

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>Position</b>	Practitioner /Senior Practitioner – Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response
<b>Reports to</b>	Team Leader – Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Nil
<b>Status</b>	Fixed Term, 6 months Or 36 months contract
<b>Location</b>	Chirnside Park

## BACKGROUND

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is the largest organization of its kind in Australia. VACCA is an Aboriginal community-controlled organization that supports and advocates for the Aboriginal community. Our strength lies with our people. Our team is committed to the organisation's vision and values; advocates for our children and other vulnerable community members; and shows respect for, observance and compliance with Aboriginal cultural protocols, practice and ceremony. Our Aboriginality is what distinguishes us from mainstream services and what enables us to deliver the positive outcomes we achieve for our people.

VACCA employs over 600 staff and delivers more than 70 programs across the state. VACCA's experience and expertise in the delivery of therapeutic interventions are underpinned by culture, connection, and healing. VACCA designs, develops and delivers programs with self-determination and an understanding that the intergenerational trauma experienced by our community requires intergenerational and community healing.

Central to VACCA's work is the importance of connection to family, community and culture as essential to Aboriginal children's safety, stability and ensuring that they have an ongoing sense of belonging. As Victoria's largest Aboriginal child welfare agency, VACCA will play a key role in the process of transitioning the care and case management of Aboriginal children from government and non- Aboriginal organisations to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations following the recent decision of the Victorian Government.

VACCA is implementing cultural therapeutic ways which is an agency wide framework that underpins our work with the community, our clients and staff.

## OUR VISION

Aboriginal self-determination - Live, Experience and Be

## OUR PURPOSE

Supporting culturally strong, safe and thriving Aboriginal communities

## PROGRAM AREA

The Victorian Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response (the Response), co-designed with representatives from the Aboriginal child and family services sector, will be implemented by VACCA in Western Metro, Eastern Metro, Southern Metro, Ovens Murray and Inner Gippsland. The Eastern VACCA office delivers early intervention supports through the Child and Family Services programs to vulnerable Aboriginal children and families in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR).

The Child and Family Services programs offer practical hands-on outreach support in responding to risks that vulnerable Aboriginal families experience, especially around Child Protection involvement or the possibility of Child Protection being involved in their children's lives. As a response service, this team works with families through culturally rich and trauma-informed models that aim to strengthen their wellbeing and cultural connections. The Response team will within our Child and Family Services team.

This Response includes an initial intensive intervention phase, delivered through a mobile and integrated approach, followed by a sustained service support phase, aimed at preventing at-risk Aboriginal children entering or re- entering care. This new Response will link to, align with, existing child and family services within the broader service system, providing an enhanced continuum of care across the state. It will be evaluated and continuously developed to enhance the Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) evidence-base for Aboriginal child and family services and programs in Victoria (including Child Protection).

The aim of the Response is strong Aboriginal families – with children who are safe, healthy, resilient and thriving; and Aboriginal parents who are supported to create a safe and nurturing home environment. VACCA will work in close partnership with Child Protection to deliver the Response.

The primary objectives of the Response are:

- family preservation – where the objective is to create safety and prevent child removal and placement in care;
- reunification – where the objective is to safely and rapidly return children to their families and communities.

## POSITION SUMMARY

The principle role of the Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response Practitioners / Senior Practitioners is to engage Aboriginal families with children and young people to support safe and healthy family functioning, prevent removal of children and support children recently placed in out of home care being reunified with their family. The position will be part of a small team that works as a cohesive whole reporting to the AFPR response Team Leader.

Responsibilities of the AFPR Practitioner / Senior Practitioner include:

- Providing an innovative, intensive wrap around outreach family support service to approximately 6 children or young people and engaging and supporting their families and the children themselves via creative strengths-based evidence informed intervention strategies, conducting outreach and home visits, contributing to risk assessments and facilitating referrals to other VACCA programs or external agencies as required;
- Maintaining both electronic and written case management systems in line with DHHS legislative and VACCA policy requirements;
- Liaising with a range of VACCA programs, Child Protection, our regional ACCOs, Alliance partners, MCH services, and Community Service Organisations to develop plans and engage appropriate support for clients.

The AFPR Practitioner/ Senior Practitioner:

- Attends referral meeting with Child Protection
- Arranges family case conference (as agreed) to confirm joint case plan roles and responsibilities
- Establish and lead care team
- Rapidly engages family and delivers an intensive therapeutic and evidence informed approach
- Deliver a service response that recognises cultural healing
- Provides practical, emotional support, advocacy, coaching and skill building and connection to social and economic resources.
- Provision of flexible funding
- Escalates any increased concern about child safety to Child Protection practitioner.
- Provides court/reports evidence as required
- Manages transitions and touchpoints as family needs reduce and they become more self-managing.

Additional responsibilities may include:

- Contributing to the broader team by providing mentoring and support to other team members and assist the AFPR Response Team Leader with duties as directed.
- Delivering group-based support programs.

Note:

1. Service delivery will comply with DHHS Covid-19 restrictions and will be delivered safely in line with VACCA's Covid-19 safe service delivery approach which includes reduced or limited in home support and phone and video conferencing options.

2. All staff employed within Response teams will be required to participate in training to understand and apply evidence informed practice approaches including Aboriginal Practice Modules and Common Elements.
3. The core hours for the Response are 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday. You will work flexibly within this bandwidth, in negotiation with your team leader.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- Internal:* All client support services including; Lakidjeka Aboriginal Specialist Support and Advice Service (ACSASS), Aboriginal Children's Healing Team, Integrated Family Services, Cradle to Kinder, Family Violence therapeutic supports (counselling and groups), Playgroups, ALFDM, Emergency Relief, etc.
- External:* Aboriginal families and community, Child Protection and Child Protection Navigator, Aboriginal organisations, Community Service Organisations, Alliance partners, MCH services, local councils, health and housing services, child care, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, family violence services, counselling services, emergency relief services, Orange Door, other community service agencies, etc

## KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Commitment to VACCA's vision and purpose.
- Awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal societies and cultures and an understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal people in contemporary Australia and the diversity of circumstances of Aboriginal people;
- An ability to work in a culturally respectful and competent manner, with Aboriginal children, young people, their families and communities, to ensure that cultural connections are fostered and maintained;
- Work experience in a relevant field that supports an understanding of child development and family functioning including theories of attachment, intergenerational and personal trauma as well as relevant risk assessment frameworks, service responses and interventions in working with vulnerable families;
- A well-developed understanding of issues that impact on Aboriginal families, children and young people, particularly those who are involved with Child Protection;
- Sound knowledge of and experience with implementing strengths-based interventions;
- Willingness to undertake training to understand and apply evidence informed practice approaches including common elements;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills and ability to support families, children and young people to set goals and work towards their achievement;

- Sound organisational and planning skills including the ability to work independently and within a small team and maintain high quality and up to date case notes;
- Ability to develop and maintain working relationships with external services including Child Protection to optimise support for families to meet their goals;
- Ability to work out of hours and on weekends as required by the role.
- You must have and continue to hold a full Australian Driver's Licence and a current employment working with children check card.

Additional criteria for Senior Aboriginal Family Preservation and reunification Response Practitioner:

- Ability to mentor other case workers and experience in supporting parents and their children through complex issues and crises and understanding the evidence informed practice approaches requirements of the program;
- Capacity to assist the AFPR Team Leader with duties as directed.

## POSITION ACCOUNTABILITIES

### CLIENT MANAGEMENT

- Ensure that all clients receive a culturally appropriate and timely response to requests for service.
- Ensure that all clients have their rights explained to them and understand what VACCA's service can offer them.

### DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY

- Undertake outreach work
- Utilise relevant evidence informed, strengths-based and trauma informed intervention strategies to engage at risk families
- Advocate on behalf of clients to ensure agency referrals are completed and appropriate support provided
- Participate in training to understand and apply evidence informed practice approaches including Aboriginal Practice Modules and Common Elements.
- Participate in data collection in line with program monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- Participant in Response Team Meetings and other client meetings as required
- Ensure culturally relevant support is provided by liaison and consultation with secondary services such as VACCAs Aboriginal Liaison Worker.
- Conduct and complete case work.
- Support families to attend social and community activities and events

### ADMINISTRATION

- Undertake accurate record keeping, including case notes, completed forms and reports as required according to program guidelines and agency registration obligations;  
Complete case management and maintenance of client files in line with legislative and policy requirements;

Maintain accurate statistical data using organisations current data systems as required by VACCA and Department of Health and Human Services;

- Attend regular training, team meetings and other forums as required.
- Undertake other duties as directed.

#### HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

- Ensure compliance with the OH&S Act and VACCA policies.
- Contribute positively and proactively to team and organisation wide OH&S activities.

#### QUALITY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure compliance with legislation, contract and policy requirements in your day to day work in order to meet the organisation's audit, contract and registration obligations.
- Proactively apply your specialist knowledge in the review and maintenance of policies, systems and processes.
- Continue the development of a culturally strong and positive working environment using a continuous improvement approach.

#### OTHER

- Participate proactively in team project initiatives
- Support other team members in periods of high demand and during periods of absence.
- Participate in project groups and attend events
- Undertake other duties as directed

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and supporting strong, safe, thriving Aboriginal communities and aim to ensure every individual is treated with dignity, honouring all cultural backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and spiritual beliefs.

VACCA is a child-safe organisation and is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people with zero tolerance for child abuse. All successful applicants will be required to undertake a National Police Record Check and Working with Children Check prior to commencement of employment and periodically following commencement.

VACCA is an equal opportunity employer and has a smoke-free workplace policy.