TOMBOLA

The ILC end-of-semester dinner at Il Trenino Trattoria was a wonderful way to celebrate another successful semester together.



Teachers and students celebrated in a warm and relaxed atmosphere, enjoying a delicious selection of authentic Italian food, with generous servings reflecting true Italian hospitality.



The lively setting and shared meal created the perfect opportunity to unwind, connect and look back on the highlights of the year.

Adding to the fun, the evening included a game of tombola – a traditional Italian favourite!



The lucky winners were rewarded with small prizes.

The dinner was not only a chance to enjoy great food and entertainment, but also a meaningful moment to connect with fellow students and teachers outside of the classroom, and continue to experience Italian culture to complement their language teaching.

It was a memorable night that captured the warmth of the ILC community and a great way to bring the semester to a close.

ILC offers Italian classes at all levels. Find out more about what's on offer for 2026 at italianlanguagecentre.org/learn-italian-brisbane/

Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING



EXCELLENT RESULTS IN CERTIT Exams

In 2025, 8 candidates sat the A2, B1, B2 exams at ILC, which is a licenced Exam Centre for the Certification of Competence in Italian issued by Università Roma Tre.

When results were published, ILC was delighted to learn that all candidates who wrote the exam had passed successfully and received their Certificates of Competence.

Cert (Certificazione dell'Italiano come Lingua Straniera) is officially recognised as a certificate of competence by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI – Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale) and the Ministry of Education and Merit (MIM – Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito).

The Cert.It. exam offers 6 levels in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The exams are intended for those who must provide a certificate to:

-  - Determine personal progress (A1)
- Apply for Italian residency (A2)
- Apply for Italian citizenship (B1)
- Study at an Italian University (B2)
- Work in Italy as an Italian, non-Italian and foreign teacher (C2).

Find out more about the Certification of Competence and exam dates at italianlanguagecentre.org

CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE IN ITALIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BASIC COMPETENCE	A1 BEGINNER	Can understand and use basic phrases for everyday needs e.g. introducing oneself.
	A2 BEGINNER	Can handle simple, routine tasks, communicating in simple and direct exchanges of information on familiar topics.
ELEMENTARY COMPETENCE	B1 INTERMEDIATE	Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling and can pronounce simple connected text on familiar topics.
INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCE	B2 UPPER INTERMEDIATE	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity on a range of topics and understand the main ideas of complex text.
ADVANCED COMPETENCE	C1 ADVANCED	Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes, understands a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognizes implicit meaning.
ADVANCED PROFICIENCY	C2 PROFICIENT	Can communicate spontaneously, fluently and precisely and understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.

Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

IILC
ITALIAN
LANGUAGE
CENTRE

GIROTONDO ITALIAN PLAYGROUPS AND SCHOOL ITALIAN CLASSES CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS!

Our ILC Christmas celebrations provided a joyful and festive end to the year for students, families and staff alike.

When ILC hosted the traditional after-school Italian Christmas concert, families and teachers gathered to watch the students sing Italian Christmas songs they had been practising in class. A special highlight of the afternoon was a visit from Babbo Natale, who arrived with presents for the students and made the smiles even bigger.

The celebrations continued throughout December with Christmas Playgroup sessions, where children and their families enjoyed a relaxed and cheerful morning creating Christmas crafts and singing Christmas carols in Italian!

Santa once again made a welcome appearance and handed out presents to ILC's youngest learners.

On both occasions, guests were treated to panettone, a much-loved Italian Christmas tradition, which added an authentic touch to the celebrations. The celebrations were a lovely way to share Italian language and culture while celebrating the festive season as a community.

Girotondo Italian Playgroup caters for children aged 3-5 years. To find out more visit italianlanguagecentre.org/girotondo-italian-playgroup/

To find out more about After School lessons visit italianlanguagecentre.org/after-school-italian/



LEGACY FUNERALS



MASSIMO NODARI
Director

We have decades of experience assisting families when a loved one passes away. In this most difficult time, we are committed to attending to every detail with the utmost care, compassion and professionalism.

Our Managing Director, Massimo Nodari, has over 25 years experience in both Italy and Australia caring for those who have died and their families. His extensive knowledge, calm professional manner and attention to detail will ensure complete bereavement care is offered

**24 hours a day,
7 days a week.**

We can give you and your family the assistance needed to celebrate and remember your loved one's life. At Legacy Funerals, we believe that each person leaves a legacy of love, to live on in the memories of those who loved them.

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*Pre-planning
Your Funeral*



Benefits of Pre-Planning Your Funeral

Protection and peace of mind

Pre-planning your funeral allows you to make sound decisions regarding the service. Here there are no decisions made out of emotions.

We will keep a record of all the important statistics required for legal paperwork. Giving you the peace of mind that everything will be completed in a systematic manner

Pre-planning a funeral offers you flexibility

If your preferences change at any time you can change your funeral plan. We understand that circumstances and personal preferences change over time and accordingly funeral wishes can also be changed.

Lightens the financial burden

When you plan a funeral service in advance it allows you to choose your service according to your preference level. It also allows you to be aware of the funeral costs.

Funeral pre-funding can also be arranged. This way you can take care of the funeral expenses today, or choose to make the payments according to your budget.

Your choices are respected

Funeral pre-planning gives your the assurance that every detail has been taken care of just the way you want.

It also allows you to discuss your wishes with your family and consider their thoughts in your planning.

Options to Pre-Pay Funeral Costs

Legacy Funerals are an agent for Sureplan Friendly Society Ltd. Sureplan is a mutual life insurance company that is a specialist funeral fund provider. Sureplan has over 80 years of experience, commencing in 1935. Originally called The Public Service Death Benefit Society of Queensland.

Sureplan understand that members provide funds for their funeral expenses to relieve their family of much of the associated financial stress. That is why they guarantee to pay their funeral benefit within one working day of receiving independent confirmation of their death.

Depositing money into a Funeral Bond instead of a savings account for example, gives your family peace of mind. When the time comes Sureplan simply needs to be advised of the passing together with the name of the funeral director being used. From there they will organise for the claim to be processed without the family needing to complete any paperwork. Your family can immediately commence with funeral planning arrangements as claims are paid within 24 hours of the confirmation of death.

When considering a funeral bond it is imperative that you read the information contained in the Product Disclosure Statement.

**Avete bisogno di aiuto nei lavori domestici?
Avete bisogno di aiuto per cucinare?
Volete incontrare nuovi amici?
Assistete qualcuno a domicilio e
avete bisogno di aiuto?**

Il Co.As.It. Community Services fornisce assistenza alle persone anziane e ai giovani dal 1987 e il nostro personale esperto e qualificato è capace di prestare un servizio culturalmente e linguisticamente adeguato.

La maggioranza del nostro personale è bilingue e capace di assistervi nel vostro ambiente familiare in casa vostra.

I nostri gruppi sociali offrono un pasto casalingo e la possibilità di incontrarsi con gli amici e chiacchierare dei tempi andati.

Attività di arti manuali, canzoni e balli, tombola e gite fanno parte del nostro programma giornaliero.

Contattate il nostro centro al

3624 6100

per ulteriori informazioni



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