

Position Description

Position Title: Community Spinal Nurse Consultant (CSNC)

Classification:	Community Spinal Nurse Consultant (CSNC) Clinical Nurse Consultant B (ZJ4)
Business unit/department:	Spinal Community Integration Service (SCIS) Victorian Spinal Cord Service (VSCS)
Work location:	Austin Hospital ☐ Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital ☐ Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre ☐ Other ☐ (please specify)
Agreement:	Nurses and Midwives (Victorian Public Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2024-2028
Employment type:	Fixed-Term Part-Time
Hours per week:	32 hrs
Reports to:	Manager Spinal Community Services
Direct reports:	Nil
Financial management:	Budget: Nil
Date:	June 2025

Position purpose

The Community Spinal Nurse Consultant (CSNC) in this role will work in the Spinal Community Integration Service (SCIS). The CSNC will work within the interdisciplinary team, to support clients who have new Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI) to transition into the community, following a period of inpatient rehabilitation. They will provide Spinal Cord Injury related advice to help the client build capacity within their support network.

About The Victorian Spinal Cord Service and Spinal Community Integration Service

The Victorian Spinal Cord Service (VSCS) is a specialised state-wide service that provides lifelong care to people who sustain a traumatic 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 includes the Spinal Community Services (SCS), which includes the following four key components:

- SCIS,
- Spinal Outreach Service (SOS),
- Spinal Urology Service, and
- Spinal Outpatients Physiotherapy

- Surveillance Clinics

SCIS is based at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre and provides community-based intervention to spinal cord injured clients from both Austin and Alfred Health, across Victoria. Community based intervention may include working with the client in their own home, with a community service provider, in their local community, at their workplace, or other community settings.

The aim of SCIS is to improve community integration and quality of life outcomes for Victorians with a SCI, whilst also empowering these individuals to live independently. The team will work with clients:

- To minimise barriers to community integration including work and other life roles.
- To enable optimal independence and self-management in the community setting.
- Within a goal directed approach supporting an efficient and effective transition from sub-acute (rehabilitation) to the community setting.
- Within the local community to optimise opportunities for community participation.
- To support adjustment to SCI through an individualised approach.

SCIS will aim to achieve the above objectives through:

- provision of specialised, interdisciplinary intervention for up to one year following discharge from the sub-acute inpatient setting
- consultation, information, and education to build capacity within existing community 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

This position involves being a CSNC for SCIS clients. This role is a fundamental component of the service, with all clients allocated a CSNC.

This is a key role, with the following responsibilities:

- Assisting the inpatient team with discharge planning
- Facilitating and coordinating the optimal community integration for SCIS clients
- Assisting the client with community integration goal setting and review
- Educating the client regarding their injury and available services
- Assisting the client to access local services
- Supporting community providers with high level SCI knowledge
- Educating community providers on certain SCI topics
- Empowering clients to manage their own healthcare by the end of their SCIS episode

Direct Clinical Care

- Work with Ability@Austin as directed and comply with the requirements of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission as required
- Undertake necessary assessment and planning with client and team to identify relevant community integration goals. Undertake referral and support to community service providers as appropriate.
- Work in conjunction with the wider MDT that supports the objectives of SCIS. The CSNC works in the areas of continence, completing continence scripts, pressure injury assessment and management, education and psychosocial management, consultation and education to community based service providers that builds capacity, remains goal oriented and works towards optimal community integration.
- Provide expert clinical knowledge to point of care nurses through communication,



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modelling, and teaching.

- Provide clinical expertise and advocacy to the patient/family in the ongoing management, adaptation, and delivery of goals of care, within scope of practice.
- Identify key priorities to be addressed within complex/unstable situations.
- Recognise scope and limitations of practice and seek advice from other experts where required.
- Demonstrate clinical reasoning and a comprehensive understanding of abnormal trends and patient conditions in complex situations.
- Escalate abnormal findings and participate in clinical decision making with multidisciplinary team.
- Provide expertise in management of complex situations and generate alternative course of action.
- Lead local continuous quality improvement to ensure care remains safe, contemporary, and effective.

Education

- Actively engage and contribute to the education and professional development of self and others at ward/unit level.
- Offer feedback to others which is specific, supportive, non judgemental, timely and reflective.
- Demonstrate use of a variety of educational strategies including reflective practice to further own professional development.
- Utilise and maintain professional practice portfolio to plan for future continuing education, professional development and employment goals for self and others.
- Support and lead staff with unit portfolios, utilising data driven approach to practice improvement.
- Demonstrate self-initiative in undertaking further educational opportunities.
- Lead/participate in local networks and forums to share and extend professional knowledge and build collegial support.

Research

- Demonstrate sound knowledge of research evidence related to area of practice.
- Promote and facilitate evidence-based care in local area.
- Create, participate and support others in the development of evidence-based guidelines.
- Identify best practice research to address gaps in nursing practice.
- Participate in research activity under direction/ supervision.
- Contribute to local research activities including selecting appropriate research methodology, and data analysis strategies.

Support of Systems

- Support others to understand the Austin Health vision and integrate strategic priorities into clinical practice.
- Support others to understand the Austin Nursing Vision : Austin nurses working alongside Austin Nurses 24/7 to deliver reliable, safe, person-centred care.
- Support others to understand the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS) and the implications for practice.
- Actively participate in role as NSQHSS clinical champion with specified portfolio for local level.
- Contribute to new or revised guidelines or procedures relevant to local clinical area.
- Lead quality improvement initiatives to address identified gaps at the local level.
- Identify practice gaps and implement projects based on clinical audit methodology and PDSA cycle.



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- Understand clinical audit and practice improvement initiatives and results at local level.
- Provides reports to Manager on audit results and deliver presentations to colleagues.
- Contribute to workplace safety audits.
- Act as a resource to support staff to document all clinical findings and patient access activities consistently and reliably into Austin Health paper-based systems and clinical application systems.

Professional Leadership

- Provide clinical leadership within nursing teams and utilise Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) Decision Making Framework to provide clinical oversight of others.
- Utilise effective communication and leadership styles.
- Begin to develop good self-awareness and self-management, and adjust own style in different circumstances.
- Demonstrate good self-awareness and adapt to changing situations
- Use active listening techniques to explore and understand the views and ideas of others.
- Support others to meet expected standards of behaviour and develop their leadership capability.
- Move between different leadership and communication styles depending on circumstances
- Seek formal and informal education opportunities on leadership.
- Participate in formal post-graduate study in leadership/ strategy/ change management.
- Support staff to manage priorities and actively assist in managing ward/ unit workload.
- Demonstrate a commitment to deliver sustainable, excellent performance and accountability within the local context.
- Seek opportunities to celebrate other's contributions and achievements in the local context.
- Lead the nursing team to achieve healthcare goals
- Support others to work autonomously within scope of practice.

Selection criteria

Essential Knowledge and skills:

- A commitment to Austin Health values
- Clinical experience in Spinal Cord Injury nursing
- Understanding of Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation
- Registered Nurse registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
- A patient focused approach to care
- A positive approach to ongoing self-education and skill development
- A flexible, innovative team-oriented approach to service delivery
- A positive approach to change and diversity
- Evidence of a current driver's license and willingness to drive for work related activities. Including visits to regional Victoria, sometimes requiring overnight stays

Desirable but not essential:



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- A sound understanding of information technology including clinical systems, applications relevant to the Management of rostering and risk management reporting or as required for the role and/or department.
- Worked in community setting
- Knowledge of community resources
- Knowledge of health, disability and adjustment issues for clients with a spinal cord injury
- Willingness to complete NDIS Worker Screening Check if required by the role.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

- AHPRA registration- Registered Nurse, Division 1

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.

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



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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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