

VACCA Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018

Vision

Our children, young people, families and communities are thriving - culturally strong, empowered and safe.

Purpose

To work towards the healing of the Aboriginal community through strengthening the safety, wellbeing and cultural connectedness of vulnerable community members particularly children.

Our Principles and Values

We believe in the principle of the right of Aboriginal people to self-determination and the rights of the child and we commit to uphold Victorian Aboriginal cultural protocols.

Best interest of the Child

- Our children have the right to be heard, to be nurtured and safe
- They have the right to optimal life opportunities including access to education, healthcare and the development of social and emotional wellbeing
- Our children have the right to their Aboriginal identity and be connected to their community
- We believe that the best environment for children is with their own families .

Aboriginal Cultural observance

- We believe that wherever possible and practicable that compliance with Aboriginal protocols, cultural practice and ceremony is integral in helping us achieve successful outcomes for our community and especially for children.

Respect

- We pay respect to and commit to comply with the individual and collective cultural rights, obligations and responsibilities of Aboriginal people in our operations, management and in the delivery of our service.
- We show respect to each other , our partners and our community to whom we provide a service.

Healing and Empowerment

- We believe in serving community members that use our services in ways which empower them.
- We use a strengths-based approach in our services and help our clients make choices for their future.
- We aim to provide empowering, healing services to do what we can to help in repairing the damage done to the Stolen Generations and the community by policies of removing Aboriginal children.

Excellence

- We believe that the community we service expects and are entitled to a high quality and professional service that is culturally embedded.

Who we are and what we do

VACCA is one of Victoria's oldest Aboriginal Community-controlled organisations specialising in supporting vulnerable community members especially children and families delivered from a cultural perspective and sensitive to the needs and circumstances of children and families. We offer a wide range of service responses supporting individuals, families and communities – helping to build resilience, strength and capability in the community. We believe that Aboriginal culture offers the solutions and the way forward for the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Our challenges and opportunities

- We anticipate a continuing growth in demand for child and family services and child protection indicated by the continued growth in numbers of Aboriginal children entering care
- The State and Commonwealth focus on family violence and ice addiction will offer additional opportunities for service responses and reforms that are more targeted to our community.
- The Royal Commission Into Institutionalized Responses to Child Sexual Abuse offers opportunities to strengthen our services as well as creating additional compliance demands on us.
- The tighter government-funding environment will mean we will need to diversify our income sources if we are to promote and develop our innovative programs especially around cultural activities. This innovation will continue.
- We will continue to advocate for Aboriginal children at risk especially those in care seeking a reunification of all Aboriginal children in care with their communities and families.
- Self-determination through the full implementation of Aboriginal Guardianship is likely to offer our children better outcomes. However, obtaining Government and DHHS commitment to its full implementation continues to challenge us.

Strategic Intent

- VACCA service improvement will be focussed on culturally appropriate, responsive and accessible services.
- We will strengthen our efforts to keep children at home and reunify Aboriginal children in care with their families and work with our sector and governments in doing the same.
- We will support and develop our staff to respond to the growing and changing need in community and improve our systems to enable and facilitate the growth we anticipate.
- Our advocacy will be based on improved research and evaluation of our services and increased understanding of community needs.

Our priorities

OUR SERVICES

Culturally embedded services premised on self-determination and self-management are critical means of providing positive outcomes for our community, especially our children and members of the Stolen Generations.

Our priorities

- Implement our Aboriginal therapeutic framework across our services
- Strengthen our response to vulnerable Aboriginal youth
- Implement best practice themes that emerge from the Royal Commission Into Institutional Sexual Abuse
- Strengthen our response to family violence including the areas of prevention and targeted response
- Promote opportunities for our service users to become economically independent
- Ensure an effective client information management and report system
- Strengthen our Aboriginal cultural practices and service models
- Ensure the voice of our service users is heard and informs practice approaches
- Implement Aboriginal guardianship
- Full implementations of client services restructure
- Strengthen our state wide responses to Stolen Generation members through our Link Up Service

OUR PEOPLE [STAFF AND BOARD]

As an Aboriginal service organisation VACCA is a strong advocate for the Victorian Aboriginal community responding to the needs of Aboriginal children and families and community. Our strength is in our people and their commitment to the organisation's vision and values and their advocacy for our children and other vulnerable community members. It is in our respect for, observance of and compliance with Aboriginal cultural protocols, practise and ceremony. Our Aboriginality is what distinguishes us from mainstream services and the positive outcomes we achieve for our people.

When we get our recruitment and development of staff right – we get our practice right. When we get it right for our Aboriginal staff – we get it right for all our staff.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Establish a dedicated workforce resource and implement a three year workforce strategy which focuses on:
 - Continued improvement and strengthening of workforce systems
 - Implementation of a learning and development framework underpinned by a training needs analysis and supporting career pathways for staff
 - Gradual staff qualifications upgrade aligned with foreshadowed government requirements
 - Leadership development training and programs particularly for emerging Aboriginal leaders
 - Strengthening succession planning of key management positions
- Provide strong governance with a focus on achieving positive outcomes, risk management and the responsibility that comes with self-determination, community leadership and corporate governance.

LEAD AND INFLUENCE

We will use our expertise in delivering services to our community as the basis for advocating for the right responses in service delivery, program design, policy and legislation. We will pursue Aboriginal guardianship and service system accountability for the standard of care and support for vulnerable and at risk Aboriginal children, individuals and families.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Hold government to account for its commitments and successfully influence policy, program and budget decisions.
- Establish partnership agreements with key sector agencies to confirm the roles, responsibilities and partnership arrangements in relation to service delivery for vulnerable Aboriginal children, families and community members.
- Identify and build cross – sector strategic partnerships to increase knowledge of need and to influence positive outcomes.
- Take opportunities to advocate for necessary service development and investment to meet the needs of all Aboriginal children in Out of Home Care.

SUSTAINABILITY

VACCA understands that to be able to do what is needed, we have to increase our level of resources; ensure we keep a close watch on the quality of our services and our operational efficiency; and minimise the impact we have on the land and natural resources.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Develop and implement a fund-raising strategy
- Develop and implement a social enterprise strategy aligned with our purpose
- Undertake sustainable growth that supports better outcomes for vulnerable Aboriginal children and families
- Maintain a strong focus on continuous improvement and systems development to support quality, safety and the management of risk
- Implement environment plan consistent with Aboriginal people's respect for the land and custodians of resources



VACCA
Connected by culture

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY