

Media release

17 June 2016

Nurse deregistered for four years

A tribunal has cancelled a nurse's registration after finding he engaged in professional misconduct.

The South Australian Health Practitioners Tribunal (the tribunal) has reprimanded Mr David Andrew Stephenson in the strongest possible terms, cancelled his registration and disqualified him from applying for registration as a nurse for a period of four years after it found he had engaged in professional misconduct.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the NMBA) referred Mr Stephenson to the tribunal alleging that the following behaviour amounted to professional misconduct:

- In 2002/2003 he engaged in sexual contact with a fifteen year old; and
- In 2006 he engaged in a sexual relationship with the wife of a terminally ill patient being treated by him.

Mr Stephenson admitted to the NMBA's allegations.

On 11 February 2016, the tribunal found that the behaviour amounted to professional misconduct and imposed the following disciplinary sanctions:

- reprimand in the strongest possible terms,
- cancellation of registration as a nurse, and
- disqualification from applying for registration as a nurse for a period of four years, effective immediately.

Mr Stephenson was ordered to pay the NMBA's costs.

In its written reasons for the decision delivered on 18 May 2016, the tribunal emphasised that the abhorrent behaviour is a grave departure from the standards expected of a registered nurse and the codes of conduct and ethics applicable to the profession.

NMBA Chair Lynette Cusack said 'the Board is clear that nurses must recognise their professional position. They have a responsibility to ensure that a therapeutic relationship is maintained with patients and their families, alongside their professional and personal boundaries.'

The reasons for the tribunal's decision will be published on the [AustLII website](#).

For more information

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