

# SAATI 50th Anniversary



## FROM VISION TO VOICE: FIFTY YEARS OF SAATI SUPPORTING TEACHERS OF ITALIAN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SAATI, the South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian, was established on **4<sup>th</sup> October 1975** by a pioneering group of teachers of Italian who felt the need to come together as an association to promote and advance the teaching of Italian in South Australia. The first General Meeting was held on **22<sup>nd</sup> October 1975**. It took place at the **South Australian Italian Association** premises in Carrington Street, Adelaide. During that meeting, the constitution was approved, and the following inaugural committee was elected:

- **President:** Ennio Ferraretto (*deceased Nov 11, 2018*)
- **Vice-President:** Prof. G. A. A. Comin
- **Secretary:** Laura Pieraccini
- **Treasurer:** Gary Ruggiero
- **Editor of Newsletter:** Lia Tedesco
- **Committee Members:** Nick Cavuoto, Nives Zancanaro, Antonietta Cocchiaro, Romano Rubichi, John Pereira

The first newsletter, distributed in November 1975, included the approved constitution, details of the elected committee, and a list of schools known to be teaching Italian at the time. In the early 1980s meetings were held at the premises of il Centro Didattico on Portrush Road.

At that time, Italian was being taught in the following South Australian schools:

- 11 state high schools
- 8 state primary schools
- 13 Catholic secondary schools
- 1 Catholic primary school

During that era of multiculturalism, Italian language programmes were growing in schools. A chair had been established for the first time in SA, at Flinders University for **Prof. Antonio Comin**, and one was soon established at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, under the leadership of **Romano Rubichi**. At the time, teachers were developing programmes, but without curricula or resources. All they had were themselves, their students and their families, and each other. SAATI filled a crucial gap.

SAATI began with a handful of members. Over the years the association increased its membership whilst seeking to forge and strengthen links and collaborate with the Italian community. SAATI is also a proud member of Educators SA, formerly known as the Council of Education Associations of South Australia (CEASA).

The association's mission is and has always been to be the **only** voice for all teachers of Italian across all sectors across South Australia. SAATI is committed to promoting the teaching and learning of Italian, in addition to representing and supporting teachers of

Italian to run rich programmes. SAATI has always sought to lead with a contemporary vision of language learning to develop the communication skills of students, bolstered by the development of intercultural capabilities and metacognitive understanding of the practice of communication and what it entails.

SAATI has nurtured and will continue to nurture strong connections across levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) and across government and non-government sectors. The association has also maintained strong relationships with various Italian organisations in SA, inviting their support for various initiatives, as well as with other professional associations in SA and nationally. The relationship that SAATI has with the Consulate is particularly helpful.

### **Early Key Initiatives**

Some committee members and supporters worked on the first Italian radio programme for SA, *Radio Paesani*, from the mid-1970s, broadcasting an hour a week of Italian language and culture from its base at the University of Adelaide.

Other initiatives undertaken by SAATI included the preparation and printing of *La Bancarella* in the 1980s and 1990s. Each issue was full of resources and teaching ideas and was posted to members several times a year.

A major project undertaken during the 1980s was the *South Australia Intercultural Student Exchange Programme* with Italy. Organised by a joint committee from SAATI and the *Associazione Italia-Australia*, in collaboration with the exchange organisation *Intercultura Roma*, the programme allowed students to spend some time immersed in Italian life, enhancing language skills and cultural understanding. This initiative also encouraged the growing number of Italian students in South Australia to keep studying the language.

At the time SAATI also supported initiatives to promote bilingual programmes in selected Adelaide primary schools which offered Italian. Additionally, in 1984 the Education Department released the long-awaited curriculum resource *Pane e Fantasia*, which many members began to use in their primary classes.

### **Past Presidents:**

Prof. Antonio Comin – Honorary President

Ennio Ferraretto OAM, JP

Margot Ludbrook

Nives Mercurio (Zancanaro)

Gianna Zybert

Lucia Baldino

Caroline Bamford

Rosetta Moffa

Helen Tooulou

Kathy Bernardi

Gianna De Leo

Julie Tarzia / Matthew Absalom (co-presidents)

Belinda Barrile (D'Agostino)  
Gianna De Leo / Antonella Macchia (co-presidents)  
Antonella Macchia  
AnnaRita Hoskin  
Maria Kitching  
Maria Kitching/Antonella Macchia (co-presidents)  
Silvia De Cesare

### **Celebrating 50 Years**

SAATI marked its 50th anniversary at the SAIA premises in Carrington Street on March 14, 2025. The event was attended by many past and present members, past presidents and past committee members and representatives from various organisations.

As the only organisation representing teachers of Italian across all sectors in South Australia, SAATI remains committed to supporting Italian teachers and students. SAATI offers:

- financial assistance for senior SACE students to attend revision programmes at the School of Languages.
- the opportunity for schools to participate in state language competitions.
- high-quality professional learning opportunities for teachers.
- opportunities for Italian Film Festival movie previews and other cultural events.
- mentoring of early career teachers or teachers new to Italian.
- networking opportunities.

### Current Committee 2025–2026

- **President: Silvia De Cesare**
- **Vice President: Elena Guastella**
- **Secretary: Lizzy Trasente**
- **Treasurer: Livia D'Aloia**
- **Communications Officer: Lydia D'Ambrosio**
- **Committee Members:** David Lepore, Imma De Masi, Stefania Chiro, Maria Lucia Di Palo, Catrina Tridente, Antonia Mastropasqua, Maria Catalano

We currently have a total of 186 members across all sectors:

4 honorary members – Margot Ludbrook, Antonella Macchia, Maria Kitching, Cav. Angela Scarino

26 corporate member schools, covering 138 members.

37 individual members

7 student members/friends of SAATI.



SAATI stands as a testament to the dedication of teachers of Italian in South Australia. The association has played a key role in promoting the Italian language and culture, supporting educators and students, and fostering a collaborative community. With a 50-year legacy of achievements and a commitment to innovation, SAATI looks forward to working with its members to continue its mission for many years to come.