



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023



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

Our people. Our stories. Our community. Our culture.

Repeated throughout the artwork, these words are at the heart of VACCA's work in protecting, empowering, and driving community-led change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The yarning circles provide a safe space for us to be heard and to learn.

These spaces help us to build respectful relationships with each other and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge. In creating space to listen, we build stronger community connections. Songlines are our walking routes across Country, linking us to the places and regions we work in. They connect us to the communities and people we work alongside.

Used to share messages between Aboriginal nations, clans and language groups, message sticks amplify our voice. They help us to share our knowledge and tell our stories to advocate for positive change. This artwork demonstrates the strength of VACCA's commitment to our children and communities. Through the strength of our voice, our actions, and our people, we nurture and empower future generations.

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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.



WHO WE ARE

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), and for more than 45 years we have responded to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, Elders and community in Victoria.

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

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

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.



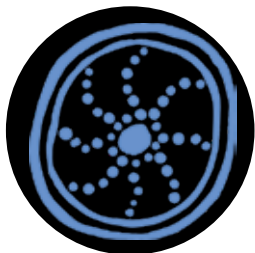
Respect

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.



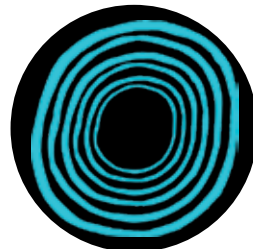
Best Interests of the Child

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.



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.



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.



Excellence

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



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.

LIKE THE ELDERS BEFORE US,
OUR STORIES HELP TO PAVE THE
WAY AS WE WALK THE PATH OF
SELF-DETERMINATION
AND CHANGE.

ANNUAL REPORT THEME

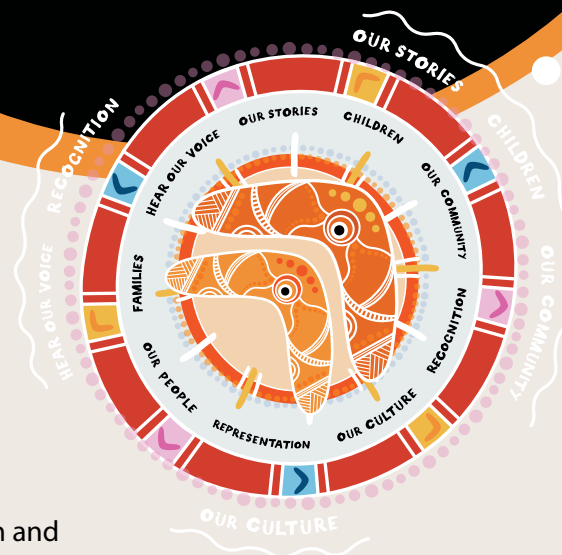
VACCA's Voice: Sharing Our Stories Representation, Recognition, Respect

Storytelling has always been an essential part of Aboriginal culture. Through language, song, dance, and art we have passed on our history and stories of Country, creation, and tradition to future generations.

Technology has introduced new possibilities for storytelling, allowing us to reach a more diverse audience. Contemporary storytelling methods help us to preserve and celebrate our culture, and to amplify our voices as we advocate for change. Now, after 45 years of protecting and supporting Victorian communities, our voice is stronger than ever.

This year we celebrate our people, share our knowledge, and reflect on our impact. We are proud of what makes us different; our wisdom and our experience. The stories we share highlight our commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal children grow up with pride in who they are, strong in culture, resilient, safe and thriving.

Just as we have always done, we look back to share the stories of our work and our people. We use these stories to give voice to the children, families and communities we walk alongside.





CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Another year of significant growth within the organisation across our core business areas demonstrates the resolve, agility and excellence that is VACCA. The 2022/2023 year was the fifth year in a row of exponential growth, adding over 200 new roles to the organisation. Our 6 regions are now bigger and more complex than most other ACCOs supporting families, creating additional governance and stewardship obligations on the Board. The Board sees this as a great privilege to continue to be at the centre of such important reform and Aboriginal leadership across the State.

VACCA is now not only the largest ACCO in Victoria but in Australia, elevating the voice of our children and families to significant influence and reach at the local, State and Federal levels. Stories matter and we now get to share and lift up the voices of our families and our practice learnings more widely and with the purpose of driving change.

Our size as an organisation has created a welcomed problem in that we now have the scale and authorising environment to design and develop with our communities local, specialised programs and supports that community want, not just need.

While our funding comes from government, we are no longer reliant on western approaches and Aboriginal ways of knowing being and doing are evident throughout our work with and for community.

The diversity of our service offerings has necessitated us to rebrand our service mantra given the breadth of our programs and services across housing, homelessness, family violence, child and family welfare, early years, mental health and therapeutic supports; and our focus on children and young people and on building systems to support their needs across education, disability and identity. This year we have seen significant growth in the focus on child protection diversion that has already demonstrated significant return on investment. Coupled with a sustained higher reunification rate of children to their families, this shows the Aboriginal way of doing things is better and achieves better results for our children. There is evidence to suggest that we are having a positive effect in diverting young people out of the justice system and we are helping more young people than ever leaving care to build sustainable independent living skills and outcomes.

Sadly, our family violence support services also continue to grow. Our ongoing issue of lapsing funding has been resolved for the majority of our family violence support services, yet we still have funding uncertainty for our therapeutic work and our cultural offerings. We continue to rely on philanthropy and grants to provide our communities with seamless service offerings, yet this remains a challenge as urgent funding reform is needed. The sustained high family violence incidents show that attitudes towards women, especially Aboriginal women remain abhorrent, and we have much to do as a society to value Aboriginal people.

This year we were provided with a once in a generation opportunity to share our voice and reform the child protection system both through

the Yoorrook Justice Commission and through the former Premier's commitment to placing Aboriginal decision making into Aboriginal hands. Our submission to Yoorrook highlighted that we must learn from the past to change the future.

While the critical importance of this was lost on the Yoorrook Commission, we have seen commitment to positive reforms activities that will shape a brighter future for our children. There is much to be done, and VACCA will ensure that meaningful change is achieved.

The Board were pleased that with the introduction of new child safe standards that we finally have a commitment to and recognition of Aboriginal culture as being protective against harm. Standard one that requires organisations to establish a culturally safe environment, where Aboriginal children and young people are valued and respected. This supports us in ensuring VACCA is a culturally safe provider of services and a culturally safe place to work but also in our wider advocacy efforts to ensure all Aboriginal Victorians are free to celebrate and be proud of their culture. One of our governance roles is to ensure children in out of home care have access to informed and tailored cultural support plans. The Board strongly believes this includes Confirmation of Aboriginality.

Lastly, it is with personal pleasure that this year's NAIDOC theme was for our Elders. VACCA has always used the wisdom and guidance of our Elders to work with our young ones and inform our cultural practice. The Board was immensely proud of the work undertaken to celebrate Elders that walked before us and walk with us now and into the future. The valuable role Elders play in shaping the lives of future generations is not lost on us.

James Atkinson
VACCA Chairperson





Every year as CEO I am invited to speak to many groups, at conferences and inquiries, and participate in working groups, committees and advocate to Ministers. This year I was especially happy that our past advocacy and appetite for greater control of child protection were to be the precursor to a massive reform. The former Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews committed to a reform agenda, and we were able to lay out our plans for how his government could transfer Aboriginal decision making into Aboriginal hands. Premier Andrews presented to VACCA and the sector a once in a lifetime opportunity to not just redesign parts of the system and tinker at the edges of reform, but to decolonise and reinvent early support offerings. How could we say no?

This was one of many conversations over the last 12 months where, for the first time in my 24 years at VACCA, I have seen both State and Federal governments actively listening, not just asking for tokenistic co-design but actual Aboriginal leadership. I often lament that VACCA is rarely asked what we do and do well; what we could replicate at scale to ensure no child gets left behind. This year there were some significant moments of hope and transformation.

An action plan for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence with a standalone First People Plan is under development. There is also Victoria's commitment to enshrining an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament; and Truth telling through the Yoorrook Justice commission with Treaty well advanced.

Our legacy for the 2022/2023 year at VACCA will be one of Voice and of sharing our stories. Of having open dialogue that reimagines systems through the lens of privileging culture.

CEO REPORT

I am proud that VACCA's submission to truth telling was rare, because it focused on not just the current system but past injustices.

Our advocacy remembered those of the Stolen Generations and before, that we are still bringing our people home. We stood strong, and walked with our ancestors to tell their stories, and lived our values in that our responsibility as an organisation is to give voice for those that are not able to have one.

We reshaped so many conversations this year and reminded others that our language, culture and voice matter; through our family violence practitioner education resources, through our cultural elements work, our healing team, taking on the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum's secretariat and in our advocacy around Closing the Gap.

I am forever proud that as an organisation we never shy away from difficult conversations. We hold others to account and expect the same in return as we strive for excellence.

The theme of this year's annual report is Sharing Our Stories: Representation, Recognition, Respect. It has reminded me of the importance of hearing from our communities more and embedding their feedback into our practice. From the carers at our events, Elders, children graduating kindergarten, to the young people who I meet at debutant balls, sporting carnivals, those that are so excited to tell me that they have gone on to university and amazing jobs; I am forever grateful that VACCA gets to be part of their story and their success.

Prof. Muriel Bamblett AO
Chief Executive Officer

2022-2023 PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT



Client Services

- Supported 800 children in care.
- 180 children in Nugel program.
- Accredited 14 new Foster Carers for a total of 102 households.
- Average of 656 family violence referrals per months state-wide (= 7,875 for the FY).
- Supported 36 men pre and post release through men's diversion programs.
- Supported 32 women pre and post release through Women's diversion programs, with 70 enquiries and new referrals.
- 173 new referrals for family finding, over 100 genograms updated.
- Facilitated 12 reunions for Stolen Generations survivors.
- Supported 31 young people pre and post release from youth justice system, including two Return to Country through the Youth Through Care Program.



Corporate

- Invested in transforming our technology and information systems to use our technology in more productive ways.
- Launched DeadlyNet – our revamped intranet.
- Supported 12 Aboriginal staff to complete the Ngulunbarra Leadership Program.
- Saw an 11% increase in number of VACCA staff, bringing total staff to 912.
- More than 40% of our staff identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- Completed 4 major capital projects across 4 sites to accommodate 168 additional staff.
- Supported 42 staff to undertake further training and professional development, 69% were Aboriginal.
- Provided employment pathways for 24 Aboriginal trainees, interns and students undertaking placements.
- Received workforce funding to support attraction and retention of Aboriginal staff.



Office of the CEO

- Web: 263,000 new users (Google Analytics)
- VACCA Social Media: 19,000 followers (FB) 4,400 followers (IG) 7,700 (LI)
- 5,000 followers on Deadly Story social media (IG)
- Celebrated NAIDOC Week with 5 events held across our regions.
- Launched a new website for Link-Up Victoria.
- Delivered 5 key digital campaigns: Our Survival Day, Connecting to Culture (Gariwerd Seasons), Celebrating our Carers (Foster Care Week), We Are VACCA, Strong Proud & Deadly (International Women's Day).
- Prepared 80 policy submissions and briefs to support key social policy reform initiatives across early childhood, child and family welfare, justice, family violence, housing, and social and emotional wellbeing.
- Supported 36 committees and working groups.
- 14 media releases and opportunities.
- Raised over \$1.2 million from fundraising, appeals, sponsorship and philanthropy.
- 17 new members following goal three of our Membership Engagement Strategy.
- Community Needs Assessments across our 6 regions are underway.

VACCA 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 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

HEAR OUR VOICE
OUR STORIES
CHILDREN

FAM
PLE
REPRESENTATION
OUR CULTURE
RECOGNITION

OUR BOARD

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 20 years.



Jason Kanoa

Vice Chairperson

Gunditjmara / Bunitj

Jason is the Executive Manager of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-op. Prior to this, Jason was employed as CEO at the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, and 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. He has been on the VACCA Board for 11 years.

Jason has a Diploma in Business Management and has completed governance training and the Indigenous Leadership Network Victoria course.



Matthew Burns

Treasurer

Taungurung

Matt is the CEO of the Taungurung Land and Waters Council. Prior to this, Matt has worked in the banking and financial sector. He is an elected member of the First Peoples Assembly as the Taungurung representative. Matt holds an Advanced Diploma in Financial Services.



Aunty Margaret Atkinson

Director

Yorta Yorta / Taungurung / Wurundjeri

Aunty Marg was a Wurreker Broker with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI). Aunty Marg is actively involved in the Gippsland Aboriginal community, having worked previously 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 12 years and has completed Governance Training.



Aunty Deidre King

Gunditjmara

Aunty Deidre 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 whilst having also served as a Board Member of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL) and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services (VALS). Aunty Deidre is a Life Member of VACCA and has been a Board Member for 8 years and was previously on the Board for 14 years. She has completed an Advanced Diploma in Business Management and completed Governance Training.



Aunty Debra Swindle

Secretary

Wiradjuri

Aunty Debra is an advocate for Aboriginal community in Victoria, and Aboriginal community controlled and managed organisations. Aunty Debra is actively involved in the Healesville Aboriginal community and has been a VACCA Board Member for 12 months.

We thank Travis Lovett for his past service as Director.

MEMBERSHIP

VACCA is owned and controlled by its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) were born from the aspirations of our ancestors and Elders for a more equal, fair and prosperous future. The legacy lives on in VACCA and our members, who constantly strive for better.

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.

VACCA would like to thank each Member for their ongoing support and contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria.



Taylor Hampton

Ngiyampaa / Wiradjuri



Sarah Gafforini

Budawang



Auntie Lesley North

Gunditjmara / Torres Strait Islander /

Mutthi Mutthi

I chose to become a VACCA member because I believe in VACCA's vision and purpose.

To be part of something bigger than myself, and to help support those in need is something I hold very close to my heart.

I believe in giving our communities the self-determination they deserve. To be amongst like-minded people who share this same value is very humbling. In working at VACCA and through membership I have the opportunity to be around some deadly people. It's something I am very proud of.

Respect, relationships and reciprocity are important to me and are the building blocks of the strong foundations of VACCA. Community control means everyone has a responsibility to make sure our children and families grow up strong and resilient. Being a member of VACCA means I get to part of the solutions to make this a reality.

I want all Aboriginal children to grow up loved and cherished as I did and as I provide for my son and nephews. VACCA provides brighter futures for the children and families we support and I'm proud to say I'm a member.

Being a member gives me the opportunity to have a voice and take part in decision making. I believe in VACCA's Vision, Purpose and Values.

As an Elder I feel that I have an obligation to my ancestors, my family and other community members to be involved and have a good understanding of all that VACCA provides.

As a VACCA employee I have seen a lot of changes over the years, and they have been better for the wellbeing and most importantly the safety of all our children, community and families across the state. There is no greater pleasure than being part of this space.

OUR STAFF

VACCA's overall staff numbers increased from 810 in July 2022 to 912 at end of June 2023, representing an 11% increase in the number of staff at VACCA in the year. Of our 912 staff, 367 identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In the 2022-2023 year, VACCA completed over 500 recruitment actions. These supported new positions created within growing service delivery areas including Family Violence Prevention, Family Services, Cultural Support Programs, and our Nugel and Community Protecting Boorais programs.



Our Growth, Our Future

VACCA experienced continued growth during the 2022-2023 year, as we kept pace with servicing community demand in family violence support services and the transfer of Aboriginal children to Aboriginal care, especially leaving care programs like Better Futures. We also saw growth in our justice programs for parents, housing and homelessness supports, and therapeutic programs.

Our consistent growth, combined with challenging recruitment conditions in the sector, saw VACCA continue to build on initiatives that support staff retention including flexible working, professional development, and a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment.

- VACCA as an employer of excellence – highlighting our positive, safe, supportive and culturally inclusive workplace. and the opportunity to make a real difference to Aboriginal children, young people, families and community.
- Growing talent pipeline – support to retain candidates from internships, traineeships, student placements and graduate programs.
- Community engagement – building stronger relationships with community to build local place-based solutions to community needs.
- Local focus – improving visibility of VACCA in each of our regions and promoting employment and engagement opportunities at a local level.

2022 VACCA Staff Forum

In November 2022, more than 600 VACCA staff from across Victoria came together at the Melbourne Showgrounds to share our achievements and celebrate our work. The Staff Forum provided an opportunity for staff to gather in one place to connect and reflect on our guiding principles, purpose and vision, following a period of significant growth for the organisation and the disruption of COVID-19.

The day opened with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony, followed by a powerful traditional dance and Yidaki (Digeridoo) performance.

CEO Aunty Muriel Bamblett welcomed attendees, opening a day of panels, guest speakers, and deadly

entertainment from Mitch Tambo, Pirrutu, Kee'ahn and more.

The We Are VACCA video series shared the stories of our work and staff, premiering as a video series that highlighted work being done in our Playgroups, Nugel and Better Futures programs.

Staff took their experience back to the office with them, and decorated desks with quotes, photos, and pictures, with new connections made and others renewed.

OUR STAFF

The Forum was an overwhelming success and it generated strong positive feedback from staff

A great celebration of our achievements at VACCA and an acknowledgment of what we do. The day was such an uplifting, emotional and inspiring day that I felt immersed in.

Connecting with colleagues, feeling proud of our work, and reconnecting with the deep cultural and spiritual wisdom of our First Nations peoples.

Connecting with other people, feeling acknowledged for the hard work we do, hearing Aunty Muriel speak in person for the first time and seeing the deadly speakers/hosts performers. Really reaffirmed I am in the right org for me.

The speakers, the panels, the dancing, the singing, the opportunity to meet/catch up with colleagues. Was a brilliant day!!!!

Absolutely everything. Feeling connected and grounded. Celebrated for the work we have been doing. Motivated in aspirational ideas of how we can do more!

Celebrating together, feeling connecting to culture and leaving the event truly feeling connected to the organisation itself.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

This year our programs have continued to expand as a result of service demand and sector reform. We continue to grow and develop the skills and experience of our staff to ensure we can provide high quality, critical support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children, and young people both now and in the future.

We continued to roll out our 4-year Organisational Workforce Development Strategy, implemented a Workforce Governance Committee, and restructured our Learning and Development team to increase our capacity for upskilling.

VACCA has delivered the Diploma of Community Services in partnership with Swinburne University for 6 years and were finalists in the 2023 Victorian Training Awards for this program. Continued strong demand for this course resulted in an additional 2 programs being offered in 2022-2023. To date, 151 staff members have graduated with this qualification, 109 (72%) are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

This year we also partnered with Kangan Institute to deliver the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management and continued our partnerships with VACSAL in delivering the Certificate IV in Community Services and The Bouverie Centre to provide the Graduate Certificate in Family Violence.

Increasing the workforce participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at VACCA is a key priority and we have achieved success through our strong early career pathways program via student placements, internships, and traineeship programs. Our newly appointed Aboriginal Community Engagement Recruitment Co-ordinator has worked to raise the profile of career opportunities at VACCA, attending events during NAIDOC, the Be Deadly Jobs Fair, and connecting with mob.



Employment Pathways

Each year we offer practical work experience and skills development opportunities to Aboriginal trainees, interns and students during their training and education. For many this also provides the opportunity to move into ongoing employment with VACCA once their qualifications and training are completed.

11 Aboriginal Trainees

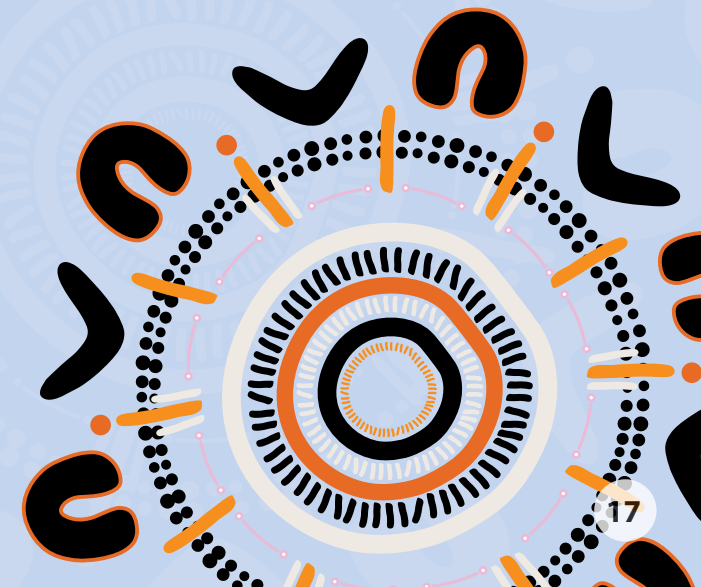
*Entry level
12-month traineeship*

5 Career Tracker Interns

*Aboriginal University
students*

**20 Aboriginal
Student Placements**

Alongside organisational growth and supports for staff career development and progression, our employment pathways programs support young people to grow and develop their early careers at VACCA while they study.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Career Development

We have continued to provide a number of avenues for existing staff to upskill and gain relevant qualifications to develop and progress their careers while at VACCA.

During the 2022-2023 year, we supported:

- **27 staff** to complete their Diploma of Community Services through Swinburne University. 21 of these staff were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (78%).
- **15 staff** to undertake their Certificate IV in Leadership and Management through Kangan Institute. 8 of these staff were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (53%).
- **8 staff**, including 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Family Violence.

A workplace 'buddy' system for those joining VACCA has seen 25 new starters paired up with more experienced staff to share their knowledge, support onboarding, and provide a friendly face in the office.

Strengthening our Leadership

Twelve staff members completed the Ngulunbarra Leadership Program in October 2022. Designed to strengthen Aboriginal representation at management level, the program supported staff in Team Leader and Program Manager roles to further develop and grow their leadership skills in preparation for future career progression.

Since completion, most participants have gone on to accept more senior roles within VACCA or are now actively engaged in higher levels of responsibility to further build their skills and confidence. The success of the program will see a second cohort of future leaders commence the Ngulunbarra Leadership Program in late 2023.



WELLBEING

Our staff are our greatest asset, and VACCA continues to invest in staff through a whole of organisation approach to promote health and wellbeing at all levels.

VACCA's Organisational Development Strategy is underpinned by a Wellbeing Support Plan that centres on the Aboriginal concept of social and emotional wellbeing; a holistic approach where our physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual health is interconnected.

In 2022-2023 VACCA continued with hybrid working arrangements and localised team-based wellbeing activities helped to foster a greater sense of community and connection throughout our regions.

Key Events and New Initiatives

Deadly Thinking

Team-based Deadly Thinking workshops were delivered successfully in two locations. Each workshop utilised yarning circles, connection to Country, guided meditation and team building activities promoting self-empowerment, and open communication and sharing.

The workshop offers space for culturally safe conversations about mental health, cultural load, lateral violence, and other issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the workplace and in community.

With the success of the first two pilot workshops, we are looking to expand Deadly Thinking to additional locations in 2023/2024.

Mental Health Matters

Delivered by VACCA's Wellbeing Co-Ordinator and Girraway Ganyi Consultancy, Mental Health Matters was conducted to help guide managers with contributing to and enhancing staff wellbeing, and supporting staff to strengthen their resilience while working in environments that are at times challenging.

The online workshop also discussed the importance of recognising and maintaining good personal mental health in a management role.

Self-Care Workshops

Self-Care Workshops can be accessed by all VACCA staff, offering wellbeing support through practical self-care strategies including reflective practice and relaxation exercises. Workshop participants share their own experiences in staying strong and building resilience, highlighting the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and practicing daily wellbeing routines.

Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid Training

63 VACCA staff completed their accreditation in Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid Training. The training, which includes e-learning modules, a workshop and an assessment, is culturally responsive and designed to empower staff with relevant first aid strategies to confidently support Aboriginal people who are experiencing a mental health issue and assist them with seeking appropriate professional help if needed.

Feedback from Participant:

“ I found the course to be inclusive, and one of the strengths was that it was hands on in moments rather than just sitting and watching a presentation. It was delivered in a culturally safe way, and with sensitivity. It was engaging and comfortable given everyone was at the same table yarning together.



RAINBOW TICK

Inclusivity at VACCA

Since receiving Rainbow Tick accreditation in 2021, VACCA has continued to be recognised as a leader in inclusivity within the sector.

As the largest ACCO to gain accreditation nationally, work has continued to ensure changes achieved during our Rainbow Tick journey are sustainable and embedded into VACCA's organisational culture at all levels. This organisation-wide approach to embracing inclusivity ensures our ability to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people.

The creation of an LGBTIQ+ Connections Group within VACCA provides accessible support for staff while further developing their understanding LGBTIQ+ issues, trends and best practice. The Connections Group is open to community, allowing staff to connect with and develop stronger relationships with service users.

Reflecting on progress made by VACCA and further establishing our status as a leader in this space, we have started to develop LGBTIQ+ inclusivity training for delivery to external organisations to support and help guide their own progress.

Inclusivity Highlights 2022 - 2023

- LGBTIQ+ resources hub developed and shared with staff on DeadlyNet, VACCA's intranet.
- Participated in the Minus 18 Queer formal and attended Midsumma to support education and resource sharing within LGBTIQ+ community.
- Obtained funding through Victoria's Pride Regional Activation Program, which allowed VACCA to partner with Gippsland Pride Initiative to host community engagement activities at Big Day Out Traralgon.
- Held a series of Yarning Workshops which provided attendees the opportunity to hear from guest speakers and peak bodies around issues facing LGBTIQ+ community. These workshops were the first of their kind to be delivered in Victoria.
- Presented VACCA's Rainbow Tick Journey at the 2023 SNAICC Conference on Larrakia Country. More than 1600 delegates were in attendance.
- Worked alongside VACCA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to start delivering LGBTIQ+ specific modules, building awareness around Queer inclusion and LGBTIQ+ issues in 2024.
- Celebrated Wear It Purple Day across our regions, hosting synchronised events at all VACCA offices.



CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

VACCA is committed to child safety and the 11 Child Safe Standards. To ensure the Child Safe Standards are embedded across the whole of the organisation, our staff, leadership, and Board participate in ongoing education and training to strengthen their knowledge and skills.

On 1 July 2022 changes to the original Standards came into effect. VACCA's role in advocating for these changes which strengthen the cultural safety and rights of Aboriginal children has meant they now place a greater focus on valuing and respecting Aboriginal culture, and fully acknowledge the unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people.

At its core, our work is in strengthening connections to culture and in providing culturally safe spaces and supports. We work to ensure Aboriginal children know who they are and where they come from, so they can grow alongside family and community, and are empowered to speak up if they feel unsafe.

Our dedicated Child Safety Team provides guidance and support to staff in all our programs to build awareness of the Standards and implementation of best practice. We support staff, families and community to better understand factors that impact the safety of children through our activities.

VACCA treats all child safety concerns seriously, and we respond to each in line with our organisational commitment and legislative obligations. Our child-focused, inclusive and culturally safe processes and responses keep the best interests of the children and young people we work alongside first, always.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Information Systems and Technology

In line with our strategic plan, we continued to make good progress on our digital transformation by upgrading our technology and information systems to meet demand and organisational growth.

We combined our information technology, management and systems departments and focused on specific goals to use available technology in more productive ways.

This included:

- Reviewing how we use current systems to improve our business processes.
- Partnering with suppliers and systems that can be fully integrated to reduce manual work, enabling us to be future ready.
- Strengthening data security to ensure our data is protected and supporting staff education and learning in this space.

Office and Property Expansion

During 2022-2023, our Facilities and Asset Management team completed 4 major capital projects across 4 sites, including our Morwell, Chirnside, and Frankston offices, and Mollie Dyer House to accommodate 168 additional staff.

This was achieved by:

- Reconfiguration of Mollie Dyer House's interior, doubling the number of desks to accommodate 54 staff.
- Adding additional office space at our Morwell office to accommodate 47 extra staff.
- Extending our Chirnside Park office to accommodate an additional 38 staff.
- Relocating our Frankston office to a new site, allowing us to double the number of desks available and accommodating 58 staff.

In addition to increasing capacity in our offices, we secured funding to repair and replace the roof at Mollie Dyer House to ensure it remains a viable site and valuable asset for VACCA into the future.

Sustainability

We further improved our sustainability and reduced our carbon footprint in line with our Environmental Strategy, by:

- Converting head office lighting from fluorescent tubes to LED panels, halving electricity costs.
- Increasing the number of hybrid fleet vehicles available in our fleet pool to 19. Hybrid vehicles now make up 11% of VACCA's total fleet pool.
- Installing ceiling insulation, replacing old air conditioning units, and preparing the recently replaced roof at Mollie Dyer House for installation of solar panels.



Key Digital Projects in 2022 - 2023

- Used digital forms to streamline internal processes, including recording staff changes, staff exits, OH&S management, and our carer safety screening system.
- Created a system for managing electronic records that is compliant with record handling requirements to support the movement of files from shared drives to Microsoft 365.
- Sought a new Managed Service Provider to ensure best value and service from our technology.
- Launched Deadly Net, our redeveloped intranet platform, and introduced a range of training courses and online materials to support staff in using new systems.
- Reviewed our policies, procedures, and risk management around cyber security.
- Completed our second round of cyber security testing.

Building a strong team to support these projects has been crucial to our progress in future proofing VACCA's technology and systems.



OUR COMMUNITY

HEAR OUR VOICE
OUR STORIES
CHILDREN

FAMILY
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REPRESENTATION
OUR CULTURE
RECOGNITION

NAIDOC

For Our Elders

NAIDOC Week at VACCA is about celebrating our culture and history, and providing opportunities for our children, young people and families to connect.

Throughout NAIDOC Week 2023, VACCA hosted events across our regions to give children, their carers and families, and community the chance to gather in celebration of our Aboriginal culture.

NAIDOC Week is a significant time for our children and young people, and these events provide them with opportunities to engage with their culture, celebrate their history, and connect with community and Elders.

2023 NAIDOC events supported cultural connections and celebrations through family fun days held in Gippsland and Ovens Murray, and in our Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern regions. Cultural activities including face painting, dancing, traditional games, weaving, storytelling, and boomerang throwing followed by a smoking ceremony at each event.

Hundreds of children, young people, carers, and community members attend these events throughout the week, and they are a highlight for many children and young people in care.

The 2023 theme was celebrated with exclusive artwork created by VACCA Designer and Gunditjmarra artist Kaitlyn Boyer. Her design highlights the profound respect we hold for our Elders and the wisdom they share, honoring both those that came before us leaving footprints for us to follow, and those we are fortunate enough to have still walking beside us and sharing their wisdom.



The NAIDOC 2023 theme of 'For Our Elders' shapes this artwork into a reflection and dedication piece for the generations before us; our loved ones, teachers and trailblazers.

The large hand comprised of various shapes symbolises our Elders and is made up of details that mark the guidance and wisdom our Elders hold and carry through time. It represents their cultural knowledge, teachings of history and strength in their guidance. The small and bare hands are our young ones reaching out with eagerness to Elders to gain wisdom, patience and understanding of our culture.

Their warmth and nurturing presence can always be felt in our sacred land and in our hearts wherever we are led.

Kaitlyn Boyer, Gunditjmarra, VACCA Graphic Designer

The artwork featured prominently across tailored communications, merchandise, and throughout activities to honor and celebrate our Elders during NAIDOC Week.





FOSTER CARE

Culture Lives Here

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 14 new carers, with a current total of 102 household carers.

Throughout the year we received 191 Foster Carer enquiries; 154 direct enquiries through the VACCA website and 37 enquiries referred to VACCA through Fostering Connections. Over 23% of our enquiries were from Aboriginal applicants.

Our Carers for Our Kids (OCFOC) was delivered to 44 applicants across all our regions, including five applicants for other ACCOs including Wauthorong Aboriginal Co-Operative.

VACCA had an active presence at events throughout the year to help raise the profile of foster care, increase the number of carer enquiries, and support the wellbeing of our current carers.

We once again partnered with The Long Walk to provide tickets to carers for Dreamtime at the 'G. 200 carers, children and young people walked a lap of the MCG before enjoying the pre-game entertainment and AFL match.

To celebrate the diversity of our carers, we attended events in regional Victoria as well as Midsumma and Wominjeka Festival.

VACCA invested in long-term marketing activities which recognise the diversity of our carers and needs of our children. Focusing on our commitment to keeping Aboriginal children in care connected to culture, the Culture Lives Here campaign incorporated digital marketing activities, billboards and television placements.

Supporting our carers is an ongoing focus. We regularly communicated with carers through dedicated carer communications, providing tips for education and culture, carer supports and opportunities to connect, as well as local events and activities.

To celebrate Foster Care Week, we hosted events across our regions for carers, children and young people at Melbourne Zoo, Wodonga Bounce, Healesville Sanctuary and Gumbuya World. We shared the voices of our carers in a video series on the foster care journey of carers Adrian and Lyndee, and Brendan and Dilinie.



LINK-UP VICTORIA

Link-Up Victoria supports Stolen Generations survivors to find and reunite with their family.

Link-Up assists Stolen Generations survivors to confidently reclaim their identity - to wholeheartedly embrace their heritage and to proudly walk on their traditional Country, sometimes for the very first time.

In creating connections to family, culture and Country, reunions provide survivors with a greater sense of who they are and where they belong. These connections were disrupted through the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their family, community, culture, and Country.

Over the 2022-2023 year, Link-Up supported 12 reunions for Stolen Generations survivors. It is the only service in Victoria providing these reunions. As illustrated by Robert's journey, these reunions are an essential part of healing for Stolen Generations survivors.

Through commemorative events like National Sorry Day, the development of educational and support services, and placement of Stolen Generations markers in cities across Victoria, we can continue to encourage conversations about our nation's true history.

By acknowledging the trauma faced by Stolen Generations and their families, who continue to experience the impacts of being removed from family, culture and Country, and by advocating on their behalf, we support survivors to heal, and we continue to bring our people home.

Case Study

Reunion

Robert, a 78-year-old proud Wamba Wemba man sought support from Link-Up to reunify with his siblings on Country. Robert had been forcibly removed at the age of five and had very limited contact with his family since then.

Link-Up worked with Robert to locate his four siblings and organise for him, his son and siblings to spend four days on Country together. During the visit, the family went to the mission and went together to visit the graves of family members who had already passed, including their mother.

KOORIE KIDS SUPPORTED PLAYGROUPS

Our Koorie Kids Supported Playgroups provide a culturally safe, fun and empowering environment for families with children under five years.

Culture is a protective factor for Aboriginal people and VACCA's supported playgroups are designed to support and strengthen connections to culture and community for children, their parents and carers.

Our Aboriginal playgroup facilitators bring cultural knowledge and connections to their work and during regular playgroup sessions children participate in cultural arts and crafts, dance, storytelling, cultural walks and activities.

VACCA's playgroups differ from mainstream services as families can access the service beyond three years of age, and they allow parents and carers to bring along older children so that no child misses out.

Run in our Northern, Western and Eastern regions, our playgroups expanded during the 2022-2023 year to suburbs in service delivery growth corridors including Mernda, Vermont South, Chirnside Park and Yarra Junction.

Space to build
social connections

Where I feel listened to

A place for
cultural activities

A safe space

Parents and Carers say
our Playgroups are:

Fun!

Supportive

Non-judgemental

Feedback from Playgroup Participants

“ Thanks again for your support. You are the second person I have spoken to today that is really passionate about what you do, as I am too, when I believe so strongly about something, especially when it comes to my babies. I guess I just feel a bit vulnerable and fragile at the moment and I also have to keep it together for the kids, and knowing I have support really does give me a lot of strength. I just want to let you know that I really appreciate your voice – it's given me peace of mind to focus on what I need to. Thank you so much. ”

“ I'm just so grateful that this is an opportunity I can come along to as a dad with my daughter. So many are mothers' groups, and not many things that dads can go to. ”

“ The fact that they've had other workers from other places come in, they're massive too, because even though somebody may not have been needed at that place at that time, they've had that reference, you know. That's helped heaps. ”

KOORIE KIDS SUPPORTED PLAYGROUPS

Little Long Walk

Alongside regular playgroup sessions, our families participate in community events which help to build connections and community links for Aboriginal parents and carers.

This year our Northern Koorie Kids Playgroups co-hosted the Little Long Walk, in partnership with Essendon Football Club and the Long Walk. Parents, carers and children gathered for a day of fun at the Hangar, taking part in cultural activities and games and finally walking a lap of the oval for their own Little Long Walk.

Early Help Model

Part of Koorie Kids Supported Playgroups, our early help model provides parents and carers with additional parenting supports, community services and referrals to parenting programs, cultural and social supports, access to health and allied health services, kinship supports, and advocacy and reunification supports.

Through integrating the suite of programs VACCA offers through our family services programs, together with our wellbeing and developmental supports, we are able to help families in need through early intervention and reduce for the likelihood of unnecessary future intensive family and statutory interventions.

Case Study

Early Help Model

A young Aboriginal mum and her four-year-old twin boys attended the Koorie Kids Supported Playgroup regularly. Both boys were in out of home care, and mum had supervised contact with them.

At the time, mum was living over an hour away from her boys. Reliant on public transport, she started to experience some challenges, particularly during COVID, and as a result her contact with her boys was disrupted and not consistent. Mum started to think that there was a high chance that her boys would not be able to return home.

After 10 weeks of regular attendance and positive engagement at the Koorie Kids Supported Playgroup, contact moved from supervised to monitored. Feeling supported and encouraged by VACCA's care team, mum felt empowered and used her initiative to obtain her license. Through our Early Help model, mum was linked with a Reconnect Program to support her to engage with study and training. Through Reconnect, she was supported to receive a scholarship for a Certificate IV in Community Services and started her learning journey when her children began their schooling in 2023.

Early Help provided the boys with new school bags and shoes. By strengthening her parenting capacity, mum has gained great confidence and a sense of achievement as a parent and is making positive changes for herself. In late 2023, the boys started having unsupervised weekend overnight stays with mum, and now reunification is a real possibility for this family.

FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

As the largest Aboriginal-led family violence service provider in Victoria, VACCA's Family Violence teams support Aboriginal women, men, young people and children to be safe from family violence, to heal from their experience, and to move forward with their lives.

Our family violence service offerings and footprint have grown as demand for our services continues to increase. Despite an increase in service provision, funding for family violence services has not increased to meet demand, with short-term funding placing the sustainability of some of our programs, particularly therapeutic supports, at risk.

In response, VACCA's innovative approach to triaging and use of brokerage ensures our children and families can access services sooner. Our early intervention programs support young people to engage in healthier, more respectful relationships, preventing the next generation of families from being exposed to violence.

VACCA's Family Violence teams in 2022 - 2023:

- Received a total of **7,875** referrals from The Orange Door, mainstream services, police, and other VACCA programs.
- Worked with **840** repeat referrals.
- Made **1,668** referrals to other programs to ensure families requiring additional assistance received the right support.
- Provided emergency and crisis accommodation for community members to ensure their safety **482** times.
- Supported community members with brokerage to help them make ends meet **2,701** times.

Deadly Lovin

The Deadly Lovin' program supports conversations about healthy, respectful relationships for Aboriginal young people aged 12–17 years old. The program aims to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal communities in the cycle of family violence by helping young people understand consent, healthy boundaries, and what respectful relationships look like.

Through culturally safe activities and advice, the program meets young people where they are and draws upon cultural strengths to build a sense of pride and empowerment. This often takes place in peer learning environments like camps, therapeutic groupwork or classroom settings to support open learning, promote insight sharing, and reinforce program content.

Deadly Lovin' also supports practitioners to have confidence in having conversations with young people about respectful relationships and consent.

Funded through Dhelk Dja in 2021 and developed in partnership with the Centre for Evidence and Implementations (CEI), Deadly Lovin' began as a pilot in our Northern Region and is now being successfully implemented across all the regions we work in.



Feedback from Deadly Lovin Program Participants and Practitioners

A deadly program that promotes self-determination. It's very empowering.

Practitioner, Deadly Lovin'

I've never made connections like this before. It feels like after sharing our own experiences in the activity, that we kind of trauma bonded.

Participant, Age 15 years

I always felt dumb because that's what everyone around me made me feel. But I guess I'm only dumb if I believe I am, and I don't have to believe that if I don't want to.

Participant, Age 15 years

Before, I didn't realise how much stuff I'd seen and been through that was actually violence. It was just normal to me.

Participant, Age 12 years

I find it weird because I'm shy when it comes to other people. But I opened up more at the campfire when we were talking about consent and abuse and stuff like that, so all of us were talking and that brought us all together. We just sat there and told our stories.

Participant, Age 15 years

Nowunun Murrumbununner Yearkun – Healing Our Spirit

Nowunun Murrumbununner Yearkun (NMY) is VACCA's Aboriginal sexual assault and therapeutic program operating in our Southern and Western metropolitan regions. NMY is a unique healing service response to the diverse needs of Aboriginal children, young people, women, and men who are survivors of sexual assault.

The distinctive feature of VACCA's model is the integration of Aboriginal cultural healing practices within an existing and proven specialist sexual assault service. While NMY is currently accessible to service users in the southern and western suburbs of Melbourne, VACCA hopes to expand the service to make it available across all the regions we work in to better support children and young people who have experienced sexual harm.

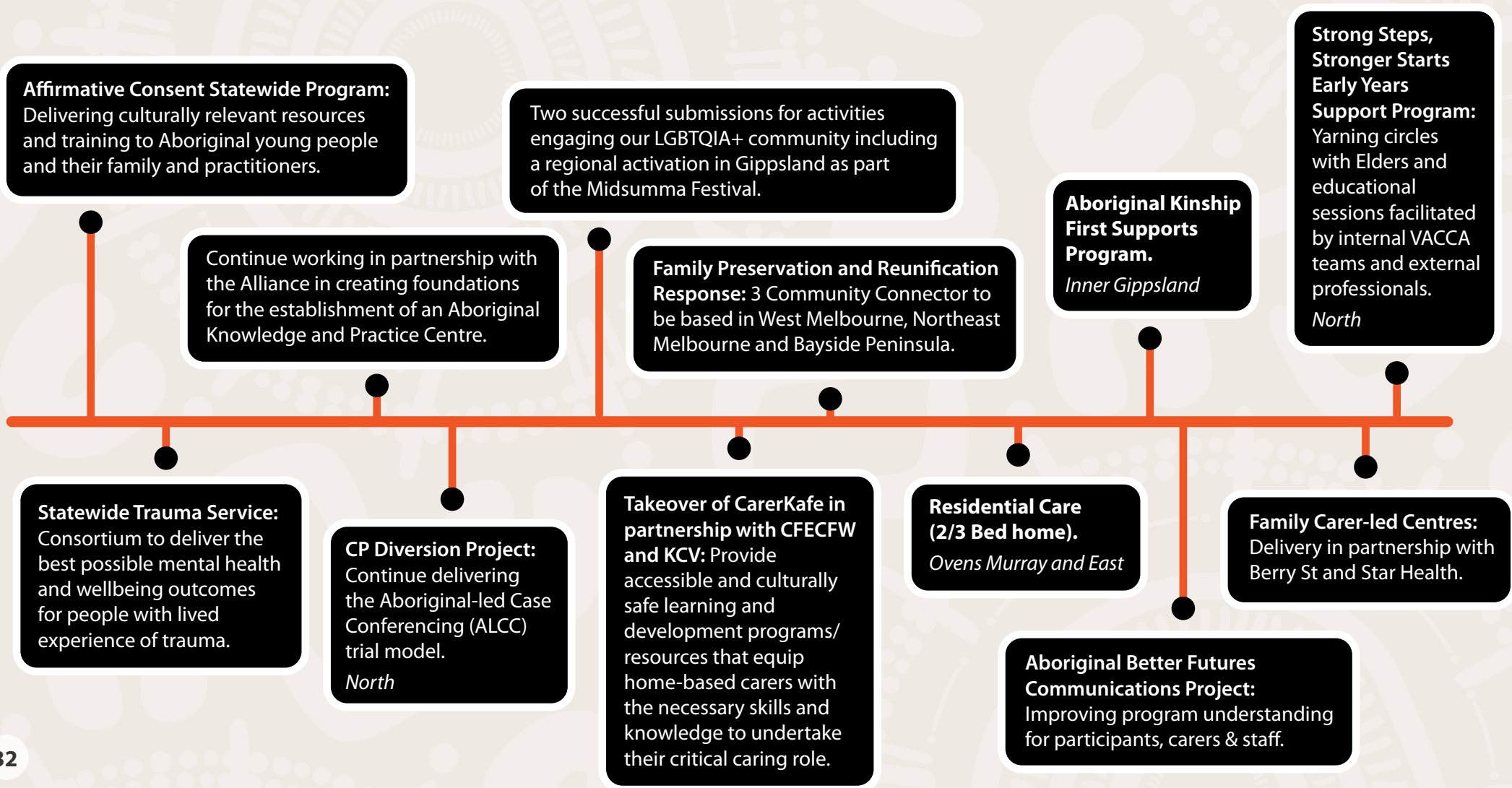


BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION

Submission Snapshot

In the last financial year, VACCA's BDSI team has:

- Submitted 39 applications for funding of which 20 have been successful
- Successfully received over \$10.4 million



EMERGENCY RELIEF

VACCA's Emergency Relief services are delivered by staff in six locations across Victoria. While our metropolitan programs receive federal funding, our Ovens Murray and Gippsland programs are reliant on funding from appeals and philanthropy.

During the 2022-2023 year we supported more than 5,000 people seeking Emergency Relief services. We support individuals and families with food vouchers, bedding and linen, rental relief or crisis accommodation, paying bills and access to support services.

Case Study

Morwell

Lauren*, a young mother, presented at our Morwell office in early 2023 seeking assistance. Lauren has four children and works hard to make sure she can cover all their costs, but her family was living paycheck to paycheck. One morning Lauren got all the kids into the car ready for school, but it wouldn't start. Her car had broken down. Lauren still wanted to make sure her children attended school every day as she knew how important their education was for their future. She started taking them to school on public transport every day, but the extra costs impacted her greatly. Now, Lauren did not have the safety net of a cupboard full of food and was struggling to afford healthy lunches for her children to take to school each day. Her son had a camp coming up that he was really looking forward to, but Lauren didn't know how they would be able to afford to send him.

Lauren already knew about VACCA, so she decided to approach her local office to ask for help. Lauren was embarrassed to talk about her situation as she'd had previous Child Protection involvement and was worried this would initiate a report. The staff at Morwell VACCA made Lauren feel safe and comfortable and knew that she just needed some extra support to get her through a rough patch. We supported Lauren with a basic weekly grocery shop and Myki cards for the whole family, so she knew her kids could get to school every day and would have healthy food in their lunchbox.

VACCA supported Lauren for a couple of weeks until she got back on her feet, and happily her son was able to attend his school camp where he had an amazing time. We stay in contact with Lauren to make sure she knows that we are here to support her and her family if she ever needs. We all face challenges in life, and know it takes bravery to seek support. We thank Lauren for allowing us to share her story, and the VACCA staff at our Morwell office for their compassionate work in supporting community members during times of need.

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



HEAR OUR VOICE
OUR STORIES
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CULTURAL STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Our Cultural Strengthening programs ensure the children and young people we work with are connected to culture and community, supporting them to grow up strong, resilient and proud.

We know that when young Aboriginal people know who they are, where they come from, and have a sense of belonging, they thrive.

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

Cultural Camps

Our Cultural Camps for young people aged 12-17 are run in our Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern regions.

Camps honour Aboriginal ways of men's and women's business; sitting around the fire, weaving, yarning and sharing our history through storytelling. Young people connect with culture through knowledge sharing, song, art and workshops, and playing traditional games. Learning from Elders helps to foster long-lasting connections with culture.

Young people who attend camps experience self-determination as individuals but also as a group. Past participants are provided opportunities to become youth leaders in subsequent camps to build their leadership skills and cultural connections.

Spotlight: Northern Region Camps

In 2022-2023 our Northern Cultural Programs team ran two Deadly Cultural Camps over three days. These camps were attended by 35 young people, community Elders, VACCA support staff and volunteers.

Held at Lake Dewar and Lady Northcote Discovery Camps on the traditional Countries of the Woiwurrung and Wathaurong of the Kulin Nation, the camps immersed attendees in culture by engaging them with local Elders and cultural activities that strengthen and support them to grow up strong in cultural identity and community connections.

During the camp young people participated in cultural activities including Marngrook, traditional weaving, possum skin burning, emu egg painting, damper making and didgeridoo playing. Other activities, such as a high-ropes course, aimed to build confidence in group settings, build resilience, and strengthen problem-solving skills.





COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN OUR REGIONS

Through local programs and events, we increase our connection to local communities in each of our regions. Events, activities and gatherings help us to fully engage with local community needs and strengthens our ability to support the children, families and young people living in these areas.

From celebrating dates of cultural significance to providing space for community to connect, VACCA-run events like community BBQs and school holiday activities provide a vital link to our local communities, helping us to respond to their individual needs and meet their unique service requirements.

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

VACCA Ovens Murray

Cultural Connections

In March 2023, VACCA Wellbeing Facilitator and Educator Lee Couch hosted a workshop for community members, including Elders, students, teachers and KESOs at the Aboriginal Gardens in Benalla.

Through Dadirri, song, and conversation, Lee facilitated connections between students, Elders and community members, highlighting the importance of intergenerational cultural connections for young people in educational settings.

Changing Gears

We supported six young people to participate in the four day Changing Gears Program, with all six going on to pass their Learners Permit test at VicRoads.

Designed to assist young people who face social, economic and physical barriers to obtaining a Learners Permit, our young people completed their learning in a culturally safe space surrounded by possum skins, gum leaves, clap sticks and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

VACCA Western

Aboriginal Women's Group

Starting in early 2023, our Western Aboriginal Women's Group started with a small group of women meeting regularly to yarn for an hour. The group has since grown to 10 and the meeting time has doubled. The group continues to meet regularly, going on a number of excursions including Connection at The Lume, and a planned op-shopping trip is currently in the works.

Western NAIDOC Ball

VACCA's Western region partnered with Melton City Council, Kirrup House, and Wurrungil Dhurrung Centre to host the first Western NAIDOC Ball in 2023. Attended by more than 400 community members, the event was a huge success and a real highlight for local community who are already looking forward to next year's Ball.

Hit Fit Sessions

Western VACCA's Koorie Wellbeing Ways Program, in partnership with YSAS, Invicta Sports and the Werribee Tigers, runs Hit Fit sessions once a week during the school term.

Designed to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people living in our Western region, the sessions build confidence, peer connection, and supports engaged listening and learning. The program's success will see sessions double to twice a week in Wyndham and Melton in late 2023.



BUILDING AN ABORIGINAL EVIDENCE BASE

A key commitment in our strategic plan is to build our capacity as an organisation to evaluate our programs and document our cultural practice. We are working to challenge perceptions that mainstream research and evaluation methods and practices are 'best' and ensuring that VACCA leads the development of evidence focused on Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.

The Research and Evaluation team provides support both internally and externally to the organisation. A key component of their work is supporting other ACCOs across Victoria to build their capacity in research and evaluation by providing training on the evaluation cycle, developing program logics and theories of change, and how to collect data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their programs.

Research Advisory Group

VACCA has established its inaugural Aboriginal research advisory group. Chaired by Aboriginal academic Helen Kennedy and comprised of Aboriginal staff across all our regions, departments and programs, the group advises on requests for research partnerships, presents findings of current research partnerships, and provides recommendations to improve methodology and apply an Aboriginal lens to developing and interpreting data. Held monthly, the group also features guest speakers with the aim of increasing knowledge transfer and translation as well as upskilling in research approaches and methodology.

Aboriginal Knowledge and Practice Centre

VACCA, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance (the Alliance) and the Centre for Evidence and Implementation (CEI), were commissioned by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to consult with ACCOs providing child and family services across Victoria to understand how to build the capacity of the sector and build an Aboriginal evidence base.

The final report titled Aboriginal Knowledge and Practice Centre: Consultations and Recommendations (BAEB Final Report) identified the need to develop a Statewide Aboriginal Knowledge and Practice Centre and detailed an innovative proposal to capture, build and share Aboriginal knowledge and practice.

The project is yet to be funded but we are hopeful this will eventuate given its need.

Aboriginal-led Case Conferencing Trial Evaluation

As part of the Aboriginal Child Protection Diversion project, VACCA designed and implemented an Aboriginal-led Case Conferencing trial (ALCC). This approach sees Aboriginal families in Melbourne's north referred to VACCA that would otherwise be referred for a formal child protection investigation. While VACCA still undertakes all necessary safety screening, the approach is to co-develop this with parents in a culturally safe way, providing tangible supports to address any safety concerns and facilitate earlier engagement with family support services. After the referral, child protection intake closes, diverting families from a formal investigation and away from the child protection system.

Key Data from Evaluation:

- One of four trials evaluated by the University of Melbourne, the evaluators found VACCA's ALCC to be the most successful diversion trial: the trial had a 78.3% investigation diversion success rate.
- Families were highly satisfied with the service and felt culturally safe.
- The trial can yield high return on investment – a \$5 return per \$1 invested.

This project has secured funding to be expanded in 2023-2024 in Melbourne's north, with plans to roll out across all our regions in subsequent years.

BRINGING UP ABORIGINAL BABIES AT HOME

Bringing Up Aboriginal Babies at Home (BUABAH) is VACCA's approach to supporting young Aboriginal women who are pregnant or have an infant and are at risk of or have had an unborn report made to Child Protection, or a have had a child previously removed.

BUABAH's service model was developed from an intensive codesign process which privileged the voice of parents who have experienced Aboriginal baby removal, unnecessary child protection reports, safety concerns that were not addressed prenatally, and unnecessary child removals. The codesign process took around 12 months to ensure the program elements were culturally relevant, based on best practice, and most critically, reflected the voice of past and future service users.

Based in our Southern region, BUABAH centres around our Koori Pregnancy and Baby Practitioners who support women, their unborn babies and the fathers or their partners, living in the Bayside Peninsula area.

Grounded in culture, BUABAH practitioners walk alongside Aboriginal mothers, practising deep listening and investing time in cultivating trust and rapport. Mothers are empowered to navigate complex pre and perinatal services and systems, and are referred to culturally appropriate wrap around supports where needed.

A pivotal aspect of the BUABAH practitioner's role is in creating and maintaining strong relationships with the local maternal hospital, maternal health services, local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health organisations, community-based child protection workers, and other related services. These strong relationships have contributed to creating systemic change in some processes and policies when an unborn report to Child Protection is made in the region.

Funded through the Out of Home Care Philanthropic Funders Network, the BUABAH pilot is in its final 6 months and is currently being evaluated by the University of Melbourne.

CULTURAL THERAPEUTIC WAYS REVIEW

Cultural Therapeutic Ways (CTW) is VACCA's whole of organisation cultural framework that guides our practice.

As part of our continuous improvement cycle, the review focused on the implementation of CTW across our Family Services teams, and in VACCA's Ovens Murray and Northern regions. The review sought to identify how well CTW has been implemented, identify barriers and enablers to implementation, share how CTW supported Aboriginal decision-making, and highlight opportunities for future learnings and improvements.

Outcomes

The review found that:

- CTW was well implemented, with articulation of practice approaches, new language, tools and resources, and was helpful for staff.
- There was wide staff knowledge of CTW and considerable effort to change practice and provide clients with culturally safe environments.
- There was strong support for Aboriginal decision making on CTW to continue, and ongoing consultation with Aboriginal staff on delivery and implementation.
- Effective leadership and project management was critical to success, along with ability to reflect, flexibility and adaptation.
- Accessible information and resources for staff from induction is critical, as is monitoring and regular reviews of implementation.

Next Steps

Following the review our next steps include comprehensive planning to support the ongoing implementation of CTW at VACCA. This can be achieved by embedding CTW across training for all staff, appointing Aboriginal staff to champion CTW, Practice Leads supporting CTW practice change, improved communication and access to CTW resources, development of monitoring plans, ongoing reflection, and adaptation to CTW implementation.

EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS

Guided by VACCA's Education Strategy, our team strengthened key sector relationships and progressed programs designed to improve educational engagement, attainment, and outcomes for the children and young people accessing our services to support Aboriginal children and young people to successfully engage with their education.

Promoting the role of self-determination in positive schooling outcomes, our programs celebrate the cultural identities of our young people, helping them to create community connections and supporting them to develop their skills to engage in further training and employment pathways.

Campfires for Self-Determination

VACCA hosted a series of community Campfire Conversations across our regions to capture the voices of our young people, carers, elders and staff on the topic of self-determination in education settings, with a focus on children in out of home care. These conversations brought young people, community, and schools together to listen, share and connect about self-determination for young Aboriginal people in education.

These conversations provided the opportunity for children and young people across the State to contribute to bigger strategic discussions about how they engage with education, and how service providers including VACCA can reflect on their practice and work side by side to ensure the education experience is inclusive, trauma informed and culturally safe.

The Campfire Conversations were supported by our Out of Home Care Team and our Aboriginal Children's Healing Team, as well as the Department of Education and Training, other sector providers, LOOKOUT Education Support Centres, and Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESO) from schools located in the regions we work.

Navigator

The Navigator program supports Aboriginal young people aged 12-17 to re-engage with school by providing educational pathways specific to their goals. By listening to the young person's voice and working alongside them to create actionable goals, Navigator encourages self-determination in young people.

While the path forward differs for each young person and may include apprenticeships, traineeships or direct employment; Navigator offers practical supports in the form of uniforms, textbooks, stationery, or travel assistance to help them reach their goals.

The Navigator program runs independently in our Western region. In our other regions the Department requires us to partner with mainstream organisations, this includes the Hume-Merribek, Outer East, Inner East, and Northeast Melbourne areas.



EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS

Residential Education Specialists

VACCA's Residential Education Specialists work with young people, schools, carers and case managers to ensure young people living in VACCA's residential care homes are engaged in meaningful education activities.

Working with a trauma-informed approach our Education Specialists improve the capacity of the young people they work alongside, connecting with them through their interests and encouraging them to think about future goals.

VACCA's Residential Education Specialists are currently working in 5 different residential houses alongside young people to improve their school attendance, achieve stronger engagement with learning environments, and to advocate for better educational outcomes for our young people living in residential settings.

Case Study

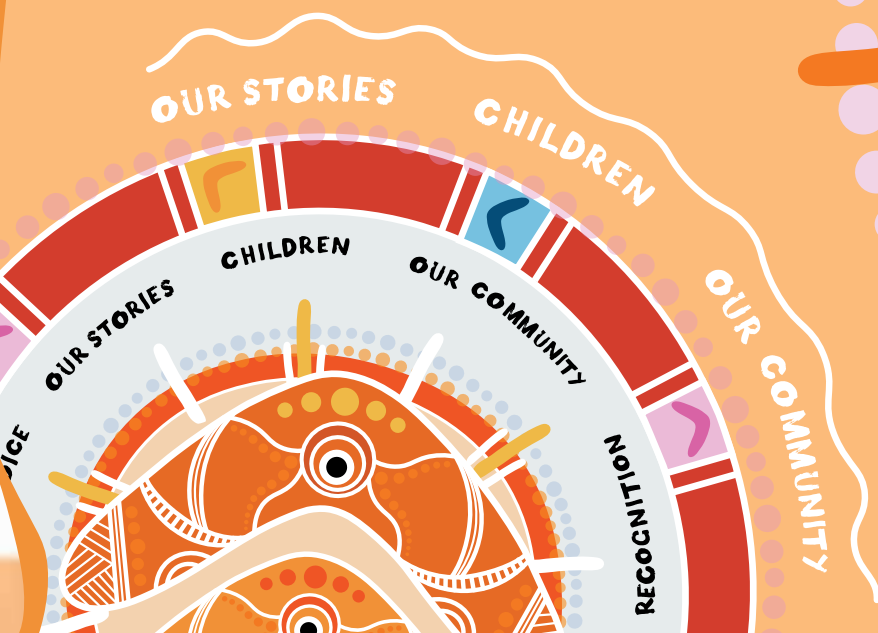
Jye

Jye*, a Grade 6 student living in residential care, was preparing for his transition to high school. He accompanied one of our Residential Education Specialists to tour local high schools to see which would be the best fit for his education and future employment goals. One of the schools they toured offered a woodworking and a mechanics program, which made Jye's eyes light up. He was so excited at the thought of being able to gain practical skills and experience to support his employment goal of becoming a mechanic. He had confided in his caseworker that even though he really felt he could become a mechanic, he was afraid that without proper help and support to achieve his goals he might never reach them and be restricted to unskilled or casual work.

When our Specialist worker investigated what was needed to enrol Jye at his school of choice, they were presented with a big challenge. Even though the school was physically closer to where Jye lived, it fell out of his school zone. The Specialist worker went to the school and spoke with the principal, spoke with Jye's Koorie Education Support Officer, and the local Education Department representative. They also requested and received letters of support from his current teachers and school principal, to support their case to obtain an exception allowing Jye to attend the school.

In November, Jye received a letter from the school telling him he had been accepted to his school of choice. This meant he would be able to pursue his goal of becoming a mechanic while staying engaged with his education. Jye was so excited that he used money he had saved up to purchase lolly bags for the Specialist worker and other VACCA staff who supported him. We know that supporting young people to remain engaged in education pathways is essential to developing their skills for future employment, and ensuring they grow up feeling strong, empowered and proud in who they are. We look forward to continuing to offer this support and guidance to Jye on his journey.

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





ABORIGINAL CHILDRENS HEALING TEAM

Our Aboriginal Children's Healing Team (ACHT) is a unique, multi-disciplinary team that provides culturally led social and emotional wellbeing and healing services to support Aboriginal children in out of home care, their families and carers.

The ACHT's model of care privileges cultural and trauma informed practice and includes a range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal practitioners covering social work, psychology, psychiatry, general practice, mental health nursing, occupational therapy, speech therapy, art therapy and more.

We believe healing should be available to all children in out of home care given the trauma of child removal. We deliver tailored, placed based, comprehensive therapeutic services and supports to help children and young people develop healthy social emotional wellbeing and coping strategies that will help them throughout their lives.

Lifting our Voices

During 2022-2023 the ACHT focused on strengthening their model to ensure that Aboriginal voices and ways of doing were heard. A 'culture first', trauma-informed approach to delivering healing services continues across all aspects of their work, and Aboriginal leadership within the team is championed.

The team's commitment to VACCA's Cultural Therapeutic Ways (CTW), our whole organisation approach to best practice when working with Aboriginal people, is evident in efforts to integrate culture into healing and therapeutic practices. This includes adapting clinical tools and language to reflect culture and promote connection, and redesigning team-wide processes to support a stronger cultural and healing approach.

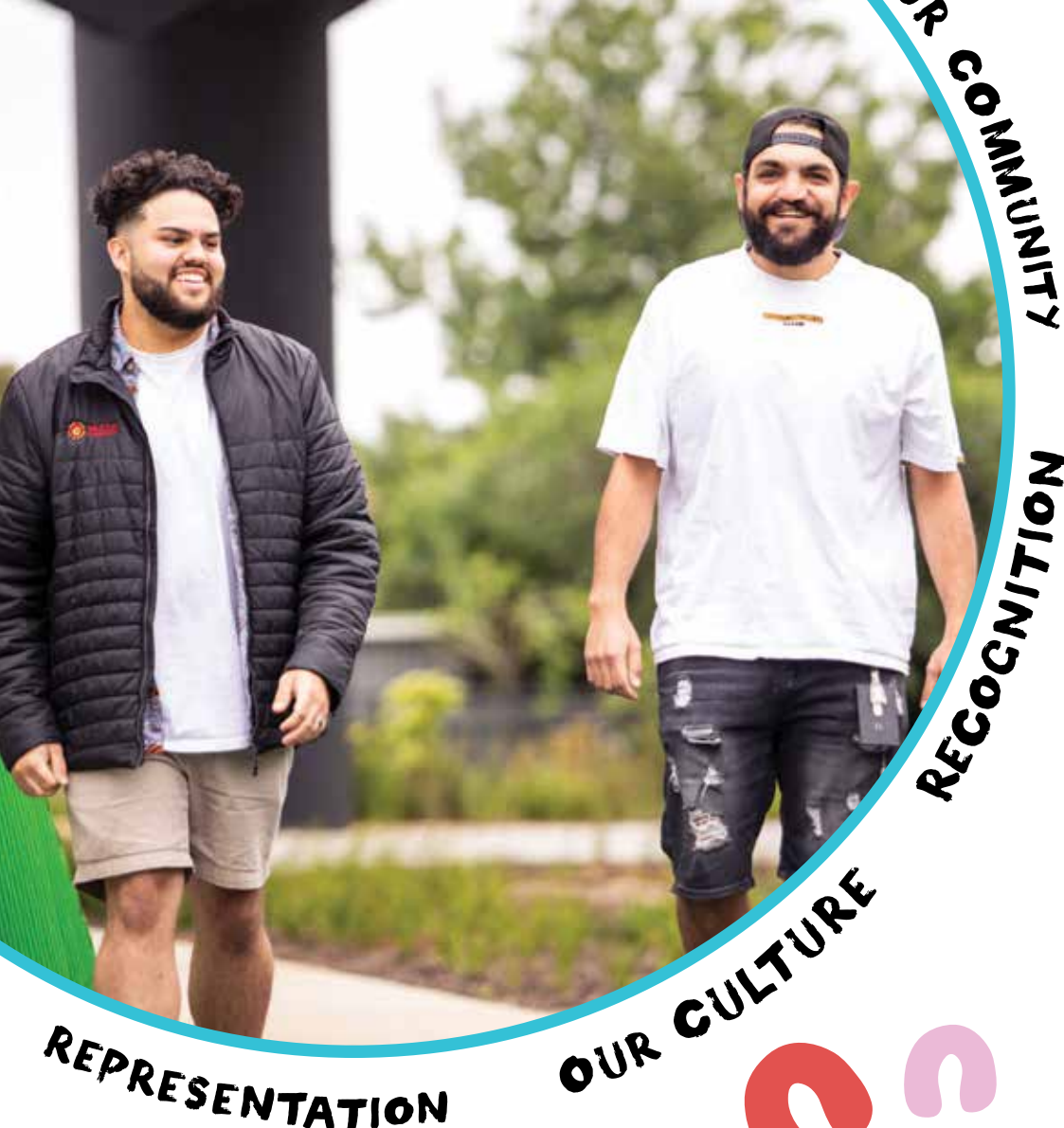
Highlights 2022 - 2023

- Commenced a live online learning program to strengthen VACCA's healing response to social and emotional wellbeing concerns commonly experienced by VACCA clients.
- Strengthened our partnership with the Royal Children's Hospital Wadja Clinic. A Clinic Fellow is placed with the ACHT once a week to provide pediatric advice and support.
- Partnered with Melbourne University on the Healing the Past to Nurture the Future Project, supporting research and system change for Aboriginal parents and children in their first 2,000 days.
- Partnered with a Melbourne University pilot to implement ASQ TRAK at VACCA - a screening tool for assessing learning and growth of Aboriginal children from birth to age five.

Welcoming Willow

In 2023 the ACHT welcomed Willow, a French Bulldog, who joined the team as a trainee therapy dog. Willow's shy, gentle nature lends itself to her work within the team, and her presence brings a smile to the faces of the children, young people, and staff she interacts with.



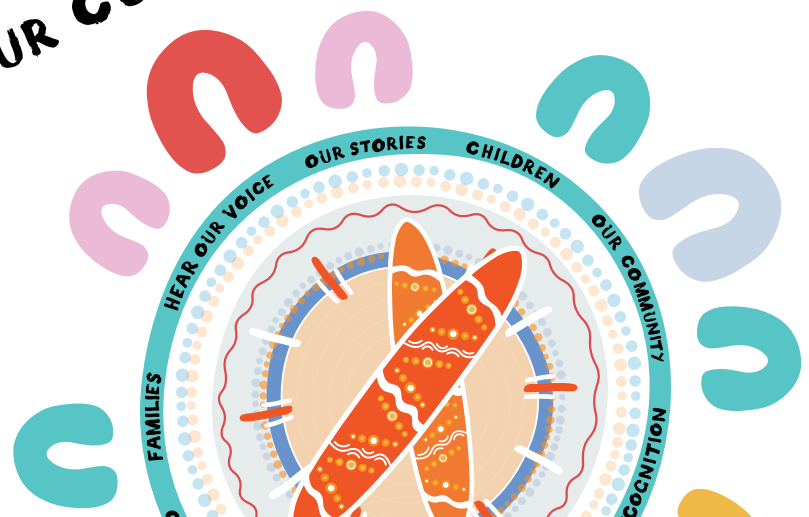


REPRESENTATION

OUR CULTURE

RECOGNITION

OUR COMMUNITY



EXTERNAL TRAINING

We offer a range of training programs to community services organisations, government agencies, and individuals working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and people, to ensure that their work is culturally appropriate.

In the year since 30 June 2022 our External Training team have:

- Received 300 enquiries for external training across from Australia. These enquiries come from sporting groups, early learning centres, local government and from both private and not for profit sector organisations.
- Delivered Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training to 2,192 participants.
- Supported 270 non-Aboriginal carers via the 2-day Nikara's Journey training package.
- Trained over 200 primary school educators via our Side By Side training package run in partnership with Berry Street. During this 4-year partnership, we have worked with educators from 9 primary schools on Gunnai Kurnai Country (Moe, Morwell and Traralgon), Wurundjeri Country (Northern metropolitan Melbourne) and parts of Bunurong and Wadawurrung Country (Wyndham Vale).

[Feedback from Participants](#) >

I loved the knowledge and practical tools we can incorporate into our work, especially the possum skin sensory idea, as I work with a lot of neurodivergent children. I had never heard about birthing trees, and I cannot wait to find out more. This training really highlighted to me how beautiful and rich First Nations culture is.

Anglicare, Nikara's Journey

The depth of trauma reflects the depth of grief, loss, and trauma from the abuse and shame imposed on Aboriginal peoples by many dominating systems of abuse, control and so called 'care'.

Take Two, Berry Street

The training has helped me in understanding the importance of connection to culture, remaining curious as a practitioner, and recognising my own privilege and the power imbalances that may impact working relationships.

Eastern Health

Being more accountable in my practice and cultural knowledge. Being responsible for monitoring myself and taking action to try to establish more culturally safe working relationships. And overall, just trying to be a better community member.

Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-op

Be curious, ask questions, don't assume...supporting identity and connection to culture in our work for those who are wanting this will help to create positive intergenerational change.

Berry Street

Ask, ask, ask! Thank you for continuing to reiterate this. I now understand the importance of asking in a culturally sensitive way and not shying away from it.

Berry Street

Having a deeper understanding of our history helps me realise the importance of promoting and encouraging cultural connections with our young kids in care. It also helps me understand the ongoing trauma associated with our history, and how it still affects our Aboriginal community today.

MacKillop Family Services, Nikara's Journey

FUNDRAISING

Where there is a shortfall or no government funding available, VACCA raises funds to enable our work in key support areas so that no Aboriginal child is left behind. Donations, bequests and grants go directly towards funding our cultural programs, events and resources at key times of the year. This includes NAIDOC Week events, Christmas gifts, Back to School educational resources and food hampers to address food insecurity.

This year, our donors have supported us in the following ways:

Education Support

Our Education Appeal in February 2023 raised \$39,000, which provided 780 children with an Aboriginal designed backpack filled with everything they needed for their first day of school.

We also provided literacy supports through culturally appropriate books to children who foster a love of reading and learning. Thank you to the FRRR Back to School Program 2023 for providing much needed vouchers to assist with back-to-school expenses.

Cultural Programs

Over \$87,000 was raised this year through Morning Tea for Culture, Run Melbourne and Melbourne Marathon.

This funding supported our Deadly Culture Camps which provide young people with a life changing opportunity to connect to Elders, Aboriginal leaders and peers, and develop important leadership skills and connection to culture.



Emergency Relief

Our Winter Appeal raised \$111,000 and provided essential emergency relief, including food, blankets and access to transport to more than 5,500 of our most vulnerable community members throughout the year.

We prioritise our Ovens Murray and Gippsland regions which are totally reliant on our fundraising and grants programs for support, but our Emergency Relief program is accessible to all community members statewide. Thank you to all the donors and funders who have supported these vital programs.

Christmas Support

Our 2022 Christmas Appeal raised over \$125,000 for Christmas events and activities that bring children in care together with community, family, and Koorie Santa. It also provided extra supports to address food insecurity and cost of living pressures for vulnerable families during this challenging time of year.

In addition, we provided over 3,500 presents to Aboriginal children and young people, and through festive hampers and other supports helped their families experience joy during the Christmas Season.

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

- 780 children were provided with backpacks containing back to school essentials and resources to start their learning strong and proud.
- 750 children were provided with back-to-school vouchers.
- Over 1000 children and families attended our NAIDOC Week events across the State.
- Koorie Santa helped us deliver 3,500 presents to children and young people in time for Christmas.
- Our Emergency Relief program supported more than 5,500 families and children in 2022-2023.





OUR PERFORMANCE

HEAR OUR VOICE
OUR STORIES
CHILDREN
OUR ANIM

FAM
REPRESENTATION
OUR CULTURE
RECOGNITIO

FINANCIAL REPORT

This financial year was of continuous growth, with gross operating income of \$125.0 million and a net operating surplus of \$3.4 million.

Expansion of Residential Care Services and transfer of Aboriginal Children to VACCA's responsibility under service reform remain the largest growth factors for the organisation.

It is expected that the State Government Roadmap to Reform and Family Violence 10 year 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 increased 17% from \$106.6 million to \$125.0 million

Summarised Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Total Income	125,018,594	106,567,429
Total Expenses	121,667,121	100,133,884
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to members of VACCA	3,351,473	6,433,545

Summarised Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) as at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Total Current Assets	63,352,059	57,338,104
Total Non-Current Assets	23,921,283	16,784,723
Total Assets	87,273,342	74,122,827
Total Current Liabilities	49,948,861	42,233,637
Total Non-Current Liabilities	13,105,948	11,022,150
Total Liabilities	63,054,809	53,255,787
Net Assets (Liabilities)	24,218,533	20,867,040
Total Equity	24,218,533	20,867,040

CULTURAL CONTENT, CAMPAIGNS AND RESOURCES

Throughout the year VACCA's Communications team leveraged our digital footprint to amplify VACCA's voice and share the stories of our staff and our work.

Using a mix of traditional and digital channels, Communications created and shared cultural content to support our clients and wider community to connect with culture, and to access services, programs and supports.

Our Survival Day

January 26 is our Survival Day - a day to observe and honour the strength and resilience of our people and communities who have survived, despite attempts of genocide and ongoing colonial violence.

On Survival Day VACCA acknowledged progress towards Voice, Treaty and Truth while calling for more immediate, meaningful action and change.

Our social media campaign encouraged community to look after their health and wellbeing in the lead up to Survival Day through yarning, connecting to culture and Country, and taking time out. We encouraged our allies to continue standing alongside us and amplify our voices year-round.

Go for a walk on Country,
reconnect with the lands
we have preserved for
generations

Connection to Culture

Gariwerd Seasons

As part of our ongoing commitment to sharing cultural resources with our children, families and wider community, we created a series of animated videos celebrating the seasons of Gariwerd.

Each video corresponds to a different local season observed by Djab Wurrung and Wurundjeri people. The animated videos feature original artwork from VACCA Designer Kaitlyn Boyer that represent the plants, animals and changes to the environment that can be observed over the course of the season.



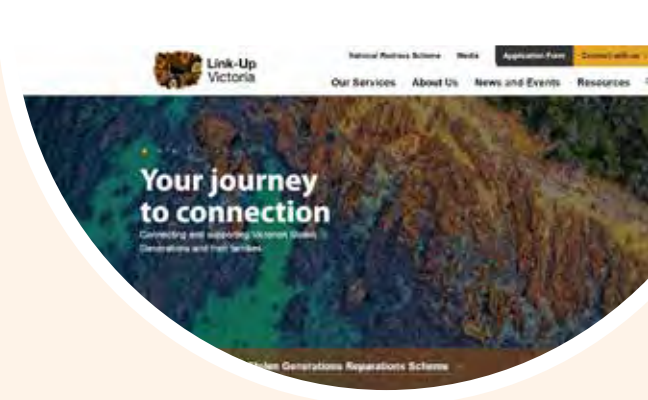
Link-Up Victoria Website

In mid 2023, VACCA completed work on the new website for Link-Up Victoria. An essential resource for connecting and supporting Stolen Generations survivors and their families, the full rebuild was designed to support individuals ease of access to information, services and support.

Original artwork by VACCA Designer Reanna Bono and photography taken on Country in Victoria compliments the improved user experience, and centres website functionality alongside connections to culture and Country.



For more information visit:
linkupvictoria.org.au





Celebrating our Carers

During Foster Care Week, we acknowledged the incredible work of our carers and the invaluable contribution they make to the lives of the children and young people they provide care for.

In celebration of their commitment and kindness, we created a series of videos featuring our carers and the VACCA staff who support them. In sharing their experiences and giving voice to the joys, challenges and rewards of caring, VACCA said to our carers: we see you, we hear you, and we thank you for all you do.

We Are VACCA

An ongoing project to share VACCA's Aboriginal ways of working, We Are VACCA was developed to create a greater understanding of who we are and the work we do.

Highlighting key programs in each region, each video in the series tells the stories of our staff, our clients, and the communities we work in.

By sharing program outcomes and bringing to life our vision and purpose through the voices of our staff and clients, We Are VACCA embodies positivity and pride with a focus on how our strengths-based approach supports and empowers culturally strong, thriving Aboriginal communities.

Strong, Proud and Deadly

International Women's Day

Through our programs and services, VACCA works to support and empower Aboriginal women and girls in all their diversity by protecting their rights and advocating on their behalf, and by strengthening families, communities and individuals.

The work we do would not be possible without the strong, proud and deadly women of VACCA who show up each day for their clients, colleagues, friends and family.

On International Women's Day we created an animated video that celebrated the women of VACCA, the women and girls we work with, and all the women who have supported us and made us who we are.





THANK YOU

**Thank you to all our donors and funders
for your continued support throughout the year.**

With your help, we have been able to continuously innovate and evolve Aboriginal service delivery models to best support the Aboriginal children, families and young people we work alongside. Your support means we have protected and cared for more children and families through our healing and preventative programs, enabling a continued connection to family, culture and community.

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

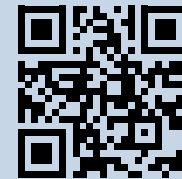
To support our work and make a tax-deductible donation please visit: vacca.org/donate

VACCA SHOP

The VACCA Shop sells a range of Aboriginal designed merchandise and educational resources.

Proceeds from the sale of these items subsidises our vital programs supporting Aboriginal children and their families.

Visit: vacca.org/shop Email: resources@vacca.org



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

FAMILIES

OUR PEOPLE

REPRESENTATION

OUR CULTURE



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

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service, Austin Health – Child and Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service, Austin Health – Child and Youth Mental Health, ACCESS EAP, Australian Psychological Society, Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, Berry Street, Bridge Darebin – Preston, Brotherhood of St Laurence, CASA House, Centre For Evidence and Implementation, Centre For Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Child First Partners, Community Housing Ltd, Djerriwarrh Health Services, Early Childhood Management Services, Elizabeth Morgan House, Empower Australia, Family Life, , First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing, Foster Care Association, Fostering Connections, Foundation House, Gateway Community Health, Gippsland Pride Initiative, Grit & Resilience Program – Rural City of Wangaratta, Impact for Women, IPC Health, Jesuit Social Services, Kids Under Cover, Kinship Carers Victoria, Koorie Youth Council, Koorie Justice Unit, Latrobe City Council, Latrobe Community Health Service, La Trobe University – Bouverie Centre, Life Without Barriers, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit, Melbourne City Mission, Melbourne Polytechnic, Merriwa Industry, North East Support & Action for Youth, Midsumma, The Orange Door Network, Orygen, Ovens Murray Child and Family Service Alliance, Ovens Murray Family Violence Partnership, Phoenix Australia, Quantum Support Services, Queen Elizabeth Centre, Ramahyuck, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – Wadja Aboriginal Family Place, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Swinburne University, SANE, SNAICC, Salvation Army, Star Health, The Smith Family, Thorne Harbour Health, Upper Murray Family Care, Uniting Vic Tas, University Of Melbourne, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, VMCH – Wangaratta, Westcare, Women's Health West, Youth Support and Advocacy Service, Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service.

Philanthropy

Australian Communities Foundation - EM Horton Family Fund, Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation, Equity Trustees - David Taylor Galt Charitable Trust, Freemasons Foundation, FRRR – Back to School Program, Gandel Foundation, The Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Naylor Stewart Ancillary Fund, Paul Ramsay Foundation, The Ross Trust, Sidney Myer Fund, William Buckland Foundation.

Corporate Sponsors

Essendon Football Club, Kinetic, oOh!Media.

Pro bono services and gifts in kind

Ashurst, Backpacks 4 Vic Kids, Good360, Impact For Women, Koala, Pinchapoo, Sikh Volunteers Australia.

Key Supporters:

3KND Radio, Albury Wodonga Foodshare, Adaps IT, AFL North East Border, Commonwealth Bank, Chirnside Park Football Club, Coldstream Football & Netball Club, D&D Printing, Frankston Arts Centre, Frankston District Netball Association, Fostering Connections, GM Leasing, Kia Motors Australia, Kmart Australia, Latrobe Valley Magistrate's Court, Melbourne Football Club, St Kilda Football Club, Target Australia, Toyota Fleet Management, Triple R Broadcasters (3RRR), The Long Walk, The Smith Family, Werribee Districts Football Club, Wodonga Foodshare.

Government

Department of Social Services; Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business; Department of Education and Training; Department of Families, Fairness and Housing; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; Department of Transport and Planning; Department of Social Services; ; Family Safety Victoria; National Indigenous Australians Agency, Department of Health.

Victorian Local Government Councils

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency acknowledges the support of: Brimbank City Council



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 Birrale Place
West Wodonga VIC 3690
p. (03) 8373 1710



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

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Co-operative Limited

ABN 44 665 455 609

340 Bell St, Preston VIC 3072

Telephone: +61 3 9287 8800

Facsimile: +61 3 9287 8999

Email: vacca@vacca.org

w. vacca.org     [@vaccaorg](https://www.instagram.com/vaccaorg)



VACCA

Connected by culture

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY