

# Ensuring Our Future



## STRATEGIC PLAN

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## STRATEGIC PLAN

### BOARD COMMITMENT

This Strategic Plan has been developed through a collaborative effort of the Board and the Management Team. The Values have been shaped by feedback from staff and the Action Plans have been developed by the Board, the Management Team and the staff.

Each Priority Area will be taken up by a Project Team which is in turn accountable to the Board for reaching the objectives and targets of each Priority Area.

The Strategic Plan is a road map, to guide the decision making and actioning process. The Plan needs to be seen as a work in progress so that it can be adapted to changing internal and external challenges.

The Board is committed to the implementation of the Plan over the next 3 years whilst remaining faithful to our Mission and Values.



**President**



**Executive Officer**

## 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.

Co.As.It. was formed with two distinct aims: to assist migrants through a coordinated settlement welfare program, and to preserve and promote the Italian language and culture in NSW.

Co.As.It. is a registered charity and its voluntary Board of Directors is elected annually by its members.

Today Co.As.It. is one of the major and most active ethnic voluntary agencies in NSW, offering a wide range of services and programs focused on community services, educational and cultural activities.

Co.As.It. activities are funded via a combination of Government Grants, Fundraising activities and fees from service recipients.

With a rapidly ageing Italian-Australian community, the **Community Services** area focuses today on the provision of services for the older members of our community via direct service provision (Community Aged Care Packages and Frail Aged and Dementia Specific Respite Day Care) as well as case management, information and referral and a volunteer visitor program. Co.As.It. continues to provide counselling and community education services in the areas of Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol and Youth and Family. Italian Senior Social Support Groups throughout the Sydney Metropolitan Area are supported and resourced by the Aged Care Team.

In the **Education** area Co.As.It. provides Italian language and culture classes within the school curriculum to over 20,000 students in NSW in State, Catholic and Independent Schools, as well as Out of School Hours Classes to approximately 1,000 students and Adult classes to approximately 600 students every year. Co.As.It. maintains its focus on the professional development of teachers of Italian and the provision of educational resources. In addition, Co.As.It. organises and promotes a series of complementary cultural activities for all teachers of Italian, the 60,000 school students in NSW, as well as the general public. Over the last 10 years, a range of activities focusing on the Italian Migration heritage have been developed 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.

## MISSION

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.

## 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.

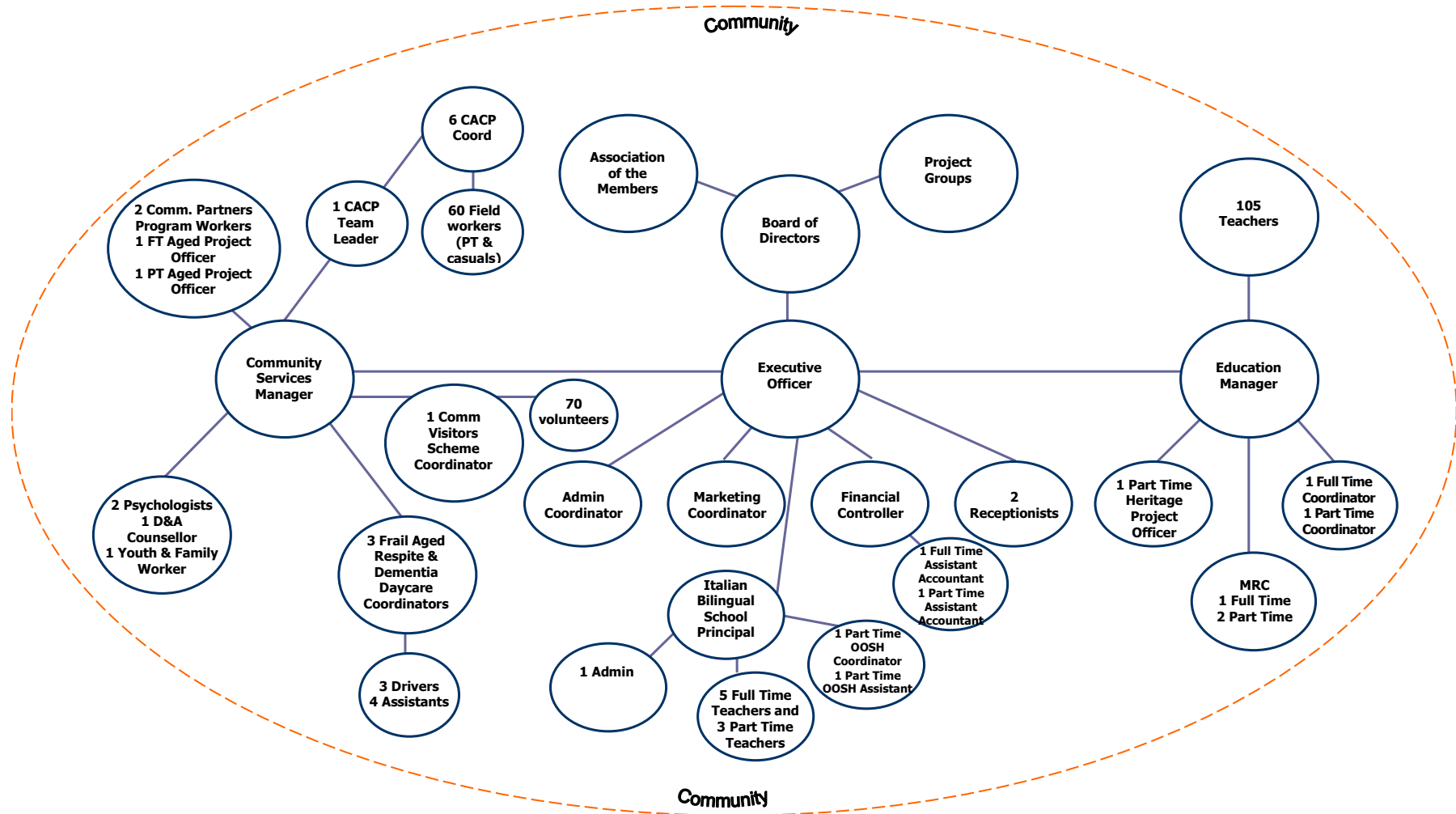
### **PRIDE**

Aspiring to reach our objectives by being faithful to our heritage.

### **QUALITY**

Ensuring excellence in all that we do.

## CO.AS.IT. ORGANISATIONAL CHART



## SERVICE AND PRIORITY AREAS

### Service Area: Co.As.It. Board

**Priority Area 1:** Board performance.

**Objective:** To optimise the effectiveness of the Board so that Co.As.It. continues to thrive and grow.

**Responsibility:** Board, Executive Officer and Managers.

### Service Area: Italian Bilingual School

**Priority Area 2:** Leadership in Bilingual Education.

**Objective:** To establish the Italian Bilingual School as the leader in bilingual education in NSW so that it becomes the Number one choice for parents.

**Responsibility:** Board, Executive Officer and School Principal.

### Service Area: Italian Education and Heritage

**Priority Area 3:** Sustainability and Financial Viability.

**Objective:** To develop and re-position the Italian Education and Heritage so that it becomes sustainable and financially viable by strengthening self-funding and consolidating funding sources.

**Responsibility:** Board, Executive Officer and Education Manager.

### Service Area: Community Services

**Priority Area 4:** Development, re-positioning and growth in Community Services.

**Objective:** To develop, reposition and enhance Co.As.It. Community Services so that funding by government and other agencies is increased and other funding opportunities are created.

**Responsibility:** Board, Executive Officer and Community Services Manager.



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## The changing Italian Bilingual School environment

The Italian Bilingual School (IBS), the result of a long held vision of Co.As.It. to provide a bilingual school for the community, is today at the forefront of bilingual education in New South Wales.

In order to continue to achieve this goal, it is imperative for Co.As.It. to consider the current policy environment and the needs and expectations of the community. When planning for the future expansion of the Italian Bilingual School, a number of factors must be taken into consideration.

- Schools are becoming increasingly more competitive; specialist schools offer something with which 'customers' can readily identify. Excelling in one area and building a reputation along those lines is extremely important.
- Parents are generally better informed and seek added value for their child's education. The added dimension of a second language is attractive also due to its potential transferability to the work market upon completion of school.
- There is increasing general interest in the Italian language and culture as also evidenced by increased numbers of adults attending language classes.
- Current enrolments vary in the catchment area; the majority of students live within the Inner West area, but some travel from the Western and Eastern Suburbs on a daily basis. Interest has been registered from the Northern Beaches area and outer West.
- There are language schools in NSW, but most rely on curriculum from the source country, some also follow the calendar of the source country (i.e. French/German etc). IBS is one of the few to teach in two languages but bases its programs largely on the Australian curriculum.
- Following local curriculum makes it less 'threatening' or of a 'risk factor' for non-Italian background parents considering alternatives to mainstream education.
- There is an unquestionably strong interest in the bilingual Transition program and in future years Co.As.It. may choose to develop a full pre-school (and perhaps long-day care) program.
- Two main challenges face IBS: the securing of stable long-term premises and the sourcing of appropriately skilled, native speakers of Italian for teaching positions.
- It is imperative to strike a balance between low student numbers, which make the school very attractive to some parents and the long term viability of classes, which are made vulnerable by the low numbers, especially when considered within a very dynamic and changing community and clientele.



## The changing community services environment

Co.As.It. has always prided itself on assisting people 'through the life span' – on the provision of services that could see a person through many potential crises throughout their lives and the provision of options and resources to cope with such events.

In order to continue to achieve this goal, it is imperative for Co.As.It. to consider the current policy environment and the needs and expectations of the community. When planning for the future delivery of community services to the community, a number of factors must be taken into consideration.

- It is well documented that the Italian community is rapidly ageing. Projections indicate that by 2020, 85% of the Italian born population in Australia will be aged over 80. It is anticipated that the demand of community care will continue to increase and that the community will require higher level and more flexible care.
- As the first generation continues to age, second and subsequent generations will require a different range of services. These services will need to take into account the cultural and linguistic background of the individual, even though language may not be an essential component of service provision.
- At a policy level, both State and Federal Governments continue to acknowledge the needs of older Australians. Similarly, mental health and health promotion are seen as a priority at this level. This has resulted in increasing funding in these sectors.
- Implication for the future planning of Co.As.It. must consider the increased competitiveness within the sector as well as stringent requirements of accountability and quality.
- It has been noted that there has been a general move away from ethno-specific funding. Co.As.It. will need to explore the possibility of re-positioning itself as not solely a provider of Italian specific services but as a 'mainstream' provider with a focus on the provision of services to the multicultural community.
- In response to community needs Co.As.It is also committed to exploring the options of private services to provide where government funding may not be available.



## The changing Italian education and heritage environment

Co.As.It. provides a comprehensive range of language and cultural services to both students and Italian teachers from pre-school to adult through a series of targeted educational programs. In addition, the professional development support Co.As.It. is able to offer Italian teachers of NSW is of prime importance.

In order to continue to achieve these services, it is essential for Co.As.It. to consider both the maintenance and expansion of the services in this sector. When planning for the future delivery of educational services to the community, the following should be considered:

- Diminishing funds from the Italian government and the eroding of funding from local sources when faced with ever increasing costs involved in running the Insertion and Out of School Hours programs.
- The competition of Italian as a subject in the face of the crowded curriculum at both primary and secondary levels in NSW schools.
- The availability of qualified Italian teachers for all sectors of our programmes - fewer students are studying Italian at University and this in turn means that few Italian teachers are graduating. In addition, schools' compliance requirements mean that teaching staff must obtain locally recognised degrees and teaching qualifications.
- Issues relating to Industrial Relations changes and Worker's Compensation Insurance costs.
- The ever-expanding interest that the general public show for leisure courses. Co.As.It. is experienced within this area – Out of School Hours program, adult classes and heritage tours - and well-placed to expand, as well as the constant interest in the discovery of the Italian migrant experience
- The popularity of children services such as the Storytime Program, which could find a successful expansion opportunity in pre-schools and Stage 1 students in primary schools.
- The growing demand by 'corporate' clients to provide 'custom made' Italian language and culture services.



## STRATEGIC BUSINESS PRIORITIES 2007 - 2009 >>>

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

#### Major Tasks

- 1.1 Clarify the purpose and work of the Board and review Board, Executive and Management structure
- 1.2 Take responsibility for raising the profile of Co.As.It. in the Italian and wider community
- 1.3 Build and strengthen contacts through lobbying and networking with key funding agencies and existing and new service partners
- 1.4 Develop a planned approach to Board succession, induction and ongoing experience of the services
- 1.5 Conduct Board training in areas of identified need
- 1.6 Review Board performance
- 1.7 Regularly engage in strategic thinking to respond to opportunity for growth

### Service Area: ITALIAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL

#### Major Tasks

- 2.1 Develop a long term Plan to achieve the Board's vision for the School
- 2.2 Review the governance structures for the school
- 2.3 Locate the school to maximise access and government funding to ensure longevity
- 2.4 Investigate provision of transport for students to enlarge catchment area
- 2.5 Optimise opportunities to promote the profile of the school
- 2.6 Maintain and maximise student numbers
- 2.7 Attract and retain quality staff
- 2.8 Source qualified Italian native speaking teachers
- 2.9 Investigate pre-school and long day care facilities

**Service Area: ITALIAN EDUCATION AND HERITAGE**

**Major Tasks**

- 3.1 Review existing services and implement a Business Plan that makes the service financially viable
- 3.2 Attract and retain quality bilingual teachers – locally and overseas
- 3.3 Review accountability and performance requirements for all staff
- 3.4 Exploit opportunities:
  - In adult language classes
  - In the leisure market
  - In travel
- 3.5 Strengthen and develop existing and new partnerships to lobby for funding
- 3.6 Enhance Human Resource knowledge and expertise
- 3.7 Develop a Marketing Plan

**Service Area: COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Major Tasks**

- 1.1 Review existing services and develop and implement a Business Plan with the aim of making services less reliant on government funding.
- 1.2 Build existing partnerships and develop new partnerships with other providers in order to secure additional agency funding
- 1.3 Broaden service delivery to include the broader multi-cultural area and other specific needs.
- 1.4 Attract and retain quality staff
- 1.5 Review accountability and performance requirements of all staff
- 1.6 Provide services aimed at the changing needs of clients
- 1.7 Enhance Human Resource knowledge and expertise

# Our future...







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