

Position Description

Specialist in Poisons

Information

Classification:	Grade 2 Pharmacist SX2 - SX5 OR Scientist RY4 - RY7
Business unit/department:	Victorian Poisons Information Centre (VPIC)
Work location:	Austin Hospital <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (please specify)
Agreement:	Victorian Public Health Sector (Medical Scientists, Pharmacists and Psychologists) Single Enterprise Agreement 2021-2025
Employment type:	Casual
Hours per week:	Variable
Reports to:	Madeline Heiner, Manager, Victorian Poisons Information Centre
Direct reports:	N/A
Financial management:	Budget: M1552
Date:	February 2026

Position purpose

A Specialist in Poisons Information (SPI) provides health professionals and members of the public with risk assessment and management advice in the event of a poisoning or suspected poisoning including accidental or intentional exposures, deliberate self-poisonings, workplace exposures, toxic hazards and envenomation. The VPIC aims to reduce unnecessary visits to general practitioners and hospitals and decrease ambulance call-outs, ensuring patients who may have been poisoned or envenomed receive the most appropriate treatment possible. The SPIs are supported by Clinical Toxicologists.

The role requires the prompt risk assessment, provision of information and management advice and maintenance of accurate records for analysis and research. In addition, SPIs assist with the preparation and review of clinical guidelines, provide education and training and contribute to the review of clinical and operational processes.

VPIC provides coverage alongside the other Poisons Centres around Australia to contribute to a 24-hour, 7-day per week service. The successful candidate is required to participate in the VPIC clinical roster, including evening, weekend and overnight shifts.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

VPIC commenced operation in 1962. It was located at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne from 1976 to 2008. In August 2008, the centre moved to the Austin Hospital, to co-locate and integrate with the Austin Hospital Clinical Toxicology Service (AHCTS). VPIC is located in the Austin Hospital Emergency Department and is directed administratively as part of the Austin Health Pharmacy Department.

VPIC provides health professionals and members of the public with risk assessment and management advice in the event of a poisoning or suspected poisoning including accidental or intentional exposures, deliberate self-poisonings, workplace exposures, toxic hazards and envenomation.

VPIC aims to reduce unnecessary visits to general practitioners and hospitals and decrease ambulance call-outs, ensuring patients who may be poisoned or envenomed receive the most appropriate treatment possible.

VPIC is a 7 day per week service, providing coverage alongside the other Poisons Centres around Australia to contribute to a 24-hour, 7-day per week service.

Position responsibilities

Role Specific:

- Provide prompt information, risk assessment and management advice appropriate to the caller in cases of poisoning, suspected poisoning, mistakes with medicines or envenomation.
- Maintain an accurate call database record of calls received by VPIC as a legal and medical record, and for peer review of calls, collection of statistics, analysis and research.
- Available to assist with day and evening shifts across a 7-day roster, including overnight shifts.
- Liaise with the Clinical Toxicology team and other specialist services in the management of complex cases.
- Assist in the preparation and review of clinical guidelines and any other guidelines relevant to the operation of VPIC.
- Provide appropriate education and lectures suitable to the needs of medical, nursing, pharmacy, ambulance officers and members of the public.
- Contribute to VPIC team meetings, both clinical and operational, engage in discussions about individual cases/calls and make recommendations for the continuous improvement of the VPIC service.
- Assist with the training and supervision of new staff when required.
- Adhere to the Practice Standards for Australian Poisons Information Centres 2014 and VPIC policies and procedures.
- Other duties as directed, consistent with the employee's skill level and classification.

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



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concerns regarding safety, quality, and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself

- Comply with the principles of patient centered care.
- Comply with Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.

Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

- Pharmacist or scientist with a minimum of 3 years' experience post qualification in an equivalent or relevant setting
- AHPRA registration without restrictions
- Ability to communicate clearly, confidently and sympathetically with patients and/or users of the VPIC service.
- Demonstrated ability to work as part of a flexible, innovative team to provide a service across 7 days, including overnights
- Ability to work and communicate effectively with colleagues and other health professionals, both onsite and remotely
- A commitment to Austin Health values: Our actions show we care; We bring our best; Together we achieve; We shape the future.

Desirable but not essential:

- Prior experience working in an acute care setting and/or poisons or medicines information service.
- Prior experience working within an Emergency or Critical Care setting.
- Relevant extra qualifications, e.g. Master of Clinical Pharmacy
- Other qualifications indicating specialist knowledge of drugs and poisons.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements



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- AHPRA registration without restrictions, if required for applicants' qualification

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

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



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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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