

18 APRIL 2008



STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE VICTORIAN VOLUNTARY MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT ON BODY IMAGE

The Age

The Age supports the admirable principles and intent of the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image and will continue to practice and uphold ethical editorial policies comparable to those which underpin the code.



Australian Association of National Advertisers

The new Victorian Voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image has been endorsed by the Australian Association of National Advertisers, the peak industry body of the Australian advertising industry.

Further, the AANA has referenced its involvement in and endorsement of the code in its submission to the Senate.

The AANA will be launching their revised and extended (to *all* media channels) AANA Code for Advertising & Marketing Communications to Children, which expressly prohibits sexualisation of children—as a direct result of the AANA's participation in the development of the Victorian Voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image Working Group.



Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Victoria Branch

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Victorian Branch supports the aims of the Victorian Voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image.

It is important to focus on educating and raising awareness within the media industry and the wider community; we all have a role to play in combating the negative impact of unrealistic and unachievable body images.

The Alliance, Victoria was pleased to be a part of the development of this Code and will work with our members to ensure its success.



Leonie Young, CEO, *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*

We know from talking to young people across Australia that their sense of “not measuring up” to an idealised body image – and the pressure to do so from themselves and their peers - can have a profound effect on self esteem, increasing the risk of anxiety and depression.

For this reason, beyondblue is putting increased focus on the relationship between eating disorders and anxiety/depression. It’s important that we try and broaden people’s perception of what is an “acceptable” and “desirable” body shape and size to one which is realistic and healthy. We wholeheartedly welcome the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image and will support its adoption by media agencies.



DOVE

Dove congratulates the Victorian State Government on this important initiative and the vital step it takes towards addressing the narrow, stifling and damaging beauty stereotypes often represented in the media and the beauty and fashion industries.

Through the work of the Dove Self Esteem Fund in Australia and internationally, we are well aware of the impact these unattainable images can have on the self esteem of women and men, and in particular young people.

As a beauty brand that advocates a more realistic representation of beauty with its campaign for real beauty, Dove has long called for change in our industry. We strongly believe that initiatives such as this are an important and valid way to ensure the problem remains top of mind and challenges the industry to change the status quo.

Having worked with the Victorian Government and our charity partner, the Butterfly Foundation over the past four years on this issue, the Dove brand is proud to support the Victorian Government and the Voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image.



Dr Rick Kausman, Australian Medical Association, *ifnotdieting*

The Code is a positive step in the right direction to better support the young people of Victoria.



Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria

The Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria supports the voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image as a significant step in the right direction.

Voluntary codes are effective only if a significant majority of the industries affected will endorse and comply with the codes. The EDFV urges organisations within these industries to show their support for this Victorian Government initiative.

By endorsing and adopting the Code, organisations will be participating in the process of cultural change which must occur in order to promote positive body image, enhance self-esteem and protect people in our community - especially young people - against eating disorders.

The EDFV applauds Minister Merlino and the Victorian Government for taking action to support and strengthen positive body image in the community through this and other initiatives, and urges the government to remain strong in its commitment to promote positive body image.



Girlfriend

Girlfriend Magazine whole-heartedly supports the Victorian Voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image. Girlfriend magazine was involved in the formulation of the Code and many of its recommendations are already embraced by Girlfriend magazine and in particular by Girlfriend's Self Respect campaign.

Launched in 2006 Girlfriend's Self Respect campaign aims to encourage teen girls to take their mental and physical health more seriously. Each month Girlfriend magazine commits to dedicating at least 10 pages to talk to girls about their mental and physical health and to make them more media literate.

With regular 'Reality Checks' indicating pages on which models photos have been touched up or where professional hair and make up was used, now Girlfriend readers understand more about how much work goes into creating some of those looks.

As part of this campaign readers were asked which celebrities they thought lacked the self respect to be included in Girlfriend magazine and so Paris Hilton and Britney Spears were banned from the magazine.

Girlfriend readers have responded overwhelmingly in support of this campaign and self respect has become one of the pillars of the magazine.



Leanne Koster, Indigo magazine, Giving Girls a Voice

We congratulate the government on this positive initiative to make a difference to the way young people see themselves. It is a powerful turning point in transforming the way images are presented in the media.

A revolutionary foundation for the creators of media imagery to provide young people with realistic images that they can relate to and see themselves in. It is a new way forward where products and services can be visually appealing yet powerfully motivating.



L'Oréal Melbourne Fashion Festival

The L'Oréal Melbourne Fashion Festival is really excited by this initiative developed by the Victorian State Government on a Media Code of Conduct around body image. This will set guidelines for the ways in which fashion and related images are projected through media channels.



Sportsgirl

Some time ago Sportsgirl created a Statement of Commitment to Positive Body Image after over 1,000 female staff in our stores told us that negative body image and eating disorders were the most important community issues facing them and their friends.

We have worked hard to tackle these difficult and complex issues by raising awareness amongst our staff and customers, introducing store policies that set good examples and providing positive body image language training to our store staff.

We take our responsibilities as an Australia wide leading fashion retailer and employer of young women seriously and believe that initiatives such as this one by the State Government are important steps in tackling this significant community issue. We would ask the Victorian Government be setting this example to encourage the other states and Federal Government to follow suit.



Professor Susan Paxton, La Trobe University

The Victorian Government leads the world in the development of this important Code. This initiative will drive change in the presentation of dangerous media images and raise awareness of their negative impact.



Kerry Wells, former Miss Universe and member of the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image Working Group

The Victorian Government is to be congratulated for taking the initiative and instigating the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image. Hopefully this will lead to a better understanding, tolerance and caring for each other in regard to our physical appearance, whatever that may be. Who knows, maybe this will lead to a better understanding, tolerance and caring for each other in regard to our entire being - and wouldn't that be wonderful.



Carl Gardiner, Managing Director, Mushroom Marketing

We know the contemporary music industry has a significant influence on the attitudes and aspirations of young Australians. In many cases there is a 'look' that goes hand in hand with the 'sound' of much of today's music.

Music comes in many shapes and sizes, and it is appropriate that the body images that are often a part of the 'look' of such music does as well.

Mushroom Marketing continues to enjoy a great working relationship with the Victorian Government across a range of youth-focused initiatives.

We will support Media Code of Conduct on Body Image within all such projects as well as encouraging our associates and artists within the music industry to do the same.



Erica Cervini, Journalism Lecturer, RMIT University and member of the Media Code Working Group

The educative role the voluntary code can play is significant. It's a big step forward in improving young people's media literacy about the preparation of fashion images, and it also encourages people working in the media to critically reflect on their reporting of body image.

Since the late 1990s, journalists and editors have been urged to think about how they report on mental illness and suicide, and in many cases suicide is now covered more sensitively.

Education is also a key to improving the reporting of body image and the voluntary code is an important step in helping to achieve this.



The Push

Cheers for fair recognition and representation of young people!

The Push is committed to helping young people in Victoria further their own aspirations through music and culture. An important part of our work is also to make sure they feel good about themselves and what they can offer.

We are pleased to support the aims of the Code.



Claire Vickery, CEO, The Butterfly Foundation and member of the Media Code of Conduct on Body Image Working Group

The Butterfly Foundation wholeheartedly supports the Victorian Governments initiative in establishing a voluntary code of conduct for the Media, Fashion and Advertising industries.

Via our work with thousands of young people every year, we are aware of the powerful role that these industries play in the development of young people's self esteem and body image. Helping young people grow into adults who are confident, happy and have a strong sense of self is a role for all community members.

This groundbreaking code is a wonderful inroad into assisting these important and influential industries play a positive role in the lives of young people. We congratulate the Victorian State Government on this initiative.

