

Position Description

Program Manager – Out of Home Care Services

Location:	Cairns and SafeKIDS Communities	Reports To:	Deputy Chief – Service Operations
Award:	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award, Level 8	PD Date:	October 2026

About us

Act for Kids is a prominent provider of prevention, professional therapy and support services for children who have suffered abuse and support for families at risk. With over 30 centres nationally, we have supported thousands of children and their families for more than 30 years. In 2024-2025 we provided services to 37,171 people, including over 21,780 children.

Our unique multidisciplinary teams provide integrated therapy, sexual abuse counselling, safe houses in remote Indigenous communities, information, advice and referral services, intensive family support and preschools designed for children with additional development needs to ensure we set them up for success at school.

About our commitment

- Our vision is that all kids have a safe and happy childhood.
- We are a child safe organisation and all children who come into contact with our services will be provided with a welcoming and safe service.
- We are committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to design and deliver services that best strengthen our support to their children, families and communities.
- We are dedicated to creating a culture where physical, psychological, and emotional safety is a priority and to actively embed strong health and safety practices in our everyday work.
- We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, creating a workplace where everyone belongs and delivering inclusive, culturally safe and affirming services.

About our values

At Act for Kids our exceptional organisational culture is aligned to our values, which guide how we work and interact. You will be part of a *team* that is *professional, ethical, caring, courageous* and *collaborative* and we expect you to demonstrate these behaviours throughout your career with us.

About Cultural Humility

Act for Kids is committed to truth-telling and walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities on a journey of healing, self-determination, and hope. We acknowledge our responsibility to lead with respect, authenticity and cultural humility, creating culturally affirming and safe workplaces. We are committed to the recruitment and retention of First Nations team members and provide opportunities for meaningful connection and cultural peer support. Our [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025 – 2027](#) sets out our reconciliation vision and the practical actions we are taking.

About the program

The SafeKIDS program delivers residential out-of-home care through remote community safe houses and a Family Reunification House in Cairns. Services support children and young people to remain connected with family, community, culture and country while receiving safe, stable and culturally responsive care.

About the position

The Program Manager - Out of Home Care Services provides program-wide operational and practice leadership across SafeKIDS out-of-home care services. Reporting to the Deputy Chief – Service Operations, the role converts organisational strategy, contractual requirements and practice standards into consistent service delivery, governance and workforce systems. The Program Manager leads two Program Coordinators and one Team Leader and is accountable for coordinated performance across the portfolio.

The Program Manager balances strong operational oversight with culturally responsive leadership, supporting managers to deliver safe, child-focused and trauma-informed care while maintaining licensing, quality, financial, workforce and risk requirements. Regular travel to remote communities and participation in after-hours escalation arrangements may be required according to operational need.

Key responsibilities

- Provide operational and practice leadership across all out-of-home care services, ensuring delivery is child-focused, trauma-informed, culturally safe and aligned with organisational standards, community expectations and contractual obligations.
- Lead, supervise and develop two Program Coordinators and one Team Leader, setting clear accountabilities, strengthening management capability and supporting consistent decision-making across services.
- Establish and monitor program-wide operating rhythms, service standards, management reporting, escalation pathways and cross-service coordination.
- Ensure compliance with service agreements, out-of-home care licensing standards, the Human Service Quality Framework, work health and safety obligations, child protection legislation and other applicable requirements.
- Lead audit readiness, quality assurance, incident and risk oversight, corrective actions and continuous improvement across the program.
- Oversee program budgets, forecasting, expenditure, procurement and resource allocation in partnership with business services, and support direct reports to manage delegated budgets effectively.
- Track and report program outcomes, outputs, workforce measures, service performance and key performance indicators; identify emerging trends and initiate timely remedial action.
- Lead workforce planning across the program, including recruitment priorities, induction, capability development, succession planning, supervision standards, performance development and wellbeing supports.
- Ensure adequate staffing and service continuity across 24/7 operations, including coordinated contingency planning and support between services.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with the Department responsible for Child Safety, community leaders, cultural advisers, families, partner organisations, suppliers and other stakeholders.
- Work closely with cultural and practice leaders to ensure services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities are culturally safe, appropriate, inclusive and connected to community, country and culture.
- Prepare accurate and timely operational, quality, risk, financial and performance reports for the Deputy Chief – Service Operations and contribute to organisational planning and decision-making.
- Lead and contribute to service development, funding, mobilisation, change and improvement initiatives within the approved organisational strategy.
- Escalate significant child safety, operational, workforce, financial, reputational or compliance risks promptly and provide clear recommendations for response.
- Represent Act for Kids with government, sector, community and partner stakeholders within delegated authority.

- Accountable for program-wide operational performance and consistent implementation of approved practice, quality, workforce and financial frameworks.
- Authorised to allocate resources and make operating decisions within approved delegations, budgets, policies and service agreements.
- Responsible for ensuring direct reports have clear delegations, measurable priorities and effective supervision.
- Refers matters outside delegation, material risks and strategic or high-impact external issues to the Deputy Chief – Service Operations.

General responsibilities

- Work in accordance with all Act for Kids policies, procedures and organisational requirements.
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to child safety, including cultural safety, by prioritising the rights, safety and wellbeing of all children in line with relevant child safe principles, standards and legislation.
- Identify, report and respond to child safeguarding risks in accordance with organisational policies, legal obligations and established risk management practices.
- Comply with work health and safety legislation, policies and procedures, take reasonable care for your own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others, and report hazards, incidents and injuries as soon as practicable.
- Engage actively in regular supervision and the Individual Development Plan (IDP) process, contributing to continuous learning and professional growth.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy in all matters relating to children, families, team members and organisational information.
- Undertake other duties reasonably requested by your manager, consistent with the responsibilities of the role.
- Contribute as a client and customer-focused, values-based team member who works collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes across Act for Kids.
- Model Act for Kids' values in all workplace interactions by being *professional, ethical, caring, courageous, collaborative* and *team* oriented.

About you

Qualifications

- A relevant tertiary qualification, such as human services, social work, psychology, allied health or a related discipline.
- Professional registration where required for the discipline or role.

Skills and experience

- Substantial leadership and management experience in therapeutic residential care, out-of-home care, child protection or a closely related human services environment.
- Demonstrated experience leading managers and multidisciplinary or geographically dispersed teams in complex, highly regulated services.
- Strong knowledge of child protection, trauma-informed care, attachment, standards of care and culturally responsive practice.
- Demonstrated ability to work respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, communities and leaders, particularly in remote community contexts.
- Proven capability in operational governance, quality assurance, licensing, audit, risk management, incident oversight and continuous improvement.
- Strong financial and commercial literacy, including budget management, forecasting, resource allocation and interpretation of service performance data.
- Demonstrated workforce planning, coaching, supervision, performance development and change leadership capability.
- High-level written, verbal, negotiation and stakeholder management skills, including preparation of complex reports and recommendations.

- Ability to manage competing priorities, make sound decisions under pressure and maintain professional boundaries.

Other requirements

- Community approval through the relevant local Community Reference Group where the role works within a remote Aboriginal community.
- Eligibility for a positive Working with Children Check in the applicable state of employment in Australia or exemption based on professional qualifications and registration.
- Willingness to undergo and pass a Suitability Check before engagement in the provision of care services by licensed out-of-home care service providers under the Child Protection Act 1999 and Child Protection Regulation 2011.
- Current driver's licence.
- Ability and willingness to travel regularly, including to remote communities, and to participate in operational escalation arrangements as required.
- Applicants must be eligible to legally work in Australia and proof of eligibility will be requested.

Other information

Applicants are encouraged to apply even if they do not meet every requirement of the role. When assessing applications, the panel will consider performance and achievements in the context of individual circumstances.

We recognise that career paths are not always linear and that personal circumstances, career interruptions or periods of leave may have influenced work history. This means we will focus on the quality and impact of achievements, alongside experience and qualifications (where required), when assessing suitability for the role.

Act for Kids warmly encourages applications from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.