

Austin Health Position Description



**Position Title: Consultant Psychiatrist working in
Emergency Department**

Classification:	Consultant Psychiatrist
Business Unit/ Department:	Mental Health Division
Agreement:	AMA Victoria - Victorian Public Health Sector Medical Specialists Enterprise Agreement 2022-2026
Employment Type:	As per contract
Hours per week:	As per contract
Reports to:	Clinical Director, Adult Services, Mental Health Division
Date:	March 2025

About Austin Health

Austin Health is one of Victoria's largest health care providers. We deliver services for patients across four main sites in Melbourne, in locations across our community, in people's homes, and within regional hospitals across Victoria. We are an internationally recognised leader in clinical teaching, training and research, with numerous university and research institute affiliations.

We employ approximately 9,500 staff and are known for our specialist work in cancer, infectious diseases, obesity, sleep medicine, intensive care medicine, neurology, endocrinology, mental health and rehabilitation.

Our vision is to shape the future through exceptional care, discovery and learning. This is supported by our values which define who we are, shape our culture and the behaviours of our people.

We aim to provide an inclusive culture where all staff can contribute to the best of their ability and strive to develop further. We recognise that our people are our greatest strength. We want them to thrive, be their best selves and feel engaged, safe and empowered. To achieve this, diversity and inclusion is essential to our culture and our values. You can view our current Diversity and Inclusion Plan [here](#).

Commitment to Gender Equality

Austin Health is committed to gender equality in the workplace. In developing our [Gender Equality Action Plan](#) we have been guided by the gender equality principles set out in the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). We believe that everyone should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

Position Purpose

This role will be primarily located in the Emergency Department (ED) and will provide liaison services to ED in addition to clinical leadership and governance to the Emergency Psychiatry Service (EPS), Planning Assessment & Planning Unit (PAPU) and Police and Clinician Early Response (PACER) teams, within the Adult and Older Adult Directorate of the Mental Health Division.

The Consultant Psychiatrist will ensure that services provided by the mental health services are the highest standard, emphasising excellence, service, care, staff performance, cost efficiency, research and education within a comprehensive clinical governance framework.

Ensure all records are kept current with timely and accurate documentation.
Ensure compliance with regulations including with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act.

This 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

1. Emergency Mental Health Services

- To provide psychiatric liaison services to the Emergency Department and clinical leadership to all mental health clinicians in EPS, PAPU and PACER
- To provide comprehensive high quality psychiatric assessment and treatment services to consumers in the ED, PAPU and community and to ensure linkages to continuity of care with other parts of mental health and primary care system
- To provide clinical leadership and supervision to the mental health clinicians and the psychiatric registrars attached to service
- To attend weekly clinical review meetings for MH team and provide clinical oversight of care delivered across the week
- To attendance regular clinical governance and education meetings with MHD and ED
- To provide support and expertise to the emergency medical staff via education and direct patient/consumer care
- To balance legal and ethical duties and deliver complex nuanced mental health care in the Emergency Department setting in the least restrictive environment possible.
- To provide support for families of people with mental illness and to ensure that they and patients are well informed and where possible able to engage in shared decision making regarding the management of their mental illness and treatment while taking into consideration the unique environment of an Emergency Department
- To provide comprehensive and high-quality routine psychiatric services across the whole of age range as needed within the Emergency Department setting
- To demonstrate clinical leadership in service delivery, in the Emergency front end services, including but not limited to consumers being seen in ED, consumers working with EPS, PAPU and PACER and as needed consumers in the rest of MHD
- To assist and provide support in the management of complex stakeholder identification, engagement and management

2. Mental Health Division

Consultant Psychiatrists are expected to provide high-level psychiatric services within their approved scope of clinical practice as part of the Mental Health Division at Austin Health. All Consultants are expected to be able to provide routine specialist mental health services to paediatric patients (up to 18 years old), adult patients (18 years old and over) and cover “on call” after hours (Adult or Youth depending on

experience) and other rosters. It is therefore anticipated that the person in this role is able to provide initial assessment to a wide variety of mental health presentations across the age range but will actively seek and receive MHD support for those presentations outside their usual experience.

To provide clinical leadership within the Mental Health programs of Austin Health all consultants need to comply with:

1. National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2002
2. National Standards for Mental Health Services 1996
3. Austin Health Code of Conduct.
4. Participate in on-call rosters, ECT rosters or other duties as required by MH Division Medical Director or delegate

About the 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 & 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.

Purpose and Accountabilities

Role Specific:

- Provision of collaborative clinical services, governance and teaching and supervisory duties as agreed with the Medical Director of MH Division.
- Undertake additional mental health services or related clinical procedures as identified within your scope of clinical practice
- Share equitably in on-call and other duties.
- Consideration of the provision of effective clinical supports after hours within ED.

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 Act 1986.
- 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.

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.

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 patient 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

People Management Roles:

- Maintain an understanding of individual responsibility for safety, quality & risk and actively contribute to organisational quality and safety initiatives
- Ensure incident management systems are applied and a response to local issues and performance improvement occurs
- Support staff under management to comply with policies, procedures and mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements

Credentiailling 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.
- 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 Act Victoria.
- 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.

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.

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 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.

Desirable for this role:

- Demonstrated experience with a variety of liaison psychiatry settings, including in reach to the emergency department where indicated.
- Demonstrated capacity to build professional relationships between mental health and other healthcare
- Demonstrated commitment to improving the quality and safety of patients across a health service and throughout the lifespan (including paediatrics and aged)
- Demonstrated ability to work with medical and surgical teams to achieve optimal health outcomes for patients of Austin Health

Desirable but not essential:

- Child and Adolescent Psychiatry experience or expertise
- A sound understanding of information technology including clinical systems.

General Information

Austin Health is a Child Safe Environment

Austin Health is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. Austin Health has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously in line with legal obligations and our policies and procedures.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Austin Health is committed to diversity and inclusion in employment and is proud to encourage applications from people of different backgrounds, abilities, ages, genders, gender identities and/or sexual orientations.

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we work on and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We welcome applications from people with disability and aim to provide an inclusive and accessible workplace. If you need any help with the application process or would like to discuss your reasonable adjustments during interviews, please let us know.

We welcome applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For any support throughout the recruitment process or further information about working at Austin Health, please follow this link to Aboriginal Employment on our [website](#).

Document Review Agreement

Manager Signature	
Employee Signature	
Date	