



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022



VACCA
Connected by culture

Accessibility

We are committed to providing accessible services to all community members. If you have difficulty understanding this report, please contact us on 03 9287 8800 and we will arrange assistance.

Diversity and Inclusion

We appreciate and welcome diversity in all its forms, including staff and service consumers, and believe this makes our teams, services and organisation stronger and more effective.

Privacy

In the interest of our client's privacy and protection, names have been changed.

Photography

Thank you to the community members and staff who volunteered and gave permission for their photographs to be published.

Artwork and design

Kaitlyn Boyer - *Gunditjmara*
VACCA Graphic Designer

ABOUT THE ARTWORK



Kaitlyn Boyer - *Gunditjmara*
VACCA Graphic Designer and Artist

A possum-skin cloak is the grounding and encapsulating piece within this artwork. It holds space for VACCA's journey, people, community and growth in upholding self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The soaring Bunjil's above our possum-skin cloak provide the wisdom and acknowledgement of our history of where VACCA began to where we are going.

Paths of footprints step through the depicted sacred land of country revealing how VACCA's growth has empowered and aided our community, families, children and young people in various regions across Victoria. The mirroring and expanding elements celebrate the strength and versatility of VACCA's growing number of staff.

Fine layers of detail throughout the artwork provide insight to the inner workings of our evolving programs and our culture we continue to nurture. This artwork is a tribute to the commitment VACCA actions as a force for positive change.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country that we work on, and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders both past and present, and to their children and young people who are our future Elders and caretakers of this land.

WE ARE VACCA

We are VACCA – the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Victoria's leading Aboriginal child and family services organisation, and the largest provider of Aboriginal family violence, youth justice and homelessness support services.

VACCA is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO), responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, Elders and community in Victoria for over 45 years.

We know that strong Aboriginal families and communities means strong Aboriginal children. Our vision for self-determination is exemplified in our work.

We focus on creating services, supports, policies and advocacy that deliver solutions for our people now and that make a difference for our future generations.

At our heart of our work is the focus on safety, wellbeing and cultural connections for our children, families and community – first, foremost, always.



OVERVIEW

OUR VISION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination – Live, Experience and Be.

OUR PURPOSE

Supporting culturally strong, safe and thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

OUR PRINCIPLES



Self Determination

We believe in the fundamental right of self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are committed to strengthening understanding and empowerment in the exercise of rights and discharge of associated obligations as First Peoples.



Respect

We pay respect to the individual and collective cultural rights, obligations and responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our operations, management and in the delivery of our service. We show respect to each other, our partners and the community we serve.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural observance

We believe that compliance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, cultural practice and ceremony is integral in helping us achieve successful outcomes for our community and especially for our children and young people.



Best Interests of the Child

Our children and young people have the right to be heard, to be nurtured and safe; to optimal life opportunities (education, healthcare and development of social and emotional wellbeing); to their identity and connection to their community and to be with their own families.



Excellence

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



Healing and empowerment

We use a strengths-based approach and aim to provide empowering, healing services to repair damage done to the Stolen Generations and the community by policies of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and disenfranchisement of our community.

ANNUAL REPORT THEME

Our Possum-skin cloak: a celebration of VACCA's growth, development, and impact.

Possum-skin cloaks have been worn by Aboriginal people in Victoria for thousands of years as a source of warmth and protection from harsh conditions.

Worn from a young age, possum-skin cloaks were initially made up of only a few pelts. But as the boorais grew, more pelts were added, and the cloak was decorated for protection, ceremony and storytelling.

More recently, cloaks have been utilised as a way to empower and strengthen culture in the workplace and community within our regions. This year we are celebrating our possum-skin cloak. Our history, our story, our growth and journey.

We started small, with only a few pelts. Today, 45 years on we are made up of many pelts – that combines our people, our programs and our community. Together we make one cloak that continues to expand, while protecting our community. Our programs and capabilities have grown, with more staff, skills and learnings. We have become more valuable, more unique, more committed and trusted.

*Just like possum-skin cloaks,
we are creating a map of our
identity, holding stories of
clan and country, through
our people, our community,
and our story.*



Chairperson's Address

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, it is our responsibility to never forget why we are here; and that is the Aboriginal children, families, Elders and communities we serve. Our vision of self-determination remains our driving inspiration.

In January 2022 we launched VACCA's new 4 year strategic plan with the underlying theme of building prosperity across generations. Our plan is our ongoing commitment to supporting our people across the lifespan; but also reflects VACCA's aspirations to actively challenge the status quo and invest in our collective futures as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

This year, like the previous, was one of challenges, innovation and growth. We added staff across our regions, focusing on our metropolitan growth corridors, Inner Gippsland and our Ovens Murray regions. We see each person that we bring into VACCA as vital members of our communities. With around 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and over 170 carers, we are actively building social capital in our communities.

Our staff and carers play vital roles as ambassadors for our children's futures and this report celebrates them.

Such sustained growth from both an organisation and service delivery footprint does require good governance and an engaged membership base. The Board has committed to growing our membership so that we are representative of the communities we serve but also our diverse service delivery footprint and reach. As we move into and grow new regions we need a broad membership base that allows the Board and VACCA's leadership team to make informed decisions based off community needs and aspirations.

Compliance burden is an ongoing issue. However VACCA again showed that we deliver high quality and relevant services for community in meeting all our Accreditation requirements. The Board is also thrilled that we are now Rainbow Tick Accredited and are a recognised leader in advocating for and supporting the rights of our LGBTIQ+ communities and young people.

The Board recognises the ongoing impact and legacy COVID-19 had on the organisation and our communities, but also acknowledge the exceptional resilience and fortitude our people and staff have shown in caring for each other and striving for better outcomes. VACCA has always been a leader, innovator and staunch advocate for the rights of children and the self determination of our peoples. Our work continues and I know our staff, leadership team and the Board are ready for the challenge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'James Atkinson'.

James Atkinson, VACCA Chairperson



CEO Address

The past year has reinforced to me the tenacity of our staff, Board and communities to continue to rise above adversity and rally around each other in times of uncertainty. We had a bumpy start in our road to recovery from COVID-19 but I am constantly inspired by the leadership of our Board, staff and communities in building a brighter future for our future leaders and generations to come.

Over the last 12 months, VACCA and our Board have taken a deliberate approach to leverage the strengths of our communities; and engage and connect with our communities as we were restricted from doing so for so long. We've been able to reintroduce our cultural camps, Return to Country, NAIDOC events and more. Being able to see each other face to face has lifted spirits and brought back into focus for everyone how important it is to be able to celebrate culture with each other.

Onboarding over 300 new positions challenged us as an organisation, to make sure our staff are connected and supported in the work that they do.

It has seen new ways of working and an ongoing commitment to staff wellbeing, development and capacity building that will continue meeting the expectations of community.

The reach and impact of our work has shown us that we are meeting community expectations, with more of our families accessing our diverse range of services. We remain committed to ensuring children stay with their families; preventing children from entering care systems and returned more children safely home.

This last year we have seen so many new policy developments that have the potential for the first time in over 260 years, to right the wrongs of the past and truly allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians and our people interstate to live and breathe self-determination. In Victoria, we have accelerated towards Treaty; we saw the announcement of the Yoorrook Truth and Justice Commission, the first of its kind in Australia that will permit us to look back, reflect and drive systemic change and healing for our children, families, Elders and communities.

The new redress and reparations schemes and timely commitments at a Federal level to the Uluru Statement of the Heart, all impact our work at VACCA but also create true hope for the future.

I am most pleased that staff are committed to embedding Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing into all the spaces we work. VACCA's investment in building the Aboriginal Evidence Base has proven invaluable in informing how we work and in integrating our Cultural Therapeutic Ways framework across the organisation.

I would like to thank our Board for their leadership and our staff for the hard work and dedication to our children, families, Elders and communities.

Prof. Muriel Bamblett AO

SNAPSHOT 2021 - 2022

Client Services

- Supported 630 children in Care
- 102 children in Nugel program
- 13 new Foster Carers – 94 households
- Average of 356 family violence referrals per months state-wide (= 4272 for the FY)
- Supported 96 men reintegrate into their family and community after being released from prison
- Supported 27 women pre and post release through Women's diversion program with 63 enquiries and new referrals
- 77 referrals for family finding
- 10 Reunions for Stolen Generation
- Supported 40 young people pre and post release from youth justice system, including two Return to Country through the Youth Through Care Program

Corporate

- Transition staff from weekly to fortnightly pay
- Launch new IM platforms - digitising forms, moving to OneDrive and Sharepoint
- Rainbow Tick Accrediation
- 10 Aboriginal Staff Completed The Ngulunbarra Leadership Program
- 20% increase in number of staff VACCA – 447 roles filled
- New offices spaces for Frankson and Morwell
- 3 new Residential homes in Tarneit, Point Cook and Pakenham

Office of the CEO

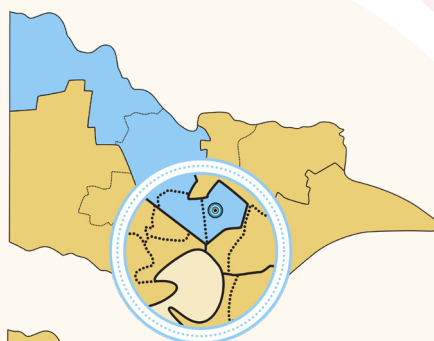
- Web: 133,000 new users (Google Analytics)
- Social: 18,000 followers (FB) 4,200 followers (IG)
- 5 NAIDOC events held across our regions
- Sorry Day event held on Taungurung Country
- Delivered 7 key digital campaigns: Survival Day, Back to School (Education), COVID Vaccinations (Health), Safe Koorie Families (Family Violence), Foster Care Week, Stay Strong Podcast (Youth), 16 Days of Activism (Family Violence)
- 67 policy submissions and briefs
- Supported 32 Committees and Working groups
- 20 Media Releases and opportunities
- We raised over \$730,000 from fundraising, appeals, sponsorship and philanthropy
- 85 Members joined or renewed their membership and the Board endorsed VACCA's first Member Engagement Strategy
- Community Needs Assessments across the six regions are underway
- National Sorry Day event held on Taungurung Country
- Mollie Dyer Awards 2021

OUR REGIONS

Our VACCA regions offer a wide range of community services and programs that work together to create the best outcomes for the Aboriginal community. Our services are focused towards self-determination and healing of the Aboriginal community by embedding culture and strengthening the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable community members; especially children and families.

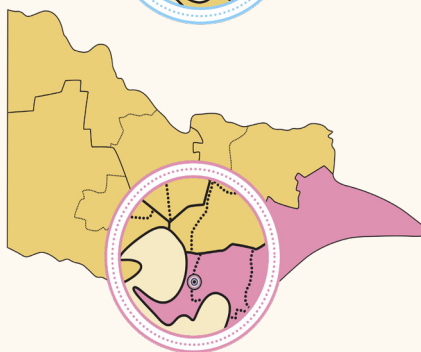
Northern VACCA

VACCA delivers a range of services from a number of locations in Melbourne's northern metropolitan region. Our head office is also based in Preston.



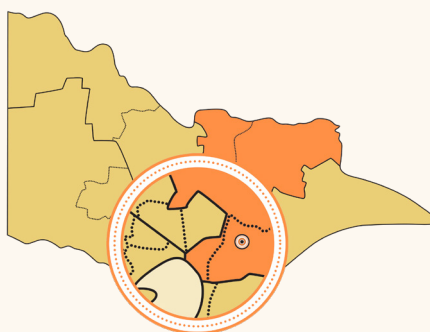
Southern VACCA

Southern VACCA provides a broad range of children, youth, family and cultural services to Aboriginal children and families in the southern metropolitan area, including Bayside Peninsula.



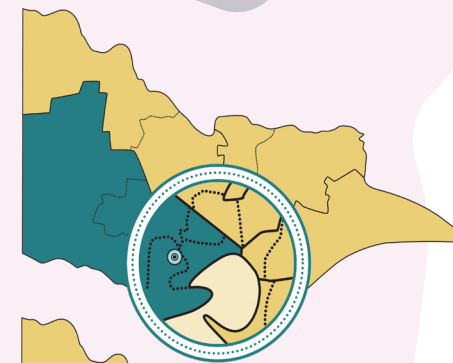
Eastern VACCA

Eastern VACCA provides services to Aboriginal Children and families living in the eastern metropolitan region.



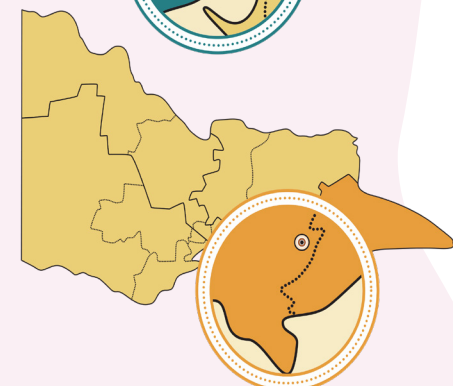
Western VACCA

Western VACCA provides a broad range of family and cultural services to Aboriginal children and families living in the western metropolitan region, including Wyndham, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton and Brimbank.



Gippsland VACCA

Gippsland VACCA is one of the region's largest Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. We employ over 60 staff and operate across sites in Latrobe, East Gippsland and South Gippsland areas.



Ovens Murray VACCA

VACCA's Ovens Murray offices are based in Wangaratta, Wodonga and Shepparton. We provide a range of services and programs across Mansfield, Benalla, Wangaratta, Alpine, Indigo, Wodonga and Towong shires. Goulburn support services are limited to the Lakidjeka program.





OUR PEOPLE

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors govern the strategic direction of VACCA; ensuring compliance with reporting bodies, responding to community expectations, and ensuring excellence in service delivery.



James Atkinson – Chairperson
Yorta Yorta / Bangerang

James is the CEO of the Aboriginal Community Elders Service (ACES) in Melbourne. He is also the former CEO of the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative. James has held management roles across the public sector in Education, from early childhood, schools, TAFE and higher education in the fields of policy development, stakeholder and project management. With a great deal of organisational experience, having served on Boards at a state and national level, James was one of the founding members of the first Victorian Aboriginal Youth Advisory Committee and a participant in the Koorie Leadership Program, and has been on VACCA's Board for over 19 years.



Jason Kanoa – Vice Chairperson
Gunditjmara / Bunitj

Jason is the CEO at the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation. Prior to this Jason was employed as CEO of the Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative. Jason was previously the Senior Project Officer, Indigenous Family Violence, at the Department of Health and Human Services and with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) as the Koorie Caucus Executive Officer and has been on the VACCA Board for nine years.



Deidre King – Secretary
Gunditjmara

Aunty Deirdre is the former CEO of the Aboriginal Community Elders Services (ACES). Prior to this, Aunty Deidre worked at the Aborigines Advancement League (AAL) for 17 years and at VACCA, and has also served as a Board Member of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL) and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services and has been an active VACCA Board Member continuously for five years.



Travis Lovett – Treasurer
Kerrupmarra / Gunditjmara

Travis is the Director of Aboriginal Self-determination and Reform with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. He previously held the role of Director / Chief of Staff in the Office of Deputy Secretary Water and Catchments at DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning). He also held the position of Manager of Koori Courts with Court Services Victoria, and served in various roles in areas ranging from youth engagement, to higher education at VAEAI (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated).



Margaret Atkinson – Director
Yorta Yorta / Taungurung / Wurundjeri

Aunty Marg is a Wurreeker Broker with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI). Previously Aunty Marg worked at the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative and was an employee at VACCA for over nine years. Aunty Marg has been an active VACCA Board Member for nine years and has completed Governance Training.

We thank Jason King and Rodney Monohan for their past service as Directors

MEMBERSHIP

VACCA is owned and controlled by its members and while it is a legal requirement, it is also an important opportunity to learn from and showcase the strength, knowledge, and resilience of our community.

The right to self-determination extends to all Aboriginal people, and we want to ensure our members, staff and clients are empowered to realise their rights as Indigenous peoples.

This year, VACCA developed a four-year Member Engagement Strategy, aiming to grow social capital, strengthen connections, deliver opportunities for members to influence better outcomes and build on meaningful engagement with community.

For 2021-22 we now have 85 Members, with almost three quarters renewing and a number of new and Life Members. VACCA would like to thank each Member for their ongoing support and contribution.



Leoni Bowey
Warumungu, NT

I became a member as I have a strong passion for supporting mob and fighting for justice and cultural connection. VACCA's purpose, programs and staff are what ultimately encouraged me to join. Connection is fundamental to improving outcomes and being a member of VACCA supports me in my connection to culture and connecting me with mob who have been extremely helpful in supporting me to feel welcome and accepted.



Trish Ferrari
Dja Dja Wurrung /
Boonwurrung

VACCA connects people to culture, and cultural connectivity produces strong people. After being removed from my mother as a child, I have worked my entire life for my community. I became a member because the work of VACCA is like planting a seed. When that seed starts to sprout, and children and families are nurtured and supported they grow into strong, healthy self-determined proud Aboriginal people.



Blake Keating
Wemba-Wemba

I chose to become a VACCA member to be part of something special and to be given the opportunity to have a voice in how we can strengthen and support our community, families, and children. It is important to me that we strive to do our best for our children because they are our future and will one day carry on the work we have done.

OUR STAFF

VACCA's overall staff numbers increased from 674 in July 2021 to 810 at end of June 2022 representing a 20% increase in the number of staff at VACCA in the year. Of the 810 staff 345 identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In the 2021 - 2022 year VACCA advertised 603 positions with 447 of these roles filled. There were 290 new positions advertised, and 195 staff moved to new positions within VACCA.

Attracting and recruiting staff to positions during COVID and the low unemployment rate resulted in intense competition for labour in the community and other sectors, and remains a challenge that we are actively addressing.

Growth and Future Proofing

VACCA experienced significant growth and community demand in our Family Violence supports including therapeutic services, Orange Door Hub supports including cultural safety, across our suite of Family Support services and our Home-Based Care Programs. We provided updated Family Violence training across VACCA and further opportunities for staff to undertake formal study. MARAM training was adopted across the organisation.

We began developing action plans to address issues highlighted in the April 2021 Staff Engagement survey with a focus on supervision, professional development and flexible working conditions. To address this we increased the capacity of our Human Resources team to appoint more specialist HR partners to actively engage and support all supervisors across the organisation.

Staff feedback also showed that VACCA's commitment to Organisation Development needed a renewed investment and focus. This has resulted in a Wellbeing Coordinator being employed and many initiatives implemented and underway to support workforce development, building capability of staff and the provision of more tailored and focused cultural and wellbeing supports. Improving staff experiences at VACCA particularly in the first 12 months of employment will be our focus into 2022-23.

As an ACCO and a significant employer of Aboriginal people, VACCA directly contributes towards the social-economic and cultural benefits associated with employment and an individual's confidence to pursue career and professional growth. Our goal is to attract, develop, and retain a highly skilled Aboriginal workforce

Leadership Development

VACCA was fortunate to be successful in attracting funds from the Aboriginal Workforce Fund Tranche 1 and 2. We utilised this funding to provide a number of internal leadership workshops as well as the Diploma of Leadership and Management (delivered by Melbourne Polytechnic) for staff. This year we launched an implementation of a new Leadership Development initiative. The Ngulunbarra Leadership Program was developed and targeted at emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders within VACCA.

The Ngulunbarra Leadership Program (Dja Dja Wurrung word for 'Coming Together') was designed to give the 10 participants the opportunity to network, meet and yarn about various topical issues in workshop discussions led by VACCA senior executives including the CEO.

The purpose of this program is to develop potential Aboriginal leadership talent that is capable and ready for succession when senior vacancies arise. Participants have engaged in a wide range of developmental activities such as mentoring, challenging projects, attending senior meetings, additional responsibilities, work placements, shadowing, higher duties and workshops. Capacity Building and Workforce Development are ongoing priorities for VACCA.



WORKFORCE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

As we undertake work critical to the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and the broader community – professional development of our staff is a priority.

To upskill VACCA staff, we have continued to partner with Swinburne University of Technology to deliver the Diploma of Community Services, and La Trobe University to deliver the Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy.

We also continue to offer student placement and traineeship programs, creating important pathways for our future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services sector workforce.

Results

Employment Pathways Trainees, Interns and Students

VACCA makes it possible for people who are starting their careers, to enter the workforce through a range of pathways:

- **Aboriginal Trainees – 5 positions** (entry level, 12-month traineeship)
- **Career Tracker Interns – 4 positions** (Aboriginal University students)
- **Student Placements – 21 positions** (unpaid) (9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) from these 15 are now employed at VACCA

The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted VACCA's traineeship, student placement and internship program over the last two years, however momentum is building for 2022-2023, and we are already seeing an increase in applications.

Career Development and Learning

For our existing staff we provide a number of avenues to gain relevant qualifications and pursue the many exciting career opportunities available at VACCA.

- **Diploma of Community Services**
Swinburne
20 staff enrolled
(15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- **Diploma of Leadership and Management**
Melbourne Polytechnic
7 staff completed
(5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff)
- **Certificate IV in Business**
Melbourne Polytechnic
11 Admin staff completed
(5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff)
- **Graduate certificate in Family Therapy**
La Trobe University - The Bouverie Centre
9 staff completed
(7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff)

CONGRATULATIONS

to all staff for their achievements!

Learning and Development Team

This year we undertook a comprehensive review of our Learning and Development team to ensure we provide the right mix of training and professional development opportunities internally and to our external partners. As VACCA's service delivery footprint grows so does our training and development needs. We are investing in blended approach to our training with a mix of online (internal) and face to face training offerings. The majority of our trainers are Aboriginal people to ensure that all VACCA staff have access to the full complement of knowledge, skills, experience and exposure to aspects important when learning about Aboriginal practice.



From left to right Jade Jenson, Jacinta Feehan, Necia Stanton, Tanya Heti, Michael McCartney, Kylie Ponchard, Damien Murray, Nikki Lowe, Dan Laws, Muriel Bamblett and Gerry McNamara.

Case Study

Improving staff career outcomes

- Swinburne's Department of Health, Science and Community partnered with VACCA to develop and deliver culturally and workplace-customised Vocational Education training

- Over 120 VACCA staff have now graduated with a Diploma of Community Services (Statutory & Forensic Child, Youth & Family Welfare Specialisation)
- The partnership focuses on improving self-determination by providing higher education and vocational training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

VACCA's child and family services staff have been empowered to provide improved support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Victoria's child protection system, thanks to specially-tailored training qualifications, a result of VACCA's 5 year partnership with Swinburne University of Technology.

Graduates

On 29 March 2021, VACCA staff who successfully completed their Diploma of Community Services were invited to attend the Swinburne University formal graduation ceremony at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The ceremony provided a wonderful way for graduates to celebrate their achievements with family and friends. The ceremony key note speaker highlighted the extra significance of their accomplishments, with students adjusting to studies being delivered online due to COVID restrictions.

The Diploma of Community Services equips workers with case management skills to provide direct support to Aboriginal children and their families, with plans for many more VACCA staff to undertake the qualification in the next year.

Congratulations to graduates Belinda Kostos, Calaniece Wallace, Mereoni Upkett, Rachael Maxwell, Te Amai (Hori) Teepa and Rebecca Ogden. We are proud of what you have achieved.



WELLBEING

Our staff are VACCA's greatest asset and our goal is that staff are supported in their wellbeing through a whole of organisation approach.

In 2021 a VACCA Wellbeing Support Plan was developed in consultation with a Wellbeing committee made up of VACCA staff. The strategic goals identified were in response to a wellbeing staff survey and are on track to be completed by 2023.

2021 – 2022 Events and Activities

- 2 statewide in-services were delivered online for VACCA staff
- **Yarning Strong** was a mental health awareness event co-facilitated with VACCA Wellbeing coordinator and Wiradjuri man Joe Williams - former NRL player and professional boxer and Author of 'Defying the enemy within'. Joe shared his mental health and addiction journey and how connection to culture saved his life.
- **R U OK DAY** was co-facilitated by VACCA's Wellbeing Coordinator and Lee Couch who is a Gomeroi woman, and a Mindfulness and Meditation Coach and Kinesiologist. The online event for VACCA staff encouraged meaningful connections with colleagues, friends, and family focused on cultivating a community of care and the principles of participation. The event centered around mental health, self-care encouragement, mindfulness and connecting with ourselves and others.
- 8 Wellbeing Workshops have been delivered for VACCA staff. The workshops discuss the importance of prioritising self-care and how to identify signs of burnout.

- 65 VACCA staff have participated in Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid Training. The training aims to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who are developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis, until appropriate professional help is received, or the crisis resolves.

Deadly Thinking

In the coming year, one of VACCA's regions will pilot Deadly Thinking – a culturally specific workshop designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their allies, where people yarn about situations and issues affecting their life personally or professionally. The program was co-designed by Rural and Remote Mental Health alongside Aboriginal cultural consultants and health professionals.

The program focuses on culturally safe conversations regarding mental health, suicide, grief, cultural load, lateral violence, and other issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The workshop offers a safe space for people to talk, finding strength in culture and family, connection to country, guided meditation, team building, self-empowerment and communication in a safe environment.

Wellbeing Plans

VACCA's regions have finalised Regional Wellbeing Plans and have commenced implementing their strategic goals.

Key themes are:

- Building a culturally safe workplace
- Embed staff wellbeing in everyday operational management
- Improve understanding and awareness of mental health
- Mental Health First Aid training
- Encourage healthy lifestyles

BUILDING AND INVESTING IN VACCA'S FUTURE

Information Technology and Management

Implementation of our Information Technology Strategy continues which enhances VACCA's technology to meet future growth demand and to ensure existing business systems continue to support our core processes over the next three to five years.

Digital Transformation

The Digital transformation of VACCA was a significant focus for the in 2021-2022. With more staff working remotely we needed systems that provide agile solutions like the migration to office 365, so staff can connect and work anywhere with an internet connection. Training for this platform will be an ongoing focus to support our staff.

Creating an integrated digital workplace is driving many of the projects delivered and progressed this year.

Key projects include:

- Records Management System that is secure and available regardless of where we work
- Rollout of Microsoft TEAMS for seamless collaboration and communication
- Implementation of digital forms with automated workflows for faster approvals and processing
- Engaging business analysts to review our systems and processes with a view to implementing systems that will reduce the administrative workload on our frontline staff

Office and property expansion

Office relocations and reconfigurations:

- Wodonga office expanded by 100%
- Wangaratta office expanded by 50%
- Benalla, assisted with opening of co-located satellite office
- Melton, Installed additional desks
- Shepparton, installed replacement desks
- Dandenong Cultural and Training hub completed

Property Management:

- New office space in Frankston and Morwell
- Secured leases for 3 x "new" Residential Houses in Tarneit; Point Cook & Pakenham
- New co-located work spaces, including relocating staff and setting up work stations for 7 Orange door sites
 - › Frankston – Orange Door & Anglicare
 - › Sunbury – Orange Door
 - › Wangaratta – Orange Door
- Closed our Ballarat Lakidjeka office & St. Albans Residential House





RAINBOW TICK

In November 2021, VACCA received the Rainbow Tick Accreditation – a formal endorsement for the work our teams have achieved in making VACCA a safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people.

In less than three years, we have delivered a significant amount of work to meet the accreditation requirements, which is a testament to the commitment of all VACCA staff who so openly embraced inclusivity. We are now the largest ACCO to gain Rainbow Tick Accreditation nationally.

Since the Rainbow Tick journey began, our Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in conjunction with VACCA's Binbeal Murrup working group, have focused on initiatives that engage our children, families, and community.

This year, we have developed and delivered of LGBTIQ+ training packages and resource guides, as we embed inclusive practice systematically and holistically, to ensure VACCA remains a leader in inclusivity, an employer of choice and safe space for our clients.

2021-2022 Inclusivity Highlights

- Celebration of Wear it Purple Day
- Introduction of dedicated LGBTIQ+ EAP service for VACCA staff
- Developed best practice resources, training materials and fact sheets tailored to support the needs of VACCA programs, clients, and staff
- Inclusive Practices training delivered to approximately 80% of staff
- Established a framework for gender and sexual identity inclusions in VACCA's forms and templates
- Development of a dedicated LGBTIQ+ staff intranet page, with links to events, resources, support services, fact sheets etc
- Inclusive materials shared with VACCA offices (pride desk flags, pronoun pins, staff lanyards, You are Welcome Here stickers, gender neutral bathrooms signage)
- VACCA's Mob Talk Podcast episode discussing LGBTIQ+ inclusion at VACCA. This resource is now being used by other organisations including, Rainbow Health Victoria (developers of the Rainbow Tick accreditation standards) as part of their training

OUR COMMUNITY



NAIDOC WEEK

Get Up, Stand Up, Show Up

Each year we celebrate NAIDOC Week as it is a significant time for our children, young people, families and community to come together and celebrate culture.

NAIDOC Week 2022 provided the first opportunity in over two years for VACCA to host dedicated events across the regions in which we work, to celebrate our culture and history with our clients and community.

These events are especially important for the children and families we work with, offering the chance to gather, connect, and celebrate Aboriginal history and culture, and are a real highlight for many children in care.

VACCA's NAIDOC week events commenced with a street march in Wangaratta, a family fun day out in Morwell, a special film screening in Dandenong, and days out to Werribee Zoo and Healesville Sanctuary.

Gippsland's NAIDOC Family Fun Day saw children enjoying face painting, jumping castles, interacting with animals, as well as cultural activities and a performance by Boorun Boys. VACCA staff demonstrated a positive and supportive rapport with the Morwell community, which greatly contributed to the strong turnout and success of the day.

Eastern VACCA's NAIDOC event at Healesville Sanctuary was attended by over 200 community members, who enjoyed activities and walking around the zoo to see all the animals.

North and West VACCA hosted over 1200 community members at the Werribee Zoo, which started with a Welcome to Country and talks by Elders. Families enjoyed access to the zoo and taking part in activities held throughout the day.

The 2022 theme Get up! Stand up! Show up! was celebrated with exclusive artwork created by Gunditjmarra woman and VACCA Designer, Kaitlyn Boyer.

I wanted to utilise various forms of shape and layers in paying respect to Elders and past generations for their fight in making change that we see and experience today. The depicted river and snake act as the flow through time while also learning and growing from past generations and recognising the change that we need to keep fighting for in moving forward.

- Kaitlyn Boyer, Gunditjmarra, VACCA Designer

The artwork was featured prominently across tailored communications, merchandise and activities to support community to Get up! Stand Up! Show up! during NAIDOC Week.



NATIONAL SORRY DAY

Each year Link-Up Victoria organises healing activities and special events for the Stolen Generations, to ensure their history and stories are never forgotten.

This year we hosted a National Sorry Day event on Taungurung Country in Kyenton, to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the 'Bringing them Home' report.

This was the first time that Stolen Generations were supported to gather together on the lands of the Taungurung people to commemorate National Sorry Day.

Featuring speakers from Link-Up, VACCA, Connecting Home, Yoorrook Justice Commission and Taungurung Land and Waters Council, the event was an opportunity for Stolen Generations and Traditional First Nations groups to come together for reflection, connection unity and healing.

The success of this event has highlighted the importance of keeping this history alive, with members of the community requesting Link-Up to host it again.

Through commemorative events, development of educational and support resources and placement of Stolen Generations Markers in cities across Victoria, we can continue to encourage conversations about the nation's true history and acknowledge the trauma faced by Stolen Generations and their families who continue to experience the impacts of being removed from family, culture and Country.



FOSTER CARE

Foster care at VACCA provides culturally safe homes for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families.

This year, the Foster Care Recruitment Team accredited 13 new carers, with a current total of 94 household carers.

Throughout the year we received 329 enquiries for Foster Care; 290 direct enquiries through the VACCA website and 39 enquiries through Fostering Connections and family Journey. Over 22% of our enquiries were Aboriginal applicants. We also expanded our Recruitment Team into the Ovens Murray region.

We delivered 10 training rounds of Our Carers for Our Kids training sessions to potential carers across all regions; and delivered 3 training sessions to other ACCO workers, including participants from Bendigo & District Aboriginal Cooperative, Wathaurong, Njernda and Mallee District Aboriginal Services.

To help raise awareness of foster care and to increase recruitment results, we have had an active presence at a number of events such as NAIDOC Week, and Dreamtime at the G, which saw 200 children and carers on the grounds of the MCG for the welcome to country ceremony.

We also invested in digital marketing campaigns, outdoor billboard and poster campaigns and delivered a targeted disability campaign, focused on recruiting carers that can support children with special needs.

Supporting carers is our ongoing focus, so we ensure we communicate regularly through dedicated carer communications, providing tips for education, culture as well as events and activities.

To celebrate and recognise the dedication and incredible commitment of our foster carers, we delivered a Carers Week 2021 online event, and shared a series of videos in line with Carers Week online celebrations – featuring videos by Uncle David Arden, Uncle Kutcha Edwards and The Merindas.



Foster Care
Week 2021



KINSHIP CARE

Kinship carers are the most undervalued part of the out-of-home care system. At VACCA we aim where possible to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with their extended family, friends of community so that they stay connected to family and culture. We also know placements with family means that where it is in their best interest, children and young people can be reunited with their families as soon as possible.

A Case Study

A proud Yorta Yorta young person in the Kinship Care program had been disengaged from school since COVID-19 and has rarely attended since returning to in-person schooling. Through conversations, the young person has spoken about an interest in working in childcare. It was suggested by a VACCA worker to try a local Childcare Centre that has Aboriginal cultural inclusion built into their program.

The VACCA worker approached the centre and arranged work experience for the young person who completed two weeks there. She has now been offered a full-time traineeship which will be starting soon. This opportunity has resulted in such a significant transformation in the young person, giving much needed direction in her life. She loves talking about all the kids at the centre and how wonderful and supportive the staff are.

Case Study – Reunification

In a collaborative effort over a 12 month period, our Ovens Murray teams supported a reunification of a mother and child. This reunification was possible because the mother worked hard with our VACCA staff and her relatives (kinship carers) to achieve all the goals that she was set, and set for herself in addressing protective concerns. Mum demonstrated great drive and motivation in her approach to access supports, rehabilitate from past substance issues, actively strengthened her parenting and living skills and she continues to engage positively with services and the local community. Mum now has had her dream come true; to wake up her with her baby every day, tuck her safely into bed and kiss her goodnight.

Western Kinship Carers – Mother's Day

Being a Carer for a child in out-of-home care can often be a difficult space to navigate when it comes to special days of celebration like Mother's Day. In the west, we held a High Teas, at our Werribee and Melton locations to recognise and celebrate the women in our community - our mums, grandparents, aunties and sisters, but especially our kinship and foster carers and our Elders, who do so much for the children in their care.

Between the two events, 68 women attended, many with their little ones joining in attendance. While the food was delicious and used native ingredients, we ensured our carers didn't leave empty handed, sharing with goodie bags and special door prizes. Those who registered but who were unable to attend were also delivered special gifts. We believe it doesn't take much to make that little extra effort to show our women and carers how much we value them.

We received beautiful heartfelt messages and emails after the event, thanking us for hosting the event and telling us that this is exactly what they needed – a little pick up and knowing that VACCA is supporting them. Most of all our women and Elders said how good it felt to be back connecting again with community.



LINK-UP VICTORIA

Link-Up Victoria supports the Stolen Generations to find and be reunited with their family.

We assist the Stolen Generations to confidently reclaim their identity; to wholeheartedly embrace their heritage; to proudly walk on their traditional Country, sometimes for the very first time.

Link-Up is the only service in Victoria to provide reunions for the Stolen Generations. These reunions help create connections to family, culture and Country to encourage healing and gives survivors a sense of who they are and where they belong.

Sadly, some reunions are now being held by the grave site of family members who have died before having the opportunity to reconnect with family, who were forcibly removed. This both a painful reminder of the legacy of forced removal policies, but also healing as they are finally reconnected on Country.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, not as many reunions were able to be held, however from early 2022 Link-Up supported 10 reunions. These reunions are an essential part of the healing journey for Stolen Generations, and Link-Up will continue to bring our mob back home.

Reparations Scheme

VACCA and Link-Up Victoria have been advocating for a Victorian Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme for decades and we were a member of the Steering Committee responsible for developing the model announced which commenced March 2022.

On March 3, 2022 the Victorian Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme was launched by the State Government. VACCA and Link-Up Victoria are supporting Victorian Stolen Generations who were removed from family in Victoria to access the Scheme. To date we have supported 15 applications and provided guidance and advice for over 30 Stolen Generations who are in the process of accessing the scheme.

We will continue to advocate and support applications for the Victorian Stolen Generations compensation scheme to ensure survivors access their right to a formal apology from the State, reparations and healing and support services.



PLAYGROUPS

In the Spotlight: Northern Koorie Kids Playgroup

VACCA runs 11 playgroups funded by NIAA and our demand for our groups is growing.

In the North, we've opened new playgroups in our growth corridors. Over 2021-22 we welcomed 25 new families and 42 new children to the Koorie Kids Playgroups across the North. Our groups focus on providing culturally safe, fun and empowering environment for families with children under five years.

While COVID-19 restrictions were still in place, Playgroup programs continued to offer online sessions, and staff presented videos and activities for families to watch and participate from home. To support our families, activity packs were dropped off to families during COVID restrictions. Face to face playgroups re-commenced in term 1 2022.

This year highlights included welcoming presenters from Koorie Families as First Educators, as well as a number of activities and excursions including the Little Long Walk with Essendon Football Club, Christmas excursion and BBQ at Mill Park and Excursion to Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre.



RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

VACCA's Residential Services ensure that Aboriginal children who are unable to live with their family, are cared for in our Therapeutic Residential homes, with 24/7 care from support workers and surrounded by culture.

VACCA's Residential Services has experienced significant growth over the past 12 months, after successfully gaining funding for new two bed Therapeutic Residential Care homes in Pakenham and Point Cook and a three bed home in Tarneit. With these three additional therapeutic residential homes added to our four existing homes, VACCA's capacity to support young people with complex needs has significantly increased.

The new Therapeutic homes come with much needed resources for our young people including education supports and a dedicated Therapeutic Specialist. This means we can establish a small interdisciplinary team in a coordinated way to ensure each young person in our care is holistically supported. Young people within the new homes are already showing us that smaller models of care is better for children who've experienced trauma.

The KEYS model was also successfully introduced this year, which is VACCA's response to findings that the mainstream system is not accessible for Aboriginal children and young people who have experienced trauma. Instead of Aboriginal young people trying to fit into the mainstream system requirements, the KEYS model brings appropriate and tailored system solutions to the young person.

Specialist supports include; family workers, AOD Worker, Community Workers, Cultural Support Workers as well as enhanced mental health and therapeutic support with a full time Mental Health Specialist, and access to a Psychiatrist (if needed). One of the many innovative aspects of the KEYS model is that Aboriginal young people are able to be supported for up to six months after leaving care, making their transition into adulthood more supportive and realistic.

Case Study

Yawa Placement

Over the months of March-April 2022, we responded to the needs of six children who had recently lost their mother in a tragic house fire, two of which were Aboriginal children. If VACCA hadn't intervened, the four youngest children would have been separated into four foster care placements as there was no family prepared to take on their care.

VACCA always advocates for siblings to stay together where possible. We implemented a Cottage Parent style of care in one of our vacant Residential homes. This meant that we were able to create a safe and supporting home-like setting where all the siblings were able to stay together, to receive healing and therapeutic care in the early weeks after their mother's passing.

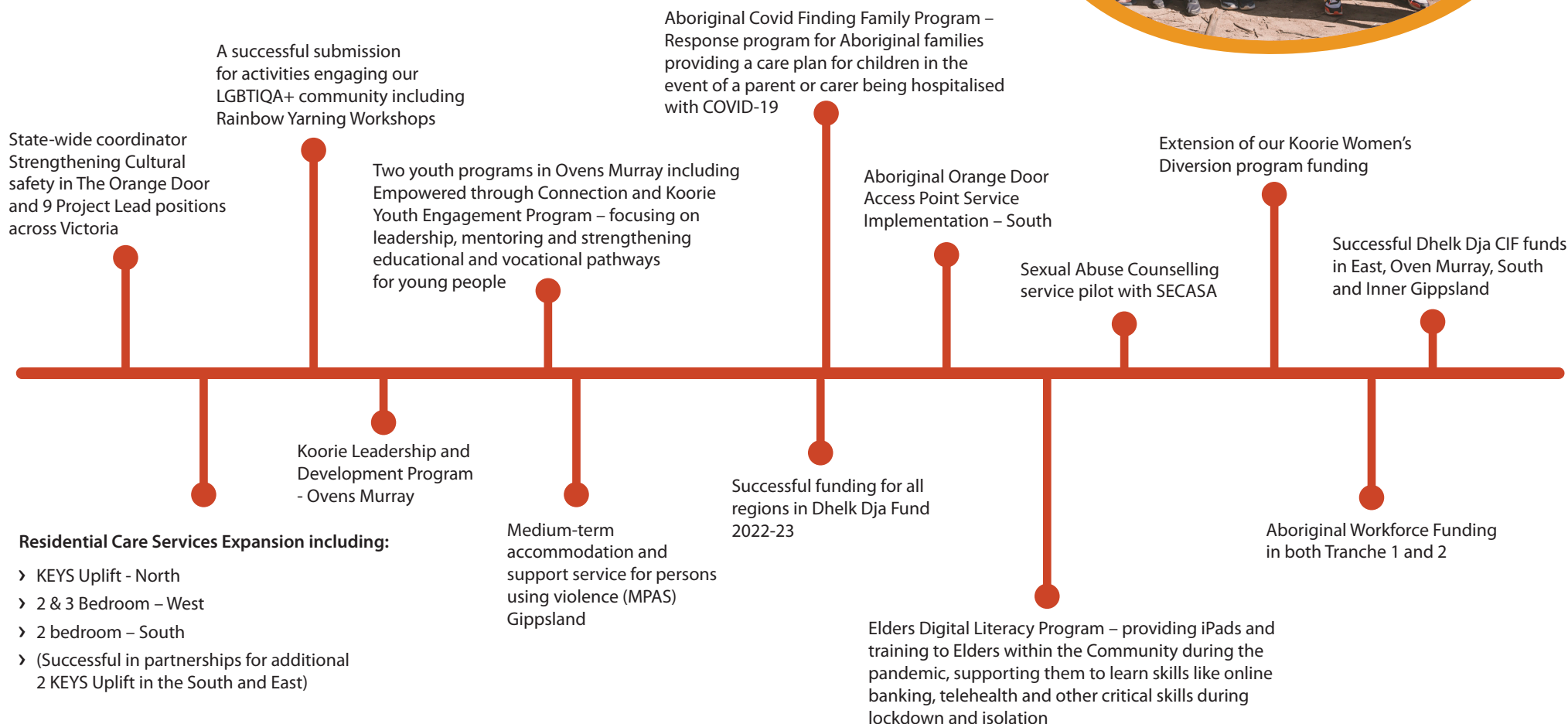
We then were able to support all the children to re-establish relationships with the Aboriginal Father of the middle two children. This creative intervention ensured that the siblings have remained together throughout their traumatic ordeal and are in the process of transitioning into their father's care.

This outcome was only possible because of our staff who dedicated weeks of their personal time to 'live in', and support these children, in addition to a coordinated and collaborative approach across a number of VACCA programs.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION

2021 -2022 Highlights

In the last financial year VACCA has been successful in 38 funding submissions, receiving over \$14 million to deliver critical programs, projects and events for our Communities across the State.



FAMILY VIOLENCE

Initiatives and Outcomes

Five years ago, VACCA's family violence services had a very small footprint. Today, we are the largest Aboriginal led family violence service provider in the State supporting all of Metropolitan Melbourne, Inner Gippsland and the Ovens Murray area. As we continue to see a significant increase in demand for our services and repeat referrals, we continue to be innovative and agile to be able to adapt our services to make sure our children and families, especially our women, receive the support and services they need regardless of where they live.

In 2021-2022 there was an average of 322 referrals per month or av 160 women each month.

Total 3770 year (includes repeat referrals)

- **Unique women 1889**
- **926 re-engagements**
- **1710 police referrals**
- **1809 Orange door**
- **158 referrals to legal supports**

Family Violence Initiatives

Deadly Lovin'

Deadly Lovin' is a program for 12-17-year old Aboriginal young people to support conversations about healthy respectful ('deadly') relationships, aiming to prevent the cycle of family violence that is overrepresented in Aboriginal communities and aiming to improve the understanding of healthy respectful relationships and consent.

VACCA was funded through Dhelk Dja in 2021 to develop a Healthy Respectful Relationships Learning Module in partnership with Centre for Excellence and Innovation (CEI).

The need for a culturally responsive healthy respectful relationships package came about through our experience in delivering camps in the Young Fullas project using mainstream healthy respectful relationships materials. These materials were adapted to meet the needs of Aboriginal young people in camp settings, however demonstrated the need to have a package designed specifically with Aboriginal young people in mind.

In the coming year, 45 VACCA staff members will be trained in the Deadly Lovin' program to support Aboriginal young people connected with our services in group settings to improve their understanding of healthy respectful relationships. A successful pilot session took place in October with staff in our Preston Office.

Strengthening Cultural Safety

The Strengthening Cultural Safety in The Orange Door Project ensures The Orange Door hubs within Victoria and their partnering ACCO receive funding to recruit a Cultural Safety Project Lead for each hub. VACCA have been successful in securing funding for 9 Hubs, as well as the State-wide coordinator role.

The project has delivered four "Strengthening Cultural safety in The Orange Door" training packages, with the first two sessions officially endorsed and delivered on a weekly basis to The Orange Door staff at all levels. The training aims to create culturally safe environments, systems, partnerships and an understanding of how to embed mechanisms for Aboriginal self-determination and culture as a healing and protective factor for Aboriginal people and families accessing services, as well as culturally safe environments for Aboriginal workforce.

Participants of the training have reflected that the power of "truth telling" approach has helped them understand how they can all take responsibility for cultural safety, irrespective of their roles through embedding mechanisms for self-determination and culture as a healing and protective factor. This project, although in its infancy, has strong engagement across the Hubs and in a strong indication for the need and strength of this approach.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM)

Mutil Agency Risk Assessment and Management is now compulsory in Victoria and completes our existing safety planning processes. To adapt to this new requirement, VACCA's has continued to support six smaller ACCO's with their MARAM alignment journey, in addition to engaging in mainstream, ACCO and LGBTIQ+ Family Violence networks, working groups and communities of practice to ensure VACCA's approach is best practice.

We actively review and consult on multiple working groups focusing on adults and adolescents who use violence including the development of Aboriginal specific practice guides, tools, and training.

Women's Therapeutic Program

In the Spotlight: HART – Healing Through Art in Ovens Murray:

- 41 workshops across 2 sites
- 27 Attendees
- 4 Elders as facilitators

Healing through Art (HART) was a direct response to the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions and the loss of connection and isolation experienced by Aboriginal women in the Ovens Murray region during COVID lockdown periods. As restrictions were lifted, we were able to run coordinated group activities and included day trips to culturally significant locations all with the aim of bringing women together in a safe space to reconnect to community, culture and each other.

Other Activities included traditional art classes, basket weaving and making possum-skin cloaks with a focus on healing. Program participants have reaffirmed the importance of how traditional practices heal and strengthen them as individuals and members of the community.

VACCA intend to extend the program into Benalla, with the opening of the new space, and greater demand for therapeutic activities in the region.

Participants feedback has been consistent:

We all feel lighter after being here. You can laugh and cry and that's all part of what makes it so good coming every week.

This is getting deadlier by the minute.

I was able to fall asleep with a smile on my face for the first time in a lot of years.

This Women's Business needs to continue, HART group is so important. It has bought us all together for a reason and our journey is just beginning, and all of us women here together we got lots more to do... This is such a cultural space and I haven't found a space like this here. It feels like home.

It's amazing watching everyone at peace when they leave, I love it.

I always go home feeling so great. My whole rest of the week is thinking about the business that goes on with you women and all the reflections I have because of you lovely women. I'm still learning, this is my school. I love it.

EMERGENCY RELIEF

Emergency Relief services are delivered by staff in six locations across Victoria. Our metropolitan programs receive Federal funding, but Ovens Murray and Gippsland programs are reliant on appeal funds and philanthropy. Each year we see over 4,500 people seeking support from Emergency Relief. We support individuals and families with food vouchers, rental relief or crisis accommodation, paying bills and to access to support services.

A Case Study

Early one evening a staff member from VACCA's Ovens Murray office noticed James was sleeping rough in a local park. James was not local and had no family or friends living nearby. With no available crisis accommodation, the staff provided James with some camping equipment and provision to see through the night. Early the next morning two VACCA staff went out to look for James and spent time with him learning more about his situation. James had recently separated from his family due to an incident. He had been left stranded, without any means of contacting family.

James is a resilient Aboriginal man proud of his culture and people. James spoke of his previous struggles with addiction but had been 14 years sober. Staff were able to bring James back to the VACCA office where he had a meal, charged his phone and provided phone credit. VACCA staff spent the day with James and organised crisis accommodation. The next day James felt more rested, safe and able to travel by train so he could be with family. He thanked our staff for their help and staff have kept in touch with James. He was surprised, but grateful to come across multiple people he'd never met that were willing to help him out.

Staff reflected that community recognition of VACCA is vast and as an ACCO we're recognised as a safe place for Aboriginal people. The small things we do like wear our uniforms or lanyards that is culturally identifiable is important and makes our people feel safe to approach us and maybe even ask for help.

Emergency Relief is a small program, but it can make a big impact in a time of need. We all face challenges in life, sometimes it might make us question who we are and what we believe. But we should never be ashamed of our culture and keep walking tall and proud.

*NB: *Names have been changed or omitted to protect the privacy of our clients and staff.*



OUR STORY



BUILDING AN ABORIGINAL EVIDENCE BASE

VACCA has extensive practice expertise and experience delivering services designed by and for Aboriginal children, families and Community throughout Victoria. This practice wisdom, approach and expertise has gone largely undocumented. Within the children and families services sector, there has been a focus on Western research and evaluation methods and practices, which have neglected to recognise and legitimise Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing.

Consequently, there is a lack of research evidence that draws on and contributes to traditional and cultural knowledge, and why this these are protective factors. With Aboriginal children over-represented in out-of-home care in Victoria, it is an urgent priority for practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and communities to commit to building the Aboriginal evidence base about what works to build and support strong and safe families.

There is a need to better recognise and foster use of Aboriginal theories, knowledge and culturally appropriate methodologies and methods in needs analysis, program design and evaluation.

VACCA through our strategic plan has committed to develop and document evidence of our programs and practice and to develop a plan to share knowledge and translate evidence into practice. This has included significant investment and resources to build our internal capacity over the past few years.

Building an Aboriginal evidence based is critical to ensure programs that meet the needs of the Aboriginal community are funded into the future, and that we understand the needs of the families and communities we work with.

Our Approach to Research

Self-determination lies at the heart of VACCA's approach to research. The Research and Evidence team aims to uphold this principle by advancing the acceptance and application of Aboriginal knowledge, evidence and ways of being and doing into research outputs both for VACCA and the benefit of the broader ACCO sector. Doing this means making sure Aboriginal values inform any research that VACCA is involved in. VACCA has established a Research Advisory Group to provide additional oversight of research projects that VACCA is involved in.



EVALUATION CASE STUDY

Koorie Kids Supported Playgroups Evaluation Summary

From 2018 to 2021, VACCA conducted an internal evaluation of Koorie Kids Supported Playgroups (KKSP), delivered in the Northern, Southern and Western Metropolitan regions.

VACCA's KKSP is an important intensive early intervention, early years' service that through two-hour weekly sessions supports parents/carers' engagement in children's learning, increases knowledge about child development, provides opportunities for Cultural and Community connection, helps children with learning routines, to increase their Cultural knowledge, connects families to early learning and other family supports.

The evaluation documented the logic model, evaluated whether the program is doing what it says it is doing; and identified emergent benefits for parents/carers and children. The evaluation used participatory methods to engage staff across the regions, and drew on program documents and data, and 14 parent/carer interviews, 10 staff interviews and one staff group discussion.

What did we find?

Demographics:

- KKSP is largely attended by Aboriginal mothers and their children. Non-Aboriginal parents/carers represent about a quarter of the participant group

- Families attending included those wanting cultural connection, families reporting significant challenges, including those families who had contact with child protection
- All Facilitators were Aboriginal women responsible for observations, identification of family needs and referrals
- Facilitators are key to successful outcomes and are highly valued by parents/carers

Emergent benefits found in the evaluation:

- **Children** – opportunities for social interaction, familiarisation with learning routines, opportunities to connect with Culture and build a sense of Cultural identity, and linkage and referral (including with kindergartens, schools, and education support services)
- **Parents/carers** – opportunities for social interaction and parent/child interaction around play-based learning, increased knowledge about child development, support services, opportunities to increase their own Cultural connection for Aboriginal parents/carers, support to their child's cultural and community connection
- Facilitators are key to successful outcomes and are highly valued by parents/carers. Parents/Carers and children's experience of KKSP is overwhelmingly positive
- Parents/carers feel safe and not judged, are engaging socially, learning about child development and supporting child learning

What did we recommend?

- Establish a statewide coordination mechanism for KKSP with Aboriginal leadership on operational matters, including planning, and to share learnings and resources
- Review the Position Description for KKSP Facilitators, provide on-the-job study opportunities and develop a program career path for Facilitators within the program
- Continue the VACCA Early Years Forum and KKSP's participation in the forum
- Review regional budgets and work towards consistent budgets across the regions, and advocate for additional funding for Cultural activities
- Develop criteria and procedures for establishment of new groups (including local stakeholder analysis and engagement) and conduct needs assessment to determine potential demand
- Continue to support outcomes measurement for the program including training for new staff in implementing the program's outcomes measurement tools



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Evidence, Our Narrative

VACCA's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan – *Building Prosperity Across Generations*, commits VACCA to growing social capital through community and member engagement. Enhancing opportunities to learn and leverage from community helps to ensure VACCA remains a dynamic and responsive organisation and strengthens connections with community, across our regions and within our teams.

This year VACCA began undertaking a Community Needs Assessment, creating regional data snapshots to better understand our service delivery, demand and projected growth. Using key findings from this research, and expertise and stories gathered from regional consultations, our intent is to write a narrative reflective of the strengths, experiences and needs of each region.

By engaging with community and using this knowledge to inform our advocacy, strategic planning will ensure we can tailor our service delivery to be reflective of the values and needs of the children and families we support. Empowering our staff, drawing on the collaborative work already underway and promoting the work and success of our community are all important contributions to working towards VACCAs vision of Aboriginal self-determination - *live, experience and be*.

We know these connections are what builds resilience, strengthens identity, and supports thriving families.



CULTURAL STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Programs and Events

At VACCA, we know the key to a strong future for young Aboriginal people is to ensure they know who they are, where they come from and have pride in their Aboriginal heritage. Our Cultural Strengthening programs ensure children and young people are connected to their culture and community, which helps build their resilience and sense of belonging.

After two years of lockdowns, we were able to successfully reintroduce a number of camps, events and cultural activities this year.

Our cultural strengthening programs cater to young people who are currently or have recently been in foster care, kinship care or residential care.

Camps Activities Include:

- Painting, dancing, cooking bush tucker, rock climbing, spear hunting, traditional games
- Knowledge sharing and learnings about songs, stories, art, sacred places, plants, animals and natural resources
- Engaging with and learning from Elders about the significance of local heritage, stories, totems and examples of clan obligations with the aim to foster long lasting connections with culture

Before going to camp, I didn't know who I was really. We need to know about our culture so we're all together, not standing alone.

– Camp 2022 participant



Little Long Walk

In the lead up to the Dreamtime at the G, as part of the Indigenous round, VACCA and Essendon Football Club hosted the Little Long Walk at the club grounds, inviting community, family and children could rub shoulders with Footy Players and Staff.

In a day celebrating culture and connections, community filled the ground while balloons with Aboriginal flag colours were blown up for children and families.

Gift packs, food and prizes ensured the event was a success, with the event formally commencing with an acknowledgement delivered by our very own Aunty Eva-Jo Edwards, with an address from Aunty Muriel Bamblett that followed.

Marching on the fields alongside the bombers, children and families completed the Little Long Walk, wearing their flag colours and identity proudly.

The Little Long walk is a tribute to AFL legend Michael Long's 2004 historic trek from his home in Melbourne to Parliament house in Canberra, to get the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people back on the national agenda.

18 years on, The Long Walk to the G continues annually to raise awareness to improve and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and life opportunities.



NUGEL

Nugel is a Wurundjeri word meaning 'belong'. Nugel aims to create self-determining families, children and young people, and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to oversee and support our kids in care.

Since launching in 2017, Nugel has enabled Aboriginal organisations to take responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people on Children's Court orders. We advocate for the importance of keeping our children and young people connected to community, culture and family. We aim to keep siblings connected; commit to finding family and community networks; pursue family reunifications where possible; and involve families in decision making.

In May 2022, we successfully expanded the Nugel program to Gippsland, where we have been authorised for 4 clients. This year we worked with 118 children, including case closures and new authorisations, across the North and Gippsland regions.

In this time, statutory involvement has ended for 16 children previously authorised to VACCA Nugel. 11 of these children no longer have statutory involvement and 5 were permanent care orders. Three children have returned to the care of their parents.

I believe that our role is to amplify the voices of our families and children, they are the best people to come up with solutions when working with us.

– Necia Stanton , Nugel Practice Lead

A Case Study

VACCA Nugel was authorised in October 2021 for two sisters, 13 and 15 years old. The girls have spent 1257 days in care with an Aunt, due to concerns with their mother's substance abuse and associated lifestyle, which includes trafficking and possession.

Prior to this intervention they had spent three years in care before returning to their mother in 2017. Mum was initially reluctant to work with Nugel due to her previous trauma as a child and interactions with child protection (12 reports regarding herself as a child and five reports regarding her own children).

Throughout their time in out-of-home care, mum was dedicated to spending as much time with her daughters as possible. She would help her sister with school pick up three to four times a week and would regularly stay at her home for dinner. Throughout their time in out-of-home care, the aunt was always supportive of reunification.

On 6 September 2022, the girls began living full time with their mum with the support of VACCA Nugel. We have been assisting with transporting the girls to their school in Epping and planning for a change of schools in 2023.

All three women were employed together at the Royal Melbourne Show over the school holidays – the first time the girls had been engaged in paid employment. The girls are very happy living back with Mum and are proud of their mum's hard work.

Nugel brought the matter back to court early and a Family Preservation Order was granted on in October 2022. Mum has now been allocated a Family Services worker from VACCA who will support her alongside VACCA Nugel during the Family Preservation Order period.

EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS

Education is one of the most important determinants of life outcomes. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the educational disadvantage experienced by many of the children and young people VACCA support. As a result, we undertook work to strengthen our commitment to improving educational engagement, attainment and outcomes for our children.

Following the establishment of a VACCA central Education team in 2021, an Education Strategy was created to guide the team's work and in 2022, a measurement framework and workplan have been documented to support full implementation of the strategy.

During the first half of 2022 we focused on workforce capacity building, developing early years and school education checklists, building of the education intranet space and the development training modules to ensure children, young people and their carers are supported to navigate education pathways.

A new role was developed to build the capabilities of professionals and carers who support children in care to understand and navigate the early childhood and school systems. Dedicated education advice has been provided to case managers, carers and schools via Student Support Groups.

We have also strengthened relationships between VACCA and LOOKOUT, laying the foundation for improved educational outcomes for children and young people in out of home care.

Stories and Yarns with Bubups

In Term 1 and 2, 2022 we partnered with Circus Nexus to deliver 'Stories and yarns with Bubups'. The project worked with Aboriginal children aged 3-5 years in VACCA's Nugel program and their parents, carers and case managers.

This project provided the children the opportunity to:

- Develop confidence and skills through the circus sessions
- Grow their cultural connections through engaging with Uncle Ron Murray, Uncle Herb Patten and Artist Emma Bamblett
- Learn about cultural knowledge and practice through storytelling and art making
- Develop listening and language skills by following instructions when using the circus apparatus
- Create the artwork for a children's book of the story *Periwanteena: the snake that tried to sing*. A Wamba Wamba story shared by Uncle Ron Murray and Uncle Herb Patten
- Celebrate culture

This project provided case managers, carers and parents the opportunity to:

- Be connected to other services and supports as guided by the Senior Education Project Officer
- Spend meaningful and engaging time with the children
- Identify developmental concerns in the children and reach out for support
- Celebrate the children's achievements
- Feel culturally connected and supported

2022 Protecting Victoria's Children Awards – Winners

VACCA Education Team won the award, recognising their work Engaging Kids in School: Committed to the very best outcomes for children & young people and demonstrate their ability to work with the education and child protection systems.

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S HEALING TEAM

Our Aboriginal Children's Healing Team (ACHT) is a one-of-a-kind multi-disciplinary team that operates across Victoria in all VACCA regions providing support for Aboriginal children in our care and programs.

VACCA are unique in providing a dedicated therapeutic healing service for Aboriginal children – one that is informed by Cultural Therapeutic Ways, our whole of organisation approach to best practice when working with Aboriginal people.

Our approach acknowledges the ongoing intergenerational impacts of colonisation, genocide and dispossession, as well as the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A sophisticated understanding of trauma and the loss of culture, identity and Country is central to the work we do.

The healing team applies an integrated culturally grounded, trauma-informed and biopsychosocial approach to healing.

A Case Study

Sarah is a 15-year-old young Aboriginal woman who was referred to the ACHT by her VACCA Case Manager with concerns about her low mood, social anxiety, chronic school refusal and risk-taking behavior. The ACHT Therapeutic Practitioner completed a brief assessment and healing plan before commencing individual therapy with Sarah. The ACHT Psychiatrist met with Sarah for a brief assessment and provided feedback and advice to the Therapeutic Practitioner to inform therapy sessions. ACHT also provided child focused carer support sessions and individual sessions for Sarah's sibling.

Our Therapeutic Practitioner and Sarah have been working together for two terms, having weekly sessions in a specially designed VACCA therapy room.

Sarah's confidence, self-esteem and communication with others are noticeably improved since working with healing team. Sarah's long-term goal has been to re-engage in education. Sarah has gained significant insight into her symptoms of anxiety, and these have reduced resulting in her recently transitioning back to school part-time. Sarah's work alongside her Therapeutic Practitioner has been instrumental in improving her overall wellbeing and working towards her goals.



FUNDRAISING

VACCA raises funds where there is a shortfall or no government funding for key support areas. Donations and grants fund cultural resources and activities at key times of the year like NAIDOC Week, Christmas and back to school, when families need assistance for extra food hampers, gifts, and school items.

Donors to VACCA's fundraising campaigns this year have supported us in the following ways:

Emergency Relief – Our Winter Appeal raised \$108,000 and provided essential relief for our most vulnerable community members throughout the year, including food, nappies and other basic needs. A grant from the Gandel Foundation also provided much needed food and vouchers which were delivered to vulnerable individuals and families in Ovens Murray, Gippsland and Northern metro regions. A grant from Trinity Families provided a boost to food relief in the Gippsland region. Our Ovens Murray and Gippsland regions do not receive any government funding so are totally reliant on our fundraising and grants program – thank you!

Christmas Support – Our 2021 Christmas Appeal reached a new milestone by raising over \$125,000 for Christmas presents for children in care and extra support for vulnerable families during this challenging time of year. This campaign provided over 3,500 presents to Aboriginal children and young people and supported their families to experience joy over the Christmas Season. We celebrated with Koorie Santa online as we came out of lockdown.

Education Support – Our first Education Appeal in February 2022 raised \$24,000 which helped over 1200 children be ready for school with an Aboriginal designed backpack and access to tutoring. The backpack contained a notepad, stationery, lunchbox and drink bottle. A big thank you to the FRRR-Back to School Program 2022 for providing much needed vouchers for vulnerable families to help pay for school expenses for over 800 children.

Cultural Programs – Over \$50,000 was raised this year through Morning Tea for Culture, Run Melbourne, Melbourne Marathon which directly supports our cultural programs. These programs include our NAIDOC program of activities, resources for in-home cultural practices and activities, and access to artists and performers to increase children and young people's cultural knowledge and the development of new cultural resources.

What you helped us achieve:



More than 600 food boxes delivered to community members in need so far, and enough funds to run this vital program in the coming financial year



4,500 community members now have access to emergency relief services



800 children were provided with back-to-school vouchers \$50 each



Support for our tutoring program



1,100 children were provided with School Backpacks and resources to start school and kindergarten strong and proud

NAIDOC Support – After two years of lockdowns we finally connected and celebrated NAIDOC week with community events across our regions. A big thank you to our sector supporters who continue to sponsor our NAIDOC Activities including; Family Life, Life Without Barriers, OzChild, MacKillop Family Services, Upper Murray Family Care, YSAS, Department of Families Fairness and Housing - North, East, West, South regions, and the National Indigenous Australians Agency - NIAA.

Here's how our generous donors were able to support our kids:

MOLLIE DYER AWARDS 2021

Leadership through Crisis Celebrating Extraordinary People in Extraordinary Times

The Mollie Dyer Awards returned in 2021, recognising and celebrating extraordinary community members who rose to the challenge of delivering services, providing support and meeting the critical needs of Aboriginal families and communities during extraordinary times.

Named in honour of VACCA co-founder and tireless advocate Auntie Mollie Dyer, these Awards celebrate the excellent work undertaken by Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in support of Aboriginal children, young people and families.

Winners and nominees were recognised for their hard work, dedication, commitment and leadership at an awards ceremony streamed live via VACCA's Facebook page in November 2021.

Presenting the awards were members of the judging panel, including VACCA CEO Muriel Bamblett AM, VACCA Chairperson James Atkinson, First Peoples – State Relations Executive Director Tim Kanoa, and VACCA Cultural Support Worker and member of Koorie Youth Council, Nakia Cadd.

About Mollie Dyer

Auntie Mollie Dyer is remembered as a courageous advocate for the rights of Aboriginal children and families. In 1976, alongside other Victorian Aboriginal community members, she founded VACCA – the first Aboriginal run agency to support Aboriginal children and families.



The Winners were announced as follows:

Community Leaders Award

Ethan Penrith – Winner

Ethan is a Yorta Yorta and Yamatji man dedicated to supporting his community, helping to deliver community health programs and advocate for healthy lifestyle choices through his work at VAHS. Ethan also works to empower Aboriginal youth, encouraging them to be their best and become leaders in their own lives. Strongly connected to his culture, family, and community, Ethan positive role model, leader and deserving winner of the 2021 Community Leaders Award.

ACCO Leaders Award

Nakia Firebrace – Winner

Nakia is a strong Yorta Yorta man who is passionate about making a difference in the lives of First Nations young peoples, and ensuring their voices are heard. Nakia has been endorsed by his Yorta Yorta Nation Elders to share his deep knowledge and understanding of Lore, protocol and language with the young people he works with to support their healing journeys and strengthen their pathways back to kin, community, mob and country.

Kylie Ponchard – Winner

A proud Aboriginal woman, Kylie has worked at VACCA for several years and has dedicated much of her life to improving the lives of Aboriginal children and their families, and is a strong advocate for Kinship care. Her dedication and hard work, particularly within VACCA's Nugel program, as well as her supportive and nurturing approach towards staff leadership makes Kylie a deserving winner of the 2021 ACCO Leaders Award.

Shirley Slann – Honourable Mention

Shirley's strong voice advocates on behalf of all the families and children she works with, working to ensure they receive the services they require while building strength and capacity. A leader within VACCA, Shirley is a mentor to all young Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, a woman who stands by her word and shows us all what is meant by integrity, honesty and passion.

Emerging Leader Award

The Emerging Leader Award winner was not announced publicly, however we are very proud of their resilience, dedication and inspirational leadership.

Congratulations to the winners and we share our appreciation for the judges time and contribution.

We look forward to hosting the 2023 Mollie Dyer Awards.





OUR PERFORMANCE

FINANCIAL REPORT

This financial year was of continuous growth, with the gross operating income of \$106.6 million and a net operating surplus of \$6.4 million.

A number of new and expanded programs were rolled out during the year including increased Targeted Care Packages; a Nugel team in Gippsland; and increases in funding from the Dhehlek Dja funding streams.

We will continue to receive additional funding for additional family violence services in 2021-22 as a result of the Victorian State Government's Roadmap for Reform commitment.

The largest growth has been the continuation of the transfer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to VACCA's responsibility.

It is expected that the Roadmap to Reform and ten-year family violence plan will continue to have a significant impact on the operations, workforce and potential future growth of the organisation, over the next three to five years.

Gross operating income compared to previous year

\$81.9 million > increased 30% to \$106.6 million

Gross operating income over five years

\$30.1 million > increased 354% to \$106.6 million

Summarised Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Total income	106,567,429	81,857,828
Total expenses	100,133,884	76,978,984
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to members of VACCA	6,433,545	4,878,844

Summarised Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) as at 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Total Current Assets	57,338,104	42,297,924
Total Non-Current Assets	16,784,723	10,650,555
Total Assets	74,122,827	52,948,479
Total Current Liabilities	42,233,637	33,710,126
Total Non-Current Liabilities	11,022,150	4,805,054
Total Liabilities	53,255,787	38,515,180
Net Assets (Liabilities)	20,867,040	14,433,300
Total Equity	20,867,040	14,433,300

CULTURAL CONTENT, CAMPAIGNS AND RESOURCES

This year, VACCA's Communications Team focused on developing and publishing cultural content and resources to support our clients and wider community, to connect with culture and to access services, programs and supports.

Stay Strong Animated Podcast

Created by VACCA in partnership with GARUWA, Stay Strong connected young people with well-respected community members including Uncle Archie Roach, singer Baker Boy and actor Muriel Spearim to yarn about how they face tough times.

Navigating topics such as the Stolen Generations, racism, self-love, community and family, the Stay Strong animated podcast also incorporated original artworks created by young artists from our Narrun Yana Art Collective and Art Mentoring Program, representing the themes shared in each episode.

Stay Strong was funded by National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) through VACCA's Barreng Moorop Program.



STAY
STRONG

Celebrating Foster Care Week

Held annually in September, VACCA celebrated its foster and kinship carers with a series of online performances from Indigenous artists Dave Arden and The Merindas plus a special message from Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Di Kerr.

While we were unable to gather at our usual Foster Care Week events, these online events provided us with the opportunity to connect with our carers and acknowledge their hard work, dedication and resilience.



Foster Care
Week 2022

VACCA Website

In late 2021, key sections of the VACCA website were refreshed to improve user experience for our clients and community, with a focus on ease of access to information about our programs and services.

The new-look VACCA website showcases cultural resources in the Cultural Hub, provides updates on our advocacy work, encourages our audience to get involved and supports community with easy access to resources across health, education, family services and more.



Strong Aboriginal families and communities mean

OUR FUTURE FREE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

From June 2020-21,
family violence incidents reported
to Victoria Police increased by 5.9%.
Alarming, this also shows an
increase in reported incidents
of 22.1% since 2017.

Back to School Campaign

After a long period of interrupted learning, VACCA helped kids and parents make the transition to face-to-face education with a series of back-to-school tips and resources.

In collaboration with Smiling Mind, VACCA shared simple ways for parents to engage with kids during a big transition, and shared mindfulness exercises and supports on social media and our website to prepare families and kids to positively return to learning.

16 Days of Activism

Our future – free from family violence. This is the message that echoed through VACCA's 16 Days of Activism campaign. Created to foster understanding and awareness, 16 Days of Activism highlighted confronting family violence statistics to illustrate the impact of exposure to family violence for Aboriginal women and children.

Our social media campaign also included key supports and access to resources for those living with, or supporting, someone who is experiencing family violence.

Vaccination Campaigns

From the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic VACCA has been committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, clients and community. Using simple action-based messaging, our vaccination campaigns encouraged community to step up and do their bit to keep our most vulnerable members safe, sharing vaccine facts and resources backed by the Department of Health and Human Services and local Aboriginal Health Services.

School makes me
feel deadly beause...

Back to school -
take small steps

CULTURAL CONTENT, CAMPAIGNS AND RESOURCES



Survival Day 2022

In the lead up to Survival Day 2022, VACCA committed to providing community with resources and supports to maintain good emotional health.

Our social media campaign encouraged community members to take time out, reflect and take care of each other, sharing mental health guidance and tips for staying connected with community and culture.

**NOT A
DATE TO
CELEBRATE**

**Connect with Country
and community**

**Take time out if
you need to**

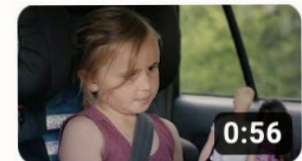
Safe Koorie Families Campaign

Designed to create conversations around family violence and spark meaningful change in our communities, the Safe Koorie Families video series and resource kit was shared directly with community, ACCOs, and mainstream sector providers.

Reaching close to 350,000 people via our social media platforms, the Safe Koorie Families videos are among VACCA's most engaged with content.



#Sa.
Victorian Aborig



#SafeKoorieF
Victorian Aborigin



#SafeKoorieF
Victorian Aborigin

THE YEAR AHEAD

As we head into the new financial year, we set our focus on the new strategic plan for 2022 – 2025 **Building Prosperity Across Generations**, with work aligning to our strategy and goals already underway.

This new plan supports VACCA's ongoing commitment to self-determination and our mission to support culturally strong, safe and thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, outlining actions to build prosperity across generations.



GOAL 1 Build on Aboriginal community strength-based activities

OUTCOMES

Empowered and connected local communities
Multimedia channels and platforms are leveraged to promote VACCA events, success stories and information to the community
Community engagement & capability has grown to include strong, diverse community voices
Existing activities identified and amplified throughout VACCA



GOAL 2 Introduce new Aboriginal models of care and service delivery approaches

OUTCOMES

New Aboriginal service response and early decision-making models are trialed
Aboriginal authorised models of care are expanded
More holistic family services approaches are evaluated and proven
Aboriginal services are providing services to Aboriginal communities



GOAL 3 Grow the validated Aboriginal evidence base

OUTCOMES

Evidence for key initiatives created
The VACCA client outcomes framework finalised and applied
Aboriginal evidence validated and published



GOAL 4 Deliver impactful early intervention

OUTCOMES

Aboriginal parenting capacity and Aboriginal children rearing practice are strengthened
New products and services developed across VACCA's regions



GOAL 5 Reverse the trajectory of children engaged with statutory systems

OUTCOMES

Robust intake systems throughout the regions are established
Youth common client outcomes are improved



GOAL 6 Build economic prosperity

OUTCOMES

Market demand for VACCA services (government, sector and ACCOs) scoped and strategy developed
Internal capacity to meet future workforce demands and emerging trends are strengthened and enhanced

THANK YOU

A big thank you to our donors and funders for their continued support throughout the year for Aboriginal children in care and in our programs, and for assisting vulnerable families across our regions. Funds raised go to supporting children and families in our care and in our programs.

Your continued support helps to connect children with their culture and community. A financial boost from our Winter Appeal has also ensured our Emergency Relief programs can now be accessed by community members in Ovens Murray and Gippsland Regions and provided much needed food relief, and follow-up to access services.

If you, your workplace, school or group would like to make a donation, leave a gift in your Will or support a particular program through a Reconciliation Action Plan or via Corporate Social Responsibility, please contact us;

Email supportus@vacca.org or call 03 9287 8800

To support our work and make a tax-deductible donation please visit vacca.org/givenow

VACCA Shop

The VACCA Shop sells a range of useful educational resources and Aboriginal designed merchandise available online. Proceeds from the sale of these items will help to fund our much-needed programs

Visit vacca.org/shop or email resources@vacca.org



**Visit VACCA Shop
Scan the QR Code**



**For more information visit:
vacca.org/support-us**

OUR SUPPORTERS AND FUNDERS

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations

VACCA would like to acknowledge and thank all Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and groups we collaborate and work with across the State of Victoria.

Partners and sector organisations

Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Initiative - Wyndham City Council, Anglicare, Austin Health – Child and Youth Mental Health, ACCESS EAP, Australian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, BADAC, Berry Street, Bridge Darebin – Preston, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Centre For Evidence and Implementation, Centre For Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Child First Partners, Community Housing Ltd, Djerriwarrh Health Services, ECMS, Elizabeth Morgan House, Empower Australia, Family Life, Family Safety Victoria, Food Ladder, Foster Care Association, Fostering Connections, Gateway Community Health, IPC Health, Jesuit Social Services, Kids Under Cover, Koorie Youth Council, Latrobe Community Health Service, La Trobe University – Bouverie Centre, Life Without Barriers, Lowitja Institute, MacKillop Family Services, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit, Melbourne City Mission, Melbourne Polytechnic, Merriwa Industry, the Orange Door Network, Orygen, Ovens Murray Child and Family Service Alliance, Quantum Support Services, Queen Elizabeth Centre, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – Wadja Aboriginal Family Place, Swinburne University, SNAICC, Social Ventures Australia, SMA Multidisciplinary Centre, Salvation Army, Upper Murray Family Care, Uniting Vic Tas, University Of Melbourne – Centre for Training and Research in Developmental Health and the Department of Social Work, VAHS, Westcare, WestCASA, Women's Health West, Youth Support and Advocacy Service, Youthworx.

Philanthropy

Australian Communities Foundation - EM Horton Family Fund, Cilla and Steven Gaff - APS Foundation, Equity Trustees - David Taylor Galt Charitable Trust, Freemasons Foundation Victoria, FRRR – Back to School Program, Gandel Foundation, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Inner North Community Foundation, The Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Naylor Stewart Foundation, Nelson Alexander Foundation, Trinity Families Fund, Sidney Myer Fund, William Buckland Foundation.

Bequests

VACCA would like to acknowledge In Memoriam Gifts from: The Late Alexander Blain and Mr Ronald Lawrence White (1935 – 2020), formerly of Ivanhoe, Victoria.

Pro bono services and gifts in kind:

Ashurst, Backpacks 4 Vic Kids, Blak Dot Gallery, Good360, Impact For Women, Pinchapoo, Refugee and Asylum Seeker Toy Drive, Share the Dignity.

Supporters:

3KND, Triple R Broadcasters (3RRR), GM Leasing, Kia Motors Australia, Kinetic, Kmart Australia, oOh!media, Mattel, Melbourne Tigers Basketball Association, Target Australia, St Kilda Football Club, Toyota Fleet Management, Seb Brown Jewellery.

Government

Federal Government: Department of Social Services, Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Department of Education and Training, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications - Office for the Arts, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

Victorian Local Government Councils

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency acknowledges the support of:



Contact and Feedback

Become a member

We invite all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 years and over to become members of VACCA. Membership provides the opportunity to share your voice on key issues which affect community, connect with one another, and have input on operations at VACCA. Membership also includes voting rights at our Annual General Meeting.

For more Information on membership, or to sign up visit vacca.org/membership.

Feedback

We are always interested to hear how we can improve our services to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and community members living in Victoria.

Your feedback is welcome via vacca.org/feedback or feedback@vacca.org

Our Locations

VACCA Benalla

52 Carrier Street
Benalla, VIC 3672

p. (03) 5821 9322

VACCA Chirnside Park

Suite 22, Level 2
1 East Ridge Drive
Chirnside Park VIC 3116

p. (03) 8727 0200

VACCA Dandenong

Suite 2, Level 2
1-7 Langhorne Street
Dandenong VIC 3175

p. (03) 9108 3500

VACCA Frankston

Level 1
405 Nepean Highway
Frankston VIC 3199

p. (03) 8796 0700

VACCA Melton

43 Bakery Square
Melton VIC 3337

p. (03) 8746 2776

VACCA Morwell

21 Hazelwood Road
Morwell VIC 3840

p. (03) 5135 6055

VACCA Preston (Head Office)

340 Bell Street, Preston VIC 3072

p. (03) 9287 8800

VACCA Wangaratta

Suite 3, 27-29 Faithfull Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677

p. (03) 5756 9000

VACCA Werribee

Ground Floor
75-79 Watton Street
Werribee VIC 3030

p. (03) 9742 8300

VACCA Wodonga

Suite 3, 1 Birralee Place
West Wodonga VIC 3690

p. (03) 8373 1710



VACCA





Connected by culture

**Serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people,
families, and community members.**

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