

2010 > 2014

# Strategic Plan

Shaping the future of Co.As.It. & the future of our community



future





# Contents

Page

<b>Board and Management Commitment</b>	02
<b>Co.As.It. Profile</b>	03
<b>Mission and Values</b>	04
<b>A Transformational Path</b>	05
<b>Shaping our future</b>	06
<b>The Strategy</b>	07
<b>Italian Bilingual School</b>	08
<b>Major Strategies</b>	09
<b>Language Services</b>	10
<b>Major Strategies</b>	11
<b>Community Services</b>	12
<b>Major Strategies</b>	13



# Board and Management Commitment

It is with great pleasure that we present the Co.As.It. Strategic Plan 2010-14. The plan represents the culmination of months of work and planning by our Board and Senior Management Team. We are delighted that we have also been able to incorporate the views of staff, volunteers and service users in the preparation of this document.

Following the success of the 2007-09 Strategic Plan we are excited about the challenges and growth that we have set for ourselves for the coming four years. The Plan provides the Board with a working document that we can use to drive the organisation forward assuring that we always remain true to our mission and values. We also believe that it is imperative that staff, service recipients, students and the broader community have an understanding of our future goals and direction.

The Plan will see us address some of our current challenges and opportunities in both the language and community sectors. We have also tried to ensure that we will continue to remain responsive to the changing needs of our community, doing our utmost to ensure that individuals receive the services that they require. Finally this plan will ensure the future sustainability of the organisation through financial planning and diversification of services.

The Strategic Plan has set a blueprint for our future. We are aware that a great deal of work will be required by our Board and Staff to ensure that we meet our objectives over the coming years, however, we are also confident that we will meet these challenges. We welcome continued community feedback with respect to our objectives and look forward to the implementation of the plan.



**Lorenzo Fazzini**  
President



**Andrea Comastri**  
CEO

# Co.As.It. Profile

Co.As.It. (Italian Association of Assistance) was established in NSW in 1968, under the auspices of the Italian Government and incorporated in 1983. From the beginning, our priorities were around the preservation of the Italian language and culture in NSW and the support of Italian migrants. During the 1970's we developed our settlement programs which enabled us to assist Italians as they arrived from Italy. Our education programs continued to consolidate and grow and Co.As.It. started to emerge as an important community based organisation. During the 1980's a range of new services were developed including mental health, drug & alcohol and youth & family. At this time the first centre based daycare group was established in the inner west as the area of aged care started to become important for our community. During the 1990's the organisation further expanded its aged, community and education services and finally, in 2002, the Italian Bilingual School was opened.

Co.As.It. receives the majority of its funding from Government: Federal, State and Italian. We have also intentionally increased the proportion of funding that we receive from private sources which we believe will serve to sustain our organisation in the future.

In the area of Community Services we manage a range of programs aimed at meeting the diverse needs of the Italian and local CALD communities. We provide in-home care via our Community Aged Care Packages and Extended Aged Care at Home programs. We also provide centre based daycare across Sydney. Co.As.It. continues to provide counselling and community education services in the areas of Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, Gambling and Youth and Family. We have caseworkers, volunteer programs, a dementia support program and a community partners program.

In the Education area (rebranded to Language Services as part of the new Strategic Plan) Co.As.It. provides Italian language and culture classes within the school curriculum to over 16,000 students in NSW State, Catholic and Independent Schools. We also provide Out of School Hours Classes to over 600 students and Adult classes to approximately 600 students every year.

Co.As.It. also maintains its focus on the professional development of teachers of Italian and the provision of educational resources. A number of successful activities and projects continue to come to life in the preservation of the history of the Italian migration (Exhibitions, Italian Family History Group, etc.) as an additional complement to the language and cultural activities conducted by Co.As.It.

In 2002 Co.As.It. opened the first Italian Bilingual School (IBS) in Australia. IBS is an independent, co-educational and inclusive Primary School offering the NSW curriculum within a fully bilingual and bicultural framework and incorporating, where possible, elements of the Italian educational programs. Over its first 8 years of life IBS has grown and developed. Enrolments have risen from the original 8 pupils to 130. The school has now completed the full Primary school cycle, from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 6 and is aiming to further expand in both student numbers and services over the next few years.



# Mission and Values

## Mission Statement

Co.As.It. provides a range of culturally and linguistically appropriate services to enhance the quality of life of the community and to promote the Italian language and culture in NSW.

## Our Values

### DIGNITY

Creating a working environment in which there is equal opportunity and a profound respect and where staff and clients feel understood and appreciated

### RESPONSIVENESS

Meeting our clients' changing needs by being supportive, responsive, adaptive and innovative

### INTEGRITY

Acting with integrity in exercising stewardship and governance while being responsible and accountable for our behaviour and ensuring our decisions are transparent and ethical

### PRIDE

Aspiring to reach our objectives by being faithful to our heritage

### QUALITY

Ensuring excellence in all that we do



# A Transformational Path

Starting in 2007 Co.As.It. embarked on a strategic planning process to help shape the future of the organisation as well as to ensure that services continued to remain responsive to community needs. As a result the 2007-09 Strategic Plan was launched and implemented. The plan considered many of the challenges that were facing the organisation at that time: reduction in funding from the Italian Government, the need for diversification and sustainability of services, the changing nature of community demographics and the need to develop user pays programs to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. These were challenging tasks for the organisation to work towards. However external pressures were such that Co.As.It. had to respond. We are pleased to be able to look back now confident that we have successfully met those objectives and laid the foundations for future growth.



In embarking on the planning for the 2010-14 Strategic Plan, we considered the process to be as important as the result itself. As such we started working in mid 2009. We decided that in the first instance it was important to gain the views of our broader community. We engaged consultants to undertake a community consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to gain the views of the community in relation to their present and future needs and the role that Co.As.It. ought to play in meeting these needs. The consultation was very extensive with over 700 people directly surveyed. The results of the consultation, available on the Co.As.It. website ([www.coasit.org.au](http://www.coasit.org.au)) provided the foundation for a discussion on community needs. In relation to the Italian Bilingual School, a broad survey was conducted of the parent, staff and student community. The survey gathered views on bilingual education, the future direction of the school and general expectations of parents.

The data collected then enabled important conversations with other key stakeholders. All office staff were involved in planning meetings where views were gathered on existing programs and areas for improvement. Staff were also involved in discussions about future growth and the development of the organisation. Teachers and care staff were invited to share their views by written feedback.

A strategic planning weekend was held in February 2010 and involved Board members and the senior management team. Managers were asked to present the findings of the community and parent surveys as well as the views of staff gathered through the planning meetings. Each service area was carefully considered in relation to remaining both responsive and relevant to the community's need as well as the question of future viability. Tough questions were considered and the discussion eventually led to a draft plan.

The draft plan was circulated to all Co.As.It. staff who were once again invited to provide feedback and comment. A final plan was ratified by the Board of Directors in April 2010 and presented to staff and members in May 2010. We look to the future with great optimism and remain confident that the 2010-14 strategic Plan will drive the vision for the organisation.



# Shaping our future



**Service Area: Co.As.It. BOARD**

Priority Area 1: Board performance  
Focus Area: Board's key responsibilities  
Objective: To optimise the effectiveness of the Board so that Co.As.It. thrives and grows.

**Service Area: LANGUAGE SERVICES**

Priority Area 3: Build sustainability and financial viability in the language services by strengthening self-funding and consolidating funding from government and other agencies  
Focus Area: Developing, diversifying and expanding language services  
Objective: To develop and re-position the language services area so that it becomes sustainable and financially viable by strengthening self-funding and consolidating funding sources.

**Service Area: COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Priority Area 2: Develop, re-position and enhance the Community Services area  
Focus Area: Diversification and Expansion  
Objective: To develop, re-position and enhance Co.As.It. Community Services so that funding is maximised and community needs are met.

**Service Area: ITALIAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL**

Priority Area 4: The Italian Bilingual School as the leader in bilingual education in NSW  
Focus Area: The school's promotion and growth  
Objective: To establish the Italian Bilingual School as the leader in bilingual education in NSW so that it becomes the school of parent choice.

# The Strategy

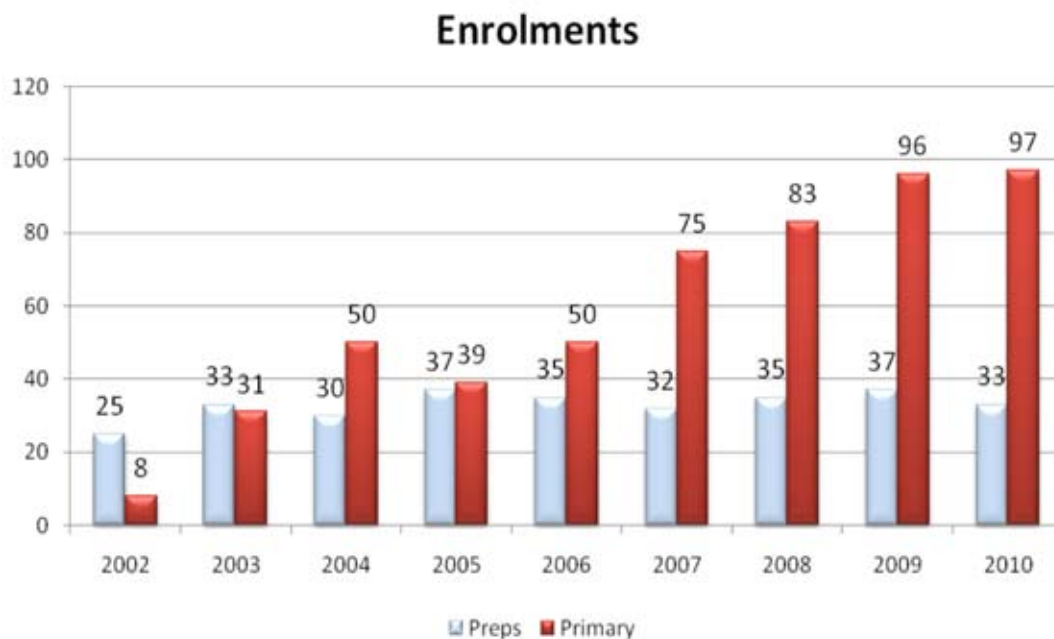




# Italian Bilingual School

The Italian Bilingual School (IBS) has continued to grow and consolidate its position as a strong player in the independent schools sector. The ability to offer a unique methodology with Italian and English being used as tools to deliver the local curriculum makes IBS an appealing choice for parents.

In 2009, coinciding with the conclusion of the 2007-2009 Strategic Plan, the school saw the graduation of its first group of Year 6 students. This was an important step in the history of IBS and symbolic of the school's consolidation over the years.



Since its inception IBS has been able to establish its name and reputation and has continued to attract quality staff and students. The new strategic plan will focus on strengthening student numbers, quality of teaching and further strengthening the status of the school within the sector. A coordinated approach will be given to the promotion and marketing of the school.

The new school site continues to be a key objective. Over the last three years we have been able to secure a lease on a new property (Yasmar) and although progress has been slower than expected, we aim to obtain approval for developing a new school on the site as soon as possible. In the meantime, the current premises have been upgraded thanks to Federal Government funding, providing the school with stable, functional and appropriate facilities.

The new strategic plan will also move to enhance the school's governance with the introduction of a new structure to support the Principal and the Board of Directors on educational issues.

Over the next few years we will also work on possible new models, such as extending the school beyond Year 6 and below Preps or the provision of additional languages. We will do this by carefully considering experiences from other schools, our own model, the input from industry experts and the impact that such developments would have on future requirements.

The plan also identifies the need to strengthen the school culture and leverage on possible synergies with the rest of the organisation. Professional development for all staff will be maintained to ensure that the school is at the forefront of quality education and prepared for the upcoming national curriculum.

# Italian Bilingual School

## Major Strategies

Major Strategies	Tasks
<p>1. Develop and strengthen the Co.As.It. culture in the school so that staff, students and parents who come to the school are fully supportive of the organisation's vision and values.</p>	<p>1.1 Continue to be implemented the current range of initiatives to address areas of concern raised by IBS staff, student and parent in the survey feedback.</p> <p>1.2 Reinforce the culture through embedding the vision and the values in induction and everyday activities.</p> <p>1.3 Develop a comprehensive induction and value/culture alignment program.</p>
<p>2. Proactively pursue a permanent location for the school.</p>	<p>2.1 Pursue the issues/challenges with the Yasmar situation so that a solution is found as soon as possible.</p>
<p>3. Explore the possible development of a K-12 model.</p>	<p>3.1. Establish a working party to work on the development of a K-12 model for IBS.</p>
<p>4. Develop transition strategies to support the students who move into.</p>	<p>4.1 Explore a range of options to respond to the need to provide an appropriate high school path for IBS students.</p>
<p>5. Explore possibilities of creating links with other bilingual schools in Australia and overseas in order to strengthen, consolidate and continue to refine the bilingual model.</p>	<p>5.1 Develop strategies to gather data in relation to bilingual schools in Australia and overseas.</p> <p>5.2. Research other models so that IBS can benchmark its results, learn from others and build on existing results.</p> <p>5.3 Develop links with other schools. Look at other models, expertise.</p> <p>5.4 Seek funding for a research project on bilingualism.</p>
<p>6. Explore the possibility of introducing other languages.</p>	<p>6.1 Explore the introduction of other languages in the curriculum.</p>
<p>7. Continue to cultivate a culture of innovation in education in the school.</p>	<p>7.1. Encourage a culture of innovation in the school as it becomes recognised as a school of educational excellence in bilingual education in Australia.</p>
<p>8. Develop innovative strategies to retain, develop and attract quality staff to the organisation.</p>	<p>8.1 Explore a range of strategies such as professional development, bursaries, reviewed contractual arrangements and other incentives to continue to attract and retain quality staff.</p>
<p>9. Develop and grow the profile of IBS so that enrolments continue to increase.</p>	<p>9.1 Follow an ongoing marketing plan focusing on data.</p> <p>9.2 Provide points of entry for students at the different year levels so that they can get up to the appropriate level with their Italian.</p> <p>9.3 Explore the possibility of providing bus transport for students as a strategy that would make the school more attractive to parents.</p>
<p>10. Work toward the provision of a long-day care centre.</p>	<p>10.1 Conduct research on the provision of a long-day care centre be conducted.</p>

# Language Services

As part of the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan, we have decided to re-brand the Education division of Co.As.It. to Language Services. This reflects a more innovative and dynamic approach to the promotion and teaching of the Italian language and culture, which we will develop over the next few years.

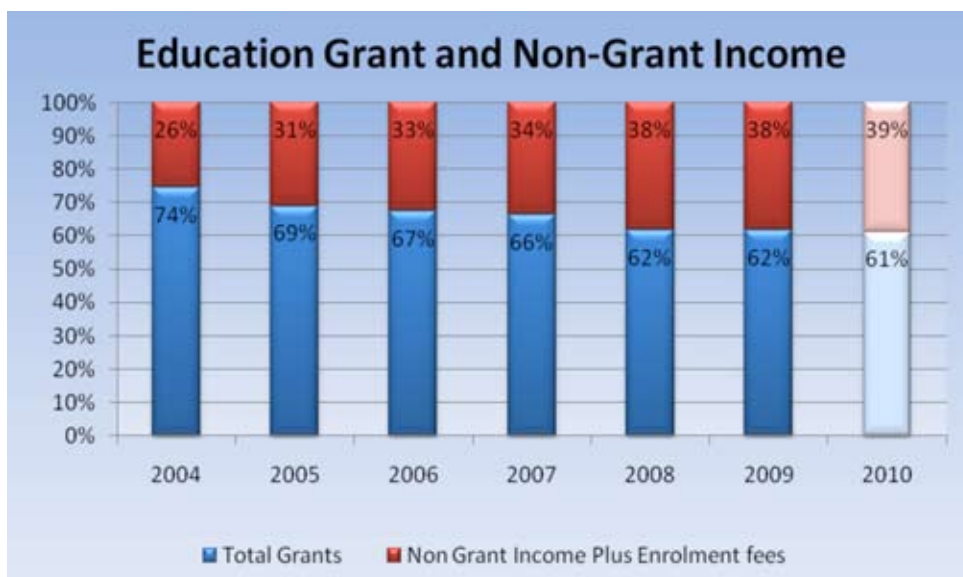
This will enable a more responsive approach to new requirements and market demands. Italian language courses for both the corporate and aged care sectors will be further developed and promoted. The plan will also see the expansion of a range of Italian language and training programs for adults, the development of activities such as vacation care, computer classes for seniors, innovative professional development for teachers, a mobile library and a stronger focus towards the online delivery of services.

With ongoing pressures on the funding front and with renewed competition from other languages, we will continue to focus on our in-school programs. We will work more closely with our stakeholders (Governments, Schools, Principals, Teachers, etc.) to ensure that the in-school and out-of-school-hours programs remain relevant, viable and a realistic choice for schools, parents and students.

We will give increased importance to certification of language skills, strengthening our relationship with the Università per Stranieri in Perugia.

We will further enhance the existing synergies between our language services division and the Italian Bilingual School leveraging on existing skills and knowledge with the objective of benefiting both areas.

We will continue to work towards the objective of self-sustainability by way of increasing the range of funding sources, developing user-pay services and continue to work on internal efficiencies.

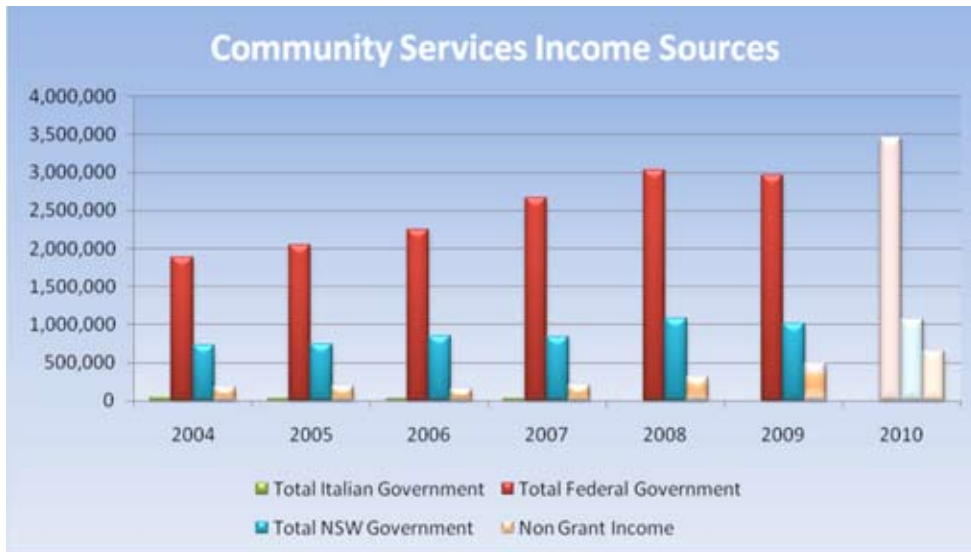


Major Strategies	Tasks
<p><b>1.</b> Focus on technology and innovation in order to expand and develop the range of Italian language and heritage services.</p>	<p>1.1 Conduct detailed research into learning management systems and a range of delivery options including video conferencing.</p> <p>1.2 Implement a suitable learning management system which enhances the delivery of courses and allows for the development of online services.</p> <p>1.3 Provide technical and pedagogical training to the language services team in the delivery of online learning.</p> <p>1.4 Develop online learning programs for Italian and English.</p> <p>1.5 Develop resources for the teaching of Italian to English speakers.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Develop a new model for delivering Italian instruction in schools.</p>	<p>2.1 Agree with Italian Consulate on a review process for the current system.</p> <p>2.2 Consult with key stakeholders, including DET, Catholic Education office, Independent Schools, and the Italian Consulate Develop a new model for delivering Italian from K-12.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Explore market opportunities and expand user-pay services in the language training sector.</p>	<p>3.1 Conduct research to identify opportunities for providing language and culture learning services, including English language courses, to the corporate, aged care and other relevant sectors.</p> <p>3.2 Identify distribution sales channels and establish a range of strategic alliances with organisations such as travel agents and Industry Associations.</p> <p>3.3 Develop a vacation care program for primary-age students.</p> <p>3.4 Develop and promote a new range of Italian programs for secondary students, including a specific course for ex-IBS students.</p> <p>3.5 Develop and promote CELI preparatory courses and exams to secondary schools and the general public.</p> <p>3.6 Develop sales and marketing strategies to reach potential clients of new services.</p> <p>3.7 Develop the language services team by providing further training in areas such as sales, marketing and promotion, CELI accreditation, adult learning and leadership skills.</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Move toward setting up a training and learning centre.</p>	<p>4.1 Investigate the possibility of becoming a Registered Training Organisation by exploring both practical and legal requirements.</p> <p>4.2 Monitor the growth in the language services and heritage area so that the Board can identify when demand necessitates the establishment of a training and learning centre.</p>
<p><b>5.</b> Identify alternative funding sources.</p>	<p>5.1 Conduct comprehensive research into alternative funding sources, including European Union funding, in order to expand the language services and heritage area.</p> <p>5.2 Set up a working party to actively seek funding opportunities and establish strategic partnerships to access funding networks.</p> <p>5.3 Develop the submission-writing skills of the language services team through training.</p>
<p><b>6.</b> Develop the Heritage service area.</p>	<p>6.1 Develop a succession plan in the Italian Family History Group.</p> <p>6.2 Identify alternative funding sources for Heritage projects.</p> <p>6.3 Explore alternative ways of recording and celebrating the contribution of Italians, including possibly a specific website for this purpose.</p> <p>6.4 Develop new tours to incorporate other historical areas and themes.</p> <p>6.5 Explore the possibility of new privately funded research projects on industries normally associated with the Italian migrant community.</p> <p>6.6 Develop new partnerships with key organisations, universities, libraries, museums, etc. to highlight the contribution of Italians.</p>
<p><b>7.</b> Develop the activities of the Italian Multimedia Resource Centre.</p>	<p>7.1 Increase sales activity in the library by sourcing new items for sale, including language learning toys, games, books, CDs and DVDs and develop a sales strategy.</p> <p>7.2 Investigate the possibility of forming strategic alliances to reach a wider distribution network.</p> <p>7.3 Conduct market research to ascertain the viability of offering services such as Story time per bambini and Computer courses for Italian Seniors to other libraries and community centres.</p> <p>7.4 Investigate the need for a mobile library service for the Italian community and explore options for delivering the service.</p> <p>7.5 Provide further training for library staff in sales, marketing and promotion.</p>
<p><b>8.</b> Develop innovative strategies to retain, develop and attract quality staff to the organisation.</p>	<p>8.1 Explore a range of strategies such as professional development, bursaries, reviewed contractual arrangements and other incentives to continue to attract and retain quality staff.</p>



# Community Services

Following the success of the 2007-09 Strategic Plan, the area of Community Services has expanded to provide additional supports to the community. This includes a significant step towards the provision of services to other CALD communities through the HACC funded centre based daycare program. Additional funding has also enabled Co.As.It. to develop programs around problem gambling, dementia information, flexible care and private (user-pays) in-home care.



It is well known within the aged and community sectors that funding is becoming far more competitive as services are required to tender for dollars. As well as this, the sector is becoming more regulated and services are required to do more with less. As Co.As.It. we have the additional task of maintaining the needs of the Italian community at a policy level. We see it as our task to ensure that the needs of the community are considered in Government planning and policy development.

Given the current political and economic scenario facing the not-for-profit sector, this current strategic plan has placed an incredible focus on research, innovation and diversification as a means to both continue to meet the changing needs of the Italian community as well as to ensure the long term viability of the organisation.

It is well understood that funding bodies are looking at new ways to deliver care and support to local communities that is both cost effective and innovative. Great energy will be placed in the coming four years to develop programs that will meet the increased need for services for the Italian community. Of particular priority will be the areas of dementia care and information; clinical and flexible care as well as counselling. It is envisaged that counselling services will need to focus on new areas like grief and support for individuals with a terminal illness.

Our strategic plan has identified the need to extend the community services of Co.As.It. outside the Sydney metropolitan area. Regional NSW and the ACT have large numbers of Italian born and Italian speaking individuals who currently are not able to access culturally appropriate care. We see it as our responsibility to respond to this need and grow our services accordingly.

Our overall focus will remain unchanged. We will endeavour to respond to the changing needs of the Italian community. We will achieve this by the continued expansion and diversification of our services. However, it is clear that this is a task that we cannot necessarily achieve on our own. We will continue to work with peak and other mainstream bodies to ensure that services across the sectors continue to be provided in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the Italian-Australian community.

# Community Services

## Major Strategies

Major Strategies	Tasks
<p><b>1.</b> Move the community service area to become a mainstream service area while maintaining its cultural orientation and expertise.</p>	<p>1.1 Explore funding opportunities for the delivery of services to the mainstream community.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Expand programs across areas of need in areas outside of Sydney (for example Griffith or Canberra).</p>	<p>2.1 Identify and target specific areas of need and establish a number of pilot projects in areas outside of Sydney.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Continue to innovate and provide targeted care that meets the changing needs of the community.</p>	<p>3.1 Give priority to funding research and data collection so that emerging areas of need are identified. 3.2 Explore the possibility of new service models in line with community needs.</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Develop innovative strategies to retain, develop and attract quality staff to the organisation.</p>	<p>4.1 Explore a range of strategies such as professional development, bursaries, reviewed contractual arrangements and other incentives to continue to attract and retain quality staff.</p>



# Dignity



# Quality



# Responsiveness



# Pride

# Integrity







### **Head Office**

Norton Business Centre  
Level 1 - Suite 3  
55 Norton Street, Leichhardt NSW 2040  
Tel ++61 - 2 - 9564 0744  
Fax ++61 - 2 - 9569 6648  
Web [www.coasit.org.au](http://www.coasit.org.au)

Postal address:  
P.O. Box 342, Leichhardt NSW 2040

### **Multimedia Resource Centre**

Casa d'Italia  
Renata Salteri Library Hall  
67 Norton Street, Leichhardt 2040  
Tel ++61 - 2 - 9564 0755  
Fax ++61 - 2 - 9569 6648  
Web [www.coasit.org.au](http://www.coasit.org.au)

### **Italian Bilingual School**

Casa d'Italia  
67 Norton Street Leichhardt 2040  
Tel. ++61 - 2 - 9572 9077  
Fax ++61 - 2 - 9572 9080  
Web [www.ibs.nsw.edu.au](http://www.ibs.nsw.edu.au)