POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position	**Education Specialist Residential Care**
Reports to	**Senior Education Advisor**
Direct Reports	**N/A**
Status	**Full Time (Western and Southern Regions)**
Location	**Positions based at relevant VACCA Regional Offices with travel between locations, depending on the position.**

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 800 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 VACCA Capacity and Service Development Unit includes a small but important Education team, including a Senior Education Advisor and Senior Education Project Officer (Partnering Agreements). The team's aim is to increase the educational engagement and progress of children and young people in VACCA's programs. The new Education Lead Residential Care role will sit within this team.

VACCA's State-wide Residential Care program currently operates in the Northern Metro, Western Metro, Southern Metro and Inner Gippsland regions. The Program operates from a trauma informed framework. It utilises current best practice developed from Trauma, Relational and Attachment theories. The program works on the premise that connection to culture is a powerful factor in healthy identity formation and ongoing healing and recovery from Trauma. The program framework recognises the impact of ongoing intergenerational trauma, racism and other forms of cultural abuse which Aboriginal children and their families have suffered.

The program aims to provide a culturally safe, nurturing and healing home environment for the children, meeting the children's individual needs using a culturally therapeutic approach. The child's Aboriginal identity, rights and connection to their family, land, and community are privileged.

The cultural foundation for the program has the following components: Cultural Safety, Cultural Rights, Cultural Responsibilities, Aboriginal understanding of family and kinship structure, Aboriginal understandings of culture as resilience. As well as this the program seeks to comply with the Best Interests Principles, and the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

The Residential Care program recognises the importance of supporting the educational engagement of young people in VACCA's care. The program has recently received additional funding for new residential homes, and this includes an allocation for education support work.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Education Specialist positions have been established to promote and encourage best practice in relation to the education of residents across VACCA's residential care programs. The Education Specialists will use a collaborative approach with VACCA residential staff, to ensure they can best support young people reengage with, attend and thrive in their chosen education setting.

This will involve:

- collaborating with members of the VACCA Central Education and Residential Care Teams
- supporting young people and their carers to identify and respond to barriers to positive educational engagement
- building the capacity of VACCA's residential care staff to advocate and guide young people to navigate pathways through their education journey
- engaging proactively with local education providers to create positive relationships

- engaging with local education networks to build connections and support for young people in VACCA residential care settings

The roles will be located at one of VACCA's regional offices, with travel to residential care program locations/communities. There will also be some opportunity to work flexibly from home.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Internal: Senior Education Advisor, Senior Education Project Officer (Partnering Agreements), Senior Program Manager Residential Care, Residential Care House Supervisors, Residential Care Case Managers & Residential Care Cultural Practice Lead, Better Futures workers.

External: Schools and other education settings, LOOKOUT Centres, Education Assessment Leads, DET Koorie Education Workforce and other relevant stakeholders.

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.
- An awareness of why Aboriginal children and carers may experience challenges or barriers within the education system.
- Demonstrated experience working and engaging with Aboriginal families and children in an educational context.
- Strong understanding of the education support systems available to young people living in residential care settings.
- Experience and understanding of school communities and the supports available.
- Experience working with high-risk youth, exhibiting challenging behaviours.
- Experience working with individuals and groups – identifying underlying issues, working with conflict, assisting people to communicate safely and effectively, working collaboratively with other services and supports.
- Ability to advocate for service intervention and client supports.
- Demonstrated understanding of strengths-based, trauma informed and therapeutic practice.

QUALIFICATION/EXPERIENCE

- Tertiary qualification in Education, Social Work or similar.
- Experience working in the education sector would be viewed as essential.

REQUIREMENTS

- You must have and continue to hold a full Victorian Driver's Licence and a current Working with Children Check or/and VIT Registration.
- Current COVID 19 vaccinations.

POSITION ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Provide individual specialist education support to young people, including implementing tailored education programs in collaboration with education and vocational providers.
- Build the skills and capacity of VACCA residential care staff to respond to the educational and vocational needs of young people.
- Facilitate young people's improved navigation of education and vocational systems and pathways including alternative education settings.
- Provide direct support for young people to assist them to participate in vocational and employment opportunities where appropriate.
- Attend meetings on behalf of VACCA to provide education updates, propose adaptations and provide feedback around education in residential care.
- Liaise with schools, educational bodies, service providers and other relevant organisations to coordinate a program of student engagement in education.
- Provide guidance to ensure the home learning environment is supportive for young people residing in VACCA care settings.
- Support education assessments and planning and ensure residential care staff are empowered to advocate for young people through the education system.
- Provide information and guidance for young people in relation to vocational pathways.
- Connect staff into tutoring and other available education supports for young people
- Support staff with the use and knowledge in re engagement in learning, individualised education plans and with student support group meetings.
- Represent residential care at monthly VACCA Education Working Group meetings

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 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 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.