

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position	Senior Aboriginal Cultural Healing Therapist
Reports to	Team Leader – Family Violence and Aboriginal Sexual Assault Support Service
Direct Reports	None
Status	Full time, 12-month contract with potential to extend a further 12 months
Location	VACCA – Dandenong; Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC) – Dandenong

ABOUT VACCA

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is the largest organisation of its kind in Australia. VACCA is an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation (ACCO) 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 of and compliance with Aboriginal cultural protocols, practice, and ceremony. Our Aboriginality distinguishes us from mainstream services and 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 is 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 in line with Victorian Government decisions and policies.

VACCA is implementing Cultural Therapeutic Ways (CTW) which is a whole of agency approach guiding VACCA's practice of healing for Aboriginal children, young people, families, community members and carers; and creating a safe and supportive workplace for staff. CTW is based upon Human Rights and United Nations Conventions, Victorian Legislation, and the practice wisdom of VACCA staff. The CTW approach ensures the cultural needs of VACCA clients is centre and foremost in all service delivery.

OUR VISION

Aboriginal self-determination - Live, Experience and Be.

OUR PURPOSE

Supporting culturally strong, safe, and thriving Aboriginal communities.

PROGRAM AREA

VACCA is delivering a pilot program of the newly established Aboriginal Sexual Assault Support Service (**ASASS**) in the Southern Melbourne Area. This specialist therapeutic service, funded through Family Safety Victoria (FSV), is nested in VACCA's broader suite of Family Violence (FV) services. The program will also work closely with Gatehouse Centre (Gatehouse), and the South East Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA).

ASASS is a unique therapeutic and healing service responsive to the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, women, and men who are victims/survivors of sexual assault. ASASS' distinctive feature is the integration of a specialist sexual assault service within an Aboriginal cultural healing context. The service will be accessible to Aboriginal children, young people, and adults residing in the Southern Melbourne Area.

Through the engagement of a Senior Aboriginal Cultural Healing Therapist and a Senior Sexual Assault Healing Therapist who will report to the Team Leader – FV and ASASS in VACCA's Southern region, the service will apply culturally safe approaches and holistic healing principles to respond to diverse client needs. The Therapists will work seamlessly with other VACCA services, Gatehouse, SECASA and other relevant services and organisations. The service model also facilitates a method for building specialist therapeutic and sexual assault response capability across VACCA; and building Gatehouse and SECASA's cultural safety knowledge.

Underpinned by VACCA's Cultural Therapeutic Ways framework (CTW), culture, connection, and healing are central to the design and delivery of the ASASS. CTW is the intersection of cultural practice with trauma and self-determination theories. The core premise is informed by an understanding of the trauma held by Aboriginal families as a result of ongoing processes of colonisation. This practice will ensure ASASS makes a critical contribution to research and building the evidence base for leading practice in working with Aboriginal families.

POSITION SUMMARY

The *Senior Aboriginal Cultural Healing Therapist* (the Therapist) will have diverse experience with and understanding of the Aboriginal community in the Southern Melbourne Area. Drawing from cultural practice, trauma, and self-determination theories, the Therapist will deliver culturally safe and holistic therapeutic services to the Aboriginal community. They will work seamlessly with the Senior Sexual Assault Healing Therapist providing appropriate interventions for Aboriginal children, young people, and adult victims/survivors of sexual assault and their family members. The service will focus on the healing needs of Aboriginal community, including children, young people, and adults by supporting them and their families throughout their healing journey.

Holding a small caseload, the Therapist will deliver therapeutic one-to-one counselling using a range of modalities, co-deliver therapeutic group programs, collaborate with case managers which may include outreach and integrate other appropriate services/cultural support. Flexible approaches that are

responsive to each person's needs are crucial to client engagement with the service. A key approach will involve therapeutic and cultural-strengthening activities such as yarning circles, working with respected Elders and other group participants, or on-to-one counselling. These activities will be delivered in a safe and confidential environment to help build trust, rapport, stability, and empowerment.

The Therapist will work with Aboriginal community members impacted by sexual assault in a culturally safe way. The Therapist's approach to healing will be underpinned by VACCA's Cultural Therapeutic Ways (CTW) framework that uses an array of therapeutic and healing methods within Aboriginal understandings of social and emotional wellbeing to strengthen outcomes. The service will be delivered in locations safe for the victim/survivor and their family.

The Therapist will:

- Hold a case load
- Contribute to the development of a sexual assault-focused cultural therapeutic approach
- Maintain strong relationships and work collaboratively with case managers and service providers
- Deliver one to one counselling supports
- Co-facilitate confidential group therapy sessions
- Promote Aboriginal self-determination through providing cultural consultation to other VACCA staff and relevant stakeholders.

The Team Leader – FV and ASASS will provide the Therapist with regular supervision and support. They will also have access to cultural and clinical supervision, as well as other supports through VACCA, SECASA, and Gatehouse. The Therapist will be located with the Team Leader – FV and ASASS at VACCA and the Dandenong Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC).

RELATIONSHIPS

<i>Internal:</i>	Team Leader – FV and ASASS, Senior Sexual Assault Healing Therapist, Senior Program Manager Family Violence and Justice, Executive Manager (Southern), Senior Project Manager Family Violence Initiatives and Family Violence Practice Lead, Aboriginal Children's Healing Team (AHT), Family Violence Therapeutic Practitioners and Aboriginal Therapeutic Group Workers, Family Violence Case Workers, Research and Evaluation Team, Clinical Governance Lead
<i>External:</i>	MDC staff, SECASA practitioners and staff, Gatehouse practitioners and staff, other local Community Service Organisations, local program partners, and others as relevant to the service, Victoria Police, DFFS Child Protection, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Orange Doors (Southern Metro).

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to, the values that underpin VACCA's 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
- An understanding of child development and the impact of trauma and sexual assault on children and young people.
- Knowledge of family-focused approaches to healing and responding to trauma.
- An understanding of culturally appropriate service responses for Aboriginal communities in the Southern Melbourne Area.
- An understanding of strength-based Aboriginal trauma-informed practice specific to sexual assault.
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of intergenerational trauma and the importance of impacts of Aboriginal cultural healing approaches.
- Ability to support victims/survivors and families to develop and monitor ongoing Cultural Safety Plans.
- Ability to work in a team and work collaboratively with other team members.
- Excellent communication skills and an ability to develop trusted relationships with Aboriginal community members.
- Demonstrated willingness to participate in professional development and engage in the professional development of other staff.
- Demonstrated ability to engage and work with a diverse range of stakeholders.

QUALIFICATION & EXPERIENCE

- A tertiary qualification or relevant experience working in a therapeutic or cultural healing context.
- (Preferable) An understanding of relevant legislation and professional guidelines (including children and young people at risk, MARAM, Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, Child Information Sharing Scheme, relevant professional Code of Ethics and Practice Standards, and privacy requirements).

REQUIREMENTS

- You must have and continue to hold a full Victorian Driver's Licence and a current employment working with children checkcard.

Please note: This is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander designated position, classified under Section 12 Special Measures of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. This employment opportunity is only available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

POSITION ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Hold a caseload of adults and children for delivering one to one therapeutic counselling
- Co-facilitate therapeutic group programs
- Collaborate with case managers and maintain linkages to other supports
- Provide culturally appropriate therapeutic interventions to Aboriginal children, young people, women, men, and families using cultural and therapeutic frameworks
- Promote service access and support warm referrals via co-location at the MDC
- Provide cultural consultation to VACCA teams and other stakeholders
- Play a lead role in ensuring culturally safe practices are embedded across all aspects of sexual assault responses and healing approaches
- Connect with Elders to seek their participation in the healing journey of Aboriginal community members
- Work to restore wellbeing at an individual, family, and community level
- Maintain strong internal linkages and collaborative working relationships with other VACCA programs such as Family Violence Programs, Aboriginal Children's Healing Team (AHT), Family Services, youth programs and cultural camps
- Engage in ongoing professional development and participate in regular supervision
- Participate in training and team reflective practice
- Work collaboratively and contribute to the development of an evidence base for an Aboriginal therapeutic response to sexual assault
- Participate in program evaluation through collection of data
- Identify and discuss areas of continuous program improvement
- Maintain collaborative working relationships with all stakeholders
- Support and assist the development and implementation of program resources such as program manuals, practice, and data collection tools to support service delivery
- Maintain accurate client records and case notes and contribute to report writing
- Maintain quality and up to date database information that meets privacy and legislative requirements
- Provide other support and engage in other tasks as required

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 /maintenance of family violence policies.
- Continue the development of a culturally strong and positive working environment using a continuous improvement approach.

OTHER

- Adhere to professional guidelines, organisational policies and procedures and legislative requirements
- Ensure confidentiality of all information relating to clients, employees, policies, processes, and dealings within the service.
- Participate in internal and external working groups and action learning forums as required.
- 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. Our recruitment process aligns with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. 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.