



VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL

WORKING TOGETHER

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Peer Test Facilitator & Health Promotion Support Worker

PROGRAM: VACountry Program

POSITION STATUS: 0.2 EFT (7.6 hours per week)

REPORTING TO: VACountry Program Coordinator

LOCATION: This position is based in Bendigo at both Bendigo Community Health Services and VACountry sites. From time to time the incumbent may be out posted to other VAC sites or other collaborating community venues.

CLASSIFICATION: VAC-GMHC Employment Agreement April 2014 (Support Services Employee, (Health Professionals & Support Services) Level 5 PP2

1. ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) was formed in 1983 as a central part of the Victorian community's response to HIV and AIDS. VAC aims to improve the health and social and emotional well-being of LGBTI communities and those living with and affected by HIV.

VAC employs around 100 staff members, across a broad variety of program areas. Professional development programs are in place, including individual supervision and a professional development program. Staff members have regular clinical supervision. Strategies are in place to maintain a stable, motivated, and supported workforce through regular staff meetings, and peer review meetings.

Our purpose

To reduce HIV transmissions in Victoria by promoting the health of gay men and of people living with HIV.

To work in partnership to improve health outcomes for the sexually and gender diverse community.

Our Vision

A future without HIV.

A world where all sexually and gender diverse people live with dignity, with equal rights, and participate fully in our society.

Our Mission

VAC leads the fight against HIV in Victoria by providing care and support for people living with HIV, health promotion, and advocacy.

We advocate, with partner organisations, to improve health outcomes for sexually and gender diverse communities.

For more information on our organisation please visit our website www.vac.org.au

2. PROGRAM CONTEXT, ROLE & FOCUS

HIV testing is a key HIV prevention strategy for gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) in Australia. It is believed that up to one third of HIV infections in the Melbourne gay community are currently undiagnosed and modelling shows that increased coverage and frequency of testing for HIV amongst high risk gay men and other gay men and MSM will be the most effective public health intervention to reduce future transmissions of HIV. Outside of metropolitan Melbourne peer led HIV and sexual health testing has not been available until the development of this project.

This best practice peer led education and testing model will address key barriers for HIV and STI testing among gay men and MSM in regional Victoria, including: lack of speciality services/practitioners, needing to return to receive HIV test results, and psycho-social barriers to disclosing same-sex relationships and sexual risk behaviours in clinical practice. Adapting a highly successful peer led HIV rapid point of care testing (RPOCT) model implemented in Melbourne, the project will provide sexual health education and screening for HIV/STIs to gay men and MSM in the Loddon Mallee region. This 12-month trial will help advocate for and inform the expansion of models across regional Victoria and nationally, improve equity of access to preventive health services for gay men and MSM in regional areas and reduce HIV and STIs through increased testing and earlier diagnosis. The Burnet Institute and the VAC have a long and successful history of collaborative public health implementation research. The recent establishment of VACountry in Bendigo now provides an opportunity to build on the successful Burnet/VAC partnership that saw us implement Australia's first shop-front HIV/STI peer led testing service for gay men and MSM in Melbourne (PRONTO!) and implement Australia's first rural peer led sexual health service for gay men and other MSM.

The primary objectives of PRONTO! Bendigo are to:

- Establish an accessible, high quality, confidential community based HIV testing and STI testing service in Bendigo. This will be a partnership between Bendigo Community Health Services, VAC and Burnet Institute
- To increase the frequency of HIV and STI testing among sexually active and high risk gay men and MSM in regional Victoria
- Reduce barriers to gay men and MSM in regional Victoria accessing HIV and STI testing at the recommended frequency
- Provide high quality evidence of the impact of community based and rapid point of care HIV testing for reducing HIV transmission risk among gay men and MSM in regional Victoria
- Enhance access to primary and secondary sexual health services by working in partnership with existing service providers
- Provide recommendations for future models of HIV testing in regional Victoria and nationally
- PRONTO! Bendigo operates within the Services Division of the VAC which holds full responsibility for the ongoing operations of the site.

Service culture

The Rapid HIV Testing service is designed to offer a friendly, non-clinical and inclusive environment. An open style of communication is encouraged between workers and guests/clients of the service. A safe environment is a paramount consideration at all times. We encourage a service culture that is accountable and respectful and where uncertainty or stressful situations do not negatively affect professional relationships or customer service.

It is expected that the Peer Test Facilitator & Health Promotion Support Worker will practice at all times in a way that maintains the integrity, reputation and function of the service with particular regard to the principles of privacy and confidentiality. This role inhabits unusual territory with regard to the style of relationship that might be established with service users and therefore requires a judicious use of 'self' within that relationship.

3. POSITION ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The specific role of the Test Facilitator is to provide peer-based rapid HIV and STI testing to gay men and men who have sex with men, initiate and facilitate appropriate referrals into care and follow-up and undertake related administrative duties at the Rapid HIV Testing site. The framework of this project is a combination of peer education, healthcare and promotion and cultural intervention. This position operates as part of a team that is collectively responsible for participating in all aspects of the projects ongoing planning, development and evaluation and the post holder is required

to keep abreast of trends and changes in HIV in Australia, related research and other social and cultural developments in an endeavour to ensure effective messaging and engagement. As the services capacity, demand and impact is more fully understood, testing for other STI's may be an additional requirement of this role.

The incumbent will also be required to support other health promotion activities within the program:

- **Supporting on the outcomes of the VACountry program education strategies**
The incumbent will assist in the efficient delivery of the VACountry Program's education activities. They will be required to support specific project tasks and may be required to coordinate one or more of the program's activities. This may include supporting community hub activities, social groups and events.
- **Supporting LGBTI alcohol and drug projects**
The incumbent will provide information and referral support for LGBTI clients impacted by alcohol and drug use. In addition, the worker will support the development of health promotion and harm reduction resources through working with peer led and community groups.
- **Social Marketing**
The incumbent may be required to assist in the implementation of social marketing campaigns in collaboration with the VACountry coordinator and/or external organisations and stakeholders. This can include print materials such as posters, pamphlets and press advertisements, online advertisements, writing articles for the print media, planning and/or assisting in planning community forums and other activities to build the capacity of target groups to respond to and address HIV-related health promotion issues assisting in the development and promotion of social marketing campaigns
- **Support of Volunteers**
The implementation of effective education strategies will be delivered with the involvement of volunteers. The incumbent may be required to assist in the recruit and maintain the interest and enthusiasm of volunteers. They may be expected to encourage the involvement of existing and new volunteers in the program's activities, and to support the work of volunteers.

Other requirements of this role include:

- Conducting HIV/STI risk assessments for individual clients of the service through an appropriate and effective pre and post Rapid HIV test counselling technique (as a person of prescribed class)
- Conducting Rapid HIV testing and interpretation through the use of the Rapid HIV testing device in accordance with Australasian Society for HIV Medicine(ASHM)/ Rapid Point Of Care (RPOC) testing guidelines, HIV Point of Care device training received under the supervision of a Registered Nurse, adopting the principles and practices of universal precautions and safe sharps disposal
- Delivering negative and provisionally reactive Rapid HIV Test results to clients with appropriate sensitivity as a person of prescribed class
- Conducting Rapid syphilis testing and interpretation through the use of the rapid syphilis test device adopting the principles and practices of universal precautions and safe sharps disposal
- Delivering negative and provisionally reactive rapid syphilis test results to clients with appropriate sensitivity and offering referral into care to the facility of the clients choice as per referral pathway guidelines
- Providing STI testing, advice and onward referral to external agencies as appropriate
- Providing phlebotomy for patients for parallel HIV and Syphilis testing
- Providing Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) advice and immediate onward referral as appropriate
- Provide onward referral for HIV care and / or STI Treatment to the facility of the clients choice as per referral pathway guidelines
- Maintaining accurate records of risk assessments and other significant client interactions within the medical software employed in the service
- Data collection as indicated by tools provided for sentinel surveillance and/or other purposes

- as directed by the Program Manager
- Attend onsite/offsite training as directed by the Program Manager
- Covering reception duties during break times and when requested by the Program Manager

It is expected that the Test Facilitator will practice at all times in a way that maintains the integrity, reputation and function of the service with particular regard to the principles of privacy and confidentiality. This role inhabits unusual territory with regard to the style of relationship that might be established with service users and therefore requires a judicious use of 'self' within that relationship.

4. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications

Applicants must complete training as a person of prescribed class to engage in pre and post HIV test counselling.
Current Drivers license.

Skills and experience

1. An understanding of HIV prevention and the role that rapid testing plays
2. Demonstrated ability to work independently and capacity and willingness to contribute to a supportive and productive team environment
3. Demonstrated sensitivity towards issues faced by gay men, in particular fears and concerns around HIV/STI testing and the ability to establish rapport quickly and to elicit information for the purpose of HIV/STI risk assessment
4. Demonstrated understanding of the principles of and requirement for confidentiality relating to any client engagement or interaction
5. An understanding of the interpersonal boundaries needed in order to operate without compromise in this role
6. Ability to convey warmth, openness, empathy and concern for the wellbeing of clients

Desirable

Demonstrated experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Active participation in the LGBTI communities
- Experience in peer-based interventions within a combined Public Health, Health Promotion and Clinical framework
- Qualifications relating specifically to Health Promotion, Public Health or Peer Education
- Previous experience in a community based organisation
- Previous experience in phlebotomy

5. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Salary is paid under the Victorian AIDS Council Inc. and Gay Men's Health Centre Inc Employment Agreement

- Health Professionals & Support Services Award 2010 Level 5 Classification and the Victorian AIDS Council Inc. Employment Agreement 2006 commensurate with experience. The hourly rate for this role is \$27.84
- Salary packaging is a legitimate method of restructuring existing salary into a combination of salary and expense payment benefits to provide a higher net remuneration for the employee. This arrangement is available at VAC
- Employer's contribution to superannuation (9.5%) will also be paid.
- Conditions of employment are as stated in the Victorian AIDS Council Inc. and Gay Men's Health Centre Inc Employment Agreement.
- The position is for a minimum of 7.6 hours per week fixed term for 12 months from date of commencement.
- A willingness and ability to work flexible hours is required, including during early evening. Occasional weekend meetings and other work-related commitments may arise.
- Completion by VAC of a satisfactory police check.
- A Confidentiality Agreement must be signed.
- VAC is an equal opportunity employer. All staff members are required to contribute to creating a non-discriminatory workplace.
- VAC provides a non-smoking workplace.
- Membership of the appropriate union is strongly encouraged.
- Applicants must be either Australian citizens, or have permanent resident status.

6. PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

VAC has a commitment to ensuring that VACountry staff members receive high quality professional supervision on a regular basis. The Test Facilitator is required to attend this supervision.

7. WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

As an employee of VAC, staff members need to strive to ensure a safe and healthy workplace by complying with the provisions of Section 25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Duties of Employees).

8. APPLICATION PROCESS

Written applications addressing the selection criteria and including a resume and the names and contact details of three professional referees should be sent to recruitment@vac.org.au

For further enquiries please contact: Harry Mc Anulty ph: 0437004680

Applications close on: Sunday 10th September 2017.

Important: it is essential that applicants specifically address the selection criteria. Where selection criteria have not been addressed, applications will not be considered.