



Nugel-Information Sheet

Aboriginal communities know best how to keep Aboriginal children safe and looked after. This is why the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA) has the 'Aboriginal children in Aboriginal care' (ACAC) program, known as Nugel at VACCA. Nugel uses Aboriginal-led approaches to supporting Aboriginal children and young people on Child Protection Orders. We walk alongside families to strengthen safety together, by actively supporting families to build their parenting capacity and reclaim their rightful roles in the care, protection and guidance of their own children.

What is Nugel?

Nugel is a Woiwurrung word that means "belong". VACCA believes that Aboriginal children "belong" and have a sacred place at the centre of Aboriginal communities – they have a 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 implements Section 18 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA), which transfers responsibility for decision making and direct work with Aboriginal children and their families from Child Protection to VACCA. For the children that come into the Nugel program, the Child Protection Order will continue, but Child Protection will no longer be involved.

Where is Nugel delivered?

Nugel is currently being delivered by VACCA in Northern Metropolitan Melbourne, Inner Gippsland, Ovens Murray, Western Metropolitan Melbourne, and Southern Metropolitan Melbourne. The statewide program, called Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care, is being delivered by Aboriginal organisations in other parts of Victoria including in Bendigo, Echuca, Ballarat and Shepparton regions.



VACCA
VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD
AND COMMUNITY AGENCY

Connected by culture

What is different about Nugel?

The Nugel program takes an approach of working in partnership with Aboriginal families and ensures services are wrapped around children and their families. Nugel promotes cultural connection and identity, strengthens safety together, and tailors support for the whole family. Nugel understands that even when a child cannot be at home, it is important to involve parents and families in planning and decision making for their child's care journey. Importantly, Nugel believes in the principle of change and will support families to strengthen safety and where possible, reunify children with their families. Transferring responsibility for Aboriginal children to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations like VACCA has been a significant and positive step towards self-determination, and in addressing over-representation of Aboriginal children and families in the statutory system. Nugel has already demonstrated improved results in reunification, parental involvement in decision making and keeping children connected to their culture and community.

Section 18 authorisation

Section 18 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* allows the Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to authorise the principal officer of an Aboriginal agency to perform functions and exercise powers under the CYFA. This means that for Aboriginal children and their siblings who are authorised to VACCA's CEO, the Nugel program takes over the role of Child Protection, including making all decisions, undertaking case planning and legal functions prescribed under the CYFA.

Contact us:

If you have concerns for an Aboriginal child and are unsure if the child is authorised to VACCA, you should contact Child Protection as you normally would. If the child is authorised to VACCA, Child Protection will inform you and ask you to contact us at VACCA's Nugel program.

If you have any questions and would like to discuss this program further, please feel free to contact:

VACCA Nugel North
p. (03) 9287 8800
a. 340 Bell St Preston VIC 3072

VACCA Nugel West
p. (03) 9742 8300
a. 75-79 Watton Street Werribee VIC 3030

VACCA Nugel South
p. (03) 9801 3500
a. Level 2, 1-7 Langhorne Street, Dandenong VIC 3175

VACCA Nugel Inner Gippsland
p. (03) 5135 6055
a. 21 Hazelwood Road Morwell VIC 3840

VACCA Nugel Ovens Murray
p. (03) 5756 9000
a. Suite 3, 27/29 Faithfull Street Wangaratta

Or for more information, go to www.vacca.org