



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022



**co.as.it.**  
community  
services



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO COUNTRY**

Co.As.It. acknowledges the land of the Turrbal and Yugambeh people on which our offices operate.

We pay our respect to the past, present, and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this Nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.



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## WHO WE ARE OUR WORKFORCE

“Do not go where the path may lead,  
go instead where there is no path  
and leave a trail.”

[Ralph Waldo Emerson]

We love to see our people make radical changes that improve other people's lives as well as define their life's best tasks!

We have seen our staff become warriors for the vulnerable, staunch advocates for the burdened and empathetic listeners for those who are suffering.

If our riches can be counted in the dedication and commitment of our people, then we are rich beyond our wildest aspirations and we thank them every day for what they do, why they do it and what an impact they make in our community.

# MISSION + VALUES



## OUR MISSION

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



## OUR VALUES

### DIGNITY

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

### SENSITIVITY

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

### HONESTY

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

### VALUE

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

### EXCELLENCE

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





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVES

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Chairperson/President        | Cav. Nereo <b>Brezzi</b>  |
| Vice President and Secretary | Cav. Antonio Giovanni <b>Palella</b>  |
| Treasurer                    | Antony <b>Brown</b>   |
| Directors                    | Joe <b>Bonica</b> (retired early 2022)<br>Angela <b>Bonica</b><br>Rose-Marie <b>Cappello</b><br>Joe <b>Chisari</b><br>Dina <b>Ranieri</b> |
| Chief Executive Officer      | Cav. Dina <b>Ranieri</b>  |
| Assistant CEO                | Tanina <b>Softa</b>   |

# CO.AS.IT. OFFICES AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY CENTRES



## **CORPORATE OFFICE**

473 Lutwyche Road  
LUTWYCHE



## **ITALIAN LANGUAGE CENTRE (ILC)**

473 Lutwyche Road  
LUTWYCHE



## **SOUTH COAST OFFICE**

34 Thomas Drive  
CHEVRON ISLAND



## **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



## **ITALO-AUSTRALIAN CLUB**

18 Fairway Drive  
CLEAR ISLAND WATERS

# PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS



It is a privilege on behalf of the Board to present this report marking another successful year of accomplishments in Co.As.It.'s 43rd year of serving the community.

The directors on entering this year's AGM were Cav. Dina Ranieri (CEO); Vice President and Company Secretary Cav. Antonio Palella; Mr Anthony Brown, Treasurer; Mr Joe Chisari; Mr Joe Bonica; Ms Angela Bonica; and Ms Rose-Marie Cappello.

Mr Joe Bonica retired from the Board in early 2022 and the Board thanked him for his long and valuable contribution to our organisation. We were delighted to welcome Ms Angela Bonica and Ms Rose-Marie Cappello to the Board. Both directors are properly qualified and have already contributed to Co.As.It.'s work.

Very sadly, we note the passing of one of our longest serving directors, Cav. Guido Canale, AM and acknowledge his great contribution to our organisation.

The Board again met for its annual planning meeting in January, enabling us to review the commitment to and ongoing viability of our programs and services while refreshing our vision of Co.As.It. into the future.

For the second year, our operations were impacted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its impact led to the implementation of strict compliance protocols in our office locations, our day activity centres and, most importantly, in the delivery of home based services to clients. Our staff need to be congratulated for their resilience and adaptability in continuing our important work under such challenging circumstances.

One particular difficulty was in the attraction and retention of staff in our aged care services. Our Community Activity Centres were closed during the peak of the pandemic but have now fully reopened to the delight of our clients and staff.

Our new head office building in Lutwyche Road, Lutwyche was occupied from July 2021 and has proven to be of great benefit to better performance. Our sincere appreciation goes to Director Tony Brown and his team for the management of the transition to our new office.

The Italian Language Centre continued successfully but within the serious constraints imposed by the effects of Covid-19. The departure late last year of the Education Adviser Dott.ssa Anna Rita Tamponi from the Italian Embassy meant a replacement would not be made within the financial year. New protocols by the Italian Government for seeking and reporting on grants for language teaching in schools have required additional administrative efforts to comply.

Tragically, the much respected Italian Ambassador to Australia, Dott Francesca Tardioli passed away during a visit to Italy and a new Ambassador is due to arrive within the new financial year. The Italian Consul for Queensland and Northern Territory, Salvatore Napolitano returned to Italy in February 2022 and we were able to thank him for his patronage and contributions.





The new Italian Consul, Dott.ssa Luna Angelini Marinucci arrived in April and quickly engaged with Co.As.It. and the whole Italian community in Queensland and Northern Territory. We look forward to working closely with Consul Angelini Marinucci in the coming years.

Once again the organisation was confronted with numerous changes by funding bodies. The change with the greatest operational and financial impact was the SCHADS Award that was implemented from July 2022, delivering in-home services for a minimum of two hours. That required considerable difficult decisions by the management and the IT team to enable operations to continue with minimal disruption and performance at the highest level.

As always, I acknowledge with gratitude the collaboration and support of partners. They are vital in accomplishing united positive outcomes for our clients and community members. I would like particularly to thank the following who have supported our vision: they include the Australian and Queensland State Governments; the Italian Consulate; Com.It.Es; the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; PHN Brisbane North; Dementia Australia; Catholic Education Offices in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville; and Education Queensland.

I wish to record the board's gratitude for the outstanding performance of all our staff and of our executive team especially in the context of the very difficult year. I am grateful for the on-going support of the whole Board. Together, we continue to be excited by the challenges and opportunities of the coming years and we are confident our vision will guide us in the advancement of our programs.

Cav. Nereo Brezzi

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S ADDRESS



Reflecting on the past 12 months, I realise how much change all of us have had to sustain and how much more is waiting for us. I am proud of our amazing staff, their continued commitment to our clients, showing compassion and understanding and creating relationships that make a difference in their daily lives. They continue to be committed show resilience and tenacity. We are grateful to each and every one of them. The ongoing Covid 19 pandemic kept our staff and management busy. Infections were continually monitored our clinical team was always ready to take calls from clients and staff responding to concerns about their health and safety. The ongoing issues surrounding staff shortages has been an outcome of the pandemic, creating many difficulties in delivering client services especially with staff being changed regularly. We welcomed the Royal Commission recommendations and the government's subsequent implementation of policy reforms.

Having been in our new Lutwyche premises for 12 months we can say that everyone is benefiting from the new environment, extra space and greater opportunities to hold face to face meetings, gatherings of clients and special celebrations. It is important that our community services programs and our language teaching program are delivered through one central place which is easily identified in the local area. One year on, our community hub at Bracken Ridge 'Amici House' has become the focal point of many activities for the community offering yoga, Latin dance, technology, stay active classes, as well as allied health services. The affordable little café is a meeting place for the local community and the centre has become a valuable resource for many.

In the next 18 months Co.As.It. will concentrate on preparing and upgrading systems and processes to welcome the new aged care program currently in draft mode. The new program is sure to bring much change and will test the adaptability of many providers. Our existing partnerships with various organisations continued to provide resources and funding to support our clients over the last 12 months. It is envisaged that those partnerships will continue to grow and include many more organisations in our network.

Through its Italian Language Centre Division, we were successful in implementing a valuable project within the schools where Italian is taught in Queensland. The ILC has expanded its team to ensure teachers of Italian are supported with resources and language immersion activities thus improving the quality of the language programs. We hope this project will continue in the future to integrate more specialised native speaking teachers into the team. The new Consul to Brisbane Dott.ssa Luna Angelini Marinucci, who took up her new post in April 2022, has been extremely supportive in working collaboratively with Co.As.It. and ILC as well as the whole Italian community.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment from our highly competent management team together with the Board of Directors in implementing the required changes to our structure and systems enabling us to respond to Government compliance requirements. We thank our volunteers, staff and clients who support our mission and believe in our abilities to expand and improve quality of services to many.

# CEO RECEIVES AWARD FROM THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

We congratulate our CEO Dina Ranieri who last year was awarded the honour of Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia for public service to the community. Dina has worked tirelessly since 1987 in advancing the mission of Co.As.It. through the successful management of numerous aged and community care programs and services that addressed a wide range of individual and community needs.

From aged care for the frail aged to large community events, concerts and festivals, Dina has ensured that Co.As.It. has a recognisable identity and viable presence within Queensland. She has worked and collaborated with the Italian government and the Italian Consulate in Brisbane to proliferate the Italian language and culture through the Italian Language Centre ILC – a division of Co.As.It.

Through her astute financial and accounting management and with the staunch support of the Co.As.It. Board, the organisation has cemented its position in the aged care industry and has the financial resources to weather future changes in the field.

We congratulate Dina for her continued public service in identifying and meeting the needs of people in the community through skilled and dedicated staff. Presented in October 2021 by the Italian Consul Dott. Salvatore Napolitano at the launch of the new Campania Association of Queensland luncheon event, Dina's award was also celebrated within our office with staff, and Co.As.It. Board member and Vice-President Cav. Tony Palella.





## NEW PREMISES AT LUTWYCHE

Co.As.It.'s Corporate Office at Lutwyche was officially opened in July 2021 culminating over 12 months of refurbishments and renovations to prepare it for the growing number of staff required to operate the number of aged, disability and community care programs across Brisbane.

With larger premises, the Italian Language Centre (ILC) that had been located at Newmarket for many years due to insufficient space has now been moved to the head office location at Lutwyche.

With these larger facilities, staff are better accommodated, have break out areas, larger kitchen and bathroom facilities and better meeting rooms, conference venues and classrooms. Additionally, undercover parking for students and staff has eased access to our offices as has the proximity to public transport.

The building at Albion that we previously occupied was leased adding extra financial resources to supplement services to our community.

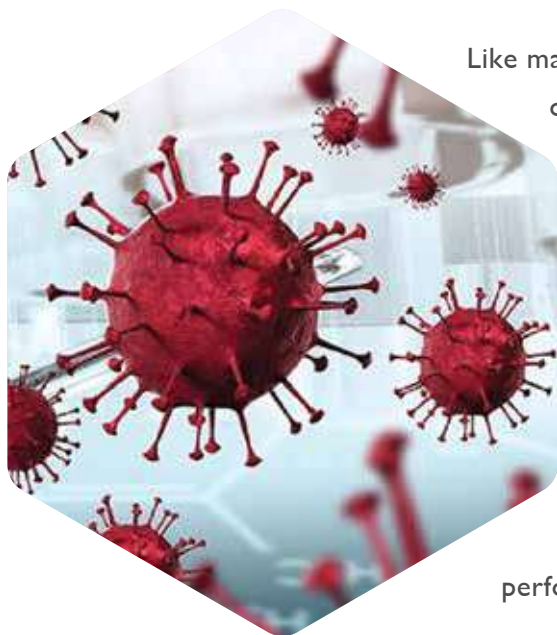


**Having grown at an accelerated pace through the last 18 months, our location at Albion had become too small and we began to look at options in the local area that could accommodate all of our staff, including ILC.**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are proud to deliver another annual report that sees our efforts and those of our people soar past the maelstrom of Covid 19 integration processes into a new chapter of community work. Our ethos is to respond to our clients' needs as an extended member of their family and ensure their place in life as an active participant, enthralled in activities and care that maintain their identity whilst realising their full potential.



Like many other service providers, in the past year we experienced on-going adjustments: changes to macro-level government policy; new funding parameters; on-going health directives; changes under the National Employment Standards that had to be integrated into our operations; new systemic and operational outcomes that had to be met whilst monitoring and assessing our financial footing within a constantly changing arena.

We were proud that our organisation's leadership and infrastructure withstood and responded well to these forces, including addressing IT resiliency, quality compliance and performance management and of course Covid-19 factors.

Despite clients' need for our support during Covid-19, some people were hesitant to access services for fear of infection and we assuaged their concerns with the introduction of an infection tracking system for clients and staff. We were also successful in receiving funding from the Department of Health to implement software to collect data on staff and clients Covid-19 and flu vaccinations, which has greatly facilitated the weekly reports requested by the Department.

During Covid 19 there was a wide shortage of qualified staff, many decided to leave aged care due to the mandatory vaccination requirements. In an effort to retain as many workers as possible retention bonuses were paid to staff by funding received through the Department of Health. Regrettably the continued and increased demand for home care packages and the system of allocation of packages by My Aged Care and staff shortages created difficulty in providing services to clients, a situation that is still current.



**Our ethos is to respond to our clients' needs as an extended member of their family and ensure their place in life as an active participant, enthralled in activities and care that maintain their identity whilst realising their full potential.**

However, above all, our core business was to enable many older people and those living with a disability to participate fully in their life plan and we were rewarded with the genuine inspirational support from our wonderful staff, support that was strongly bolstered by Management and our Board members.

In July 2021, we completed refurbishments to our new building at Lutwyche and staff eagerly moved into our new premises which has greater potential for growth. We were also delighted to once again have our Italian Language Centre (ILC) under the same roof centralising our linguistic, cultural, aged, disability and community work.

We were gratified that our work in dementia care was recognized by a further 12 months funding from Dementia Australia for designing a program that supported CALD families as well as provided group education sessions about dementia for this target group. This dementia support program service was augmented by increased funding from the Department of Health for flexible respite in Brisbane North and Cabool regions which supported carers and clients with dementia by accessing centre-based day care respite, in home and overnight respite.

Our successful Short Term Restorative care package funding for Brisbane North and the Cabool region has made a significant difference to the lives of many clients through its 8-week intense program of physiotherapy, occupational therapy and nursing. Often these clients will transition to a home care package to enable continued independent living at home.

The announcement of the extension of our Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding was welcomed. New funding agreements with CHSP were negotiated for the next 2 years with increases in service outputs and unit costs. The funding will continue until 2024 when the new Support at Home program will commence and replace Home Care Packages, CHSP and Short Term Restorative Care programs.

We were invited to participate in the Dept. of Health's research study by Allens Consulting in developing a national unit pricing policy for CHSP. Undertaken during 2021/22, the study examined the real unit cost of currently providing aged care services with a view of projecting unit costs in the future for the proposed 2024 Support at Home Program.

Out of necessity in meeting the assessment needs for eligibility to CHSP, our RAS team increased to 10 assessors for clients in Brisbane North, Cabool and Brisbane South and we continued to work in partnership with Brisbane North PHN and Aspire 4 Life.

Following an extensive auditing process, we were approved by the NDIS Commission as a registered NDIS provider.

In response to a nationwide shortage of aged care workers in the later part of 2022 the government implemented changes designed to increase the care worker sector. They (SCHADS AWARD) introduced a mandatory of a two hours minimum shift engagement, including payment for travel time and broken shifts. As no financial compensation or extra funding was provided to service providers this engendered a significant shortfall in everyone's operational costs, costs that were to be absorbed by providers.

Co.As.It. had to redefine the parameters in which our workers could operate, a new service model was been developed to meet the criteria of the new award yet still keep the organisation financially viable.

The new conditions created greater difficulty within the CHSP program, with hundreds of shifts under the two hour minimum services across larger geographic areas, the organisation met challenging resistance. Approximately 800 clients within the CHSP program needed to be contacted directly by phone by a CHSP coordinator.



The Home Care Program (HCP) underwent changes in the way providers were funded for managing client packages. Providers are expected to submit the client's expenses monthly to be reimbursed by the Department. This change was not favourably accepted by those clients with an ITF and some decided to terminate their package. An Assurance Review for this program saw us complying with all program guidelines with some changes in the transparency costs in regards to transport.

Responding to the high need for dementia care education within CALD communities in their own language, we created a new service called Mind Wellness operated by a team of Counsellors and Dementia Resource Officers who provided support, education and practical advice to many clients, carers and their family members.

Additional support was provided to hospitals when our dementia care clients were admitted. This is a Co.As.It. funded program that is now highly sought and well accepted in the CALD communities we service.

As part of Senior's Week community information sessions were held in Brisbane and the Gold Coast regions and attended by well over 200 people who were interested in planning for their future aged care, health and social and recreational needs.



At the 2021 Care Expo, our staff were guest speakers and supported older persons and carers with information on our services and in navigating the aged care system. Through our stand, we were asked many questions by dozens of older persons and it became concerning that so many were unaware of how to access aged care services.

Through our connection with Co.As.It. in Melbourne we were informed of an upcoming migration museum exhibition and we were delighted to have been able to contribute one of our client's migration history and photographs for the opening of the Italian Migration Museum in Genoa. Photos on Italian migration, POWs, and a full range of photos depicting proxy brides was sent to Genoa for inclusion in the exhibition.

In February 2022 we learnt of the sudden death of the much respected diplomat H.E. Francesca Tardioli, the first female Ambassador to Australia, and described by our own Australian Ambassador to Italy, Margaret Twomey *"As a brilliant colleague and one of Italy's greatest gifts to Australia."*

It was also with genuine sadness that in February 2022 we saluted Italian Consul, Salvatore Napolitano who returned to Rome after his tenure in Brisbane. We were grateful for Mr Napolitano's strong community involvement throughout his term in Brisbane. The new Italian Consul Luna Angelini Marinucci arrived in Brisbane in May 2022. Visiting our offices she is looking forward to working in partnership with Co.As.It. in the delivery of Italian language programs in Queensland as well as participating and supporting community events and engagements.

We thanked the outgoing Com.It.Es. President - Comm. Mariangela Stagnitti for the commitment and dedication to the community over her 12 years on the Com.It.Es. Board. The reigns were passed onto the new President and Committee elected by the Italian community in December 2021. Co.As.It. President Cav. Nereo Brezzi was involved in the Canberra located election of the new CGIE representative, (General Council of Italians Abroad). We congratulated the re-elected Dott. Franco Papandrea, who will represent



the regions of Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica, advancing and recognising in a positive and proactive way, the requests, cultures and interests of Italians abroad.

Furthermore, Co.As.It. was fortunate to receive a donation from the Piemontese Association of Queensland. We thank the committee for selecting Co.As.It. as the recipient of their funds which have been collected through their various fundraising events.

The Italian Language Centre continued to defy the limitations imposed by sporadic lockdowns through the second wave of Covid. The 6th National Conference for Australian Teachers of Italian took place via Zoom in October 2021. The conference was organised in conjunction with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Sydney, Co.As.It. Sydney, and the Italian Embassy in Canberra.

Funding applications for the teaching of Italian language and culture through the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were changed to reflect a new model of support. Organisations needed to apply for specific projects which addressed relevant criteria. ILC was successful in its application for funding to support schools where Italian is taught, provide teaching assistants, create resources and liaise with Italian teachers in improving the quality of the programs. A Statement of Understanding was signed between the Department of Education and the Italian Consulate in December 2021. A grant of \$15,000 allocated under the Community Languages Multicultural Grant program was instrumental in producing teaching resources and preparing a curriculum for after school hours language classes.

**5,269**

Total clients  
(across ALL programs)

**437,260**

Total service hours  
(across ALL programs)



# COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM (CHSP)

The CHSP program is funded through the Department of Health and Aged Care covering five aged care regions. Co.As.It. is also contracted to deliver CHSP services through the PHN Brisbane North Consortium covering the Brisbane North and Cabool aged care regions.



The CHSP program has the largest number of clients and predominantly provides a base level of support under the aged care umbrella for clients who are still leading a fairly independent life style and only require minimal support in some areas.

As a CALD provider we aimed to respond to the needs of our many, culturally and linguistically diverse clients. To make our diverse clientele feel culturally safe and understood the CHSP team provided service coordination and administrative support

in multiple languages (English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hindi, Arabic, Greek, Kinyarwanda, and Kirundi) through a team of 6 full-time Care Coordinators, and another 21 multidisciplinary staff members (both full-time and part-time).

During the past year, we focused on providing an increasingly holistic service approach that aimed to maintain clients' health and wellbeing so that they remain living in their homes for as long as possible. The wellness and reablement approach helped many of our clients retain their independence.

To capture the effects of the service approach from the client's perception, coordinators consistently used the ASCOT tool during service onboarding and service reviews. This provided us with valuable insight on how our clients addressed different areas of their life, enabled assessment of the effectiveness of the provided services, as well as measured changes over time that allowed us to identify additional support needed.

The most evident positive effects of the wellness and reablement approach were achieved through allied health services viz. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, however individually designed support services like teaching life skills to someone who could not cook, or how to use their computer tablet to shop online or re-connect with their family and friends via the use of social media were highly effective. Services for clients who had temporarily lost mobility after surgery were met with 'Personal Care Assistance' to partially or fully regain their autonomy and ultimately be exited from the program.



**The program helps senior Australians access entry-level support services to live independently and safely at home.**

# BEING A COORDINATOR IN CHSP

It has been a challenging year with COVID, staff shortages and ongoing award changes. The team on the Gold Coast has provided clients with education regarding the processes and offered support when required especially for those clients with no family or friends able to assist them. The new award has caused some confusion to clients and trying to streamline a new change on top of staff shortages has been demanding. In saying this, the office staff have pulled together as a team and worked well to achieve the best results for our clients and the best outcome for the company as per the new regulations. It has been rewarding to be part of such a great team.

## CHSP CASE STUDY

Before her cancer diagnosis, Dianne was an avid chef around her own kitchen and very active in her garden and local walking group. She also loved taking walks with friends, seeing movies and the occasional coffee or dinner date. Due to a digestive condition, Dianne mostly eats fresh fruit and vegetables which she grows herself. But after having undergone three cycles of chemotherapy to combat the lung cancer she was diagnosed with in January 2020, the active and self-sufficient lifestyle that 81-year-old Dianne enjoyed has gotten progressively more difficult.



Because of her cancer and treatment, Dianne is easily fatigued and gets out of breath quickly. Back pain leaves her unable to stand for long periods. She says “I cannot stand in the kitchen to prepare a meal due to my back pain and mobility issues and I have been trying to use a chair for support but it is not working.” While she has supportive friends who help her out with her lawn and the occasional meal or two, she misses the act of cooking her own home grown produce.

This activity was really valuable to Dianne and her quality of life, so her family decided to reach out to Co.As.It. to match her with an in-home support worker who could help her. A support worker now comes for 2 hours bi-weekly specifically to help prepare meals which they cook together, completely from scratch, using ingredients from the garden. Dianne and her husband try to do as much as they can when the support worker is there – it’s a very happy little production line in the kitchen and they are both back to eating organic healthy produce!

Thankfully with the expertise of our Coordinator and the willingness and enthusiasm of her support worker, Dianne has regained some sense of self-sufficiency in her life. She is even more appreciative that her Coordinator suggested a more manageable smaller knife, so she now wields a nifty little knife that she handles with ease.



## CHSP CASE STUDY

We are constantly surprised by stories of how people in the community are treated by some service providers. We have been in the care industry for over 43 years and whilst we have to run as a business to continue to provide services, we are determined to put our clients first!

Joan (85yrs) is a client who lives alone in a retirement village and loves creating beautiful sequin art that her daughter-in-law frames to hang on her walls. We have provided her with scheduled weekly domestic assistance services for the past 5 years. During a review with her Coordinator she told us how eagerly she looks forward to seeing her Community Care Worker every week and that unless she has declined our assistance, we have never missed a service for her - ever. We were justifiably chuffed by her praise!

Regrettably, she told our Coordinator that her neighbour, who is with another provider, is never informed when her worker can't attend and sometimes can go for months without getting any assistance nor any explanation.

We take great pride in treating clients like we would our own family, actions that disregard the needs and ongoing care of older people like this puts the client's well-being at greater risk. If you are aware of any person who is being treated like this by their service provider, do not hesitate to refer them onto someone else.

|         |                     |
|---------|---------------------|
| 4,214   | Total clients       |
| 228,118 | Total service hours |



# HOME CARE PACKAGES (HCP)



Designed for those with more complex care needs that go beyond what the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) can provide.

Working as a Home Care Package Coordinator brings daily challenges, from helping clients who have mental health concerns, to broken bones and more. We see many clients try to cope with residual depression because they are unable to do the things they used to do, while others deal with more complex issues that are often intertwined such as difficult family dynamics, dementia, other illnesses, mobility issues, etc.

But one thing is certain: everyone wants to be in their own environment, their own space and able to make their own decisions about how they want to live their life.

This is what we want to help them achieve, we try to manage client expectations but sometimes this too can be challenging. As humans we are not always easy to please! We have to manage their needs within the identified parameters, not always as elastic as the client would like. From providing support workers in their homes to help with domestic duties like laundry, meal preparation, transporting them to appointments and social activities as well as personal care we try to meet their goals with positive actions.



Occasionally, clients will put off having a mobility aid because they want to stay independent, without realising that the help of an aid promotes their independence, allowing them more freedom and safety to get out and do more. After using a walker for example, they often wonder why they didn't have one years ago.

With regulatory changes to the minimum hours our workers must attend, it is difficult for clients to grasp the situation, what's vital is providing information for them often, being patient and allowing time for them to adjust to the new rosters.



# HCP CASE STUDY



The first time one of our Coordinators visited new client Shirley who lives in a retirement village, she knew immediately they would form a very special and professional bond. When they started talking about her family and social support she had, with a warm smile and a sparkle in her eye she told our Coordinator that she did get lonely at times as her daughter and granddaughter both worked full-time.

She said she hadn't formed any close friendships in the village and she wasn't interested in any of

the activities provided by the village. The Coordinator told her about the social activity groups at our facility Amici House.

Whilst there was hesitation in her voice, our Coordinator felt she would love to see the centre so she took the chance of saying she would be happy to take her and another new client for a brief visit.

Things went very well as the brief visit turned into a full day after liaising with our facility Coordinator.

Shirley and her new friend absolutely loved the atmosphere, there were warm welcomes, delicious meals, great activities, and lots of laughter. Together, they are now attending the social activity centre every fortnight.

Our Coordinator says that when she dropped Shirley home that first day she couldn't thank her enough for encouraging her to go because *"I wouldn't have known what I was missing!"*



# HCP CASE STUDY

Co.As.It. has helped client Kim deal with many of her medical conditions over the years. She struggles with diabetes, hypertension, hypothyroidism and lymphoedema in her stomach which she has had for some time.

Her lymphoedema in particular affects all aspects of her life, as well as her heart and other organs. Her doctor put her on fluid tablets which keep her stable, but when it does flair up she must stay in the hospital. Because of her heart, she is not able to have an operation, which is a source of depression for her.

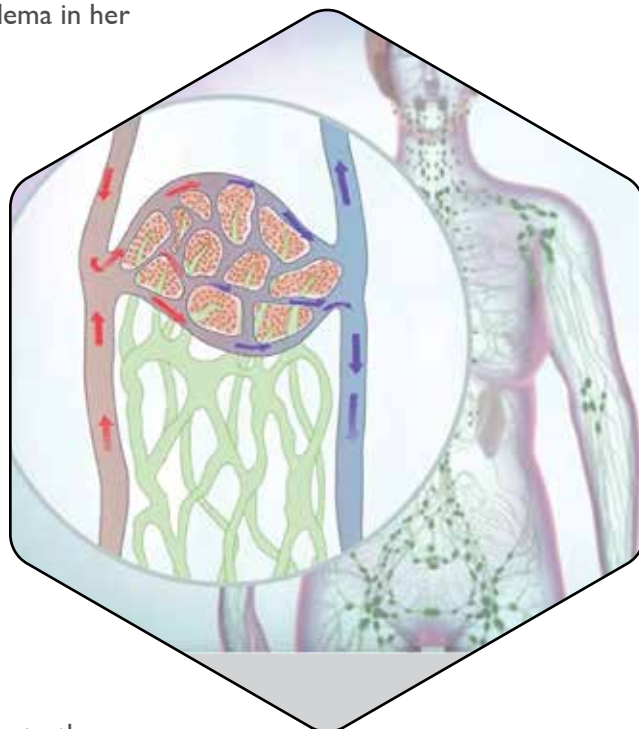
Kim's Coordinator attended an Aged Care Expo where she saw an exhibit stand advertising assistance for people living with lymphoedema.

She then brought the information to the Co.As.It. Allied Health Team Leader and reached out to the company to ask if they would be interested in signing a brokerage with us, which they were.

As a result, a lymphatic care assessment was made and the report was sent. Since then, Kim has been having manual lymphatic drainage three times a week on her stomach.

Before, Kim never thought she would be able to get any relief but now she is full of joy as the treatment appears to be a success.

Not only has it done wonders for her condition, she has also lost some weight and improved the condition of her heart. She has said on more than one occasion that the Coordinator saved her life.

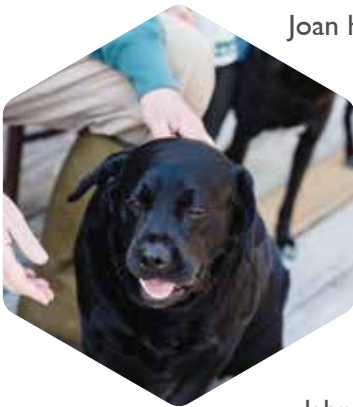


# HOME CARE PACKAGES (HCP)

Building rapport with our clients is imperative to providing a quality service and matching care workers with the clients. Generally speaking, clients are very grateful for our assistance and support. However, some clients are incredibly independent and it is hard for them to accept our help. Sensitivity is required in being able to work collaboratively with these client, primary carers and other related stakeholders to ensure that the client receives the best possible support, whilst respecting their right to self- determination.

Changes are a normal part of our daily lives and having these discussions with our clients can provide many insights and awareness for both the client and ourselves. Clients take changes to rosters with good humour and understanding of the situation at hand. However, it can become disruptive and confusing for some clients who do not take changes to care worker and service times graciously, therefore all communication needs to be delivered sensitively and with honesty.

## HCP CASE STUDY



Joan had been one of our clients for a number a number of years before a bad fall which broke her back admitted her to hospital. On discharge she was allocated a Home Care Package. Joan is also legally blind and has multiple medical conditions.

Joan has two black labrador guide dogs April (14 yrs old) and Hannah (5 yrs old). When Joan had this particular fall, both dogs nudged and supported Joan to her armchair where they stayed by Joan's side for the next 2 days - before Joan was able to get assistance. Joan then spent 3 weeks in hospital. Over the years, Joan's labradors have been her life line. In Joan's own words *"They provide companionship, nursing and are very protective of me"*. They can even detect and alert Joan if her blood sugars are high.

Joan lives alone with her dogs and is very appreciative of the assistance that she now receives from Co.As.It. Joan's broken back causes constant pain and movements are often difficult for her, however, this year she was very excited to be able to purchase a recliner/lift chair with her HCP funds, a tipper kettle, light weight cutlery and lever taps for her ensuite – making her more independent and comfortable within her own home.

She is very fond of the care workers who support her and provide essential services including personal hygiene, meal preparation, shopping, social support etc. Of course all care staff must be inspected and approved by her April and Hannah before they can begin but so far, we haven't had any problems and working collaboratively with Joan's guide dogs is now part of our routine!

Joan has said to staff that she doesn't know how she managed before we came along, we are consistently there for her and always available to offer practical and emotional support.



# NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)



**Providing formal funding for living support to people living with a disability.**

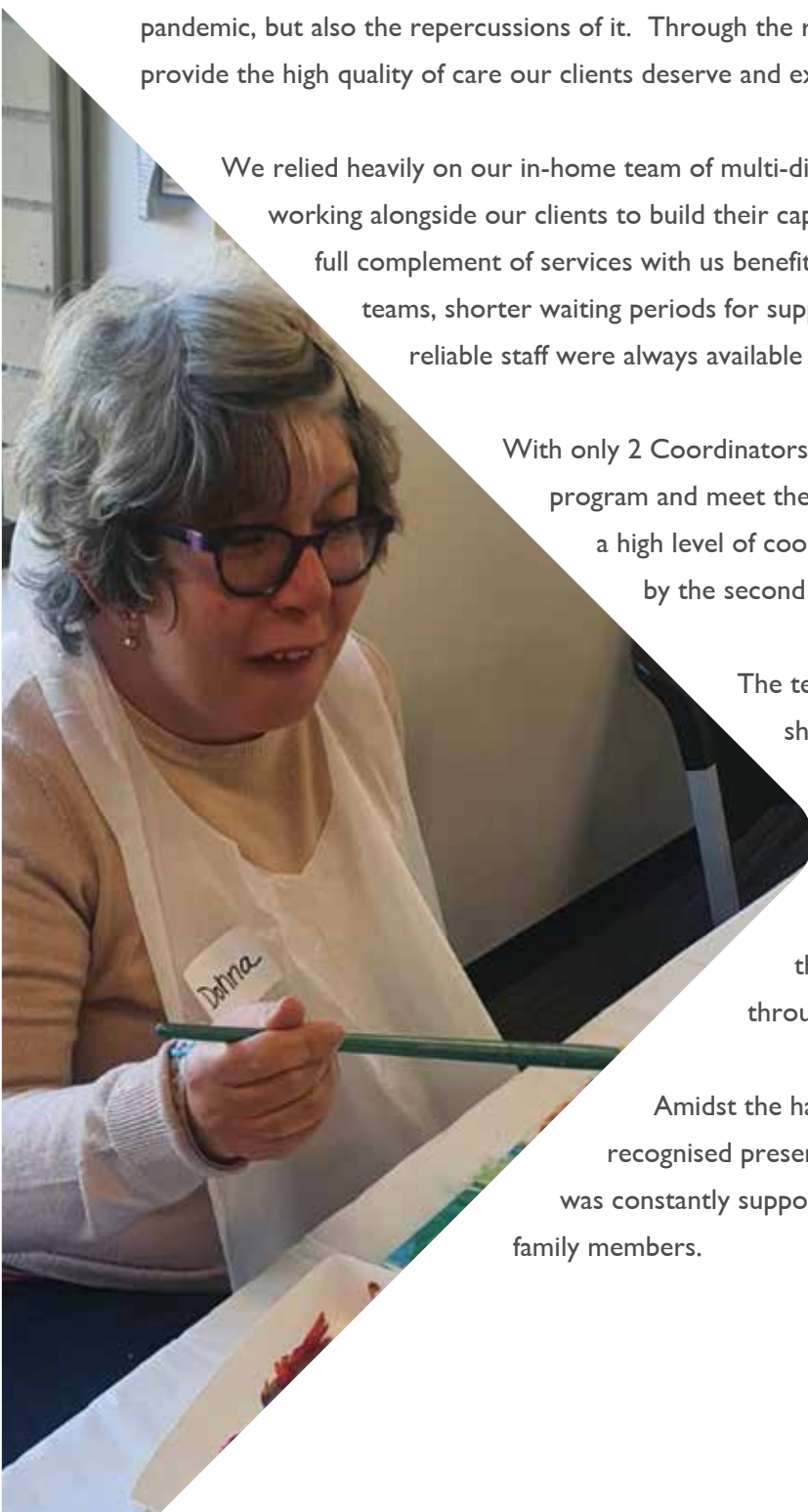
The past 12 months have been indeed a very challenging year. Not only have we continued living through the pandemic, but also the repercussions of it. Through the rough times, our small NDIS team has continued to provide the high quality of care our clients deserve and expect.

We relied heavily on our in-home team of multi-disciplinary experts (Physio, OT, etc.) which was pivotal in working alongside our clients to build their capacity and achieve their goals. Clients who received the full complement of services with us benefited greatly from having fluid communication between teams, shorter waiting periods for supports and the certainty that qualified, consistent and reliable staff were always available to meet their needs.

With only 2 Coordinators and part-time support staff, the pressure to grow the program and meet the needs of the current participants, many whom require a high level of coordination due to their complex need, was further tested by the second wave of Covid-19.

The team faced challenges of working from home, care staff shortages and even floods. Through these trying events our small team did their utmost - working in synergy with other teams and focusing foremost on the ethos of 'client centered' care. It was this ethos that drove the team to give their utmost to cover the shortages, to ensure the most vulnerable did not slip through the gaps, and continue delivering superb care.

Amidst the hardships, we continued to grow and become a solid and recognised presence in the community as an NDIS provider, one that was constantly supported by praising feedback we received from clients and family members.



# NDIS CASE STUDY



While travelling in Vietnam in 2015, Andrew suffered a bike accident resulting in a traumatic brain injury. Life as he knew it changed drastically as he had to adapt and re-learn basic life skills such as walking. In 2020 he became an NDIS participant with us.

Andrew has overcome many challenges: last year he needed to move out of his family home to live independently and learn to care for himself.

With the right combination of specialised support from his coordinator, physiotherapist and his community care workers who speak his language,

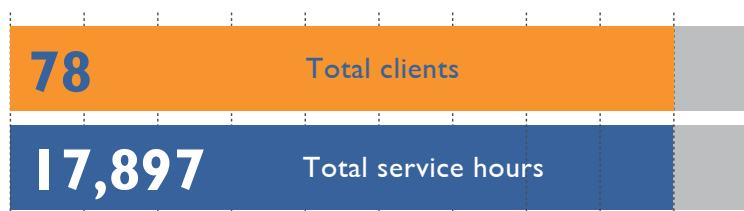
Andrew has flourished in his journey to become independent and live in his own unit.

Andrew has successfully started volunteering at the Vietnamese Community Centre as a teacher's aide, teaching people to speak English. Andrew feels most passionate about this as he can use skills he learned prior to his accident.

The physiotherapist working with him reported that *"When Andrew commenced physio in 2020, he was mobile without any aids and not falling but he did have issues with his gait. Through Andrew's NDIS funding, we developed a home program addressing balance, coordination and muscle strengthening."* She met with Andrew and his support worker regularly to ensure everyone was 'on the same page'. His support worker was trained to recognise aspects of Andrew's gait which could be improved and to give prompt Andrew to assist him in remembering and practising the key points. In addition to this gait re-education, he was fitted with orthotics, to correct his foot position. Andrew now has a much more normal walking pattern, less abnormal stresses on his body. His balance has also improved significantly and he now goes to the gym to train with an exercise physiologist to further work on his fitness and strength.

Through the years Andrew has been supported by his two CCW's who assist him with everyday activities such as budgeting, community engagement, attending appointments and cooking nutritious culturally appropriate meals.

These days Andrew is either at the gym with his support worker, collecting the cherry tomatoes he has planted in his veggie garden, washing dishes while his worker is learning to use his new gadgets. Andrew and his workers have built a trusting relationship, with their help, Andrew has increased capacity and quality of life again. We are sure Andrew will continue to reach his goals and we will be right by his side in his journey.





# COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Community support services encompass a mix of quality programs and activities that build skills, provide knowledge, promote personal and social development, promote physical well-being, and create and sustain local networks.



# QLD COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME (QCSS)

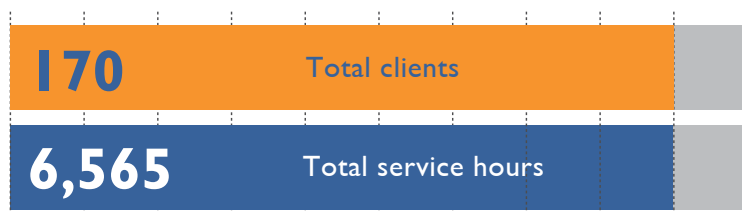
Despite the challenges and the impact of staff shortages, flash floods and Covid-19, we have been pleased to have met our clients' needs with commitment. A success reflected in our clients' feedback and compliments. Even though the QCSS services are time limited and low intensity, many shared that they were so grateful for the support they received whether it was at home with completing domestic tasks or being able to access the community doing grocery shopping at the specialised stores that they preferred.

## QCSS CASE STUDY

Theresa was referred to Co.As.It. in July 2021 by the Queensland Community Support Scheme Access Point to receive QCSS support services. Theresa told us that her mental and physical health concerns, including peripheral vascular disease, meant that she required some assistance with her day to day tasks to regain and maintain her independence

Theresa was very grateful for the support she received from Community Care Worker, Valerie. Theresa shared that Valerie *"Gets the job done. Valerie supports me with my personal care tasks and assisting me at home with my laundry, vacuuming and preparing healthy meals. Valerie is one in a million! Having someone to help me in managing my household, reduces my anxiety and takes the pressure off when I feel overwhelmed by these daily tasks."*

Theresa further told us that she was so grateful to Valerie and her Coordinator and that *"Co.As.It. has been the best thing that has happened to me. I will never change providers."*



For people under 65 yrs of age who need short term, small amounts of help to keep or regain their independence.



# COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT (CISS)

Increased funding from the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy to support activities through the Neighbourhood Centre assisted in the CISS Program's plans for more community activities in the past 12 months.

Staff continued to be energetically involved in community education, playgroups, information dissemination, technology, art and dance classes and the establishment of supportive networks that improved social connectivity and widened access to existing community services.

The program particularly focused on vulnerable single people and those coping with mental health difficulties.

## CHRISTMAS HAMPERS 2021

Over the Christmas period 2021, we were able to provide 50 Christmas hampers for the most vulnerable in our community. These were delivered by our staff who were often overwhelmed by the humility and gratitude of the recipients.

## LATIN DANCE CLASSES

These free classes were run weekly with professional Latin dance instructors to promote both physical and social well-being in addition to improving mental health and having a new recreational pursuit.

## INSIEME

Keeping older people connected is vital (especially those in aged care homes), the publication of the quarterly magazine Insieme, Co.As.It.'s organisational magazine is available on the website as well as a hard copy for those without access to digital technology.

**268**

Total clients

**4,568**

Total service hours

# COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT (CISS)

## STAY ACTIVE PROGRAM

Older members of the community, especially CALD people, do not currently access existing physical activity programs due to cultural, linguistic and logistical differences, but more significantly, due to a lack of recognition that early and onGoing physical activity has long term benefits for their well-being.



The elderly in particular miss planning for future health contingencies. This lack of education in building and promoting physical wellness early, impacts their long-term health. This project is aimed at educating and actively involving the community in physical activity programs for their mental, physical and social well-being, whilst promoting continued practice of these activities at home.

The Stay Active exercise program for older members of the community expanded over the past 12 months, with eight groups running each week in various locations around Brisbane. This free community based program funded by Co.As.It. has been hugely successful and despite operating eight groups per week, there is still a waiting list of people wishing to join the sessions.

By participation in weekly, 45-minute exercise sessions focusing on increasing flexibility, strength, balance, coordination and cardiovascular endurance, significant measurable change in lower limb function and mobility was achieved in community dwelling older adults.

## TECHNOLOGY CLASSES

The CISS technology classes saw tangible results in older users being able to keep connected with peers, family and friends, particularly during Covid-19 lockdowns.

There is a wide need for older members of our community to maintain linkages in our rapidly changing technological environment.

Without skills in technology they risk becoming marginalised in an increasingly computerised world: for example, setting up smart televisions etc. is a challenge for many.

Weekly technology classes follow a simple step-by-step approach, from a gradual introduction to computers, tables and smartphones to the description and use of some of the most famous social media programs available.



# COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME (CVS)

This is one of our favourite 'feel good' programs that focused on the building of friendships that were genuine, meaningful and caring for both people living in aged care facilities and people living at home and receiving a home care package.

Unfortunately due to restrictions in visiting during Covid new ways of communicating were needed that did not rely on face-to-face contact. This was challenging and not always successful, as residents struggled with using technology to communicate, particularly with staff shortages that impacted on all care services within the facilities.

Visiting at home was also challenging as both clients and volunteers were hesitant to have close contact. Despite these hiccups, we were pleased to have recruited additional volunteers and to have met visit requirements through telephone, letters or face-to-face visits in both areas.

## CVS CASE STUDY

When our volunteer visitor Ranald was introduced to HCP client Alfio (92) he was hoping to learn about Alfio's country of birth, especially the region of Sicily, because he was planning to travel there for a holiday later in the year.

Little did Ranald know that Alfio was also going to introduce him to the world of the 'super handyman'. Alfio shared with Ranald that there is not much that he has not tried to fix, make or engineer, from making his own leather shoes to engineering a mirror suspended from a cupboard draw over his bed so that he can lie down and apply his own eye drops without missing.

Alfio is a retired tiler and does not stop tinkering to pass the time. He has made his own full leather dress shoes by hand from watching his father, a shoemaker, when he was a boy. He even made a leather orthopaedic sandal to straighten his crooked big toe.



After his wife passed away, Alfio carried on his wife's love of cooking and tried his hand at gourmet Italian cuisine. He has now become a master chef of Italian cuisine and pastries and he enjoys sharing his delicious creations with family and friends.

Alfio has a wealth of knowledge to pass on and Ranald is keen to practice this Italian language, learning about Italian cooking and at the same time, connecting with the Italian culture.



# CALD ACTIVITY PROGRAM

The CALD Activity Program plays an important role in providing culturally and linguistically significant activities in Italian for Italian residents in aged care.

The program can assist residents who have left their homes to adapt to living in an aged care facility where the food served and activities organised may be foreign to them.

This program does not receive formal funding and currently two Activity Officers facilitate eight aged care homes in the Brisbane area where weekly, bi-monthly or monthly groups take place.

The cost of the program is kept as low as possible and is met by the care facilities who recognise that the culturally and linguistically needs of the Italian residents in their care.

With over 70 residents enjoying the CIAO Program on a regular basis, there is much promise that the program will continue as it assists the facility to provide cultural support under The Aged Care Charter of Rights.

The sessions run for approximately 90-120 minutes and during that time sensory, auditory and tactile activities are planned that reflect any festivals, occasions, periods or traditions in Italy that occur in that particular month.

Freshly brewed Italian coffee and well known Italian music are always included at each group, with many residents singing along spontaneously.





# MIND WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Mind Wellness program is funded directly by Co.As.It. in response to the identified need in CALD communities for counselling, practical support and dementia awareness education. The team has 3 bi-lingual professionals offering an umbrella of emotional, psychological and real-world support as well as specialised dementia strategies for carers and families.

Tailor-made therapies, using holistic and multi-disciplinary approaches worked effectively at delivering solution focused outcomes; connected users to appropriate services and provided clinical and empathetic strategies that aimed to improve the lives of vulnerable people, cognitively impaired clients and their care givers. Living through the second wave of the pandemic saw an increase in clients 'anxiety, social isolation, phobias and traumatic events culminating in an upsurge of referrals.

In the past 12 months, carers were a prime target, counselling and productive collaboration with the Dementia Australia Outreach Partnership Program delivered dementia support and education to the CALD community in South East Queensland. We were gratified to identify improved mental health and wellbeing in all clients: reduced anxiety related symptoms, reduced social isolation, prevention of burnout related to carer fatigue, and broadened and enhanced connections with external services. CALD clients stated that they acquired a better understanding of dementia, and were using recommended coping strategies and were accessing more support from other services.

## NOURISHING THE SOUL



'Nourishing the Soul' a new group service was developed after identifying that women of all ages and cultural backgrounds continued to put their children, spouses and families first but neglected their own self-care. Whilst undertaking many caring and nurturing roles in their daily life, they were missing the resources and knowledge critical to attaining self-fulfilment, positive self-awareness and confidence.

Operating on a monthly basis, the groups empowered women by providing practical support, informative presentations, and discussions during gentle pampering sessions with essential oils, aromatherapy etc.

The most relevant salient topics at the groups were depression; the ageing process; grief and loss and end of life concerns. We were heartened to have feedback from the women who were thrilled to have time to themselves and that they greatly enjoyed the sessions and the loveliness of the surroundings – nicest of all that they *“actually felt loved and listened to.”*

# MENTAL WELLNESS CASE STUDY

Roberto, a CALD client in his 60s was referred to us with a diagnosis of terminal cancer. Being the sole carer of his 90yr old mother who had advanced dementia, his diagnosis was of grave concern as he struggled to deal with his own illness as well as planning for the future care of his mum.

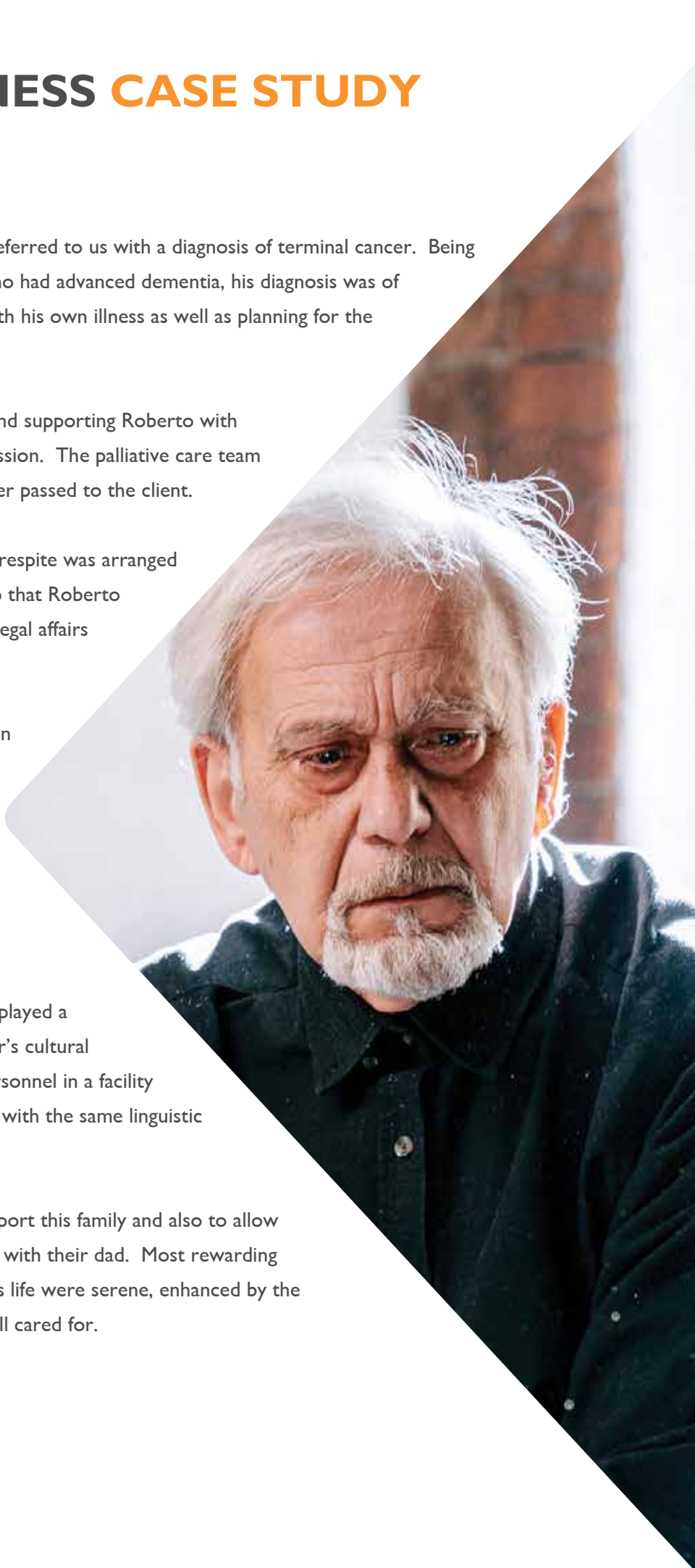
Our team went to work, collaborating and supporting Roberto with practical information, energy and compassion. The palliative care team in the area was contacted and the number passed to the client.

In the meantime a two-week residential respite was arranged for his mother via the Carer Gateway so that Roberto could consult his solicitor to ensure his legal affairs were sorted.

A family meeting with the client's children identified his wishes for his mother and we were able to support the family in transitioning the lady into permanent residential care where the family was confident she would be well nurtured.

Our multilingual tool '*Snippets of my life*' played a defining role in sharing Roberto's mother's cultural and familial needs with the aged care personnel in a facility where there were many other residents with the same linguistic and cultural background.

We were very pleased to be able to support this family and also to allow Roberto's children to spend quality time with their dad. Most rewarding for us was that the last days of Roberto's life were serene, enhanced by the knowledge that his mother would be well cared for.



# CLINICAL SERVICES

In the past 12 months, the focus of the clinical team was underpinning essential nursing support specifically through the second wave of Covid and in ensuring that interconnected services, care staff and volunteers employed the use of trackers for disease and isolation control.

This was in synergy of meeting the clinical needs of clients many of whom live with co-morbidities and complex health issues.

The close collaboration with other in-house teams at Co.As.It. such as NDIS and HCP, and close coordinated teamwork within the clinical team itself led to outstanding health results which were directly attributable to our nursing staff's expertise, dedication, and their profound compassion in alleviating the distress and often chronic conditions of their clients.



# CLINICAL SERVICES CASE STUDY

Brett is a 33 year old man who has been receiving nursing services from our clinical team for approximately 12 months.

When Brett was 2 years old he fell into a duck pond, died but was resuscitated. Regrettably, he was without oxygen for so long that he acquired an hypoxic brain injury. As a result, he now lives with very complex cognitive and behavioural issues for which he is prescribed medication.

Brett's brain injury makes him vulnerable to predators who seek to take advantage of him. Unfortunately Brett connected with a young lady who was unscrupulously accessing his medications for her own personal use, not only abusing his vulnerability but also putting Brett at risk because he was not receiving the medication he required for his own mental stability.



In preparation for a time when she is no longer able to support him and also safeguard his security, Brett's mother purchased a unit for him and put extensive support processes in place to allow him to live independently.

We were approached to assist with daily medication accessed via a locked box. This however made it difficult because requiring medication three times a day meant that three nurses would have had to attend daily. He would be also be prevented from managing his own medication thereby reducing his independence.

After discussion with his mother, we decided to trial a Tabtimer. Each week a nurse attended and transferred his tablets from his Webster pack into a locked Tabtimer which sounded an alarm each time his tablets were due. The Tabtimer was locked which prevented his friends from stealing them for recreational use. The alarm ensured that he never forgot and the Tabtimer only dispensed medications that were due so there was no risk that he would accidentally take the wrong medicines.

Whenever possible we tried to send a male nurse, so that Brett could connect with a positive male role model (with whom he is beginning to open up and share his concerns). Occasionally they would have breakfast together across the road from his unit which has opened up other possibilities for Brett.

This has been working successfully for 12 months and Brett has been able to take responsibility for managing his own medicines. We are happy to see that this strategy of a male nurse and a supported medication system has had such a positive impact on Brett's independence and life.

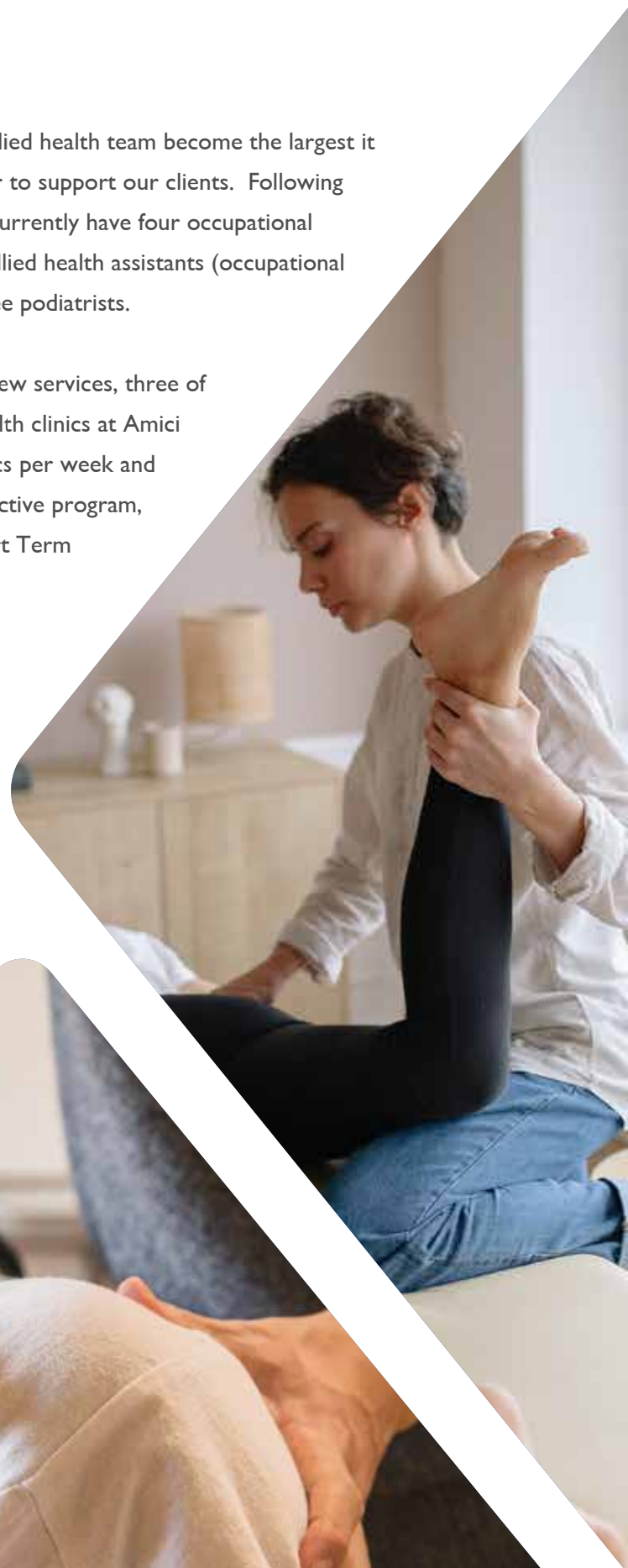


The previous 12 months has seen the Brisbane in-house allied health team become the largest it has ever been, and therefore in a better position than ever to support our clients. Following a significant period of challenges around recruitment, we currently have four occupational therapists, supported by one full-time and two part-time allied health assistants (occupational therapy and physiotherapy), nine physiotherapists and three podiatrists.

With this increased capacity, we were able initiate some new services, three of the most significant were the commencement of allied health clinics at Amici House which run two to three full day physiotherapy clinics per week and one podiatry clinic fortnightly, the expansion of the Stay Active program, and our significant involvement in the newly obtained Short Term Restorative Care packages (STRC).

The STRC program commenced in March 2022 and we were soon at capacity with the 26 packages funded. Given the nature of this program, the allied health team is vital especially in the field of physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

With the increased capacity of the allied health team and the excellent communication between the team and the STRC Coordinator, we have been able to accommodate all STRC referrals in-house, which ensured these clients had strong support in assisting them to reach their goals.



# ALLIED HEALTH CASE STUDY

In May this year, the lovely tenacious Beatrice was referred to our Short Term Restorative Care Program (STRC) through the My Aged Care assessment process. STRC provides a maximum of 8-weeks services aimed at providing a *'shot in the arm of therapy'* to eligible seniors living in the community.

Beatrice had been swimming daily in Moreton Bay, winter and summer, until three years ago when at the age of 80 years she thought it best not to swim alone!

Gall bladder removal in late 2021 and a slow recovery had set Beatrice back in her mobility and confidence, and in early 2022 her devoted family sought guidance and support to help keep her safe and independent in her high-set home.

One of our physiotherapists commenced weekly visits to improve Beatrice's strength and balance and a dietician provided advisory sessions to help her add to her petite 49kgs. One of our occupational therapists identified several risks in the home environment that could be addressed to reduce the risk of falls and help Beatrice maintain the independence she fiercely upholds.



Under the guidance of our occupational therapist, Beatrice's son promptly removed the shower screen doors and the bottom track (toe catcher), installed a curtain rod, shower, vanity and toilet grab rails and cleverly fashioned an old door into a very serviceable and stable 'lid' over the disused bath tub – turning a hazard into a useful bench seat and storage area.

Using STRC funding we also arranged the installation of a second handrail at the back stairs, bought a personal alarm for Beatrice and supplied non-slip absorbent mats for the bathroom. Finally, our occupational therapist completed a referral to the CHSP service that undertakes major home modifications for eligible clients – to start the family on the path of having the washing machine and dryer installed in the bathroom.

Beatrice is looking stronger, healthier, more confident and is definitely much safer in her home environment. She might even hit the beach again soon!

|        |  |  |
|--------|--|--|
| 1,847  | Total clients<br>(nursing and allied health)       |  |
| 62,703 | Total service hours<br>(nursing and allied health) |  |



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

1,200

Total clients  
(community activities and engagements)



**co.as.it.**  
community  
services



# SOCIAL ACTIVITY CENTRES

Our five social activity centres at Acacia Ridge, Stafford Heights, Bracken Ridge, Cleveland, and the Gold Coast continued to be an essential service for the local areas.

The increased incidence of cognitive impairment within the older community saw centre-based respite as fundamental support for carers and families with full-time responsibility of care. Specialised dementia specific groups operated in three centres at Stafford Heights, Acacia Ridge and Bracken Ridge, and incorporated activities based on emotional and experiential memories that created a sense of satisfaction and happiness in our clients.

Carer support services only formed one component of service delivery. Many social and recreational activities ensured high usage of each centre which also fostered networking and community participation especially at the community hub Amici House at Bracken Ridge.

Amici House is the first of its kind in that it is a community hub and not only does it provide valuable respite and socio/recreational activities, it also meets the local needs of the community with other services. These include allied health, physiotherapy, podiatry, senior exercise classes, technology classes and art classes for people living with disabilities.

Amici House also runs a well-attended community café that offers delicious meals and snacks, and has become a popular destination for the locals. The centre is also used by other not-for-profit organisations to operate small activities for their groups.





# SOCIAL OUTINGS

Despite having cancelled the social outings due to Covid we continued to provide and maximise opportunities wherever possible for our clients to meet, greet and define their own social connectivity. The fact that there were periods of isolation again in the past 12 months meant that as the restrictions were lifted there was an imperative need of helping people to nurture networks face to face after such a long time in isolation at home.



The social outings ensured that recreational and social linkages widened and promoted greater community participation to minimise isolation, alienation and apathy. These outings were an integral program offered by Co.As.It. both in Brisbane and the South Coast.

Held monthly when Covid permitted, outings saw clients travel as far as the Sunshine Coast, Maleny, Buderim, Redcliffe, Toowoomba, and the Gold Coast. Ever intrepid in their efforts to experience new sights, the 'tourists' were always enthusiastically involved in the excursions. Some of the outings with full busloads went to the alpaca and emu farms, the Ginger Factory and

St Bernard's Hotel at Mt Tambourine where, on arrival, participants were greeted by two massive 90kgs St Bernard dogs.

## INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS: TOTS TO NONNI

Our experience over the past decades has shown that contact between the generations is as enriching for the youngsters as it is for the elderly.

At both ends of the life cycle, it is easy to see that the very young and those nearing the end of their lives have a lot in common. They both play to a drum that is out of beat with the urgency of modern, everyday life and they have time to engage, listen, absorb and learn about simple pleasures.

In the past year we presented as many opportunities as we could to foster these connections especially through regular visits from child care centres close to our social activity groups.



# SENIOR'S WEEK COMMUNITY INFORMATION FORUMS

Having had to cancel our previously planned Information Forum due to Covid lockdown, we were very pleased to be able to stage it on 20 October 2021 at the Kedron Wavell RSL Club.

Funded by COTA, the Forum was attended by 83 participants of whom 36 were from a CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) background. The Forum was opened by CEO Cav. Dina Ranieri before five guest speakers took the attendees on an interesting journey through five different areas of interest.



On the South Coast, a Morning Tea was organised for 40 seniors with two guest speakers who addressed dietary needs as people aged as well as practical exercises for people living with Parkinson's disease.

The Community Information Forums have always been popular annual events that also provide us as service providers, with valuable feedback on what the older community members expect, need and prefer once they need to access aged care and community services.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



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

Held at Cloudland this year after the pandemic hiatus, the occasion was again a cheerful reason to celebrate good health, community connections, and the role of women as volunteers in our community.

# ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Italian Language Centre (ILC) is a division of Co.As.It.  
Community Services Ltd.

ILC's mission is to be the focal point in Queensland for the teaching  
and learning of Italian language and culture.

The organisation aims to achieve this by:

- Supporting Italian language programs in Queensland schools
- Offering professional development opportunities for teachers of Italian in schools across Queensland
- Offering nine levels of Italian language courses for a range of students: from children to adults and from beginners to advanced
- Organising events, activities, competitions that promote the love of Italy, its language and culture



**ILC**  
ITALIAN  
LANGUAGE  
CENTRE



# SUPPORTING ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

In 2020 the Queensland Department of Education and the Italian Consulate signed a Declaration of Intent officially called: *'Statement of understanding on education cooperation between the Consulate of Italy, Brisbane, and the State of Qld represented by the Department of Education'*. This agreement, valid until 2024, outlined the agreed areas of cooperation as:

- Strengthening educational links
- Mutually supporting StuditaliA prize
- Reciprocal student exchanges through the Fri.Sa.Li. global student program
- Working towards allowing for a constant supply in suitably qualified teachers
- Encouraging practices in Queensland schools which support continual study of Italian

ILC continued to support the agreement by hosting Fri.Sa.Li. delegations, Italian Principals, supporting Italian programs in Qld schools, organising annual events for *'Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo'*, and applying for funding to make all this possible.



During the 2021/2022 school year, ILC was proud to have supported 86 teachers of Italian in Queensland schools in 2021 and 97 in 2022. This support was via financial contributions

towards Italian programs, the delivery of professional development sessions and language proficiency upskilling workshops, the provision of in-class support, and the sponsorship of the StuditaliA prize which rewards excellence in Italian for students in Year 12.

Support for Italian programs in Queensland schools was made possible through funding provided by MAECI (Ministero Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale) through the Italian Consulate

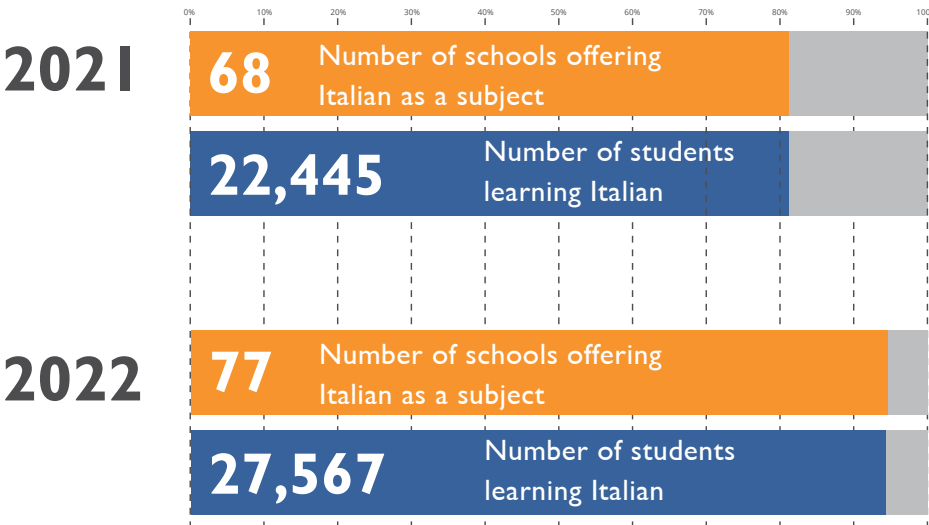
in Brisbane. ILC was successful with yearly funding submissions that ensured continuity in the teaching of Italian language programs within Queensland schools.

Applications for funding covered two areas: support for Italian programs in Queensland schools and the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers in schools. In 2020-2021 budget requests were put forward and both were approved for the 2021-2022 school years.





Funding was based on the number of school students studying Italian as well as the total number of Italian hours taught weekly across the state. Data was collected annually from state and non-state Primary and Secondary schools and reflected the following:



- During the second semester 2021 and the first semester 2022, the approved funding was channelled into:
- The employment of Language Program Liaison Officers on fixed-term contracts to deliver language upskilling workshops as well as provide support teachers of Italian with curriculum requirements
  - The employment of Italian Resource Officers on fixed-term contracts to provide in-class support where required.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE **UPSKILLING**

ILC continued to support teachers of Italian in partnership with MAECI (Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale) which provided funding for the promotion of Italian teaching and learning throughout Queensland.

Professional development and language upskilling events were attended by enthusiastic teachers, eager to learn new teaching strategies as well as share tips with colleagues.

The PD program was offered on different dates and venues throughout Qld such as Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast throughout 2021 and 2022.

Each workshop attracted very positive feedback that integrated Italy's evolving dynamic language.

Innovative and entertaining elements such as using a short Disney-Pixar movie to rediscover the art of letter writing, strategies to teach prepositions and other grammar were enthusiastically received by the attending language teachers.

One of the teachers commented that *"The planet song is fantastic! Just what I needed to spice up the unit I am working on. I'll use it in my next class!"*, whilst another teacher commented: *"I never realised prepositions could be taught in such a simple way!"*



# FROM CHILDREN TO ADULTS AND FROM BEGINNERS TO **ADVANCED**

## ADULT ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Nine levels of Italian language courses are offered, from beginners through to advanced.

268 enrolments were received from adult students attending group classes and private lessons across Semester 2 2021 and Semester 1 2022.

## ADULT SHORT COURSES (TERM 3-4 2021-TERM 1-2 2022)

**Canzoni a Tema:** Themes: *'Solo per i tuoi occhi'* and *'I colori e il fascino dell'arcobaleno'*

**Book Club Italiano:** *'L'appello'* by Alessandro d'Avenia and *'Lessico Famigliare'* by Natalia Ginzburg

**Movie Clip Club:** *'Pane e tulipani'*

42 students attended these courses over 3 fortnightly Saturdays between Semester 2 2021 and Semester 1 2022

## GIROTONDO PLAYGROUP

Twice-weekly Playgroup sessions for children aged 3-5 years are based on themed activity booklets.

A total of 65 enrolments were received over Terms 3-4 2021 and Term 1-2 2022.

## AFTER SCHOOL ITALIAN PROGRAM

Qualified native-speaker teachers ensure students are positively engaged in learning language through a range of activities. School-aged children attended after school classes at ILC. A total of 47 enrolments were received during Semester 2 2021 and Semester 1 2022.

## ITALIAN SUMMER SCHOOL

Prior to the start of Semester 1 2022, Italian Summer School intensives were held from 10-27 January: one for adults and one for children.

Morning and evening sessions were offered with 41 adult students enrolled across three levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced), and 15 school-aged students from Prep to Year 7.





# EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND COMPETITIONS

## ITALIAN SPEAKING COMPETITION 2021

The 6th Italian Speaking Competition accepted entries to be sent via video clip and was open to students from Yr2 to Yr12 studying Italian from three regions: South Brisbane and Gold Coast (Region 1), North Brisbane and Sunshine Coast (Region 2), and Far North Queensland (Region 3). A total of 227 competitors entered and were judged by mother-tongue ILC teachers.

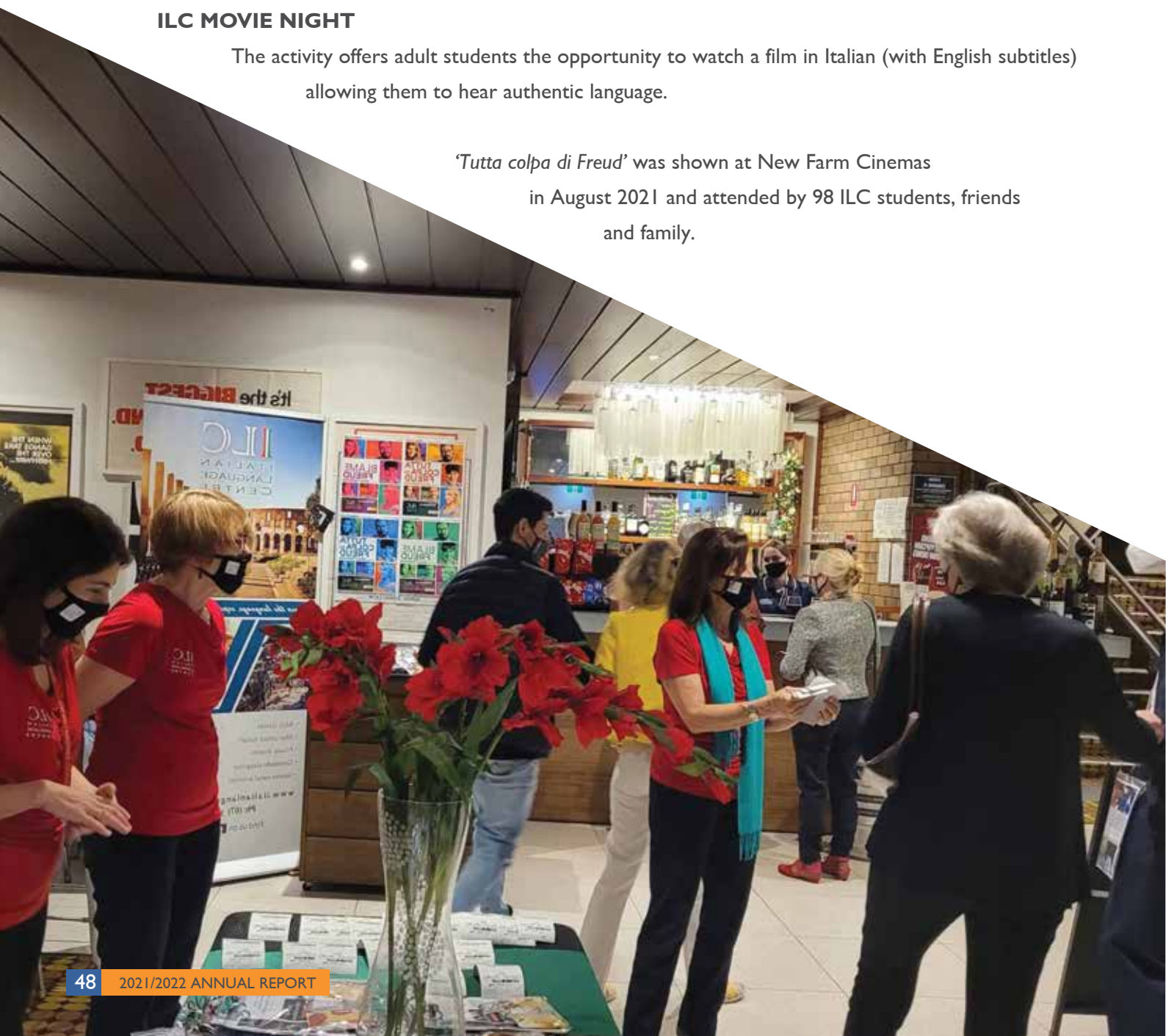
## ILC CALLIGRAM COMPETITION 2021

This annual event open to all school students of Italian from Prep to Yr8 was launched with the theme '*Navigando nello Spazio*'. The competition attracted 218 entries. Medals and Certificates were awarded to the winners in each category.

## ILC MOVIE NIGHT

The activity offers adult students the opportunity to watch a film in Italian (with English subtitles) allowing them to hear authentic language.

*'Tutta colpa di Freud'* was shown at New Farm Cinemas in August 2021 and attended by 98 ILC students, friends and family.







## STUDITALIA PRIZE 2021

Co.As.It. Community Services Ltd. provides sponsorship for this annual event organised by the Queensland Department of Education (DoE) under the patronage of the Italian Consulate in Brisbane.

The prize rewards excellence in Italian achieved by Yr12 students. ILC was once again invited to serve on the selection panel which followed a rigorous selection process to choose the 2021 winners.

The Award ceremony on Friday 26 November was opened by Mr Stephen Biggs, Executive Director, DoE International who then called on Minister Grace Grace, Minister for Education, who delivered the main address. The Italian Consul Salvatore Napolitano also addressed the audience and congratulated the winners.

Each winner received a travel bursary to Italy. The five runners-up who did not win received a complimentary voucher from Co.As.It.-ILC to attend the ILC Summer School course.

## END-OF-SEMESTER CELEBRATIONS

The end of Semester 2 2021 was celebrated at Lava Ristorante Tuesday 7 December and attended by 59 adult students and teachers. The 'Italian Pizza Movie Night' was held on 17 June 2022 to celebrate student dedication and achievements throughout Semester 1 2022. The event was attended by 61 adult students and teachers.

On both occasions, students completing a minimum of 10 lessons out of the total 16 were awarded certificates, while those with unblemished attendance records received a small gift in recognition of their dedication.

# WHAT NEXT FOR ILC?

The ILC team will continue to work in partnership with local education authorities such as Education Queensland and Brisbane Catholic Education Office (including the Dioceses of Cairns and Townsville) to enhance student linguistic capacity.

The Italian language teachers will benefit from the new language assistants provided by ILC with the funding contribution from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Teachers will be supported in implementing various strategies to align with the Australian curriculum.

ILC professional development team will offer a variety of workshops, upskilling teachers and prepare resources to improve the quality of the language program.

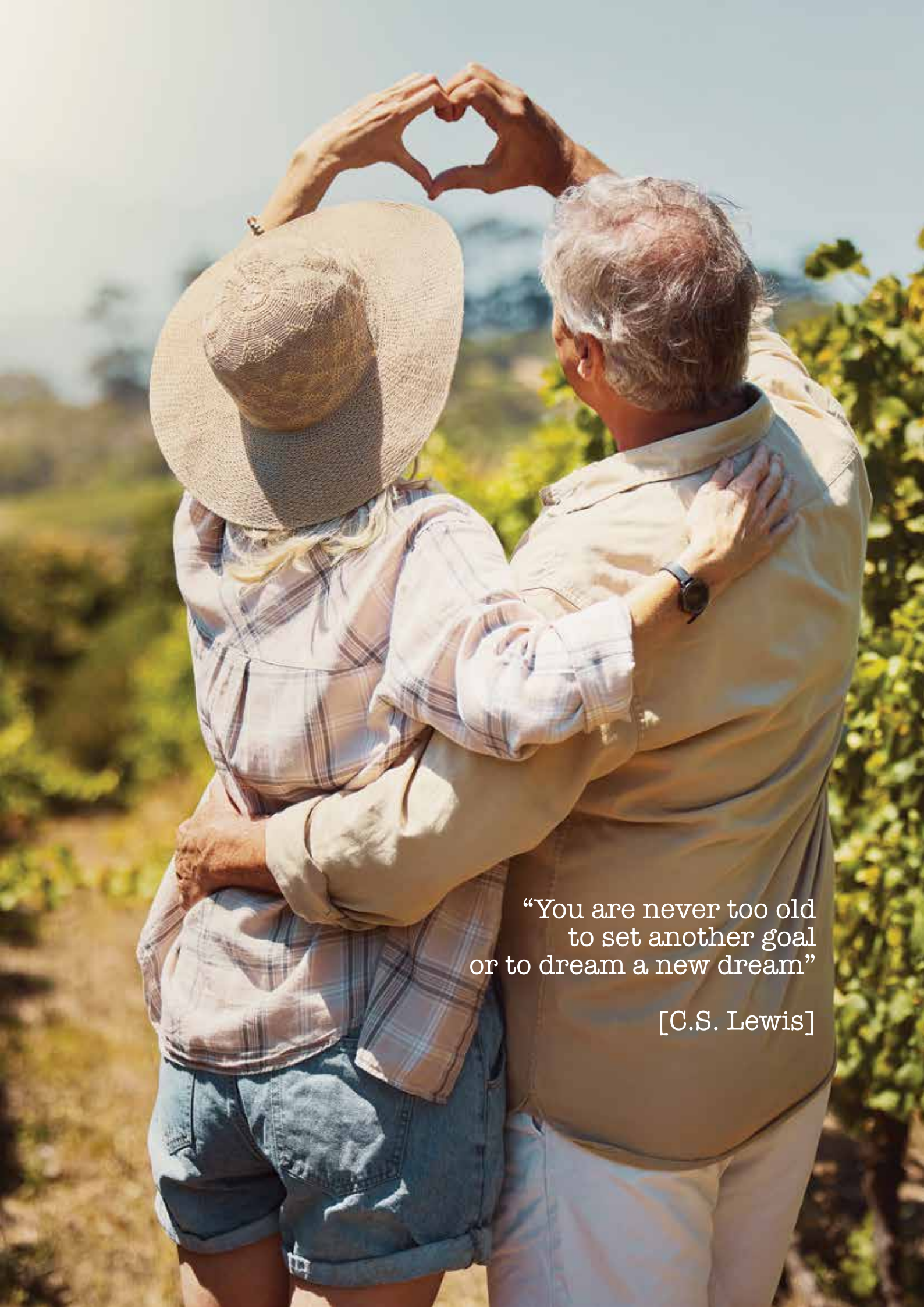
We look forward to the approval of the certification as an exam centre from Università degli Studi Roma Tre for levels of Italian (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) for students.

This certification approval will ensure that those interested persons sitting for the exam are then able to attain Italian passports and Italian citizenship.

Our ILC team will be working closely with schools, teachers, Italian authorities and the Italian Consul to bring these aims into reality.







“You are never too old  
to set another goal  
or to dream a new dream”

[C.S. Lewis]





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