



# Italian joint program for elderly care

Cara Jenkin

**T**HE Italian Government is embarking on a rare partnership with training organisation TAFE SA to overcome a shortage of carers with experience in working with people with an Italian background.

A new training program will begin next month to provide the specialised skills to up to 30 aged carers, who will work with the state's growing elderly Italian population.

The community-inspired course, Carers: più personnel, is a special certificate course funded by the Italian Government, with support from TAFE SA.

Carers will complete two courses in six months to give them the skills required to work in the specialised field, as well as in both the aged care industry and in-home and community care.

The training will include information on aged care from a European perspective, providing carers with international exposure and experience.

Course spokesman Frank Barbaro said hundreds of thousands of Italian migrant workers helped Australia to grow post-World War II and were now in need of appropriate care.

He said it was an innovative project that would improve the skills

of unemployed and underemployed people, and provide extra carers for an ageing community.

He said it was a practical project that aimed to improve worker's training and qualifications to meet the needs of the elderly and was a rare collaboration between Italy and Australia.

"Students who enrol in the course, on successful completion, will gain a Certificate III in aged Care and a Certificate III in home and community care," he said.

"They will also receive Italian language lessons tailored to aged care situations and a briefing on Italian and international developments in aged care.

"The project adds another dimension in care for the elderly which, along with the care for the very young, is a mark of how fair and just a society is.

"Care for our very young is at the core of human nature and when that is not done or not done adequately personal and community dysfunction is more likely."

Mr Barbaro said the program also aimed to give greater attention to aged-care issues, particularly in a multicultural community, and ensured younger and older people could communicate together.

The course is a pilot program of the Federation of Italian Migrant Workers and their Families' (Filef) Rome's Training, Culture and International Co-operation program, with assistance from the Italian Assistance Association of SA and Fernando Santi Institute.

Students wanting to take part in the course must have, or be eligible for, Italian citizenship and be aged up to 45 years. The course will take six months with training provided three days a week.

Work placements in the metropolitan area will be included in the study.

The program will provide free study, free Italian language classes, an allowance for study expenses, support to find work and support for work experience in Italy.

Once qualified, carers will be able to work in residential aged care facilities – high care or low care – aged day centres, supported residential care or respite services, which provide care to elderly Italians.

Course applications must be made by 5pm on March 19. More information is available by contacting Antonietta Mazzacano, ph 8211 8842 or Luisa Schopman, ph 8165 3755.



**RESPECT:** More carers are needed to work with people of an Italian background