

## **Conviction of Thomas Sam**

Sydney homœopath, Thomas Sam, and his wife Manju were convicted of manslaughter by gross criminal negligence in June 2009. Their daughter, Gloria, died of malnutrition and septicæmia, complications of severe eczema, in May 2002 at 9 ½ months of age. This is a terrible tragedy, and one can only imagine the immense devastation experienced by Thomas and his family.

The AHA has received emails from members and the general public asking what is being done to defend either Thomas and/or homœopathy. The AHA would like to make the following statements:

- The press have misrepresented and failed to publish the full details of the case, resulting in some negative print media.
- The trial/conviction of Thomas and Manju Sam was not about the efficacy of homœopathy. It was about the negligence of the parents in the general care of their child's health care.
- Thomas is not an AHA member, and is not registered with AROH.
- All AHA members are registered with AROH and must abide by the Codes of Conduct of the AHA and AROH, and recommendations or guidelines regarding duty of care. These include the advisability of referring a patient to another therapist or medical practitioner when treatment is not progressing. It is also deemed good practice to not treat your own family in situations other than for first aid or emergencies, and to transfer the care to another independent practitioner as soon as possible.
- All NSW 'unregistered' health professionals are bound by the NSW Department of Health Code of Conduct, which has similar codes to the AHA and AROH .

### **AHA Actions:**

- The AHA assisted the court with finding an expert witness who could comment on the case from a medical and homœopathic perspective.
- The AHA has responded to the press where appropriate, and will continue to do so, though there is no guarantee that AHA press releases will be published.
- The AHA will continue to promote homœopathy in a positive light to counteract the negative publicity.
- The AHA will continue to lobby the government for protection of title for homœopaths, via a system of co-regulation. This will help to protect the public from practitioners who are not registered, and who do not meet the government-endorsed National Competency Standards.

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