

# Astha Tomar

MBBS, FRANZCP, AFRACMA

## Contact

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## Strengths and Style

Stakeholder-engagement  
Collaboration  
Leadership  
People & operational  
management  
Strong initiative  
Decisive with clear  
rationale  
Politically astute  
Reflective, self-aware  
Personal Integrity  
Resilient  
Excellent written and verbal  
communication skills  
Flexible and adaptive  
Outcomes focused

## Awards

*Psychiatry Workforce  
Development Scholarship  
Recipient,*  
DH, Victoria, 2020

Nominated for *Australian  
Medical Association's Annual  
Women in Medical Leadership  
Award, 2022*

## Profile

I am a dedicated and highly motivated senior psychiatrist leader with over 20 years' experience in psychiatry across multiple countries and jurisdictions (India, New Zealand and Australia- Western Australia, a brief stint in Northern Territory and over 15 years in Victoria).

A values driven professional, I relish opportunities to collaborate with and motivate individuals, teams, organisations and systems to thrive, to achieve their purpose and to drive optimal outcomes.

## Current Appointments

- Chair, Victorian Branch, RANZCP
- Head of Youth Mental Health Services, Peninsula Health, Victoria
- Member, Mental Health Ministerial Advisory Committee, Victoria
- Member, Mental Health Workforce Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Department of Health, Victoria
- Member, Mental Health Workforce Safety and Wellbeing Committee - Strategy towards the elimination of seclusion and restraint project
- Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Monash University
- Chair, Safety and Quality Committee, HeadSpace, Frankston
- Member, RANZCP Victorian Branch RAWG Racism Awareness Working Group
- Member, RANZCP Gender Equity Working Group
- Member, RANZCP Membership Engagement Committee
- Member, RANZCP Member's Advisory Council
- Private Psychiatrist, The Melbourne Clinic
- Accredited Impairment Assessor, TAC and Wrongs Act, WorkSafe Victoria

## Recent Appointments

- Member, Clinical Advisory Group, Evaluation of Better Access through the MBS Initiative, DoH, Government of Australia, 2022
- Member, Mental Health Workforce Technical Advisory Group, DH, Victoria, 2021
- Member, Committee, Women's Mental Health Network Victoria, 2020-2021
- Member, External Advisory Committee on potential misuse of drugs of dependence, DHHS
- Member, External Advisory Committee, SafeScript, Real-Time Prescription Monitoring Implementation

## Work Experience

### Consultant Psychiatrist, Head of Youth Mental Health Services • Peninsula Health

#### 2018- Current

Responsible for:

- ❖ System transformation of Infant, Child and Youth Area MH and Wellbeing Services at Peninsula Health
- ❖ Governance of YPARC and Youth team
- ❖ Providing leadership, guidance and direction to the teams with perspective of Safety and Quality responsibilities.
- ❖ Supervision of JMOs, Registrars, Junior and Senior Specialist Trainees
- ❖ Forming and maintaining key strategic relationships with external teams and organisations like HeadSpace, GP Clinics, Schools, HYEPP at Alfred Health and other primary, secondary and tertiary level services
- ❖ Direct clinical care: Youth team and YPARC

Key achievements:

- ❖ Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (YPARC)
  - YPARC is a 10-bed community based, residential mental health service and provides specialized, short-term, recovery focused treatment for young people aged between 16-25 years of age in a youth friendly, home like environment which was first established in May 2012.
  - Input into redesign and refurbishment of YPARC infrastructure whilst safeguarding continuity of clinical care delivery.
  - The Frankston YPARC Governance structure and Model of Care has had a few changes over the years and I have led the teams involved in these change processes around Dual Clinical and Operational Governance (with MIND and Mentis as other service providers at YPARC) and evidence based guidance. Along the way I have prioritized wellbeing of the team members, young persons we provide care for and their support systems.
- ❖ Youth Community Mental Health Team (YCMHT)
  - YCMHT provides tertiary level, multidisciplinary mental health assessment and treatment for young people aged 16-25 years who present with moderate to severe mental health problems, and extends support to their families and carers. The Youth Mental Health Team has been set up to be an assertive outreach community team and the model of care is informed by several key theoretical concepts and underpinning beliefs, including recovery focus, holistic and systemic care, developmental theory and Trauma-informed care. All multidisciplinary team members are actively supported with their professional development specific to Youth work
  - The team has been through some significant change processes including facing the risk of losing its role in entirety. This exciting rejuvenation and expansion from 0.5 EFT, which it was reduced to from a fully functioning team at one point, to current ~15 EFT team included strategic work around new governance structures, Model of Care and orientation and support of new clinicians and LE workforce.
  - This includes development of business cases for active recruitment along with provision of leadership to the Senior Medical Staff.
- ❖ Establishing Peninsula Health as an Infant Child and Youth (0-25 years) Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

- In response to the Royal Commission recommendations, I am co- leading the design and establishment of a 0-25 age group service for Victorians living in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula communities.
- This included successfully working with Monash Health and the DoH to support Peninsula Health MHWBS in establishing an Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health wellbeing service, with two streams of Perinatal, infant and family mental health and wellbeing service (0-12) and Child & Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, integrated with Alcohol and other Drug Services (12-25).
- I am now working with my team to establish a clear single stream governance structure, identify innovative pathways of care, build strong partnerships with key stakeholders and organisations, and build a skilled sustainable workforce. Equally important has been the work with internal stakeholders such as LE group, People and Culture and Industrial Relation partners

## **Victorian Branch, RANZCP**

May 2021     **Current Chair**

2016- 2021     **Deputy Chair, Secretary, Member**

Key achievements:

- ❖ Authoring/reviewing a number of reports and reviews including:
  - The RANZCP Victorian Branch 2022 Victorian State Election Priorities, Improving the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the Victorian Community, <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/resources/submissions/ranzcp- victoria-state-election-priorities.aspx>
  - Pre-Budget Submissions to Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance
    - FY 2022- 2023, <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/resources/submissions/ranzcp- vic-branch-pre-budget-submission.aspx>
    - FY 2021-2022, <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/resources/submissions/ranzcp- victorian-branch-pre-budget-submission-2021.aspx>
    - FY 2020- 2021: “Mental Health Priorities for the 2021-22 Victorian State Budget”, <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/resources/submissions/ranzcp- vic-branch-pre-budget-submission-2020-21.aspx>
    - FY 2019- 2020: “Mental Health Priorities for the 2019-20 Victorian State Budget”, <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/branches/victoria/ranzcp-vic- branch-pre-budget-submission-2019-20-v6.aspx>
    - FY 2018- 2019: “Mental Health: targeting new investment, July 2018”, [https://www.ranzcp.org/Files/Branches/Victoria/RANZCP\\_Vi c-Branch-Mental-health-targeting-new-inve.aspx](https://www.ranzcp.org/Files/Branches/Victoria/RANZCP_Vi c-Branch-Mental-health-targeting-new-inve.aspx)
- Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System, Victorian Branch, RANZCP response
  - Spearheaded the response to the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* legislation which would see a significant impact on the functioning of MH systems and services for communities, consumers, carers and clinicians. I ensured engagement with various stakeholders including Lived Experience individuals and organizations, Nurses, Psychologists, Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police, MHV. I mobilised involvement of psychiatrists within the College, that of Binational as well as Sections, Faculties and Special Interest Groups.
  - Member, Mental Health Workforce Technical Advisory Group which worked on two important workforce initiatives viz. *Victoria’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy* and *Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Capability Framework* <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022- 04/victorias-mh-wellbeing-workforce-strategy-2021-24-140422- pdf.pdf.pdf>

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/victorian-mh-and-wellbeing-workforce-capability-framework-pdf.pdf>

- Led Victorian Branch engagement with RCVMS, details available <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/branches/victoria/ranzcp-royal-commission-engagement-summary.aspx>
- Victorian Branch submissions to RCVMS <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/resources/submissions/ranzcp-victorian-branch-submission-to-the-royal-co.aspx>  
<https://www.ranzcp.org/files/resources/submissions/ranzcp-victorian-branch-royal-commission-tor>
- Organised and chaired multiple Victorian Branch member forums on RCVMS

➤ Coordination of RANZCP Victorian Branch COVID-19 Response

- Establishment of Database of Victorian Psychiatrists available to support Victorian Health Care Workers during COVID-19 pandemic
- Joint Project funded by DHHS for Victorian Branch for the wellbeing of psychiatry workforce including trainees in the public health system worth around \$50,000
- Webinar Series for Victorian members of RANZCP
- Moderator for panel discussion on role of psychiatrists and trainees in supporting their colleagues and other HCWs during COVID crisis

➤ Chair, Racism Awareness Working Group

- Formed with the purpose of developing a better understanding and reflection on biases in self, others and systems
- Related surveys, workshops/sessions and development of a Position Statement

➤ Victorian Psychiatry Training Partnership 2022

- New \$4.5 million funding stream to strengthen psychiatry training in Victoria
- Creation of up to 200 new training positions and funded DoT, DoAT and SIMG DoT positions

➤ Witness to Australian Government Productivity Commission Public Hearing into Mental Health, November 2019

- Highlighted need for better governance and funding models of MH services
- Discussed importance of system support for the trainees
- Supervision in private sector and rural and regional areas
- Advocated for systems to meet the needs of CALD communities

➤ Position paper, Enabling Supported Decision-Making, 2018

<https://www.ranzcp.org/Files/Branches/Victoria/Enabling-supported-decision-making-Vic-Branch-Posi.aspx>

➤ Victorian Psychiatry Workforce Project

Analysis by the RANZCP Victorian Branch in 2017, revealed the challenges facing Victoria's psychiatry workforce. <https://www.ranzcp.org/files/branches/victoria/ranzcp-vic-psychiatry-workforce-report.aspx>

➤ Member, RTPM Real Time Prescription Medicine External Advisory Group SafeScript, DHHS Victoria (2017-2019)

Significant input on Clinical Governance, Privacy and confidentiality, need for increased support in AOD Services, ease of access and inclusion of specific medications in SafeScript.

➤ RANZCP Victorian Branch CME events organized

- Co-Convener, Victorian Branch Annual Weekend Conference 2022, Lorne
- Convener, Victorian Branch Annual Weekend Conference 2019, Lorne
- Co-Convener, Victorian Branch Annual Weekend Conference 2018, Hepburn Springs
- Co-Convener, Victorian Branch Annual Weekend Conference 2017, Marysville
- Led the processes and events related to Annual Victorian Branch Traveling Scholar and Victorian Branch Meritorious Award
- Multiple other events related to membership support, policy and advocacy work

## **Private Psychiatrist • The Melbourne Clinic, Richmond**

### 2018- Current

Providing inpatient and outpatient care

## **Past Work Experience**

### February 2018- June 2020

Consultant Psychiatrist, Youth Services (YPARC and Youth team), Peninsula Health Mental Health Services, Frankston

### June 2016- December 2017

Consultant Psychiatrist, PTRS, Austin Hospital

### January 2012- January 2014

Visiting Consultant Psychiatrist • MITA and MIDC, IHMS. Provided psychiatric care and support for asylum seekers and refugees

### March 2010- July 2011

Consultant Psychiatrist, EPPIC, ORYGEN, Melbourne

### February 2009- February 2010

Registrar, St.Vincent's Health- deputised to Professorial Unit, The Melbourne Clinic, Private specialist inpatient care in Mood and Anxiety Unit

### August 2008- January 2009

Registrar, Secure Extended Care Unit, Mental Health Services, Austin Health, Heidelberg

### May 2008- August 2008

Registrar, Thomas Embling Hospital, Forensicare

### Feb 2008- May 2008

Registrar, Community Forensic Mental Health Services, Graylands Hospital, Perth

### December 2002- July 2007

RANZCP trainee: Registrar rotations with Waikato District Health Board and Bay of Plenty District Health Board, New Zealand.

Completed rotations in Inpatient and Community Adult teams, Psychogeriatrics, Consultation-Liaison, Child and Adolescent, Forensics, Dual Disability services.

### January 2002- December 2002

Senior House Officer, Waikato DHB, New Zealand

### September 2001- November 2001

Clinical Observer, Waikato DHB, New Zealand

### July 1998- September 2000

Post Graduate Trainee, Department of Pharmacology, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi, India

## Clinical Governance and Leadership formal training and experience

- Candidate, RANZCP President Election. 2023
- Registered for *Victorian Healthcare Association's [Health Board Essentials](#) program*, delivered in partnership with the Australian Centre for Healthcare Governance (ACHG). 2023  
Topics covered:
  - Victorian health system
  - Corporate governance
  - Risk concepts and context
  - Clinical governance
  - Finance fundamentals
  - Consumer and stakeholder engagement
- EOI for [For-Purpose Executive Leadership Program](#) at Melbourne Business School, 2023  
Topics covered
  - Strategy Development and Execution
  - Innovation and Growth
  - Marketing and Impact Narrative
  - Adaptability and Leading Change
- *AFRACMA*, Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators. 2022
- *Williamson Community Leadership Program, Leadership Victoria*. 2021
- *Leadership Fellow with Mental Health Reform Victoria* set up for implementation of recommendations from RCVMHS initial report.  
Participation in specific projects including:
  - Mandatory JMO Psychiatry Rotation Framework
  - HiTH project: Innovative model of in-patient level MH care delivery in the home.
  - Setting up of first Women's 35-bedded MHWBS as a public- private partnership
  - HOPE expansion and HOPE-Child Youth models of care
  - Initial work related to Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Centre and teams
- *Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Governance* for patient Safety and Quality Care, Australasian Institute of Clinical Governance. 2021  
Modules included:
  - Clinical governance,
  - Building Culture and Collaboration and
  - Advanced leadership in Healthcare
- Member, RANZCP Section of Youth Mental Health
- *Psychiatry Workforce Development Scholarship Recipient*, DH, Victoria. 2020
- Developing '*Leadership program for Psychiatrists*'
  - Joint project between Victorian DH and Victorian Branch, RANZCP
  - Funded by Victorian Government, an approved budget of more than \$700,000
- Tutor, SIMG Tutoring Program, GV Health project funded by DHHS Victoria, 2020- *current*
- Examiner, Monash University MED1490 Psychiatry OSCEs, 2021
- Peninsula Health Undergraduate Medical Education Program, Monash University, evaluation and marking of written case reports, 4th year medical students, 2018- *current*
- Accredited Supervisor, RANZCP

## Education, Professional Development and Research Activities

- Victorian Branch RANZCP Annual Conference, Lorne, 2022:
  - Debate: *'Should psychiatrists hold the pen on involuntary treatment?'*, A Tomar, S Stafrace, R Vine, C Ryan, S Adams, P Tune
  - *'Update on Reform process RCVMHs'*, P McGorry, M Hopwood, S Moylan, A Tomar
- *'Systemic Misogyny and Violence against Women and Girls: An international perspective'*, A Tomar, Women and Mental Health Special Interest Group Conference 2022, RCPsych, Royal College of Psychiatrists, October 2022
- Speaker, Leadership for MH System Development, *'Human Resources for Mental Health: Initiatives in Victoria'*, University of Melbourne, October 2022
- Speaker, *'Managing burnout and staying healthy'*, RACP Physicians Wellbeing Seminar, September 2022
- Speaker, Podcast: Psych Matters RANZCP, *'Leadership and management for psychiatrists during and post COVID-19'*, with M Wright, R Vine and N Elzahaby.  
<https://psychmatters.ranzcp.org/1072258/9709927>
- RANZCP Annual Congress, Sydney 2022
  - Pre-Congress Workshop, *'Developing a blueprint for the shape of Mental Health Services in Australia'*, J Allan, V Eapen, I Hickie, P McGorry, A Tomar, A Virgona.
  - *'A binational College or one comprising nine colonies? The impact of a fractured federation on relationships between the binational College, its branches/NZ and respective governments'*, A Virgona, A Tomar, B Emmerson, M Galbally, P Furst, D Chapman.
  - Speaker, *'Women as Leaders in Psychiatry: Glass Ceiling or Myth?'*, A Tomar, A Cockram, R Vine, J Kulkarni, C Quadrio, S Loi, P Golding, M Bismarck, C Silberberg, E Moore, M Galbally.
  - Speaker, *'Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System: Is it delivering what it promised?'*, A Tomar, P McGorry, A Cockram, R Vine, S Stafrace, B Singh.
  - *'Supporting Psychiatry Workforce through COVID19. Initiatives at Victorian Branch, RANZCP'*, A Tomar, L Allen.
  - *'The Racism Awareness Working Group: Equity, discrimination and racial discrimination-creating stronger links and safety for our culturally and linguistically diverse patients'*, A Tomar, S Loi, S Sundaram, JP Teo.
  - *'Supporting trainees in leadership: initiatives at the Victorian Branch, RANZCP'*, A Tomar, K Allen, T Sellitto, L Allen.
  - *'Bringing Trainees and SIMGs into the fold: What are we waiting for?'*, A Tomar, A Virgona, K Jenkins, R Lakshmana.
  - Chair, *'Relevance of Feminism to Psychiatry today'*, Speaker M Galbally, Inaugural National Women in Psychiatry Meeting.
- Speaker, *'Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System: What it means for care'*, Update in Psychiatry: A session by RACP, April 2022  
<https://www.racp.edu.au/news-and-events/all-events/past-event-presentations>
- Speaker, Leadership for MH System Development, Jointly organized by University of Melbourne and PARI, June 2022
- Forums by Victorian Branch RANZCP
  - Chair, *'Systematic approaches to achieving equality in mental health'*, Dr Lade Smith & Dr Raj Mohan, RAWG 2021.
  - Chair, *'Complexities of personality development with childhood trauma'*, J Beatson and S Rao, 2021.
  - Moderator, *'Psychotherapy in the COVID era'*, by Professor Glen Gabbard, 2020.
  - Moderator, *'Psychiatrists and the state of Victorian Mental Health System'*, Panelists C Morgan, R Vine, A Carroll, R Newton, P McGorry & H Herrman, Victorian Branch RANZCP Annual Conference 2019
- Lawsense Seminar on Law for Medical Health Practitioners, September 2015
- Speaker, *'Replicating an Australian model of private mental health care in an Indian setting- is it possible?'* VIMHANS, New Delhi, 2015

- Speaker, RACGP & RANZCP workshop on mental health concerns for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, 2014
- Speaker, 24th Hoch-Trivedi-Lebovici Guest Lecture, Department of Psychiatry, Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, 2013
- Comment on Newman L et al. "*Seeking asylum in Australia: immigration detention, human rights and mental health care*". *Australasian Psychiatry* 2013; 21(4): 315-320
- AMA4 Impairment Assessment Training, Core Module Stream and Psychiatry GEPIC Stream Module, August 2013
- Multiple other courses and conferences over the years, with special interest in Trauma work, Psychotherapy, Neurostimulation, Child and Youth specific events.
- Tomar, Cheung. '*Musical hallucinations induced by drugs*', *International Psychogeriatrics* 2007; 19(6):1169-72, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17845733/>
- Thesis, Doctor of Medicine (MD), University of Delhi. '*A comparative study of the efficacy of three Artemisinin derivatives viz. Arte-ether, Artemether and Artesunate in the treatment of acute uncomplicated falciparum malaria*', 2000
- MBBS, Lady Hardinge Medical College, University of Delhi, 1997

## Social Media, Advocacy and Press Releases

- Invited Editorial Opinion Piece, Herald Sun, *13th December, 2022*  
'Dan, we must get this right.': Highlighting the importance of Reform work in the clinical sector  
<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/serious-trouble- victorians-waiting-six-months-for-mental-health-support-20221103- p5bv9c.html>
- News article, Geelong Advertiser, *20th May 2022*  
'Psychiatrist shortage contributes to long wait times in Geelong'.
- News article, Daily Telegraph, *22nd August 2021*  
'Aussie kids wait nine months as psychiatrists burnt out.'
- Founder and moderator of social media group 'Kaleidoscope'.  
Established in *2020* for Victorian psychiatrists as a platform for
  - sharing clinical information
  - providing peer support
  - current active membership of around 400 psychiatrists
- Moderator, multiple social media platforms connecting psychiatrists, SIMGs and trainees across Australia and NZ to enhance and provide effective advocacy.
- Establishment and coordination of advocacy group lobbying Federal Minister of Health for establishment of new Telehealth MBS item numbers for outpatient care.
- Successful development, implementation and promotion of viable telehealth models of Mental Health Care in both Public and Private sectors in Victoria.
- Participant in national advocacy group promoting appropriate PPE for HCWs during COVID pandemic, *April 2020*
- *Project InItTogether*: Supporting Victorian psychiatrists/SIMGs/Trainees to support their overseas colleagues through COVID-19 pandemic.
- Member, Victorian DHHS and Austrade Joint Delegation to India to develop models of mental health care in public and private health sector, *December 2015*
- Member of Victorian Government Delegation with Neuroscience Victoria and Austrade to develop and expand mental health care in India, *April 2015*
- Witness, Review WA State Forensic Mental Health Service, DoH, Govt. of WA, *2008*
- Multiple press releases through Victorian Branch, RANZCP (available on website)