

Mental Health Practice Development Lead



New Beginnings,
Stronger Communities

Note: Vacro promotes equitable and inclusive recruitment practices to support the attraction and retention of a diverse workforce.

Position overview

Position title	Mental Health Specialist
Unit or program	Arc
Position objective	<p>The Arc program is a reintegration model designed to address the interlinked problems of homelessness, social exclusion and recidivism among people exiting the Victorian prison system. Arc provides intensive case management support for men and women including both a three-month pre-release and two-year post-release phase.</p> <p>Arc case management functions alongside a tiered intensity of support including specialist disability, family violence and mental health experts as well as access to stable housing on release from prison. The Arc program partners with community housing providers (CHPs), who provide participants with a suitable home on their release.</p> <p>The Mental Health Practice Development Lead is responsible for strengthening the capability of the case management workforce to work effectively with people experiencing mental ill health within complex reintegration circumstances.</p> <p>The role focuses on developing practice that supports safe, sustainable reintegration, by building staff capacity to work with the intersection of mental illness, desistance, trauma, and social disadvantage.</p> <p>Drawing on Vacro's innovative Reintegration Practice Framework, the role supports staff to enhance their practice in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting identity change and pro-social pathways.• Strengthening participant agency and engagement.• Ensuring interventions are evidence-informed, responsive, and tailored to individual circumstances.• Working effectively by integrating mental health expertise into planning, case management, and cross-sector collaboration, supporting sustainable reintegration outcomes.
Job classification	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010, Level 6 pay point depending on qualifications and experience.
FTE	0.6-0.8

Location	Level 1, 116 Hardware Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 Involves State-wide travel, with pool car access
Reports to	Arc Program Manager
Direct reports	N/A
Key external contacts	Senior Reintegration Coordinators, Case Managers, Housing Coordinator, Executive Director of Programs, Community Housing Providers, Prison-based health and management staff, Community Corrections Services (CCS) staff, other external support service management staff, i.e. drug and alcohol treatment providers, mental health service providers, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander services.

About Vacro

Vacro is an independent non-profit organisation working with people caught in the criminal justice system and their families. Founded in 1872, we are Victoria's oldest and only specialised criminal justice reintegration service. We provide reintegration, family, and employment support that enables people to create new beginnings for themselves and their families.

Vacro is committed to ensuring that diversity and inclusion are at the core of our organisation and the way we work. We believe that our team members are our greatest asset. By supporting diversity, inclusion and respect, we create a workplace where everyone feels valued and empowered to bring their full selves to work.

We value the expertise of people from a wide range of backgrounds. Because of the work we do, we especially value the expertise of First Nations people, people with lived experience of the criminal justice system people of diverse sexualities and gender identities. We welcome applications for a wide range of candidates, including people with a criminal record. (We do not discriminate based on a person's criminal record, however in some circumstances, contractual or legislative obligations may limit a person's eligibility for certain roles. We are happy to have a confidential discussion about how these requirements may affect a candidate).

Vision	New beginnings, stronger communities.
Mission	To support new beginnings for clients of the correctional system and their families and build safer and stronger communities.
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity & Humanity: We stand alongside our participants and each other, always recognising and respecting their value, dignity and humanity. • Empowerment: We empower people to continually grow, lead, and expand their possibilities. • Aspiration: We support people to seize opportunities, for futures imagined, reclaimed, or redefined. • Meaningful change: We challenge injustice and advocate for both systemic and personal change, approaching this work with courage and respect.

Key responsibilities

Key result area	Task	Performance indicator
Workforce Capability & Practice Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the identification and prioritisation of specialist mental health learning needs to strengthen workforce capability and improve participant outcomes. • Provide secondary consultation to case managers on complex mental health presentations, including assessment, formulation, risk, intervention planning, and evidence-informed, person-centred practice. • Build staff understanding of the interaction between mental health, trauma, substance use, reintegration challenges, safeguarding and ethical practice. • Deliver coaching, reflective practice, file review, and targeted training to strengthen mental health literacy, record keeping and practice capability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case managers report increased confidence and capability in managing complex mental health presentations. • Timely, appropriate consultation is provided for high-risk or complex cases. • Improved consistency, quality, and accuracy of mental health considerations in case planning and reviews.
Integrated Care Planning and Service Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support case managers to develop holistic, strengths-based psychosocial care plans that respond to individual needs and circumstances. • Assist with navigation of the mental health system, including referrals, service linkage, and care coordination. • Promote collaborative practice with external mental health providers and other relevant services. • Support continuity of care between custodial and community health settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care plans demonstrate clear integration of psychosocial and reintegration supports. • Improved continuity of care and reduced service gaps for participants with mental health needs. • Positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders regarding coordination and collaboration.

Risk Management, Safety and Responsive Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance on risk assessment, safety planning, and crisis response for participants with complex presentations. • Support staff to apply structured, proportionate responses to risk that align with ethical and person-centred practice. • Participate in case reviews and critical incident debriefs as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks are identified early and managed appropriately within program protocols. • Staff demonstrate confidence and consistency in applying risk management approaches. • Reduction in unplanned crisis responses through proactive planning and support.
Quality Improvement and Program Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement through stakeholder collaboration, file review, and identification of service gaps and emerging needs. • Support the integration of mental health expertise into program development and improvement initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health expertise is embedded into program improvement activities. • Practice improvements are informed by data, staff feedback, and reflection. • The program demonstrates increased effectiveness in supporting participants with complex mental health needs.

Key capabilities

Knowledge

- Values collaboration and works respectfully with diverse professional disciplines and external partners.
- Demonstrates empathy, curiosity, and respect for people with lived experience of the justice system.
- Maintains professional boundaries while being approachable and supportive to staff.
- Reflective and adaptable, with a commitment to continuous learning and quality improvement.
- Demonstrates resilience, sound judgement, and calm decision-making in complex or high-pressure situations.

Essential Qualifications

- Qualified psychologist, social worker, mental health nurse or occupational therapist with registration to appropriate professional body (e.g. AHPRA, AASW)

Experience

- Experience working with people with complex mental health needs in community, justice, forensic, or outreach settings.
- Experience providing secondary consultation, clinical advice, or specialist support to multidisciplinary teams.
- Experience contributing to workforce capability through training, mentoring, or reflective practice.

Skills

- Ability to translate complex mental health presentations into practical guidance for case managers.
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills, including influencing practice without line management authority.
- Capacity to support holistic, strengths-based planning and ethical responses to risk.
- Effective documentation and professional reporting skills.

Behaviours and personal attributes

- Collaborative, respectful, and values lived experience.
- Calm, reflective, and resilient in complex or high-pressure environments.
- Approachable, professional, and committed to continuous improvement.

Mandatory requirements

- Verification of personal identity, employment history and qualifications.
- Satisfactory National Police Check (if a requirement of the position).
- Working with Children Check Victoria (if a requirement of the position).
- Victorian Driver Licence (if a requirement of the position).

Expectations of all Vacro staff

- Uphold Vacro's Vision, Mission, Values and Code of Conduct.
- Demonstrate commitment to people impacted by the criminal justice system and their families.
- Comply with legislative requirements relating to this position, including taking all reasonable care of your own safety and that of others in the workplace; contributing to the improvement of health and safety within the workplace; and complying with Vacro procedures and practices which support occupational health and safety.
- Provide safe and quality services as a priority, for which you are responsible, accountable and supported by Board and management.
- Operate within Vacro's formal delegation framework and in accordance with its policies and procedures.
- Participate in continuous quality improvement activities, including identifying opportunities and making improvements to systems, processes and programs.
- Participate in Vacro meetings, regular supervision, and professional development.
- Represent and enhance Vacro's profile at stakeholder and network meetings, as designated by your Manager.
- If it becomes an inherent requirement of the position in future, you will be required to show evidence that you are up to date with pandemic vaccination, and maintain up-to-date vaccination status, as defined by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). Up to-date vaccination status is defined by the number and timing of appropriate vaccine doses recommended for and received by an individual, according to their age and other factors.

Incumbent declaration

I have read this Position Description and agree to undertake the duties and responsibilities listed above. I acknowledge that:

- The Position Description is an indication of the duties and responsibilities that I am required to undertake. Additional or other duties and responsibilities may be allocated to me, in discussion with my manager.
- Where training and support are required to fulfil these duties, or additional or other duties at a similar level of responsibility, these will be provided within the guidelines of the organisation.
- The Position Description will be reviewed regularly in consultation with me.
- The Performance Indicators, where included in this document, are indicative. Performance Indicators will be set by my immediate supervisor in discussion with me, for each year (or another period) and my performance reviewed against those Performance Indicators.

Name of incumbent

Signature

Date
