



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE



Position Description

Title:	Head of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Department:	Mission Directorate – Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Location:	Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Centre, 434 St Georges Road, Thornbury (with occasional travel across Melbourne required)
Employment Status:	Permanent, full time
Reports to:	Director of Mission, Archdiocese of Melbourne
Number of direct reports:	2 part-time team members

Position Overview

The Head of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry provides culturally informed, pastoral and operational leadership for Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM) and leads its staff, relationship, resources and day-to-day ministry.

The Head of ACM is responsible for sustaining the ACM House as a welcoming, culturally safe and spiritually supportive place, while strengthening relationships with Aboriginal Catholics, families, communities, parishes, schools, clergy, Church agencies and community partners across Melbourne and Victoria.

ACM is presently in a significant phase of transition and discernment for its future ministry. This position will participate constructively and humbly in the listening and discernment process, helping to contribute to the conditions in which Aboriginal Catholic voices, experiences, faith needs and hopes can be heard. The role will respect that the future direction is to be discerned by Aboriginal Catholics themselves, with clergy and lay supporters, and in consultation with the Archbishop of Melbourne and the Bishops of Victoria.

As the renewed vision emerges and is endorsed, the Head will translate it into an achievable strategy, operating model, programs, partnerships and measures of success. The role therefore requires a leader who can hold continuity and change together: stewarding the ministry faithfully in the present while building the relationships, capability and systems needed for its future.

The Head of ACM is employed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and forms part of the Mission Directorate, reporting to the Director of Mission and is subject to the ethos which underpins the values of both ACM and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designated position

This position is designated for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Only Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are eligible to apply.

The designation of this position reflects the particular purpose of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, lived experience, cultural knowledge and community relationships to the effective leadership of the ministry.

This recruitment is intended to operate as a special measure under section 12 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).

About Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM) is a ministry of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, shaped by Aboriginal Catholics, for Aboriginal Catholics, and offered as a gift to the wider Church. Since its beginnings in 1987, ACM has sought to be a place of belonging, prayer, formation, cultural expression and community connection. The ACM House in Thornbury holds enduring significance as a sacred place of memory and hope for Aboriginal Catholics and the wider community.

ACM is committed to strengthening the participation, leadership and voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the life of the Church. Its ministry is grounded in respect for the dignity of each person, open hospitality, healing, reconciliation and right relationship.

In 2026, the Church in Australia marks the 40th anniversary of [St John Paul II's historic address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Alice Springs on 29 November 1986](#). His words affirmed the indispensable place, voice and gifts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the life of the Church. Drawing upon the image of a burnt tree in which the sap continues to flow, he spoke of endurance, hope and renewal, proclaiming: "The time for this rebirth is now." This anniversary provides an important context for ACM's present discernment—honouring the enduring faith, resilience and spiritual richness of Aboriginal Catholics while looking with hope and courage towards the ministry's renewed future.

Organisational Description

Presided over by the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) serves as the spiritual home for 1.1 million Catholics, making it the largest Archdiocese in Australia. Rooted in a rich tradition of faith, service, and community, the Archdiocese embraces a diverse and vibrant network of parishes, schools, ministries, and outreach programs, providing pastoral care, education, social welfare, and administrative support to the wider community.

Guided by the Archbishop's key priorities, the mission of the Archdiocese is to renew and strengthen parish life and faith communities, engage and inspire youth and young adults, support the formation of adults and families, and reform Church structures and operating reform. Our commitment is to foster a culture of renewal and missionary discipleship, ensuring that the Church remains a source of hope and transformation in an evolving world.

Key Accountabilities

Mission Leadership and Stewardship

- Provide visible, values-based leadership of ACM in a manner consistent with its Catholic mission and the dignity, cultures, spirituality and lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Ensure the ACM House remains a place of welcome, belonging, prayer, gathering, cultural expression and respectful encounter.
- Hold together the pastoral, spiritual, cultural and organisational dimensions of ACM so that its activities remain purposeful, responsive and sustainable.
- Represent ACM appropriately within the Archdiocese, across the Victorian dioceses and with external partners, and provide informed advice on matters affecting Aboriginal Catholics and the ministry.

Discernment Listening and Transition

- Participate in and support the current discernment process with humility, openness to the Holy Spirit and respect for Aboriginal Catholic leadership and self-determination.
- Build trusted pathways for listening to Aboriginal Catholics across the Archdiocese and Victoria, including people who may not currently be connected with ACM.
- Support culturally safe conversations in which community members can express their experiences, needs, hopes and priorities, ensuring participation is accessible and not merely consultative in name.
- Provide timely information, operational support and advice to the discernment group, the Director of Mission, the Archbishop of Melbourne and, as appropriate, the Bishops of Victoria, without pre-empting or directing the outcome.
- Maintain clear records of themes, recommendations, decisions and commitments, with appropriate regard for cultural authority, consent, confidentiality and the stewardship of community knowledge.
- Develop and manage a transition plan that protects essential ministry, relationships, staff wellbeing and service continuity while the future model is being discerned.

Future Vision Strategy and Implementation

- Following endorsement of the future vision, convert the discerned direction into clear strategic priorities, implementation plans, responsibilities, timeframes, budgets and measures of success.
- Lead change with transparency and care, communicating what has been heard, what has been decided and how the renewed vision will be implemented.
- Develop programs, gatherings, formation, pastoral initiatives and partnerships that respond to the discerned needs and aspirations of Aboriginal Catholics.
- Regularly evaluate progress with community and key Church stakeholders and adapt implementation where learning, circumstances or community feedback require it.

Community Engagement and Relationships

- Develop and sustain respectful, reciprocal and trusted relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics, Elders, families, communities and organisations.

- Strengthen connections with parishes, schools, clergy, religious institutes, Catholic agencies and other dioceses so that Aboriginal Catholic voice, leadership, faith and culture are more fully recognised in the life of the Church.
- Support opportunities for prayer, sacramental life, formation, cultural expression, healing, reconciliation and community gathering.
- Ensure engagement reflects local cultural protocols, recognises diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and avoids speaking on behalf of community where authority has not been given.

People Leadership

- Lead, supervise and develop two direct reports, currently the Engagement Officer and Administration Assistant, providing clear priorities, regular supervision, constructive feedback and appropriate pastoral support.
- Establish team plans and individual goals aligned with ACM priorities, monitor performance and workload, and foster accountability, collaboration and continuous learning.
- Build the cultural capability of the team and ensure staff, volunteers and partners understand and uphold expectations for cultural safety, safeguarding, professional conduct and respectful relationships.
- Support staff through the discernment and transition period by communicating clearly, managing uncertainty responsibly and involving team members appropriately in planning and implementation.

Governance Operations and Sustainability

- Prepare annual plans, budgets, reports, funding proposals and acquittals, and monitor expenditure and resources in accordance with Archdiocesan requirements.
- Ensure appropriate governance, risk management, recordkeeping, privacy, safeguarding, work health and safety and other relevant Archdiocesan policies are embedded in ACM activities.
- Oversee the safe, welcoming and effective operation of the ACM House, including use of facilities, events, maintenance, resources and community access.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships and resource development that strengthen the long-term sustainability of the ministry without compromising its purpose or community priorities.
- Provide regular, concise reporting to the Director of Mission on ministry outcomes, emerging needs, risks, finances and implementation progress.

Safeguarding and Professional Responsibilities

- Promote and uphold the safety, dignity and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults in all ACM settings and activities.
- Respond appropriately to concerns, disclosures and incidents in accordance with legal obligations and Archdiocesan policies and procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality, professional boundaries and the careful handling of sensitive personal, cultural and community information.
- Take reasonable care for personal and workplace health and safety and contribute to a respectful, inclusive and safe working environment.

- Undertake other duties reasonably required and consistent with the scope and purpose of the position.

Key Selection Criteria

Essential

1. Is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and brings the lived experience, cultural knowledge and community understanding required to lead Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in a culturally safe, respectful, faith-filled and accountable manner.
2. Demonstrated ability to build and sustain trusted relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, Elders, communities and organisations in the Catholic community.
3. Demonstrated leadership experience in community ministry, pastoral work, community development, not-for-profit services or a related field, with the capacity to hold mission, people and operations together.
4. Proven ability to support community-led consultation, listening or discernment processes without controlling their outcomes, and to synthesise diverse perspectives with integrity and discretion.
5. Demonstrated capacity to translate a community-informed vision into strategy, implementation plans, programs, partnerships, budgets and measurable outcomes.
6. Experience leading and developing staff, including setting direction, supervising performance, managing workload and supporting people through change and implementation.
7. Highly developed communication, facilitation and interpersonal skills, including the capacity to engage sensitively with community members and communicate with senior Church leaders and organisational stakeholders.
8. Sound organisational, financial, governance and project management capability, including the ability to manage competing priorities, risks, reporting and compliance obligations.
9. A mature understanding of and commitment to the mission, sacramental life and teachings of the Catholic Church, together with the capacity to support the particular identity and charism of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry.
10. Demonstrated commitment to safeguarding, ethical conduct, confidentiality and the dignity of every person.

Desirable

1. Tertiary qualifications in theology, ministry, Indigenous studies, community development, social sciences, leadership or a related discipline, or equivalent substantial experience.
2. Established relationships within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria and/or experience working with Aboriginal Catholic communities.
3. Experience working within a Catholic or faith-based environment.
4. Experience in organisational change.

Employment Requirements

- A current Working with Children Check and satisfactory National Police Check.
- Valid working rights in Australia.
- Capacity to work flexibly, including occasional evenings and weekends, and to travel within Melbourne and regional Victoria as required.