

ANNUAL REPORT



20
24



CONTENTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

04 VISION AND MISSION ACKNOWLEDGMENT	05 PATRONS AND COMMITTEE	06-07 MANAGEMENT AND MEMBERS OF STAFF	40-41 LANGUAGE, CULTURE, HERITAGE DIRECTOR	42-43 ITALIAN LANGUAGE ADULT CLASSES	44 LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM
08 CO.AS.IT. GOVERNANCE SYSTEM	09 CO.AS.IT. ORGANISATION CHART	10-12 PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT	45 STUDENT'S EVENTS	46 IL GIROTONDO PROGRAM	47 RESOURCE CENTRE
14-19 CEO'S ANNUAL REPORT	20-21 MELBOURNE ITALIAN FESTA	22 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	48 AFTER HOURS PROGRAM	49 MUSEO ITALIANO EDUCATION PROGRAM	50 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
23 RECRUITMENT	24 INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	25 IT, INFRASTRUCTURE & CYBER SECURITY	51 C.U.T.E. UJNIVERSITA' DELLA TERZA ETA'	52-53 C.U.T.E. SURVEY	54 CULTURAL PROGRAM
26 RESEARCH, MEDIA, SPECIAL PROJECTS	27 WITCARE HUB	28-29 AGED CARE SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT	55 NEXT GEN PROGRAM	56 IHS & MUSEO ITALIANO	58-59 FINANCIAL REPORT INTRODUCTION
30 SERVICE PROVISION	31 VISITATION PROGRAM	32-33 SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS	60-82 FINANCIAL REPORT		
34-35 ACCESS & SUPPORT	36-38 CLINICAL GOVERNANCE & QUALITY CARE	39 CUSTOMER RELATIONS			

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

CO.AS.IT. ITALIAN ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION

VISION

"CO.AS.IT. is a provider of aged care, education, and heritage services which supports a future where the Italian-Australian community flourishes, contributing richly to a modern, inclusive Australian society through the vibrant interchange of culture, knowledge, and mutual respect."

MISSION

"CO.AS.IT., established in 1968, is steadfast in its commitment to enriching the lives of the Italian-Australian community through its dedicated work, profound cultural understanding, and comprehensive educational and social services.

We collaborate with our community by preserving and promoting the Italian language and heritage, embracing multiculturalism, and fostering dignity and inclusivity.

We provide high-quality services that respect individual needs, celebrate diversity, and integrate timeless values with innovative solutions to meet contemporary challenges."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CO.AS.IT. gratefully acknowledges the support of the following:

Ministero degli Affari Esteri e Cooperazione Internazionale (MAECI)

Capitolo 3153 Progetto "Assistentato Linguistico dall'Infanzia alle Secondarie" approvato con graduatorie finali pubblicate con D.M. 0520 del 15/5/2024

- Government of the Commonwealth of Australia
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Government of the Republic of Italy
- Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Consulate General of Italy for Victoria and Tasmania
- State Government of Victoria
- Department of Health
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Mu.MA - Istituzione Musei del Mare e delle Migrazioni (Genova)
- Il Globo Newspaper

PATRONS AND COMMITTEE

Patron-in-Chief

The Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC

Emeritus President

Sir James Gobbo AC CVO (in memory of)

CO.AS.IT. Board

President

Mr Vincent Volpe

Vice Presidents

Ms Grace Alessandrini

Dr Tony Bartone

Secretary

Ms Carmen Randazzo

Treasurer

Dr Dominic Barbaro

Members

Dr Paul Arduca

Mr Vito Cassisi

Mr Ciro Fiorini

Mrs Maria Irminger

Ms Bruna Pasqua

Mr Don Pasquariello

Prof Mauro Sandrin

Ms Silvana Sgrò

Mrs Anna Trabucco

Patrons

The Hon. Bernard D. Bongiorno, AO

Dr Vic Buccheri

Mr Angelo Favaloro

Dr Anthony Mariani, AM

Dr George Santoro, AO

Mrs Susan Santoro

Mr Tony Schiavello, AM

Mr Angelo Taranto

Mr Carlo Travaglini, OAM

Mrs Elsie Valmorbida

Mr Mariano Valmorbida

In memory of

Comm. David Barro

Mr Giancarlo Caprioli

Mr Gianni Gangitano

Prof Piero Genovesi

Mr Dante Mecca

Mr Paolo Mirabella, OAM

Mr Sebastiano Pitruzzello, OAM

Mr Giuseppe Sala

Mr Giovanni Scomparin, OAM

Mr Saverio Valmorbida



STAFF

MEMBERS

ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executive Officer
General Manager
Finance Manager
Assistant to Finance Manager
Accounts Payable & Payrole Officer
Accounts Assistants

On. Marco Fedi
Lusiana LiVolti
Alfred Qiu
Jonathan Feng
Suong Tran
Yu Cao
Cassie Wang
Qian Wei
Patricia Yang

Administration Assistance
& Front of House

Rosemary Bonacquisto
Mirella Lamberti
Sylvia Salerno
Grace Lastrina
Manish Poudel
Elaine Bocchini
Francesca Martone
Luca Esposito

Training & Development Officer
Recruitment Officer
IT Officer
Marketing & Branding Specialist
Marketing Assistant
Research & Media Liaison Officer



AGED CARE SERVICES

Director

Emma Contessa

Care Managers

Massimiliano Aiello
Antonietta Aloï
Marilena Aloï
Rakhee Dev
Lara Ferraro
Linda Lastrina
Silvia Mena Burgos
Filomena Pacca
Vincenzo Pappalardo
Sara Pontoglio
Sherydan Reynolds
Marinella Terranova
Patricia Torresi
Angela Vindigni

AGED CARE SERVICES

Clinical Governance & Quality Care

Manager Deborah Caprioli
Clinical Care Coordinator Allan P Krechowitsch
Registered Nurses Teresia Belia
Chloe Kim
Youna Kim
Pablo Martinez
Claudia Vallese
Serena Sandrin
Access & Support Stella Tallorito
Customer Relations Giovanni Ghilardi

Compliance Officer
Access & Support
Customer Relations

In-home Support

Acting Team Leader Marisa De Simone
Service Provision Support Concetta Carramusa
Jacob Colosimo
Nadia Del Vecchio
Alfie Falleti

Aged Care Assistants

108

Italian Senior Citizens Association

Coordinator Frank Di Blasi

Visitation Program

Manager Filomen Adem
Admin Assistant Daniela Montesano
Regional Coordinators Rina Afflitto
Tania Barbaro
Laura Demontis
Linda Francione
Maria Josie Pellegrino
Maria Penco
Concetta Tartaglia
Davide Vigiano

Volunteers

220

Social Support Groups

Manager Maria Metelli
Admin Assistant Flora Levorato
Assessment Officer Margaret Rizzo
Site Coordinators Nina Scali-Parrello
Bianca Lorefice

SSG Aged Care Assistants

9

ITALIAN LANGUAGE, CULTURE & HERITAGE DEPARTMENT

Director Ferdinando Colarossi
Support Officer Alexander Parise

Education & Language

Coordinator Michela Pellizon
Language Assistants
Coordinant Maria Cagiati

Language Assistants

25

After Hours Italian Program

Coordinator Maria Brancolino
Team Leader Sally Monitto

Adult Classes

Coordinator Alexander Parise

Il Girotondo Program

Coordinator Mariella De Paolis

Sessional Teachers

22

University of the Third Age (CUTE)

Coordinator Francesco Pascalis
Project Officer Ivano Ercole

Sessional Teachers

2

Resource Centre

Teacher Librarian Federica Falco
Library Assistant Tania Barbati
Volunteer Maria Aligna

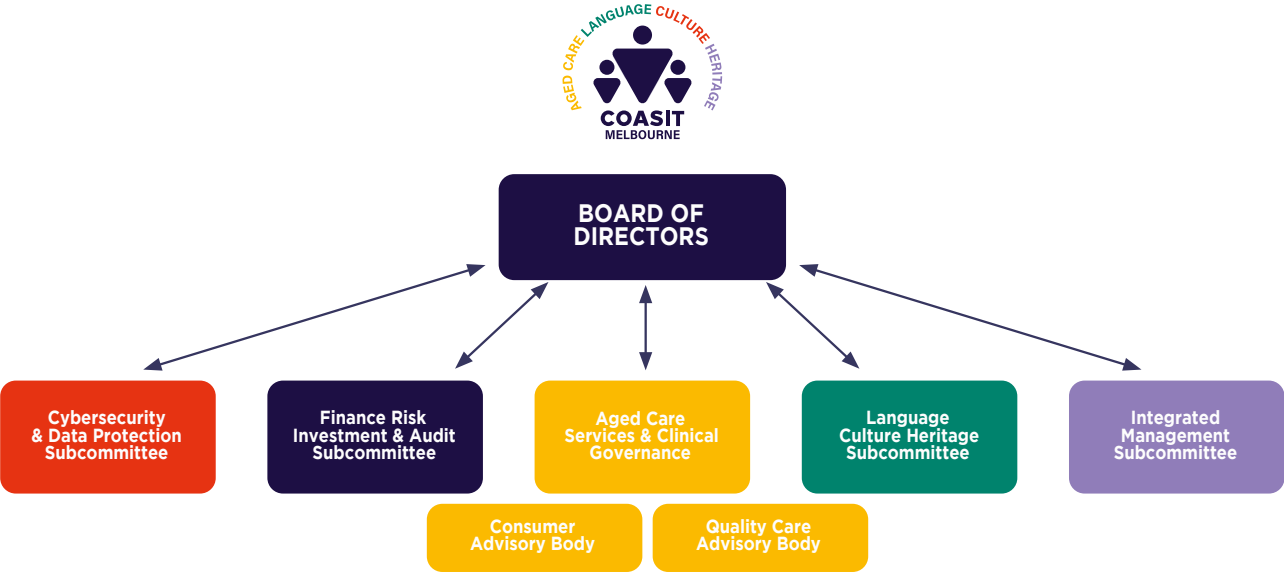
Cultural Program

Manager Dr. Paolo Baracchi
New Gen Officer Carmelina Calabro

Italian Historical Society and Museo Italiano

Manager Elizabeth Triarico

GOVERNANCE SYSTEM



AUSMED Training Modules for:
Aged Care 8 Quality Standards, Aged Care Code of Conduct, SIRS
Code of Conduct (Board, Staff and Volunteers)
Non-Disclosure Agreements for Board Members and Senior Staff (NDA)
Conflict of Interest Policy, Protocols and Declaration

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Comm. Vincent Volpe
PRESIDENT

Grace Alessandrini
VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Tony Bartone
VICE PRESIDENT

Carmen Randazzo
SECRETARY

Dr. Dominic Barbaro, AM
TREASURER

Prof. Mauro Sandrin
MEMBER

Ciro Florini
MEMBER

Bruna Pasqua, AM
MEMBER

Cav. Vito Cassisi
MEMBER

Maria Irminger
MEMBER

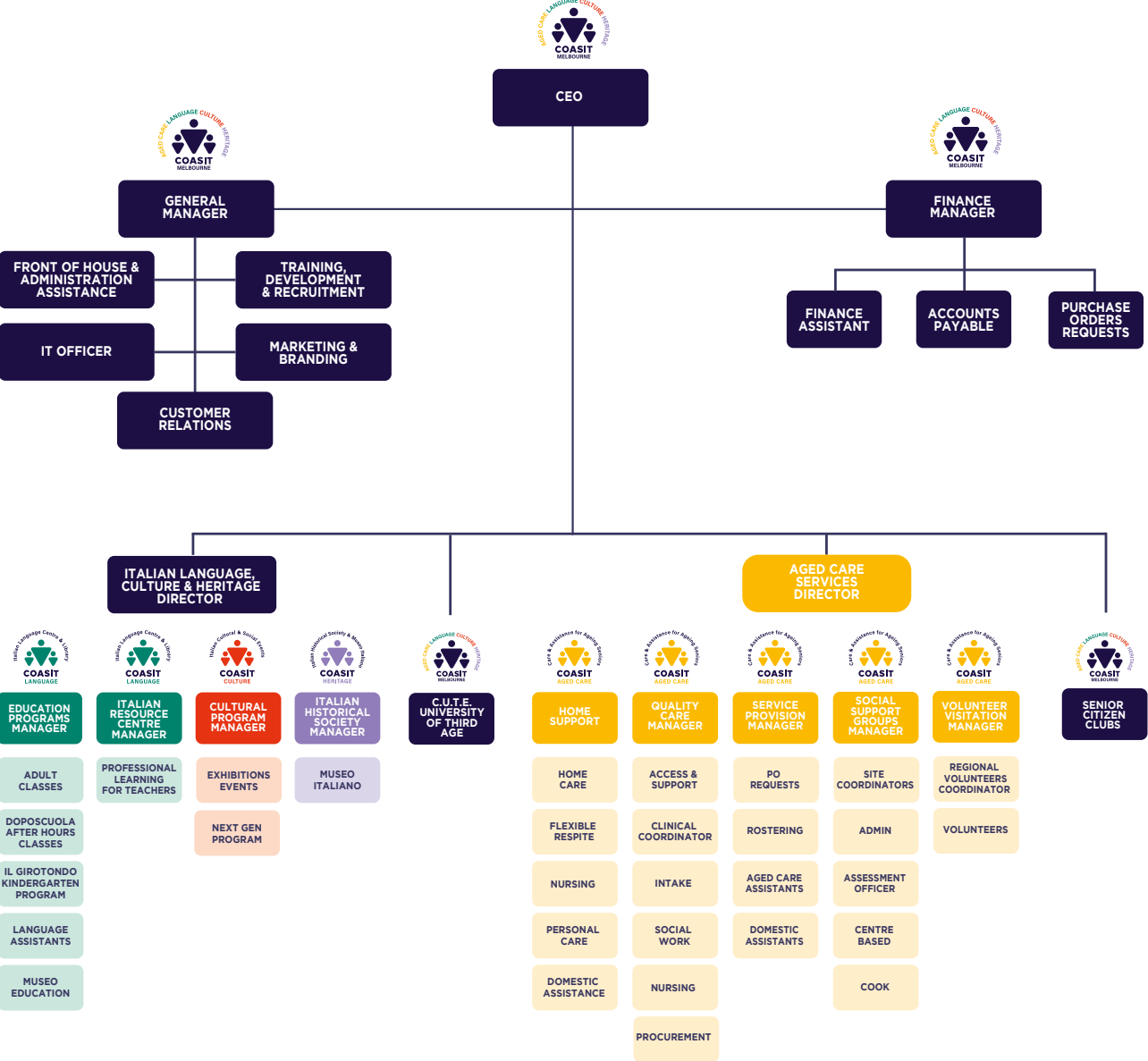
Anna Trabucco
MEMBER

Don Pasquariello
MEMBER

Silvana Srgò
MEMBER

Dr. Paul Francis Arduca
MEMBER

ORGANISATION CHART



SOLIDARITY, INCLUSION, AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE



GROUNDING IN ITS CORE VALUES OF SOLIDARITY, INCLUSION, AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE, CO.AS.IT. HAS RESPONDED TO THE CHALLENGES OF THESE TURBULENT TIMES WITH RENEWED ENERGY AND FOCUS.

With unwavering commitment, the organisation has expanded its services to create new educational opportunities, foster social cohesion, and enhance the community's well-being. By integrating Italian culture with contemporary Australian life, CO.AS.IT. has strengthened its role as a bridge between the two nations, enriching the lives of those connected to Italy and promoting intercultural understanding.

This year, significant efforts have been made in upgrading internal processes and operations. These efforts are progressing rapidly, enabling CO.AS.IT. to expand and improve the quality of its services, while modernising its structure to meet future challenges. With the guidance of a dedicated People and Culture Manager, the organisation is better equipped to support its staff and navigate upcoming transformations.



TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATIONS

have been prioritised to ensure that every segment of the community feels included and a series of initiatives have been launched to ensure each generation is welcome into the CO.AS.IT. family.

In the aged care sector, which remains a cornerstone of CO.AS.IT.'s mission, the organisation has embraced change as an opportunity for growth. In response to recent government legislation, CO.AS.IT. has adapted its aged care programs to ensure elderly community members continue to age with dignity within their cultural context. An ambitious five-year plan has been established to improve support-at-home programs and meet the growing need for culturally sensitive care. This includes opening a second Aged Care office in Niddrie to expand our services, recruiting Italian-speaking caregivers, and exploring streamlined visa options to strengthen the connection between elderly individuals and caregivers.

PRESIDENT REPORT FOR YEAR 2024

PRESIDENT VINCENT VOLPE

As part of its forward-thinking approach, CO.AS.IT.'s Social Support Groups (SSG) will undergo a transformation, relocating to new centres in Niddrie, North Brunswick, Reservoir, and Regional Victoria. These centres will offer a diversified workforce providing both group and in-home support, further enhancing the well-being of elderly community members in a culturally familiar environment.

A key aspect of our community care efforts includes the coordination of nearly sixty senior citizen clubs, as well as the outstanding success of the C.U.T.E. Università della Terza Età project. This initiative continues to grow and thrive, playing an increasingly important role in enriching the lives of our senior community members.

CO.AS.IT. remains a leader in promoting Italian language, culture, and heritage through its educational programs, Museo Italiano, and the Italian Historical Society. From accredited courses for Italian teachers to programs like Language Assistants, Doposcuola, and Il Girotondo, CO.AS.IT. plays a crucial role in fostering Italian language and culture in Victoria, with the support of both, the State and Italian Government. Plans are also underway to recruit Italian teachers directly from Italy to meet the growing demand for Italian-language educators in Victorian schools.

CO.AS.IT. has expanded its cultural offerings, including exhibitions, research opportunities, and events, providing a comprehensive, year-round program for all generations of Italians and culture enthusiasts. The organisation's role as the promoter and organiser of the Melbourne Italian Festa was a resounding success, attracting thousands of attendees, reaffirming CO.AS.IT.'s central role within the community and beyond, and highlighting our capacity to rise to significant challenges.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and constant commitment of our CEO, Marco Fedi, whom I personally thank for his outstanding work, as well as our managers, staff, and volunteers. A special mention goes to all the members of the board, whom I sincerely thank for their assistance, support, and guidance in helping me fulfill my role as president.

RELAZIONE DEL PRESIDENTE

**SOLIDARIETÀ, INCLUSIONE E
DIALOGO TRA CULTURE**

ISPIRATO DAI SUOI VALORI
FONDAMENTALI DI SOLIDARIETÀ,
INCLUSIONE E DIALOGO TRA LE
CULTURE, IL CO.AS.IT. DI MELBOURNE
HA AFFRONTATO CON ENERGIA E
DETERMINAZIONE LE SFIDE DI QUESTI
TEMPI DIFFICILI.

L'organizzazione ha ampliato i propri servizi, creando nuove opportunità nel settore dell'istruzione, promuovendo la coesione sociale e migliorando il benessere della comunità. Inoltre, integrando la cultura italiana nella vita contemporanea australiana, il CO.AS.IT. ha rafforzato il suo ruolo di ponte tra le due nazioni, arricchendo la vita di chi è legato all'Italia e promuovendo la comprensione reciproca tra le due culture.

Quest'anno sono stati compiuti significativi sforzi per migliorare i processi e l'operatività interna, permettendo all'organizzazione di espandere e migliorare la qualità dei suoi servizi. Con il supporto di un nuovo responsabile delle risorse umane e della cultura aziendale, il CO.AS.IT. è meglio equipaggiato per sostenere il proprio personale e affrontare le trasformazioni future. La trasparenza e la comunicazione sono state prioritarie per garantire che ogni segmento della comunità si senta coinvolto, e sono state lanciate iniziative per accogliere ogni generazione all'interno della grande famiglia del CO.AS.IT.

Nel settore dell'assistenza agli anziani, pilastro della missione del CO.AS.IT., l'organizzazione ha abbracciato il cambiamento come opportunità di crescita. In risposta alla recente legislazione del governo federale, il CO.AS.IT. ha adattato i propri programmi di assistenza per garantire che i membri anziani della comunità possano continuare a vivere con dignità nel loro contesto culturale. È stato avviato un ambizioso piano quinquennale per migliorare i programmi

di supporto domiciliare e soddisfare la crescente necessità di assistenza culturalmente appropriata, inclusa l'apertura di un secondo ufficio per l'assistenza agli anziani a Niddrie e il reclutamento di assistenti di lingua italiana.

I gruppi di supporto sociale (SSG) del CO.AS.IT. subiranno una trasformazione, con nuove sedi a Niddrie, North Brunswick, Reservoir e nella regione del Victoria. Questi centri offriranno una forza lavoro diversificata, fornendo supporto di gruppo e domiciliare per migliorare il benessere degli anziani in un ambiente culturale familiare. Un aspetto chiave degli sforzi di cura della comunità è anche il coordinamento di circa sessanta club per anziani e il successo del progetto C.U.T.E. (Università della Terza Età), che continua a crescere e arricchire la vita dei membri più anziani della comunità.

Il CO.AS.IT. rimane un'organizzazione centrale nella promozione della lingua, della cultura e delle radici culturali italiane attraverso i suoi programmi educativi, il Museo Italiano e la Società Storica Italiana. Dai corsi accreditati per insegnanti di italiano ai programmi come quello degli Assistenti di lingua, il Doposcuola e Il Girotondo, il CO.AS.IT. svolge un ruolo cruciale nella diffusione della lingua e cultura italiana in Victoria, anche grazie al supporto del governo statale e di quello italiano. In questo ambito è in fase di progettazione un piano per reclutare insegnanti di italiano direttamente dall'Italia e rispondere così alla crescente domanda di educatori nelle scuole del Victoria.

L'organizzazione ha ampliato la sua offerta culturale, con mostre, opportunità di ricerca ed eventi, fornendo un programma completo durante tutto l'anno e per tutte le generazioni di italiani e appassionati di cultura italiana. Infine, il CO.AS.IT. ha anche consolidato il ruolo di promotore e organizzatore della Melbourne Italian Festa, che si è dimostrata un grande successo e, attirando decine migliaia di partecipanti, ha riaffermato il ruolo centrale del CO.AS.IT. nella comunità e oltre.

Tutto questo non sarebbe stato possibile senza la dedizione e l'impegno costante del nostro CEO, Marco Fedi, che ringrazio personalmente per il suo straordinario lavoro, così come dei nostri manager, dello staff e i dei volontari. Un ringraziamento speciale va poi a tutti i membri del consiglio direttivo, che ringrazio sinceramente per il loro supporto e guida nel mio ruolo di presidente.



WE PROUDLY PRESENT THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT, A TESTAMENT TO OUR SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH ACROSS ALL AREAS OF CO.AS.IT. MELBOURNE. THE ORGANISATION HAS MET AND EXCEEDED ALL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) FOR THE YEAR, DEMONSTRATING OUR COMMITMENT TO EXPANDING OUR SERVICES, MAINTAINING HIGH-QUALITY



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

CEO ON. MARCO FEDI



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



GROWTH AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

CO.AS.IT. has experienced marked growth in all service areas, increasing the number of clients accessing our aged care and community services. Our commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred care has been reflected and echoed in the overwhelmingly positive feedback from clients, families, and community stakeholders. Forming committees and subcommittees has also improved engagement, enabling clients to play an active role in shaping the services they receive. CO.AS.IT., as a service provider, will "Listen, Care, and Reinvest in you—Because You Matter."

CO.AS.IT. BELIEVES

that every aged care client deserves to be heard. That's why we've designed a care system that prioritises your voice, offers personalised attention, and reinvests resources back into the services and support you need. Through our Supplementary Assistance Fund for Home Care Clients, we ensure that the benefits of your care extend beyond individual support, empowering the entire community.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR CHANGES

We have successfully implemented several significant changes across the organisation, particularly in the aged care sector. These changes, which align with government reforms and our long-term strategy, have been a resounding success. The support-at-home program is evolving into a robust, client-focused model that listens and acts on the needs of those we serve, setting the stage for a new era in aged care.

AGED CARE SERVICES

CO.AS.IT.'s aged care services have grown substantially, with increasing numbers of clients benefiting from our care programs. This year has seen enhanced engagement through newly formed committees and subcommittees designed to turn clients into active participants in the decision-making process. In line with the broader aged care reforms, we continue to adapt our Social Support Groups (SSG) and Visitation programs, ensuring they remain relevant and practical.

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) continues to be a cornerstone of our aged care offerings. Our commitment to maintaining and evolving these services has been unwavering, and continuous improvements have been made to ensure quality care and responsive service delivery.

ACCESS AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Our Access and Support programs remain vital to the organisation's mission of providing comprehensive information, support, and engagement to individual clients and the wider community. These programs are crucial in helping vulnerable individuals navigate the aged care system, providing them with essential assistance and advocacy.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Education remains a central pillar of CO.AS.IT.'s activities. This year, we reaffirmed our leadership in Italian language education, with our Language Assistants Program now being adopted in other states of Australia and internationally.

Our Doposcuola and Il Girotondo programs continue to support families in fostering Italian language skills from early childhood through adulthood. Our adult education programs also remain robust, helping individuals of all ages and backgrounds engage with the Italian language and culture.

The Resource Centre has also seen significant improvement, and plans are underway to establish a new Universal Library, further strengthening our educational resources.

CULTURAL AND GEN Z PROGRAMS

CO.AS.IT.'s cultural initiatives, including the Museo Italiano and Italian Historical Society, continue to be at the heart of our work in Carlton. These programs celebrate our rich Italian heritage and connect new generations through innovative projects like the the GenZ programs, ensuring that Italian culture remains vibrant and relevant.

MIF24 - A MAJOR CULTURAL MILESTONE

One of the most significant highlights of the year was the Melbourne Italian Festival (MIF24), held at the historic Royal Exhibition Building on 5-6 October. This event was a success and a testament to our organisation's capability to foster strong community

bonds while promoting Italian culture. A key feature of MIF24 was the ITALEA event, sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which promises to be a driving force in shaping future relations between Italy and Australia. We can all be proud of this achievement. We are grateful to Elaine Bocchini for organising the event.

RECRUITMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

This year, we welcomed Karen Tavolaro as our new People and Culture Manager. Karen's expertise will be instrumental in furthering our efforts to retain and recruit new aged care and education talent. We have made significant strides in worker retention and recruitment, including exploring avenues for recruiting professionals from Italy, mainly in the aged care and education sectors. Additionally, we are expanding our capabilities by providing support through the WitCare Hub, another success story that enhances our service offerings.

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUBS AND CUTE PROGRAM

The CUTE program is about maintaining learning opportunities available to our community. CO.AS.IT. supports Senior Citizens Clubs and

their role is crucial in maintaining a solid connection with our community. Our support for these clubs remains critical to our commitment to nurturing a vibrant and engaged Italian-Australian community.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are proud to have achieved all our targets and indicators this year, and we owe this success to our incredible staff's dedication, hard work, and resilience. Their commitment to excellence and innovation has been instrumental in helping us navigate the challenges of the year and emerge stronger.

In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on growth and innovation, particularly in aged care and education. As we look to recruit new workers from Italy and other regions, we are committed to providing the best possible care and learning experiences for our clients, students, and community members.

CONCLUSION

CO.AS.IT. Melbourne has had a landmark year marked by significant achievements in service delivery, community engagement, and organisational growth. Thanks to our staff's extraordinary efforts and our community's continued support, we have successfully met all KPIs. Together, we are well-positioned to continue leading in aged care, education, and cultural promotion for years to come.

Thank you to all staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters for making 2024 a year of success and growth. We look forward to building on these achievements with optimism and determination as we move into the future.

RELAZIONE ANNUALE

SIAMO ORGOGLIOSI DI PRESENTARE IL RAPPORTO ANNUALE 2024, UN DOCUMENTO CHE TESTIMONIA I NOSTRI SIGNIFICATIVI TRAGUARDI E LA CRESCITA IN TUTTE LE AREE DEL CO.AS.IT. DI MELBOURNE. L'ORGANIZZAZIONE HA RAGGIUNTO E SUPERATO TUTTI GLI INDICATORI CHIAVE DI PRESTAZIONE (KPI) PER L'ANNO, DIMOSTRANDO IL NOSTRO IMPEGNO NELL'ESPANDERE I SERVIZI, MANTENERE ELEVATI STANDARD DI CURA E ATTUARE CAMBIAMENTI ORGANIZZATIVI CRUCIALI PER SERVIRE AL MEGLIO LA COMUNITÀ.

PUNTI PRINCIPALI

CRESCITA E QUALITÀ DEI SERVIZI

Il CO.AS.IT. ha registrato una notevole crescita in tutti i settori operativi, con un aumento del numero di clienti che usufruiscono dei nostri servizi di assistenza agli anziani e per l'intera comunità. Il nostro impegno nel fornire un'assistenza di alta qualità, incentrata sulla persona, è stato confermato dal giudizio estremamente positivo ricevuto da clienti, famiglie e stakeholder della comunità. La creazione di comitati e sottocomitati ha migliorato il coinvolgimento, permettendo ai clienti di svolgere un ruolo attivo nel modellare i servizi che ricevono. Come fornitore di servizi il CO.AS.IT., "Ti ascolta, si prende cura e reinveste in te — Perché tu conti".

IL CO.AS.IT. CREDE

che ogni nostro cliente meriti di essere ascoltato. Per questo abbiamo progettato un sistema di cura che dà priorità alla tua voce, offre un'attenzione personalizzata e reinveste risorse nei servizi e nel supporto di cui hai bisogno. Attraverso il nostro Fondo di Assistenza Supplementare per i Clienti dell'Assistenza Domiciliare, garantiamo che i benefici per la tua assistenza vadano oltre il supporto individuale,

rafforzando l'intera comunità.

IMPLEMENTAZIONE DI CAMBIAMENTI SIGNIFICATIVI

Abbiamo implementato con successo numerosi cambiamenti significativi in tutta l'organizzazione, in particolare nel settore dell'assistenza agli anziani. Questi cambiamenti, in linea con le riforme governative e la nostra strategia a lungo termine, stanno dando ottimi risultati. Il programma di assistenza domiciliare sta evolvendo in un modello solido e incentrato sul cliente, che è in sintonia con le esigenze di coloro che assistiamo, preparando il terreno per una nuova era nell'assistenza agli anziani.

SERVIZI DI ASSISTENZA AGLI ANZIANI

I servizi di assistenza agli anziani del CO.AS.IT. sono cresciuti notevolmente, con un numero sempre maggiore di clienti che beneficiano dei nostri programmi. Quest'anno abbiamo potenziato il coinvolgimento attraverso la creazione di comitati e sottocomitati volti a trasformare i clienti in partecipanti attivi nel processo decisionale. In linea con le riforme dell'assistenza agli anziani, continuiamo anche ad adattare i nostri Gruppi di Supporto Sociale (SSG) e i programmi di visite, assicurando che rimangano rilevanti e utili.

Il Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) continua ad essere una pietra miliare della nostra offerta di servizi per gli anziani e il nostro impegno nel mantenere e modernizzare questi servizi è rimasto costante, con continui miglioramenti per garantire cure di qualità e una pronta risposta alle esigenze dei clienti e delle loro famiglie.

PROGRAMMI DI ACCESSO E SUPPORTO

I nostri programmi di Accesso e Supporto rimangono fondamentali per la missione del CO.AS.IT. nel fornire informazioni complete, supporto e coinvolgimento per i clienti e l'intera comunità. Questi programmi sono essenziali per aiutare le persone vulnerabili a orientarsi nel sistema di assistenza agli anziani, offrendo loro sostegno ed assistenza.



PROGRAMMI EDUCATIVI

L'istruzione rimane un pilastro centrale delle attività del CO.AS.IT. Quest'anno abbiamo riaffermato la nostra leadership nell'insegnamento della lingua italiana, con il nostro Programma di Assistenti Linguistici che è stato adottato anche in altri Stati dell'Australia e a livello internazionale. I nostri programmi Doposcuola e Il Girotondo continuano a sostenere le famiglie nel coltivare le competenze linguistiche in italiano dall'infanzia all'età adulta. E anche i nostri programmi di educazione per adulti rimangono solidi, aiutando persone di tutte le età e provenienze a entrare in contatto con la lingua e la cultura italiane.

Il Centro Risorse ha visto miglioramenti significativi, e sono in corso piani per istituire una nuova Biblioteca Universale, rafforzando ulteriormente le nostre risorse educative.

PROGRAMMI CULTURALI E GEN Z

Le iniziative culturali del CO.AS.IT., tra cui il Museo Italiano e la Società Storica Italiana, continuano a essere il cuore del nostro lavoro a Carlton. Questi programmi celebrano il nostro ricco patrimonio culturale italiano e collegano le nuove generazioni attraverso progetti innovativi come i programmi GenZ, assicurando che la cultura italiana rimanga vibrante e rilevante.

MIF24 - UN IMPORTANTE TRAGUARDO CULTURALE

Uno dei momenti più significativi dell'anno è stato la Melbourne Italian Festa (MIF24), tenutasi al Royal Exhibition Building il 5-6 ottobre. Questo evento è stato un successo straordinario e ha dimostrato la capacità della nostra organizzazione di rafforzare i legami comunitari promuovendo la cultura italiana. Un elemento chiave del MIF24 è stato l'evento ITALEA, sponsorizzato dal Ministero degli Affari Esteri italiano, che promette di essere una forza trainante nel modellare le future relazioni tra Italia e Australia. Possiamo tutti essere orgogliosi di questo risultato. Siamo grati a Elaine Bocchini per l'organizzazione dell'evento.

RECLUTAMENTO E SVILUPPO DEL PERSONALE

Quest'anno abbiamo accolto Karen Tavoraro come nostra nuova Responsabile delle Risorse Umane e della Cultura Aziendale. La sua esperienza sarà fondamentale per rafforzare i nostri sforzi di trattenere e reclutare nuovi talenti nel settore dell'assistenza agli anziani e dell'insegnamento. Abbiamo compiuto importanti progressi nella ritenzione e nel reclutamento del personale, inclusa l'opportunità di reclutare professionisti dall'Italia, principalmente nei settori

dell'assistenza agli anziani e dell'insegnamento. Inoltre, stiamo ampliando le nostre capacità offrendo supporto attraverso il WitCare Hub, un'altra storia di successo che arricchisce la nostra offerta di servizi.

CIRCOLI PENSIONATI E PROGRAMMA CUTE

Il programma CUTE mira a mantenere aperte le opportunità di apprendimento per la nostra comunità. CO.AS.IT. sostiene i Circoli Pensionati e il loro ruolo è cruciale per mantenere un solido legame con la nostra comunità. Il nostro supporto a questi circoli rimane essenziale nel nostro impegno a coltivare una comunità italo-australiana vivace e coinvolta.

PROSPETTIVE FUTURE

Siamo orgogliosi di aver raggiunto tutti i nostri obiettivi e KPI quest'anno, e dobbiamo questo successo alla dedizione, al duro lavoro e alla resilienza del nostro straordinario staff. Il loro impegno per l'eccellenza e l'innovazione è stato fondamentale nell'aiutarci a superare le sfide dell'anno e ad emergere più forti.

Nell'anno a venire, continueremo a concentrarci sulla crescita e sull'innovazione, in particolare nei settori dell'assistenza agli anziani e dell'insegnamento. Mentre ci prepariamo a reclutare nuovo personale dall'Italia e da altre regioni, siamo impegnati a fornire le migliori esperienze possibili di cura e apprendimento per i nostri clienti, studenti e membri della comunità.

CONCLUSIONE

Il CO.AS.IT. Melbourne ha vissuto un anno storico, segnato da importanti successi nella fornitura di servizi, nell'impegno comunitario e nella crescita organizzativa. Grazie agli sforzi straordinari del nostro staff e al continuo sostegno della comunità, abbiamo raggiunto con successo tutti i KPI. Insieme, siamo ben posizionati per continuare a essere leader nell'assistenza agli anziani, nell'istruzione e nella promozione culturale per molti anni a venire.

Un ringraziamento a tutto lo staff, i volontari, i partner e i sostenitori per aver reso il 2024 un anno di successo e crescita. Con i risultati ottenuti, possiamo guardare al futuro con ottimismo e determinazione.

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

LUSIANA LIVOLTI

General Manager

THIS PAST YEAR, THE IMS COMMITTEE CONTINUED TO MEET EVERY SIX WEEKS

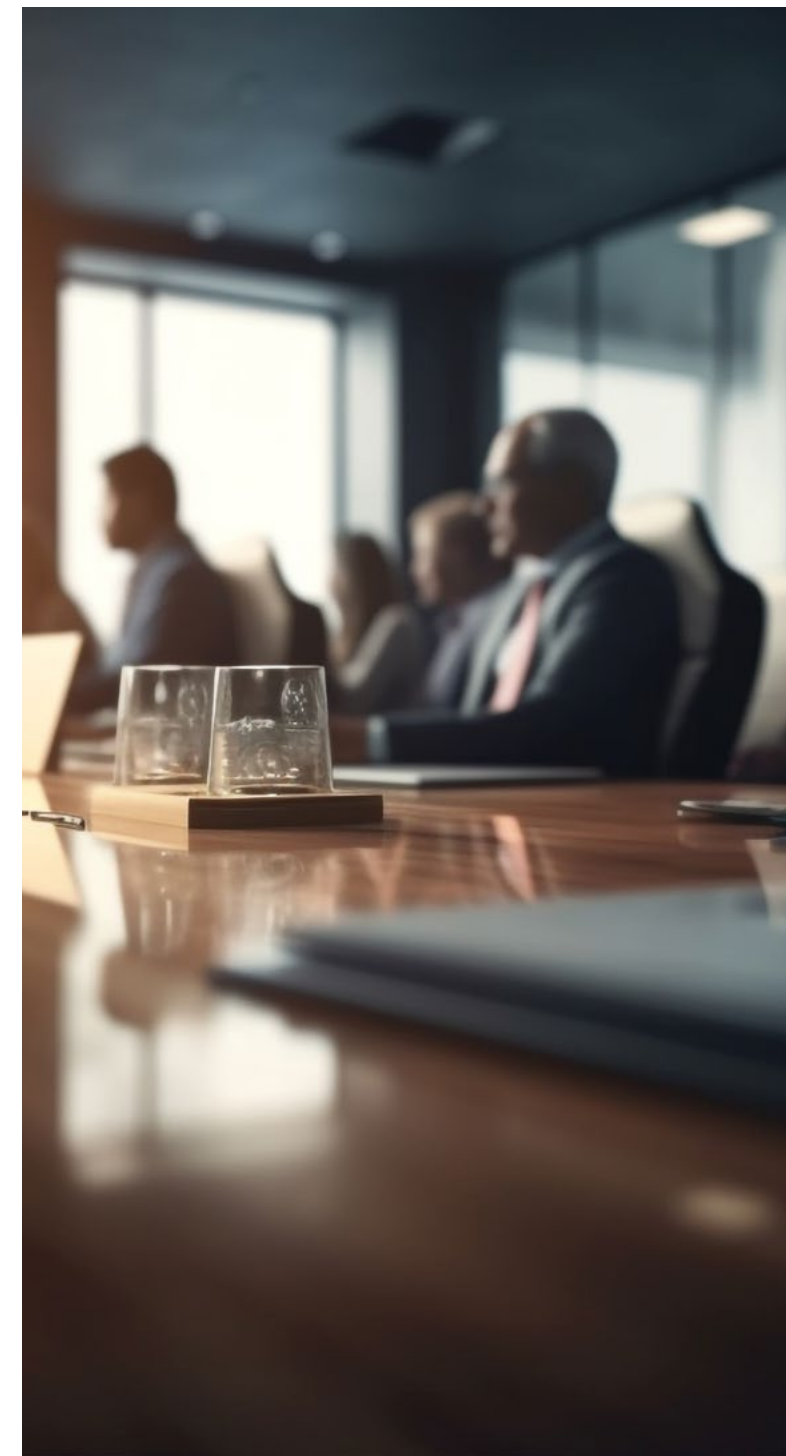
This past year, the IMS Committee continued to meet every six weeks. The Committee's members include the CEO, Financial Controller, General Manager, Director of Aged Care Services, and Director of Language, Culture, and Heritage. The IMS Committee Chair reports directly to the Executive Board, and the Board may advise on matters that are raised for their input.

Over the year, the Chair has extended an invitation to other managers and persons with relative experiences to ensure a more informative discussion to assist with planning. This has included the Training and Development Officer, Managers from various programs, and the Clinical Coordinator.

These meetings are a foundation for management to be introduced to, and gain clarity on, new or amended policies and procedures, have the confidence to disseminate the same to their respective employees, and offer the opportunity to raise areas of concern that can be addressed in the open forum.

In moving forward the IMS Committee will continue to review established processes ensuring that they are maintained and reviewed regularly. This will also ensure that compliance with regulatory authorities is maintained and applying risk management checklists will allow for continuous improvement.

The IMS Committee looks forward to the next twelve months of working collaboratively on bigger and better programs and opportunities.



MELBOURNE ITALIAN FESTA

ELAINE BOCCHINI
Marketing & Branding Specialist



MIF24 DRAWING RECORD ATTENDANCE AND FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

The Melbourne Italian Festa 2024 was an outstanding success, attracting approximately 100,000 visitors to the Royal Exhibition Building over the weekend of October 5th and 6th. This remarkable turnout represents a substantial increase from the 35,000

attendees in 2023, highlighting the festival's growing popularity.

This surge in attendance reflects a broader evolution within Melbourne's Italian community. The first major wave of Italian immigration to Australia occurred after World War II, primarily in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1970s and 1980s, Italian migration slowed as Italy's economy strengthened, but it revived in the 1990s and continued to diversify. When Italian-Australians began celebrating their heritage in Carlton's Lygon Street, the

community was largely composed of first-generation immigrants and their young families. However, as immigration slowed, the community grew through the descendants of these early immigrants. More recent arrivals in the 1990s and 2000s, alongside the newest immigrants on Working Holiday Visas, have contributed to a vibrant and multigenerational community.

MIF24 successfully catered to this diverse Italian-Australian demographic, which includes first-generation immigrants, their descendants, and recent arrivals. CO.AS.IT. is now well-positioned to start serving this evolving audience.

With over 150 exhibitors, the festival showcased an array of Italian products, from imported and locally produced food and beverages to artisanal crafts and fashion, celebrating the rich diversity of Italian culture. This marks a notable increase from the 90 exhibitors in 2023. Both new Italian immigrant businesses and well-established Italian-Australian enterprises embraced the event, reflecting the dynamic makeup of Melbourne's Italian community.

Financially, MIF24 generated an impressive \$2 million in turnover, underscoring the festival's increasing economic impact.

MEDIA STRATEGY PLAYED A KEY ROLE TO INCREASE THE ATTENDANCE

Our media strategy played a key role in reaching not only Melbourne's diverse Italian community but also Australians with a passion for Italian culture, delivering over \$262,000 in earned media value. Through targeted outreach to a wide array of journalists and media outlets, we achieved extensive coverage across various platforms:

Television: Channel 9, Channel 10, Channel 7, ABC, SBS (National and Italian), and Il Globo TV.

Radio: The Fox, Nova 100, Gold 104.3, 3AW, Triple M, SBS (National and Italian), and Rete Italia.

Print: Herald Sun, The Age, and Il Globo.

Social Media: Urban List, Broadsheet, and influencers such as Hannah McKnight and Big Vincenz.

Our Direct Digital Strategy further amplified our reach, generating nearly 1 million impressions:

Social Media: Facebook reached 629,686 users, and Instagram reached 74,800, for a combined total of 704,486.

Digital Radio & TV: SBS Digital Radio secured 40,502 impressions, and SBS On Demand TV achieved 90,912 views.

Website: The Melbourne Italian Festa website attracted 56,719 visitors, with a total of 77,018 visits.

Newsletter: Through CO.AS.IT.'s CRM, we sent four campaigns, reaching a total of 30,000 contacts.

Compared to 2023, we achieved a 300% increase in audience reach. MIF24 has enabled CO.AS.IT. to expand its capacity to host large-scale events for the Italian community and grow our database, which will be invaluable for future engagement efforts with this multicultural, intergenerational audience.

A special mention goes to the sponsors who made the event possible. Without the generous support of Chemist Warehouse, the Italian Australian Foundation, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Italea, Caffè Trombetta, and other minor contributors, the festival's success would not have been as remarkable. Additionally, the growth in scale and prominence of the Melbourne Italian Festa has made it increasingly attractive to larger companies interested in aligning their brand with the festival, promising new



sponsorship opportunities for future editions.

Thank you also to Zecchino d'Oro, an initiative that not only drew a large audience but also provided us with the opportunity to collaborate with primary schools across Melbourne.

On the political front, the presence of the Premier of Victoria and the former Mayor of Melbourne added prestige to the event. CO.AS.IT. and MIF24 were also honored to represent Australasia in "Turismo delle Radici," an initiative by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Distinguished guests included Maria Luigi Vignali, Director General for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies, and Giovanni Maria De Vita, Embassy Counsellor and Project Leader for "Turismo delle Radici."

CO.AS.IT.'s presence at the festival was prominently featured through a strategically located stand in the heart of the event. This prime location strengthened our brand, highlighted our role as the festival's organizer, and provided ample opportunities to engage with attendees, showcase our services, and enhance our visibility within the community.



LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



SYLVIA SALERNO
Training Officer

At CO.AS.IT., we believe that the foundation of excellent service and care lies in the continual growth and development of our staff. Throughout 2024, our Learning and Development (L&D) initiatives have focused on enhancing the skills and knowledge of our employees to ensure the highest standards of care and service.

In the aged care sector, we ensure that our clients receive safe and quality care by equipping our Aged Care Assistants (ACAs) with the necessary skills and knowledge. For this reason, we have set a standard that all ACAs must hold a minimum qualification of a Certificate III in Individual Support. 97% of our ACA are fully qualified. CO.AS.IT. continually seeks initiatives to support our staff, with six currently enrolled in a certificate course through CO.AS.IT., demonstrating our commitment to maintaining a highly skilled workforce. Additionally, we offer traineeships that allow our ACAs to work while studying.

A key focus this year was enhancing the clinical skills of our ACAs. In partnership with Dementia Australia, we introduced three dementia-specific AI workshops for ACAs caring for clients experiencing dementia. These workshops included:

- EDIE, which simulates what it's like to live with dementia from the perspective of someone who has it.
- Talking Ted, which demonstrated effective communication techniques and problem-solving strategies.
- D-ESC, an AI workshop (in which we participated as part of a pilot program) that equips caregivers with skills to manage changes in behaviour and de-escalate situations.

These initiatives resulted in a 39% increase in certifications for dementia-specific care approaches.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we responded to feedback from our volunteers by providing additional training on dementia. In collaboration with Dementia Australia, we coordinated a workshop titled "Understanding

Dementia", which 35% of our volunteers attended.

CO.AS.IT. recognises the importance of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) in fostering a healthier and more supportive workplace culture. All office staff attended a two-day MHFA course, and all support staff completed micro-credential units on the topic.

Finally, this year we implemented a training plan for our Board. At CO.AS.IT., we understand that training for the Board reinforces the importance of our values and ensures board members are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to govern effectively, comply with regulations, support staff and clients, and lead CO.AS.IT. to continued success.

In 2024, CO.AS.IT. has remained committed to enhancing the skills and qualifications of our staff through its L&D initiatives. Our efforts not only support the professional growth of our team but also reflect our dedication to delivering compassionate, quality care to our clients.



RECRUITMENT

CO.AS.IT.'S VISION IS TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY HOME CARE, WHERE PEOPLE ARE OUR STRENGTH.

SYLVIA SALERNO
Training Officer

This commitment is reflected in the recruitment efforts within the aged care sector, which have been both rewarding and challenging. The recruitment team remains focused on building a workforce capable of delivering high-quality, person-centered care. However, the recruitment process has been impacted by industry-specific challenges.

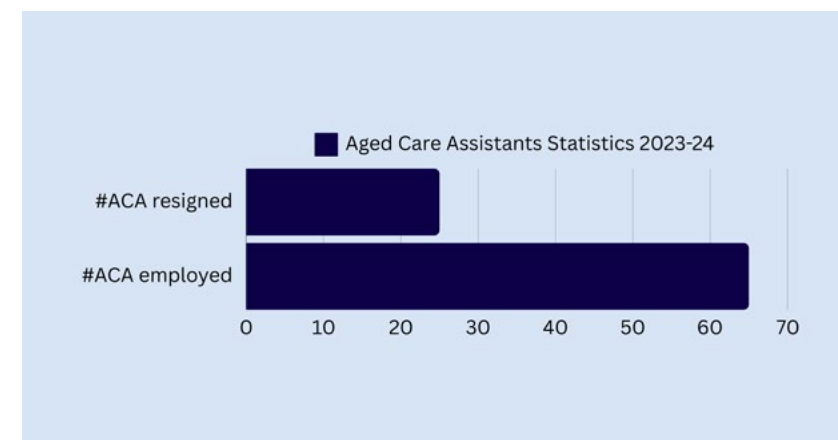
Growing Demand for Aged Care Services, and pressure to find skilled professionals to meet this need.

Recruitment of Italian-Speaking Workforce

A large portion of CO.AS.IT.'s aged care clients are Italian-speaking, making it crucial to recruit ACAs who can speak or understand Italian. However, finding candidates with both the necessary language skills and required qualifications remains a challenge.

Shortage of Skilled and qualified Workforce

To address these challenges, CO.AS.IT. continues to focus on attracting and hiring candidates capable of delivering safe and high-



quality care. A rigorous recruitment process ensures that only the most qualified applicants are selected.

In 2023/24, CO.AS.IT. partnered with HSSO, a government-funded initiative, to assist in the recruitment and retention of ACA.

CO.AS.IT. supports candidates seeking permanent residency in Australia, including one employee currently on the labor agreement. The organisation is also exploring ways to assist Italian migrants through sponsorship in this field.

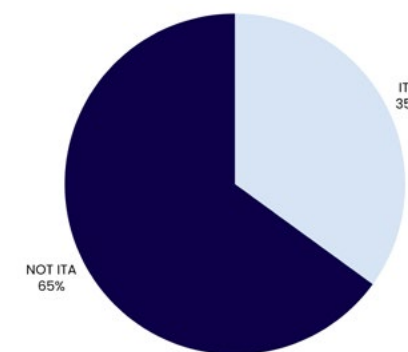
Recruitment Statistics for 2023/24

In the 2023/24 fiscal year, CO.AS.IT. recruited 65 Aged Care Assistants to support its aged care services. Of those recruited, 23 (35%) were of Italian background, reflecting the organization's efforts to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of its Italian-speaking clients. By the end of the period, 12 ACAs had left the organisation, citing reasons such as work - life balance, retirement, and career changes.

Additionally, CO.AS.IT. expanded its workforce with the recruitment of the following key roles:

- Care Managers: 2
- Rostering Officers: 2
- Resource Centre Staff: 1
- Regional Coordinators: 3

Despite the challenges faced, CO.AS.IT. remains committed to hiring a skilled and compassionate workforce capable of delivering the highest standards of care. The organisation continues to fulfill its vision of providing high-quality home care to aged care clients while upholding its mission to enrich lives through dedicated service, education, and the preservation and promotion of Italian heritage.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

LORENZO NUTI
Digital transformation Consultant

CO.AS.IT. MODERNISES OPERATIONS WITH NEW CRM, TRANSFORMING WORKFLOW AND ENGAGEMENT.

Transforming the Way We Work

In 2024, CO.AS.IT. took a big step forward by adopting a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, connecting and integrating it with many other essential software. This change isn't just about technology; it's about transforming the way CO.AS.IT. works.

Making Things Easier

With this unified CRM and software system, every department at CO.AS.IT. now shares the same database and integrated software, making daily operations smoother and giving everyone who connects with us a better experience.

Bringing Us Together

The new CRM brings together all the information about CO.AS.IT.'s employees, stakeholders, clients and processes in one place. This way, everyone is in sync, and collaboration happens naturally across all departments.

Quality and Profiling

Now, we have, and increasingly will have, a clear view of every interaction with clients to easily spot patterns or needs we may have missed. This helps each department ensure high-quality support and service.

Community Engagement

Our unified database also means we can create more personal and effective marketing campaigns and events. Plus, organising and managing such events is easier, with all planning tools for all departments in one place.

Access and Sharing

With everything in one database, clients and stakeholders can view their own interactions with us anytime. This makes support more personalized, without needing anyone to repeat information.

Management

With a holistic view of how each department is doing, CO.AS.IT.'s management team and board can make data-informed decisions. This unified data will help CO.AS.IT. set data-driven strategies toward long-term goals, ensuring that every team is working toward the same vision.

New Website

All this centralized data is about to come to life on our new website. Soon, CO.AS.IT. will have a dynamic online space to showcase everything we do and offer powerful yet simple online services. It's designed to make connecting with us easier and bring our full range of activities right to our users' fingertips.

IT, INFRASTRUCTURE & CYBER SECURITY

MANISH K POUDEL
Information Technology Officer

Over the past year, CO.AS.IT.' IT has played a critical role in supporting the organization's operational goals, ensuring technological solutions align with business needs, enhancing cybersecurity, and driving digital transformation. This report outlines the key IT initiatives, challenges, and future plans.

Infrastructure Upgrades: The IT department successfully upgraded most of the core IT infrastructure, including server migrations to the cloud and network enhancements. These improvements have resulted in better performance, scalability, and reduced downtime. The migration has also significantly decreased maintenance costs. The upgrade on Wi-Fi network to Unifi has also resulted in more coverage, reliability and security of our wireless network while futureproofing the infrastructure when more Wi-Fi 7 devices are available for work.

Cybersecurity Enhancements: In response to increasing cyber threats, we strengthened our cybersecurity posture by implementing advanced threat detection systems, regular penetration testing, and an updated incident response plan. Key to this effort was the introduction of comprehensive endpoint security monitoring, ensuring that all devices connected to the network are continuously monitored for potential threats. Additionally, all employees are made aware about importance of cybersecurity and given cybersecurity training to mitigate risks related to phishing and online threats.

Regular Data Backups: To protect against data loss and ensure business continuity, we have instituted a robust system of regular backups for all critical systems and data. Backups are securely stored both on-site and off-site to provide an additional layer of security and quick recovery in case of unforeseen disruptions. These measures have been invaluable in maintaining data integrity and minimizing downtime.

Support for Remote Work: In response to the continuing demand for flexible working arrangements, we enhanced

our remote work infrastructure. The deployment of cloud platforms, endpoint security monitoring, and collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams and 3CX ensured seamless communication and collaboration, contributing to the organization's resilience during periods of remote operations.

Future Plans

Cloud Strategy Expansion: Over the next year, we plan to continue expanding our cloud strategy by migrating more systems and applications to cloud-based services, improving accessibility, scalability, and security.

Digital Transformation Projects: The CO.AS.IT.' IT department has plans to automate more internal processes, that will result in operational efficiency. The implementation of new tools to streamline every department's workflow. Additionally, we are planning to implement different survey and data collection tools that will improve client engagement and overall satisfaction.

AI and Data Analytics: To support data-driven decision-making, we will explore integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics tools. These technologies will provide deeper insights and improve the efficiency of our operations.

Cybersecurity Investment: Cybersecurity Threats: Despite strengthening our defenses, the growing sophistication of cyber threats remains a challenge. Phishing attacks and ransomware attempts have risen, requiring ongoing vigilance and investment in security tools and training.

We will continue investing in cybersecurity to address the growing threats. A focus will be placed on advanced threat intelligence, multi-factor authentication (MFA), endpoint security, and employee training programs.

CO.AS.IT. remains committed to aligning our technology roadmap with the organization's goals, ensuring continued growth, and mitigating emerging challenges.

RESEARCH MEDIA SPECIAL PROJECTS



LUCA ESPOSITO
*Media Liaison Officer
Research Officer
Special Projects Coordinator*

In today's evolving cultural and educational landscape, well-developed research and forward-thinking project planning are crucial in advancing CO.AS.IT's mission. By prioritizing strategic decision-making and project development, these research efforts have been instrumental in supporting the CEO and various departments, ultimately aiming to expand CO.AS.IT's influence and shape a visionary future for the Italian community.

This vision is supported by the planning and execution of key projects designed to enhance the Italian community's impact on broader Australian society. Each initiative is rooted in promoting social and cultural values, and the projects CO.AS.IT is currently undertaking are transformative. They are set to drive significant progress not only in Italian language education in Victoria but also in the broader promotion and appreciation of Italian culture in Melbourne. These initiatives will celebrate the rich history and substantial contributions of the

Italian community while creating new and innovative spaces for expression, tools for connection, and opportunities for growth.

To support and drive this ambitious agenda, reports, and papers have been developed to provide valuable insights to stakeholders and ensure that the projects align with CO.AS.IT's long-term goals of cultural engagement and social impact. These documents ensure that projects align with CO.AS.IT's long-term goals of cultural engagement and social impact. The materials include monthly updates and in-depth analyses on topics such as Australian media trends, migration policy reform, aged care reform, and Federal and State government budgets. Additionally, meetings with key political and government stakeholders have been held to discuss CO.AS.IT's proposals, exploring collaborations on important issues such as migration policies, education, culture, aged care, and broader social concerns.

A strong emphasis has also been placed on developing more effective communication strategies and strengthening relationships with prominent media outlets, also for promoting the Melbourne Italian

Festa 2024 and ensuring the smooth participation of key authorities, further enhancing CO.AS.IT's visibility and standing.

CO.AS.IT's strategic approach is also reflected in its support of special projects, such as the expansion of the Witcare Hub and the ongoing development of C.U.T.E. Università della Terza Età. These projects are continuously refined through participant feedback and surveys to ensure their ongoing success and positive impact.

A modern, research-driven mindset is embedded in CO.AS.IT's communication strategies, which play a crucial role in achieving the organisation's objectives. Through meticulous strategic planning, robust media engagement, and close partnerships with key government offices, CO.AS.IT continues to thrive. It is expanding its reach, enhancing the well-being of the Italian community, and fostering deeper connections between Italy and Australia.

WITCARE HUB



BARBARA ZORODDU
Witcare Hub Coordinator

Witcare Hub is a community service dedicated to empowering new Italian migrants, residents, and their communities by addressing their settlement needs and enhancing social participation, economic independence, personal well-being, and community connections. Recognising the significant barriers faced by those coming to Australia from diverse cultural backgrounds, such as language difficulties, family separation, and a lack of support networks, Witcare is committed to bridging these gaps. These barriers often extend to accessing essential services, financial resources, and employment opportunities.

Witcare Hub, offers tailored support, practical skills training, and intensive, personalised guidance, helping migrants, especially young people and women, confidently enter the Australian workforce and integrate into society. Additionally, Witcare is dedicated to promoting mental health and fostering respectful relationships within the community by encouraging connection, mutual support, and overall well-being.

Witcare Hub activities and progress

- **Online presence and web portal:** Since July 2023 Witcare Hub has established a comprehensive web portal and a strong online presence, creating a virtual space for the Italian community in Australia to access valuable resources, information, and support.
- **Infopoint for Temporary Visa Holders:** Witcare Hub opened a physical infopoint in Carlton dedicated to assisting temporary visa holders (particularly Working Holiday

Visa holders and students) in navigating their lives, work, and rights in Australia. This service focuses on providing comprehensive solutions tailored to individual needs. The service has received numerous 5 stars reviews and positive feedback from its users both in Italy and Australia.

- **Media Outreach:** By collaborating with Italian media outlets, Witcare Hub ensures that Italians interested in migrating to Australia have access to reliable information and a support network that addresses their settlement needs.
- **Community Engagement:** In March 2024, Witcare Hub presented its services at a public event supported by the Italian Consulate, engaging with the younger Italian community. This event led to the creation of new community initiatives, such as "Pane di Casa," a theatre recital written by a young community member, fostering cultural expression and community connections.
- **Partnerships with Key Organizations:** Witcare Hub has formed strategic partnerships with The Migrant Workers Centre, expanding its ability to support Italians in Australia with employment rights and workplace issues. Witcare is also looking to establish partnerships with women's organizations that fight violence against women.
- **Women's Group Initiative:** Recognising the unique challenges faced by Italian women in the community, Witcare Hub has established a women's group that focuses on addressing these needs and developing projects to empower and support women within the community. Witcare is also collaborating with other Italian women groups in Australia to establish a strong mutual support network through events and projects.

AGED CARE SERVICES REPORT 2024



I AM INCREDIBLY PROUD TO LEAD A TEAM OF PASSIONATE, SKILLED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE OLDER MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

EMMA CONTESSA
Aged Care Services Director

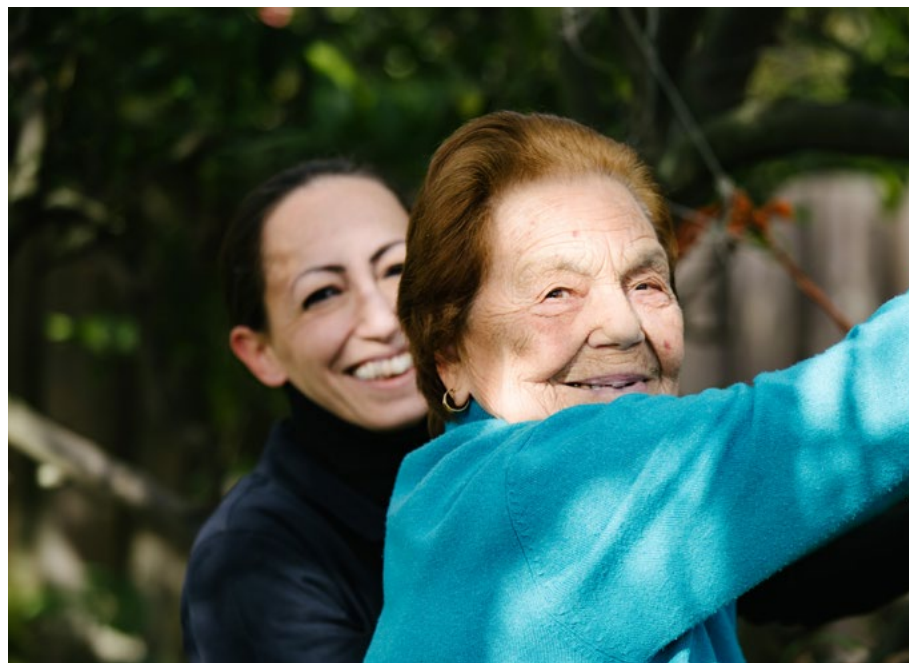
I am proud to present an overview of the accomplishments of the Aged Care Services Department for 2024, showcasing our ongoing commitment to quality, safety, and compliance in supporting older Italians across Victoria.

Over the past twelve months, we have consistently upheld CO.AS.IT's mission to provide exceptional care and support, enabling our clients to live safely and independently in their own homes for as long as possible. This would not be achievable without the dedication and expertise of our staff, who remain our greatest asset.

As a government-funded aged care provider, we are required to meet the Aged Care Quality Standards, which reflect the high expectations of care and service from the community. Our department is committed to not

only meeting these standards but exceeding them. Throughout the year, we have continuously updated our policies, processes, forms, and assessment tools to align with best practices. Ensuring quality care and minimizing potential risks to our clients are at the core of everything we do.

In summary, I am incredibly proud to lead a team of passionate, skilled individuals who are committed to enhancing the quality of life for the older members of our community. Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, and partners. Together, we are making a meaningful difference, and we move forward with optimism and inspiration.



QUALITY REVIEW

In February, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission conducted a comprehensive Quality Review of all our aged care programs. I am incredibly proud to report that we achieved an excellent result, meeting all standards with no recommendations for improvement. This outstanding achievement reflects the hard work and efforts of our entire team. I extend my sincere gratitude to all staff for their commitment and effort.

I AM INCREDIBLY PROUD TO REPORT THAT WE ACHIEVED AN EXCELLENT RESULT, MEETING ALL STANDARDS

QUALITY & CLINICAL CARE

The Quality & Clinical Care Department (Q&CCD) continues to be the backbone of our commitment to delivering expert clinical services that prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of our clients. Our team of expert registered nurses has been instrumental in upholding the highest standards of care, helping ensure that each client receives attention that is both personalized and aligned with industry best practices.

In 2024, the Q&CCD diligently monitored and enhanced the clinical care provided to both Home Care Package (HCP) and Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) clients. Their efforts not only met regulatory requirements but also contributed to improved health outcomes, giving clients the confidence that they are receiving care that safeguards their well-being. The expertise and dedication of the Q&CCD remain vital to our success.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on the achievements of this year, pushing the boundaries of quality care and keeping the needs of older Italians at the forefront of everything we do.

HOME CARE PACKAGES PROGRAM (HCP)

Our Home Care Packages program continues to grow and evolve, playing a pivotal role in empowering older Italians to live independently in their homes. This year, over 450 individuals benefited from the support of our dedicated Care Managers, who tailor services to meet

each client's unique needs and preferences. The program stands as a testament to our commitment to delivering personalized, client directed care.

HOME CARE PACKAGES PROGRAM (HCP)

CHSP services have once again proven essential in 2024, providing flexible respite care, personal care, domestic assistance, and nursing services to over 180 individuals. With CHSP often supporting those not yet eligible for an HCP, these services ensure that even more people in our community can continue to live safely and comfortably at home.

SERVICE PROVISION



MARISA DE SIMONE
Acting Service Provision
Team Leader

UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES TO OUR COMMUNITY

Our team of 110 Direct Support Workers, has been the backbone of our operations, ensuring that we meet the diverse needs of our clients with professionalism and care.

Our Service Provision Team is structured to maximize efficiency and responsiveness. We have four full-time rostering coordinators who play a crucial role in managing the daily schedules and ensuring that our services are delivered seamlessly. We are supported by a part-time administrative member who also serves as a relief Rostering Coordinator, stepping in whenever needed to maintain continuity of service and support.

On average, our team undertakes 300 services a day, a testament to our capacity and commitment to meeting the needs of our clients. These services range from personal care to domestic assistance to meal preparation and community engagement. Each service is tailored to the individual needs of our clients, ensuring that they receive the best



possible care and support.

This year, we have seen significant achievements in our service delivery. Our direct support workers have been instrumental in providing consistent and high-quality care, which has been reflected in the positive feedback from our clients and their families. The dedication and hard work of our team have not only met but often exceeded the expectations of those we serve.

Like any organization, we have faced challenges, particularly in managing the high volume of services and ensuring that each client receives personalized attention. However, our team has risen to these challenges with innovative solutions and a collaborative approach. We have streamlined our scheduling process, allowing us to better match our workers with clients based on their specific needs and preferences.

Looking ahead, we are committed to continuing our growth and improving our services. We plan to invest in further training and development for our Direct Support Workers to enhance their skills and knowledge. Additionally, we aim to expand our team to meet the increasing demand for our services, ensuring that we can continue to provide the high level of care that our clients have come to expect.

The Service Provision Team at CO.AS.IT. is proud of the progress we have made this year. Our success is a direct result of the hard work and dedication of our team members, from our Direct Support Workers to our Rostering Coordinators and administrative staff.

We look forward to building on this success in the coming year, continuing to provide exceptional care and support to our community.

VISITATION PROGRAM

FILOMENA ADEM
SSI Manager



Through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), our dedicated volunteers have selflessly shared their time and energy and provided essential social support, offering regular companionship to older adults living independently in their homes. This year, our volunteers made weekly visits to over 200 clients, demonstrating the constant commitment that forms the foundation of our program.

For many clients, these weekly visits have become a cherished routine, offering not just social interaction but also a sense of community and belonging that can often be difficult to find. These interactions remind us that a simple visit can have a profound impact, bringing warmth and a friendly face to those who might otherwise face their days alone.

Our commitment to ongoing training and professional development has further enhanced the quality of support we provide to our volunteers. In June, Dementia Australia delivered dementia training, which was both informative and well-received. These sessions equipped our volunteers with the knowledge and skills to handle various situations with greater understanding and care.

Regional Coordinators conducted two rounds of zone meetings this year, creating valuable opportunities for volunteers to connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. During the first round, psychologist Roberta Gotardi and Emma Casolo discussed mental health issues in the elderly. The second round focused on navigating My Aged Care, featuring a presentation by Filomena Adem.

Throughout the year, we took every opportunity to celebrate and honour the incredible contributions of our volunteers. In May, we hosted a special event for National Volunteer Week at the Reggio Calabria Club, where we expressed our heartfelt gratitude to our amazing volunteers, each receiving a thoughtful gift as a token of appreciation.

We celebrate our volunteers at our annual Pranzo, a festive gathering to reflect on our achievements and honour their commitment. Volunteers receive certificates recognizing their years of service and the meaningful impact they've made. This celebration is a heartfelt way to show our appreciation for all they do.

This program would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our incredible team. Their passion and commitment ensure we can continue providing essential support to those in need. A special thank you to Daniela Montesano, Davide Vigiano, Tania Barbaro, Mary Penco, Concetta Tartaglia, Laura Demontis, Linda Francione, and Josie Pellegrino. Each has played a vital role in making this year a success, bringing their unique skills, energy, and heart to the program.

As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited to celebrate 40 years of the Visitation Program. Our commitment to reducing social isolation and promoting a connected community remains strong. We're proud of this year's accomplishments and look forward to the opportunities ahead. To every volunteer, staff member, and supporter—thank you for making a difference, one visit at a time.

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS

MARIA METELLI
SSG Manager



WE PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL CARE AND SUPPORT TO ALL OUR SOCIAL SUPPORT CLIENTS

We take pride in fostering an environment that radiates warmth and hospitality, where every client feels secure and supported.

At our SSG centres, the principles of dignity and respect underpin all that we do. We believe these values are not just ideals but an absolute necessity.

To accomplish this, our staff work tirelessly to provide a daily program of activities designed to stimulate cognitive function, improve communication skills, and enrich the social and cultural experiences during the time our clients are attending our centres.

We continue to prioritise safety, especially with the ongoing challenges posed by COVID and associated strains. As a precaution, we maintain social distancing and infection control measures at all our centres to safeguard our consumer's health and well-being.

We acknowledge that Social Support Group attendance numbers have declined during the past year mainly due to the natural progression of ageing clients and transitions to Aged Care Facilities or other care arrangements.



Our dedicated Social Support Group Assessment Officer Margaret Rizzo is diligently managing our waiting list and welcoming new client, both from internal referrals and through the My Aged Care Portal. While the process can at times be arduous and time-consuming, we remain confident that our client numbers will increase with targeted marketing activities that are in progress.

In the spirit of innovation and creativity, we are constantly exploring new initiatives to enhance the clients' experiences. One such event an annual visit of Scotch College year 10 students to the Rosanna SSG centre in October, as part of an Italian language exchange program between students and our SSG clients. These inter-generational activities enrich the lives of both our clients and participating students.

Throughout the year we have had several guests who attended our Social Support Group centres, to celebrate several events, Tarantella Festival, Showy Dance School (Latino Dance) who entertained, our clients.

The main highlight for this year was having our Social Support Group clients and staff who interacted with both Professor Susan Braedley from Canada and Professor Bodil Blix from Norway. The Professors are a part of a 7-year project that is aimed to understand how often more marginalised groups of older adults including migrants and refugees

experience ageing and how both mainstream and age specific services in large cities respond. CO.AS.IT. was asked to participate in this project by Sara Charlesworth professor Emerita RMIT University Melbourne.

At the Rosanna Social Support Group Centre, we are very fortunate to have a representative from the Patronato INAS Maria Buonopane who always makes herself available to see our Social Support Group clients with any issues concerning their Italian Pensions and other related matters as they arise.

Our commitment to staff development and training is strong. The Social Support Group team actively engages in both mandatory and optional training to continually improve their skills, ensuring that they provide the best

possible service. Since implementing the new Social Support Group staffing structure, we are delighted to report the cohesion and collaboration among staff has reached new heights. The unity has made the staff more agile in adapting to changes that not only benefit our clients but also contribute to the growth of CO.AS.IT.

We are proud to report that staff members are working harmoniously to meet and exceed the goals and objectives of the Social Support Group Program.

In closing, CO.AS.IT.'s SSG Program remains steadfast in its commitment to providing excellent care, upholding the values of dignity and respect and continuous improvement to meet the socio-recreational needs of our clients. We thank our clients, their families, our dedicated staff and our valued partners for their support in achieving these goals. Together, we look forward to enriching the lives of those we support and creating lasting friendships in the years ahead.



ACCESS & SUPPORT

STELLA TALLORITO
Access and Support Officer

The Access and Support (A&S) Service is a funded activity in Victoria, and it continues to play a valuable role in supporting the older Italian-Australian community to access subsidised entry level aged care services via the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

The Access and Support worker at CO.AS.IT. continues to assist consumers who are experiencing a variety of barriers in accessing home support services via My Aged Care, the National entry point and gateway for older people requiring aged care services.

The A&S Program has continued to assist consumers at various stages of their My Aged Care (MAC) journey, from facilitating the initial Registration and Screening process via My Aged Care, to supporting consumers during their Assessments, to assisting them with up-take of CHSP services.

Until July 2024, most of the referrals to the Program were made by the Assessment Agencies, these being the various Regional Assessment Services (RAS's) based in the local government areas serviced by the Program, and the various Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS's) serving the Northern and Western metropolitan areas of Melbourne.



Referrals to the A&S Program by the Assessment services are made directly to our MAC Provider Portal. With such referrals, the role of the A&S worker is to follow-up and assist consumers with care coordination of services such as finding a suitable CHSP provider, provision of linking support, navigation assistance, as well as assisting consumers and their families with system understanding.

A small number of referrals have continued to come to the Program from community members, enquiries via Reception at CO.AS.IT., on-line enquiries and walk-ins.

Increasingly, consumers entering the service system for the first time are presenting later for assistance and are therefore more likely to have complex care needs which CHSP services often cannot meet.

Over the last 12 months, the A&S worker's period of involvement with the consumers has increased, with most consumers now being assisted until they have successfully transitioned to a Home Care Package.

Therefore, the once important founding principle of the A&S Program that consumers were of a "transient" nature and required only short-term support, is no longer applicable.

There are also several "systemic" issues affecting the aged care sector some of which are severely impacting on the delivery of CHSP services to consumers. The A&S worker has become increasingly aware of CHSP Providers closing their "books" to new consumers due to insufficient capacity. Whilst other Providers are placing consumers on lengthy waiting lists for services.

As a result, consumers are now waiting longer to access entry level/CHSP services and it is not uncommon for consumers to be assigned a home care package particularly the level 1

and 2, whilst still waiting for CHSP services to commence.

The latter part of 2024 has delivered many changes as well as challenges to the aged care sector.

The Care Finder Program, commissioned by the Primary Health Networks (PHN's) was introduced across Australia.

The role and functions of the care finders have many similarities with those of the Victorian based A&S workers.

Whilst the two Programs should be complementary rather than one substituting the other, all A&S workers in Victoria have experienced a drop in referrals.

Referrals to the A&S workers have further been impacted by the move to a Single Assessment Workforce which has resulted in the replacement of the Regional Assessment Services (once located in Local Government Areas) with the newly appointed RAS's, some based interstate, now responsible for Assessment Services across Victoria.

This new arrangement has resulted in a national backlog of consumer Assessments and Support Plan Reviews.

There has also been a move away from the more traditional and purposeful face-to-face assessments as RAS's opt for over-the-phone assessments.

Finally, whilst DoHAC envisages that the Victorian A&S Program will continue to have a complimentary role alongside that of the Care Finders, there has been no official announcement about the future funding of A&S Program.

Therefore, for the A&S workers in Victoria it will be "business as usual", until 1st July 2025, when the new Support at Home Program will be launched in line with the proposed Aged Care Reforms.



HIGH QUALITY CARE

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY CARE IN THE COMMUNITY CARE SETTING ENSURES SAFE, HIGH-QUALITY CARE FOR CLIENTS BY ADHERING TO STANDARDS AND OVERSEEING SERVICE DELIVERY.

It includes managing risks, monitoring both holistic and clinical practices, and ensuring compliance with the Aged Care Act, Aged Care Quality Standards, Serious Incident Response Scheme, Charter of Aged Care Rights, Infection Control, COVID-19 Regulations, Work Health and Safety Laws, and the Privacy Act. This framework fosters continuous improvement through regular audits, staff training, and feedback mechanisms, all aimed at delivering person-centred care that protects the health, dignity, and well-being of our aged care clients.

Our incident reporting systems help us quickly identify and manage risks, allowing CO.AS.IT. to deliver safe, high-quality care efficiently. Our Clinical Care Manager and Registered Nurses collaborate with Case Managers and our Social Worker to assess clients' health and well-being, preventing issues such as falls, medication errors, infections, and deteriorating conditions. Care plans are regularly reviewed, and client health and clinical data is documented and monitored to ensure timely responses to any concerns.



DEBORAH CAPRIOLI
*Clinical Governance and Quality Care
Manager*

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

Over the past twelve months our Clinical Governance Framework continues to ensure that the care provided under Home Care Packages and Aged Care Programs meets high standards of safety, quality, and effectiveness. This involves creating clear protocols for managing Clinical needs and implementing Quality Improvement initiatives. Our Clinical and Case Management Departments, along with support from our Social Worker, adhere to these protocols to ensure consistent, safe care across all services.

CHALLENGES

- Timely management of incidents
- Compliance with Regulations
- Effective Risk Management
- Cultural Resistance
- Communication Gaps
- Balancing Quality and Efficiency
- Active Client Involvement

SUCCESSSES

- Refined incident response protocols for swift and effective action.
- Thorough investigations of incidents to identify root causes and prevent recurrences.
- Fostered a transparent culture around incident management
- Data Management and Analysis

QUALITY CARE

Over the past year, our Clinical Care Manager, our Registered Nurses, our Case Managers, our Social Worker, and our Service Provider Compliance Officer have actively monitored consumer care and worked with stakeholders to promptly address any concerns.

CHALLENGES

- Adapting to new regulations in the aged care sector.
- Ensuring consistent and efficient review of Clinical, Case Management and Social Work practices, in relation to clinical, holistic, emotional and social well-being for clients across different care settings
- Balancing consumer centred care with compliance requirements.

SUCCESSSES

- Enhanced quality control measures and continuous improvement initiatives.
- Strengthened staff training programs to promote best-practice clinical, holistic and psycho-social care
- Improved collaboration and understanding between clinical staff, case managers, and consumers and their families or representatives



COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

Over the past year, maintaining compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and Aged Care Standards continues to be a priority. CO.AS.IT's Clinical Governance Framework ensures that clients receive a structured and comprehensive approach to their care, guaranteeing that the Quality, Safety, and Effectiveness of the services provided are accurate and adhere to the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Regular audits, reviews and assessments are conducted to measure our performance and ensure that our care delivery remains compliant and aligned with best practices.

QUALITY REVIEW FEBRUARY 2024, ON-SITE

In February 2024, CO.AS.IT. Aged Care Services Department underwent a Quality Review by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, assessing our adherence to Aged Care Quality Standards. In March, we proudly received a MET rating, marking a significant milestone and a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team. This rating reflects our commitment to providing high-quality, safe, and person-centred care.

The CO.AS.IT. Board of Directors along with all Aged Care Staff feel absolute pride in this result. While this achievement may seem like business as usual, it's essential to recognise how far we have come and the challenges we have faced along the way.

QUALITY AND CLINICAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Clinical Governance Committee has been responsible for overseeing the Quality, Safety, and Effectiveness of CO.AS.IT.'s Aged Care Programs. This Committee has actively monitored Clinical Practices and maintained Risk Management oversight.

When necessary, the Committee has made recommendations for Quality Improvement, updates or amendments to Policies and Procedures, Training and Education, and Compliance. It has ensured that evidence-based protocols are followed, continuing to foster a culture of Transparency, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement.

This remains an outstanding accomplishment by our dedicated, considerate, and empathetic staff.

The pride we feel stems from our unwavering efforts to exceed these standards. Each team member plays a vital role in ensuring our practices align with best practices and regulatory requirements. Their teamwork, professionalism, and commitment to continuous improvement have been instrumental in our success.

This achievement not only highlights our effective systems but also fosters a culture of excellence and accountability, motivating us to uphold high standards and enhance our services for the well-being of our consumers. We celebrate this accomplishment and look forward to future improvements.

QUALITY CARE ADVISORY BOARD

The Quality Care Advisory Board (QCAB) a requirement introduced by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ASQSC), to promote Continuous Improvement and oversight of Quality Care in Aged Care Services. The QCAB plays a crucial role in ensuring that providers meet the Aged Care Quality Standards and deliver safe, high-quality services to clients.

Our first meeting took place in May 2024, discussions centred around the Charter of Aged Care Rights, Advocacy, an update on the Aged Care Quality Standards and the upcoming changes set to take effect on July 1, 2024. Our next meeting is set for November 2024.

ACHIEVING A MET RATING IN A QUALITY REVIEW AND NO RECOMMENDATIONS MADE FOR IMPROVEMENT IS A STRONG INDICATOR OF EXCELLENCE IN CARE AND COMPLIANCE.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

GIOVANNI GHILARDI
Customer Relations Officer

As the Customer Relations Officer (CRO), my role is pivotal in creating positive client experiences and maintaining strong relationships between CO.AS.IT. and our valued clients.

Over the past twelve months, I have focused on ensuring clear and effective communication between clients, their families, and our organization regarding services, policies, and updates.

A key aspect of my role is addressing client complaints and concerns promptly and professionally. By collaborating with the relevant departments, we work to resolve issues and implement solutions, which in turn strengthens relationships with clients and their families, builds trust, and ensures client satisfaction.

In 2024, we established CO.AS.IT.'s inaugural Consumer Advisory Body (CAB), with two successful meetings held in March and September. The CAB, consisting of 11 individuals (a mix of clients and their representatives), discussed important topics related to the changes in the Aged Care sector and other issues of



significance to our community. These meetings were well-received and reinforced the strong rapport we have with our clients and their families. I am pleased to announce that the Consumer Advisory Body will continue into the new year, and we look forward to welcoming new members and additional voices to the group.

In July, our annual Aged Care Survey was distributed to clients and families via email and post. To date, we have received approximately 450 responses. I am pleased to report that the survey results were overwhelmingly positive, with an overall satisfaction score of 98%. This reflects a high level of satisfaction across all categories.

The CO.AS.IT. Aged Care newsletter continues to be distributed every two months to clients and family members across various programs, available in both Italian and English.

As CRO, I remain committed to keeping our clients informed, maintaining open communication, and ensuring their voices are heard.

KEEPING OUR CLIENTS INFORMED, MAINTAINING OPEN COMMUNICATION, AND ENSURING THEIR VOICES ARE HEARD



LANGUAGE CULTURE HERITAGE



VIBRANT, DIVERSE, AND ENRICHING PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED ACROSS THE YEAR

FERDINANDO COLAROSSO
*Language, Culture and Heritage
Departments Director*

Overall, the Language, Culture, and Heritage Department has much to celebrate for 2024. The talented and hardworking members of this department deserve congratulations for the vibrant, diverse, and enriching programs they have delivered.

The department's language programs cater to all ages, from preschool to our esteemed elders. Offerings include "Il Girotondo" for preschoolers, "Doposcuola" for primary and secondary students, adult classes, and the CUTE program for our senior participants.

The prestigious and extensive cultural program has been further enriched with the introduction of the Next Gen program, which has attracted a younger audience to its many original and entertaining events.

The Historical Society continues its vital mission of collecting, preserving, and disseminating the rich history of Italian migration. The CO.AS.IT. Museo Italiano remains a popular destination, particularly for school excursions. The Museo's education program offers an engaging introduction to the permanent

collection and the history of Italian immigration.

The promotion and support of teaching Italian in Victorian schools continue to be a major focus for the department's Education and Language team. The COAS.IT. Language Assistants program significantly enhances the teaching of Italian across Victorian schools.

The Resource Centre, with its constantly updated teaching resources, has provided invaluable support to teachers and students alike. This year, VCE students have been a primary focus for the Language team, beginning with intensive preparatory classes at the start of the year followed by mock oral and written exam sessions throughout the year in preparation for their VCE Italian exam in November.

THE CORNERSTONE OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

In 2024, the Italian Language Program for Adults remains a cornerstone of the Italian Language, Culture and Heritage Department, building on the successes and lessons learned from previous years. Following a full school year conducted entirely on CO.AS.IT. premises in 2022, the program has become a vibrant space for adult learners to engage with the Italian language and culture, fostering a sense of community among students.

In 2023, the program averaged 20 classes per term, engaging approximately 120 students each session. Adult learners benefit from weekly two-hour classes designed to cater to various skill levels, from Beginner to High Advanced. This comprehensive curriculum includes specialized courses like Cinema & Conversazione and Contemporary Italy conversation courses. Students also enjoy free membership to the CO.AS.IT. Resource Centre, which provides access to an extensive collection of materials, including grammar books, novels, DVDs, and CDs. This resource enhances their study of the Italian language and culture, allowing them to immerse themselves further in the language outside of class.

To accommodate those still hesitant to attend in-person classes, the program continues to offer online and semi-online options, ensuring inclusivity and flexibility for students. This adaptability has proven beneficial, allowing classes to proceed smoothly even if teachers are ill or abroad. In such cases, instructors connect virtually while students gather in person, maintaining the program's continuity.

In January 2024, the program hosted three intensive courses over four days, catering to various levels and

ALEXANDER PARISI
Adult Classes Coordinator



promoting immersive learning experiences. These sessions encourage rapid language acquisition and greater confidence among students. Additionally, the initiative to provide free classes for parents of students at Brunswick South and Footscray primary schools remains a significant aspect of the program. Launched in 2022, this pilot program successfully engaged 35 parents across three beginner classes and one intermediate class during term 3, and it is expected to continue into term 4. This initiative not only supports family involvement in language learning but also strengthens cultural ties within the community.

20 CLASSES PER TERM 120 STUDENTS PER SESSION NEW INTENSIVE COURSES

Looking ahead, CO.AS.IT. is committed to enhancing its marketing efforts to promote the Italian Language Program further, aiming to increase enrollment and expand its reach. The program is dedicated to maintaining high-quality language education while fostering a deep appreciation for Italian culture and heritage. With its diverse offerings, flexible learning options, and strong community ties, the Italian Language Program for Adults is well-positioned for continued success and growth in 2024 and beyond. The combination of engaging classes, dedicated instructors, and a supportive environment ensures that students thrive as they embark on their journey to mastering the Italian language.



ITALIAN LANGUAGE ADULT CLASSES

LANGUAGE ASSISTANT PROGRAM



MARIA CAGIATI

Language Assistants Program Coordinator

THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM PLACES RECENT GRADUATES FROM RENOWNED ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS AS LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS.



These assistants collaborate with qualified language teachers to promote the teaching of the Italian language and culture and contributing to the creation and implementation of engaging language programs.

This year the Program have brought 21 language assistants to schools across Victoria. The process began with an informative meeting for liaison teachers where all participants' responsibilities were clearly outlined, creating a solid foundation for a successful program.

Upon their arrival, the assistants participated in a week-long induction program before being assigned to their respective schools. A presentation evening was also held to introduce them to the CO.AS.IT. community and to extend an official welcome.

As the first semester progressed, initial school visits took place in both Melbourne and Regional Victoria, to ensure that all necessary conditions were in place for them to perform their roles effectively. During these visits, individual interviews were conducted with both the assistants and the liaison teachers to gather

feedback on the program. The results were highly positive, with both assistants and teachers expressing strong satisfaction and unanimously highlighting the essential need for a program like this in Victoria's schools.

Additionally, beginning in the second semester, we have organized weekly meetings with the assistants at the CO.AS.IT. headquarters, which are scheduled to continue through December. These meetings are dedicated to collaboratively developing a variety of resources for schools, specifically aimed at addressing the existing scarcity of materials on particular topics. By focusing on these areas, we hope to enhance the educational support available to both teachers and students.

Finally, to conclude this year's program and to kick off the celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the Language Assistant Program in 2025, we designed the first exhibition featuring the language assistants. Set to take place at the end of November, this exhibition will showcase the current assistants' expectations, impressions, and experiences of coming to Australia through text panels, photographs, videos and various artworks.

STUDENTS' EVENTS

MICHELA PELLIZON

Education & Language Coordinator



In 2024 CO.AS.IT. has confirmed and strengthened its leader position in the offering of the programs developed for VCE students of Italian.

Following the extremely positive feedback received from both students and teachers in 2023, the Department has decided to increase the number of sessions available to the students competing the Unit 3 & 4 in Victorian secondary schools in order to provide a more comprehensive support that included both the Oral and Written components of the exams.

The year started with the two-day-VCE Intensive program which were held on 23rd and 24th January 2024 from 9am to 4pm. The students participated to four sessions each day held by four experienced VCE Italian teachers aimed to prepare the students for the upcoming year and their end of the year Italian exam. The intensive program included activities which had the goal of reviewing what students had been learned in Italian so far and immersing the students in the language as preparation for the challenges of the final VCE Italian exam.

We had 51 students who attended the Intensive course.

For the first time, CO.AS.IT. decided to offer the opportunity to students to complete some VCE Practice Written Exams. The focus of the mock exams was initially to give students an opportunity to experience the timing, and the nerves associated with such experience and to understand better how the written exam works in all its sessions. The exams were corrected and personalised feedback was provided to

all students. We offered one practice written exam in Term 1, 2 and 3. For the first exam we had 34 students enrolled. For the second and third one respectively 50 and 51 students.

As in 2023, we also made sure we supported the students in the preparation of their VCE Italian Oral exam. Two sessions were held in June and September during the school holidays. In June students had an opportunity to practice their first part of the exam, the general conversation and to receive feedback from experienced assessors who provided suggestions and strategies on how to improve which would

also be valuable in preparation for the second part of the oral exam, the discussion. With the Oral exams to be officially held in October, at the end of September, students had the opportunity to practise their full exam. The opportunity provided by CO.AS.IT. became more and more popular

and we had 60 students enrolled in June and 80 enrolled in September.

VCE Preparation Day, in collaboration with VATI, this event was held on Monday 23rd September, at the Catholic Leadership Centre. Students could book one of the two



IL GIROTONDO

MARIELLA DE PAOLIS

Il Girotondo Coordinator

Celebrating Our Second Year

Il Girotondo proudly marks its second year of operation, providing a vibrant Italian language program across 14 selected centres in Melbourne. Our initiative has successfully engaged nearly 500 students aged 3 to 5 years, offering a rich educational experience that emphasizes both language acquisition and cultural appreciation.

Program Overview

This year, we facilitated 28 classes each week for 40 weeks, ensuring consistent and dynamic learning opportunities for our young learners. Our well-structured lessons are designed to highlight the numerous benefits of learning a second language at an early age, fostering curiosity and engagement through play-based activities.

Resource Development

In our second year, we produced a comprehensive suite of in-house resources to support our program. This includes the editing of books, alongside the creation of flashcards and games tailored to enhance the learning experience. These resources are vital tools that promote interactive learning and help solidify language skills.

Cultural Engagement

Our program goes beyond language instruction; it also immerses students in the rich tapestry of Italian culture. Throughout the year, we celebrated significant cultural events such as "La Festa della Repubblica" and the "Venetian Carnival." Additionally, students had the opportunity to explore regional Italian traditions by participating in hands-on activities like making regional foods. These experiences have allowed children to connect with the Italian culture meaningfully.



and parents, affirming that the "Girotondo" program is truly cherished across all our centres. Our commitment to creating an engaging, effective, and enjoyable learning environment has resulted in great achievements, and we are proud of the impact we have made in the community.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, it is our mission to continually improve and expand our program. We are dedicated to enhancing our curriculum, developing new resources, and finding innovative ways to inspire our students. The feedback we receive will guide us in our efforts to do better each year.

Some feedback:

Hadfield Early Learning Centre: "Children thoroughly enjoy the Girotondo lessons and eagerly anticipate each session with excitement. Their enthusiasm for learning Italian is palpable and we have already begun to witness significant improvements in their language skills".

North Carlton Children Centre: "We are blessed to have such an incredible language program in our centre. Children and parents are so thankful to CO.AS.IT."

Brunswick Free Kindergarten: "The language program is the greatest success of this learning year. Thank you from all of us".



RESOURCE CENTRE

THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM PLACES RECENT

FEDERICA FALCO

Resource Centre Coordinator

The Resource Centre plays a vital role for both Primary and Secondary Italian Teachers in Government, Catholic and Independent schools in Victoria and Interstate. We see good numbers of teachers taking advantage of our services and enjoying the resources shared with them.



The Resource Centre offers yearly subscriptions for Italian Teachers (Primary and Secondary) and CO.AS.IT. Students (doposcuola and adult students). We currently have 154 active subscriptions with new enquiries for 2025 already starting. New subscription forms for 2025 are being finalised using the new platform Zoho.



In 2024 we started a new Saturday opening. Many teachers and doposcuola parents have attended and enjoyed this new opportunity to utilise our services.

We have added lots of newly purchased and donated books, DVDs, Kits, games and more to our extensive collection. A total of 696 resources were borrowed and 165 new resources were purchased and catalogued. These included educational kits, board games, textbooks, pedagogical books for teachers and students, resources for children and younger students, DVDs and narrative books. Many items for the IHS collection have also been received and catalogued.

This year two editions of our digital educational magazine 'Orizzonti' have been sent to subscribers, with more editions scheduled to be shared before the end of the school year. Orizzonti delivered since the beginning of the year are 'Understanding and using text types' edition and 'Settimana della lingua italiana - il mondo fra le righe' edition. Three more editions are scheduled for the rest of the year (Explorers, Italian through Movies and Migration)

Curriculum advice and support for teachers in person, via email and phone is ongoing. Multiple requests are received daily. Several regular newsletters and bulletins (shorter versions of our newsletter) were sent out throughout this year. In these communications, new resources, events, news, Orizzonti editions and job vacancies are advertised to subscribers. Zoho has been implemented as the new CRM database platform to collect subscribers' information as well as to send out our newsletter. Training is happening weekly and it is ongoing. In the period, activities for the 'In Classe competition' in collaboration with Il Globo were created and online Youtube videos of readings for children were produced.

DOPOSCUOLA

MARIA BRANCOLINO
Doposcuola Coordinator

THE AFTER-HOURS ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM



The After-Hours Italian Language Program (Doposcuola), an accredited Community Language School with the Department of Education is an integral part of the educational services provided by CO.AS.IT. The program is offered to students from Preschool, Primary and Secondary levels and caters for all students from Italian and diverse language backgrounds.

In 2024 there was continued interest in the program from both existing and new families with a total of 164 students enrolled and participating in the Italian language classes. The numbers for the Preschool/Foundation class and the VCE Italian Support classes in particular increased during the course of the year. The qualified and experienced teachers who facilitate the language program are dedicated to engaging the students in learning the language and culture. The Italian language program is structured in line with the Victorian Curriculum for Languages; Victorian Education guidelines and relevant pedagogy, to ensure the delivery of a quality program for all learners.

An important aspect of the program is the provision of Professional Learning for teachers and education staff to ensure they further develop their knowledge and skills. This has included teacher planning sessions, Language conferences, workshops, webinars, First Aid training and Child

Safe training. This year the Child Safe training has been extended to new education staff and Board members as part of the Victorian Government's mandatory Child Safe Standards guidelines, which all community language schools are required to adhere to implement to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students attending the program.

In 2024, Community language schools were required to apply for re-accreditation to enable them to continue to provide the language classes for students and receive government funding for the program. An important achievement for the After-Hours Italian Program (Doposcuola) was the application for reaccreditation for the period 2025-2027. This involved information sessions; work dedicated to reviewing policies with updated templates; and preparation of documents and requested samples of program evidence. The reaccreditation process was an opportunity to review existing practices; and has assisted in the strategic planning to further develop and improve the quality of programs offered.

CO.AS.IT.'s reputable relationship with parents, stakeholders, the Department of Education (DE) and the Community Languages Victoria (CLV) contribute to the success of the After-Hours Italian Language Program.



MUSEO ITALIANO

EDUCATION PROGRAM

MARIA BRANCOLINO
Museo Italiano Education Program Coordinator

The Museo Italiano Education programs are based on the exhibition related to Italian migration to Australia and their contribution to Australian society. The programs are offered for students from Primary to VCE level and include staff-led presentations conducted bilingually or in Italian, as well as self-guided programs supported with supplementary material for students to enhance their learning experience. The Museo Education programs cater for students learning Italian in mainstream school; as well as other curriculum areas such as English, History, Humanities, Multicultural studies, Diversity and Global perspectives.

Teachers and students are provided with educational material and kits which are available on the CO.AS.IT. website, to prepare for their visit to view the exhibition at the Museo Italiano. In 2024, there was an increased interest and queries from schools interested in programs offered and excursions to the Carlton area. A total of 2136 students visited the Museo Italiano for either a self-guided visit only (1059 students) or to attend a staff led presentation offered on Wednesdays or Fridays only (1077 students). This included students from metropolitan and regional Secondary & Primary schools; as well as students from two sister schools in Rome and Bologna, Italy.

A highlight this year was the opportunity to review the current programs and discuss new ideas and resources with Nicla Buonasorte from MEI, Genova who visited CO.AS.IT. This collaboration was beneficial and provided informative ideas to improve the quality of education programs for students.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



MICHELA PELLIZON

Education & Language Coordinator

Festa della Repubblica at the Calabrian Club in Bulla.

We participated on Sunday, 2nd June, at the "Festa della Repubblica." We had a stand promoting all our programs at CO.AS.IT. Our Girotondo teacher Elena run a session for the pre-schoolers. It was a very successful event which created a lot of interest among the audience.

Italian Greek Event - Una Faccia Una Razza Festa

We participated at an event on Sunday 27th October organised in Monee Ponds by the social club of the local Greek church as the representatives of the Italian community in Melbourne. At the multicultural event, we run three workshops for children: one with our illustrator Erica Facchini, one with the Zumba teacher Linda Nogara and one with our Girotondo teachers Elena and Sally. We also presented a session of the Vinello and Pennello, also led by Erica Facchini. The day also included the Italian Magician Anthony De Masi. A great opportunity to support our community while connecting with other communities in Melbourne.

Heidi's Exhibition " Molto Bello: Icons of Modern Italian Design"

The program is supporting the Heide Museum of Modern Art in the creation of public programs for their 2024 exhibition, Molto Bello: Icons of Modern Italian Design. Our contributions include assisting in the development of educational materials related to the exhibition, promoting the event to our network of schools and teachers, and highlighting the CO.AS.IT. programs at the museum's Molto Italiano festival on November 30 and December 1.

Pimpa and Geronimo Stilton Event

On Monday, 24th June, we took part in the Pimpa and Geronimo Stilton workshop organized at Brunswick East Primary School in collaboration with the Italian General Consul, the Institute of Culture, and Comites. Around 230 students participated in the workshops led by illustrator Erica Facchini, who taught the young students how to draw the characters from the two books. This event was part of a project promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was dedicated to promoting Italy and its rich cultural heritage among children and youth.



C.U.T.E. UNIVERSITA' DELLA TERZA ETA'

FRANCESCO PASCALIS

C.U.T.E. Coordinator

The C.U.T.E. project has further established itself during 2024. In addition to the six classes that started at the beginning of the year, a seventh has been added at Clayton Hall, 264 Clayton Rd, Clayton. This group also includes seniors from our community who are highly motivated to participate, especially because they understand that, having time on their hands, the project offers them the important opportunity both to be able to use this time profitably and to acquire elements of knowledge of life that will help them live a better life.

It is a source of great satisfaction for the C.U.T.E. leaders to see that the participants in the courses are responding very well. In essence, the project has at least three objectives:

- to guarantee a cultural growth of the subjects involved so that they can relate to life in terms that are new, more interesting and more stimulating for them, while at the same time encouraging fruitful interaction with the teacher through exchanges of ideas and opinions;
- promote the habit of mentally processing reasoning and reflections in such a way as to keep the brain in exercise to counteract its aging;
- promote important moments of socialization and human relationships that in the age of maturity can be of

fundamental importance to overcome situations of isolation and loneliness that often recur.

As regards the success of the project promotion operation, much is due to the close collaborative relationship carried out with the Management Committees of the Italian Pensioners' Clubs of Victoria. The network of Clubs, supported attentively and

gatherings and through the local Italian media. After the presentation of the project on June 25th at the conference room of CO.AS.IT. and the interviews by Francesco Pascalis on SBS radio (broadcast on July 5th) and on Rete Italia (broadcast on August 21st), on August 12th a full-page article was published in Il Globo, in which the CUTE project was fully explained and presented.

Negotiations are underway with various Pensioners' Clubs to open new classes in the areas of Moonee Valley (Community Library), Knox (Italian Club), Dromana (Community Centre).

A PROGRAM THAT IS GROWING WITH GREAT SATISFACTION OF BOTH LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS

continuously by Frank Di Blasi, has proven to be of fundamental importance in promoting the purposes of C.U.T.E. As a result of the various meetings with the Management Committees of the Clubs and their willingness to carry out awareness-raising work, there has been a lot of positive responses and enrolments.

However, in addition to the dissemination work carried out directly through the Clubs, it is necessary to remember that the promotion of C.U.T.E. has also been carried out through community

C.U.T.E. SURVEY

THIS REPORT OUTLINES THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY CONDUCTED AMONG PARTICIPANTS OF THE C.U.T.E. UNIVERSITÀ DELLA TERZA ETÀ PROGRAM AT CO.AS.IT.

LUCA ESPOSITO
Media Liaison Officer
Research Officer
Special Projects Coordinator

Participants were asked to complete a short survey. Of the approximately 100 course participants, more than half—56—completed the questionnaire.

In addition to providing feedback on the structure of the courses and lessons, participants were also asked to answer questions about the benefits they felt attending the Università della Terza Età courses had brought to their lives.

The responses revealed very interesting results, not only demonstrating general satisfaction among participants and a high level of interest in the topics covered during the lessons, but also confirming the broad personal and social benefits that attending the lessons provides in various aspects.

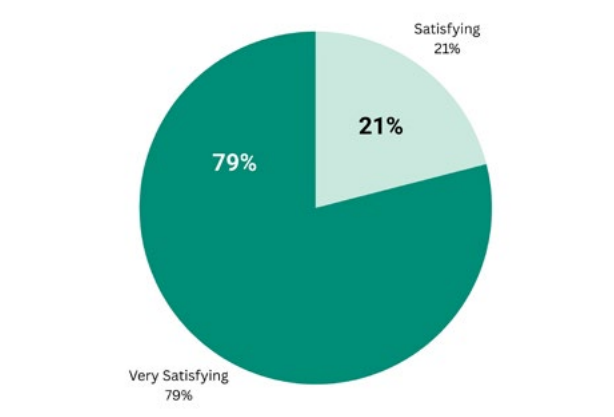
PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

The research clearly demonstrates that the Università della Terza Età initiative is highly valued by participants, both in terms of the course format and structure.

In fact, 100% of survey respondents reported being either Very satisfied (79%) or Satisfied (21%) with the way the lessons are conducted. It is worth noting that 3.5% expressed interest in exploring a different format or approach, while still appreciating the current one.

Some participants mentioned a preference for a more structured and in-depth format, while others expressed a

This is a topic worth considering for the future, especially as the expansion of class offerings may require the inclusion of new teachers, which is indeed happening.



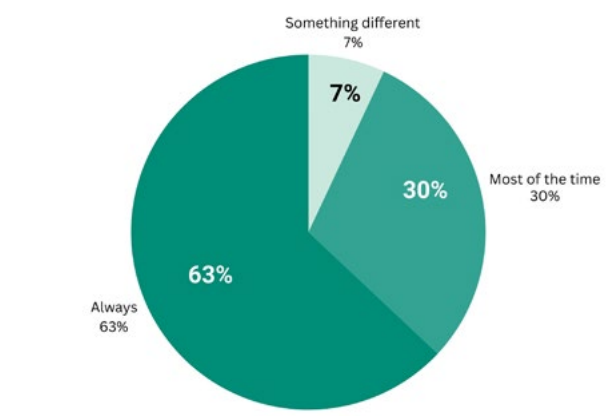
more structured and organized lesson system would also bring greater clarity regarding the courses and could facilitate external communication about the C.U.T.E. project.

CONTENTS AND TOPICS COVERED

Regarding the contents and topics of the lessons, and the interest they generate among participants, the survey responses paint a more nuanced picture.

While a large majority—over 60%—stated that they are always interested in the topics covered, and 30% expressed satisfaction most of the time, 7% of participants indicated that they would appreciate something different.

Specifically, they requested more in-depth exploration of themes related to art and architecture, as well as greater attention to historical data.



However, these suggestions do not detract from the general and widespread satisfaction expressed by participants regarding the offerings provided by C.U.T.E.

INTEREST IN THE ITALIAN CULTURE SOAR

Attending the C.U.T.E. lessons has provided participants with a broad range of both personal and social benefits. Notably, a significant percentage of participants reported that the courses have ignited a greater interest in the world around them, culture in general, and particularly Italian culture.

70% Stated an increased interest in the Italian culture Although the lessons focus on general culture and are not always specifically centered on Italian culture, a remarkable 70% of participants reported an increased interest in the latter as a result of attending the courses. Around the same percentage also noted a heightened interest in culture in general.	30% Feels more capable of understanding current affairs Over 70% of students believe that the lessons have stimulated a greater interest in the world around them and in current events. Moreover, 30% feel that the courses provide effective tools to better interpret current affairs.	52% Believes the ability to focus has developed A notable finding is that over half (52%) of respondents believe that attending the lessons has significantly developed their ability to focus, highlighting the initiative's effectiveness in stimulating participants' cognitive function.	51% Has observed an improvement in daily life In general, more than half of the participants (51%) observed that attending the CUTE courses had a highly positive effect on their daily lives, serving as a crucial tool in combating depression and boredom.
---	---	--	---

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

From a social standpoint, it is noteworthy that a big percentage of participants highlighted how C.U.T.E. courses have an effective impact in reducing isolation, with many stating that they have expanded their social connections as a direct result of attending the lessons.

62% Has reported an improvement in social connections Over 60% of participants reported noticing an expansion in their social relationships, and 54% believe that attending the lessons has also increased their desire to engage in more social interactions.	48% Feels a enhanced sense of belonging to the Italian community Attending the courses, and more generally, the implementation of a project like this dedicated to the elderly, has also strengthened the connection to the Italian community for 48% of participants.	50% Reported a boost in self-esteem Another significant finding is reported by 50% of course participants, who stated that attending the lessons has boosted their self-esteem. This is a crucial element in combating social marginalisation and provides students with an important tool to face daily life with fewer difficulties.	48% Feels a positive impact on the quality of life The survey shows that the perception of widespread improvement in certain aspects of life due to attending the lessons is clearly felt by all course participants, with half (48%) of them acknowledging that the C.U.T.E. project has had a positive impact on their quality of life.
--	--	--	---

CULTURE

2024 WAS AN EVENTFUL YEAR FOR CO.AS.IT. CULTURE, WHICH NOW INCLUDES BOTH THE CULTURAL PROGRAM AND THE NEW NEXT GEN PROGRAM

PAOLO BARACCHI
Cultural Program Manager

In 2024, the CO.AS.IT. Cultural Program continued its mission of promoting Italian Australian culture, hosting over 50 events that attracted approximately 3,500 people. The diverse offerings—talks, book launches, music and theatre performances, presentations, culinary walking tours, and film screenings—celebrated the talents of artists, writers, performers and scholars, both established and emerging, bridging past and present generations of the Italian Australian community, while also attracting considerable interest from the wider Australian multicultural community.

A highlight was the first-ever collaboration between CO.AS.IT., the Hellenic Museum, and the University of Melbourne for National Archaeology Week, a project initiated by the Cultural Program team. This successful partnership broadened the program's reach and institutional connections, showcasing CO.AS.IT.'s leadership in cultural innovation.

In July CO.AS.IT. welcomed Dr. Nicla Buonasorte, Curator of the National



Italian Emigration Museum Museo (MEI), for a month-long residency. This exchange strengthened CO.AS.IT.'s international presence, as Dr. Buonasorte lectured within the Cultural Program and actively participated in several events.

In 2024, the Cultural Program continued its collaborations with organisations such as the writing collective Ascolta Women Inc. and the Federation of Veneto Associations in Victoria. 9 live theatre shows in Italian and in Sicilian were offered in partnership with La Mama Theatre. We continued our traditional collaborations with the Italian Consulate General, the Italian Cultural Institute, ComItEs, the Dante Alighieri Society and the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with whom we co-presented the Week of the Italian Language in the World.

Regular initiatives such as the Italian Cinema Forum with Dr. Mark Nicholls (The University of Melbourne), now in its 6th year, continued to thrive, with rising attendance reflecting the growing interest in Italian culture.

The Cultural Program expanded its audience through active promotion on social media and regular features in Italian media outlets like Il Globo, Rete Italia and SBS Italian radio Program.

Looking ahead, the Cultural Program team is working on exciting new local and international projects and will continue its involvement in the planning and continuation of the Diaspore Italiane international symposia series, with its 5th iteration set to take place at MEI in Genova in December 2024, further cementing CO.AS.IT.'s role in global Italian cultural dialogue.

The CO.AS.IT. Cultural Program hosted 4 exhibitions:

- The P.R.omised Land by Angela Viora (until April)
- Through Young Eyes: Italy and All Things Italian (May – June) (Next Gen)
- The Islands Where We Left Our Ancestors by Joshua Santospirito (July – November)
- Ali e radici: Language Assistant Exhibition (from November).



NEXT GEN



CARMELINA CALABRO
Community Engagement Officer

Launched within CO.AS.IT. Culture in February 2024 by Community Engagement Officer Carmelina Calabro, CO.AS.IT.'s Next Gen initiative was developed to provide fun, engaging, and social events that stimulate interest in Italy, Italian culture, and language for the next generation with a target on children, students, young adults, families, and new migrants, regardless of whether they are Italian born, of Italian descent, or simply Italophiles. Many of these people have a passion for Italian culture but often struggle to find ways to connect with it. Next Gen was created to offer an entry point for these individuals, encouraging deeper and more consistent engagement with Italian culture.

In less than a year since its inception the program has surpassed expectations in both attendance and engagement. The inaugural event, the Italian Family Picnic, held in Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy, attracted over 250 attendees. The initiative was particularly popular with young families, and the overwhelmingly positive feedback has paved the way for it to become an annual tradition.

Following events for adults have included a Pasta Making Workshop, Painting and Clay classes as part of the Vinello e Pennello art workshop series, and Yoga in Italian. Additionally, the Kids' School Holiday Program was reinstated featuring art, cooking, and dance workshops for children aged 3 to 13. The photo competition and exhibition Through Young Eyes: Italy and All Things Italian saw 32 photos taken by Victorian



Primary and Secondary students on display and 508 votes submitted by the public to select the winners. All these events have been popular across the board, receiving positive feedback and numerous requests for larger, more regular programming for both children and adults.

The strong demand for these events is evident in their attendance, which has been consistently excellent, with most events fully booked and some requiring waitlists spurring the need for additional sessions. The diverse participant base has included people from many backgrounds, and around 60% of adult events had a majority of attendees under the age of 45, underscoring the program's capacity to reach a younger demographic.

Workshops have been led by young Italian-born and Italian Australian professionals, showcasing the diverse skills in Victoria and fulfilling the program's goal of supporting and sharing community talent. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who has collaborated with Next Gen so far.

Looking ahead to 2025, Next Gen plans to expand its events and increase their frequency. The focus will remain on attracting a younger demographic while improving outreach through marketing. The program also aims to strengthen connections with Italian Australian organizations, university clubs, and Italian migrants to foster greater community engagement with the next generation.

ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEO ITALIANO

ELIZABETH TRIARICO

HIS & Museo Italiano Manager



The Italian Historical Society has been in operation now for 44 years and it is continuing to grow from strength to strength with increased collaborations, donations, community projects and amazing opportunities to showcase the work of the Society and share its highly significant Collection. Some of the highlights are outlined below.

The University of Sydney, ARC Opening the Multilingual Archive of Australia & IHS Collection Project, was successfully completed between July and October, with 37 objects, documented, photographed, processed and added to the OMAA website. The Society thanks the University of Sydney ARC OMAA Team for their invaluable support and the unique opportunity to be part of this very significant project. This support included the employment of full-time researcher, Archivist Bronte Laffin-Vines, for 3 months and whose invaluable work has greatly improved access to the Society's Collection.

The Society's important Collection relating to Italian Internment in Australia, was showcased in the Zoom presentation by Elizabeth Triarico, Manager of the IHS & Museo Italiano, titled: "Preserving and Sharing Stories of Italian Internment in Australia", which took place on 24 April 2024, as part of the New York Conference titled, "Preserving Memories of Captivity and Their Legacy: Museums and Repositories". Elizabeth also had the opportunity to highlight the important preservation work of the Society during the Q&A Session for the international launch of the La Marzocco Documentary, "The Rise of Espresso", was launched internationally at the 2024 St. Ali Italian Film Festival.

The Museo Italiano Exhibition proved to be a popular destination for historical Societies this year with visits from the Glen Eira Historical Society and the Lilydale Historical Society. The Museo Italiano also featured in the City of Melbourne's new "Carlton" publication and in the 'City of Melbourne Heritage Discussion Paper'. The Museo Italiano Virtual Reality Tour was successfully updated with additional information, features and Italian language text.



On the weekend of 3-4 October, CO.AS.IT. successfully staged the 2nd Melbourne Italian Festa at the Exhibition Buildings in Carlton. It was an amazing celebration of all things Italian. This was the first time that the Society had its own dedicated CO.AS.IT. stand which, from comments received on the day and online following the event, it was a huge success which has generated significant donation offers. The stand included large scale versions of images from the Collection, a copy of its flagship publication *Per l'Australia*, which continues to be very popular and the very first IHS Collection series of postcards. A Guide to accessing the Society's online family history resources was also developed and launched at the Festa, which is invaluable tool for those interested in researching their family history.





FINANCIAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

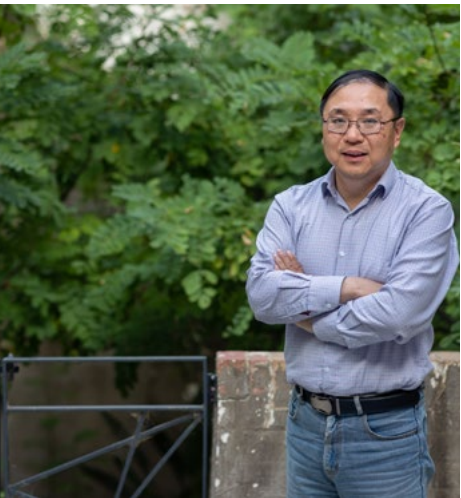
CO.AS.IT. CONTINUES ITS OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND REMAINS IN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION.

The company's business keeps growing and recorded a \$1.3 million surplus for the financial year. The increased revenue and well-managed operating costs reflect a healthy business growth.

CO.AS.IT.'s solid and strong financial foundation is made of substantial

financial assets and fixed assets. The financial assets are allocated in different forms, e.g., cash equivalents, term deposits and investments, to achieve an optimal financial return and manage well-balanced risks.

ALFRED QIU
Financial Controller



ACCURACY, EFFICIENCY AND INNOVATION ARE ALWAYS THE THEMES OF OUR FINANCE DEPARTMENT.

In FY2024, we continued the review of internal reporting and data control process. Most operational procedures have now been streamlined and standardised, in order to maximise our reporting productivity and quality. By adopting standard data templates and predefined reporting formats, we significantly reduced manual data entry and improved data consistency. Based on that, a lot of automated data collection, reporting and checking procedures and tools have been developed and implemented. The automation covers quite large areas in our work, including cost allocation, salary reconciliation, superannuation checking, investment performance assessment, budget variance analysis, leave provision calculation and management report generation, etc. After automation, more data checking and verification procedures have been embedded in the system to improve data quality without requiring additional time. This allowed us to achieve more within the same timeframe, enhancing our overall efficiency and data quality.

We converted to full digital filing of our suppliers' invoices from FY2021. We now further implemented automatic invoice recognition and document filing system. Several software works together to achieve this target. Invoices sent to our email account would be automatically detached and saved to designated folders. These invoices would then be

uploaded to data capture software to extract key information by using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. All the extracted data are further exported and summarized, and automatically compared with those being processed in the accounting system. Finally, document management software completes the invoice filing based on predefined rules and criteria.

The automation frees up accounting staff from routing tasks, saves time and improves data accuracy and consistency. It also minimises the risks of human errors and ensures compliance with accounting standards and regulations. The performance of the automation is very encouraging. Onerous accounting tasks could now be completed through streamlined and standardised processes within much shorter time and minimal human intervention. Finance Department continues to improve and optimise the accounting process with our always commitment of quality, timely and reliable accounting data.

Thanks to each member's supports and contributions, we had a very fruitful 2024. Staff's dedication, professionalism and teamwork enables Finance Department to consistently meet the highest standards of performance.

FINANCIAL REPORT



CO.AS.IT.
ITALIAN ASSISTANCE
ASSOCIATION

ABN: 85 005 596 485

FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

CULTURE AND CARE
WITH AN ITALIAN FLAIR



CO.AS.IT. ITALIAN ASSISTANCE
ASSOCIATION

189 FARADAY STREET, CARLTON VIC 3053

PH. 03 9349 9000 - COASIT@COASIT.COM.AU - WWW.COASIT.COM.AU