

Position Description

Mental Health & Wellbeing Allied Health Professional- Spinal Community Services

Classification:	Grade 3 Social Worker OR Occupational Therapist
Business unit/department:	Spinal Community Service - Continuing Care Division - Spinal Community Integration Service (SCIS) - Spinal Outreach Service (SOS)
Work location:	Austin Hospital ☐ Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital ☐ Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre ☒ Other ☐ (please specify)
Agreement:	Allied Health Professionals (Victorian Public Health Sector) Single Interest Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026
Employment type:	Part-Time
Hours per week:	32 hours
Reports to:	Manager – Spinal Community Services
Direct reports:	N/A
Financial management:	Budget: N/A
Date:	October 2025

Austin Health acknowledge 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

The Mental Health & Wellbeing Allied Health Professional will work within the Spinal Community Service as a member of an interdisciplinary team, supporting clients with a new spinal cord injury (SCI) to establish themselves in their community following a period of inpatient rehabilitation, and supporting clients manage common complications of spinal cord injury that can lead to significant health issues and re-hospitalisation.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

The **Victorian Spinal Cord Service (VSCS)** is a specialised state-wide service that offers lifelong care to people who sustain a traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) in Victoria, Tasmania and southern New South Wales. Inpatient services are provided at the Austin and Royal Talbot campuses of Austin Health. The VSCS also provides community and outpatient programs.

VSCS **Spinal Community Services** includes the **Spinal Community Integration Service (SCIS)**, a community facing service supporting clients establish themselves in the community in the first 12 months following spinal rehabilitation, the **Spinal Outreach Service (SOS)** supporting clients manage common complications of spinal cord injury that can lead to significant health issues and re-hospitalisation, and several outpatient clinics offered to assist clients proactively manage their SCI related health.

The **Spinal Community Integration Service (SCIS)** is based at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre. An interdisciplinary team offer community facing intervention including:

- provision of specialised, interdisciplinary intervention for up to one year post discharge from rehabilitation
- consultation, information, and education to build capacity within existing community and health services.
- provision of flexible, innovative services based on the individual needs of the client
- working within the principles of social inclusion and community participation

Position responsibilities

Role Specific:

- Support clients to connect with their community following a period of inpatient rehabilitation.
- Empower clients to manage their SCI related Health in order to participate in a full life
- Work as part of an interdisciplinary team, in collaboration with inpatient teams and community agencies.
- Act as SCIS Liaison with a group of SCIS clients
- Provide support and consultation to clients and their community providers
- Be a specialist resource for the SCS and wider VSCS regarding clients with complex psychosocial, mental health & wellbeing issues.

Direct Clinical Care

- Provide expert consultation and support in relation to people with spinal cord injury experiencing mental health and/or behavioural problems in the community.
- Complete risk assessment of clients as required to inform referral to and support of community providers.
- Assist clients in sourcing and reviewing service provision as required.
- Consultation with internal and external care providers to resource discharge planning and community integration specifically around psychosocial, mental health and wellbeing needs.

Support of Systems



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- Comply with Austin Health requirements for data collection, clinical documentation and record keeping.
- Responsible for a timely response to referrals and provide assistance to others in prioritisation and completion of tasks.
- Organise programs and/or special projects, as required and/or delegated by the manager.
- Obtain feedback through means such as surveys to ascertain whether service standards meet stakeholder expectations and respond to any identified deficits.
- Ensure that Incident management is appropriate and timely and that a systematic response to local issues and performance improvement occurs.
- Contribute to a Quality and Business Plan as required in accordance with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and Austin Health Guidelines.
- Promotes the vision and goals of Austin Health, VSCS and SCS.
- Promote an environment where staff members' input is valued in helping shape the organisation's aims and objectives.
- Develop and maintain a positive working relationship with staff at Austin Health and external agencies.
- Promote a philosophy of care, which supports interdisciplinary work, and ensures the continuum of care of different health care professionals.
- Participate in relevant committee work, attend relevant meetings, and prepare and submit reports as required.
- Identify gaps in service provision.

Professional Leadership

- Maintain a professional demeanour reflective of Austin values
- Demonstrate strong mentoring skills within the multidisciplinary team.
- Establish and maintain professional relationships with relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- Liaise with referral agencies, including visits to such agencies to assist with discharge planning and transition to community.
- Provide education and support regarding management of clients with spinal cord injury living in the community to external agencies, and carers, as required to support client centred care.
- Provide support and education to staff external to the VSCS and Austin Health
- Communicate information and expectations clearly and concisely in a way that builds effective and collaborative working relationship with others.
- Actively participate in and contribute to Continuous Quality Improvement Programs.
- As an expert resource, provide expert clinical knowledge and direction to ensure that clinical standards, policies, and procedures promote a client centred model of care.

Education

- Secondary consultation and guidance to the SCS team about mental health services, and advice on the management of difficult behaviours
- Provide education to staff on mental health related to spinal cord injury
- Provide consultation, liaison and education to SCS, key agencies and community groups as required.



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- Participate in regular supervision and professional development.

Research and Quality

- Contribute to developing and maintaining Austin Health clinical SCI policies and procedures, particularly those relevant to Mental Health issues.
- Develop, implement, and monitor quality improvement activities and research projects in collaboration with department/ward managers to ensure the delivery of safe contemporary SCI clinical care.
- Participate in relevant committee work, attend relevant meetings, and prepare and submit reports as required
- Review referral and treatment processes to improve efficiency and awareness of discharge and community management within the VSCS and other internal and external services.
- Actively participate in evaluation activities.

All Employees:

- Comply with Austin Health policies & procedures as amended from time to time
- Comply with the Code of Conduct and uphold our values, and diversity and inclusion commitments
- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public. Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself
- Comply with the principals of client centred care
- Comply with Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management

Selection criteria

Essential Knowledge and skills:

- Demonstrated expert knowledge and understanding of psychosocial & mental health issues in the context of spinal cord injury or similar traumatic injury.
- Experience in working with mental health systems and services
- Experience in navigating systems of Insurance including NDIS & TAC, and Aged Care system
- Demonstrated knowledge of relevant legislation.
- Comprehensive knowledge of health, disability, and adjustment issues for clients with a spinal cord injury and insights into the psychosocial impact of trauma and acquired disability
- Knowledge and experience in managing risk (including suicidal ideation, family violence etc)
- Ability to support team and broader community systems in navigating challenging behaviours, and complex mental health needs
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively and effectively as part of the multidisciplinary team and with multiple key stakeholders, supporting the team in navigating complexity in clients' circumstances
- Recognised degree in Social Work or Occupational Therapy, and be eligible for AASW Membership or registered with AHPRA
- Minimum of 5 years of postgraduate experience in a relevant area, and a high level of clinical



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expertise

- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills
- Demonstrated commitment to enhancing clients' health outcomes.
- Evidence of a current driver's license and willingness to drive for work related activities.

Desirable but not essential:

- Postgraduate degree (or equivalent) in Allied Health discipline.
- Clinical experience in community facing outreach work.
- Strong working knowledge of the following: Acute/Sub Acute Health Care, Aged care, or Disability Support Sectors.
- Experience with TAC and NDIS processes
- Demonstrated ability to work flexibly and collaboratively with staff from other disciplines as part of a client focused interdisciplinary rehabilitation team working in the community.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

Relevant professional qualification in a health-related discipline of Social Work or Occupational Therapy, with current Registration with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) where applicable.

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 the requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.

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).



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- 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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