

INSIEME



Quarterly Newsletter
Edition 2 - 2025



OUR VISION

To be a leader in the provision of quality, accessible and affordable community care services for the general and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities.

OUR VISION

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

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A *Message* FROM OUR CEO

I'm reminded of how powerful the small moments of connection really are.



Reflecting on the past few months, I'm reminded of how powerful the small moments of connection really are.

Whether it's a chat during a home visit, laughter shared in a group or on an outing, or the comfort of someone checking in, these are the moments that truly matter for us at Co.As.It.

We were proud to acknowledge and honour our volunteers during National Volunteer Week in May. Their contributions continue to bring a smile and meaningful connection to the elderly living in our community.

It was a pleasure to again connect with members of the Portuguese community, together with the Hon. Consul of Portugal and the Hon. Consul of Brazil and

to welcome new clients to our programs during a morning tea filled with laughter and new friendships.

The team was happy to bring joy to those less fortunate and living alone in our community. Hampers filled with food, winter warmth and special treats for them to indulge in, were each thoughtfully packed and delivered with care. A reminder that they are not forgotten, cared for and part of our community.

I hope this edition gives you a glimpse of the care and community spirit that continues to run through Co.As.It.

Tanina Softa

NURSES BRING A SMILE WITH EVERY VISIT

In today's busy world compassionate home health care is often difficult to find.

Our Co.As.It. nursing team know this and their quality care goes above and beyond clinical expertise.

For our nursing team, it's about building genuine connections, establishing trust and supporting clients to live with dignity.

Every day our nurses embody this philosophy by providing high-quality, culturally responsive care.

From wound management and medication support to chronic condition management and palliative care, our care model is both practical and tailored to suit each client.

Behind the medication

While most people associate medical treatment with anxiety, our Co.As.It. clients find visits from our nursing team reassuring.



For Maria, 84, who lives alone, visits from Co.As.It. nurses are more than simply support with daily medication, they are the highlight of her day! Maria shares the view that laughter is the best medicine.

'It's not just the help I get with making sure that I take my medication,' Maria said. 'The nurses take the time to talk with me and we laugh together when they hear my jokes!'

For others, like recently widowed Bob, the care he receives through our nursing team is vital for his wellbeing and ability to remain living independently.

Through nursing visits, Bob can stay in the comfort of his northern Brisbane home, where he has lived for the past 42 years.

During each visit, while his wound is being attended to, John enjoys the company and friendly chat he has over a cup of tea with our nurses.

These small moments of care are those that have the biggest impact.



IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Our nursing team brings together professional excellence with cultural understanding, familiar language and a personal touch that helps clients to feel supported, safe and most importantly, valued.

Whether it's managing a wound, keeping health conditions under control or monitoring clients to ensure everything is stable, a visit from our nurses bring a smile to everyone they visit.

Supporting our clients in their home environment where they feel secure and comfortable, with the reduced stress accelerating their recovery process, is what also brings a smile to our nurses.



FROM BREATHLESS TO BOUNDLESS

A COPD Recovery Story

Robert's journey back to independence began with a simple goal; walking from his lounge chair to the bathroom without gasping for air.

After battling lung cancer and a brain tumour that temporarily robbed him of speech, the 24 hour oxygen user faced a mountain of physical and mental challenges.

The turning point came through a carefully crafted home exercise program that adapted to his daily energy levels.

Some days he couldn't manage any tasks at all and that was okay.

The flexible approach honoured his body's limitations while gradually building strength.

Six months later, Robert moves through his home with newfound confidence.

While he still has difficult days, the crushing breathlessness and muscle weakness that once confined him have significantly improved.

His story proves that recovery isn't about perfection; it's about progress, one careful step at a time.



KEEPING INDEPENDENCE ROLLING

Conquering mobility challenges at 85

For Dawn, 85, daily shopping trips and community outings weren't luxuries; they were lifelines.

Over the years, our Allied Health Team have been supporting Dawn with her decreasing mobility and transfer ability.

Despite severe back pain, breathing difficulties, and mobility challenges, Dawn was determined to maintain her independence with help from her devoted daughters.

The solution came in the form of a transportable scooter, but a new problem emerged: her daughter struggled to lift the heavy equipment in and out of their car for each outing.



The physical strain threatened to end Dawn's cherished community connections. Enter occupational therapy and a creative partnership with Alternate Mobility.

After testing a demonstration scooter lift, they successfully installed a vehicle hoist system that Dawn's daughter could operate safely and independently.

Now Dawn continues her daily adventures while protecting her primary caregiver from injury.

The modification ensures both women can maintain their quality of life; proof that sometimes the smallest innovations make the biggest difference in aging gracefully at home.

SHORT TERM RESTORATIVE *Care*

JOHN'S LEAP OF FAITH

With multiple health challenges, John agreed to participate in Co.As.It.'s Short Term Restorative Care (STRC) program to help him to continue living at home.

Earlier this year, John had become more unsteady on his feet.

The 74-year-old has been living with his wife of 55 years while also facing Parkinson's disease.

The disease which affects movement had contributed to John's history of falls, with his doctors placing him on medication for the neurological condition.

Meanwhile, John was also facing type 2 diabetes and cardiac disease relating to hypertension, high cholesterol and Ischemic Heart Disease.

Knowing this, John's wife reached out for more assistance through our STRC program.

Homeward bound

Co.As.It.'s 8-week STRC program aims to help clients like John to maintain their wellbeing and independence.

After joining our program, John was assisted to identify his health goals and match the services needed to achieve them.

Our team of allied health professionals set about scheduling the services and supports required by John required to reduce his pain and improve his mobility and wellbeing.

Through our Occupational Therapy team, John's home was assessed for the modifications required to reduce the risk of falls.

They identified the helpful equipment to improve John's capacity to self-care through showering and dressing himself every day.

With multiple
health challenges
John agreed to
participate
in STRC



SHORT TERM RESTORATIVE *Care*



Learning to live again

Within weeks of being in our STRC program, John's wife joyfully remarked that 'she's got her husband back'.

As the weeks passed, John became more knowledgeable about his health challenges, especially Parkinson's disease.

For the first time, John is now considering joining a Parkinson's support group.

Through this leap of faith in joining the program, John and his wife are enjoying their life again.

This means weekly coffee with friends, exercise classes and Men's Sheds.

Little by little, John's independence and confidence has returned and he attributes this to the support he has received through Co.As.It.'s STRC program.

Importantly, through our Physiotherapy team, John has also improved his strength, balance and endurance when walking around the home he shares with his wife in a retirement village.



COMMUNITY *Education*

With our Cybersecurity for Seniors program creating a serious buzz, Co.As.It. is staking a claim to helping older people to stay safe online.

Since launching in March 2025 at Amici House, our Cybersecurity for Seniors program has aimed to educate everyone about the small changes we can all make to be much safer online.

Our top tip is: Stop, Check and Protect, when something doesn't seem right!

Staying safe online may sound this simple but clever new scams are starting every day.

That's why we've made it a priority to host information sessions across our Social Activity Groups and programs to get everyone on board in fighting cyber-crime.

From Amici House to Casa Serena and Aurelia and Cleveland, everyone was given an overview on how to stay safe from the many tricks scammers deploy.

Through delivering this important information in both Italian and English even more of our clients were enlightened on how to stay safe online.

Creating a serious buzz about online safety

Our Cybersecurity for Seniors program continued sharing online safety tips when Information sessions were held at the Gold Coast.

Stop

Do not give money or personal information to anyone if unsure.

Check

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

Protect

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

Our Cybersecurity for Seniors program is a Cyber Security Awareness Support for Vulnerable Groups grant activity that received grant funding from the Australian Government.





Women's Wellbeing in Motion

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AS YOU AGE

Information Session
for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women

(Light refreshments included)

29th August 2025 | 11:30AM-1PM

Amici House

294 Bracken Ridge Rd,
BRACKEN RIDGE QLD 4017

Bookings Essential

events@coasit.asn.au or
call +61 7 3624 6100

Funded by Neighbourhood Centres Qld (NCQ) & Qld Women and Girls' Health Promotion



QLD COMMUNITY SUPPORT *Scheme*

HEALING THROUGH COURAGE AND CARE

For weeks, our client Odessa* had been consumed by confusion.

Odessa who had grown up in a war-torn country, thought migrating to Australia would bring happiness.

Overwhelmed with shock at how different life was in Queensland, Odessa's emotional wellbeing declined.

She didn't realise what was really going on was the onset of intense mental ill health.

Eventually, it was the concern of Odessa's adult daughters that persuaded her to seek medical help.

Odessa's moods have now stabilised, through her regular intake of anti-psychotic medication.

It was during her hospitalisation that social workers also explored how Odessa could be better supported at home.

That's when Odessa, aged in her 50s, joined Co.As.It.'s Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS) program.

The QCSS program provides short-term low intensity support to assist clients like Odessa to live independently, increase connections and participate in their local community.

Enjoying family time

Having Co.As.It. Support Workers clean Odessa's home and provide assistance with domestic tasks has made life so much better.

Until then, Odessa's mental health challenges and the sedative effect of her medication meant basic cleaning was an extra burden that she could not cope with.

Having a clean home brightens Odessa's life and frees up more time to enjoy coffee and activities with her daughters.

Through QCSS Odessa was also given more support to attend medical appointments that she may have otherwise skipped as well support with buying groceries.

The time Odessa spends with her daughters and grandchildren is now much happier all round, as they no longer have the responsibility of doing her housework, managing her shopping and providing her transport.

(*Odessa's name changed to protect her privacy)



QLD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Scheme

The QCSS is provided through 2 streams:

Community Connection aims to assist people to connect with services and live more independently.

Direct Care and Support offers basic cleaning, assistance to attend appointments and social outings including transportation.

You may be eligible to receive support through QCSS and Co.As.It. if you:

Are under 65 (or 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

To apply for QCSS support please call the QCSS Access Point on 1800 600 300 or (07) 3028 9360

or self-register online at: serviceavailabilityregister.com.au

TRANSFORMING ONE MAN'S LIFE WITH INDEPENDENCE AND JOY

The alarm sounds at 6am in Stephen's Redcliffe home, but it's not just another morning routine.

For Stephen, who experienced acquired brain injury in 2013, each day begins with the arrival of a Co.As.It. NDIS Worker who helps transform challenges into opportunities for independence.

'I am so very thankful for each and every visit I receive from a Co.As.It. support worker,' Stephen shares.

'I am unable to shower or dress myself due to partial paralysis, and without Co.As.It.'s wonderful support life would be such challenge.'

Since joining Co.As.It. in 2019, Stephen has benefitted from comprehensive Support Coordination and In-home support services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Four dedicated Co.As.It. support workers rotate throughout the week, assisting with personal care, meal preparation, and social support while helping Stephen to achieve his health, lifestyle and social goals.

The relationship extends beyond professional duty. *'My support workers go and above the call of duty so much so that I refer to them as friends rather than support workers,'* Stephen

explains. His days are filled by activities that bring lightness and joy, shared with his beloved rescue dog, Leroy, a Kelpie Cross.

An avid football follower and former powerlifter, Stephen considers pursuing his passion for weight training through dumbbell exercises.

Through expertly trained staff providing dedicated care throughout each day, Stephen's story demonstrates how quality NDIS support can transform lives, turning daily challenges into stepping stones toward independence and fulfilment.

Caring through coordination

From the early stages of Stephen's contact with Co.As.It. to his engagement as a longstanding client with us today, he has benefitted from NDIS Support Coordination.

Through working closely with Stephen from the outset to understand and apply his NDIS plan to pursue his health, lifestyle and social goals, a mix of services were identified and delivered.

Even when faced with additional health challenges recently, our NDIS Support Coordinator continues to step in to ensure Stephen has access to the services required to live independently at home.



National DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

THE PURR-FECT OR PAW-FECT DAY



With care worker Lucy by her side, Shelly dove headfirst into the CATstravaganza.

The two-day event was everything she had hoped for and more—a celebration of her lifelong passion surrounded by fellow cat enthusiasts.

Shelly's story illustrates how person-centered care isn't just about meeting basic needs—it's about recognizing what brings genuine joy and making those experiences accessible.

*"I don't like cats,
I adore them!"*

This declaration is from Shelly, whose face lights up whenever animals are mentioned.

For someone who has loved cats since childhood, particularly her beloved Mary, finding joy in everyday activities takes careful planning.

As an NDIS client since 2019, Shelly relies on her support team to help identify opportunities that match her interests.

When support coordinator Melissa discovered the OZ Feline Fair happening in May, she knew immediately this was Shelly's moment.



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK



National Volunteer Week (19-25 May) was celebrated through the theme, 'Connecting Community'.

We celebrated this important event by acknowledging the incredible commitment of our volunteers and the meaningful connections they bring to the lives of many elderly living in our community.

On 20 May our Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) and Social Group volunteers gathered together a morning tea and presentation.

Our ACVVS team proudly presented volunteers with Certificates of Appreciation and heartfelt gifts as a small token of our sincere appreciation for making a difference in the lives of the people they visit.

Our volunteers had a delightful time together sharing stories about the clients they regularly visit.

Their volunteer stories are not just stories. They are valuable experiences that inspire us all. It was priceless to listen to them and see the smile on their faces.

During the week, the diverse passions and talents everyone brings to the act of volunteering are recognised.

The ACVVS program is tailored to provide social support and connections for older people living at home or in an aged care residential facility.

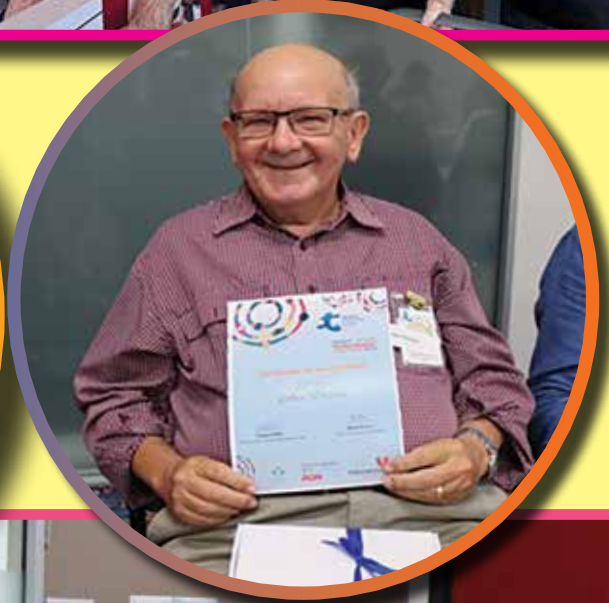
To all our volunteers, we are deeply grateful and thank each and every one of you for your generosity of spirit and commitment. You truly make a difference in our volunteer team

National Volunteer Week is also an invitation for people to consider volunteering.

Would you like to brighten someone's day? Join our ACVVS team and make a difference in someone's life! Call us today on (07) 3624 6100 or email acvvs@coasit.asn.au.



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME

Meeting HCP client, Nellie was a morning filled with laughter for retired CCW turned ACVVS volunteer, Gabrielle.

Nellie immensely enjoyed the company and had been looking forward having a volunteer visitor to share her wonderful stories.

Her most memorable story is when she met her husband Robert - many, many years ago at the beach.

Australia in the 1950s was experiencing a cultural renaissance along its magnificent coastline. Young Australians embraced a carefree lifestyle that revolved around the ocean.

Weekends meant packing picnic baskets and spending entire days by the water, where the informal, relaxed Australian spirit truly came alive.

Nellie was in her late teens when fate intervened on one memorable day at the beach.

She noticed young Robert on the back of a truck, his gaze fixed intently upon her.

Faced with this bold admiration, Nellie made a decision that would change both their lives forever – she cheekily poked her tongue out at him.

This playful gesture, so quintessentially youthful and spirited, was the spark that ignited their romance.

What began as teenage mischief blossomed into something beautiful and enduring.

What is more delightful is the way her eyes still sparkle with the same mischief that once prompted her to poke her tongue out at a stranger. A stranger who soon became the love of her life - and still is. We're sure Gabrielle can't wait to hear her other stories !



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME

BUILDING BRIDGES: COLOMBIAN VOLUNTEERS ON THE MOVE!

Three remarkable volunteers from Colombia have proven that compassion knows no borders through their work with the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS).

Juan and Elizabeth, the program's first husband-and-wife volunteer team, recently joined alongside fellow Colombian Angie.

Their arrival marks a significant milestone for ACVVS as these dedicated individuals embark on meaningful journeys to support older community members while building their own new lives in Australia.

For Elizabeth, volunteering carries deeply personal significance. Having cared for her beloved grandmother in Colombia and worked professionally with elderly clients, leaving her grandmother behind during migration proved emotionally challenging.

Our volunteer visiting scheme has provided Elizabeth with a renewed opportunity to channel her passion for brightening the lives of older people.

"This volunteer opportunity allows Elizabeth to reconnect with her calling while contributing to her new community," explains the ACVVS team.

The three Colombian volunteers have been strategically matched with clients at aged care residential facilities that specialise in supporting culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

During their comprehensive induction process, new volunteers receive guidance on the program's core mission: enhancing quality of life for older Australians through meaningful social connections.

The integration of Juan, Elizabeth, and Angie demonstrates how volunteer programs can serve dual purposes – supporting vulnerable community members while helping newcomers establish meaningful connections in their adopted homeland.

We won't be surprised if some of the residents learn to speak some Spanish!



Ciao IN AGED CARE HOMES

NOT PAST MAKING PASTA

Our CIAO program is creating a lot of fun for Italian residents of aged care homes across Brisbane.

As many as 10 aged care homes are now filled with the sounds of Italian chatter mixed with laughter and song.

Residents who have moved from the comfort of the family home to aged care continue to enjoy a reassuring sense of engagement and belonging.

Through the CIAO program, Italian aged care residents join together for morning teas with Italian recreational activities, singalongs, cooking and many other small enjoyments that are culturally and linguistically relevant.

The residents never tire of doing cooking activities - mainly because they also get to eat the results!

For the first time, St Vincents at Carseldine provided Italian residents with the opportunity to make handmade fresh pasta.

Maria, one of the resident's daughters, was the driving force in making it happen by providing the ingredients and utensils.

"Mum used to make fresh pasta for my dad Nicola every day, and it's something she loved doing for him. Cooking was such a big part of my mum's life" she stated.

Even though it had been quite a few years since the residents had made pasta, they knew exactly what to do.

The gentle manipulation of the flour and water, then the expert kneading of the dough was a gratifying ritual honed over over many decades of being daughters, mothers and grandmothers.

As the residents busily made themselves active, a delightful expression of 'aliveness' was visible for all to see even the staff were delighted in feeling how much the residents exuded happiness and vivacity.

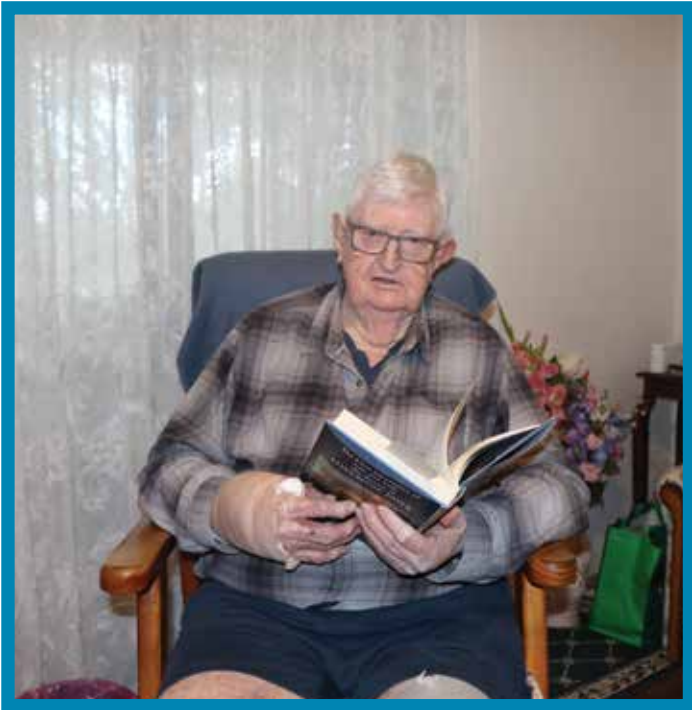
Need we say the experts produced chef quality results that everyone had seconds of - both of the soft silky pasta and the fresh tomato salsa lightly infused with basil and garlic - mmmm delicious!



Ciao IN AGED CARE HOMES



FINDING LIGHT THROUGH A NEW PATHWAY



Bob's story

Now, at 78, Bob faces a new reality, one where independence has become infinitely more challenging.

The man who once had a built-in support system now navigates doctor's appointments, household tasks, and the emotional weight of grief largely on his own.

Despite being approved for a Level 3 Home Care Package, Bob finds himself on a medium-priority waitlist with an estimated wait time of six to nine months.

Yet Bob's story isn't one of despair. Instead, it's a testament to resilience and the power of community support.

Through Co.As.It. he continues to receive care worker services and nursing support that make a tangible difference in his daily life. More importantly, he remains grateful for every bit of assistance he receives.

"He's more than happy to contribute toward his care," notes his care coordinator, highlighting Bob's appreciation for the services that help him maintain his independence and dignity.

In a world that often feels indifferent to the struggles of aging, Bob's story serves as a reminder that small acts of kindness can illuminate even the darkest days.

While he waits for his home care package, he continues to find reasons to smile, proving that hope and human connection remain powerful forces in the face of loss and readjustment to life's changes.

BOB' STILL WANTS TO SET OUT TWO CUPS FOR BREAKFAST

In the quiet moments of his morning routine, Robert 'Bob' still wants to set out two cups for breakfast—a habit that speaks volumes about the depth of love that once filled his home.

Last November, Bob lost his beloved wife, a woman who had been not just his partner in life but his companion in navigating the challenges that come with aging.

The couple had been clients of Co.As.It, sharing their home care services in a way that made their golden years feel manageable and meaningful.

They supported each other through appointments, celebrated small victories together, and found joy in the simple act of facing each day as a team.

INSPIRED BY ORCHIDS

I tend my orchids with the devotion of someone who finds peace in petals and soil.

At 70-something, living alone on the Gold Coast's southern end, my days flow between my beloved garden and weekly library visits.

My world has grown smaller over the years, partly due to hearing difficulties that make social connections more challenging than they once were.

The orchids don't mind my hearing, though. They respond to gentle touch and careful attention, blooming in brilliant purples and whites that brighten my quiet home.

My niece helps when she can, bless her heart, though she has her own busy life to manage. I treasure our conversations and the way she always remembers to speak clearly so I can follow along.

The weekly visits from my carer are another bright spot in what can feel like a solitary existence.

With only a Level 2 package, my support is limited, but I'm genuinely grateful for what I receive.

I've learned to appreciate the small kindnesses, the way my carer always asks about my garden, how the librarian saves books she thinks I might enjoy, the neighbour who waves from her fence when I'm outside watering my plants.

For someone like me, who spends most days in quiet solitude with only my orchids for company, that recognition feels like sunshine breaking through winter clouds.

Every time I look at my orchids now, I'm reminded not just of their beauty, but of that moment when kindness knocked on my door and changed my winter into something warmer and brighter.

WINTER SUNRISE

HELEN'S STORY

GRIEVING THE LOSS OF A CLIENT

One of the many challenges people working with older people face during their career is how to cope when a client dies.

Death is often seen as part of the job when working with older people, however, we are not usually taught how to cope with loss and death.

The experience is often referred to as 'disenfranchised grief'.

Grief researcher, Ken Doka, describes disenfranchised grief as: 'Grief that people experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, socially sanctioned or publicly mourned'.

Care workers usually develop a close relationship with older people in their care. When they die, the care staff also experience grief.

Grief is a normal response to loss:

- It may evoke sadness, shock, numbness, denial and anger.
- Even with boundaries, we often feel the highs and lows of our clients and grieve when they pass.
- Many people are surprised by the emotions that death evokes.

When you experience bereavement, remember to:

- Treat yourself kindly and be compassionate to yourself.
- Validate your feelings, take time to reflect and remember you are a person first, and a care professional, second.

For more information or support please email our Mind Wellness team at mindwellness@coasit.asn.au



FINDING HER VOICE AT 90

This is a powerful story about finding strength and a voice later in life .

For one remarkable moment of courage a 90 year old wife stood up to decades of emotional manipulation.

It highlights how even deeply entrenched patterns of behaviour can change when someone finds the courage to say “no”.

After decades of marriage, Angela had perfected the art of silent compliance.

At 90, she moved through her days like a devoted servant—cooking, cleaning, and answering every demand from her husband Mario, who ruled from his high chair with the authority of a king.

“A slave would have been treated better,” observed the social worker who first encountered this troubling dynamic.

Mario wasn’t violent, but his manipulative control was absolute. Angela’s heart condition worsened under the relentless pressure, yet she couldn’t bring herself to refuse his endless requests.

The breaking point came when Mario rejected a move that would bring them closer to family support, declaring he’d rather see Angela’s health fail than leave their house.

“Well, I shall go to a nursing home obviously!” he said dismissively when warned about Angela’s deteriorating condition.

Those words sparked something in Angela that decades of quiet suffering couldn’t extinguish.

For the first time in their marriage, she stood up: “Well, I am going! You can stay here by yourself!”

At 90, Angela finally said no, and everything changed.

WHEN “NO” CHANGES EVERYTHING.

Mario, faced with the reality of his dependence on Angela despite her ill-health, had to grudgingly follow her on her move to their new home.

Today, both are healthier and happier.

Angela has learned to set boundaries when tired, and Mario has discovered he can actually do basic tasks himself.

Sometimes the most powerful word in any language is simply “no.”
ww



KINDNESS IS KEY TO DEMENTIA SUPPORT

When our Support Workers first visited Harold* as part of his Home Care Package, he was initially a little surprised at his new guests. His wife and grown children had become his entire world in recent years.

After a busy career involving lots of travel and a passion for sport, Harold's world of contacts gradually began to shrink following retirement. Then, 3 years ago, Harold, now in his 80s, was diagnosed with dementia.

Social isolation is a significant challenge for most people living with dementia; the gradual loss of social connections can feel alienating.

Living at home with his wife, Harold began to look forward to our support workers' regular visits. The genuine warmth and patience our workers showed Harold became a lifeline, providing much needed social support for him and respite for his wife. Their consistent kindness helped Harold feel valued and understood, even on his more challenging days.

Meanwhile, Harold discovered an unexpected source of daily joy. A variety of colourful native birds visited each morning, and Harold delighted in their faithful presence. He would speak gently to his feathered visitors, that seemed to respond to his kind attention; perching on the railing as if they too understood the comfort of companionship.

Harold's story illustrates how small acts of kindness; whether from dedicated support workers who take time to truly connect, or even the simple presence of birds responding to gentle words, can transform daily life for people living with dementia.

These moments of human and natural connection remind us that kindness doesn't need to be grand. It just needs to recognise that every person deserves dignity and companionship.

(*Name changed to protect his privacy)

How to approach people living with dementia

Remember that older people have lived a full life with their own personal history, adult responsibilities and interests.

Always greet them with a smile.

Face them directly to avoid startling them as they may have diminished eyesight or poor hearing.

Introduce yourself with a soft yet warm voice each time you visit and let them know who you are and why you are visiting.

Speak slowly due to cognitive changes, as they may need more time to process what you are saying.

Gently approach when recognition and acceptance is visible and continue to speak with a calm, friendly and warm tone.

Discuss topics of interest, allowing them time to process and time to engage.

Actively listen and respond appropriately. They may not remember the correct words but they may try to communicate through actions or descriptions.

Always treat the person with dignity, respect and genuine interest.



Out IN THE COMMUNITY

GOLD COAST AGED AND DISABILITY EXPO

It was a day to remember as we shared information about our services with everyone, including some special guests at the Aged and Disability Expo at Sea World Resort on 13 May, 2025.

While performers kept the good vibes going, Co.As.It. connected with everyone who visited our display expressing an interest in our excellent aged and community services, and services to the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community.

GOLD COAST SENIORS HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE EXPO

We had a busy day at the Gold Coast Seniors Health and Lifestyle Expo at Runaway Bay on 8 May 2025!

Co.As.It. was delighted to connect with visitors to our stand. For many older people, domestic assistance generated many questions, because a little bit of extra support around the house can make a huge difference to independence.

Whether it's help with basic household chores, like washing or shopping, or just being there to support them while they prepare for another day, we were ready to provide a helping hand.

Many visitors were also keen to learn about the social groups and getting support to get out and about to appointments and activities.

Our responsive services assisted people to be better informed about living independently in their own home and maintaining social connections.



Out IN THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION FOR PORTUGUESE SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Connection, conversation and community were on the menu at our morning tea for the Portuguese speaking community at Casa Aurelia in May.

Guests experienced our warm hospitality and enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the Honorary Consuls' of Brazil and Portugal in Brisbane, Valeria Noleto and Diana Lopes, respectively.

The local Portuguese speaking communities were out in force filling Casa Aurelia on a Saturday morning and we enjoyed answering all their questions about our social activities and services.

It was a perfect way to introduce everyone to Co.As.It. Community Services and how we provide quality support services to the general community and specialise in services for the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community.

Our responsive services assist people to remain living independently in their own home and maintain social connections. Find out more at coasit.asn.au or call us on (07) 3624 6100.



CAROL'S SURVIVAL JOURNEY

Watching everyone laughing and enjoy coffee together at Amici House was a turning point for Carol*.

Her husband had been the love of her life and when they separated, she was in her 70s.

Devastated, she knew the only way to get over her heartbreak would be to move closer to her children who would provide emotional and spiritual support.

Having moved from interstate, Carol also left behind her friends and her community and she felt incredibly lonely.

Carol's daughter encouraged her to go out for morning tea with her at Amici House café. As she joined her daughter at the café, she started to envisage a better life.

Following years of abuse from her husband, Carol suddenly felt interested in the world around her again.

As they sat down to coffee and cake, Carol worked up the courage to find out more about the programs at Amici House.

Gradually, Carol joined the various classes at the community hub and slowly learned to trust in herself, most of all she enjoyed establishing a sense of belonging to a new community.

She had not enjoyed physical exercise classes or social groups for years but by embracing life again and making new friends at Amici House, Carol has outgrown her past and now looks forward to spending more time with her family, new friends and her first grandchild.

(*Carol's name changed to protect her privacy)

COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL *Support*

WARMTH IN EVERY *Basket*

As the cool Queensland winter settles across the state, a network of dedicated community coordinators is working tirelessly to ensure the most vulnerable older people in our community don't go without some luxury and essential items they need to stay warm and nourished.

Thanks to vital funding from the Queensland Government, these unsung heroes are delivering winter hampers packed with care and compassion to vulnerable individuals and families across our communities.

The funding has become a lifeline for many households struggling with the rising cost of living and for those who are isolated and lonely.

Each hamper tells a story of thoughtful preparation – warm food items nestled alongside nutritious goods, carefully selected to bring joy and comfort during the colder weeks.

Perhaps most importantly, each delivery carries with it a message that resonates far beyond the physical contents: you are not forgotten, and your community cares. The hampers don't just provide essentials, they give dignity and hope.

One very grateful client said she was speechless when she opened her door to find this unexpected gift.

"Standing there in my doorway, holding this beautiful hamper, I felt something I hadn't experienced in years as I had not had anything gifted to me like this in before," she said.

"The hamper wasn't just filled with useful items, though those were certainly appreciated. It was packed with something far more precious; the message that someone, somewhere was thinking of me. It reminded me that I am not just a case number but a person worthy of kindness and consideration."

BRINGING
HOPE TO
QUEENSLANDERS
THIS WINTER



COMMONWEALTH HOME *Support* PROGRAM

BAKING LARGE MOUTH NANNYGAI FISH

In her youth, Heather's adventures included sailing around the world for 5 years before settling to raise a family and run hospitality businesses in Rockhampton.

Heather who joined Co.As.It. in 2017, is a mother of 4 and grandmother of 3 and loves nothing better than catching up with friends and family for a chat and a cuppa and watching her grandchildren grow and learn.

By far her most favourite activity is baking the freshly caught fish delivered by her son. *"I always look forward to my son, an airline pilot, stopping over in Brisbane to devour his freshly caught Large Mouth Nannygai together,"* Heather said.

Facing challenges of cancer and a brain aneurysm, our client Heather describes the domestic services she receives from her Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) as 'fabulous'.

Heather doesn't need to worry about household tasks, which gives her plenty of time to focus on family and fitness.

More importantly, Heather can continue doing the things that she enjoys, including supporting



her children and attending her first CHSP social outing.

We're delighted to share Heather's feedback:

"I always look forward to seeing my Support Worker and I am delighted with how efficiently he makes my home look and feel fabulous."

Heather's daily schedule is invigorating. It always includes joining friends for a brisk walk around her leafy neighbourhood - full of steep hills!

If you are or a loved one are looking for support like Heather, call us on 3624 6100 or find out more at <https://www.coasit.asn.au>



BREAKING THROUGH THE AGED CARE MAZE

How One Phone Call Changed Everything for Enrico

When Enrico emerged from his recent hospital stay, struggling with breathing issues that had required oxygen support, he and his wife faced a daunting challenge that confronts thousands of Australian families daily: navigating the complex aged care system.

The Italian-born couple found themselves holding referral codes for services but had no roadmap for what came next. With no support network in place, they felt overwhelmed by the bureaucratic maze that stood between them and the care Enrico desperately needed.

Their breakthrough came through an unexpected connection. A former employee, recognising their Italian heritage, reached out to an aged care coordinator via email, asking if assistance could be provided. This simple act of advocacy would prove transformative.

The coordinator immediately sprang into action, contacting Enrico's neighbour who served as his representative. Through this conversation, Enrico's specific needs became clear: regular weekly nursing visits for health monitoring and in-home podiatry services, crucial for managing his diabetes and mobility challenges.

What followed was a masterclass in efficient care management. The coordinator swiftly completed Enrico's intake process and arranged nursing services.

While his ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team) assessment remains pending, the request has been submitted, keeping momentum toward comprehensive care.

They now have a dedicated contact person who understands their situation and can guide them through My Aged Care queries and service coordination.

This story highlights both the challenges and solutions within Australia's aged care system.

While the maze of referrals and assessments can seem insurmountable, having the right advocate can make all the difference.

Enrico's experience demonstrates that sometimes, one phone call can bridge the gap between confusion and care, transforming an overwhelming system into a manageable path forward.

For Enrico
and his
wife, the
relief
is
palpable.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

THE TOTS ARE BACK!

As the autumn sun shone gently over Amici House in early April everyone eagerly awaited a special visit from local kindergarten children.

During the visit of happy and bright youngsters to the regular social activity group, laughter, lightness and energy filled the room.

Shy at first, the children enthusiastically performed the Chicken Dance and the Macarena.

Memories of childhood filled the room as everyone clapped along. The room buzzed with joy and vitality, inspiring a few clients to spontaneously hop up and dance a little with them.

There were vibrant artworks everywhere when the day's activities concluded with a fun-filled art session that brought everyone together.

Good vibes were all round as the visit ended, with smiles and gratitude filling the air.



RABBIT EARS EVERYWHERE

Everyone loves Easter including our Social Groups who joined the spirit of fun, friendship and bunny spotting.

Our centres were each decorated to make Easter extra special. Everyone was greeted by floating Easter bunnies, chocolate eggs and hot cross buns.

The seafood lunch was flavoursome and the vibes were high as the joyous atmosphere of Easter continued throughout the gatherings.

For everyone, it was yet another amazing get-together at their social group while honouring Easter traditions celebrated across the world.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

LA FESTA DELLA REPUBBLICA

Our Social Groups were delighted to celebrate Italian National Day on 2 June 2025, as a cornerstone of the nation's identity and pride.

Greeted by the Italian flag and matching decor - reflecting all that is Italian - the atmosphere evoked warm sentimental feelings. Vibes were high as our guests were immersed in Italian culture.

From wonderful music and dancing to delicious cuisine, everyone paid homage to Italian history.

They enjoyed sampling flavoursome and classic Italian foods like Antipasto, Cannelloni and Sorbet for dessert.

Staff in folk costume joined the dancing as everyone sang the favourite songs of their youth before social activities from tombola, cards to bocce began.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

LOVING OUR MOTHERS

Everyone loves to celebrate Mother's Day, including our clients who joined in to honour the care, love and affection of motherhood.

Our social groups were each decorated to express our gratitude on Mother's Day, with flower garlands, golden table mats and heart-shaped table pieces.

On arrival, everyone received a gift basket or silk pouch filled with heart-shaped chocolates, and lovingly crafted by clients during a workshop.

Our clients - many of whom are mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers - enjoyed a joyous get-together savouring high tea treats, from delicious cupcakes garnished with rose-shaped apples to assorted pastries and sandwiches, to name a few.



KELVIN GROVE COLLEGE VISITS US

Casa Serena's calendar for its Social Group activities is anything but quiet. Their activities are all about connections and moments that make you smile. The centre is always ready for a gathering, from friendly catch-ups to birthday parties, it's where memories are made.

Kelvin Grove State College students discovered this when they visited recently, joining in to play cards, tombola and bocce.

Then there's delicious lunches, when the students practised their Italian language skills while forging links between generations and exploring the rich stories of client lives.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

SACRED SPACES AND GARDEN PLACES EASTER AND MOTHER'S DAY - GOLD COAST

Autumn brought two memorable outings for the South Coast Social Group, each offering its own unique blend of spirituality, nature, and community connection.

The Easter journey led groups to Marian Valley - Shrine of Our Lady Help of Christians in Witheren, where many clients experienced the peaceful monastery grounds for the first time.

Guided tours revealed hidden shrines and monastery life, while the serene environment provided perfect space for Easter reflection. Some clients found quiet moments in the church, prepared beautifully for the season's celebrations.

The highlight came during their packed picnic lunch when a priest joined the group, offering blessings that made the day feel truly special. For many, it was a rare opportunity to connect faith with friendship in such a meaningful setting.

Mother's Day brought a different kind of joy at Barrow Cafe and Nursery in Mount Nathan. Before settling into lunch, clients wandered through the nursery and greengrocer, many leaving with plants and fresh produce.

The outdoor seating allowed everyone to enjoy both the delicious meal and the garden views that surrounded them.

Both outings proved that sometimes the best social activities combine the simple pleasures of good food, beautiful surroundings, and meaningful company.



SOCIAL *Outings*

MT COOT-THA AND IPSWICH

It was a sun-filled journey under blue autumn skies when our Social Groups visited Mt Coot-tha and Ipswich in April.



There were bright smiles on everyone's faces when they reached the spectacular Mt Coot-tha Lookout while being captivated by the panoramic views.

The Summit Café offered stunning front-row seats to picture-perfect views of Brisbane's landmarks while everyone enjoyed a delicious morning tea.

Beautiful by day and charming at night, the glorious views continued as everyone descended the mountain for their next destination, the Brisbane Botanic Gardens.

Strolling along the tree-lined paths, each step in this rich natural setting is a gateway to discovering a wilder world where nature rules.

The gardens offered everyone a deep immersion into the lovely natural landscape filled with amazing flora and fauna.

A delicious lunch at Club Services Ipswich brought everyone together again to socialise.



SOCIAL *Outings*

WALKABOUT CREEK

Our Social Outing groups discovered that even in winter, Walkabout Creek at Enoggera Reservoir comes alive with vibrant birds and kangaroos.

Situated on the doorstep of Brisbane city, Walkabout Creek is one of our city's hidden pockets of lush parkland and lakeside splendour.

Greeted by Park Rangers eager to welcome them to the Walkabout Creek Discovery Centre everyone experience a guided tour of the flourishing gardens, where emus were spotted strutting through bushland.

Educational talks about Queensland's incredible biodiversity about our reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish and mammals kept people delighted.

After experiencing the tranquillity of the vast Enoggera Reservoir with its abundant birdlife, everyone gathered for lunch at the Walkabout Creek Café before heading home with a lot more knowledge of our beautiful home.



MT NATHAN

The Gold Coast wonderful wild side was waiting to be explored when Mt Nathan's Historic Rivermill welcomed our Social Outing groups in May.

Set in hinterland beside the Coomera River, the famed Historic Rivermill combines rustic charm with a laid-back atmosphere to offer an experience beyond the coastline.

As part of the Historic Rivermill experience everyone soaked up the serenity with a delicious morning tea and lunch together all while enjoying lively conversation and connection.

From strolling the landscaped gardens to sampling locally-sourced produce and uncovering hidden treasures in the hinterland, it was a Social Outing to remember.

The playful alpacas, curious goats and river turtles made delightful appearances during the day bringing smiles to everyone.



WAVELL STATE HIGH SCHOOL INTRODUCES ITALIAN

At Wavell State High School, students will soon have the exciting opportunity to study Italian when the school offers Certificate II in Applied Languages (Italian).

To introduce students to Italian language and culture, the ILC team recently presented a vibrant Italian Cultural Immersion Day at the school.

The event was designed to engage students in a dynamic exploration of Italian language and culture through a series of interactive stations.

Participating groups of students rotated through the stations where they had the opportunity to play interactive language games learning about iconic Italian landmarks, renowned artists and luminaries of various fields, plus the rich world of Italian cuisine.

Early feedback indicated that in just the few short rotations, students quickly picked up that:

“All Italian words end with a vowel”;

“Italians can have full conversations with their hands”;

“Many English words are similar to Italian”;

“Italy is 25 times smaller than Australia!”.

This hands-on approach was designed to enrich students' knowledge and ignite an interest in learning the language by selecting to engage in and achieve the Certificate II in Applied Languages (Italian): a stepping stone to a whole new world!



AT WAVELL STATE HIGH SCHOOL, STUDENTS WILL SOON HAVE THE EXCITING OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY ITALIAN

Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

OPEN DAYS AT MT ALVERNIA & PADUA COLLEGE

In May this year the Kedron area in Brisbane came alive with Mount Alvernia College and Padua College hosting their Open Days.

Throngs of people streamed towards the schools to find out about the educational opportunities available to their children.

The most eye catching exhibit was the green, white and red Fiat 500 parked at Padua College to indicate the Italian station was present on campus.

In red-shirt uniforms, ILC's team was highly visible at the Italian stations where they assisted the Italian teachers to advise interested parties on the many advantages of learning a second language, especially one so rich and musical!



Teachers of Italian

See the ILC webpage to access funded support services available throughout the year for the teaching and learning of Italian in Queensland schools.

<https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/supporting-italian-in-queensland-schools/>

OPEN DAYS AT MT ALVERNIA & PADUA COLLEGE



At Padua College Italian has been re-introduced in Years 5, 6 and 7.

Students have the opportunity to 'taste' a term of Italian before selecting it as an elective in middle and senior high school.

Many parents with children at St Anthony's Primary School Kedron were delighted to find their children could carry on their Italian learning journey at Padua College and Mount Alvernia College.

ILC plays a pivotal role in supporting Italian programs in Queensland schools through funding from the Italian Government and wishes the two colleges much success in growing their Italian programs.

Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

IMMERSION CLASSES - St John's College Nambour



Students from St John's College, Nambour, recently visited Co.As.It. to interview Italians living and working in Australia.

They enthusiastically listened to stories of migration and discovered that Italians not only speak the official Italian language but also at least one of 20 dialects depending on the region they come from.

Any initial nervousness at practising their language skills soon disappeared as students learned Italians are friendly and approachable, giving them the confidence to practice ordering sandwiches in fluent Italian!

A big thank you to all of the teachers who made this wonderful experience possible!

To arrange an immersion excursion for your school simply click <https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/italian-immersion-excursion-at-ilc/>



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

ART CLASS WITH LUMACA LAURA

Children attending a recent ILC Italian Playgroup session, experienced becoming 'little artists' as they participated in a colourful and creative activity inspired by Lumaca Laura, a much-loved character featured in the ILC Playgroup Italian booklet.

With big smiles and curious hands, the children explored a fun and tactile painting style, using cotton buds instead of traditional brushes.

This sensory activity encouraged fine motor skills and creativity, while reinforcing Italian vocabulary like 'i colori' and 'la lumaca', everyone's favourite snail! As the 'little artists' decorated Lumaca Laura's shell with bright dots, they practised 'GIÙ!' (down) and 'SU!' (up) while dipping cotton buds in the paint. The results were stunning! Bravissimi, piccoli artisti!

Have you enrolled your child yet?

Simply click on <https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/girotondo-italian-playgroup/>



Servizi comunitari per anziani e giovani bisognosi di sostegno.

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

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

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

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

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



Contattate il nostro centro al

3624 6100

per ulteriori informazioni



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Funded by

