

Co.As.It.

Annual Report 2024





About Co.As.It.

Co.As.It., Italian Association of Assistance, was established in 1968 to promote Italian language and culture in NSW and to assist the growing number of migrants arriving from Italy.

Co.As.It. has grown to offer a vast range of programs, including aged care services and language classes for adults and children. Co.As.It. also operates an independent primary school, the Italian Bilingual School, which delivers the NSW curriculum in Italian and English.

Mission

Our Italian heritage enables us to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the community by enhancing quality of life and providing opportunities for lifelong learning.

Vision

Lifelong learning
& support

Values

Loyalty
Dignity
Integrity
Wellbeing
Responsiveness

Acknowledgment of Country

Co.As.It. acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.



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The story of Italian Australians is deeply and proudly woven into the fabric of our nation. Over so many generations, Italian families have made their lives here and enriched this country beyond measure. Indeed, you have played such a cherished role in the shaping of our modern nation that Australia without Italians is quite simply beyond imagining.

— Hon. Anthony Albanese,
Prime Minister of Australia
Italian National Ball 2024

President's Message



Dear members,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Co.As.It. Annual Report for 2024 and reflect on the remarkable achievements and milestones that have defined Co.As.It. throughout the year.

Since 1968, Co.As.It. has stood as a pillar of the Italian-Australian community, a bridge connecting our vibrant heritage with the broader community. This year has been no exception; we have continued to uphold our mission with unwavering commitment and passion.

Throughout the year, we hosted a series of concerts, cinema nights, and community events, further enriching our cultural tapestry and fostering a sense of community.

One of the many highlights of the year was the Italian National Ball. The Ball was held at The Fullerton Hotel Sydney on the 1st of June, and was a resounding success, hosting 570 guests, marking the festivities of Festa della Repubblica, Italian National Day.

Our involvement as a major sponsor of the Norton Street Italian Festa once again showcased our dedication to community engagement. Hosting the main entertainment stage, we were honoured to welcome Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and His Excellency Italian Ambassador Crudele.

In collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy in Sydney, Italian Tourist Board in Australia, and the Italian

Chamber of Commerce we hosted Flavours of Italy; a celebration of the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World (La Settimana della Cucina Italiana nel Mondo).

As part of Co.As.It's partnerships with Italian universities to enhance our work as a provider of quality Italian language programs, we welcomed 15 Language Assistants from Italy to support the teaching of Italian in NSW schools. These invaluable partnerships further reinforce our commitment to the promotion of Italian language and culture in NSW.

In 2024, Co.As.It. taught Italian to thousands of students through its extensive range of language programs for both children and adults. Over 8000 children in State and Catholic schools, 500 children in Out of School Hour centres and 750 adults in evening classes studied Italian in Co.As.It. programs.

Through Co.As.It's support, Italian continued to be one of the most widely taught languages in NSW primary and secondary schools. Special thanks go to our exceptional teachers and Education staff. Their tireless dedication, creativity, and commitment to providing high-quality education is truly commendable.

In July this year, the Italian Bilingual School welcomed students and families from the Convitto Nazionale Paolo Diacono in Cividale del Friuli, as part of a student exchange program. The students from CNPD had the opportunity to study at IBS and explore NSW and Canberra as a part of the exchange program between the two schools. This represented an exciting

opportunity for our students to make connections and establish lifelong friendships with Italian students.

I was extremely proud and humbled by the invitation to the Italian Bilingual School to compete at the CONI Summer Games (Italian National Olympic Committee) in October this year. The selected students proudly represented Australia and the Italian Bilingual School on an international level, competing with the best of the best athletes from around the world.

This year, we have seen impressive growth and impact across our programs. In the realm of care, we have expanded our services to support our older community members in living with dignity and comfort. Our counselling and community support teams have provided solace and guidance to individuals and families during difficult times.

In our Community Services programs, we have achieved several significant milestones. In collaboration with the Cancer Institute NSW, we ran several information sessions in Italian to increase the awareness of women from Italian background (aged between 50 and 75) to the importance of breast cancer screening. We experienced growth across all our Programs, now supporting over 1,075 consumers.

We received new Allied Health Funding for Physiotherapy in Southwest Sydney, which allowed us to provide 11,000 hours of Allied health Services to our clients.

We were invited by the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) to participate as the Associate Investigators on the ODYSSEY Study. This study involved the development of a dementia app for carers of people living with dementia in various community languages. We played a crucial role in the development of the APP in Italian and then recruited 16 members of the community to test the App and Provide Feedback. The App is due to Launch in May 2025.

It's humbling and gratifying to hear of the ongoing exceptional work that our community services staff provide, and the positive impact that our services have on the community. We assist hundreds of people per week through a range of aged care and community programs, and I thank those who provide the direct care, for their ongoing hard work and dedication.

This year the Co.As.It. Medal was awarded to Associate Professor Antonia Rubino and Julius Larobina, for both having demonstrated outstanding contribution, service, and assistance to the Italian community in NSW. We acknowledged their contributions and awarded them the medals at our end of year function.

A special thank you is owed to our incredible staff at Co.As.It.; the Managers, Team Leaders, Coordinators, Teachers, Care Workers, and Support Staff. Your dedication and hard work have been the driving force behind our success. Your belief in our mission allows us to do what we do best, serve with heart and purpose. Thank you for walking this journey with us.

A heartfelt acknowledgment goes to Thomas Camporeale for his exceptional contributions and unwavering support throughout the year. Your commitment and dedication have not gone unnoticed, and we are grateful for your tireless efforts.

Last but certainly not least, I extend my deepest appreciation to the Co.As.It. Board; Frank Chiment (Vice President), Paul Dovico (Treasurer), Lou Bacchiella (Secretary), Maria Pirrello, Ben Sonogo, Linda Restuccia, Romano Di Donato, Lina Di Donato and Rose Megale. Your leadership, wisdom, and dedication have steered us through the highs and lows, ensuring that Co.As.It. continues to thrive and make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

I commend to you the 2024 Co.As.It. Annual Report and I look forward to your continued support of the organisation.



Comm. **Lorenzo Fazzini**
President

General Manager's Message



As we reflect on 2024, I am proud to share another year of growth, innovation, and unwavering commitment to our mission at Co.As.It.; to support, preserve and promote the rich heritage of the Italian community in New South Wales.

Co.As.It. is more than just an organisation; it is a community, a family, and a beacon of support and enrichment for so many people. Together, we have achieved milestones, overcome challenges, and continued to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.

This year, we strengthened our core services while expanding opportunities across Education, Community Services, and Cultural engagement. Every interaction, every service provided, and every moment of care has contributed to strengthening the community.

In Community Services, we have deepened our impact through aged care, mental health support, and volunteer programs. Our HCP Program continued to grow, and we reached a record number of HCP Consumers in 2024, with a total of 471 HCP consumers across the Sydney Metropolitan area. Mental health remained a priority, with growing demand for our bilingual counselling services. Through education, outreach, and one-on-one support, we addressed stigma and created safe spaces for individuals and families navigating mental health challenges.

In 2024, we established two new Consumer Committees. Our Consumer Advisory Committee

(CAC) and our Quality Consumer Advisory Committee (QCAC). Whilst we established these Committees in response to our requirements under the current Aged Care Reforms, they have brought tremendous value to our organisation. The purpose of these committees is for consumers to provide input into the way we operate our services. We hear directly from our consumers of any actions and changes we could implement to improve the quality of services.

Our language and Education programs continue to flourish, reaching more students than ever through our partnerships with local schools, Universities, and Institutions in Italy. Co.As.It. welcomed fifteen Italian language assistants from partner universities who supported schools across NSW, contributing to classroom learning, developing HSC materials, and producing new episodes of *Ascolta e Impara*—a radio series supporting Italian learners.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure dignity, connection, and compassion are at the heart of every service we deliver.

In cultural engagement, we proudly delivered a calendar of events that brought people together in celebration. Cultural initiatives remained a cornerstone of our work, with flagship events like the Italian National Ball and the Norton Street Italian Festa celebrations drawing record attendance and reinforcing our shared identity. Our collaborations with Italian institutions, local councils and community groups have enriched these events and expanded their reach.

None of this would be possible without our incredible team, partners, supporters, and the community we proudly serve. Thank you for your continued trust, support and collaboration. I look forward to another year of connection, care, and cultural pride.

I must particularly thank the Management team - Sara Vilella, Anita Bonanno, Maria Angelatos, Luana Campione, Helen Hafda and Christina Pasquariello for their leadership and support.

I thank the Board of Directors for their constant guidance, support and for the trust they have placed in me. The Board of Directors provide the vision that drives the organisation and work tirelessly to ensure that it is delivered.

To our President Lorenzo Fazzini, your passion for this community is inspiring. Thank you for all the support you have given me this year and for teaching me to always fight for what is right, despite the obstacles that are in the way.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to innovation, inclusion, and cultural integrity—ensuring that Co.As.It. continues to thrive as a vital part of the multicultural fabric of New South Wales.



Cav. **Thomas Camporeale**
General Manager

Our Board



Lorenzo Fazzini
President



Frank Chiment
Vice President



Paul Dovico
Treasurer



Lou Bacchiella
Secretary



Maria Pirrello
Director



Ben Sonogo
Director



Linda Restuccia
Director



Lina Di Donato
Director



Romano Di Donato
Director



Rose Megale
Director

Senior Management Team



Thomas Camporeale
General Manager



Sara Villella
Head of Education
& IBS Executive
Principal



Anita Bonanno
Head of
Community
Services



Luana Campione
Human Resources
Manager



Christina Pasquariello
Business Services
Manager



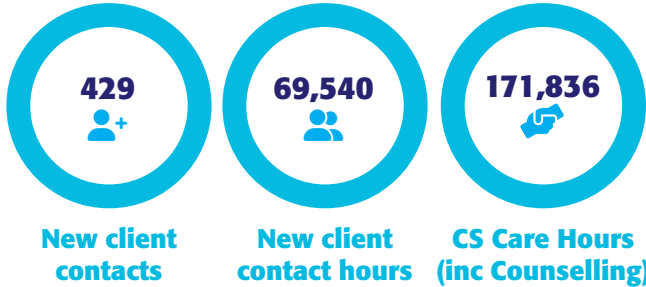
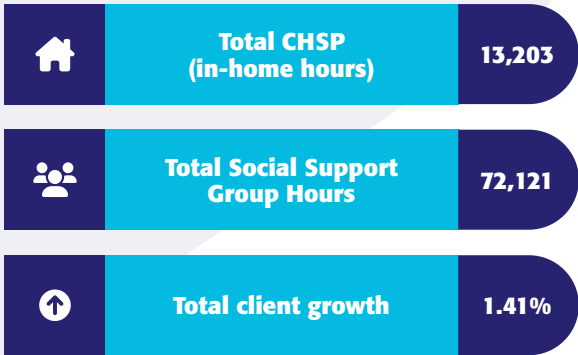
Helen Hafda
Marketing,
Events and
Communications
Manager



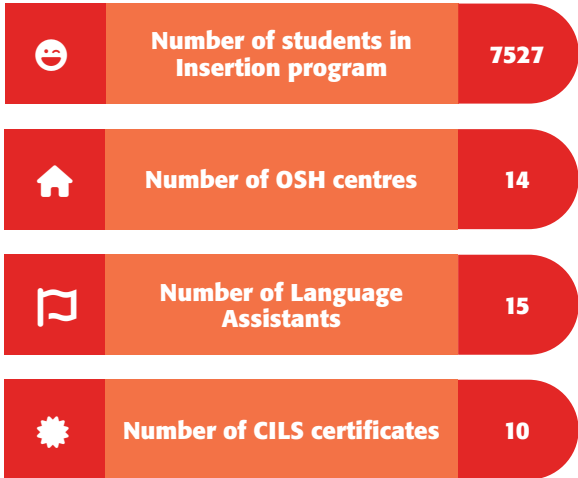
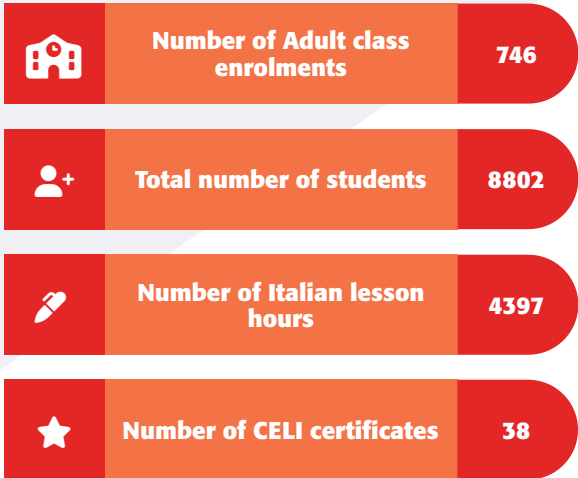
Maria Angelatos
Governance
and Compliance
Manager

2024 Highlights

Community Services



Education Services



Community Services



Commonwealth Home Support Program

Personal Care, Domestic Assistance and Allied Health

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) is an entry-level support program offering services to seniors without complex care needs, to live independently and safely at home.

Not only did we continue providing these entry level CHSP in-home services to an average of 242 consumers per month, equating to an average of 1,100 hours per month through the year, but we also managed to secure additional growth funding to expand our Allied Health Services into South West Sydney. Thanks to this additional funding, Co.As.It. now provides the following CHSP Services.

Aged Care Planning Region	Western Sydney	South East Sydney	South West Sydney	Inner West
Personal care		✓	✓	✓
Domestic Assistance	✓		✓	
Allied Health (podiatry & Physio)			NEW	✓



Group Based Activities

In 2024, we embarked on a journey to reinvent the way in which we provide Group Based Social Support Services to our consumers. We commenced a consumer consultation process and completed a GAPS Analysis which demonstrated that we needed to introduce more options and more flexibility when it comes to meeting the social support needs of the Community. During this process, we identified the need to establish more Active Ageing Groups, to attract the next generation of seniors that want to remain fit and active and enjoy weekly outings, whilst balancing the need to maintain our traditional centre-based social support options for those in the community that are frailer or have carers that require respite. We now offer Active Ageing and Traditional Centre Based Groups across most of the Aged Care Planning Regions we are funded to provide services.

The Aged Care Reform landscape was also a driving force in the need to make changes in the way that we deliver our group-based activities. With the ever-increasing governance requirements and the introduction of new environmental and food safety standards, we had to make the difficult decision of relocating some of our groups to new venues, and to change the way in which we provide meals at our Centres. It takes time to adjust to change but we worked collaboratively with our consumers to address their initial concerns, providing a total of 72,121 hours of group-based social support. This is an increase of 25,264 hours from last year which provides us with reassurance that we are heading in the right direction.

Community Care

Home Care Packages (HCP)

This program is a Federal Government initiative designed to support older persons to live independently in the comfort of their own home. Our HCP consumers receive support with clinical care, allied health, respite, personal care, transport, meals, domestic assistance, and social support.

Throughout 2024, our dedicated team of staff provided:

- 26,996 hours of Personal Care.
- 16,197 hours of Domestic Assistance.
- 13,701 hours of Social Support and Transport Services.
- 10,947 hours of Allied Health Services.
- 5,396 hours of Respite.
- 2,585 meals.
- 2,460 hours of gardening.
- 968 hours of clinical care services.

Our HCP Program continued to grow, and we reached a record number of HCP Consumers in 2024, with a total of 471 HCP consumers across the Sydney Metropolitan area. With this growth, we also welcomed many new consumers from many diverse cultural backgrounds including:

- Lebanese
- Greek
- Croatian
- Syrian
- Maltese
- Spanish
- Macedonian
- Indian
- Portuguese
- Serbian

- Persian
- Bosnian
- German

All consumers received culturally safe care and we were able to utilise our current multicultural team of staff to ensure each and every consumer's cultural and spiritual needs were met.



Today, COASIT continues to uphold its mission, promoting health campaigns, supporting the elderly and those in need and fostering cultural exchange through Italian language and culture courses. With the support of both the Italian and Australian governments, COASIT builds bridges between communities, enriching the cultural fabric of Australia and enhancing our bilateral ties.

— H.E. Paolo Crudele, Ambassador of Italy in Australia

Counselling and Community Development

Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme (ACVVS)

We have been working diligently to recruit new volunteers to join our ACVVS program. With the increasing costs of living, people are finding it harder to volunteer their time, as many people are taking on more paid employment to make ends meet. However, despite these difficulties we successfully recruited many new volunteers to join our program. This has enabled us to accept new referrals and increase the number of people receiving support from volunteers. Our volunteers have provided over 500 hours of companionship to more than 31 socially isolated seniors residing in a Residential Aged Care Facility or in their own homes. The ACVVS program also provides an opportunity to our volunteers to grow their own social networks and forge new friendships as they meet other fellow volunteers during our volunteer training and social events.

Counselling Programs

Our bilingual counselling programs experienced an increase demand in service following the tragic incident at Bondi Westfield in April 2024. We worked closely with the Italian Consulate to assist the Italian-Australian Community that were impacted by this tragedy. An increase in demand for counselling was also recorded due to an increased awareness of Domestic Violence.

The team continued to be active in community engagement activities and we held a Mental Health Week event in October 2024. The team maintained a regular presence on the weekly radio program Spazio

Giovani on Rete Italia, to raise awareness for mental health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol awareness issues.

Youth and Family Program

The Youth and Family program is delivered via a model of Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) and the focus of this program is to provide early intervention and support services to children, young people, and/or their families that are vulnerable or living in risk. Our Youth and Family Program Officer continues to work in Partnership with Metro Assist, Stepping Stone, and Headspace Ashfield including:

- Love Bites
- Stepping Stone
- NAIDOC Week
- The Sky is the Limit
- Supported Play Groups
- Resume Writing Workshops

We have also developed a new partnership with Sydney Secondary College in Leichhardt to develop *Transition to High School* programs aimed at ensuring young people remain in school and obtain their High School Certificate.

Projects

In 2024, we completed many of the large projects we had been working on over the past two years.

The Cancer Institute Breast Screen

We delivered 5 information sessions in the Inner West and Southwest Sydney to promote the importance of Breast screening for women aged 50-74yrs. Co.As.It. received a grant from the Cancer Institute to deliver these sessions and over 97% of attendees reported that

they now had a better understanding of Breast Cancer and were more likely to book a breast screen.

EARLI

We fulfilled our commitment with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to be part of The Enhanced Advance Care Planning and Life Review Longitudinal Intervention (EARLI) Project. Throughout the course of this project, we were able to recruit 6 community members to be part of this longitudinal study which will provide valuable insight to the UNSW on the cultural beliefs and expectations around death, dying and Advance Care Planning.

ODYSSEY Dementia App.

We were invited by the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) to participate as the Associate Investigators on the ODYSSEY Study. This study involved the development of a dementia App for carers of people living with dementia in various community languages. We played a crucial role in the development of the App in Italian and then recruited 16 members of the community to test the App and Provide Feedback. The App will be launched in May 2025.





Luigi

Home Care Packages

Luigi Dolce is a devoted, unpaid carer for his parents, Frank and Giovanna Dolce, both in their 80s. Through the support of Co.As.It., Frank receives a Level 2 Home Care Package, while Giovanna, who has been diagnosed with dementia, receives a Level 3 Home Care Package. The services provided through their packages include Domestic Assistance, Social Support, Physiotherapy, and Podiatry – all of which have been critical to maintaining their quality of life.

Luigi shared, “We accessed aged care services a year ago, as soon as my parents needed additional help. My mum’s dementia was progressing, and my dad needed respite support to continue living well himself.” Through Co.As.It.’s services, Luigi has also been able to find crucial respite, easing the pressures of his caregiving role and allowing him to focus more on maintaining a balanced work and family life.

Born in Italy, Frank and Giovanna, like many migrants of their generation, have limited English skills – a challenge that has grown with age. Luigi knew it was essential to find a culturally appropriate provider where his parents would feel understood, respected, and supported in

their native language. “It was important for me to find a service where the staff could truly understand my parents’ background and treat them with dignity,” Luigi explained.

Choosing Co.As.It. was an easy decision. “Co.As.It.’s connection to the Italian community and its deep understanding of the older generation made all the difference. They take such good care of my parents,” Luigi said.

Reflecting on his journey, Luigi expressed immense gratitude for the decision to seek support. “The services have given me more quality time with my parents and the ability to better balance my work and family responsibilities,” he said. His advice to other carers juggling multiple commitments is simple but powerful: “Make the decision and access assistance. It will help you let go of much of the burden that comes with caring for a loved one.”

Luigi’s story is a testament to how culturally sensitive aged care services, delivered with compassion and respect, can empower families, and improve lives across generations.

Matthew

Stepping Stone Program - Youth & Family

Matthew, a proud 19-year-old Aboriginal young man, has been participating in the Stepping Stone program for over two years. Delivered in collaboration between Co.As.It. and Stepping Stone House, this program was developed to help young people navigate the complexities of healthy relationships and build essential life skills for the future.

Throughout his journey in the program, Matthew openly shared his personal experiences with toxic relationships during both individual and group sessions. With the support of the program's mentors and peers, Matthew developed critical insights into the dynamics of healthy and unhealthy relationships. He learned to recognise the subtle differences between "red flags" and "green flags," and began exploring the underlying factors that had contributed to his past relationship challenges. Through these reflections, he built strategies for emotional regulation, boundary setting, and self-awareness.

Matthew recognised he had reached a major turning point when he made the difficult decision to walk away from a relationship that displayed many "red flags." Although a challenging choice, it marked a powerful step toward prioritising

his personal growth and wellbeing. "It was hard, but it allowed me to focus on myself and put into practice what I'd been learning with the support of the Stepping Stone team," Matthew shared.

Since then, Matthew has entered a new relationship—one that feels markedly different. "There were so many more 'green flags' than 'red flags.' I wanted to make sure I was on the right track with my emotional regulation, so I turned to the Stepping Stone support team for guidance," he said. Their ongoing support reassured Matthew that he was applying his new knowledge in real life.

The Stepping Stone program created a safe, supportive environment that empowered Matthew to be open, vulnerable, and to embrace positive, lasting changes. "Like every relationship, we have our ups and downs," he reflected, "but now I understand how to regulate my emotions and set healthy boundaries when I need to take time for myself."

Matthew's story shows how programs like Stepping Stone can transform lives by equipping young people with the tools they need to foster healthy relationships, build resilience, and shape a positive future.



Armando

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)

At 90 years young, Armando Simonelli is full of life, with a vivacious spirit and a cheeky sense of humour. A true social soul, he's always enjoyed the simple pleasures of conversation, connection, and sharing a meal. While Armando no longer gets out into the community as often as he once did, his days are brightened by fortnightly visits from Co.As.It. ACVVS Volunteer, Guglielmo.

Together, they share coffee, play cards, enjoy sweets, and often swap stories from their travels. On special occasions, Armando dons his best clothes for an outing to Petersham RSL — a visit that brings back the joy and excitement of his younger years. "For a moment," he says, "it's like time stands still."

Born in Rome, Armando lived in many cities across Italy and had always hoped to return one day. Although life took a different path, his heart remains closely

tied to his homeland. He finds comfort in reminiscing about Italy with Guglielmo, who has visited many of the places Armando fondly recalls. Their shared memories and passion for Italian culture have built a genuine bond.

Whether at home or out for a bite to eat, these visits offer more than just company — they bring purpose, connection, and joy. "Guglielmo's visits put me in a great mood," Armando says. "He's not my volunteer, he's my friend."

Armando's story is a powerful reminder of the impact that companionship and conversation can have on the wellbeing of older Australians. Through the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, Co.As.It. volunteers like Guglielmo help reduce social isolation and bring warmth and friendship into the lives of seniors — one visit, one story, and one shared meal at a time.



Menaka

CHSP Allied Health Services

At 77 years old, Menaka Yengar is an inspiring example of healthy ageing. Born in India, Menaka now calls Australia home, where she continues to live independently and actively thanks to the support she receives from Co.As.It. through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). As part of her care plan, Menaka accesses both physiotherapy and podiatry services, which help her maintain her mobility, health, and overall wellbeing.

A few years ago, Menaka recognised that as she grew older, staying physically active would be essential to preserving her independence and quality of life. Motivated by a desire to improve her flexibility, strength, and health, she committed to making her wellbeing a top priority. Today, through regular physiotherapy sessions and ongoing podiatry care with Co.As.It., Menaka is facing the challenges of ageing with strength and confidence – always putting her “best foot forward.”

Prior to joining Co.As.It., Menaka had tried allied health services through other providers but felt that something was missing. After hearing glowing feedback from friends and community members about Co.As.It.’s exceptional care, she decided to transfer her services. Reflecting on her experience, Menaka shared, “My physiotherapist not only improves my physical health but also does wonders for my psychological wellbeing. Our sessions are full of friendly conversations, and the social interaction has become just as

important to me as the therapy itself.”

Menaka also highlighted the outstanding support she receives from her Case Manager, Mia. “After trying different providers, I would definitely recommend Co.As.It. to everyone. They are simply the best. Their staff truly care about their clients, and Mia has been so kind and helpful throughout my journey.”

According to Menaka, Co.As.It.’s allied health professionals are both “wonderful and lovely people” and highly skilled practitioners. She values the professionalism, compassion, and personal attention she receives at every appointment, which has helped her feel supported, empowered, and connected.

Menaka has been recognised for her valuable contributions to the community. She was awarded the Professor Shirley Randell, Women Chiefs of Enterprises Award in 2021 for social contribution. Menaka was also awarded the international Alliance of Women award in 2022 for making a World of Difference in the community.

Menaka’s story is a powerful reminder of the importance of accessible, high-quality allied health services in helping older Australians live healthier, more independent lives. Co.As.It. is proud to support clients like Menaka in achieving their goals and embracing each chapter of life with vitality and dignity.



Maria

Group Based Activities

Maria Fragassi, 81, was born in Italy and carries with her the vitality and resilience typical of her generation. Having led a full and active life, Maria is a strong advocate for staying engaged and connected, especially as we age. “Too often, we end up spending too much time at home,” she says. “But life is meant to be lived outside, with others.”

Maria first learned about Co.As.It’s new Active Ageing Group model from a close friend, who encouraged her to try something new. Unlike traditional social support programs often held in community halls, the Active Ageing Group offers a dynamic and refreshing alternative—weekly outings and activities designed to promote physical movement, mental stimulation, and most importantly, social connection.

Maria was immediately drawn to the concept. “I love the outdoor ones best—when we have a simple sandwich in the park, sit in the sun, chat, stroll, and play cards,” she explains with a smile. These simple pleasures, combined with variety and companionship, have turned her weekly outings into something she now eagerly anticipates.

Since joining, Maria has developed meaningful friendships with other group members. “We share our stories, talk about the towns in Italy where we grew up, swap recipes, and give each other little life tips,” she says. These interactions have given her a renewed sense of belonging and purpose.

She credits the program with making a real difference in her well-being. “This group has truly lifted my spirits. I look forward to going out, breathing fresh air, and being surrounded by people who understand me. It has improved my mood and my overall quality of life.”



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NOI VEDIAMO
VOSTRO
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Co.A
lifelong
learning
& sup

Education Services

In 2024, Co.As.It. strengthened its leadership in Italian language education through new international partnerships, expanded language programs, innovative teacher training, and outstanding student achievements. Our commitment to promoting Italian language and culture across NSW continues to grow, reaching thousands of learners of all ages.

Partnerships with Italian Schools and Universities

In 2024, Co.As.It. continued to develop and expand its network of partnerships with schools and universities in Italy to support and enhance our work in the promotion of the study of Italian language and culture in NSW. In January, a delegation visited Venice, Cividale del Friuli, Torino, Siena, Prato, Perugia, Rome, Naples and Milan with the primary objective of establishing formal agreements with Italian universities to enhance our work as a provider of quality Italian language programs; endorse Co.As.It. as an employer of choice through the promotion of teaching opportunities within the Language and Education faculties of Italian universities; provide Italian language assistants to support the teaching of Italian in NSW schools; encourage research opportunities in our teaching programs and provide professional development opportunities for teachers.

Sister-school agreements were also sought to promote cultural exchange which will expand the range of learning experiences for NSW students and encourage professional dialogue and exchange between Italian and Australian teachers. Schools visited include St. Philip Bilingual School Rome, Istituto Comprensivo Nitti Rome, Lachance Arts School Rome, Convitto Nazionale Statale Cicognini di Prato,

Scuola Primaria Achille Sclavo Siena, The International School of Florence, Liceo Linguistico Statale Augusto

Righi, Scuola Primaria e Secondaria di 1 grado e Sacro Cuore, Convitto Nazionale Pietro Longone Milano, International Bilingual School Milano, Convitto Umberto 1 Torino and Saint Denis Bilingual School Torino.

Agreements were signed with five universities and three schools, which will ensure Co.As.It. continues to be at the forefront of Italian language education in NSW, shaping the future of language learning by providing innovative learning programs and timely support to those wishing to learn Italian: from preschool children through to adult learners.

Key projects for the promotion of Italian language and culture

Each year, Italy's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, (Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale) receives applications for the funding of projects which aim to promote Italian language and culture in countries all over the world. In 2024, the following projects submitted by Co.As.It. were ranked in the Top 10 in the world in their category, enabling over 8000 students to continue learning Italian in NSW schools and ensuring 500 students access Italian language programs in after school centres. Principals could also apply for a language assistant to support the teaching and learning of Italian in their school. 15 language assistants from universities across Italy were employed to work in NSW primary and secondary schools, providing valuable support to teachers and students. They also worked on the development of language teaching and learning materials for HSC and produced new episodes of our Italian radio series *Ascolta e Impara*, initially created to support teachers and students of Italian during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Project 1: Italian courses integrated in the school curriculum which lead to certification (CELI/CILS)

Project 2: Extracurricular Italian courses which lead to certification (CELI/CILS)



For over 55 years, Co.As.It. has supported Italian migrants and their descendants in NSW. I pay tribute to their work promoting the Italian language and providing important community services.

— **Chris Minns, Premier of NSW**

Professional development for teachers of Italian

Training course for Italian teachers

In 2024, Co.As.It. was granted a contribution from the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (MAECI) to provide a unique professional development opportunity for teachers of Italian. The course provided teachers with valuable insights into the processes of evaluating language competency based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR); preparing them for certification in DILS (Didattica in Lingua Straniera) and to become CELI (Certificazione Lingua Italiana) examiners. The Corso di preparazione in Didattica della Lingua Straniera (DILS-PG) e di formazione esaminatori CELI, was developed by Professors Roberta Rondoni and Nicoletta Santeusano from the Università per Stranieri, Perugia. The course included 40 hours of training delivered via blended learning, with eight sessions online and three day workshops in Sydney.

Seminar for Italian teachers

On 16 October, Professor Letizia Cinganotto, lecturer, and the Rector's Delegate for International Relations at the Università per Stranieri, Perugia visited Sydney to deliver a seminar for teachers entitled "Books, gamification and multimodality for teaching Italian L2/LS" at the Italian Cultural Centre. The seminar explored the potential of multimedia and multimodal technologies in the teaching of Italian in the era of Artificial Intelligence, and game-based learning.

Workshop for Italian teachers

During the Settimana della Lingua Italiana, S. Villella presented a workshop entitled "La cultura italiana fra

le righe e fra i banchi della scuola primaria in Australia" at the National Italian Teachers' Conference held in Melbourne on Saturday 19 October. The workshop highlighted the importance of using literary texts in the teaching of Italian in primary schools and provided ideas and practical examples for teachers to engage children in the discovery of Italian culture through literature.

NSW Department of Education Minister's Awards 2024

The NSW Education Minister's Awards for Excellence honour the achievements of outstanding students from community languages schools. Co.As.It. students who study Italian in our Out of School Hour Program are eligible to be nominated for this Award. This year our students were awarded Commended and Merit certificates. Only 10 students in the State receive the coveted Awards, 5 in primary school and 5 in secondary schools.

Eleven children studying in the Out of School hour program were nominated for the 2024 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Languages for their overall commitment to the study of Italian and their involvement in Italian community activities. Eric Wang, a student in the Meadowbank OSH Centre, was awarded one of only ten Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement.

This highly prestigious award was presented by the Hon. Prue Car MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning at the 2024 Minister's Awards' Ceremony on 2 September 2024. Two children also received a Commended Award and eight children a Merit Award. Their achievements were celebrated at the Co.As.It. Annual Awards Night.



Co.As.It. Annual Awards Night

The Co.As.It. Annual Awards Night was held at the Italian Cultural Centre at the Italian Forum on Monday 2 December 2024. This was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements in the study of the Italian language of all Co.As.It. students. The event was attended by winners, primary and secondary school principals, Italian teachers, parents and friends. The Italian Consul General Dott. Gianluca Rubagotti; Dirigente Scolastico Dottoressa Valentina Biguzzi; Senator Francesco Giacobbe; and Julius Larobina, Managing Director of Italian media group including La Fiamma and Globo TV, were special guests, and presented prizes and certificates to the students. The categories were Co.As.It. Competition, Premio in Classe, The Minister's Awards, CELI Adolescenti, CELI Adults, CILS Bambini/Ragazzi, IBS Year 6 Graduation and CONI (Italian Olympic Committee).

The Settimana della lingua italiana is an Italian government initiative dedicated to the promotion and celebration of the Italian language in the world. As part of this initiative, Co.As.It. held an Italian competition for students in Kindergarten to Year 12 across all NSW schools. Hundreds of entries were received from across NSW, including regional areas.

In 2024, the theme of the Settimana della lingua italiana was *L'italiano e il libro: Il mondo fra le righe*. Students were asked to explore and reflect upon the world represented within the lines of Italian literary texts, drawing inspiration from these texts to produce artworks.

Premio in Classe

Premio In Classe is the first national Italian language competition that seeks to promote the Italian language and culture to secondary school students through the engaging medium of film. Participants use their Italian language skills and cultural knowledge to creatively address the theme of the competition. The competition brings together organisations within the Australian Italian community committed to the promotion of the Italian language and culture including Co.As.It. Sydney, Co.As.It. Brisbane; Co.As.It. Melbourne, Il Globo, La Fiamma and IL GLOBO TV. Held during la Settimana della lingua italiana, Premio In Classe is a national

competition designed to encourage artistic expression in Italian language. At the secondary level, students are asked to create a short film in Italian exploring the theme of "Italian language and literature: the world within". They were free to select and represent a poem or a passage from any literary text in Italian. In 2024, the national prize in the Secondary category was awarded to Luca and Marco Zammit in New South Wales. The national prize in the Primary category was awarded to Harvey Valneris in Victoria and Alexander Nottle in Western Australia.



Education Programs

In 2024, Co.As.It. taught Italian to thousands of students through its extensive range of language programs for both children and adults. Over 8000 children in State and Catholic schools, 500 children in Out of School Hour centres and 750 adults in evening classes studied Italian in Co.As.It. programs. Through Co.As.It.'s support, Italian continued to be one of the most widely taught languages in NSW primary and secondary schools.

Programs for children

Insertion program

In 2024, Co.As.It. continued to support the teaching of Italian in schools through the delivery of quality programs and the production of contemporary teaching and learning resources.

Co.As.It.'s Insertion program follows the NSW K-10 Italian Syllabus and provides quality instruction to thousands of students in State, Catholic and Independent schools in NSW.

Insertion classes are conducted by qualified teachers of Italian with recognised teaching qualifications and accreditation to teach by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

One of the key components of the success of the program is the longstanding and respected educational partnership with the Italian Government through the Italian Consulate Sydney and the Embassy of Italy, the NSW Department of Education and the Broken Bay Diocese.

The Italian Insertion program is renewed annually with modern content and innovative teaching strategies to ensure quality and longevity. Students and teachers are able to access materials at appropriate levels created for primary schools for Stages 1, 2 and 3 and secondary schools for Stages 4 and 5.

Students are also guided towards the certification of their language level through the support of Italian language assistants and the provision of additional lessons.

Out of school hours (OSH)

Co.As.It.'s Out of School Hours Program has enabled generations of students to learn Italian language and

culture across NSW, providing opportunities for both primary and secondary age children to study Italian after school. The annual program provides quality Italian lessons and access to an online learning portal. Digital teaching and learning resources are created to ensure students could develop their knowledge of the language, as well as developing an understanding and appreciation of Italian culture. In 2024, over 500 students were enrolled in the OSH Program across 14 centres in Sydney. In addition to learning the language, students participated in cultural activities including performances and literary competitions.



Programs for Adults

Italian Classes

Co.As.It's Italian Program for adults is based on the internationally recognised Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The program includes lessons, self-access materials and a tutoring service via a Learning Management System (LMS), to ensure participants have all the necessary tools to develop the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as developing their understanding of Italian culture.

Students access an online media library to download Italian books and newspapers to their computer or mobile device. They can also access additional learning areas on the LMS including a grammar reference section and a listening section.

The Italian Adult course Program also offers opportunities for students to continue their study of Italian language and culture in Italy. The innovative structure of the program provides students with the freedom to choose learning materials most relevant to them.

Students learn at their own pace by selecting a standard online course and adding the features they need. Conversation classes and cultural events are offered online to further extend learning opportunities. The online conversation classes are designed to support students in improving their communication skills in a natural, fun and engaging environment with the aim of developing fluency.

Online cultural events also immerse students in Italian culture and reflect on its contribution in music, film, art, literature and design.

In 2024, 750 adults enrolled in Italian classes for adults, the highest number recorded in the last 5 years, with 331 enrolled in Leichhardt, 303 in the CBD and the remaining in Meadowbank and online courses. In the latest satisfaction survey, 95% rated the courses as excellent and 5% as good.

Certification

Co.As.It. is an official Exam Centre for CELI (Certificazione Lingua Italiana), DILS (Didattica in Lingua Straniera) and CILS (Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera) and delivers quality preparatory courses for all learners of Italian wishing to sit official exams to obtain these internationally recognised certifications. The Università per Stranieri di Perugia issues CELI and DILS while CILS is issued by the Università per Stranieri di Siena.

The certifications are all recognised by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Italian Ministry of Education. Italy requires all applicants for Italian Citizenship to demonstrate knowledge of the Italian language equal to, or greater than level B1, as established by the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. B2 is the entry level required for foreigners wishing to study in Italian universities. Proof of knowledge is accepted in the form of an official certificate from an approved Italian examination centre like Co.As.It. Co.As.It. is the only exam centre in Australia for CELI, DILS and CILS.

Professional development program

Co.As.It. works closely with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), which sets and monitors quality teaching, learning, assessment and school standards. NESA requires teachers to complete accredited professional development to maintain accreditation. Co.As.It. supports Italian teachers in obtaining and maintaining accreditation with NESA by providing access to a program of teacher-identified and NESA registered professional development.

Each year Co.As.It. prepares a professional development program for language teachers in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education – Community Languages, the Broken Bay Diocese, the Modern Language Teachers Association (MLTA), Sydney Institute of Community Languages Education (SICLE) and the NSW Federation of Community Languages (NSWFCLS).

This includes access to webinars run by qualified international and national practitioners, Italian language courses designed to maintain language competency, access to an online Italian professional learning community, access to the Italian Certification exams CELI and DILS, programs run by the Università per Stranieri di Perugia, as well as access to an online resource centre.

In 2024, the Professional Learning Program focused on developing teachers' skills in engaging students in language learning.



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Marcus

Renaissance in Leichhardt

Marcus Van Alten enjoys studying Italian through our Adult class program. He commenced at the Basic level of A2.2 and in just two and a half years has progressed to level B2.4 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, making him an independent speaker of Italian. At this level, students can use language flexibly, interacting with fluency and spontaneity, which is a perfect description of Marcus, student of Italian and emerging artist.

As a 14 year old with an artistic flair and an interest in history, Marcus was inspired by the Renaissance art of Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci and was determined to see the beauty of Firenze and Venezia with his own eyes. He meticulously researched student exchange options and dragged his parents to information nights to make his dream a reality. Persistence paid off and in 2013, at the age of 15, Marcus was selected for a student exchange program to live and study in Italy for a year. He travelled to Italy on his own and lived with an Italian family in a small town near Magliana in Rome, attending high school, a Liceo Linguistico in Trastevere, where he learned Italian and some French, Spanish and Latin. Italian was his first love though, a love that he nurtures to this day, along with his painting. Marcus made lifelong friendships in a transformative year which shaped his linguistic, cultural and artistic vision. "Ever since that year, I have been obsessed with anything Italian – painting, history, food, language, music, culture."

Upon returning to Australia, Marcus completed school, followed by tertiary studies in media, and worked as a

junior news producer at Channel 9 before leaving the corporate world behind to pursue his true passions, art and Italian. "I knew that Leichhardt was the home of Italians, so I went there to rediscover the language. From the moment I walked into Co.As.It., I felt at home. I was greeted at the front desk by receptionist Mina and got along with her so well that I now affectionately call her zia." Marcus enjoys coming in on Fridays for his Italian lessons and has formed many friendships. "The teachers have all been great. I have had Emma for the past year and she's fantastic. You can tell she has an intense passion for languages. Her knowledge goes so deep, she really understands all the intricacies of the language."

Marcus also joined Co.As.It.'s Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, which helps develop social connections for older people, particularly from linguistic or cultural backgrounds who may be at greater risk of social isolation. As part of the program, Marcus would visit an elderly gentleman in East Hills once a fortnight. Marcus has become part of Co.As.It.'s extended network and Little Italy, having moved to Leichhardt a month ago. "I have developed a sense of community in Leichhardt."

A passion for art, history and Italian culture has accompanied Marcus from an early age and is now blossoming in his landscape paintings. He is proud of a landscape of Venezia completed for his brother in 60 hours. "I have a bit of an obsession with Venice, as I have been there a few times. Painting these places makes me nostalgic, like I'm back over there, at a time

when I was younger, a sort of magical feeling." With a Roman accent, Marcus also knows Rome like the palm of his hand. When he switches from English to Italian, he uses his hands to express himself, without even thinking about it. Marcus is the only one who speaks Italian in his family. They are amazed at his ability to speak another language and see the passion for Italian culture flowing through in his paintings. As an adult, Marcus reflects on his painting and wonders "Who knows who I would be, if I had not gone to Italy." 14 year old Marcus would not have contemplated that possibility.



Chiara

Italy comes to South West Sydney

Chiara Torresan is an enthusiastic Italian teacher at Good Samaritan Catholic College in South Western Sydney. The school has been participating in Co.As.It.'s Italian Insertion program since 2023, receiving support for its language program through a contribution from the Italian government which enables young graduates from Italian Universities to come to Australia as language assistants.

Chiara is passionate about teaching Italian, recalling how she has wanted to teach ever since she was a little girl, playing at her Nonna's house. "Nonna had a whiteboard, and I would line up the chairs in front of it and sit my soft toys there. When my sister was old enough, she would have to sit there too. I was always bossing people around; I liked to be in charge."

It is that strength of character and that determination which has held Chiara in good stead, as she fights for the teaching of languages in general, and in particular, for Italian. "Advocating for languages has been really hard, as the perception is that language study is not important. Italian is not considered a 'real' subject. I find myself encouraging students to continue learning Italian and at the same time promoting the importance of languages with staff and families. Languages is a Key Learning Area and, as such, deserves to be recognised and resourced appropriately."

Resistance has only made Chiara stronger, stimulating her to work harder to develop a solid

Italian program at Good Samaritan. When Chiara started in 2021, there were only mandatory Italian classes in Year 8, while now Italian is taught to Year 12. Her Year 12 class is made up of students who do not necessarily have an Italian background, a testament to Chiara's ability to transmit her love for Italian language and culture to all. "I want my students to leave my lesson having learned something new, whether that's something they learn in Italian or a skill they need for life. I want to make sure I can pass on knowledge to them; I love sharing my love for Italy."

Following a Sydney Catholic Schools network meeting to discuss the implementation of NESA's new Modern Languages syllabus, Chiara made contact to find out how Co.As.It. could support the teaching of Italian in her school. It was a fortuitous call that led to the establishment of an agreement between Co.As.It. and Good Samaritan College to participate in the Insertion program and receive the support of Italian language assistants from Italy.

For Chiara, the language assistant initiative has had a positive influence on student motivation. "When the language assistants arrived at school, my students were so excited. The assistants were so eager to share their experiences and help with our work. They were eager to do anything, including creating resources and marking. They had so many ideas and helped students prepare for HSC."

Chiara believes that through the language assistant

initiative, Co.As.It.'s Insertion program is bringing a breath of fresh air to Italian classrooms. "Most of my students probably won't get to Italy, but by having a language assistant, Italy comes to them."







Lucille

A Legacy of Learning

Lucille Gravina has always held a passion for the Italian language, a passion which she has passed on to her three children Matisse, Gianluca and Valentina, who study Italian through Co.As.It.'s Out of School Hours (OSH) program.

Lucille began her Italian language learning journey back in primary school in Melbourne where Italian lessons formed part of her school's curriculum. Thirteen years of learning Italian followed, and Lucille is now able to read, write and speak fluently in Italian. This knowledge, along with a passion for travelling, has given Lucille the confidence to travel many times to Italy on her own and to immerse herself in her heritage and culture. Her firm grasp of Italian has also enabled her to build strong connections with her relatives in Italy, something she feels would not have been possible without having studied Italian for so many years. Lucille believes strongly that learning Italian helped her hold on to her heritage.

It is little wonder that when she had children, Lucille wanted to pass on her love of the Italian language and culture to her children. Unfortunately, no Italian was offered at her children's schools here in Sydney, so Lucille had to search for an alternative. Her mother does some volunteer work at Co.As.It. in Melbourne and had mentioned they do Italian courses, so Lucille looked up Co.As.It. Sydney and discovered the Out of School Hour Program. Matisse, Gian Luca and Valentina all began learning Italian in Co.As.It.'s OSH program from a very young age and are unanimous in their agreement that learning another language is

not only fun, but that it is an important skill that will benefit them in the future.

From making new friends from different schools, to learning new words each week, the children have enjoyed their experience with the OSH program and the connection it gives them to their family's background and culture. A recent trip to Italy was the perfect opportunity for the children to showcase their language skills and they enjoyed being able to share a connection with their grandparents' relatives, something which they believe would not have been possible had it not been for the knowledge gained in Italian lessons.

The Italian language has become an integral part of the children's everyday lives, even outside of the classroom. They enjoy listening to Italian music at home and know all the words to the songs. At a wedding in Melbourne, Matisse, Gianluca and Valentina recognised and sang along to the songs, increasing their enjoyment of the evening was immeasurably. Valentina has also learned an additional Italian skill and enjoys playing Scopa with Nonno, while Gianluca peppers his conversation with his favourite sayings "Santo Pecorino!", "Santa Mozzarella!" and "Santa Ricotta!" Matisse's confidence with speaking and understanding Italian has increased, and she is proud of being able to put together full sentences.

So passionate are the children about continuing their lessons in Italian that they continued their studies

online throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, facing the many challenges associated with this new type of learning and persevering throughout this difficult time. Lucille believes that one of the strengths of the program are the native Italian teachers who come out from Italy wanting to teach Italian. She has praised the patience and dedication of her children's teachers, who encourage and guide their students. Lucille's children have had a great experience and whenever anybody asks about the OSH program, she encourages them to enrol their children because it is well-structured, includes revision and textbooks and is good value for money.

Lucille has gained many benefits from her journey in learning Italian and has encouraged her children to do the same and experience the richness of learning a second language. Her children believe they, too, will encourage their own children to one day learn Italian. This legacy of learning is sure to be passed on through the generations, building strong connections to their cultural heritage, maintaining links to their extended family in Italy and keeping the Italian language alive in their hearts and minds.

Italian Bilingual School



In 2024, the Italian Bilingual School continued to strengthen its commitment to academic excellence, cultural exchange, and community engagement. Through dynamic programs, international partnerships, outstanding student achievements, and vibrant school life, IBS provided students with enriching opportunities to grow, connect, and succeed in a bilingual, multicultural environment.

Connections with Italy

Sister-School Partnerships

In 2024, IBS expanded its sister-school network by establishing new partnerships with Convitto Nazionale Pietro Longone in Milan and Convitto Nazionale Statale Cicognini in Prato. These partnerships promote cultural exchange, enrich learning opportunities for students, and encourage collaboration between Italian and Australian educators. Plans are underway for joint projects that will strengthen connections and create friendships across continents. The expanding student exchange program will offer current and former IBS students the chance to study in Italy and provide Italian students the opportunity to experience life in Sydney.

Educational Collaboration: “A New Way of Living in the World”

IBS students partnered with Istituto Comprensivo San Giulio in San Maurizio d’Opaglio, Italy, on a two-year educational project exploring sustainable production and consumption. The project, part of the UN’s Agenda 2030, encouraged meaningful discussions around sustainability between Australian and Italian students.

CONI – Italian Olympic Committee Games

In a historic first, a team of IBS students with Italian heritage represented Australia in the under-13 CONI Games held in Sicily from 3–6 October. This invitation was part of the

“Turismo di Ritorno” initiative by Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Students participated in soccer, explored towns linked to Italian migration stories, and even met long-lost relatives. Two IBS students were awarded honorary Italian citizenship. Congratulations to representatives M. Danieleto, S. Facibeni, D. Frontini, G. Frontini, P. Licciardello, L. Moschella, R. Murtagh, and A. Tesoro.

Student Exchange with Convitto Nazionale Paolo Diacono

The Italian Bilingual School encourages school exchanges as the benefits go beyond the classroom, with students and families forming lifelong friendships. From 27 July to 9 August 2024, students and their teachers, Maestro Carlo and Maestra Elisabetta, from our sister school in Cividale del Friuli, attended the Italian Bilingual School.

This represented an exciting opportunity for our students and several activities were planned to welcome the visiting students and their families to our community. The visit included excursions to Sydney landmarks such as Darling Harbour, Featherdale Wildlife Park, the Art Gallery of NSW, and Parliament House, where they were welcomed by Jordan Lane MP.

Embassy Visit

On 5 April, IBS students visited the Embassy of Italy in Canberra to better understand the role of the Italian Government in Australia. A highlight was seeing their handcrafted map of Australia proudly displayed—previously presented to Ambassador Paolo Crudele during his visit to IBS in 2023.

Distinguished Visitors to IBS

Italian Consul General Gianluca Rubagotti and Monsignor Alberto Rocca, Director of the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, one of the most prestigious galleries in Italy, delivered a unique art lesson on la Natura Morta.

Professor Letizia Cinganotto (University for Foreigners, Perugia) observed classroom practices and commended the school’s bilingual teaching approach. She was impressed by the methodology employed by teachers and the level of student interaction.

Professors Roberta Rondoni and Nicoletta Santeusano from the Università per Stranieri, Perugia visited the Italian Bilingual School to run professional development for Italian teachers on CELI and DILS language certifications. Both Professors praised the school’s bilingual methodology and student proficiency.

Presentations and Public Engagements

“Amazing Me” Presentation: Year 5 and 6 students and parents attended a session on bodies and puberty led by educator Rowena Thomas.

National Conference: During the Settimana della Lingua Italiana, S. Villella presented on using Italian literature in primary schools at a national conference in Melbourne.



Year 6 Graduation

Over 150 students and families attended an awards ceremony celebrating excellence in Italian studies. Year 6 graduates received certificates signed by the Italian Consul General.

Performances

The IBS Choir performed at major community events including Ferragosto at Five Dock and the Norton Street Italian Festa. Their bilingual songs impressed large audiences, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and demonstrated the students' confidence and talent.

Competitions and Academic Excellence

WriteOn Competition: Students submitted imaginative pieces inspired by a painting of Redfern Station. The painting inspired them to write a variety of imaginative responses in the form of narratives and poems, as well as diary entries, letters and detective stories.

ICAS Assessments: ICAS is a comprehensive skill-based educational assessment that is administered independently and is based on academic competencies with an added competitive element. A number of students from the Italian Bilingual Schools took part in a range of ICAS competitions and achieved good results.

NAPLAN: The 2024 NAPLAN results for both Year 3 and Year 5 were excellent with students performing well above the National and State average in all areas tested.

Cultural and School Events

Carnevale: Students designed colourful costumes using recycled materials.

Kadul Performance: Indigenous artist Ryka Ali led students through music, dance, and storytelling, sharing Torres Strait and Aboriginal traditions.

Anzac Day and Festa della Liberazione: Year 6 students delivered a touching joint presentation commemorating both occasions with creativity and respect.

NAIDOC Week: Students created a collaborative goanna collage and shared Dreamtime stories in a special assembly.

Book Week: Embracing the theme "Reading is Magic", students participated in shared reading and storytelling activities.

Through innovative initiatives and forward-looking projects, COASIT continues to promote diversity and inclusion, forging bridges between different communities and promoting intercultural understanding.

— **Hon. Nicola Care, Member of Italian Parliament**



Science Week: Hands-on experiments and interactive sessions with “mad scientists” brought the theme “Species Survival” to life.

Nonni Day: Students and grandparents played Tombola together, celebrating intergenerational connection and Italian tradition.

Littlescribe Writing Festival: Students from Year 2 to Year 6 participated in the Mini-Writing Festival, a live interactive event featuring prominent Australian children's authors. The students worked with the published authors to develop and publish their own writing.

AIS Road Safety Project: IBS teachers embarked on an exciting Professional Development course focused on integrating technology into PDHPE Road Safety lessons. They explored innovative techniques using iMovie and the green screen to create dynamic and interactive activities for our students. Year 6 students used green screen technology to produce road safety videos with guidance from trained staff.

Year 5/6 Camp: Students visited Canberra, exploring government institutions, museums, and the Embassy of Italy, gaining real-world insights into democracy and Italian diplomacy.

Sporting Achievements

The Italian Bilingual School is a member of the All-Suburbs Independent School Sports Association (ASISSA). As part of this association, students compete in athletics, cross-country and swimming carnivals. Students also have an opportunity to compete in a range of sports at an interschool level. This association provides a representative pathway for elite athletes to progress to Combined Independent Schools (CIS) events.

A group of our top athletes represented IBS at the ASISSA Athletics Carnival on 21 August.

S. Ogilvie, C. Carulli, S. Moschella, L. Animato, J. Cantali, T. Hughston, M. Scamporlino, S. Facibeni, J. Yang, A. Gulisano, A. Formica, I. Davies, G. Kang, and A. Moschella and I. Davies performed exceptionally well. J. Yang's outstanding achievements earned him a place to compete in the ASISSA CIS Swimming Carnival.

Giornata Nazionale dello Sport & Festa della Repubblica

To mark Italy's National Day, students presented on the benefits of sport, linking physical activity with cognitive and social development. The initiative was acknowledged by CONI (Italian National Olympic Committee).

Music Program

IBS's music curriculum emphasises exploration, creativity, and performance. In 2024, the school choir performed at community events and the End-of-Year Concert showcased student talent in both English and Italian.

OOSH Program

With service approval from the Department of Early Childhood, Co.As.It. continues to provide a specialised OOSH program in English and Italian at the Italian Bilingual School, Meadowbank. The program provides a structured after school care service to meet the needs of children and parents for quality care. The OOSH program continues to grow providing an environment that supports each child's capabilities and where children can explore, socialise and expand their interests through play and hands-on activities. In 2024, families accessed children's digital portfolios and participated in shared learning experiences.

Parent Engagement and P&F Initiatives

IBS fosters strong partnerships with parents through regular communication, information nights, and social events such as the IBS High Teas. The newly elected P&F Committee played a vital role in community building and fundraising, supporting the school through events such as the mother's and Father's Day stalls, Halloween Disco, chocolate drive, and a well-attended End-of-Year Dinner.

In 2024, the Italian Bilingual School strengthened its connections with Italy, excelled academically, enriched student life through diverse events, and engaged the community. We are proud of our students' achievements and thank our families, staff, and partners for their continued support in delivering outstanding bilingual education.





Stella

Stellar performance

Stella Vardanega is an Italian Bilingual School (IBS) graduate who continued her studies at Rosebank Secondary College and attained outstanding results in HSC in 2024. Stella scored in the highest band in all her study units, earning her a place in the HSC All-round Achievers list for 2024. In addition, Stella ranked 4th in the state for Italian Extension. An extraordinary achievement, which has made her family and her teachers very proud. "I was shocked but super happy when I received my results. For the first week it was disbelief, but then offers from universities came in."

The Italian Bilingual School has an agreement with Rosebank Secondary College for our students to access accelerated learning programs in Italian. Stella attributes her results to starting work at an earlier point than other people in her year. "Having been able to do accelerated subjects like Italian and Math before Year 12 was definitely an advantage because it gave me more time and flexibility in Year 12. I had free periods that I could use to catch up on work and study, so that after hours I could still continue with my dance commitments and work. Also, I had great teachers and a great family who supported me the whole way."

Stella's mother, Cate, is a teacher and discovered the Italian Bilingual School by chance on a walk in Five Dock when Stella was a baby. "I found the perfect school for our kids for primary school." Cate felt it would be amazing if her children could speak in Italian with their father and his Italian parents. It proved to be the perfect gift for the whole family. "I know my mother-in-law is delighted her grandchildren can speak with her. As she ages, even

though her English is much better than she gives herself credit for, she does find speaking English more challenging so the fact that she can speak Italian to her grandchildren, and that they can understand is wonderful. Our children have spent a lot of time in Italy and can communicate openly and fluently, which is a beautiful thing as it means family relationships and connections can be kept alive.

Cate remembers being really impressed that there would be little performances at IBS throughout the year, from Preps all the way to Year 6, giving students an opportunity to stand up and present, not just to their class, but to the whole school. Being exposed to public speaking from such a young age made it far less intimidating for them. Over the years, Cate has noticed that IBS students who went on to study at Rosebank were well prepared for life in high school and really flourished. "If you think about how small the cohort from IBS is at Rosebank, and how many of the kids end up in leadership positions at the school, performing in the musical and doing well in their ATAR, it is amazing."

Stella recalls loving IBS from the moment she started Preps at the age of 4 in Leichhardt. The immersive experience of learning and speaking in Italian for half of the week from such a young age made learning the language seamless. She didn't feel she was consciously learning the language, "it just 'soaked' naturally into my brain, just as I was learning English." Stella explains that "in primary school you absorb the language and in secondary school you are able to analyse it through grammatical knowledge, which in some ways is how we learn our first language. We are immersed in it and then we focus on structure.

When it came to analysing texts, I could use some of that Italian grammar knowledge. An understanding of learning a different language helped me reflect on how we use our own language to communicate things."

The Italian Bilingual School gives students the opportunity to attend school in Italy at a young age through a well-established exchange program with sister-schools in Magione, Cividale del Friuli, Rome, Milan and Prato. Stella believes that "having the opportunity to travel to Italy a few times when I was young and go to school there, was eye opening. I found that every time I came back from Italy, I had an extra passion for the language and so much extra knowledge."

Both Cate and Stella agree that there have been many advantages to attending the Italian Bilingual School and growing up bilingually. "It was an amazing and unique primary school experience that I was very lucky to have. And I think it definitely has set me up for so many opportunities which I otherwise wouldn't have had. Such supportive, amazing teachers, a great community. The school taught me so many things, not only the language but being part of a tight close-knit community. It helped me develop communication skills and my leadership skills."

For now, Stella is focused on a full time dance course and next year she is planning to study law and international relations in a course which will hopefully incorporate her love for languages and include an exchange year in Italy.



Co.As.It. Financial Summary

Co.As.It Italian Association of Assistance Statement of comprehensive income		
For the year ended 31 December 2024		
	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Government grants	19,263,305	17,596,188
Other grants and levies	1,207,674	806,002
Services and other revenue	5,173,854	4,703,367
Total revenue	25,644,833	23,105,557
Employee benefits expense	(13,777,561)	(12,637,478)
Homecare packages expenses	(6,794,083)	(5,636,254)
Advertising expense	(419,747)	(384,252)
Cleaning and rubbish removal	(157,516)	(148,504)
Computer expenses	(352,561)	(322,193)
Day care expense	(241,122)	(255,141)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(428,187)	(505,189)
Finance costs	(118,055)	(55,241)
Insurance expenses	(572,659)	(508,721)
Legal and professional fees	(169,128)	(370,668)
Motor vehicle, bus and hire expenses	(120,271)	(136,276)
Printing and stationery	(58,105)	(94,750)
Building outgoings	(346,559)	-
Repairs and maintenance	(222,865)	(161,973)
Telephone and internet	(145,338)	(138,195)
Employee travel reimbursement / other travel	(707,334)	(683,384)
Other expenses	(926,703)	(770,509)
Surplus before income tax expense	87,039	296,829
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus after income tax expense for the year	87,039	296,829
<i>Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</i>		
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	87,039	296,829

Major Funding Sources 2024

Community Services

Commonwealth Department of Health

- Home Care Packages
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme
 - Social Support Group
 - Allied Health and Therapy Services
 - Personal care
 - Domestic Assistance
 - Centre Based Respite
- Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)

NSW Health – Sydney Local Health District

- Mental Health Programme
- Drug and Alcohol Programme

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

- Youth and Family Programme

Education Services

NSW Department of Education and Training

- Insertion Class Programme

NSW Department of Education and Training
(NSW Community Languages Programme)

- Out of School Hours Programme

Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della
Cooperazione Internazionale

- General grant from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for the teaching of Italian in schools (Insertion Programme) and in Out of School Hour centres (OSH Programme)

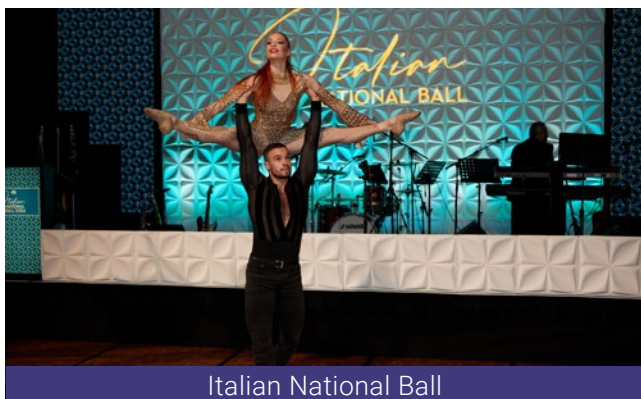
Italian Bilingual School

Commonwealth Department of Education
NSW Department of Education and Training



2024 Photo Gallery ➡







Ferragosto



CNPD Exchange Program





CONI Games



Italian Film Festival



Norton Street Italian Festa





Mental Health Month





Flavours of Italy





Italian Awards Night







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