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Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Tribunal reprimands and suspends physiotherapist

6 November 2014

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal has reprimanded Mr Alexander Browning and suspended his registration as a physiotherapist for two months.

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia took disciplinary action against Mr Browning alleging that he had violated a practitioner-patient boundary by conducting a sexual relationship with a patient over a 14-month period.

Mr Browning first treated the patient for a neck complaint in 2008, and on several occasions in 2009-10. The professional relationship ended approximately 24 days after the sexual relationship started.

The Board sets the professional standards that registered physiotherapists must meet. These are detailed in the Board's [code of conduct](#), which includes specific information about professional boundaries.

Mr Browning and his patient were of a similar age when the relationship started, and the Tribunal found the relationship was not exploitative, predatory or emotionally distressing to the patient. It therefore found the boundary violation was at the lower end of seriousness for cases of this kind.

Mr Browning admitted to engaging in professional misconduct.

The tribunal imposed conditions on Mr Browning's registration, requiring him to complete a course of education addressing professional boundary management issues with patients and undertake a 12-month mentoring program.

Mr Browning was also ordered to pay the Board's costs of and incidental to the proceedings fixed at \$14,000.

The full decision is on the [AustLII website](#).

For more information

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