



Annual Report 2024-2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Co.As.It. acknowledges the traditional owners on whose land our offices operate. We pay our respect to the past, present and future Elders and acknowledge the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Mission

To offer choice, value and consistently high quality services to people with diverse needs.

Our Vision

- To be a leader in the provision of quality, accessible and affordable community care services for the general and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities.
- To be the focal point in Queensland for the promotion and the study of the Italian Language and Culture.

Our Values

Dignity

Create a work environment in which there is equal opportunity, where staff and clients are understood and respected.

Value

Aspire to provide value for money at all times and meet the clients' expectations and financial capacity to receive the best possible care.

Sensitivity

Meet the clients' needs by being responsive, adaptive and innovative and supporting clients in their choice of care and lifestyle.

Excellence

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

Honesty

Act with integrity, be transparent, and exercise stewardship and good governance, while being responsive and accountable.

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Our Offices and Centres

Brisbane

Office



Corporate Office

473 Lutwyche Road,
LUTWYCHE



Italian Language Centre (ILC)

473 Lutwyche Road,
LUTWYCHE

Social Activity Centres



Casa Serena

1 Lanchester Street,
STAFFORD HEIGHTS



Casa Aurelia

79 Sussex Road,
ACACIA RIDGE



Cleveland Baptist Church Hall

240 Bloomfield Road,
CLEVELAND



Amici House

294 Bracken Ridge
Service Road,
BRACKEN RIDGE

South Coast

Office



Chevron Island Office

34 Thomas Drive,
CHEVRON ISLAND

Social Activity Centre



Italo-Australian Club

18 Fairway Drive,
CLEAR ISLAND WATERS

Board of Directors and Executives



President

Cav. Uff. Nereo Brezzi



Vice President and Secretary

Cav. Antonio Giovanni
Palella



Treasurer

Antony Brown



Director

Emma White



Director

Joe Chisari



Director

Comm. Dina Ranieri



Director

Rose-Marie Cappelo



Director

Angela Bonica
(Till 21/03/2025)



CEO

Tanina Softa

The Year in Review

This year, we continued to support the diverse needs of people of all ages, cultures, abilities and life circumstances through our wide range of programs and services offered to the community.

We sincerely thank our funding partners, both federal and state, for their support. This enabled us to provide in-home support, foster social connection, promote wellbeing and deliver

culturally responsive care, ensuring the varied needs of our community were met. Through our strong partnerships with other CALD providers, we

continued to share knowledge and expertise, working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients from CALD backgrounds.



AGED CARE SUPPORT AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The CHSP program operated at full capacity, support to Home Care Package clients increased and the STRC program continued to enhance client’s function and independence.

Our ACVVS program remained critical in enhancing social connection and reduce risk of isolation.

Amid this, we prepared for the transition to the new Support at Home program planned for 1 November. This included, implementing new systems, enhancing current systems and

providing training to ensure the team is confident and ready to continue delivering high-quality care under the new program.

HELPING INDIVIDUALS THRIVE

Our QCSS, CISS, and NDIS services continued to help clients maintain independence, build skills and participate in their communities. QCSS and CISS services exceeded funding KPIs and milestones, reflecting the high quality and impact of the support we deliver.

The NDIS audit during the period confirmed full compliance, successfully maintaining our registration.

We were grateful for the additional state government funding this year which enabled us to deliver emergency relief to community members experiencing financial hardship. Beyond the financial assistance and our hampers filled with essential items, the support reassured vulnerable members that they are not alone and cared for.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

We celebrated seniors and their valuable contributions at our Rhythms of Life celebrations, made possible by funding granted by COTA (Council on the Ageing).





Funding from the Department of Social Services enabled us to build awareness and confidence in recognising scams and preventing cybercrime among CALD communities.

Our diverse range of activities and social groups fostered connection and belonging, helping reduce isolation while supporting others to stay active, maintain their wellbeing, and remain independent and



engaged in the community.

ECHOES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Feedback and contributions from our clients, the Client Advisory Committee and the Quality Care Advisor Committee helped us review our services and supported continuous improvement.

OUR PEOPLE

Recruitment continued to focus on strengthening a workforce with the skills, language and cultural knowledge to respond to the needs of the people we service.

Federal government grants supported the additional costs associated with higher wages and leave liabilities due the Fair Work Stage 3 award increases.

The dedication of care workers was recognised through annual bonuses and loyalty gifts for staff who have worked 5, 10, 15 or more years. The generosity of our volunteers was also celebrated during National Volunteer Week.

LEADERSHIP AND TRANSITION

We farewelled our CEO, Dina Ranieri on her retirement, celebrating the remarkable legacy she has built and we are delighted that she will remain on our Board as a Director.

After almost 10 years, we farewelled our Regional Assessment Service team funded by PHN (Primary Health Networks) in December, following reforms and the introduction of a new integrated assessment system in aged care.



ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Our Italian Language Centre continued to foster the love of learning the language and culture across all age groups through a full program of educational and cultural activities

We were honoured to welcome the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who visited to see firsthand how



Italian government funding supports our Italian programs in Queensland schools.

Other highlights for the year included celebrating *La Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel mondo* by continuing our support for the Studitalia Award, hosting the launch of Italian author, Paolo Giordano's new book *Tasmania*, as well as celebrating Carnevale, running competitions and much more.



LOOKING AHEAD

Throughout all this, we celebrated remarkable achievements across all areas. From expanding services to strengthening social connections and supporting the diverse needs of our community.

We look forward to continuing to make a meaningful, lasting impact on the lives of the people we support. ■



President's Message



Cav. Uff. Nereo Brezzi
President

Providing quality, accessible and affordable care underpins the Co.As.It. Community Services approach and is why, on behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present this report of another highly productive year in serving our community.

Within the competitive aged care and NDIS sector, we navigated operational challenges as we expanded our services to meet the growing demand from a rising number of clients from both the general and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

With informed guidance for our operations through our strengthened Provider Governance – supported by a Client Advisory Committee and a Quality Care Advisory Committee – we consolidated our reputation for high quality service delivery among clients, the community and the sector.

The enthusiasm of these committee members is greatly appreciated and we thank them for their contribution. Their commitment is vital as we navigate national reforms under the new *Aged Care Act* from 1 November 2025.

Importantly, the organisation's revenue needs were met by contract renewals and increases in existing programs, new funding and grants for special projects, such as, a cybersecurity awareness program and seniors events.

Our strong commitment to Italian language education in Queensland is widely known and respected and we are most grateful to the Italian government through the Italian Consulate in Brisbane and the Italian Embassy in Canberra.

The Italian government's generosity continues to facilitate the Italian Language Centre's (ILC) participation in the Queensland Department of Education and Catholic Education programs.

During the year, we were able to show firsthand to MAECI (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) how the funding is being used to support the Italian teaching of language in Queensland schools.

A highlight included a visit to Co.As.It. and ILC from our esteemed Director of Ufficio V at MAECI, Consigliere d'Ambasciata, Filippo

Romano, accompanied by the Italian Consul, Luna Angelini Marinucci.

Other achievements in the ILC's participation in state and national activities to facilitate the teaching of Italian language included the *XXIV Settimana Della Lingua Italiana nel mondo* celebration and the annual StuditaliA Award, now in its 31st year.

We also continued our commitment to professional development for Italian teachers in addition to supporting Italian language speaking competitions across the state.

We were grateful to engage in important discussions about Italian language teaching in partnership with other Co.As.It. bodies, the Italian Embassy and Com.It.Es.

Engagement activities continued to expand to enrich the lives of more clients, with our International Women's Day celebration and our hamper initiative being key examples. We are grateful to our funding partners for making these activities possible.

Notably, our Amici House community hub at Bracken Ridge continues to attract hundreds of visitors each week and at its Christmas art exhibition from NDIS and Community Art participants.

Once again, I acknowledge with gratitude the collaboration and support of partners and other Co.As.It. entities. In particular, I thank: the federal and state governments; Brisbane City Council; the Italian Embassy, the Italian Consulate for Queensland and the Northern Territory, Com.It.Es. Queensland and Northern Territory; PHN Brisbane North; the Catholic Education offices in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville; the Queensland Department of Education; and our Italian parliamentary representatives, the Honorable Nicola Carè and Senator Francesco Giacobbe.

I thank our staff, our executive team and directors for their ongoing support.

As we acknowledge our achievements, we draw upon our learnings from the past to shape our future direction. With our mission and values in mind, we look forward to our ongoing delivery of high quality programs, services and activities. ■

"Providing quality, accessible and affordable care underpins the Co.As.It. Community Services approach and is why, on behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present this report of another highly productive year in serving our community."

CEO's Message



Tanina Softa
Chief Executive Officer

As my first year in the position of CEO and my 33rd year with Co.As.It, I am honoured to present my inaugural annual report for Co.As.It. Community Services.

I have been fortunate to inherit a legacy of dedication, cultural pride and strong community services that has been carefully built over decades. My commitment and focus stepping into the position has been to honour this legacy and ensure Co.As.It. continues to grow, evolve and respond to the needs of our community.

The year has been both consuming and deeply rewarding. Every day I witness the incredible impact Co.As.It. has on the people in our community, making sure they are always supported, safe and most importantly, respected and connected.

I am grateful to our dedicated,

compassionate and professional team in all that they do, across all the services we deliver.

A large part of the year focused on preparing for the reforms in the aged care sector, including the introduction of a new Support at Home program. This has required a significant amount of time in planning to ensure we are able to continue delivering quality care in line with the new program.

We have invested a new software program (Alayacare) and enhanced other IT systems for quality and financial management, to better capture information as well as improve efficiency.

Our provider governance was strengthened and supported by our Client Advisory Committee and Quality Care Advisory Committee who contributed to the organisation's continuous

improvement with informed decision making and a shared commitment to improving Co.As.It.'s quality in service delivery.

My sincere appreciation is extended to our funding partners, both federal and state governments. Their funding has enabled Co.As.It. to continue delivering a diverse range of programs to the community.

We appreciate the funding received from the Italian Government, enabling the Italian Language Centre (ILC)

to continue supporting the Italian curriculum in schools across Queensland and the professional development of teachers of Italian.

Through schools and other initiatives, ILC continued to nurture the love of the language and culture to children and adults.

I sincerely thank the Board of Directors for their stewardship and vision, as well as their trust in me to continue building Co.As.It.'s legacy.

To the incredible team of staff and volunteers – thank you for your commitment, compassion and great work in always embodying Co.As.It.'s mission.

Looking ahead, I am excited for the future and am confident that together we will overcome any challenges and continue to be strong, resilient and deeply rooted in the values that have always defined Co.As.It., which is to make sure our community remains at the centre and core of all that we do. ■

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Diversity and Inclusion

Co.As.It. is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued, respected and empowered.

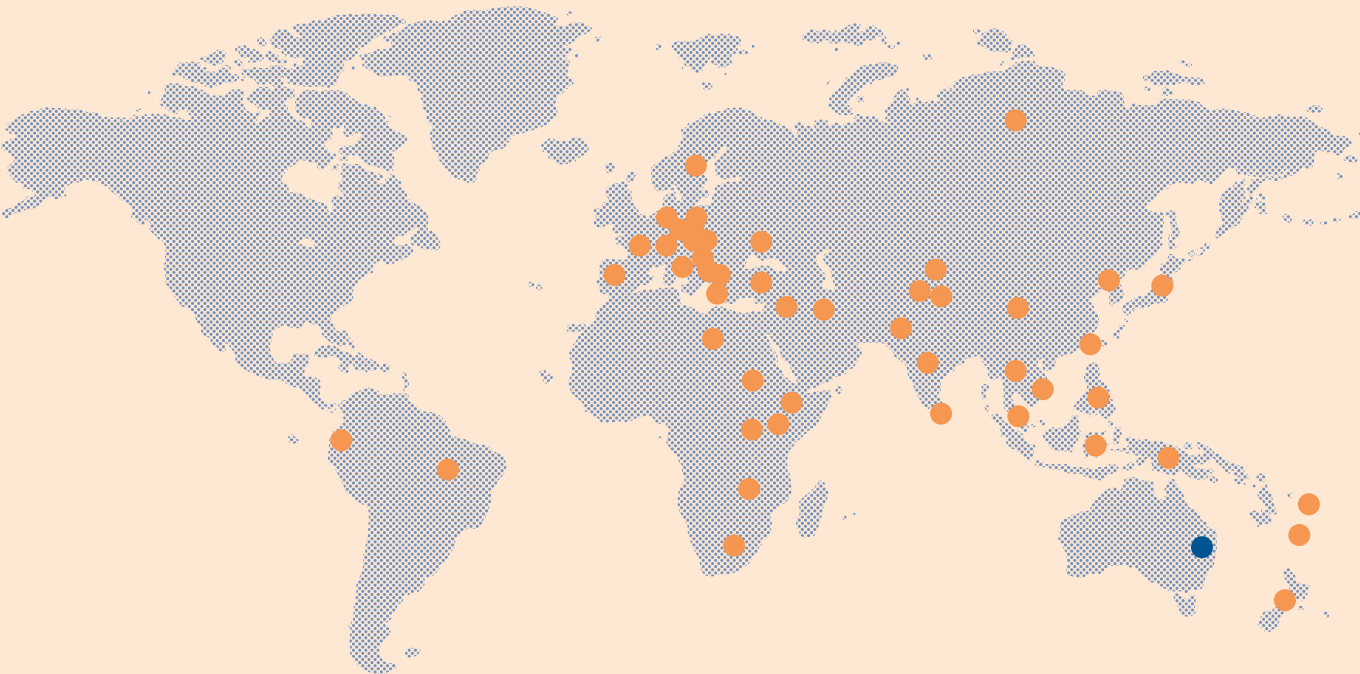
Recognised as a provider supporting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and a large percentage of our workforce representing diverse cultures and backgrounds, we are able to understand and respond to the needs of the people in our community.

While we specialise in supporting CALD communities, we are equally committed to

embracing and including all forms of diversity - gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Throughout all our program, services, and interactions, we embrace equality and are committed to ensuring everyone is welcomed, included and always at the centre of everything we do. ■

 **%78** | of Staff are Bilingual



 **%74** | Clients from CALD Background

Our People



3
Management



8
Finance



24
General Administration



20
Regional Assessment Service



72
Aged Care and Community Services



23
Clinical Team



23
Allied Health



348
Care Workers



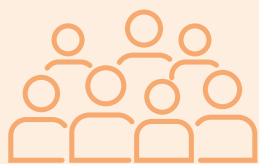
16
Italian Language Centre (ILC)



77
Volunteers

Community Footprint

Co.As.It. Community Services



Total Clients

5,961



Total Service Hours

1,529,717

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

Total Service Hours

327,933



Home Care Packages (HCP)

Total Service Hours

248,897



Short Term Restorative Care (STRC)

Total Service Hours

3,123



Clinical Services (Nursing and Allied Health)

Total Service Hours

70,197



National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Total Service Hours

25,977



Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS)

Total Service Hours

6,984



Community and Individual Support Services (CISS)

Total Service Hours

6,898



Community Engagement/Connections

Total Service Hours

198,703





Home Support

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

During the past 2024-25 financial year, the aged care sector has experienced increasing demand for services and substantial challenges.



The CHSP program operated at full capacity and exceeded its KPI's during the 2024-25 financial year.

Our team worked conscientiously to respond to the ongoing and growing demand for support from older people in our community, including those with higher-level care needs.

Services were successfully delivered across all 5 funded regions (Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Caboolture, Logan and the Gold Coast), responding to the diverse needs of our clients.

Our allied health team played

a pivotal role in supporting reablement and working with clients to restore function, build confidence and enhance independence.

A constant stream of enquiries was received during the year from current and prospective clients. This included calls from people seeking services and direct referrals from Regional Assessment Officers seeking providers for assessed clients.

Many individuals and families had been waiting a significantly long time to access support. A number of clients who were waiting approval for their home care package to be assigned

or upgraded were also referred to our CHSP services for interim care until their home care package was approved.

We worked collaboratively with other service providers to ensure support for shared clients. Partnerships with Care Finders were also strengthened during the year, providing us the opportunity to assist vulnerable clients and those at risk of homelessness.

The team also focused on the upcoming aged care reforms, education and preparing to transition and operate under the new *Aged Care Act*.

Looking ahead, the CHSP team remains committed to delivering high-quality care which promotes independence and wellbeing.

As we continue to prepare for the implementation of the new *Aged Care Act*, our focus will remain on continuous improvement to ensure we can continue to evolve in the new landscape of aged care.

We extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated staff whose ongoing compassion and commitment has played a large part in the success of the program during the year. ■

Case Study

MARIA



When Maria joined Co.As.It., she was courageously taking the next step in her journey of self-care, independence and connection.

Still recovering from back surgery, Maria faced new challenges while adjusting to life without her late husband. Without her husband, Maria not only grieved his company but found it challenging to live at home on her own.

She was however determined to remain living in the family home where she had many treasured memories.

Our allied health team supported Maria during her recovery. The Physiotherapist assisted her to regain strength and mobility, while our Occupational Therapist assessed and recommended equipment and grab rails which were installed and made daily life easier and safer for Maria.

Understanding her needs, our Care Coordinator promptly arranged domestic assistance to ease the burden of

household chores that had also become difficult for Maria.

Our care worker helped with making the bed, hanging the washing and vacuuming floors, allowing Maria who is very house-proud, to enjoy her home with comfort and pride.

The support has enabled Maria to have more energy to enjoy the things she loves most which includes cooking her favourite Italian meals to share with her sons and grandchildren as well as spending special time with her loyal dog, Bella.

Remaining connected in the community and attending to other necessities, was also a barrier for Maria who no longer drives.

Weekly visits from our Care Worker not only provides Maria with companionship but ensures Maria can attend medical appointments and also participate in her grocery shopping.

Attending Casa Serena (our social group activity centre) is a highlight of Maria's week, where she reconnects with her Italian friends over morning tea, lunch and her favourite activities such as 'Tombola' and singalongs.

From helping with daily domestic tasks to sharing friendly conversations, Maria feels supported every step of the way and continues to embrace each day with connection and joy. ■



Home Care Packages (HCP)

True care is not just delivering a service, it's preserving dignity, honouring choice and walking beside people as they continue to live the life they love at home.



The year was one of both progress and challenge for our Home Care Package (HCP) team. We remained committed to delivering high quality and individualised care that supported clients to live safely, independently and with dignity in their own homes.

With a workforce made up of over 75 per cent of staff who reflect a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, our services continued to respond to the communities we serve. This diversity has always enriched our ability to understand and respond to the unique needs of CALD clients, ensuring that care continues to be delivered with sensitivity, respect and cultural understanding.

Together with the support of our clinical, allied health professionals and the Mind Wellness team, we continued to respond to our clients with

complex and high-level needs. This collaborative approach enabled Care Coordinators to develop individualised care plans in partnership with each client and their families to ensure they continued to receive tailored care that best met their individual needs.

Across South East Queensland, early March 2025 brought significant challenges when extreme weather swept through the region with the onset of Tropical Cyclone Alfred. During this time, our clients remained our highest priority. With the dedication of our care workers and nursing team, we continued to deliver essential services for many of our clients, particularly those who were most vulnerable and had no other support. Their compassion and resilience ensured that even during natural disasters, no client felt alone.

Community engagement also remained a strong focus this year. Through our participation in various retirement, lifestyle

and seniors expos across Brisbane and the Gold Coast, we continued to raise awareness of our services. Aside from prioritising client care, a large part of the year was spent preparing for major reforms to the aged care system, including the introduction of the new Support at Home program which will replace the current HCP program.

Initially scheduled for 1 July 2025, the program's deferral to November provided valuable additional time for our team to learn and better understand the new program, as well as refine processes, strengthen internal systems and ensure we are well prepared to meet the new program requirements and operate efficiently.

Amid the challenges and reforms, the dedication, flexibility and responsiveness of our staff has been remarkable. Their willingness to embrace change, maintain excellence in care and support clients through an unsettling period of preparing for a sector-wide transformation has ensured that Co.As.It. remains well-positioned to deliver quality, person-centred care, *now and into the future!*

As we look ahead to the changes the new program will bring, our team remains focused and ready. We will continue to strengthen our services, guided always by our core commitment which is to uphold the rights and dignity of every client we care for. ■

Case Study

VINCENZA



At the age of 87, Vincenza radiates resilience and joy. Proving that with the right support, independence and happiness can be achieved at any age.

Living with chronic pain, migraines and other health concerns, Vincenza previously struggled with everyday tasks and enjoy life. Through Co.As.It.'s compassionate and culturally responsive support services, she enjoys greater independence and the freedom to live life her way.

Vincenza's Coordinator works closely with her in her preferred language, ensuring her care plan always reflects her needs and choices. From coordinating

nursing and allied health support to helping with her weekly outings, every aspect of her care is planned to keep her well, safe and connected.

Vincenza treasures the time she spends with her Care Worker, at home, on shopping trips, pharmacy errands and even a coffee at her local café. Simple moments that bring companionship, laughter and joy to her days.

Twice a week, she early waits for the Co.As.It. minibus to arrive and take her to Casa Serena (Social Group Activity Centre) where she enjoys the day with

her friends. It's a place where her friends have become like family and every day feels like a little celebration.

Regular visits from nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists as needed help maintain Vincenza's mobility and wellbeing, ensuring she can continue living independently at home.

Together with her family, Vincenza is very grateful for the care and support that makes her life brighter, safer and meaningful. ■

"Simple moments that bring companionship, laughter and joy to her days."

Short Term Restorative Care (STRC)



"Through collaboratively identifying their goals, many clients have regained their independence, confidence and purpose, reigniting their community engagement and involvement."

The Short Term Restorative Care (STRC) program, now in its 4th year, has continued to demonstrate effective outcomes through its multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to client care.

To ensure each client received tailored support which addressed their individual needs and goals, the program's team remained dedicated to delivering a responsive, integrated and coordinated service delivery model.

In the past year, our STRC program experienced a steady stream of referrals for clients.

Through collaboratively identifying their goals, many clients have regained their independence, confidence and purpose, reigniting their community engagement and involvement.

We regularly received feedback from clients and families who expressed their sincere gratitude for the significant improvements our program has made to their sense of well-being.

During the past year, we began preparations for major reforms and the new Restorative Care pathway which will be introduced from 1 November 2025. ■



Allied Health



Our Allied Health team comprised of occupational therapists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, and allied health assistants has experienced continued growth, innovation and stability in the past year.

Through delivering allied health services, Co.As.It. Community Services has assisted more people to live in their own home and participate more fully in community life.

Our team's professional expertise and consistent enthusiasm has enabled us to respond to an increasing number of allied health referrals, which expanded both in volume and complexity throughout the year.

During the year, we have responded to almost 2,500

referrals to enable clients to live safely and independently at home. With a multidisciplinary and innovative approach, our team worked closely with the Care Coordinators, Nurses and Mind Wellness team to provide support.

To meet the growing demand for our services, we continued to expand activities and services in addition to providing therapy services.

Our podiatry and physiotherapy clinics at Amici House continued to run at high capacity, with podiatry services increasing to 2 full days per week and physiotherapy clinics now available daily.

Our physiotherapist led 'Stay Active' classes continued to

attract strong attendance. The classes, which aim to optimise flexibility for members of our community aged 60 and over, are held at 3 locations.

During the past year, we also introduced a gentler 'Keep Moving' class at Amici House for people who are over 60 with mobility needs. With our physiotherapist guiding clients through gentle exercises, the classes were a welcome addition for improving strength and mobility.

While all of our classes are designed to improve the physical wellbeing of older people they also provide a social component. Some participants have been attending the same classes for more than 3 years, developing new friendships during and after classes. Our 'Stay Active' program therefore continued to deliver many benefits from physical exercise to social connections.

In 2024-25, we also welcomed student placements. The placements provided a valuable learning experience for the students while also enabling clinicians to fulfil an important role with their professional sector. The students completed their 120 placement hours as part of a Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance; and Occupational Therapy (OT) students completed their 7-week and 10-week placements.

FUTURE GROWTH

As we plan for future growth, we remain committed to continuing to supporting clients to complete daily activities, in whichever way they are able to through our range of therapy services. ■



Case Study

JOHN

Through a coordinated approach combining targeted physiotherapy, practical occupational therapy interventions, and education, John regained his independence, improved his wellbeing, and re-engaged meaningfully with his community.

John, a 75-year-old man living with his wife in a retirement village, was referred to the Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) program following a period of reduced activity and low mood associated with Parkinson's disease.

John had been spending most of his time at home and was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain his usual independence in daily activities.

Co.As.It's physiotherapist and occupational therapist stepped in to support John with his physical function and safety at home.

Our physiotherapist provided weekly sessions targeting strength, balance, and mobility, which assisted with John's safe and confident use of a four-wheeled walker.

Our Occupational Therapist conducted a home safety assessment and then trialled and recommended simple assistive equipment, including a toilet surround and bed grab bar.

This equipment promoted independence with personal care and transfers. A calendar clock was also provided and was found to be particularly beneficial, enabling John to stay oriented with the day and date.

In addition to the equipment prescription, our occupational therapist provided education about Parkinson's disease, explaining common symptoms and sharing practical strategies to manage daily tasks.

This education and information was presented in small chunks over several visits. John and his wife reported that this clear,

accessible information helped them better understand the condition and significantly reduced their anxiety.

By the end of the eight-week program, John demonstrated improved strength, balance, and confidence.

John had also re-joined community activities and social clubs he had previously withdrawn from, and began sharing what he learned about Parkinson's disease with others.

This helped reduce John's embarrassment related to his symptoms and increased his confidence in social interactions.

Through a coordinated approach combining targeted physiotherapy, practical occupational therapy interventions, and education, John regained his independence, improved his wellbeing, and re-engaged meaningfully with his community. ■

Clinical Care

Supporting Health and Independence



"Being able to heal in their own home and a familiar environment allows clients to maintain daily routines, preserve independence and exercise greater control over their health care."

Access to compassionate, culturally responsive health care can often be challenging for many, yet Co.As.It's Clinical Care team has continued to bridge that gap.

Over the past year, our dedicated team of registered and enrolled nurses continued to provide compassionate, culturally responsive and high-quality home health care to people in the community.

Throughout the year, our team continued to deliver reliable, individualised care that responded to the unique needs of each client.

With a combination of clinical expertise and warm interpersonal skills, our nursing staff provide a range of supports. This includes: acute and chronic wound care management; continence education, assessments and access to incontinence

products; medication management; monitoring of chronic and aged-related health conditions; and supporting clients to maintain their overall health and well-being in the comfort of their homes.

Our clinical care team also continue to play a significant role as an integral member in restorative care and reablement, through supporting clients in the STRC and CHSP programs, and more broadly across other Co.As.It. programs.

Through health education and medication management, our clinical team supported clients to regain confidence and functional ability following illness, hospitalisation or a period of decline.

Our team also played an essential role in helping clients to recover at home, reducing hospital stays and preventing

readmissions. Being able to heal in their own home and a familiar environment allows clients to maintain daily routines, preserve independence and exercise greater control over their health care.

Clients have reported positively about the timeliness of our services, the expertise and competence of our team and the effective collaboration between Co.As.It. teams, families, and other healthcare providers. This has demonstrated the meaningful difference home care nursing can make.

While challenges such as, the increasing complexity of care continued to affect the sector, Co.As.It's clinical care team remained adaptable and committed to ensuring the best possible quality of life for clients across the community. ■

Case Study

ROSLYN

Holding hands through the journey

When Roslyn, lovingly known as Ros, joined Co.As.It. in October 2024 for support, she was still surrounded by the familiar comforts of her home and the unwavering devotion of her husband, Colin, who had cared for her for years.

As Ros became frailer and her health challenges grew, Colin began to feel the weight of caring for the person he loved most in the world. With courage and humility, he accepted the support of our clinical team who would soon become an extension of their family.

From the very first visit, our nurses became more than healthcare providers, they became companions on a deeply personal journey. They entered Ros's home not only with clinical expertise but with their hearts attuned to her and Colin's emotional world.

Each visit with Ros included thorough well-being checks, careful monitoring of her skin and wounds, as well as guidance on personal care. Beyond this care, our nurses also brought patience, gentle encouragement and reassurance, ensuring Colin that he was not alone in this journey.

As Ros's frailty grew, so did the challenges. She lost weight, moved less, and experienced discomfort and fatigue that made daily life a

quiet struggle. Pressure injuries became a constant concern.

Our nurses worked alongside Colin, providing education, support and encouraging him in ways that kept Ros comfortable and dignified. Pain management was carefully monitored and no ache or discomfort was overlooked. Our nurses observed, listened and guided, always helping Colin to navigate both the physical demands of caring for Ros and the emotional strain for him to experience the person he loved, decline so quickly.

Our team partnered and worked together with the Community Palliative Care Team which brought additional support, offering guidance and reassurance, ensuring Ros's final days could be lived with comfort and compassion. When the time came for Ros to be admitted to the Hospital Palliative Care Unit, it was a decision made out of love, for her safety, for her comfort and for Colin's well-being

Through it all, our nurses had witnessed quiet moments of love that no medical chart could ever capture. Colin gently holding Ros's hand as she slept, sharing stories from their life together, tears held back and released in equal measure.

Together, our team celebrated small victories, the moments Ros could eat a meal comfortably, the days when she felt a spark of energy, and the smiles that broke through fatigue. They supported Colin as he learned to accept help, guiding him to care for himself even as he cared for her.

When Ros sadly passed, it was with peace and dignity, surrounded by people who had walked beside her especially Colin, every step of the way.

Her story is a testament to the profound impact of our compassionate nursing care we continue to achieve. For Ros, Colin and our nurses who became family, the journey was one of shared humanity, gentle guidance and unwavering support.

In every gentle touch and every quiet reassurance, our nursing team helped Ros to live her final months in comfort and dignity, giving Colin the strength to navigate the greatest loss of his life.

Ros and Colin's story is a quiet celebration of love, care and the extraordinary difference that kindness and genuine dedication to care can make. ■



Mind Wellness Program

Supporting continued wellbeing is at the heart of everything the Mind Wellness Team do.

The Mind Wellness Team continued to play an essential role in supporting the wellbeing of members in our community.

Throughout the year, we experienced a growing demand from individuals seeking support to manage psychosocial and emotional challenges. Many of which were related to isolation, loneliness and anxiety.

There was also an increase in requests from individuals facing barriers to accessing mainstream services due to cultural and linguistic differences. The growing need reinforced our team's commitment to providing culturally sensitive support that recognises the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our community.

To respond to these demands, our team was expanded to include a qualified Social Worker. This complemented the expertise of the Registered Nurse and Counsellors who also delivered dementia support services.

Together, this multidisciplinary team enabled us to offer a holistic approach to each individual's wellbeing and address their emotional, psychological and health needs. This included guidance, support, information and resources for people living with dementia and their carers.

Our Registered Nurse's clinical expertise continued to be invaluable in identifying underlying health factors, supporting clients with complex needs and collaborating with other professionals to ensure coordinated care.

Counselling services continued to provide professional and confidential support for individuals and families experiencing emotional distress, grief, anxiety and other life challenges. They provided counselling which focused on a 'person-centred approach' designed to sustain and offer solution-focused strategies which supported clients to manage their daily challenges, build coping strategies and enhance resilience.

Another significant area of focus this year was supporting clients living with dementia as well as their carers.

Our team worked collaboratively with Co.As.It's Care Coordinators to ensure that care plans and service delivery were responsive to each person's emotional, cognitive and physical needs. This integrated approach ensured that both clients and carers received individual, compassionate, informed and culturally appropriate support.

Community outreach continued with our team participating in dementia awareness and support expos and engaging with individuals through Co.As.It's pop-up store at Lutwyche; and helping to raise awareness of available supports and assisting with access to services.

The women's wellbeing group – Nourishing the Soul – also continued to be popular.

An additional group was introduced in response to growing demand and provided more women with a safe and supportive space to connect, reduce isolation and nurture their emotional wellbeing.

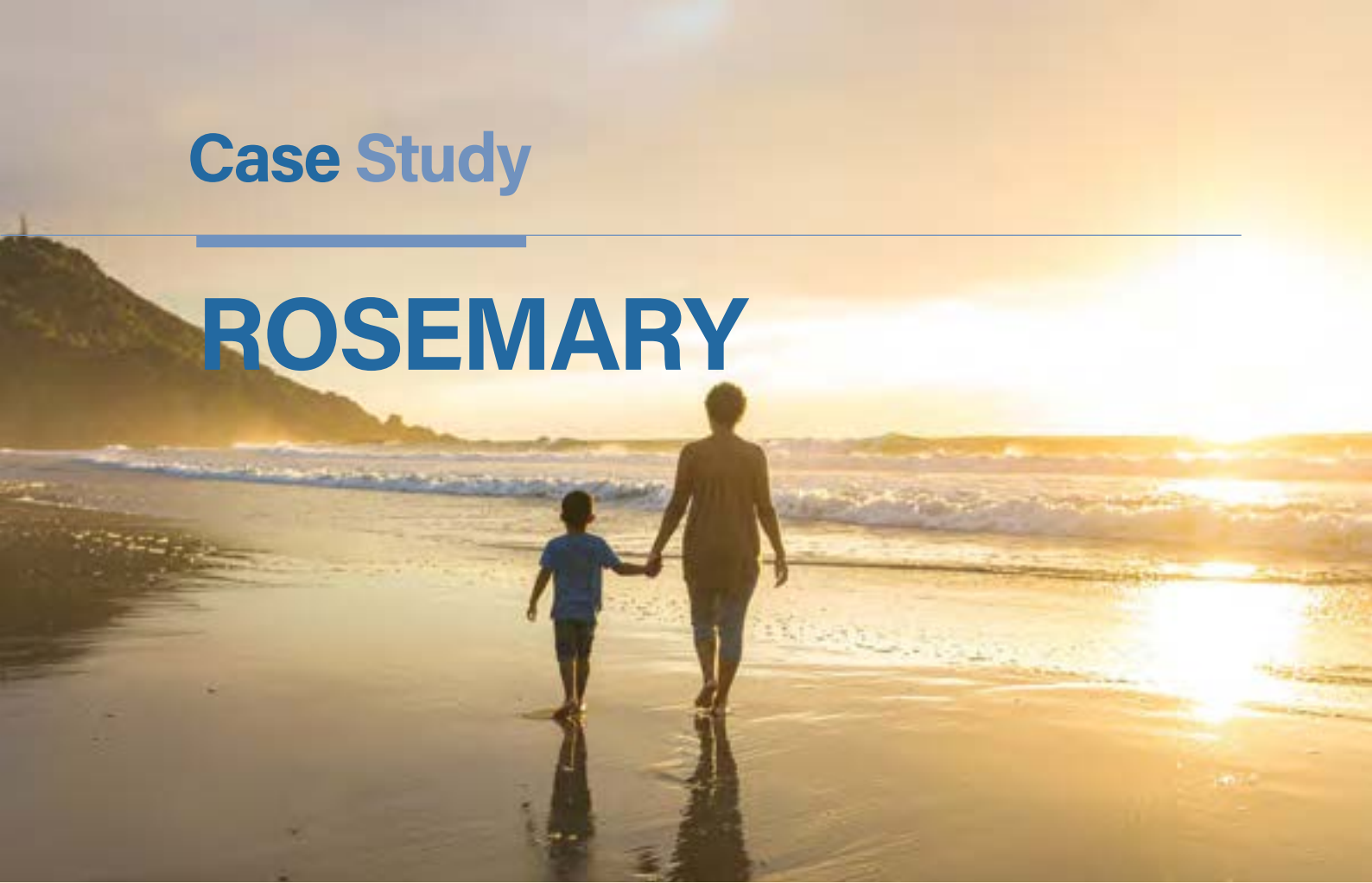
Our team is always inspired by the resilience, courage and self-awareness of the women attending these groups.

With holistic support, proactive outreach, education and culturally sensitive care, the Mind Wellness Program ensured individuals and families received the guidance, connection and resources they needed to continue living well and independently in the community, while also feeling supported. ■

"The growing need reinforced our team's commitment to providing culturally sensitive support that recognises the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our community."

Case Study

ROSEMARY



When life takes an unexpected turn, finding the right support can make all the difference.

Rosemary* reached out to our Mind Wellness Team via email.

In person, Rosemary presented as a well-groomed and well-spoken lady who is at the top of her career. But due to domestic violence and a breakdown, had found herself destitute with 2 children to support.

Rosemary, having managed to move into a rental property with her 2 children, was desperately needing financial assistance and emotional support. Despite Rosemary's impressive education, Rosemary had lost hope and confidence in herself.

Once the therapeutic connection with our counsellor was made, and through appropriate counselling strategies, Rosemary began to believe in herself and her capacity, as she observed, "to pick up my life and enjoy my beautiful children again".

What made this possible? A person-centred approach aimed at treating Rosemary with dignity and respect, allowing Rosemary to become the key person in her own growth and psychosocial progress.

Rosemary has now embarked on a new career as well as 'healthy relationships' with newly founded friends and enjoying quality time with her children.

Rosemary said the regular support and respectful approach made a difference at a very crucial time in her life and she is grateful for the assistance that she received.

(*Rosemary's name changed to protect her privacy.) ■

"Your regular support and respectful approach made a difference at a very crucial time in my life and I am grateful for the assistance that I received"

Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS)



"Together with our consortia partners we exceeded our targets for the year and provided continuous and regular support across Brisbane north and south."

In 2024-25, our QCSS program, funded by the Queensland Government, has helped a diverse range of vulnerable clients in our community.

The program assists people with a range of disabilities, chronic illnesses or health conditions to improve their capacity to live independently and access supports which enable them to foster and maintain connections with their local community.

We have worked with each client to develop personalised, achievable goals and outcomes to increase their confidence and capacity.

This has included provision of short-term direct care and support, such as, personal care and assistance with household tasks.

Our team also continued to promote community

connections by supporting clients to access local activities or other supports to encourage social interactions.

Together with our consortia partners we exceeded our targets for the year and provided continuous and regular support across Brisbane north and Brisbane south, with a strong focus on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients. ■

Case Study

SOFIA

Every week, Sofia steps out of her apartment with a bright smile lighting up her face to join her care worker for their regular trip to the shops.

For Sofia, a Somali immigrant adjusting to life in Australia, these routine outings are more than an opportunity to buy groceries, they are stepping stones to confidence.

As they stroll into local shops together, Sofia is reminded of her earlier life when she spots colourful fabrics with vibrant patterns.

Another memory is triggered when Sofia spots a familiar spice used in Somali cuisine.

"Cumin!" she exclaims, proudly using an English word she learned recently.

Little by little, these timely moments provide our team with an opportunity to encourage Sofia to practice her English, by gently guiding her pronunciation and celebrating these small but significant victories in her language journey.

As they walk together, Sofia confides about her earlier life in Somalia, with her voice growing more confident with each English sentence.

Listening intently and occasionally introducing a new word or phrase, before long, their shopping excursion



has been transformed into impromptu language lesson.

As our support worker helps Sofia carry her shopping bags home, it's clear that outings are more than restocking the pantry. They're about building confidence, fostering independence and nurturing a sense of belonging in Australia.

With the unwavering support of Co.As.It. support services, Sofia is progressively gaining confidence in her ability to engage with the community and reducing the social isolation she had initially experienced while adjusting to her new life. ■

"With the unwavering support of Co.As.It. support services, Sofia is progressively gaining confidence in her ability to engage with the community and reducing the social isolation she had initially experienced while adjusting to her new life."

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

As the NDIS sector continues to evolve in 2024-2025, our program remained steadfast in its delivery of exceptional support to clients living with disabilities and providing services that enhanced their independence.

Our team continued to strengthen its commitment to promoting choice and control for NDIS clients during the year.

By focusing on understanding and meeting each person’s individual goals and support needs, we were proud to see many of our clients step forward with greater confidence, joining community events, engaging in social activities and building stronger connections within their local communities.

Client focused planning and the delivery of individual supports aligned to their preferred and established schedules, ensured clients accessed timely care and support for in-home and community based tasks and activities.

Providing personal care, nursing, daily living and independent skill development in familiar and safe environments helped our clients feel comfortable and secure while working toward greater independence.

During the year, we introduced a new model of nursing services to enhance the quality of complex care supports.

Feedback from our clients and their Support Coordinators has been positive and reflected an appreciation of the support model and Co.As.It’s person-centred approach.



Our team continued to work with the philosophy that when clients feel comfortable and confident, they are more open to learning new skills and forming meaningful friendships through shared experiences and activities.

ART EXHIBITION

Of the program’s many achievements, the NDIS Art Classes continued to attract enthusiastic participation and the opportunity for our clients to unleash their creativity.

The annual Christmas art exhibition, was another highlight of the NDIS program this year, as our clients, family and friends, admired

the paintings displayed across Amici House.

Our focus on client connectedness, skill development and social engagement also influenced staff recruitment and ongoing training for our care workers.

We continued to ‘match’ care workers to clients based on shared interests, skills and considerations, such as, gender, age and cultural background. This matching has contributed to the best possible outcomes for planned supports and feedback from clients indicated their appreciation for being able to have an active role in selecting their care worker. ■

Case Study

STEPHEN

A new chapter of strength, beyond the weights.

In his younger years, Stephen, 62, would start his days practicing weight training through lifting dumbbells.

That was until 2013 when Stephen suffered an acquired brain injury and partial paralysis.

Stephen’s journey with Co.As.It. since 2019, is a vibrant illustration of how our NDIS Support Coordination and personalised support can transform lives.

After identifying his goals, including independence and social connection, our care workers have been instrumental in making these aspirations a reality.

From personal care to meal preparation, grocery shopping, banking, medical appointments and building social connections, Stephen’s care workers are helping him to achieve his health, lifestyle and social goals.

“I am so very thankful for each and every visit I receive from a Co.As.It. care worker,” Stephen said.

Throughout each week, 4 dedicated Co.As.It. care workers provide Stephen with the assistance necessary to embrace opportunities for independence and connection.

As an avid football follower, Stephen acknowledges that we are social beings and connection is not a luxury, it’s a need. With Leroy, his Kelpie Cross rescue dog, taking the place of a loyal friend, Stephen has had his share of lonely days.

There’s no shame in feeling lonely or of needing help to live independently, and with this in mind, Stephen’s relationship with our NDIS team extends beyond professional duty.

“My care workers go and above the call of duty so much so that I refer to them as friends,” Stephen said.

With our carefully crafted NDIS support and services, Stephen is redefining what is possible.

Our dedicated NDIS services demonstrates how quality support can transform challenges into stepping stones towards independence and fulfilment for clients. ■



“My care workers go above and beyond the call of duty — so much so that I refer to them as friends.”

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)

MAKING TIME FOR FRIENDSHIP

Through the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS), Co.As.It. strengthens social connections for older people living at home or in residential care. Supported by federal funding and 75 dedicated volunteers, the program helps reduce loneliness and isolation by providing regular friendly visits that foster companionship, inclusion, and a higher quality of life for older community members.

CARE AND COMPASSION

The ACVVS has been pivotal to creating a more inclusive community for older people, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. In reaching out to older people who may be at a higher risk of isolation and alienation due to language and cultural differences, the program continues to deliver many benefits for both older people and volunteers alike.

HOW WE HAVE PROGRESSED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Throughout the past 12 months, our ACVVS program has navigated some challenges while maintaining its commitment to creating meaningful connections between volunteers and older people.

Key obstacles have included

inadequate communication from residential aged care homes (RACHs) that inhibits effective matching, visiting restrictions that hinder volunteer access (for example, no weekend visiting), and inconsistent notification of resident deaths that leaves volunteers feeling undervalued.

Volunteer-related challenges have also persisted, including health and personal issues affecting visit consistency, hesitancy to engage with clients experiencing severe health or cognitive difficulties, and the ongoing legacy of COVID impacting volunteer commitment and recruitment.

In response, operational adaptations have been implemented including increased visitor monitoring, enhanced telephone liaison, stronger communication protocols with RACHs, and expanded networking through membership with larger volunteer organisations like Volunteering Queensland.

Training initiatives were strengthened through four sessions on social connections, healthy boundaries, and the human experience of volunteering, reaching 58 participants. Recruitment efforts also expanded with increased advertising, participation in volunteer expos, partnerships with volunteer organisations, and online upskilling opportunities, while weekend sessions were

trialled to support working volunteers, though attendance remained steady. Throughout the past year, celebration and recognition of volunteers remained a priority.

Highlights included celebrating both International Volunteer Day and National Volunteer Week with parliamentary and Queensland Governor invitations to attend morning teas. We also presented our volunteers with gifts and certificates, hosted 2 Christmas lunches, and distributed regular ACVVS and Co.As.It., newsletters to highlight individual volunteers and recipients.

A submission to the Parliamentary Enquiry on Volunteering in Queensland further amplified advocacy for volunteer contributions to supporting vulnerable people.

Despite persistent challenges in recruitment, volunteer commitment, and RACH communication, the ACVVS program continues to create meaningful relationships that improve the well-being of recipients and deliver deep satisfaction to volunteers.

New strategies continue to be developed and implemented to address hindrances to recruitment and enhance volunteer support, ensuring the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of both volunteers and the older people they serve. ■

In the kitchen with Belinda



Meet Belinda, an enthusiastic volunteer whose Italian heritage was the inspiration behind her decision to volunteer.

For Belinda, her Italian-born parents were longstanding clients of Co.As.It., and volunteering provides an opportunity to keep cultural traditions alive while 'giving back'.

Belinda was matched with Maria, 90, and their friendship is bonded by coffee, cooking, crafts. Maria is a renowned quilt-maker, with a passion for Italian culture.

This is what Belinda shared about why she chose to volunteer:

I got involved because I wanted to help someone but in the

end I found it was helping me just as much. It also upsets me that so many people are sitting at home or in aged care with no one to visit them.

Visiting Maria

It gives me so much joy to give back to someone. My visits are always fun. Maria and other older people in our community have so much to offer and have so many exciting stories to tell. They just want to share them with you.

I always leave my visit feeling so much better. It takes me back in time to childhood when life was simpler. It also takes my mind off daily stressors.

Maria's advice for someone considering volunteering

Just do it!

Make time. You won't regret it. It is so rewarding and joyful to spend time with someone who really appreciates that you've taken the time to see them.

CHANGING LIVES

For Maria, having a special friend to enjoy spending time with and share her joys has given her a new passion and something to look forward to every week.

Maria's masterclass in making quilts and homemade gnocchi has been inspirational for Belinda.

Spending time together in the kitchen also brings back special family memories for Belinda while providing a delicious meal to enjoy together, filled with conversation and laughter. ■

Community Support

CIAO Program

Italians who once crossed oceans for a new life in Australia are now reviving cultural traditions in their golden years.

In their senior years, they are now finding comfort in our program called CIAO (Cultural Italian Activity Opportunity).

Through our CIAO program, Italian seniors living at aged care residential homes continued to enjoy a sense of belonging and cultural connection in

their new surroundings.

A YEAR OF ROARING SUCCESS

The past year has been a roaring success with numerous curated activities that reflected salient times in the Italian calendar.

From Carnevale celebrations to Ferragosto gatherings, residents have engaged meaningfully with their heritage through activities delivered in their own language.

The benefits of this approach are clear: Italian residents

communicate more freely, express themselves more fully, and connect more deeply when activities honour their linguistic and cultural identity.

As new residents are added frequently to our program across facilities, they quickly discover the joy of quiz games testing their knowledge of Italian history, music sessions featuring beloved folk songs and special occasions marking important cultural milestones.

Through singing, sharing stories, and celebrating together, participants experience

enhanced cognitive stimulation, stronger social bonds and a renewed sense of vitality that comes from engaging with their culture in meaningful ways.

When Co.As.It. developed the CIAO program in 2014, the program was the first of its kind to be introduced into aged care homes. Having expanded to more than 14 aged care facilities across Brisbane, the CIAO program has improved the quality of life for more than 150 Italian residents each month.

In the past year, this self-funded program enabled our Activity Officers to host more than 200 culturally and linguistically appropriate social activity groups for residents. From arts and crafts to singalongs, special cultural events, cooking and games, Italian residents are brought together

to enjoy a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging in their aged care home.

QUALITY OF LIFE

These culturally appropriate activities bridged the gap between the daily lifestyle activities and fostered cognitive, social and physical enjoyment. One resident who had a limited tactile sense in her hands strengthened her physical and social skills while tossing a ball with fellow CIAO participants.

IMPORTANT IMPACTS

While the CIAO program continues to have a significant

impact in improving the lives of aged care residents, it continues to be delivered at a low cost to residential facilities.

In alignment with Co.As.It.'s commitment to community service, this ensures this important program can be implemented even when aged care facilities have limited financial resources.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

As our population continues to diversify and age, programs like CIAO that are culturally and linguistically responsive in aged care, will continue to be in high demand. ■

"Italian residents communicate more freely, express themselves more fully, and connect more deeply when activities honour their linguistic and cultural identity."



Community and Individual Support Services (CISS)

During the year, our Community and Individual Support Services (CISS) made a lasting impact across our community and continued to foster connection, inclusion and personal wellbeing.

Over the year, we saw a significant rise in client participation, community engagement, and requests for individual support, reflecting our strong commitment to delivering inclusive, high-quality activities and services that build skills, share knowledge and nurture social and personal growth.

Our dedicated team provided personalised guidance and

support, helping individuals to access the services and resources they needed to meet their personal goals.

For individuals facing personal or emotional challenges, our qualified counsellors provided empathy, understanding and guidance across a wide range of concerns, such as, mental health, domestic violence, family relationships, substance

abuse and many other life traumas and challenges.

Beyond direct counselling, we also assisted community members to access additional resources and services through referrals and ongoing support.

This vital service continues to be a trusted source of care for many in the community, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse



(CALD) backgrounds, ensuring that no one in our community faces their challenges alone.

FINANCIAL RELIEF

Through emergency relief funds, individual financial assistance and our essential hampers, we extended practical assistance and support to the vulnerable members in our community experiencing hardship.

Our hampers continued to bring comfort and dignity, reminding community members that they are valued, cared for and not forgotten.

CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Our annual Art Exhibition at Amici House once again came alive with colour, creativity and connection.

Showcasing the extraordinary talent of our community members, the exhibition attracted over 100 guests and celebrated creativity, inclusion and joy.

HARMONY WEEK

Harmony Week celebrations further highlighted our organisation's vibrant diversity across our community, including our offices. Our vibrant celebrations shared food and culture in the spirit of respect and belonging.

While the celebration is always

a highlight of our calendar, diversity isn't just celebrated for a day or a week at Co.As.It, it's part of who we are every day!

INSPIRED AND EMPOWERING ACTIVITIES

Our wide range of activities continued to promote



"The hamper wasn't just filled with useful items... it was packed with something far more precious: the message that someone, somewhere was thinking of me."



wellbeing, learning and connection across all ages:

‘Girotondo’ Playgroup, in partnership with the Italian Language Centre, nurtured children’s connection to Italian language and culture.

Stay Active classes encouraged seniors to build strength and improve balance through gentle exercise, promoting independence.

Latin Dancing, Yoga and Art Classes provided opportunities for creativity,

movement and mindfulness, fostering both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Technology Classes helped bridge the digital divide, empowering people with essential skills to connect and communicate online.

Nourishing the Soul groups provided women with a safe space for personal growth, nurturing belonging and empowerment.

Through all our services and activities, the program

continued to embody the spirit of community and always creating opportunities for people to feel included, supported and connected. Every activity and conversation helped strengthen the sense of belonging that sits at the heart of our mission.

By combining personalised support with inclusive community activities, the program continues to empower individuals and bring them together to build a stronger, more independent and resilient community. ■



Community and Social Connections



This year brought together people from all ages, generations and cultures, fostering connection, inclusion and meaningful engagement in our community.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY: MARCHING FORWARD TOGETHER

This year, our annual International Women’s Day event transformed the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre into a vibrant celebration of empowerment.

The theme ‘Marching Forward’ set the tone, with the room alive with colour and the positive energy of women united in purpose.

Butterflies in different colours filled the room, symbolising transformation, resilience and diversity. The atmosphere buzzed with connection and inspiration.

We were honoured to hear the personal journeys, experiences and powerful messages delivered by the Hon. Fiona Simpson, Minister for Women

and Women’s Economic Security, Cr. Vicki Howard, Italian Consul Dott.ssa Luna Angelini Marinucci, and Malta’s Honorary Consul, Sandra Micallef.

The celebration proved to be another event of recognising the remarkable women in our community and inspiring them to rise, evolve and always keep ‘Marching Forward’.

“The theme ‘Marching Forward’ set the tone, with the room alive with colour and the positive energy of women united in purpose.”



SENIORS MONTH: RHYTHMS OF LIFE

In October 2024, the air was filled with laughter, joy and warm hugs at Brisbane and the Gold Coast during Seniors Month with our Rhythms of Life concert events.

Made possible with the contribution of COTA (Council on the Ageing), these events brought together members of our community to honour the joy of being a senior while also acknowledging the invaluable contributions they have made to the community.

Beyond the lunch and entertainment, the celebrations offered an opportunity for seniors to connect with friends, form new friendships, and importantly celebrate the pride of being a senior.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, reaffirming Co.As.It's commitment to promoting healthy ageing and community engagement.

CONNECTING GENERATIONS: STORIES THAT BRIDGED TIME

Meaningful moments of connections between generations continued to be at the heart of Co.As.It's activities in Brisbane and the Gold Coast, where young people engaged with older community members to share culture, stories and experiences.

These interactions create lasting memories while fostering understanding, respect and a sense of belonging across different age groups.

Through regular visits to our social activity groups-children, teenagers, and adults came together for morning tea, conversations in Italian and engaging social activities.

In November 2024, our Gold Coast Social Group members were delighted to visit Coombabah State High School, where they enjoyed a fun-filled morning with Year 10 and 11 students.

Through these intergenerational interactions, all participants – children, teenagers and the aged, experienced meaningful community connection, cultural exchange and enriched social engagement. These moments created lasting memories while fostering understanding, respect and a sense of belonging across generations.

CELEBRATING CULTURE AND CONNECTION: PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY MORNING

Casa Aurelia welcomed members of the Portuguese community to a morning tea filled with conversation and connection.

Guests were welcomed with warmth and hospitality and enjoyed the opportunity to have Brisbane's Honorary Consul of Portugal Diana Lopes, and the Honorary Consul of Brazil Valeria Noieto, join them.

The event brought everyone together over coffee and morning tea, sparking

All of these moments of connection and engagement, strengthened our community, celebrated diversity and built bridges across generations and cultures; proving that when community comes together, everyone thrives!

lively conversations and an opportunity to better understand the pathway for accessing support and aged care services.

More than just a gathering, the morning tea highlighted the vibrancy of our diverse community and reflected Co.As.It's mission to nurture inclusion, ensuring that every member of our community is informed, valued and connected.

HONOURING OUR VOLUNTEERS: THE HEART OF CO.AS.IT.

As always, the true heroes behind Co.As.It's work is our volunteers.

The generous individuals who give their time, compassion and energy to support others throughout the year.

From visiting residents in aged care facilities and clients receiving a home care package, to assisting at our social group centres, their kindness and dedication continued to make a profound difference in the lives of many people in our community.

During National Volunteer Week in May and International Volunteer Day, we proudly recognised their outstanding service through special events, certificates and medals of appreciation.

Volunteers who reached 5, 10, 15 years and beyond of volunteering, were celebrated for their long-standing commitment to supporting vulnerable members of our community and fostering connection.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES: CYBER AWARENESS

With appreciation for the funding from the Department of Social Services, our cybercrime awareness sessions brought the community together in an interactive space of conversation and learning.

We delivered practical ways to stay safe online to members of the community from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and strengthened their digital skills, with the added bonus of enjoying meaningful social engagement with

others in their community.

By combining practical cyber-safety guidance with opportunities to connect, these sessions empowered participants, while reinforcing bonds across our diverse community and proving that learning and connection go together.

All of these moments of connection and engagement, strengthened our community, celebrated diversity and built bridges across generations and cultures; proving that when community comes together, everyone thrives! ■



Social Group Activities



ADVENTURES, FRIENDSHIPS AND WELLBEING ACROSS SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Our social group activities came alive with laughter, connection and many memorable moments.

From lively games, singing and dancing at our centres, to day trips across South East Queensland, every gathering offered more than just a day out. It offered friendship, a sense of belonging and joy.

Each activity celebrated the simple power of coming together and proved that social connection is one of the most powerful ingredients for mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

At our social group centres, located at various locations across Brisbane and the Gold Coast, our clients enjoyed

a wide range of activities, including bocce, arts and crafts, games and many other activities.

The groups were always filled with laughter, conversation and continued to form new friendships and strengthen existing ones.

Celebrations and special occasions were again a highlight this year. St Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day were among the many different events celebrated this year. They all featured festive decorations and menus specially prepared to match the theme.

Among the year's treasured moments were the visits from school students and tiny tots from local kindergartens and childcare centres. Their visits brought treasured moments and created unforgettable intergenerational memories.

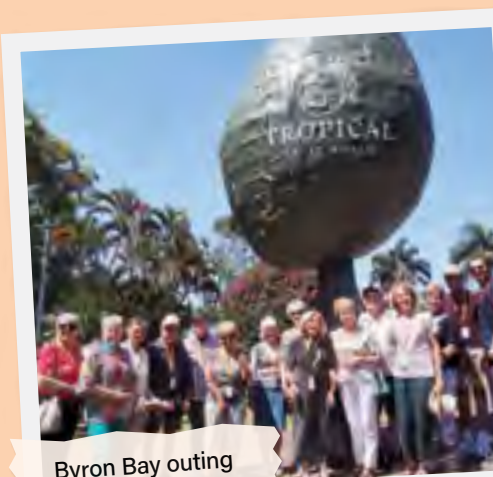
CONNECTIONS EXTENDED BEYOND OUR CENTRES

Our Social Outings team ensured unforgettable adventures.

From the sparkling beaches of the Sunshine Coast to the peaceful islands of Moreton Bay, Brisbane's cultural precinct and charming hinterland towns, our clients explored wildlife parks, local markets, museums, gardens and breathtaking scenic drives.

Along the way, laughter echoed on the bus, stories were shared over morning tea and lunch, and friendships blossomed.

Through these activities and adventures, our clients experienced the power of connection, the confidence of belonging and the wellbeing benefits of meaningful social interaction. ■



Byron Bay outing



Xmas Party joy



Noosa outing



Fun and laughs



Tiny Tots visit



Celebrating Mother's Day



Busy crafting



Great times

Amici House: Where friendship and community flourish

Amici House continues to grow as a vibrant community hub and café which brings people together through connection, creativity and care.

This year, more than 750 visitors walked through its doors each week to participate in a wide range of services and activities that promote wellbeing, independence and inclusion, as well as a warm and safe place to meet.

Meaning 'friends' in Italian, Amici perfectly captures

"It's been amazing to see new friendships bloom and even former school friends reconnect."

the spirit of the centre. A place where friendships are formed, old ties are rekindled and everyone is welcomed with warmth and respect.

When Amici House first opened in 2021, it was a quiet local space. Over the years, it has continued to become a thriving hub with activities expanded to meet the evolving needs of the community.

What began with a small social group of 8 people has blossomed into a busy calendar hosting many weekly activities, including exercise classes, yoga sessions, art classes, dance classes, a technology group, cybercrime awareness sessions, women's groups, and another social group activity for those aged 65 and over.

The centre also welcomed



"Amici House really does have great vibes."

other community groups and providers and hosted special events throughout the year, providing a welcoming space for meetings and memorable family events and celebrations.

These bookings further strengthened Amici House's aim as a hub where community members can come together in a welcoming and safe environment to create happy and memorable moments.

Demand for physiotherapy and podiatry services at Amici House continued to grow during the year.

The availability of its clinic to daily, enabled community members to access these services independently and in an environment where they

could also connect with others.

The need for support and guidance for understanding aged care, as well as accessing other relevant services, continued to grow. Over the past year, we assisted community members to navigate My Aged Care and other support services needed to respond to their individual needs.

At the centre of it all is the Amici House Café. This is where home-style lunches, cakes and coffees are made fresh and served daily. The café has become a favourite spot for locals and class participants; a place where good food and good company come together.

Amici House has evolved from

a local community centre into a cornerstone of connection.

It's a place where every visitor is greeted with a smile, every challenge is met with support and every day brings new opportunities for growth and friendship.

As the hub continues to expand its reach, its mission remains unchanged...to keep hope, friendship and community spirit at the heart of everything it does. ■

"It's the moments shared, the friendships formed, and the care shown that turn a community into a family."

Italian Language Centre

The Italian Language Centre (ILC) is a division of Co.As.It., and during the 2024-25 year, ILC has continued to promote the learning of the Italian language and culture throughout Queensland by remaining the focal point of Italian language teaching to school students, teachers, adult learners, after school students and Girotondo playgroup.



ILC’s mission is to:

- 1. Support the Italian curriculum in Queensland schools made possible through a project funded yearly by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI - Ministero Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale).
- 2. Provide 10 levels of Italian Language courses to a range of students, from children to adults and from beginners to advanced.

3. Promote language activities and events, organise cultural events and competitions

1. SUPPORTING ITALIAN CURRICULUM IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

All Italian teachers supported by ILC are involved in promoting the Italian language and continue to be passionate about creating an engaging learning environment for students through both language classes,

social and cultural activities.

In 2024-25, ILC promoted and supported Italian programs within the state, Catholic and independent schools across Queensland with funding from MAECI (Ministero Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale) through the Italian Embassy in Canberra and the Italian Consulate in Brisbane.

In this context, 2 Language Program Liaison Officers and 2 Italian Resource Officers and a Curriculum and Language Support Officer were employed, to provide Italian program curriculum support in the form of teaching resources,



in-school sessions, curriculum planning and immersion days held at ILC premises.

One teacher (native language speaker) also provided the L.I.F.T. (Language Instruction for Teachers) program offering fluency sessions to upskill teachers during the second semester of 2024.

As part of the reporting to MAECI, data was collected from state and non-state primary and secondary schools to fulfil the funding requirements. Every year an application for funding is submitted and approved accordingly. In 2024-25, the 77 schools that formed part of the ILC program were provided with a small contribution to support their Italian program.

On 28-29 October 2024 Consigliere d’Ambasciata, Filippo Romano, Director of Ufficio V of the Direzione Generale per la Diplomazia Pubblica e Culturale (DGDP) visited Brisbane.

Accompanied by the Italian Consul, and ILC representatives, the Consigliere visited All Hallows’ School and Brisbane State High School (both supported by ILC’s Program funded by MAECI) followed by a visit to the Co.As.It. and ILC office at Lutwyche. He also had a series of engagements with the Queensland Department of Education and Training.

Our ILC representatives participated in the Inaugural European Language roundtable, organised by the German Honorary Consul Prof. Michael Rosemann and the Queensland Education Department.

Many of those who attended contributed to the discussions with enthusiasm and insight. The gathering highlighted the importance of advocating for European languages and reaffirmed shared commitment to promoting language education for future generations.

Italian school programs in Queensland	2024	2025
No. of schools offering Italian as a subject	77	77
No. of students studying Italian	25,770	26,344
Annual number of hours taught	50,918	51,060

Table-1: Data collected from Queensland schools under the ILC program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2024-25, ILC offered Professional Development (PD) opportunities in partnership with Brisbane Catholic Education and Townsville Catholic Education. 7 PD sessions took place throughout the reporting period and were held in Townsville, Cairns, Sunshine Coast, ILC Brisbane, Brisbane Catholic Education and University of the Sunshine Coast.

They were targeted at teachers in state and non-state schools and aimed to enhance teaching strategies and improve the language proficiency of teachers of Italian. The PD program focused on new technology, task-based and project-based learning.

STUDENT WORKSHOPS

In 2024, 30 students from Year 11 and 12 participated in tailored school holiday workshops, aimed at improving Italian speaking and writing skills, in preparation for exams. Guided by ILC teachers, students learned how to approach exam questions with confidence, structure their writing and express themselves with clarity and accuracy. In addition, 25 students from Year 11 and 12 attended Saturday morning workshops, which focused on fluency and conversational Italian.

2. ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSES

ILC offered a variety of Italian language courses for a range of students, from children to adults and from beginner to advanced. A total of 537 students attended the following classes: Adults, Italian summer school, private lessons, girotondo playgroup, after-school Italian, Zumba in Italian, Canzoni a Tema and Movie Clip Club.

3. LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS

STUDITALIA PRIZE 2024

Co.As.It. and ILC proudly sponsor the annual Studitalia Award, now in its 31st year, which is hosted by the Queensland Department of Education under the patronage of the Italian Consulate. The prize rewards excellence in Italian for Year 12 students, with ILC serving on the judging panel. At the award ceremony on 27 September 2024, the Italian Consul for Queensland and the Northern Territory, Luna Angelini Marinucci, congratulated 8 winners who each received an all-expenses paid month-long trip to Italy.

ITALIAN SPEAKING COMPETITIONS

In 2024-25, ILC encouraged students to develop their Italian language skills by providing judges, certificates and medals at Italian speaking competitions across Queensland.

At the Cairns competition on 26 July 2024 and in Townsville on 1 August 2024, ILC was proud to sponsor prizes to reward contestants from Far North Queensland. ILC judges were also involved in



"All Italian teachers supported by ILC are involved in promoting the Italian language and continue to be passionate about creating an engaging learning environment for students."

the LTQ Languages Speech Contests at Brisbane on 4 August and at the Sunshine Coast on 25 August 2024.

In addition, ILC organised 2 promotional Italian days at St Columba's Primary School, Wilston, in July 2024 and Mt Alvernia College in September 2024. In December 2024, our team had the pleasure to attend the Academic Excellence Awards at Bulimba State Primary School,

to present the 'Ciao Bella' award.

CALLIGRAM COMPETITION

Every year, ILC hosts a Calligram Competition for students from Prep to Year 8 across Queensland. The 2024 theme 'In classe' attracted 176 colourful entries and provided an opportunity for students to showcase their creativity and Italian language skills in a fun and engaging way. Category



winners were presented with medals and certificates.

SETTIMANA DELLA LINGUA ITALIANA

Every October, ILC joins Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel mondo celebrations of the Italian language and culture. The universal celebrations remind us that Italian is far more than a national language, it is a shared cultural space that inspires everyone around the world. The 2024 theme was inspired by Italian and books - 'L'italiano e il libro: il mondo fra le righe' - discover a world between the lines.

As part of XXIV Settimana Della Lingua Italiana nel mondo, a National Conference for Teachers of Italian in Australia was organised on 19 October,

2024. This 9th National Teachers' Conference was held in Melbourne with the cooperation of the Italian Embassy - Education Advisor and Co.As.It. Melbourne. Our Curriculum and Language Support Officer delivered a workshop 'Pimpa alla scoperta del bel Paese: un'Avventura Italiana', and the event was attended by the President and Director.

The Italian Consul also organised 'An evening with Paolo Giordano' which was held at the ILC premises on 22 October to promote the author's latest book. Paolo Giordano discussed parts of his book *Tasmania* and answered questions from ILC educators and the audience.

"Every October, ILC joins Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel mondo celebrations of the Italian language and culture."

CARNEVALE

In February 2025, ILC was transformed into a vibrant celebration of Italian tradition during its 'Aperitivo di Carnevale'. The Carnevale plays an important role in Italian folklore and is traditionally linked to regional masks, dating back to ancient times. Everyone enjoyed the music, merriment and cuisine as they embraced the world of maschere (masks) and the spirit of Carnevale. In an atmosphere filled with joy of Carnevale, the





Italian Consul Luna Angelini Marinucci, delighted everyone in her Arlecchina costume.

STUDENT VISITS

In 2024-25, Kelvin Grove State College students were immersed in Italian culture when they visited Casa Serena on 3 occasions. During the visits, students enjoyed practising their Italian speaking skills while assisting our clients with tombola, singalongs and card games. For our clients, the student visits were a wonderful

occasion to meet with young students and share nostalgic memories of their homeland while also delighting in our Queensland way of life.

CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCE

ILC is a licensed exam centre for the Certification of Competence in Italian, issued by the Università Roma Tre. The Cert.It. exams are intended for those who need to demonstrate proficiency in Italian for visa, employment or study purposes.

The qualification is officially recognised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAECI) and the Ministry of Education and Merit (MIUR). In 2024-25, 12 students sat the exam for Cert.It.

PARTNERSHIPS

ILC is proud to partner with Australian and Italian organisations, including the Italian Embassy in Canberra, the Italian Consulate in Brisbane and Com.It.Es. Qld and Northern Territory (Committee for Italians abroad).

Professional bodies include the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLA) and Language Teachers Queensland (LTQ) (formerly MLTAQ)

Education institutions include the Queensland Department of Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, Townsville Catholic Education, Cairns Catholic Education Office, Cairns School of Distant Education, Griffith University's Department of Italian Studies and Board of Teachers' Registration. ■



Financial Snapshot



Equity

\$28,917,464



Assets

\$34,203,001

Liabilities

\$5,285,537



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