



VACCA

Connected by culture

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY

A large, vibrant orange graphic dominates the center of the page. It features a central, stylized human figure in a lighter shade of orange. Surrounding this figure are various traditional Aboriginal patterns, including concentric circles, dotted lines, and organic shapes. The entire graphic is set against a solid orange background.

# Koorie Connect Program and Procedure Manual



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# Welcome



## Welcome

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Welcome to the Koorie Connect Program (program). This program is one of many programs the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) provides to the Aboriginal Community that reflects our cultural values and principles in achieving the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of Aboriginal people.

Fundamental to our work is the commitment to provide programs and deliver services in an Aboriginal way, reflecting the priorities and needs of the Community. Our vision is for Aboriginal children, young people, families and Community to thrive – by being culturally strong, empowered and safe. We strive to achieve this vision by providing programs that:

- keep children safe
- empower and strengthen individual, families and Community
- draw on culture to promote healing and build resilience
- utilise and embed kinship systems of care and Aboriginal childrearing practices
- provide an Aboriginal trauma-informed approach.

As a member of the team, you play a vital role in achieving this vision and in helping individuals and children to remain connected to their families and Community when they are unable to live at home. This manual, together with mentoring, supervision, training and professional development, will guide and support you in this important work.



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# 1. Preface



## 1.1 How to use this manual

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The Koorie Connect Program and procedure manual (manual) will inform and guide you in culturally appropriate case practice and the delivery of effective services to Aboriginal children, parents and families.

It provides information about the tools and casework frameworks you will use in your day-to-day work.

This manual is not a stand-alone resource. You will also need to read the [client services manual](#) and the [Introduction to family violence manual](#) for information about the policies and practices relevant to all client service staff and the broader child and family sector.

This manual is designed to be read online. Hyperlinks have been created within the text to access information, forms and resources while reading. You can also click on the table of contents page numbers to take you directly to sections in the manual.

## 1.2 Language used in this manual

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It is important staff are aware of how language is used within VACCA and this document. We understand that language is powerful and have sought to be respectful in the way we use language. Key terms we use within this manual are:

Child – this refers to children and young people up to 18 years, unless otherwise specified.

Aboriginal people – this refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Community – this refers to and acknowledges all Aboriginal people living in Victoria.

VACCA uses the 'phrases Aboriginal and Communities' (plural) to 'acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal people and communities their different histories, political dynamics, social situations and cultural characteristics. Some Aboriginal people will prefer to use other terms to convey their tribe or clan group: for example, some Aboriginal people from Victoria may prefer 'Koorie'<sup>1</sup>.

When VACCA refers to Elders and Traditional Owners, the written words are with a capital letter to show the deep respect we have for these positions and their significance in the Community. We have also written Country in capital to show the importance and sacredness of land and Country.

More information about language can be found in the [client services manual](#).

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<sup>1</sup>Building Respectful Partnerships: The Commitment to Aboriginal Cultural Competence in Child and Family Services, VACCA, 2010, pg10

## 1.3 Introduction

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In July 2014 the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet introduced the [Indigenous Advancement Strategy](#) (strategy) which replaced more than 150 individual programmes and activities with five broad-based programmes:

- jobs, land and economy
- children and schooling
- safety and wellbeing
- culture and capability
- remote Australia strategies.

The objective of the strategy is to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians, with a particular focus on:

- getting Indigenous Australians into work
- ensuring children go to school
- making communities safer.

Prior to 2014 VACCA provided a funded an Indigenous Community Links program which we called Koorie Connect that operated in the North and South. This was an information and advice service to increase access to local services and supports.

In line with the Indigenous Advancement Strategy the Koorie Connect program was redeveloped into a casework service to meet the objectives of the new funding arrangement under the activity of making the Community safer. The program was also moved from the South to the West due to the increasing Aboriginal population in the West, limited Aboriginal services and demand for the service.

In 2017 VACCA was required to re-submit for funding for the program through a direct funding application with the department. The department provided guidelines for future funding to include a long term case management approach to support at risk Community members to address multiple and complex issues. The Koorie Connect model transitioned in June - July 2017 to provide an intake and assessment service and long term case management.

## 2. Overview of the Koorie Connect Program

### 2.1 Program summary

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The Koorie Connect program (program) provides a holistic and trauma informed case management support service for at risk Aboriginal people over 18 years who have multiple and complex issues.

The program will conduct intake and assessment of Community members presenting at the service to facilitate transition into case management or support/referral to other services.

The case management response includes: support to identify and address underlying trauma; case work to address issues and make changes; support to engage and maintain connection with specialist services; assistance in navigating the service system; co-ordination of support services; support for mainstream organisations to provide culturally safe and appropriate services; and support to develop and maintain connections to Community and Culture.

The program provides outreach case management to people who are experiencing the following issues:

- relationship and family conflict
- anti-social or offending behaviour
- family violence
- alcohol and substance misuse
- mental or physical health issues
- financial difficulties
- unemployment
- homelessness or housing issues
- isolation and disconnection from family, Community and Culture.

#### Integrated service response

The program operates as part of an integrated service response in each office in conjunction with the Department of Social Services funded Emergency Relief program. Workers will be able to provide important emergency relief funding to individuals and families who present with a number of needs including financial crisis with food vouchers, material aid and support to pay bills.

## 2.2 Program aims

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The program aims to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal people and to reduce the associated harmful behaviours that impact on individual, family and Community safety and wellbeing by:

- supporting individuals and families to identify issues impacting on their own safety and wellbeing
- supporting individuals and families to access Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services to address issues in their lives and become more resilient and less susceptible to harm
- supporting connection to Community and culture and thereby promote healing.

## 2.3 Program principles

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The program is underpinned by the following principles and values:

- the best interests of children is paramount
- a recognition that the impact of colonisation and the consequent trauma across generations of Aboriginal families continues today
- a commitment to culturally appropriate and holistic practice
- respect for Aboriginal self-determination and person-centred services
- empowerment of individuals to make important decisions
- recognition of the important role of the Community in supporting families
- to ensure individuals remain closely connected to their family and Community.

Case practice is informed by:

- the best interests of the child – protecting and promoting the safety, wellbeing and cultural identity of our children
- Aboriginal cultural observance – the importance of cultural practice and compliance with Aboriginal protocols and ceremony in effecting positive change and healing
- a commitment to ensure the cultural rights of the Community and families are values and upheld
- empowering our Community with a strengths-based approach
- excellence – our Community is entitled to high quality and professional services.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.4 Program eligibility

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To be eligible for the program, individuals need to live in the North or West metropolitan area and be Aboriginal or caring for an Aboriginal child. The primary target group for this program is Aboriginal people who are highly vulnerable to risk and harm.

The service will provide support to Aboriginal people and families experiencing:

- isolation, hardship and disconnection from family, community and culture
- financial difficulties
- homelessness or housing issues
- relationship and family conflict
- family violence
- substance misuse
- mental or physical health issues
- other identified issues.

As part of the intake and referral process it is important that people are asked if they are working with any other VACCA program or have an existing caseworker. If people already have a caseworker they should be referred back to their existing caseworker for support.

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<sup>3</sup> VACCA Strategic Plan 2015-18.

## 2.5 Program targets

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The program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. VACCA has a funding and service agreement, which sets out the services to be provided, the target group, program standards and performance measures.

The department has established [Indigenous Advancement Strategy Guidelines](#). Staff will need to comply with these requirements in delivering this program which aims to increase Community safety and wellbeing through:

- improving health, social and emotional wellbeing
- improving drug, alcohol and substance misuse prevention and treatment
- reducing offending, violence and victimisation in communities.

### Targets

The program targets for each office are:

- 15-20 clients at any time providing case management support to address issues and improve safety and wellbeing. The length of service is based on the needs of each individual client to support them to achieve their goals and improve their safety and wellbeing.

Reporting to Prime Minister and Cabinet is for both programs with a total of 30-40 clients at any time.

### Key performance indicators

VACCA must report against the following key performance indicators to Prime Minister and Cabinet:

- number or proportion of Indigenous people employed
- compliance with contract schedule requirements, budget, timeframes, targets and reporting requirements – at reporting date
- services are delivered by appropriately qualified staff
- referrals are received from and made to other relevant providers (these are services that work with the client)
- client satisfaction.

### Outcomes

The target group for the service is Aboriginal people with multiple and complex issues. It is expected that clients will have a number of issues and we will provide support to achieve a range of outcomes to improve their safety and wellbeing. Outcomes will be identified for each individual from the following:

- reduced substance misuse and harm
- reduced contact with the criminal justice system
- violence reduction and victim support
- improved wellbeing and resilience.

The program aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- the service is effective in reaching the target group and clients' needs are met and goals achieved to improve their safety and wellbeing
- harmful and risk behaviours are reduced and changes are sustained
- clients connect with relevant services to improve safety and wellbeing.



## Evaluation

The program will evaluate short, medium and long term outcomes through:

- client assessment of issues and progress of improving safety and wellbeing every 3 months during service provision and 3-6 months after closure
- case plan reviews of achievement and progress towards goals
- observations and feedback from staff or other professionals working with the client that the risk has been reduced as a result of the contact service
- number of referrals to other services and feedback on engagement with services from clients and other services
- client feedback on satisfaction with the service provided and that their needs have been met and goals achieved to improve their safety and wellbeing.

## 2.6 Data collection and reporting

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The program will report on key performance indicators and expected outcomes of the program using a report template provided by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Performance reports are provided to Prime Minister and Cabinet every six months.

## 2.7 Program location and contact information

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### Northern program

#### **Preston office**

340 Bell Street  
Preston VIC 3072

PO Box 494, Northcote Plaza  
Northcote VIC 3070

Ph: (03) 9287 8800

Fax: (03) 9287 8881

### Western program

#### **Werribee office**

8 Watton Street  
Werribee VIC 3175

Ph: (03) 9742 8300

## 2.8 Program hours

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### Operating hours

The program operates from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. There is flexibility for caseworkers to work outside of normal business hours if this is negotiated with their team leader or program/operations manager.

## 2.9 Program structure

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Program structures are updated regularly, caseworkers can access the [program structure](#) to get a better understanding of how the program fits within the broader office and staff in positions.

## 2.10 Program positions

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### All staff

All staff within this program are required to:

- prioritise the wellbeing and safety of children
- empower and strengthen individuals to make good decisions for themselves and their families to support self-reliance
- use a trauma-informed approach to practice
- respect and promote the kinship systems of care and decision making
- see individuals within the context of their past and present experiences
- maintain the dignity of individuals
- create a culturally safe environment where individuals and families feel safe and supported.

### Intake and assessment worker

The intake and assessment worker is responsible for ensuring that Aboriginal culture is embedded throughout all aspects of the program's functioning and that all program activities are culturally safe.

It is their role to:

- provide phone and office support to identify issues and support needs
- complete the [intake and assessment form](#) documenting all information about the client, assessment of their current situation, their goals and support plan
- support Aboriginal Community members and their families by providing information, advice and supported referrals to a range of mainstream and Aboriginal services
- develop and maintain relationships with other service providers and promote access and pathways to their services for Aboriginal people
- Input data into the appropriate client database and be responsible for maintaining client information
- advocate for individuals and assist them to overcome barriers to services or achieving goals
- identify the individual or family's cultural support needs and provide information about Community activities. Where appropriate help them to re-connect to the Community and with Country via referrals to Link Up and other Aboriginal services
- develop and maintain a list of local services
- maintain high quality and up to date client files that meet privacy and legislative requirements
- provide support to other workers and programs in the team as required
- participate in training, team meetings, case plan meetings and other meetings as directed.

The intake and assessment worker may also undertake the role of a support worker as part of the Emergency Relief program (see the [Emergency Relief Program and Procedure manual](#)).



## Caseworker

The caseworker is responsible for ensuring that Aboriginal culture is embedded throughout all aspects of the program's functioning and that all program activities are culturally safe.

It is their role to:

- support Aboriginal Community members and their families by providing information, advice and supported referrals to a range of mainstream and Aboriginal services
- provide phone, office and outreach support to address issues, resolve conflict, change behaviour and increase capacity to better manage and improve their safety and wellbeing
- develop a [support plan](#) for the client identifying their goals and review the plan every three months
- deliver intensive case work including assessment, goal setting and support to achieve outcomes for individuals and families with long term engagements
- advocate for individuals and assist them to overcome barriers to services or achieving goals
- undertake case reviews including reviewing and updating support plans every three months, completing client feedback forms and caseworker observation and feedback forms
- develop and maintain relationships with other service providers and promote access and pathways to their services for Aboriginal people
- input data into the appropriate client database and be responsible for maintaining client information
- involvement in program planning, statistical monitoring, reporting and evaluation
- identify the individual or family's cultural support needs and provide information about Community activities. Where appropriate help them to re-connect to the Community and with Country via referrals to Link Up and other Aboriginal services
- maintain high quality and up to date client files that meet privacy and legislative requirements
- provide support to other workers and programs in the team as required
- participate in training, team meetings, case plan meetings and other meetings as directed.

The caseworker may also undertake the role of intake and assessment worker as part of the Emergency Relief program (see the [Emergency Relief Program and Procedure manual](#)).

## Team leader

The team leader is responsible for the day-to-day management of the program.

It is their role to:

- ensure Aboriginal culture is embedded throughout all aspects of the program's functioning and that all program activities are culturally safe
- ensure the program is focused on the best interests of the child
- have a good understanding of the practice tools, manuals, forms and checklists relevant to this program. The team leader also has a key role in ensuring staff are familiar with and adhere to relevant [VACCA policies](#), in particular the child safe, unsafe behaviours and critical incidents policies
- ensure each individual or family has a documented intake and assessment form, support plan and 3 monthly assessments
- review client files to ensure they are up to date and a good quality standard
- provide regular and formal supervision to caseworkers in the program
- ensure that data collection and monitoring systems are adequately operating effectively.

## Program/operations manager

The operations manager is responsible overseeing the management of the program.

It is their role to:

- ensure Aboriginal culture is embedded throughout all aspects of the program's functioning and that all program activities are culturally safe
- be familiar with all relevant legislation, sector and [VACCA policies](#), including governance and foundational documents relevant to managing the program. It is the role of the operations or program manager to guide staff to embed these frameworks in their practice
- ensure the program is focused on the best interests of the child
- provide support and supervision to the team leader
- ensure adequate staffing levels by leading the recruitment, induction and retention of staff
- ensure that data collection and monitoring systems are adequate and operating effectively
- ensure the program operations are compliant with department standards, child safe standards and continuous quality improvement processes
- ensure that performance targets are met
- manage program finances and ensure program remain within budget
- ensure VACCA policies and procedures are implemented, monitored and reported as required.

## Executive manager

The executive manager is responsible for the overall management of the program.

It is their role to:

- ensure Aboriginal culture is embedded throughout all aspects of the program's functioning and that all program activities are culturally safe
- provide support and supervision to the operations manager
- participate in VACCA strategic, business and operational planning activities
- engage in department and sector service development and strategic planning
- ensure the program operations are compliant with legislation, standards, program requirements and continuous quality improvement processes manage program finances and ensure programs remain within budget
- ensure VACCA policies, procedures and systems are in place and working effectively.

## 2.11 Key networks and partnerships

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### Internal networks and partnerships

All caseworkers are expected to work with other VACCA programs as required to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and families using our services.

Information about other VACCA programs and the services they deliver can be found in the client services programs section of the [client services manual](#).

Caseworker will need to be familiar and work closely with the following internal programs.

#### **Lakidjeka ACSASS**

The Lakidjeka Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service (ACSASS) is a state-wide service that provides expert advice to Child Protection on culturally appropriate interventions and case consultation regarding significant decisions made about Aboriginal children. If Child Protection is involved the caseworker will need to advise Lakidjeka ACSASS of program involvement and keep Lakidjeka informed of work with the child and family to assist them in making decisions and providing advice to Child Protection.

## **Cradle to Kinder**

The Cradle to Kinder program provides support to vulnerable pregnant women and women who have just given birth (within 6 weeks) up until the time the child is four years of age. The caseworker may make a referral through Child FIRST to this program.

## **Aboriginal Kinship Care Program**

The Aboriginal Kinship Care Program is able to provide an information and advice service to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kinship carers who are caring for Aboriginal children. They can also provide group support and activities and short-term family support and cultural connections work. The caseworker may recommend a referral to the Kinship Care Program for children currently in the care of kinship carers if additional support for the current placement is required.

## **Foster care program**

The foster care program provides stable and culturally safe foster care placements for Aboriginal children. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal carers are supported to provide safe, stable and culturally appropriate care for children in their own home. The program ensures children in care continue to learn about their culture and participate in Aboriginal Community events and activities, ensures children in care have regular and safe contact with their family and provides children with a healing environment to recover from trauma. For children in care who access this program, they maybe in a foster care placement managed by VACCA and the caseworker will need to work closely with foster care workers.

## **Playgroups**

Playgroups provide opportunities for Aboriginal parents and carers to meet other Aboriginal families and establish support networks while strengthening their parenting skills and knowledge. The caseworker may support families to attend and participate in playgroups.

## **Integrated Family Services**

The Integrated Family Services program provides support to individuals and families caring for children to address issues and improve their quality of life. The program focuses on the strengths of the individual and family, supporting them to identify goals and work towards achieving these. Individuals and families in contact with the service will generally have between 1 to 6 hours of contact with their caseworker per week.

The caseworker may make a referral to Integrated Family Services where families require further less intensive support service.

## **Mental Health Worker**

The mental health worker supports Aboriginal children aged 5-13 years who have mental health issues or who are at risk of a mental health illness, where the parents have consented to this support. There is some flexibility for the worker to support young people over 13 years on a case-by-case basis. The mental health worker also delivers community education and facilitates group work for mental health. The caseworker can refer children or young people to this worker if relevant and appropriate in the Northern metropolitan area.

## **Emergency Relief**

The Emergency Relief program provides a culturally respectful service to help Aboriginal people to address immediate basic needs in times of financial crisis. Access to emergency relief is considered universal and is a safety net for people experiencing financial distress or hardship and who have limited means or resources to help them alleviate their financial crisis. Emergency relief is seen as an entry point into the continuum of financial services and other support services. Aboriginal people will be supported to address immediate basic needs in times of financial crisis through the provision of provision of food vouchers, support to pay bills and material aid. The caseworker can support families and carers to access financial support where this is needed.

## The Wilam Support Service

The Wilam Support Service is a transitional service that aims to support Aboriginal singles, couples, families and young people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. The service provides case management support to help these client groups achieve long term housing, employment, education, health and wellbeing outcomes so to prevent a return to homelessness in the future. For some families involved with the service they may require further support to address housing issues and the caseworker can refer to this program for people residing in the Northern metropolitan area.

## Aboriginal Stronger Families

The Aboriginal Stronger Families program provides intensive in-home support for up to 12 months for families where children are at risk of entering out-home care or have been placed in out-of-home care for the first time. If Child Protection are involved, the caseworker may make a [referral](#) to the Stronger Families program for intensive support where families live in the North Eastern Melbourne Area (if there are vacancies referrals may be accepted from the Hume Moreland Area).

## Cultural programs

All client services programs are involved in delivering and facilitating cultural programs for children in care and the broader Community in their service areas. In addition VACCA has a cultural programs team based at head office. All staff should keep informed of relevant cultural activities and programs to support families and children to attend, keeping them connected to Community and culture. See also client services programs section of the [client services manual](#).

## External networks and partnerships

The program works in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and community service organisations that provide support to individuals and families in need.

External referrals to other services may include (not limited to):

- Salvation Army, Anglicare Victoria, Uniting Care - Financial counselling and food vouchers
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service - Counselling, medical, financial counselling
- Elizabeth Morgan House - Family violence refuge
- Homeground / Launch Housing - Housing support
- Haven Home Safe - Housing support
- Brotherhood of St Laurence - Furniture
- Aborigines Advancement League - Food vouchers, food bank
- St Kilda Mums - Donations of children's clothing/furniture
- WT Onus Hostel - Accommodation
- Gladys Nicholls Hostel - Accommodation
- Neami Drug and Alcohol Service
- Wadamba Wilam - Housing and referrals
- Ngwalla - Services
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- Centrelink Indigenous Support Officer
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.





## 3. Working with children and families



### 3.1 Referral and intake

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#### Referral sources

Referrals will come from:

- police
- prisons
- mental health services
- homelessness services
- drug and alcohol services
- VACCA programs including Emergency Relief
- individuals, couples or parents/carers (self referral)
- family or Community members
- Community Service Organisations
- Government departments.

#### Intake processes

The program has integrated intake and assessment with the Emergency Relief program which may be the first point of contact for many people who access this program. The intake and assessment worker will collect initial information about the clients' current circumstances and needs and will discuss their support needs to identify whether they meet the criteria for long term case management or referral to another service.

Professional referrers will initially contact the intake and assessment worker to discuss potential referrals to the program. The intake and assessment worker will consult with their team leader to discuss potential referrals and identify that they meet the criteria for the service and that there are current vacancies. A copy of the [intake and assessment form](#) will be provided to professional referrers where the Community member meets the criteria for long term case management for them to complete referral information.

The intake and assessment worker will complete the [intake and assessment form](#) for self or community referrals for long term case management.

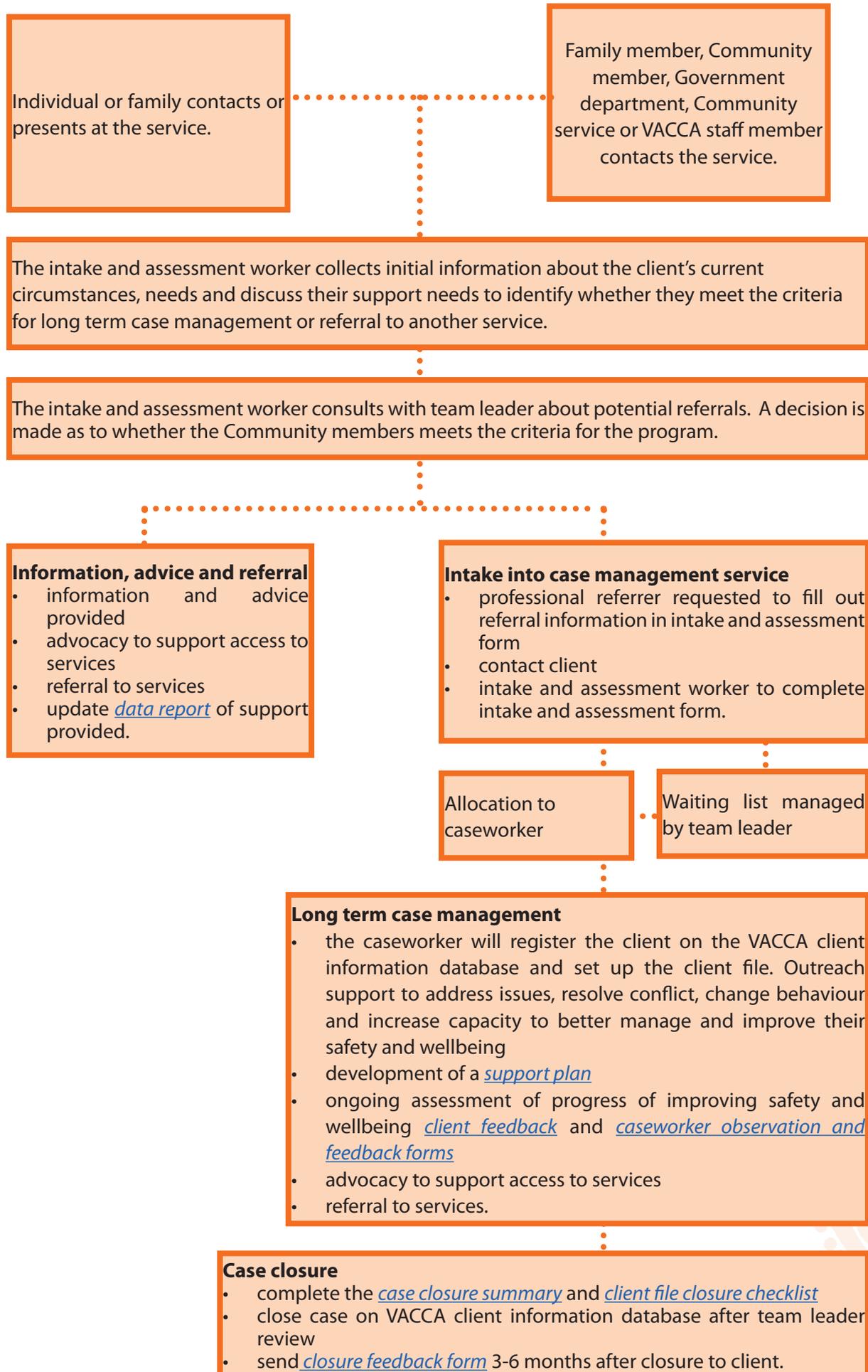
Where the Community member does not meet the criteria or there are no current vacancies the intake and assessment worker will provide information and advise about other support options or the timeline for allocation to a caseworker. The team leader will develop a waiting list where allocation is possible within the next four weeks.

The intake and assessment worker will update the program [data report](#) of all Community members that receive information, advise and referral support.

The intake and assessment worker will contact the Community member to discuss referral and complete the [intake and assessment form](#) for long term case management.

As part of the intake and referral process it is important that people are asked if they are working with any other VACCA program or have an existing caseworker. If people already have a caseworker they should be referred back to their existing caseworker for support. An email is to be sent to the worker and team leader of the persons contact with the service and any relevant information provided.

## Provision of service flowchart



## 3.2 Assessment of individuals and families

### Cultural tips for building relationships

- be aware of using language and behaviour that may cause shame
- be genuine in your interest in the child and their family and make this evident
- create time for a yarn
- acknowledge that sharing information is a two way process and share something about yourself
- show warmth and where appropriate use humour to lighten conversations
- use straight talk – be honest, open and transparent
- respect cultural norms and values and model this through your conduct, particularly in relation to the roles and responsibilities of family and Elders and men and women's business.

### Assessment

The intake and assessment worker will have commenced the assessment of the current circumstances of the individual or family. The caseworker will continue the assessment of the individual or family's needs. The caseworker will need to collect additional information needed to set goals and update the [intake and assessment form](#).

The caseworker will work with them to identify goals and support they require from the program. These activities may take a few visits to complete.

The assessment phase usually occurs over 2-3 home visits and within 3 weeks of allocation.

### The intake and assessment form

The [intake and assessment form](#) is used to guide and document the assessment. The template covers information about the individual and family, cultural identity and heritage. It includes the identification of risk and wellbeing issues and child's wellbeing assessment (where applicable) and an assessment of the client's circumstances.

The caseworker should not rely on the assessment template as a checklist to be gone through with the individual or family or spend the entire time writing. This may give the impression they are there for their own purposes rather than to listen. Before taking notes, the caseworker will need to explain that note taking is necessary to record their information accurately. After the visit, the caseworker will complete the intake and assessment form and place this in the client file.

### Practice tip for conducting assessments

Use a conversational style to obtain information from the parents and children. Be curious and listen carefully. Demonstrate a sincere interest in what the family have to say. Pick up on their non-verbal cues and respond appropriately to these. For example, if a person is becoming agitated, take a break or end the discussion. Go back later to the discussion to gather the information you need. You may need to raise the conversation or question in a different way or contact other sources who can provide this information.

## Client circumstance outcomes

The aim of the assessment is to understand what has led the person to need the support of the program. It provides an assessment of the client's circumstances in the following domains:

- personal and family safety
- sexual abuse
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- drug and alcohol abuse
- physical health
- mental health
- intellectual disability
- age-appropriate development (for children)
- family functioning
- anger management
- behaviour management
- employment, education and training
- financial management
- housing/transient lifestyle
- community participation and networks.

This enables a holistic assessment of their needs and ability for the program to identify how we support people to improve their safety and wellbeing.

### Practice tip for child safety

The safety and wellbeing of the child is always the priority in any assessment. Make sure you are always aware of what is happening for the child or children. Refer to child safety and wellbeing section of this manual for more information about responding to concerns for a child.

## Waiting lists

If there is no current capacity within the program for a case management response, professional referrals will be provided with information and advice to provide the client with approximate waiting time until the individual or family can access the service. The referrer will be encouraged to provide the Koorie Connect program details to their client to access the service directly during this time.

All individuals and families who contact the service directly will receive information, advice and referral to another service.

Where it is assessed that a case management service is required the team leader will manage a waiting list if allocation is possible in the next four weeks.

## Case allocation

The team leader and caseworkers will review all new referrals, and determine whether the caseworker has capacity to provide casework service (workload) and allocate from the waiting list as the caseworker has capacity.

## Registration and client file set up

In order to register the individual or family as clients of the program and create a client file, the team leader will ensure that the caseworker or administration worker:

- conducts a search of the client information database to check if there is existing or previous VACCA involvement
- retrieves all closed files relating to the individual or family, in line with the VACCA [client records and file management policy](#)
- registers program involvement with the client information database using the existing client information database number or generate a new client number
- sets up the paper client file in accordance with the VACCA client file folder requirements using the [client file structure](#)
- completes the [client information summary](#) and attach it to the paper file.

### 3.3 Case management

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The program will be provided using an Aboriginal trauma informed case management model that involves a number of key elements, which include:

- seeing individuals within the context of their past and present history and experiences
- understanding the compounding effects of disadvantage and trauma inherited and experienced by the Community
- an ongoing commitment to the maintenance, development and promotion of culture as a protective factor and in healing
- creating a culturally safe work place where Aboriginal staff and the wider Community is comfortable attending, shown respect, and know their opinion is valued and important
- the self-determination and empowerment of the Aboriginal community and Elders in decision-making
- a commitment to facilitating and organising cultural and ceremonial activities for individuals, families and Community.

This approach ensures we holistically understand the impact of trauma, not only on individuals but also their families, Community and culture. A holistic model of trauma not only involves looking beyond the individual but takes into account the history of trauma throughout the generations. This enables the care team to understand the impacts of trauma and help services to respond in a more holistic and comprehensive way to support the individual to address the multiple and complex issues impacting on their safety and wellbeing. These are likely to include family violence, substance misuse, antisocial or offending behaviour.

This service will include a holistic and comprehensive assessment of the client's needs and current circumstances, support clients to identify goals and develop a support plan with the client to work together to address their safety and wellbeing issues, provide casework support to address underlying trauma and presenting safety and wellbeing issues and case management support to co-ordinate specialist services. The program will support people to connect with their Country, Community, family and culture to build their capacity to respond to life stressors.

The program will provide the following:

- holistic and comprehensive assessment of safety and wellbeing issues
- development of a support plan with the individual
- supported referrals, engagement and maintenance of connections with specialists services e.g. psychiatrist
- support for mainstream services to engage and provide culturally safe and appropriate services
- co-ordinate services and chair care team meetings for clients involved with multiple services to coordinate support services and develop shared support plans
- casework advice and support to address issues, resolve conflict, change behaviour and increase their capacity to better manage their wellbeing and improve their safety
- advocacy support, such as attending meetings and appointments with the client, making phone calls on behalf of the client, assisting the client to complete paperwork and transport to attend services
- providing outreach and follow up visits to support clients to complete tasks on support plan and reach goals to improve their safety and wellbeing
- cultural advice and information about the Aboriginal Community, Aboriginal services, activities and events and supporting them to develop relationships with local Aboriginal and mainstream services
- connecting the client to Community and culture to increase social and emotional wellbeing and build capacity to respond to life stressors and resilience.

## First home or office appointment

In preparing for the first home visit caseworkers will need to read VACCA policies and procedures on [staff safety](#) in regards to home visiting.

For the caseworker the purpose of the first home visit is to:

- welcome the Community member (including children) to the program and explain the role of the program
- begin to engage and build a relationship, including with the children
- discuss the programs expectations including transition, exit and staff safety
- provide a copy of the [client information pack](#), which includes a welcome letter, feedback and complaints form, exchange and release information form, [VACCA and Koorie Connect brochure](#), transport authority form, VACCA client services charter, Dardee Boorai – Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children & Young People and a privacy brochure
- go through the key documents as per the [client information pack checklist](#) to ensure the Community member understands the forms and obtain their signature to indicate that that forms have been received, were explained, understood and the client agrees to abide by these documents
- request Community member signs relevant forms or leave forms with family to review and request signed forms at next home visit
- where age appropriate children and young people should be provided with key documents from the client information pack and the caseworker needs to ensure that they understand the forms and documents provided, their right to provide feedback and processes.

It is important that the caseworker provides written and verbal information in a way that is understood by people accessing our services including children.

The caseworker should not conclude the first visit without organising a date and time with the individual or family for their next visit.

### 3.4 Goal setting and planning

The caseworker will discuss the intake and assessment form and continue to assess the support needs of the Community member. Once the assessment phase is complete the caseworker will work with the Community member to identify goals and tasks required for the Community member to reach these goals.

All case planning should be discussed and driven by the Community member. Remember that:

- the plan is to be developed with the Community member using the information obtained through the assessment recorded in the [support plan](#)
- the plan must reflect the needs and wishes of the Community member, as far as possible. Where this is incompatible with the resources of the program, this will need to be negotiated
- the plan should use the Community member's words and language
- the Community member needs sign a completed plan
- a copy of the completed plan is to be provided to the client and a copy placed on the client file
- the plan is to be discussed with the team leader in supervision.

Given the length of involvement of the program with Community members, support plans will be reviewed every three months and updated with new goals or tasks throughout the program involvement. Goals and tasks identified in the support plan should be realistic and achievable.

## Support plan

The [support plan](#) involves setting and recording actions, goals and priorities and the steps necessary to achieve these. The caseworker and Community member will need to:

- document the goals
- work out how each goal will be achieved (the actions required)
- determine how long each action will take (timelines)
- identify the care team required
- identify who is responsible for each action – the Community member, the caseworker or other care team member
- set review dates for when the goals set out in the [support plan](#).

The [support plan](#) should be prepared with a strengths-based focus, working towards safety and wellbeing.



### Cultural tips for planning and goal setting

- in all planning, consider the cultural rights and needs of the child
- ensure that key members of the family – and where appropriate, Community members – are invited to planning meetings, and that they know how important it is that they attend
- empower people to actively participate in case planning and decision making by:
  - using an Aboriginal family decision making approach
  - creating an environment where they feel supported and comfortable in attending by organising the meeting at a culturally safe venue
  - making sure they are fully informed about the case planning process, who will be in attendance, whether there are non-negotiable aspects prior to the meeting
  - using language that they understand and ensuring they are consulted in the meeting and supported to contribute to discussions.

## 3.5 Making referrals

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A key role of the caseworker is making referrals and supporting individuals, couples and families to access relevant services to help them achieve the goals outlined in the assessment.

Caseworkers are to provide information about local services and refer people to services that will best meet their current needs. Part of this program is to actively support Aboriginal people's access to services which may include advocacy, building relationships and networks with local services to enable caseworkers to introduce clients to workers from other services, taking people to appointments, attending appointments with people and providing information about local services.

## 3.6 Court Work

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Occasionally families referred to the program, may be subject to a Children's Court protection orders that may include a supervision orders.

On occasion, caseworkers may receive a subpoena to give evidence, provide a copy of the client file or a report to the court. The caseworker must advise their team leader or program manager as soon as possible if they receive a subpoena who will support the caseworker in attending court or providing documents as legally requested in the subpoena.

The [client services manual](#) has more information about the Children's Court of Victoria, court related tasks, casework and VACCA provides regular training. The caseworker will also need to refer to the [client records and file management policy](#) for information about procedures to undertake if the client file is subpoenaed.

## 3.7 Client records and file management

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An important part of working with individuals and families is keeping accurate records and up to date case notes and client files. The caseworker is required to keep paper and electronic client files.

All caseworkers are required to follow VACCA's [client records and file management policy](#) that sets out the responsibilities and expectations of staff in recording client records and managing client files to:

- ensure there is standardised and consistent record keeping practices across programs and offices
- create clear, accurate, up-to-date, respectful and professional client records including case notes, using VACCA templates
- record assessments, plans, actions, consultations, key decisions and outcomes to meet accountability requirements
- create and register client files so that they can be quickly and easily accessed when required
- maintain client files in a manner that protects documents from misuse, loss, damage and unauthorised access
- only allow access to client files in accordance with privacy laws and access procedures.

It is the responsibility of all VACCA staff to ensure that client files are created and managed in accordance with relevant legislation and in line with this policy.

## 3.8 Casework tasks

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### Housing Support

#### Public housing

The caseworker may need to support adults or young people to access homelessness services to obtain crisis accommodation who can also support them to complete an application for public housing.

To apply for public housing people will need to complete an [application for public housing](#) and an application for housing with [Aboriginal Housing Victoria](#). To obtain housing through Aboriginal Housing Victoria individuals must provide proof of Aboriginality in their application. Providing a Confirmation of Aboriginality letter or a statutory declaration is required. The support worker can check if the person has confirmation of Aboriginality and if not support them to access the Link Up program to commence a process through VACCA or refer them to their local Aboriginal Co-op.

## Financial support for private rental

Individuals and young people may be eligible to access the following financial support to obtain housing:

The Office of Housing provides some financial support for private rentals.

- [Commonwealth rent assistance](#) – subsidises the costs of private rentals
- [Bond loan scheme](#) - provides financial supports for bond for rental properties
- [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) - can assist with property enquiries and provides useful guides and information to renters
- [National rental affordability scheme](#) –provides financial support for up to 8,500 rental dwellings for low and moderate-income earners.

## Managing substance affected or aggressive clients

If a client presents in reception as substance affected or aggressive, an assessment of the person is to be completed in the reception area as to whether the person should proceed to an interview room to receive support.

Staff should be familiar with the [staff safety policy](#) to reduce the possibility of staff being subjected to violence and aggression and follow processes in preparing for an office appointment outlined in the manual. VACCA has an [aggression and violence policy](#) with procedures to follow if a client is violent in the office. If this occurs the [critical incident policy](#) outlines what staff and management are to do in response to the incident.

These policies provide explicit procedures which staff should follow, whenever a client or staff member has been violent or aggressive.

VACCA reminds staff that if they are physically assaulted in any way, this is a criminal offence and they may choose to press charges against the perpetrator. Any kind of physical violence will be treated seriously and referred to the police where necessary.

## Client expenses (brokerage)

The program has client expense brokerage funding to support the needs of Community members. The use of brokerage funding needs to be in line with the support plan developed and directly related to outcomes for the Community member. This funding enables the program to provide flexible and responsive services based on the needs of the individual, examples include the purchase of services, physical or mental health assessments and material aid.

The caseworker and team leader will discuss the needs of each Community member involved with the program and identify their financial support needs. The caseworker will record all client expenses on the [brokerage summary form](#).

## Promote Community engagement and connection

VACCA's [community calendar](#) is a tool for keeping caseworkers and Community members up to date with events and activities in the Community. The caseworker is expected to review the calendar and to let Community members know about upcoming events and activities on a regular basis.

Given the program is a state-wide service the caseworker will need to contact local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to be informed of local Community activities and events and provide contact details to carers to remain informed.

## Care team meetings

Care team meetings are an important way for the professionals involved with an individual to communicate with each other and coordinate services. The caseworker will convene regular care team meetings and encourage and support Community member's participation in these meetings.

Depending on the circumstances, Child Protection may convene these meetings, as agreed.

## 3.9 Case review

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### Case review requirements and documentation

All [support plans](#) are subject to a quarterly case review. The caseworker needs to routinely reflect upon the circumstances of the Community member based on new information and action outcomes. Interventions may need to be revised outside of quarterly reviews where there are significant changes in the Community member's circumstances.

Case reviews take place for all clients every quarter, every year, occurring in the third week of December, March, June and September. The caseworker will review their cases during these weeks and bring the reviews to supervision with their team leader or program manager for discussion.

In addition to the [support plan](#), the caseworker will need to complete the following documentation as part of the review:

- a [client feedback form](#) with the Community member for them to provide feedback about their assessment of their issues, progress of improving safety and wellbeing, referral and engagement with other services and satisfaction with services provided
- a [caseworker observation and feedback form](#) of assessment of achievement and progress of support plan, reduced risk as a result of services, improved safety and wellbeing engagement with other services
- where required other professionals involved with the community may be requested to complete the [caseworker observation and feedback form](#) to be incorporated in case review and reporting to the Department of Prime Minister and cabinet.

Team leaders will also complete regular audits of client files using the [client file audit tool](#) throughout involvement with the Community member or family to ensure all documents and casenotes have been completed and are on the file as per the [client file structure](#).

## 3.10 Exit planning

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### Exit planning requirements

It is expected that Community members will remain in the program until they have achieved long term goals and improved their safety and wellbeing. The time of support will be based on the needs of the Community member as outlined in their support plan. As the Community member begins achieving their medium and long term goals, the caseworker should begin discussing a transition and exit plan from the program.



#### Cultural tips for exit planning

- help individuals to identify Community supports and establish a support network before leaving the program
- work through any concerns individuals may have about the program ending, or their concerns about being referred to non-Aboriginal services
- give information on relevant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services and check whether the Aboriginal services require proof of Aboriginality as part of their eligibility
- make sure individuals know about upcoming cultural and Community activities to remain connected to culture and Community
- ensure Community members know they can contact VACCA at any time should they need further support.

### If a Community member wants to withdraw from the program

A Community member has the right to withdraw from the program at any time. The caseworker needs to encourage people to stay in the program if there are current safety and wellbeing issues.

The caseworker is to consult with their team leader in regards to strategies to keep the Community member engaged in the program and continue to work towards achieving goals to improve their safety and wellbeing.

## 3.11 Case closure

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Case closure is an important event, providing the opportunity for all involved to reflect and review progress on goals, acknowledge the experiences gained during the program, celebrate successes and achievements and plan for the future. This should occur in a meeting with the Community member 2-3 weeks prior to closure. The caseworker also needs to discuss how support was delivered and seek feedback about:

- what worked well?
- what were the challenges?
- how could we improve services provided?

Closing the case is a responsibility shared by the caseworker and the team leader or program manager. When a case is closed, the caseworker is responsible for:

- completing the [case closure summary](#) and discussing this with the client
- sending a copy of the closure report to the family and Child Protection, if they are still involved
- sending closure letters to Child Protection and other relevant professionals
- sending a closure letter to the family using the [case closure letter template](#)
- placing copies of the closure letters and the closure report in the client file
- complete a [closure checklist](#)
- providing the entire client file (multiple files) to their line manager for sign-off.

The caseworker will also need to inform the individual that VACCA has a Continuous Quality Improvement team that will send out a feedback form to seek independent feedback to improve services we provide at VACCA. The program will also contact the Community member and send a feedback form in 3-6 months to gain feedback about their current situation after the program has ended.

The caseworker's line manager is responsible for reviewing the file to ensure that the closure report and letters are completed to the required standard, and that the file has been appropriately maintained.

The team leader, program or operations manager is also responsible for:

- completing a [client file audit tool](#)
- advising relevant senior managers that the case has been closed
- ensuring that the client information database is updated with closure information
- closing the client file and sending for archiving, as per VACCA policy and procedures.

The team leader is responsible for advising the Continuous Quality Improvement team of all closed cases for processes to be completed to seek independent feedback and input from community to improve the services we provide at VACCA.

The team leader is also responsible for ensuring the caseworker contacts the Community member and sends a [client closure feedback form](#) in 3-6 months after closure to gain feedback about their current situation and ability to maintain safety wellbeing.

## 3.12 Re-entry into the program

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To re-enter the program, all Community members must go through the same referral and intake process as a new referral. The caseworker will need to advise Community members that they can self-refer into the program or other VACCA programs in the future should they require additional support.

## 4. Child safety and wellbeing



### 4.1 Child safety and wellbeing

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VACCA is committed to the safety and wellbeing of at risk and vulnerable children and young people and place the safety of children and young people above all else. This commitment is clearly stated in VACCA's Child Safe policy and is reflected throughout a range of other VACCA policy, procedures guidelines and practice. VACCA programs and services are consistent with the Victorian Child Safe standards ensuring that a proactive approach is taken to protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.

Staff need to be familiar with the child safe policy understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from abuse and comply with procedures outlined in this policy.

More information about child safety can be found in the [client services manual](#).

### 4.2 Responding to concerns for a child

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All children have a right to feel and be safe and to live in an environment that is free from abuse, neglect and violence. VACCA expects that staff who know or believe a child is being hurt by someone in their family or is living in a home that is unsafe will act on behalf of that child to protect them, regardless of whether this happens in course of their work or in Community.

Staff are expected to be familiar with [VACCA's child safe policy](#) that sets out roles, responsibilities and procedures to respond to and report suspected child abuse or neglect.



## 5. Staff safety and wellbeing

### 5.1 Staff safety and wellbeing

It is important for staff to keep themselves safe and well while working in the Aboriginal Stronger Families program. Working with children and families with complex needs can be challenging emotionally and physically and at times place staff in unsafe situations. Safety issues can arise in and out of the office, outside of work hours, and for Aboriginal staff in the Community.

VACCA requires you to be familiar with the [staff safety](#) and [staff wellbeing](#) policies. These policies aim to protect and maintain your safety and wellbeing.

In preparing for contact with children, young people and families, it is important staff assess and plan for potential risks (example during bushfire fire season), including how to respond to identified risks. The [staff safety](#) policy sets out the safety procedures to be followed in planning and working with children and families:

- in the office
- while attending home visits, at court or in other places
- when transporting children and families in VACCA vehicles or other forms of transport.

For Aboriginal staff living and working in Community, this policy also sets out the safety procedures to follow when attending Community and cultural events.

#### Practice tips for staff safety

- Look after yourself and be aware of your wellbeing and safety, and that of your colleagues.
- Actively manage your work and personal boundaries.
- If you are part of the Aboriginal Community, be aware of your safety in Community and of triggers that may contribute to your own trauma.
- If you are concerned that your wellbeing or safety is at risk, discuss the issue with your program manager and refer to VACCA's staff wellbeing and staff safety policies.

VACCA understands the impact our work can have on your health, in particular the impact of vicarious and intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal staff. The [staff wellbeing](#) policy outlines the things that we will do to maintain your wellbeing and the programs and services in place to support you.

We are committed to providing you with:

- access to appropriate counselling
- regular support and guidance (including debriefing) from team leaders and managers
- workplace action to reduce stress when the need arises
- training and other professional development opportunities to increase your capabilities and knowledge
- information and options for managing stress and support where required
- culturally appropriate and respectful supervision.

However critical incidents in the workplace involving or affecting staff may occur and these are defined as staff incidents.

A staff incident may include for example:

- a staff member is physically injured at work through a workplace accident
- a staff member becomes emotionally unwell through workplace bullying or vicarious trauma
- a staff member is physically or verbally threatened or assaulted by a client.

A [staff incident report](#) form must be completed where a critical staff incident has occurred.

There are a number of other related policies and procedures that staff are required to understand and enact to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and their colleague. These procedures are generally covered under [occupational health and safety](#) and [human resources](#) policies.

## 5.2 Supervision

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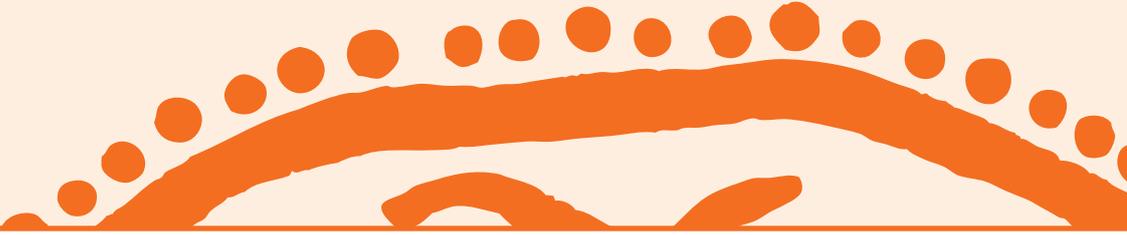
All VACCA workers are supervised and managed according to [Our work our ways VACCA's supervision program](#). There are a range of the [supervision forms](#) that are to be used to document supervision arrangements and record supervision.

The program conducts regular supervision that is documented in a supervision agreement for all workers, team leaders and managers. Supervision is to be documented on the supervision record or unscheduled supervision record. Where the team leader or manager provides direction on a particular case, the Action plan for casework section is to be completed for each client and placed on the client file.

Supervision creates opportunities for the workers to talk about their work, identify and address issues, develop high-quality assessments and plans and review support provided to the Community.

Please refer to the [Our work our ways VACCA's supervision program](#) for more information about supervision.

## 6. Quality



### 6.1 Quality Services

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VACCA is committed to providing quality services and continuously improving our services. Staff are expected to deliver efficient, effective, consistent quality services that meet legislative obligations and standards. VACCA has policies, client services program and procedure manuals, forms and templates in place to direct and manage work across programs to ensure we meet our organisational obligations and provide quality services to the Community.

The Continuous Quality Improvement team undertake internal auditing, facilitate external audits, analyse data including incident reports, feedback and complaints to support VACCA in developing, reviewing and updating policies, procedures, forms and templates.

Staff are expected to be familiar with VACCA policies, client services program and procedure manuals and use correct forms and templates. If unsure of procedures or forms to use caseworkers need to speak with their line manager, or contact the Continuous Quality Improvement team for information about where the correct information or form is located.

### 6.2 Responding to critical incidents

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Caseworkers are expected to be familiar with [VACCA's critical client incident policy](#) and respond to critical incidents according to these procedures. It has been developed in line with the department's critical incident management instructions.

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff in reporting and responding to critical incidents that involve or impacts on clients during VACCA's work with them. Caseworkers need to speak to their line manager to discuss and plan appropriate responses that need to occur and ensure that timeframes of reporting critical incidents are met.

## 6.3 Feedback processes

The program is to gather and receive feedback according to [VACCA's feedback guidelines](#). When individuals and families have contact with the program they will be given information about how to provide positive feedback and make a complaint. This involves talking to them about:

- how they can give feedback
- who they can give feedback to
- giving feedback anonymously
- the importance of their feedback – that it is valued and treated with respect and in the strictest confidence.

A complaint and feedback form is to be provided to all clients in the client information pack.

VACCA's Continuous Quality Improvement team will be advised of all closed cases and send independent feedback forms to people who access VACCA's services to seek input from community that is used to improve the services we provide at VACCA.

Information about handling complaints is contained in the client complaints section of the [client services manual](#).

### Cultural tips for obtaining feedback

Aboriginal people may feel uneasy about providing feedback for a number of reasons. When asking for feedback it is important to:

- explain why feedback is important to VACCA and how it will be used
- provide them with a variety of options for feedback so they can choose the one they feel most comfortable with
- assure them that good and bad feedback is appreciated and if they prefer they can provide feedback anonymously.

## 6.4 Privacy and confidentiality

All staff in the program must handle personal information related to staff, service users, volunteers and third parties according to relevant legislation and the VACCA [privacy](#) and [confidentiality policies](#). It is important that all staff understand their responsibilities in protecting and managing client information, including sharing their information.

If a caseworker is concerned about the privacy and confidentiality obligations expected of them, or has trouble understanding the policy, they are asked to speak to the program manager.



### Cultural tips for talking to families about privacy and confidentiality

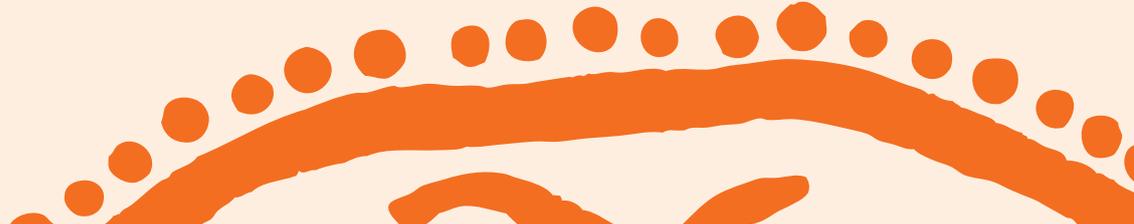
Aboriginal people may have fears about the security of their information in an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation. It is important to:

- always advise children and families of their privacy rights and their right to change caseworkers if there is a conflict of interest because of family and community connections
- describe to them how you will keep their information safe and the systems in place to restrict access to their information
- encourage them to talk to you if they are worried that their information is unsafe
- address privacy concerns immediately.

Please take the time to read the privacy and information sharing section in the [client services manual](#).



## 7. Resources



### 7.1 Key legislation

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The Koorie Connect works within the requirements of the following legislation:

- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#) (Vic.)
- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005](#) (Vic.)
- [Working with Children Act 2005](#) (Vic.)
- [Information Privacy Act 2000](#) (Vic.)
- [Health Records Act 2001](#) (Vic.)
- [Family Law Act 1975](#) (Commonwealth)
- [Family Violence Protection Act 2008](#) (Vic.)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#) (Vic.)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#) (Vic.).

A summary of each of these Acts is provided in the legislation section of the [client services manual](#).

### 7.2 Key sector policies and frameworks

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The program is underpinned by a range of sector policies and practice frameworks. It is important that you learn about these and understand how they relate to your day-to-day practice. The most relevant sector policies and frameworks are provided below.

- [Indigenous Advancement Strategy Guidelines](#)
- [Best interests case practice model](#)
- [Dardee Boorai: Victorian charter of safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people \(2008\)](#)
- [Aboriginal cultural competence framework \(2008\)](#)
- [Marrung Education Plan 2016-2026](#).

More information about these key policies and frameworks can be found in the [client services manual](#).

## 7.3 Key VACCA policies and frameworks

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All staff will need to be familiar with and know how to locate VACCA policies as they relate to their area of work. These policies and frameworks have been developed to guide the way in which staff undertake their roles and responsibilities within the organisation.

It is your responsibility to be aware of these policies and frameworks and ensure you work within these guidelines.

All VACCA policies fall under the following key headings within the VACCA organisational folder. Please click on the hyperlinks to familiarise yourself with the policies within each of these headings:

- [Governance](#)
- [Foundation documents](#)
- [Corporate services](#)
- [Finance](#)
- [Occupational health and safety](#)
- [Human resources](#)
- [Information management](#)
- [Client services](#)
- [Quality](#)

Critical to working within the organisation is having an awareness and understanding of the [VACCA strategic plan 2015-18](#). All staff are expected to read this plan and refer to it regularly. More information about the VACCA strategic plan can be found in the [client services manual](#).

VACCA has developed a number of frameworks to support the organisation and more specifically support staff in delivering services to children and families. These include:

- [Our work, our ways: VACCA's supervision program](#)
- [Building respectful partnerships: the commitment to Aboriginal cultural competence in child and family services](#)
- [VACCA contracted case management guide](#)

In addition to VACCA's policies and frameworks and strategic plan, each program area will also have an operational business and risk plan. This plan contains important information about the programs objectives, reporting requirements, targets and strategic directions. The program's operational plan can be obtained from your team leader or manager.

## 7.4 Practice tools

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- [Client services manual](#)
- [Introduction to out-of-home care manual](#)
- [Introduction to family violence manuals](#)
- [Koorie Emergency Relief Program and procedure manual](#)
- [Community calendar](#)
- [Program structure](#)

## 7.5 Forms

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- [Client file structure](#)
- [Client summary information](#)
- [Intake and assessment form](#)
- [Client information pack](#)
- [Client information pack checklist](#)
- [Supervision forms](#)
- [Support plan](#)
- [Client feedback form](#)
- [Caseworker observation and feedback form](#)
- [Data report](#)
- [Case note template](#)
- [Client file audit tool](#)
- [Closure letter template](#)
- [Case closure summary](#)
- [Closure checklist](#)
- [Client closure feedback form](#)



