

How an Australian Lives La Dolce Vita in Italy



Thirty-two students and Friends of Dante joined Lou Puggioni who spoke about how and why he lives in Italy for 6 months or more each year.

Lou reminded us of the beauty of Italy, the culture, the food and the relatively low cost of living compared to Australia.

Living in Italy for 6 months per year as an Australian citizen can be an enriching experience. Italy is known for its rich history, culture, and cuisine, which makes it a popular destination for tourists and expats. However, before embarking on your Italian adventure, it is important to understand the visa requirements and codice fiscale.



Lou advised that as an Australian citizen, you are allowed to stay in Italy for up to 90 days without a visa. However, if you plan to stay longer than 90 days, you will need to apply for a visa. The type of visa you will need depends on the purpose of your stay. If you plan to work or study in Italy, you will need a work or study visa. If you plan to retire or travel for an extended period, you may need a long-term tourist visa or a retirement visa.

To apply for a visa, you will need to visit the Italian embassy or consulate in Australia. You will need to provide supporting documents, such as proof of accommodation, financial means, and travel insurance. The visa application process can take several weeks, so it is important to plan ahead.

The codice fiscale, or fiscal code, is a unique identification code used by the Italian government for tax and administrative purposes. As an expat living in Italy, you will need a codice fiscale to open a bank account, sign a rental agreement get supermarket loyalty cards and access other services. A tourist or expat can purchase a tourist SIM Card without a codice fiscale if they show an Australian passport.

To obtain a codice fiscale, you can do this through the Italian Consulate in Brisbane. You will need to provide a valid passport, proof of residency, and other supporting documents. The process is relatively straightforward. Details of the Italian consulate in Brisbane can be found at: https://consbrisbane.esteri.it/consolato_brisbane/en/

Once you have obtained your visa and codice fiscale, you can start your Italian adventure. Italy has a lot to offer, from stunning landscapes and historic cities to delicious food and wine. However, living in Italy can also be challenging, especially if you do not speak Italian. Dante Gold Coast can certainly help you with your language development so that you will be confident when you get there.

Living in Italy for 6 months per year as an Australian citizen is possible, but it requires planning and preparation. You will need to apply for a visa, obtain a codice fiscale, and adjust to the local culture. However, the rewards of living in Italy, such as learning a new language, making new friends, and exploring a new country, are well worth the effort.

Brian Bell

Thank you for organising this talk - we found it so helpful and Lou very entertaining

Rhonda Stokes

It's Easy to Live La Dolce Vita - By *Deanna Nott*

The Società Dante Alighieri Gold Coast recently held an exciting and informative session on "La Dolce Vita in Italy" featuring guest speaker Lou Puggioni. More than 30 students and their friends attended the event, eager to learn about Lou's experiences of living in Italy for six months or more each year.

This event was a remarkable opportunity for attendees to gain insights and practical advice on how to live in Italy. As the lecture began, Lou shared his knowledge on how and why he chooses to live in Italy for such a significant amount of time. He talked about the legalities of living in Italy and the pros and cons of doing so.

One essential piece of advice that Lou gave to those hoping to stay longer than three months in Italy was to make an appointment with the Italian Consulate in Brisbane to acquire a visa or even a passport, if entitled. He also shared his thoughts on the beautiful food, wine, and welcoming people of Italy.

Lou's knowledge extended beyond a single region of Italy; he talked about all of the different regions of Italy, advising that it is easy to visit many places in the European Union if you are in Italy for extended period of time.

Following the session, the students enjoyed a delightful afternoon tea of tiramisu and espresso coffee, *'fatto a mano'* by our wonderful president Giovanna Santomauro. Many students had further questions for Lou and shared their own experiences of travelling to Italy with him. The event was an incredible success, and the students left with a newfound appreciation of the many opportunities and benefits of living in Italy.

Lou's lecture was not only informative but also inspiring. His passion for Italy was evident, and it left the students feeling excited about the prospect of exploring Italy's many regions. The Società Dante Alighieri, Gold Coast, hopes to host similar events in the future, giving its members the opportunity to learn from personalities like Lou Puggioni.

Deanna Nott

Over 30 students and friends attended a talk by Lou Puggioni who spoke about how and why he lives in Italy for 6 months or more each year. Having travelled extensively throughout Europe and now wanting to spend more time there in retirement, Lou considered various countries and towns before settling on Lago di Como (Lake Como) as his ultimate base. As Lou explained, Lake Como is only a short drive or train ride to Milan, and heading north, Switzerland is only 20 minutes away.

Lou explained to those present how it is possible for anyone to buy a house in Italy and even provided some indicative values of units and houses in different areas. Of considerable interest was the fact that it is possible to obtain a Retirement Visa from Italian Immigration that will allow people who can prove they have approximately 38,000 Euro per couple per year (less for singles) to live off. This type of visa allows people to stay as long as they like, and not restricted by the usual three month limit.

It sounded like Lou made collecting supermarket discount cards a past-time. To be eligible to get these cards, one must first apply for a *Codice Fiscale* (identity card).

By his own admission, Lou doesn't like the cold, so travelling in Europe for most of the spring, summer and autumn, returning to the Gold Coast when it gets too cold. The talk was followed by a vigorous question and answer session during which Lou answered people's specific queries. This was followed by an afternoon tea, including Giovanna's famous tiramisu. A number of people expressed a desire to attend but couldn't make the presentation, so if Lou is willing, another session may be organised at a later date. This is one not to be missed. *Mark Hayward*

Much interest from the participants was in the practicalities of buying in Italy and living there. Lou made a point in stating that Italians tend to holiday in their own country, so may own second homes - often inherited - so you may need to do your research in order to find somewhere to buy as they tend to hold onto them and not wish to sell.

Basic costs as experienced in Australia, e.g. rates, power, other utilities, are generally much cheaper.

Transport services are readily available apart from in some areas in the south, where they may be patchy.

Mobile phone coverage through TIM is excellent

Income tax is not an issue as you wouldn't be working or earning in Italy.

Pat Hembrow