

INSIEME



Quarterly Newsletter
Edition 4 - 2024



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

In March our annual International Women's Day event is being held and tickets are already selling fast!



Happy New Year to you all and welcome to another edition of "Insieme".

2024 wrapped up with many celebrations that brought our community together to celebrate the Christmas spirit.

Our annual Christmas hampers were also a reminder of the importance of reflection, kindness and spreading joy, including bringing comfort to those in our community who are less fortunate.

As the new year rolls out, 2025 is going to present new challenges to our organisation, particularly with the introduction of the Support at Home program planned for July.

This program will replace the Home Care Packages and Short-term Restorative Care programs as part of the new Aged Care reforms. We are already restructuring our

systems and processes to ensure a smooth transition and continued quality care for our clients.

In March, our annual International Women's Day event is being held and tickets are already selling fast! Every year, over 300 women support our organisation in furthering the role of women as leaders and facilitators of change. Don't miss this year's event and be sure to get your tickets before it sells out – find out more in this edition.

We now have a new website that is colourful, simple and easy to navigate. Don't forget you can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

If you'd like see where our social outing trekkers have been, what else is happening at Co.As.It. or even keep abreast of what's going on at the Italian Language Centre, do a little scrolling.

Happy reading!

Tanina Softa

HOLDING ONTO HOME

Graham's journey was not defined by dementia, but by his resilience, his family's love, and a community committed to honouring his wishes.

The walls of a home hold more than just memories: they cradle our sense of identity, comfort, and independence. For Graham, an 82-year-old gentle man navigating the complex landscape of dementia, his modest residence became a sanctuary of dignity and love.

Diagnosed with dementia seven years ago, Graham was determined to maintain his independence. A single man living alone, he faced the progressive challenges of his condition with remarkable courage. His two adult children understood his deepest wish: to remain in the familiar embrace of his own home for as long as possible.

Co.As.It. would become Graham's lifeline. Working in close partnership with his family, they crafted a nuanced care strategy that evolved alongside Graham's changing needs. As his dementia slowly reshaped his world, the nursing and other home support teams dynamically adjusted their approach, increasing in-home and nursing care to match his declining health.

Graham's journey was not without obstacles. Frequent falls and hospital admissions punctuated his days, each setback met with unwavering medical attention. Our nursing teams would carefully monitor his condition, tenderly healing his wounds and restoring his strength.

For seven remarkable years, Graham defied the typical trajectory of his diagnosis. He continued to live in the home where he had built a lifetime of memories, surrounded by caregivers who saw beyond his medical condition to the human being within.

Ultimately, after years of dedicated care, Graham's condition necessitated hospital admission. While the ideal scenario would have been for him to spend his final days at home, this wasn't possible any longer.

His family found solace in the quality of life he had maintained. They expressed deep gratitude for the compassionate staff from Co.As.It. who had supported Graham's independence and dignity.

His story reminds us that perfection isn't measured by flawless outcomes, but by the moments of connection, care, and respect along the way. Graham's journey was not defined by dementia, but by his resilience, his family's love, and a community committed to honouring his wishes.

Not every story has a picture-perfect ending, but each one is rich with victories—small and profound—that illuminate the human spirit's remarkable capacity to adapt, support, and love.



STUDENT'S HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

A significant part of the assessment focused on the bathroom - a space that poses safety risks for many people.

Our Co.As.It. Allied Health Team has been able to support two students this year, including Tatyana, a valued team member working part-time as a domestic assistance worker who has started a Certificate IV Allied Health Assistance.

As part of this course, Tatyana must complete 120 hours of clinical placement, and the Allied Health team has been excited to be able to provide the placement at Co.As.It.

Tatyana has spent time shadowing both physiotherapists and occupational therapists, in the community and at Amici House.

One of our experienced occupational therapists, Keelan, highlighted the benefits of students having 'real-life' experiences.

When Tatyana first observed an occupational therapist (OT) during an initial assessment, she was not sure what to expect. While she had some idea about what OTs do, seeing the process firsthand gave her a much clearer understanding of their work and its impact on lives.

The day began with a visit to a client's home, where the OT focused on understanding the client's daily routine and any challenges they were experiencing. Tatyana watched as the OT asked questions about the client's health and activities, aiming to identify areas where assistive devices or home modifications could improve safety and independence.

A significant part of the assessment focused on the bathroom—a space that poses safety risks for many people. The OT explained that the goal was to increase the client's independence with toileting and showering while reducing their risk of falls.

Tatyana assisted by taking measurements for modifications. She saw how these simple but carefully planned changes could make a meaningful difference in helping the client move around more confidently and perform daily tasks more independently.

Beyond the practical aspects, Tatyana learned how important it is to connect with clients on a personal level.



During the visit, she chatted with the client, helping them feel comfortable and at ease. Her friendly approach made the interaction more relaxed, and the client seemed to appreciate the care and attention given to their needs.

By the end of the day, Tatyana had a much deeper appreciation for the role of OTs. She saw how their work goes beyond recommending equipment—it's about empowering people to live independently and safely in their homes.

The experience also showed her how even small contributions, like assisting with measurements or building rapport with clients, can play a part in improving someone's quality of life.

Tatyana left the experience gaining valuable insight into a profession dedicated to making everyday life safer, easier, and more comfortable for those who need it most.

KICKING OSTEOGENESIS IMPERFECTA TO THE KERB

In a world that often underestimates the power of resilience, Roslyn stands as proof of hope and determination. Living with osteogenesis imperfecta (OI), a genetic condition that makes bones as fragile as glass, she has weathered over 100 fractures—a number that would break most spirits, but not hers.

A Life of Challenges, A Heart of Courage

Imagine a body where each step could potentially lead to a fracture, where hearing is a challenge, and where muscles and joints constantly remind you of your limitations. This has been Roslyn's reality. Yet, instead of surrendering to her condition, she has chosen to dance with adversity.

Supported by her devoted husband and empowered by NDIS funding, Roslyn has transformed her challenges into opportunities for creativity and personal growth. Her days are now filled with artistic pursuits that highlight her resolute spirit—crocheting intricate rugs, creating sparkling diamond dot artworks, painting by numbers, and crafting personalised cards.

Breaking Barriers, Not Bones

The NDIS has been a game-changer for Roslyn. Her home is now decked out with adaptive living aids.

She is now enjoying using a purpose-built ensuite bathroom; a Revolution dining chair that allows her to share meals with loved ones; walkers and walking sticks; an electric recliner and adjustable bed and an iPad for online learning, including lip-reading courses.

Roslyn's most remarkable transformation has been physical. Her unwavering commitment to her exercise program has yielded incredible results. Where once walking was a monumental challenge, she now navigates steps with increasing confidence. Her improved gait and ability to pick up objects from the floor are victories hard-won through persistence and professional support.

Inspiration and Resilience

Roslyn embodies the true meaning of strength. She demonstrates that disability is not inability, that limitations are often just opportunities in disguise. Her story is a powerful reminder that with the right support, an unyielding spirit, and a positive attitude, remarkable transformations are possible.

In a world that often celebrates physical perfection across a wide range of tableaux, Roslyn teaches us a more profound lesson: true strength lies not in an unblemished body, but in an unbreakable spirit.



QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY SUPPORT *Scheme*

MARY'S NEW LIFE



Having arrived in Brisbane as a refugee from war-torn Syria, like many refugees, life has been difficult - if not traumatic.

Mary's journey to Brisbane and being a Co.As.It. client in our Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS) program has been fulfilling.

Having arrived in Brisbane as a refugee from war-torn Syria, like for many refugees, life has been difficult - if not traumatic.

Within the QCSS program, we aim to provide a sense of security and assure Mary that her life has taken a turn for the better. Mary accesses our QCSS Direct Care and Support to attend appointments.

The program focuses on individual needs but also offers community connections support to assist people to connect with services and live more independently.

"I really appreciate all of the support Co.As.It. provides through its QCSS program," Mary said. "It means I can now focus on spending more quality time with my family to go on social outings together and attend our local Catholic church. I also love preparing traditional Middle Eastern food - kebabs and baklava - for my family."

With the loving support of family, who all live nearby, Mary is now enthusiastically enjoying activities in her neighbourhood but she yearns to see her twin four-year-old grandchildren who live in Lebanon.

While we hope that her dream is soon a reality, we will continue to support her as she settles into her much-loved new country.

AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME

SPECIAL GUESTS AT *Government House*

The economic benefit of volunteers during the year 2022/2023 was valued at \$117.8 billion

In recognition of the willingness of volunteers to give of their time, skills and support, Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young held a morning tea at Government House in early December.

The event was to celebrate International Volunteer Day and the vital role volunteers play in communities across the world.

Attended by our ACVVS Coordinators this formal recognition of the value of our volunteers was a gratifying way of celebrating the enormous impact volunteers have on society in general.

A recent study done by Volunteering Queensland identified that in Queensland, the economic benefit of volunteers during the year 2022/2023 was valued at \$117.8 billion.

An estimated 64.3% of Queenslanders (2,800,000 people) aged 15 years and over contributed to our community on a multitude of fronts, not only impacting positively on the those they assisted, but also on the country's GDP. *

The study also identified that if the work done by volunteers Queensland-wide was to be reimbursed as a salary, the state would need to find \$31.3 billion per year in wages.

*"Comparing the costs to the benefits, Queensland's volunteering is estimated to return a benefit of \$4.70 for every \$1 of cost." **

In our increasingly technical and digital arena, the ability to connect on a face-to-face and human level is both a gift and a prize.

For many organisations and auspices, the event was a delightful acknowledgement and appreciation of the work carried out in promoting and implementing human contact for older people in our community.

**State of Volunteering in Queensland 2024 (Volunteering Qld publication)*



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO VOLUNTEERING

The enquiry is calling for public submissions around creating an effective volunteering ecosystem.

In further acknowledgement of volunteers, on 11 December, Co.As.It. CEO Tanina Softa and one of our ACVVS Coordinators attended Queensland Parliament House for the launch of a Parliamentary Inquiry into Volunteering, hosted by the Honourable Ann Leahy MP, Minister for Volunteers.

The inquiry aims to increase an understanding of volunteering in Queensland communities, increase participation rates and improve opportunities for volunteering whilst also increasing awareness and understanding of volunteering and its central importance to all Queensland communities.

The inquiry is also calling for public submissions around creating an effective volunteering ecosystem and producing recommendations that will increase and improve opportunities for the volunteering workforce.

The closing date for submissions is 28 February 2025 and the Parliamentary Committee report is due 18 September 2025.

If you would like to contribute to the enquiry go to: <https://volunteeringqld.org.au/parliamentary-inquiry-into-volunteering/>



AGED CARE VOLUNTEER *Visitors* SCHEME

ACVVS FESTIVITIES

Before Christmas two special lunches were held in Brisbane and the Gold Coast to honour our volunteer visitors. They were gatherings that celebrated not only the festive spirit but the genuine, human connections that often go unnoticed in our increasingly digital world.

In a time when technology often drives us toward screens and virtual interactions, these volunteers embody the power of human presence. They are the ones who show up, listen, hold a hand, and share a smile — simple acts that carry immense value, especially for those who may otherwise feel invisible in society.

The lunches were a reminder that, while technology can enhance communication, it can never replace the warmth and comfort that human touch and direct connection bring.

The elderly, often isolated by age and circumstance, find solace in the companionship of these volunteers, who offer not just time, but empathy, patience, and kindness.

Amidst the bustling holiday season, this gathering was a moment to pause and reflect on the irreplaceable value of real human interaction — the kind that,

Amidst the bustling holiday season, this gathering was a moment to pause and reflect on the irreplaceable value of real human interaction

no matter how advanced our digital tools become, remains fundamental to our well-being and our shared humanity.

They were celebrations of these volunteers' commitment to bridging the gap, fostering relationships that matter, and making a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most.

In a world where technology sometimes isolates more than it connects, these volunteers continue to prove that the most meaningful connections are those made face-to-face, and heart-to-heart.

Thank you to all of our volunteers for their truly great commitment during that past year!



CIAO IN AGED CARE HOMES

MUSIC BRINGS US TOGETHER

In social situations all around the world, music is supremely important, a universal language, combining melody, harmony and messages.

It also plays a supportive role for our Co.As.It. CIAO initiative which bridges the gap between daily recreational activities in residential aged care homes and Italian residents.

Italian residents at Rockpool always delight in musical performances by piano accordionist, Fausto, who with his piano accordion and singing voice, always lights up the atmosphere with everyone joining in – joyously dancing, singing along or enthusiastically applauding.

When Rockpool resident Anna listened to Fausto perform, the joy was apparent in her beaming smile, as she remarked, *'I love this, it makes me feel young and alive'*.

Positive processes occur in our brains when we listen to music or play together, tapping into our emotions, often evoking cheerfulness, happiness and contentment.

Activity officers of the CIAO Program know this, having found Italian residents rank music almost on par with coffee and food, and for an Italian that says a lot!



Another popular feature of the CIAO initiative is fun-filled interactive activities that delight auditory, olfactory and visual senses for the residents.

Activities also create moments of glee, like competitive games where a balloon is hammered by foam batons whilst residents try to keep it afloat!

When Lucy at Portofino joins in, she does so with both energy and joy: *'I'm very determined to hit that balloon and get my exercise for the day!'*

This simple activity strengthens hand and eye coordination, while promoting engagement with one another through play and laughter - and the players are fiercely competitive!



UNSINKABLE BUOYANCY

Denis has had a rough year this year, almost becoming homeless, he spent over four months in hospital with a very bad break to his leg after an accident.

He had no support services in place to assist him once he went home. We collaborated with another provider, ensuring Denis received home support from us when he returned home, while they concentrated on finding him accommodation.

A short time after he was discharged, Denis was rushed to hospital via ambulance. Experiencing a lot of pain, a diagnosis of cancer soon required him to start chemo and radium treatment five times a week for five weeks.

Being the trooper that Denis is, he took it on the chin and with collaboration between his other organisation and Co.As.It., he was able to get to his daily treatments which are now thankfully completed.

Putting services in place for Denis was no easy task, Denis is a very independent man used to independence in all daily living tasks, and driving on his own.

Denis accepted weekly assistance with Personal Care, fortnightly Social Support and weekly physio to assist him get back on the road to recovery and achieve his goal of driving again.

Strength does not come
from physical capacity.
It comes from an
indomitable will.
(Mahatma Ghandi)

Denis received one of the Co.As.It. Christmas Hampers right before his last treatment and you couldn't wipe the smile from his face. He said he felt "pretty good" and was genuinely thankful for the hamper.

He has faced life's challenges with an unwavering resolve: health scares, tragedies of losing loved ones, and beating alcoholism.

Denis has celebrated 42 years of sobriety of which he is intensely proud. He still attends AA services, supporting others and inspiring them with his success story.

We hope to be helping Denis stay at home for as long as possible and seeing his indomitable spirit, we don't have any doubts that this will be easily achieved!



COMMUNITY & *Individual* SUPPORT SERVICES

TECH SKILLS FOR SENIORS

Now in its 3rd year, Amici House Community Centre and Café attracts 600 visitors each week for a wide range of exciting activities.

Of those, Stay Active classes, Yoga, Pilates, Latin Dancing and the opportunity to learn more about technology have proven popular.

Places are available in the Amici House Technology Classes every Tuesday from 10am to 11am.

For a block of 4 classes the cost is \$20.

The benefits of the technology classes for clients are countless, especially when using mobile apps to stay in touch with family and friends, not to mention the added bonus of making new friendships.

To book your place in a Technology Class phone 3624 6100.



I CESTI PORTANO GIOIA A NATALE

Nel vero spirito delle festività natalizie, il Co.As.It. ha dimostrato ancora una volta il potere della comunità distribuendo cesti natalizi ai membri vulnerabili della nostra comunità locale.

Questa iniziativa edificante è andata oltre la semplice fornitura di cibo: ha trasmesso speranza, dignità e senso di appartenenza a coloro che altrimenti avrebbero potuto sentirsi dimenticati durante il periodo festivo.

I cesti preparati con cura erano più che semplici pacchetti di cibo. Erano messaggi di sostegno realizzati con cura, pieni di generi alimentari essenziali e deliziose prelibatezze stagionali che hanno portato un sorriso sui volti di persone in difficoltà finanziarie o in stato di isolamento sociale. Ogni cesto rappresentava un'ancora di salvezza di connessione, ricordando ai destinatari che nonostante tutto erano parte integrante della loro comunità.

Tutti hanno lavorato per identificare e raggiungere i più bisognosi, assicurando che i cesti fossero distribuiti ai membri più vulnerabili della società.

Sovvenzionati dal governo statale, i cesti hanno portato gioia ad oltre 100 persone e famiglie, che hanno vissuto un Natale più luminoso e pieno di speranza.

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HOME CARE PACKAGES | *South Coast*

JOHN 'SCOOT'S' ABOUT

John knows how difficult life can be after losing 2 limbs but he also knows that being positive and grateful can help in continuing to lead a fulfilling life.

When John suffered the loss of one lower limb around two years ago his life changed dramatically.

Then in 2024, John who has lived with diabetes since childhood, suffered the loss of his other lower limb. However, he is a person who bravely faces reality and makes sensible preparations and Co.As.It. was there to help.

John had only joined our Home Care Package program recently and since then, we have made it a priority to support John's quest for independence.

Having learned to walk with one prosthetic leg, after spending substantial time in hospital and rehabilitation, John looks forward to receiving his second prosthetic in the future. Whilst waiting for this to happen, he made plans about being mobile in the interim.

Just prior to Christmas last year, after waiting for ages for overseas parts, a life-changing breakthrough was John receiving the keys to a modified mobility scooter.

This means John can now scoot about independently without having to rely on his wife. With independent mobility, a new exciting chapter has begun for John and his wife and grateful for support from us, this couple is back to enjoying life.

John knows how difficult life can be after losing 2 limbs



PAM'S BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK

Creative painting often serves as an effective method for reflecting and connecting with the bold colors, textures and details of our vibrant Australian landscapes, sunsets and wildlife.

Across Co.As.It. many of our clients are now demonstrating impressive talents to portray the beauty of these themes through mixed mediums, from acrylics to gold leaf and charcoal.

Our valued client Pam is quietly developing a reputation for her exquisite creations which radiate the splendid colours, layers and designs found in outback landscapes, soaring birds and autumn gardens.

We are delighted to support Pam to continue her passion of painting.

Pam was among the many artists from Community Art Classes and NDIS who proudly displayed their artwork at our annual Christmas art exhibition at Amici House in December 2024.

Since joining activities at Amici House in 2022, Pam has not looked back. Along with enjoying community engagement, Pam has delighted in craft activities from sewing to creating cards, and more recently art classes, which have been life-changing.

As she wanders around her light-filled home, Pam and her close family are immersed in a warm atmosphere enhanced by Pam's paintings that invite connection with our treasured landscapes and wildlife.



Pam was among the many artists who proudly displayed their artwork at our annual Christmas Art Exhibition.



MIND *Wellness* TEAM

L'UNIONE FRA SORELLE

Negli angoli silenziosi di Amici House, organizziamo incontri speciali ("Nutrire l'anima") solo per donne. Il Mind Wellness Team ha creato più di un semplice gruppo di supporto. Ha creato un santuario in cui le donne possono togliersi la maschera, trovare la vulnerabilità e riscoprire se stesse.

Questi non sono solo incontri, sono linee di vita per le donne che ricostruiscono la propria vita dopo perdite, delusioni e sfide personali.

La storia di Joanne inizia dopo una profonda perdita. Dopo anni di cure per il marito John durante la sua battaglia contro la demenza, si è ritrovata alla deriva.

"Ero tutto per tutti", ricorda. "Un'infermiera, una madre, una badante, ma IO, chi ero?"

Per Joanne, venire al primo incontro significava fare dei passi incerti oltre il dolore.

Ciò che era iniziato come una partecipazione esitante è sbocciato in un'emancipazione personale. Le lezioni d'arte, lezioni di danza e l'abbraccio di supporto di altre donne sono diventati il suo percorso verso il rinnovamento. Non si è solo guarita, si è trasformata.

Ora, Joanne fa di più che partecipare agli incontri. Accoglie nuovi membri, il suo percorso di recupero sta diventando un esempio di speranza per gli altri che affrontano sfide simili. La sua presenza sussurra un messaggio potente: la guarigione è possibile e tu sei più forte del tuo dolore.

Questi gruppi dimostrano che il vero recupero non è solitario, è un viaggio collettivo di forza, compassione e gioia inaspettata. Se tu o qualcuno che ami ha bisogno di un rifugio avvolgente, contattaci, saremo lieti di incontrarti.



SHE LEFT - AT 80 YRS OF AGE!

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another person, this could be a partner, family member, aged person or friend.

Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence or exert coercive control over another person.

That is why Maria's story (not her real name) is so much more incredible because at the age of almost 80, she had the courage to end the cycle of abuse and stand up for her own right to live freely.

Control and domestic violence are embodied by silence, silence from those that suffer, silence from those around them, and silence from those who perpetrate abuse.

This silence leaves women in isolation carrying the burden of embarrassment, humiliation and mortification. It stops them from speaking out about the abuse and precludes them from getting help, often with serious consequences.

That is why Maria's action is incredibly brave. In front of her children, she suffered years of abuse from her husband, including numerous bashings (resulting in brain injury), coercive and financial control.

Then one day he was admitted to hospital for an extended period of time and without the perpetrator controlling and abusing her, she discovered a world where she did not have to ask permission for anything, nor put up with his abuse.

After her husband returned from hospital, her life resumed as before. However Maria had tasted freedom and relished it. She did something profoundly difficult, setting a course of action in place to retain her independence.

She called some family members to set up supports and once she had done so she took her plan to the next level. Giving her husband an innocent excuse she said 'I am going to the shops to buy sugar'. She then left, went to stay with her brother in another state and never went back!

A report for Domestic Violence was filed with the police. A social worker helped Maria to overcome the anxiety, fear and apprehension she suffered whilst we supported her during this difficult transition.

Maria left with just the clothes on her back but she is living well on her pension, and without her husband controlling her money, she is finally enjoying a new wardrobe!

With the support of Co.As.It's social worker, Maria is now learning and implementing healthier coping mechanisms. 'God has been on my side' she said.

Well done Maria! You are an example and an inspiration for people of all ages.

In March 2020 at the Women of the World Festival, HRH the Duchess of Cornwall stated that the survivors of coercive control and domestic violence are some of the bravest people she has ever met. Imagine having the courage to remove oneself from that situation at almost 80 years of age!

According to Mark Groves (National Centre for Domestic Violence), domestic abuse will never end until we make it socially unacceptable. It is up to us as family members, friends and colleagues to help say 'NO'.

We hope that Maria's story will inspire many other people living with domestic violence to seek support and help. We are here to support you.



**If you are a victim of Domestic Violence there is help.
Call 000 if you are in immediate danger or call 1800RESPECT or 1800 737 732
Or feel free to call the Mind Wellness Team at Co.As.It. 3264 6100**

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day (IWD) has been around for over a hundred years, as have many of the issues still impacting women's advancement.

Since 1911, IWD belongs to all who care about women's equality, celebrating women's achievements and raising awareness about discrimination.

"As mothers, aunts, grandmothers and sisters, we need to nurture the greatness, strength, and tenacity in our children. We need to encourage younger women to use their voice and stand up for what they believe. We need to teach them the meaning of courage and embolden them to defy limits or expectations, especially those imposed by gender." (*Tanina Softa CEO*)

Take action to forge gender parity and help raise the awareness of gender equality, come and join us for a lovely morning of connections, friendship and solidarity with our sisters.

*International
Women's Day*

SATURDAY 1 MARCH
starting at 11am

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre
Plaza Terrace Room
2 course lunch

Fashion parade by *Lauren Churchill*
Hosted by *Kim Skubris*

Raffle prizes including a travel voucher

Prosecco sponsored by:



\$125 VIA EVENTBRITE
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ROMA STREET PARKLANDS DELIGHTS

With sun-filled gardens, picnic spots and incredible views of Brisbane city's skyline, Roma Street Parkland is a must-visit for our social groups.

Prior to the Parkland's official opening in 2001, the area was known for holding markets, being a railway yard and a base for American troops during World War II.

Today, natural beauty is the focal point of the Parklands.

It is so spectacular that our social groups made two separate visits in December, enjoying exceptional sights including the Spectacle Garden which showcases a host of colourful subtropical flowering plants.

From the first rays of sunrise over the gardens to sunset behind the leafy canopies, the Parklands inspire, relax and delight its visitors and wildlife alike.

Spanning several hectares, the Parklands offered something for everyone in our social groups, from pathways to explore in rainforest settings to horticultural splendour and beautiful green spaces.

Their fun-filled visits were made all the more adventurous as eastern water dragons lounged around rocks, pathways and waterfalls, soaking up the sun.

Afterwards everyone enjoyed sightseeing as they travelled from Brisbane towards Ipswich for a delicious lunch together at Redbank Plains Tavern.

Great scenery, great friends and delicious food, how could they not enjoy catching up with each other amid blossoming gardens.



AGED CARE | SOCIAL *Outings*

SENIORS ARE STILL KIDS AT HEART!

There's no better place for nature lovers than the spectacular northern NSW region just a short drive south of Coolangatta. Everyone in our Social Group celebrated Christmas on a high note with a memorable trip to Pottsville and Ballina.

Hopping off the bus for morning tea in Pottsville marked the first leg of the journey before exploring the town. With a dynamic community of artists showcased in galleries, markets and shops across town, the clients had some great sightseeing to do.

Then it was lunch at Ballina RSL, where clients enjoyed magnificent river views before heading home.

Spectacular northern NSW scenery framed our social group's journey back to the Gold Coast signposted by charming towns, panoramic lookouts and breathtaking beaches.

A group photo with Santa was the highlight of the day, with many remembering sitting on Santa's knee when they were youngsters.



A group photo with Santa was the highlight of the day



WHY WE LOVE NEWSTEAD HOUSE

Filled with old-world charm, every room delightfully evokes a romantic atmosphere

A 10-minute journey north from the heart of Brisbane takes you to Newstead House which reopened in July 2024, after extensive renovations. The city's oldest European-style riverside property has once again become a popular tourist attraction.

This entertaining outing for our Gold Coast clients was preceded by morning tea at the famous Yatala Pies,

The historic homestead that dates back to 1846.

Everyone was delighted by the period décor, dating back to between 1862-90, when Newstead House was home to local businessman George Harris and his family.

Filled with old-world charm, every room delightfully evokes a romantic atmosphere through colourful paint schemes,

polished floorboards and ornate furnishings. Outside, the house is surrounded by manicured lawns, complete with exquisite gardens and an ancient Old Fig Tree, described by everyone as amazingly beautiful.



After exploring Newstead House and being in awe of its breathtaking river views, everyone enjoyed lunch together at another iconic Brisbane venue – Breakfast Creek Hotel.

Arguably one of Queensland's most famous pubs, the hotel has enjoyed long-term popularity among tourists and locals alike.

As our outing attendees discovered, the Breakfast Creek Hotel's mouth-watering lunches appeal to everyone and were yet another highlight of this awesome outing.



AGED CARE | SOCIAL *Outings*

Sweet and Savoury

Located inland from Gold Coast beaches and near the route to Mount Tamborine, our Co.As. It. Social Outing group enjoyed experiencing the luxury and glamour of Hope Island in November.

Setting off for a day filled with excitement, Yatala Pies renowned for its mouth watering temptations was the first stop on their journey from Brisbane.

Diets and healthy eating were not a priority that day!

Participants fuelled up for a serious shopping expedition which was next on the itinerary.

It was a fruitful day – perhaps not so fruitful for the tired legs of the shopaholics but everyone was very satisfied with their purchases and the enjoyment of company and good food.

With emerging friendships growing stronger on every outing, participants are always keen to reserve their spot for the next adventure.



Diets and healthy eating were not a priority that day!



co.as.it.
community
services

STAY ACTIVE KALINGA | CARINA

Co.As.It Community Services is running an exercise group suitable for people aged 60 years and over.

The program is aimed at optimising strength, endurance, balance, and flexibility. Enhance your overall well-being and delay age-related deterioration.

Ideal for those able to mobilise without the use of a walking aid, walker, or wheelchair.

**MONDAYS
(KALINGA)
WEDNESDAYS
(CARINA)**

**LIMITED SPACES
AVAILABLE**



\$25 for 5 sessions
Bookings are Essential
No Walk-Ins
Call: 07 3624 6100
mail@coasit.asn.au

KALINGA
20 Clark St, Kalinga
The Community Place



CARINA
150 Fursden Rd, Carina
Abruzzo Club

AMICI HOUSE COMMUNITY *Cafe*

SAMPLE THE FOOD AND YOU'LL BE BACK!

Located at Bracken Ridge with free parking, Amici House Community Café offers delicious morning teas, coffees and lunches at great prices.

With a selection of home-style lunches, cakes and hot beverages, Amici House Café is the first choice of locals who enjoy the relaxed, welcoming outdoor deck environment.

With an access ramp leading to an undercover deck, Amici House is also perfect for Support Workers to bring clients for lunch, morning and afternoon teas and just to get some fesh air. But he best part? The enthusiastic welcomes of the staff - every time you walk in!

Amici house Cafe is located at 294 Bracken Ridge Road, Bracken Ridge. Open Monday to Friday from 7am to 3pm.



COMMUNITY ART *Exhibition*

A CANVAS OF JOY: ART, COMMUNITY AND CHRISTMAS CHEER

Our community hub walls came alive with colour, creativity, and connection this holiday season, as the annual art exhibition from Amici House transformed the space into a vibrant celebration of human potential. What began as a simple showcase of student artwork quickly blossomed into a magical evening that touched the hearts of everyone present.

Guests embraced the sounds of a local choir, their Christmas melodies weaving through the room like threads of pure joy. The music set the perfect backdrop for an extraordinary journey through imagination, where each brushstroke told a story of passion, learning, and personal growth.

The artwork adorning the walls was nothing short of breathtaking. From luscious still-life paintings of fruit, to soulful portraits that captured the essence of human emotion, and landscapes that transported viewers to distant horizons – including some enchanting interpretations inspired by the great Monet – the exhibition was a spectacle and a reflection of the students' talent and dedication.

Behind every masterpiece was the guiding hand of their accomplished teacher, renowned artist Kerry, whose own passion had clearly ignited the creative spirits of her students.

The pride was palpable – not just in the artwork, but also in the beaming faces of the artists who had poured their hearts into each piece.

The event was more than just an art exhibition; it was a celebration of community. Old friends reconnected, new acquaintances met and the room hummed with animated conversations and laughter. The festive atmosphere was further encouraged by delicious refreshments. As the event came to an end, the traditional Italian Christmas cake, *panettone*, was served – a sweet punctuation mark to a day of shared joy and achievement.

Guests departed with more than just memories; they carried with them a renewed sense of connection, inspiration, and the true spirit of the holiday season.

It was an event that reminded everyone present that art is more than just paint on canvas – it's a powerful language of human connection, hope, and celebration.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

BACK TO SCHOOL AT COOMBABAH STATE HIGH SCHOOL

In November, our Social Group members were delighted to visit Coombabah State High School on the Gold Coast where they enjoyed a fun-filled morning of social activities with Year 10 and 11 students. Italian language students and elder Italian community members discovered they have far more in common than they ever imagined.

The morning began with anticipation. For the Italian seniors, this wasn't just another visit. It was a journey of remembrance, sharing and unexpected joy. For the students, it was an opportunity to connect beyond textbooks and learn living history.

When the students' slideshow of their trip to Italy illuminates the classroom, something extraordinary unfolds. The Italian visitors are passive observers—they're active participants, their eyes sparkling with recognition. *'I remember the streets of Naples,'* one client may say, or *'those mountains remind me of my childhood home'.*

Their spontaneous commentary transforms a simple presentation into a rich, layered narrative. The students lean in, captivated. These aren't just tourists in photographs: these are living storytellers, bringing distant landscapes to life through personal memories.

The cultural quiz becomes a delightful dance of knowledge and experience. Students, armed with classroom learning, challenge the elders.

The elders, with decades of cultural understanding, offer nuanced insights. Laughter erupts when unexpected answers surprise everyone.

Tombola—the traditional Italian numbers game—becomes a perfect metaphor for their connection. It's not just about winning; it's about sharing a piece of cultural heritage.

What makes this exchange truly special is its authenticity. Students see beyond the stereotypes of ageing, recognising wisdom and vibrant personalities. The elder visitors rediscover the energy of youth, their own memories refreshed by young perspectives.

By lunch at Dublin Docks Tavern, something has changed. They're no longer strangers or categories (students and elders, young and old).

They're simply people, connected by shared human experiences, by curiosity, by the beautiful complexity of cultural identity.



The most exciting part? This isn't an ending, but a beginning. This is the third time we have combined the generations, now with plans for the students to visit Co.As.It.'s Social Group Activity centre.

The cultural exchange promises to continue growing, deepening understanding with each shared moment.

In a world that often emphasises differences, this gathering shows that the right interest and motivations, our capacity for connection, empathy and mutual respect has a ripple effect on the waters of our lives.

AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

THE RACE THAT STOPS THE NATION

Fun-filled horse races exceeded everyone's expectations during Melbourne Cup parties at our Social Activity Centres. Our centres opened their doors and filled their atmosphere with equine-inspired themes to make Melbourne Cup an unforgettable day for everyone. It was a day filled with amusement as clients happily arrived in their finest attire for the race that stops the nation

Clients were greeted by swaying horse-inspired balloons, colourful equine-themed table mats and bright horse-racing table pieces. From there, thrilling activities from betting on mock Melbourne Cup races to posing as jockeys in a photo booth and enjoying lunch together added to the day's excitement.

For our clients, it was yet another wonderfully happy get-together at their social group during a spectacular sporting week across Australia.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

PAMPER DAY

You know you're in for a lovely day when pampering is part of the plan. When clients in our Memory Support Group at Casa Aurelia were invited to come along to a Pamper Day, many accepted with excitement.

Manicures, hand massages and beautifully groomed nails with colourful polish were so satisfying! Perhaps the men may have been a bit fussy about having their nails painted - but we also provided relaxing manicures for them.

For more than a decade our Memory Support Groups have added an extra layer of support for our clients and their carers with centre-based respite and caring activities that focus on their other senses.

Activities are created that reach across confusion and memory fogs to create a sense of security and safeness in often bewildering environments.

Seeing the clients happy as they went home was a sure sign that these strategies not only work, but that the 'feel good' sensation remains for quite some time.



AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

HOW WE CELEBRATED 'NATALE'



Our Social Groups radiated joy, happiness and laughter during Christmas celebrations from Amici House to Casa Serena, Casa Aurelia, the Gold Coast and Cleveland.

Our Gold Coast social groups were the first to celebrate. Everyone gathered to revel in the tradition and festivities of Christmas, from a choir performance to a sing-along, dancing, raffles and a delicious lunch. The excitement reached its peak with a surprise visit from Santa, who presented Christmas hampers to delighted raffle winners.

Our Cleveland social groups were next and they must have been nice this year, because Santa visited, bringing chocolates and good cheer. With the spirit of Christmas taking over, they sang-along to much-loved Italian and Australian carols, from Jingle Bells and Silent Night to Feliz Navidad and Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle.

They also beamed while posing for photographs with Santa. It was an awesome day enjoyed by everyone!

Santa then landed at Amici House, bringing out the best in our social group Christmas celebrations. Revelling in the season's festivities, everyone happily sang classic carols – Silent Night and The First Noel – before striding up to Santa to collect their Christmas gift, before enjoying a delicious home style meal prepared by our talented cooks.

Casa Serena also came alive with the spirit of Christmas when Santa visited. Sparkling with happiness, they too sang-along to popular Italian and Australian carols, followed by an exciting raffle and a delicious Christmas lunch together, much to everyone's delight!

AGED CARE *Social* GROUP ACTIVITIES

Finally Christmas celebrations at Casa Aurelia were full of surprises, when a larger than life Santa knocked on their door, bringing generous gifts galore! Everyone also joyously sang carols in the spirit of Christmas.

The festivities attracted enthusiastic feedback from 'marvellous' to 'amazing' and 'we're already counting down to Christmas 2025.



ZUMBA IN ITALIAN KICKS OFF AT ILC!

On 24 October ILC launched an exciting new course combining fitness and language. Designed with a clear sense of purpose by a certified Zumba instructor who is also an Italian teacher, the classes are accessible to all fitness and language levels.

Participants have expressed their appreciation not only for the classes but also for the supportive community atmosphere where everyone feels welcome.

They have enthusiastically commented:

"I really enjoyed my Zumba classes. The instructor's contagious energy and the engaging Italian music she chose, made every work-out fun and motivating. What a great way to keep fit! I highly recommend this to anyone who is looking to combine exercise and good music!" (F.)

"After my first Zumba class I felt so happy! Sometimes it is really hard to find the motivation, but the instructor made everything easy and fun! I am looking forward to attending my next class!" (L.)

"Thank you so much for making the Zumba in Italian classes a very enjoyable and fun experience. Your enthusiasm and energy are contagious and it's a great way to get some exercise and dance to Italian music". (S.)

"What fun we are having on Thursday nights! You are the best Zumba teacher ever! Very encouraging and enthusiastic" (E.)

The next series of Zumba sessions started in January. Come and join us! To find out more simply click on the link:
<https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/zumba-in-italian/>



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

END OF SEMESTER - YIPPEE!

Students from all ILC classes streamed into the Tomato Brothers restaurant on the evening of 26 November to celebrate the end of semester 2 2024 with a memorable 'Cena di fine Semestre'!

It was a joy to witness students connecting with fellow ile sharing a copious Italian meal together. How interesting to share stories of language learning journeys in this friendly, celebratory atmosphere.

One of the evening's standout moments was the lively singing competition. The winning table sang "AUGURI DI BUON NATALE" with a fervour reflecting the impressive level of competition. ILC was delighted to honour the performance with a complimentary bottle of prosecco to enjoy together.

What would the cena be without awards? Congratulations to the four students all from different classes who received a well-deserved 'panettone alla pera e cioccolato' to reward their efforts.

ILC eagerly looks forward to welcoming students back next year.

Enrolments for 2025 are open and you can reserve your spot for the next phase of your Italian language learning via the link

<https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/learn-italian-brisbane/>



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

OFFICIAL VISIT BY DIRECTOR OF UFFICIO V (MAECI)

On 28 October 2024, accompanied by the Italian Consul Luna Angelini Marinucci, Co.As.It.-ILC President Cav. Nereo Brezzi, Co.As.It.-ILC CEO Tanina Softa and Co.As.It.-ILC Director Dina Ranieri, the Director of Ufficio V at MAECI (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Consigliere d'Ambasciata Filippo Romano, visited Co.As.It.-ILC in Brisbane.

Ufficio V focuses on promoting Italian language and culture worldwide, collaborating with organisations like Co.As.It.-ILC which supports Italian teaching and learning in Queensland schools.

The Consigliere's visit to All Hallows' School and Brisbane State High School highlighted the importance of cultural exchange and education in fostering international understanding and cooperation.

He expressed his enthusiasm for the strong ties between Italy and Australia and commended the efforts of educators and students alike in preserving and celebrating the Italian heritage.

It was a day filled with inspiration and renewed sense of purpose for a future enriched by shared knowledge and cultural appreciation.

Ufficio V focuses on promoting Italian language and culture worldwide, collaborating with organisations like Co.As.It.-ILC



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

CHRISTMAS FOR LITTLES AT ILC

The holiday season sparked with joy and laughter as the Italian Language Centre hosted the annual Christmas concerts performed by students of the Playgroup and After School Italian programs.

These two enchanting events brought families and friends together to celebrate the festive spirit through music, creativity, cherished traditions and of course food!

The concerts featured the children singing traditional Italian Christmas songs as well as performing short role-plays in Italian.

On both occasions, the children's enthusiasm and efforts were met with resounding applause and proud smiles from parents and loved ones.

In the words of a parent attending the After School concert: *"...the performances were so polished and the kids all seemed so comfortable and confident. It was a delight to watch!"*

The highlight of the events was a special visit from *Babbo Natale* who delighted the children by handing out presents and sharing warm wishes.

A heartfelt thank you to all the families who attended, the dedicated Italian teachers and to the wonderful After School and Playgroup learners who made the day unforgettable.

ILC looks forward to welcoming students to After School Italian and Girotondo Italian Playgroup 2025.

Enrolments are open. Simply click on the links to reserve a spot:

After School Italian

<https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/after-school-italian/>

Girotondo Italian Playgroup

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



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

IMMERSION PROGRAM QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

Two dedicated teams, (Brisbane and Sunshine Coast) work tirelessly throughout the year supporting Italian programs by facilitating in-school immersion experiences as well as providing teaching resources upon request.

From classrooms to consular visits, every moment has been a step towards fostering a love for Italian teaching and learning. ILC is excited to continue the journey of promoting Italian language and culture at schools throughout Queensland.

Italian Christmas at St. Columba's Primary School: Year 1 and Year 2 students enjoyed an introduction to Italian Christmas traditions. They were amazed to learn that children in Italy receive gifts from both Babbo Natale (Santa's Italian "colleague") and a lovely old lady called La Befana who delivers coal instead of gifts to naughty children.

Demystifying the Imperfetto verb tense at All Hallows' School:

Year 10 students engaged in an ILC Italian in-school session with the focus on demystifying one of the more challenging verb tenses: the Imperfetto. Students were encouraged to think of it as a tense that sets a scene, evokes memories and captures the rhythm of past habits. The correct use of the Imperfetto tense was effortlessly reinforced.

Italian through sport at St Joseph's Nundah: Year 3 and Year 4 students enjoyed a lively cultural immersion lesson which began with an interactive presentation introducing vocabulary related to Italy's most beloved sports: IL CALCIO (soccer), IL CICLISMO (cycling); L'AUTOMOBILISMO (car racing); IL MOTOCICLISMO (motorbike racing); IL TENNIS. At the end of the session, students were able to express their sports preferences in Italian and were confident enough to actively engage in IL GIOCO DEI MIMI (miming game) to reinforce the vocabulary learnt throughout the session.

Italian teachers in Queensland schools wishing to book a funded in-school Italian session or receive Italian teaching resources; simply click on the following links and complete the request form:

Italian in-school session
<https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/in-class-italian-pedagogical-session-at-school/>

Italian teaching resources
<https://www.italianlanguagecentre.org/italian-resources-for-teachers/>



Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

KELVIN GROVE STATE COLLEGE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Co.As.It. and ILC organised a week of work experience at Casa Serena for four Year 10 students learning Italian at Kelvin Grove State College.

Read Haiden, Shubb, Leonard and Lucas, reflect in their own words their experience:

"Last week, we had the privilege of participating in the Casa Serena work experience. This unique opportunity brought us closer to the community and allowed us to practise our Italian skills.

As part of the work experience, we worked alongside the Casa Serena staff to support the elderly clients. We learnt more about the day-to-day running of the community centre and assisted with meals and activities.

A definite highlight was joining in the games, including cards, bingo (tombola) and bocce.

The connections we made were meaningful and all of us formed special friendships. Thanks to the incredible Co.As. It staff and clients, we forged links between generations, cultures, and personalities.

It was a brilliant language opportunity for us all and a chance to connect with a broader diverse community.

Thank you to everyone who made it possible and we hope to be back soon!"



"A definite highlight was joining in the games...."

Italian LANGUAGE TEACHING

WINE AND CHEESE GET-TOGETHER

On Saturday 23 November the Scala Room was transformed into a 'cellar' with wine barrel tasting stations scattered around the room, festooned with trailing vine leaves and bunches of grapes.

Co.As.It. CEO Tanina Softa opened the proceedings, welcoming Cav. Fil d'Arro from Italiquore who shared insights into Italy's finest wines and produce.

As guests meandered between the tasting stations, they sampled and enjoyed renowned wines like the Medici Ermete Lambrusco and Sangiovese, the intense deep red Roma Capomunni, the Bellussi extra dry prosecco from Valdobbiadene, the Montresor pinot grigio, a Rocca del Dragone white with a hint of almonds and honeysuckle, Marengo deep ruby reds from Piemonte, and a Contero sparkling red.

Towards the end of the session, guests also tried the bitter 'digestivo' Vecchio Amaro del Capo from Calabria and finally, the Milano Giass Dry Gin.

The wines matched perfectly with delectable cheeses like Grana Padano, Fontina, Provolone and Gorgonzola.

The afternoon was filled with chats and laughter and feedback has some describing this event as 'absolutely awesome' and 'we can't wait for the next one'.

Arrivederci all prossima! Be sure to join our next event as we celebrate Carnevale.

www.italianlanguagecentre.org





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APERITIVO DI CARNEVALE

*Celebrate Carnevale while sampling beautiful
Italian wines and traditional Carnevale treats*

Sat, 22 February | Italian Language Centre
3.30pm - 5.30pm | 473 Lutwyche Rd, Lutwyche

\$25 (No Refunds)

*Join the fun by wearing a mask or
pick one from our great selection at the event*
(OPTIONAL)



BOOK NOW:
[italianlanguagecentre.org/
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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



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