

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>Position</b>	Senior Case Manager
<b>Reports to</b>	Team Leader
<b>Direct Reports</b>	One case support worker (by agreement)
<b>Status</b>	Full time (38 hrs pw)
<b>Location</b>	Operates out of Preston office

## BACKGROUND

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is the largest organisation of its kind in Australia. VACCA is an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation 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

In an Australian first, after decades of advocacy and lobbying from Aboriginal communities, in 2017 the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) began taking on the authorisation of Aboriginal children and their siblings, under Section 18 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA). Thus allowing for all decision making in relation to the care, case planning and case management to be done by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. The program is known state-wide as Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC).

VACCA's Nugel program has been at the forefront, transforming the business of protecting children so as to truly meet the best interests of Aboriginal children today and for generations to come. Nugel, which means "belong" in Woiwurrung, offers a new model of child protection practice that involves Aboriginal organisations working in partnership with Aboriginal families. Nugel believes that Aboriginal children "belong," and have a sacred place at the centre of Aboriginal communities – they have an inviolable right to be seen; to be heard; to be nurtured; and to be safe. They have the right to know who they are, where they come from and where they belong. Nugel understand that the best way to achieve this is to wrap our service response around the family and community as a whole in order to restore circles of care that have been a part of the Aboriginal Way of protecting children since the times of the ancestors.

Although the implementation of section 18 CYFA is recognised as a historically significant move towards self-determination, the authorisations under section 18 are limited to children already subject to Child Protection Orders. This has excluded the ability for Aboriginal organisations to intervene earlier to slow the rates of Aboriginal families entering further into the child protection and out of home care system.

Aboriginal organisations have continued to advocate to take on a role with children and families at their first contact with Child Protection, before there is an Order in place. Hoping to stem the flow of Aboriginal children into statutory systems by providing a cultural response to children and their families.

The 2020-21 Victorian State Budget provided funding to develop and pilot an Aboriginal organisation's response to child protection reports about the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people.

This new approach will aim to deliver culturally informed investigation of child protection reports and offer culturally appropriate support for families, with the aim of strengthening Aboriginal families and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children in child protection and care.

Two pilots will be established: one at VACCA and the other at Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative. The organisations will hold decision making responsibility under the CYFA.

VACCA's pilot will be integrated into the existing Nugel program, giving valuable experience and support to the new team, aiming to provide a positive experience for families in the program. VACCA are committed to implementing systems that promote relational practice and minimise the number of professionals involved in the life of a child.

## POSITION SUMMARY

Reporting to the Team Leader, the Senior Case Manager will hold a mixed caseload of children authorised to VACCA as well as leading investigations into new child protection reports. The Senior Case Manager will make assessments and recommendations if a child is in need of protection. If the child is found to be in need of protection the Senior Case Manager will work directly with children, families and community to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.

As with all of VACCA's work this will be guided by cultural values aiming to wrap our service response around the family and community as a whole in order to restore circles of care that is at the heart of the Aboriginal Way of protecting children.

The Senior Case Manager will work closely with the Team Leader supporting the team and taking on higher duties as delegated by the Team Leader and senior program staff. The Senior Case Manager will hold a workload reflective of the seniority of the role, being capable of working with a higher more complex cases.

This role will have the opportunity to make a real-life difference in the lives of Aboriginal Children and families involved in the early stages of the child protection system.

## 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.
- Proven ability to effectively communicate and negotiate with Aboriginal children and families, demonstrating effective and culturally appropriate interpersonal skills e.g. active listening, empathy in all verbal and non-verbal communications
- Demonstrated ability to undertake complex work with children and families who have experienced trauma and may present with challenging behaviours, using culturally safe therapeutic approaches to heal and build resilience.
- Demonstrated understanding of child development, attachment, and trauma as they relate to Aboriginal children.
- Understanding of the legislations, policy and practice requirements relating to Aboriginal children, families, and communities
- Experience or detailed understanding of completing investigations, interview strategies and documenting evidence.
- Proven experience in preparing accurate documents and reports e.g., case notes, incident reports, court reports, that meet audience needs.
- Ability to collaborate with other service providers, stakeholders such as police and courts to achieve outcomes.

- Demonstrated ability to work in a complex, fast paced team, and to demonstrate resilience in managing competing demands. Commitment to self-care and of support of the team.
- Ability to lead and mentor staff within the team, providing advice and support as needed.

## EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS

### **Mandatory:**

- A recognised Social Work degree or a similar welfare or behavioural related degree which includes:
  - a. a primary focus on child development, human behaviour, family dynamics and/or impacts of trauma and preferably
  - b. a practical component such as counselling or case work practice.or
- A recognised Diploma of Community Services work or similar qualification, which is studied over a minimum of two academic years of full-time study (or part-time equivalent) and includes:
  - c. a primary focus on child development, human behaviour, family dynamics and/or impacts of trauma
  - d. supervised fieldwork placements (ideally completed within the child and family welfare sector) and at least one unit in case management, case work practice or counselling.

\*If you don't meet these requirements but strongly believe and are able to demonstrate you have the knowledge and capacity to fulfill this role, please contact us

### **Desired:**

- Experience working in the child, youth and family's sector will be an asset.
- Aboriginal applicants are encouraged to apply.

## REQUIREMENTS

- You must have and continue to hold a full Victorian Driver's Licence, a current employment Working with Children Check card and a National Police Check.
- Current COVID-19 vaccination

## POSITION ACCOUNTABILITIES

### INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF HARM

Supported by the Team Leader and senior program staff, the Senior Case Manager will:

- Lead investigations into reports of harm received by child protection about Aboriginal children and young people.
- Conduct outreach visits to family homes and manage conflicts when they arise.
- Interview children and families to ascertain past and future harm.

- Make assessment if the child or young person is in need of protection.
- Make recommendations based on outcomes of assessments.
- Make applications to the Children's Court when required, preparing court reports and providing evidence when required

## ENGAGEMENT AND WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

- Where a child or young person is found to be in need of protection the Senior Case Manager will engage the family on a voluntary basis to address the concerns with children, families and community to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.
- In line with the Children Youth and Families Act (2005) and VACCA policy and guidelines – work alongside children and families to:
  - Identify risks and safety concerns
  - Develop, implement and review case and cultural plans to attend to children's safety, wellbeing and long-term stability – drawing upon cultural and healing practices as well as family decision making as part of this process.
- Where the child or young person's safety and wellbeing is unable to be ensured through voluntary engagement with the family, the Senior Case Manager supported by senior staff will take action needed to protect the child or young person. This may include making protection applications, and any other work associated with the application including giving of evidence, preparation of court reports, presenting information and recommendations on decisions and actions in the best interests of the child.
- Ensure all client records and files are up to date and that the Client Relationship Information System (CRIS) is used for recording, analysing and reviewing client information.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

- Engage with and build strong collaborative relationships with Aboriginal children, young people, families, and carers – ensure they understand VACCA's practices and processes and that they know their rights, they have a voice and know how to use it.
- Engage with and build strong collaborative relationships with other VACCA programs, other ACCO's, CSO's and the Aboriginal community more broadly - in order to work as part of an integrated wrap-around community and service system.
- Engage with and be a voice for Aboriginal children, families and communities with other external stakeholders – including all DFFH divisions, and community service providers. Provide information about Nugel practice and advocate for better service delivery for Aboriginal children and families.

## 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.
- Committed to own self-care and support others within the team.
- Commit to regular supervision and VACCA's supervision processes.
- Utilise external supports through VACCA's Employment Assistance Program.

## QUALITY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure compliance with legislation, contract and policy requirements in your 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.