

Tensions & Traumas in Health Law

Edited by Ian Freckelton, Kerry Petersen

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One of the joys and highlights of contemporary Australian general practice is the encouragement to explore a range of healthcare issues beyond the narrowest boundaries of our specialist discipline.

One such area is the evolving discipline of health law, where the clinical domain that we know so well interacts with the legal and governance structures of the courts and lawmakers, and the ethical positions of society at large.

It was from this position that I sat down to read this rather lengthy tome. Initially, I was somewhat apprehensive, concerned that the text and extensive footnotes and

references would position the book more as a legal training textbook than a text for a wider audience. However, my fears were quickly abated. The text is written in an engaging style and does not presuppose that the reader is imbued with an extensive knowledge of the law and legal procedures. I particularly enjoyed the unanswered questions posed by the writers on notable controversial topics. The editors' goal was to be 'comprehensive [with a] lively analysis and the focus on controversial and cutting-edge problems in health law'. In my opinion, the book meets this objective with apparent ease.

There is an extensive range of topics covered in 37 chapters across 10 main topic areas, which are appropriately indexed. This gives readers the option to parachute in and read about their

areas of interest rather than simply reading from cover to cover.

Areas addressed include privacy and confidentiality, death and dying, and legal liability issues.

In summary, I found this an interesting and thought-provoking book that extends across the boundaries of general practitioners' daily work into areas of contemporary Australian health issues that affect the ethical and professional lives of all our colleagues.

Professor Stephen A Margolis OAM
Senior Medical Editor, *Australian Journal of General Practice*; Professor, School of Medicine, Griffith University, Qld; Medical Officer, Royal Flying Doctor Service.

