

Position Description

Consultation Liaison Psychiatrist

Classification:	Consultant Psychiatrist
Business unit/department:	Mental Health Division
Work location:	Austin Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify)
Agreement:	AMA Victoria - Victorian Public Health Sector Medical Specialists Enterprise Agreement 2022-2026
Employment type:	Part-Time
Hours per week:	14
Reports to:	Clinical Director, Specialty Services, Mental Health Division
Date:	August 2025

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Austin Health operates, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Position purpose

For this role:

Austin Consultation Liaison (CL) Psychiatry service provides a consultation-liaison service for medical and surgical inpatients at Austin Health comprising of the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, and Royal Talbot Hospital. Our service addresses the interface of medicine and psychiatry and aims to improve the quality of care for all patients at Austin Health with co-existing psychiatric, psychological or behavioural difficulties affecting their medical management.

The Consultation Liaison Consultant Psychiatrist is responsible for the leadership, management, and delivery of clinical service, psychiatry registrar supervision, staff education, and patient advocacy within the service. The Consultation Liaison Psychiatrist is a key member of the CL team which is supported by a Lead CL Consultant and Manager as well as Senior CL Clinicians, Psychiatry Registrars and HMO. The CL Psychiatrist will also assist with the quality and effectiveness of the Austin Health Specialties Mental Health Services through the provision of professional supervision and contribute to the development of quality assurance processes and practices.

The CL Psychiatrist will be expected to:

- Have a detailed knowledge of consultation liaison psychiatry as demonstrated by experience and/or Advanced certificate in Consultation Liaison psychiatry from RANZCP or equivalent.

- Demonstrate experience with a variety of liaison psychiatry settings, including in-reach to the emergency department where indicated.
- Demonstrate capacity to build professional relationships between liaison psychiatry and the general hospital.
- Demonstrate commitment to improving the quality and safety of patients across a health service and throughout the lifespan (including paediatrics and aged).
- Demonstrate an ability to work with medical and surgical teams to achieve optimal health outcomes for patients of Austin Health.
- Must hold a current Working with Children Check (WWC Check) in compliance with the Working with Children Act 2005.
- Undertake specialist mental health assessments of patients referred from the medical and surgical inpatient units or specialist out-patient Liaison clinics
- To practice Evidence Based Medicine
- Provide specialist mental health consultation service which will offer management advice to the multidisciplinary team caring for the patients
- To provide ongoing assessment to monitor and review the effectiveness of intervention strategies implemented
- Ensure ongoing liaison occurs between medical, surgical and mental health teams
- Provide support and psychoeducation to patients and their family/carers about mental illness
- Liaise with other specialist services to ensure that the needs of patients with co-morbid mental health needs are met
- Promote and provide education to staff about mental health
- Implement education programs for staff to promote development of skills in risk assessment and clinical practice in the management of patients with mental health issues
- Actively participate in team meetings, clinical reviews and supervisors' meetings within the Mental Health Division
- Provide clinical and college supervision for the Psychiatry Registrars working in the service and appropriate supervision to the CL medical HMO
- Promote service initiatives and developments related to managing patients with mental health issues
- Ensure implementation of Austin Health objectives, policies, rules and regulations
- Promote strong inter-agency relationships and ensure timely and accurate information sharing between services with shared consumers
- Maintain a commitment to continuous quality improvement through ongoing evaluation of the service provided

General:

To provide consultant psychiatric services to the Mental Health Division (MHD) as directed / required. The Consultant Psychiatrist will ensure that services provided by the MH Division are the highest standard, emphasizing excellence, service, care, staff performance, cost efficiency, research and education within a comprehensive clinical governance framework.

The Consultant Psychiatrist provides clinical leadership within the Mental Health Division of Austin Health and ensures compliance with:

- National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2002
- National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Version 2019
- Austin Health Code of Conduct.

And they will participate in on-call rosters, ECT rosters, or other duties as required by Mental Health Division Medical Director or delegate.



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The Consultant Psychiatrist is expected to provide high-level psychiatric services within their approved scope of clinical practice as part of the Mental Health Division at Austin Health and is expected to provide routine specialist mental health services and cover “on call” after hours.

The Consultant Psychiatrist role is a senior Medical Position and carries with it the professional responsibilities of clinical leadership, teaching and training as well as administrative requirements.

Key Priorities

Continuum of Care

(Includes service provision, consumer/patient assessment, care planning, continuing management)

- To ensure high quality acute assessment and treatment services are provided to the patients of the service in line with the key principles of the Victorian Mental Health Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, including but not limited to, an emphasis on consumer-focused recovery, accessibility, quality of care, evidence-based treatments that are safe and therapeutic and a holistic whole person approach.
- To develop treatment programs, which as far as possible enable treatment in the least restrictive environment for patients of the service.
- To provide support for families of people with mental illness and to ensure that they and patients are well informed about mental illnesses and their treatment.
- Observe, record and report general and specific mental, physical and social conditions of patients which may be indicative of a change in their condition.
- Attendance at Clinical Governance Meetings as required.
- Ensure all records are kept current with timely and accurate documentation of the patient's progress.
- Ensure compliance with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

Austin Health's Mental Health Division provides care and services through a comprehensive range of teams to meet the needs of mental health consumers and carers throughout Victoria. Services in the MH Division are located across Austin Health and in the community.

The Mental Health Division incorporates three program areas:

- **Adult and Older Adult Mental Health Services**
- **Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health Services**
- **Mental Health Specialty Services**

All Mental Health Services work within a clinical framework that promotes recovery- oriented practice and supported decision making. This approach to client wellbeing builds on the strengths of the individual working in partnership with their treating team. It encompasses the principles of self-determination and individualised treatment and care.

Position responsibilities

Role Specific:

- Provide comprehensive and high-quality routine psychiatric services to patients allocated at Austin Health demonstrating clinical leadership in service delivery, including but not limited to in-patient services, out-patient services, community health and inter-department liaison services.
- Undertake collaborative clinical services, governance and teaching and supervisory duties as agreed with the Medical Director of MH Division.
- Undertake special mental health services or related clinical procedures as identified within your scope of clinical practice
- Share equitably in on-call duties.



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Leadership and Management

(Role of the governing body, leadership & direction)

- To provide secondary and tertiary consultation to other professionals providing services to people with mental illness within the Division.
- Participate in education sessions.
- Participate in professional activities outside Austin Health.
- Comply with the profession's Code of Ethics.
- Function in accordance with Legislation affecting psychiatric practice.
- Use and promote effective communication and interpersonal skills.
- Act to rectify unsafe practice or unprofessional conduct.
- Maintain current professional knowledge and skills.

Human Resources Management

(Includes recruitment, performance management, workplace relations, staff support)

- To supervise the work of registrars and HMO's of the service and be available to them for consultation as necessary.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with Occupational Health and Safety requirements and regulations.
- To be familiar with emergency, fire and evacuation procedures and policies.

Information Management

(Includes information management practices, systems, information technology)

- To ensure there is adequate documentation on patient care and in particular ensure diagnoses are recorded, management plans and discharge plans are completed on in- patients and treatment plans are developed and regularly updated in regard to community patients
- Ensure that all access to and knowledge of confidential material, including statutory, clinical and administrative, in any medium, is kept and maintained by all staff in a confidential manner, on the understanding that inappropriate and unapproved release of such information may result in termination of employment.
- Complete documentation in accordance with Austin Health MH Division, Austin Health requirements and Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022.
- To ensure that all aspects of service are compliant with MHA.
- Assist in identifying gaps in the service system.
- Communicate, interpret and ensure Psychiatric Services philosophy, objectives, policies and procedures are implemented.
- Participate in the formulation and periodic review of Psychiatric Service policies and procedures.
- Participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of Quality Improvement Activities.
- Attend meetings as requested.
- Regularly report on the performance of all functions.

Safe Practice and Environment

(includes Health & Safety systems)

- Promote maintenance of a safe environment for all consumers and staff in accordance with hospital policy.
- Ensure all members of staff are familiar with Occupational Health and Safety requirements and regulations.
- Take reasonable steps to safeguard consumers, other staff and members of the public from infection and be familiar with the concepts of hospital infection control policies.
- Ensure adequate medications, supplies and equipment are available, maintained and utilised economically.
- Understand hospital emergency, fire and evacuation procedures and policies.



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Improving Performance:

(In care and service delivery)

- To develop collaborative relationships with other service providers to ensure the best outcomes for people with mental illness.
- To participate in educational programs of the service, including community education.
- To provide formal teaching for trainee psychiatrists and medical students and be involved in Austin Health's training programs.
- To ensure that clinical and experimental research is ethically conducted.
- Attend relevant education programs, maintaining a commitment to personal and professional development.
- Complete personal objectives annually, or as requested.
- Promote an atmosphere which is conducive to learning for staff, patients/carers, relatives and significant others.
- Actively promote and participate in quality improvement activities by initiating and conducting relevant activities and taking action to ensure best possible outcomes for patients and the organisation.
- Identify opportunities for review of practices/patient care and initiate best practice ideals.

Performance Appraisal/Review:

- Review of appointment will occur at three months.
- 12 monthly on anniversary of appointment.
- Appraisal/review shall incorporate the assessment of Key Priorities and Performance Objectives.
- Performance shall be generally in line with guidelines of:
 - Austin Health Policies and Procedures
 - National Standards for Mental Health Clinicians

Teaching, Training and Research:

- Contribute to the supervision, education and training of junior medical, nursing and other clinical staff, including participating in their performance appraisal and feedback processes.
- Participate in both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching activities.
- Commitment to facilitate, conduct and participate in clinical and/or basic research.
- Participate in the auditing and review of clinical practices to improve clinical outcomes.

Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice

Core Scope of Clinical Practice – Procedures, therapies and competencies that a Fellow from the respective specialist medical college would be competent in practicing. This only applies to practice at Austin Health and its campuses.

All Psychiatrists should be competent in the following areas.

Theoretical/Patient Management Skills

- Demonstrate an empathic approach to the assessment of all people with mental health problems and mental illness, which fosters the formation of a therapeutic alliance.
- Elicit thorough and relevant histories from people with mental health problems and mental illness, perform comprehensive mental status examinations and document these accurately.
- Assess accurately situations where the level of disturbance is severe and risk of adverse events, such as injury to self or others, may be high.
- Assess the person's presentation in the context of his/her personality, developmental stage, resilience and coping mechanisms.
- Take account of the person's indigenous or ethnic and cultural background.



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- Determine which further investigations are appropriate for achieving a comprehensive understanding of each person with mental health problems and mental illness.
- Integrate the information obtained from people with mental health problems and mental illness and carers into a formulation of the case in which relevant predisposing as well as precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors are highlighted.
- Utilise a widely accepted diagnostic system to assist in making the diagnosis (and differential diagnosis) in each case.
- Recognise the specific issues in the assessment of people with mental health problems and mental illness related to the utilisation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022.
- Develop and implement a clear, competent care plan, informed by research and current best practice, integrating biological, psychological, social and cultural interventions according to the needs of each person with mental health problems and mental illness.
- Routinely re-evaluate diagnostic and management decisions to monitor their appropriateness and thus ensure optimal care.
- Appropriately obtain and document informed consent for treatment whenever possible.
- Offer treatment in the most appropriate setting for the individual concerned, utilising the least restrictive option for that person.
- Use humanely the provisions for involuntary hospitalization and treatment, mindful of the major implications of such hospitalization for the person with mental health problems and mental illness and his/her carers.
- Develop skills in establishing and maintaining a therapeutic alliance.
- Recognise and apply the principles of long-term care and rehabilitation for those people with chronic mental health problems.
- Use knowledge of the implications of co-existing medical illness to modify treatment appropriately.
- Recognise and utilise the contributions of non-medical professionals in the care of people with mental health problems and mental illness and collaborate effectively with these professionals to provide optimal care.
- Demonstrate a finely developed ability to communicate clearly, considerately and sensitively with people with mental health problems and mental illness, carers, other health professionals and members of the general public, in a wide variety of settings.
- Use professional interpreters appropriately.
- Keep adequate records of the history and mental status of each person with mental health problems and mental illness, as well as of significant interactions with people with mental health problems and mental illness, carers, and other professionals.
- Where possible, work with people with mental health problems and mental illness, and carers, to develop a collaborative management plan.
- Demonstrate leadership skills in settings where clinical direction is required.
- Demonstrate skills appropriate for taking on a supervisory role with students, junior colleagues or other professionals seeking supervision in psychiatry.
- Develop skills necessary to elicit and assess the perspectives of people with mental health problems and mental illness and carers on psychiatric services delivery, including, where appropriate, skills facilitating empowerment of people with mental health problems and mental illness.
- Develop skills necessary to work in a multidisciplinary environment.
- Develop skills necessary to liaise with non-psychiatrist doctors and other health care professionals in the management of physical/psychiatric comorbidity.

This will be assumed if the Psychiatrist has a Fellowship of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists or equivalent and an ongoing continuous practice in this specialty.



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Extended Scope of Clinical Practice – Procedures, therapies, and competencies that a Fellow from the respective specialist medical college would be competent in practicing after additional training, qualifications and experience as determined by the Head of Unit* has been completed. This only applies to practice at Austin Health and its campuses.

*The Head of Unit is expected to apply guidelines from the respective specialist medical college and appropriate state, national and international guidelines.

- **ECT** - All Psychiatrists should complete an approved training course including supervised treatments of ECT before providing ECT themselves. Documentation of Psychiatrists approved to provide ECT is maintained by the ECT coordinator. All Psychiatrists employed by the MH Division may be required to participate in the on- call ECT roster.
- Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
- Psychiatry of Old Age
- Consultation Liaison Psychiatry
- Addiction Psychiatry

Emergency/Life threatening situation – In a medical emergency situation, any medical staff member who is credentialed at Austin Health is permitted to provide necessary patient care, as best able, and outside their defined scope of clinical practice in order to provide life-saving measures and/or to prevent serious harm.

Please note – Recognising the dynamic and rapidly advancing nature of medical practice, if you believe a novel competence, practice or procedure should be included within your specialty's scope of clinical practice, please speak to your Head of Unit and refer to the 'Introduction of a New Technology / Clinical Practice' policy on the HUB (<http://eppic//Document/1193>).

For general accreditation the following need to be satisfied

- Demonstrated continuing professional development
- Regular attendance at audit
- Participation in one or more of the following
 - Teaching or research
 - Organising audit
 - Clinical governance
 - Other role within Austin Health but outside of the unit/specialty
 - College role

For each area where special expertise needs to be demonstrated.

Some or all of the following criteria will be used to assess accreditation:

- Specialist training or a specific fellowship
- Significant accumulated total experience in the field
- Recent experience (adequate number of cases per year in previous years)
- Satisfactory completion of an acceptable outside organisations credentialing requirements.



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Selection criteria

Essential Knowledge and skills:

- Must be a registered Medical Practitioner in Australia with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- Fellowship of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists or equivalent post graduate specialist qualification.
- To be an accredited supervisor for RANZCP training in accordance with RANZCP guidelines.
- Experience in providing services to people with serious mental illness.
- A commitment to community approaches to the care of the mentally ill and providing support for their families.
- Have demonstrated commitment to high quality patient care.
- Knowledge of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act and the Disability Act.
- A capacity to provide high quality supervision and teaching to other mental health professionals.
- A commitment to continuing education.
- Demonstrated commitment to high quality patient care.
- Demonstrated commitment and ongoing activity in research and/or clinical audit activities
- Involvement in teaching and training of medical, technical and nursing staff, including at undergraduate and post-graduate level
- Attendance and active involvement in relevant departmental, organisational and external meetings (i.e. College, Association and National/International bodies)
- Demonstrates engagement, teamwork and collaboration.
- Have demonstrated ability to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Have demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to Clinical Governance
- Must hold a current Working with Children Check (WWC Check) in compliance with the Working with Children Act 2005.

For this Role:

- Have a detailed knowledge of consultation liaison psychiatry as demonstrated by experience and/or Advanced certificate in Consultation Liaison psychiatry from RANZCP or equivalent.
- Demonstrate experience with a variety of liaison psychiatry settings, including inreach to the emergency department and rehabilitation services where indicated.
- Demonstrate capacity to build professional relationships between liaison psychiatry and the general hospital.
- Demonstrate commitment to improving the quality and safety of patients across a health service and throughout the lifespan (including paediatrics and aged).
- Demonstrate an ability to work with medical and surgical teams to achieve optimal health outcomes for patients of Austin Health.

Quality, safety and risk – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public by following organisational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines.
- Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself.
- Promote and participate in the evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Comply with the principles of person-centered care.
- Comply with requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.



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Other conditions – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Adhere to Austin Health's core values: *our actions show we care, we bring our best, together we achieve, and we shape the future.*
- Comply with the Austin Health's Code of Conduct policy, as well as all other policies and procedures (as amended from time to time).
- Comply with all Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.
- Provide proof of immunity to nominated vaccine preventable diseases in accordance with Austin Health's immunisation screening policy.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.

General information

Cultural safety

Austin Health is committed to cultural safety and health equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise cultural safety as the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, identities, cultures, bodies, and abilities. We welcome and support applications from talented people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, people with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ and people of all ages and cultures.

Austin Health is a child safe environment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. Austin Health has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and commits to protect children. We take allegations of abuse and neglect seriously and will make every effort to mitigate and respond to risk in line with hospital policy and procedures.



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