

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position	Community Researcher – VACCA & Latrobe Regional Hospital
Reports to	Senior Program Manager, Nugel & Lakidjeka ACSASS, VACCA Gippsland; and LRH Research Manager
Direct Reports	N/A
Status	Fixed-term up to four years
Location	21 Hazelwood Road, Morwell (VACCA office) and Latrobe Regional Hospital

BACKGROUND TO VACCA & LATROBE REGIONAL HOSPITAL

VACCA

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is an Aboriginal community-controlled organization that supports and advocates for the Aboriginal community. Our vision: Aboriginal self-determination - Live, Experience and Be. Our purpose is supporting culturally strong, safe and thriving Aboriginal communities.

Our Aboriginality is what distinguishes us from mainstream services and what enables us to deliver the positive outcomes we achieve for our people. VACCA employs over 600 staff and delivers more than 70 programs across the state. VACCA's experience and expertise in the delivery of therapeutic services are underpinned by culture, trauma-informed practice, and self-determination.

Central to VACCA's work is the importance of connection to family, community and culture as essential to Aboriginal children's safety, stability and ensuring that they have an ongoing sense of belonging. As Victoria's largest Aboriginal child welfare agency, VACCA will play a key role in the process of transitioning the care and case management of Aboriginal children from government and non-Aboriginal organisations to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations following the recent decision of the Victorian Government.

Latrobe Regional Hospital

Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) is located 150km east of Melbourne at Traralgon West. We are a public health service established under the Health Services Act 1988 (Vic). This followed the merger of two public hospitals in Traralgon and Moe and a nursing home in Morwell in 1991.

LRH has 313 beds and treatment chairs and cares for a population of more than 270,000 as a provider of specialist services to the Gippsland region. We offer services such as cardiac care, surgery, medical, renal, emergency care, aged care, obstetrics, mental health, pharmacy, allied health and rehabilitation. Medical and radiation oncology are offered at the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre on site.

LRH is the main provider of acute mental health services in Gippsland with inpatient care at the hospital and community mental health services and teams in the Latrobe Valley, Sale, Bairnsdale, Yarram, Orbost, Warragul and Wonthaggi.

As a teaching hospital we are closely affiliated with Monash University's School of Rural Health and Federation University and provide placements and clinical experience for students.

THE PROJECT

Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future is a research project that seeks to contribute to promoting healthy Aboriginal families, organisations and communities within the Inner Gippsland area. It is an Aboriginal-led four-year community based participatory action research project funded by the national Medical Research Future Fund. The research organisation heading up the project is the University of Melbourne.

The purpose of the project is to demonstrate how we can best provide support during pregnancy and the first two years after birth for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) parents who have experienced complex trauma. Becoming a parent is exciting but it can be hard, particularly for parents who have experienced difficulties in their own childhood, which can have long lasting effects on physical, social and emotional wellbeing. The effects may be 'triggered' during pregnancy and the transition to becoming a parent, causing distress and challenges for creating a nurturing environment for the new baby. On the flip side, growing research shows that becoming a parent offers a unique life-time opportunity to heal from this childhood hurt and provide a nurturing environment for children.

Yet, despite these opportunities for healing and the risk of triggering due to the intimate nature of perinatal care - particularly during frequent contacts with health care providers during pregnancy and the first two years after the baby's birth - there is currently no evidence of applied strategies for supporting parents who may be experiencing complex childhood trauma. Building on four years of rigorous co-design, this four-year community-based participatory action research project will begin to address this critical gap by demonstrating how to optimise the provision of skilled, sensitive, trauma-integrated primary maternity and family care.

POSITION SUMMARY

The aim of this position is to provide research support to the University of Melbourne research team to ensure successful implementation of the project in Inner Gippsland. This role will be jointly based at VACCA and Latrobe Regional Hospital; it will sit within the Nugel, Lakidjeka and ACSASS team in VACCA, and the Research Team at Latrobe Regional Hospital. The Community Researcher will work to engage Aboriginal Community members to participate in the project, conduct interviews with them, support other data collection activities and sense making, and support resource development for Community. They will use their knowledge of Community, culture and Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing to advise the team on the best forms of engagement and other research approaches.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- Educational qualifications related in health, social work, psychology or other relevant discipline; **or** equivalent experience;
- Basic skills using Microsoft office documents;
- Experience of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and/or communities;
- Experience in engaging with and consulting/yarning with Aboriginal Community members to understand their views and experiences;
- Ability to share cultural knowledge and provide cultural advice to the project team;
- Effective and culturally appropriate interpersonal skills, e.g. active listening, empathy in all verbal and non-verbal communications;
- Organisational and team skills - planning tasks, time management, ability to work independently, follow established procedures with limited supervision and contribute positively to an effective team.

Desirable:

- Experience or training in undertaking research activities, including interviewing, group consultation, making sense of findings;
- Experience working with health and social services.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- The ability to work flexible hours when required;
- A full Victorian Driver's Licence, a national police check and a current employment Working with Children check card;
- Only candidates with full working rights in Australia may apply for this position

POSITION DUTIES

- Co-ordinating the local Site Implementation Team;
- Working collaboratively with staff at local sites to implement the project;
- Liaising with Elders and other key stakeholders in the community to ensure meaningful engagement in the project;
- Engaging with and seeking to recruit Community members to participate in the project, including assisting with focus group discussions for community members and staff;
- Keeping a journal of implementation enablers and barriers;
- Organising and conducting interviews with Community participants (using agreed techniques and guidance);
- Assisting with data collection and writing in collaboration with the research team;
- Supporting development and implementation of local learning resources for parents and service providers;
- Assisting the research team in understanding the meaning of Community participants' views and lived experience and what this means for development of resources;
- Coordinating local meetings and participating in project meetings;
- Participating proactively in VACCA and Latrobe Regional Hospital team meetings;
- Participating in presentations at conferences, key stakeholder workshops and other events;
- Undertake other duties as directed.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

- Ensure compliance with the OH&S Act and both VACCA and Latrobe Regional Hospital policies;
- Contribute positively and proactively to team and organisation wide OH&S activities;
- Continue the development of a culturally strong and positive working environment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

VACCA is committed to Aboriginal self-determination and supporting strong, safe, thriving Aboriginal communities and aims to ensure every individual is treated with dignity, honouring all cultural backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and spiritual beliefs. VACCA is a child-safe organisation and is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people with zero tolerance for child abuse. All successful applicants will be required to undertake a National Police Record Check and Working with Children Check prior to commencement of employment and periodically following commencement.

VACCA is an equal opportunity employer and has a smoke-free workplace policy.

Latrobe Regional Hospital values our community's diversity. We are committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and safe service and workplace for everyone who engages with our organisation regardless of race, culture, religion, sexuality, gender identity, age or ability.

LRH is a child friendly and child safe hospital with zero tolerance for child abuse or harm of any kind. This includes Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and linguistically diverse children and children with disabilities.

LRH has policies and protocols in place in line with the Victorian Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both paediatric patients and paediatric visitors.

HOW TO APPLY

**** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply ****

- Open to full-time or part-time applicants
- Open to a job share arrangement (at least one indigenous role)

The deadline for applications is Monday 11th April, 2022.

APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE:

- A cover letter outlining why you are applying for this position
- Written responses to the essential and desirable selection criteria outlined above
- A resume with your skills, experience, and qualifications

Applications must be submitted on the VACCA website at www.vacca.recruitment.com.au

If you'd like to know more about the role and project, please contact Cath Chamberlain on 0428 921 271;
email: cacham@unimelb.edu.au

For more information about the application process please contact Bavi Rai, Recruitment Advisor, VACCA, at 03 9287 8835.

Benefits

The successful incumbent will be offered an honorary position with The University of Melbourne and have extensive opportunities for career development as a member of the project team.