

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position	Permanent Case Worker/Better Futures Referral Worker
Reports to	Team Leader Permanent Care
Direct Reports	NA
Status	Full time (38 hrs pw), 12-month position
Location	Preston

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

It is a legislative requirement that all applications for permanent care orders for Aboriginal children with non-Aboriginal carers are assessed by an Aboriginal agency before being presented to the Children's Court. The VACCA permanent care program has the specific responsibility of undertaking these assessments through a cultural and trauma lens ensuring that the ongoing cultural needs of children will be met.

The Permanent Care Program is a state-wide program which requires workers to complete assessments across the state.

The 2021-22 Victorian State Budget expanded the Better Futures and Home Stretch programs to young people on permanent care orders where they can be supported via Better Futures from 15 years and 9 months and Home Stretch from 18 years up until they turn 21 years old.

The expansion of the programs commenced 1 July 2021. VACCA will be responsible for progressing eligible Aboriginal Better Futures applicants. This will include working with carers and young people on permanent care orders to determine their eligibility for the programs and refer them to the appropriate Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation that are a Better Futures and Home Stretch provider.

POSITION SUMMARY

Permanent Care Program

Permanent care planning and permanent care orders are an established part of the child and family system in Victoria and are legislated in the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. For Aboriginal children, living with non-Aboriginal carers, applications for permanent care orders must be assessed by an Aboriginal agency before being presented to the Children's Court. The Aboriginal Permanent Care program (program) is funded by the department to undertake these assessments across Victoria. This position will provide assessments of non-Aboriginal carers who wish to be the permanent carers of an Aboriginal child. Permanency planning is a key feature of the work with children on protective orders.

Better Futures Referral Service

The purpose of the position is to be a contact point for carers and Aboriginal young people to progress their application for Better Futures and Home Stretch, and to provide information, support, advocacy and referral services to Victorian ACCOs that are a Better Futures or Home Stretch provider. This is a state-wide service and primarily a phone-based role. The Better Futures referral worker role works in a strengths-based, culturally competent and trauma-informed manner whilst maintaining a child-centred, family-focused approach and ensuring that the wellbeing, safety and best interests of children and young people remains paramount.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Internal: Lakidjeka ACSASS; Out of Home Care programs; Aboriginal Children's Healing Team, AFLDM programs; Senior Advisors –Cultural Planning; Cultural Programs.

External: Child Protection, Community Service Organizations, Aboriginal organizations and services, mainstream services.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to, the values that underpin VACCA' vision and purpose and the capacity to take a leadership role in championing these internally and externally
- Demonstrated awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal societies and cultures, and commitment to continually build knowledge of such, along with a high level of awareness of the key issues which impact upon Aboriginal communities
- Demonstrated ability to advocate on behalf of children and families
- Demonstrated ability to undertake case management tasks, such as assessments and referrals, and to participate in case planning
- Demonstrated ability to prepare accurate documents and reports e.g., case notes, court reports, work reports that meet the audience needs
- Demonstrates effective culturally appropriate interpersonal skills e.g., active listening, empathy in all verbal and non-verbal communications
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with Aboriginal organizations, government departments and community service organizations
- Demonstrated ability to offer informed constructive input and feedback to team discussions, assists and supports other staff in dealing with difficult cases/issues

REQUIREMENTS

- You must have and continue to hold a full Victorian Driver's Licence and a current employment working with children check card.
- Current COVID 19 Vaccinations

POSITION ACCOUNTABILITIES

Permanent Care Case Worker- .5 EFT

- Undertake detailed assessments and recommendations of the appropriateness of permanent care for Aboriginal children in out of home care who are in the care of non-Aboriginal carers. (This involves determining any current or potential unmet needs of children, carers or the family prior to permanent care).
- Identify barriers to achieving permanent care orders for Aboriginal children, for example children who need AFLDMs or cultural plans and facilitate referrals to appropriate programs at VACCA or other Aboriginal organisations.
- Present the Assessment report to VACCA's Caregiver Assessment Panel (the body that endorses the reports) and action any of its recommendations.

- After approval by the Caregiver Assessment Panel provide a report to the Children's Court in relation to the making of a Permanent Care Order for Aboriginal children
- Community development – conduct permanent care assessment information sessions to DHHS, ACCOs and CSOs
- Supervision of students or trainees

Better Futures Referral Worker- .5EFT

- Assistance to parents/carers and Aboriginal young people to progress applications, including providing additional support to vulnerable Aboriginal clients.
- Applicants are assessed, prioritised and processed in a timely manner.
- Utilise the Client Relationship Information System for Service Providers (CRISSP) to assess eligibility and referrals.
- Utilise relevant guidelines to conduct assessments and including direct engagement with parents/carers.
- Provide information, support, advocacy and referral pathways to parents/carers in a timely, professional and empathic manner.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

- Regular travel is required for this role
- 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 internal 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.
- 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