

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0813_11

Senator Cash provided in writing.

Question

**THE REPORT ON THE NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP ON BODY IMAGE - CODE
OF CONDUCT & ITS SUPPORTERS (RECOMMENDATION 4&5)**

"Code of Conduct & its Supporters (recommendation 4 & 5) 1. Has industry been responsive in regard to the code? 2. Has the Code been revised in response to industry and public feedback, technological development or other issues? 3. How many companies/organisations/groups have taken steps to promote positive body image? 4. Is a list of these bodies publicly accessible (for example through a website?). 5. In the recommendations it states: "If, after a sustained period of continued developments... there is a broad failure of industry to adopt good body image practices, the Australian Government should look to review the voluntary nature of the code." Please define "sustained period" and "broad failure". Would the Government consider something stronger than 'voluntary' if poor uptake was demonstrated? 6. Given that the recent Mission Australia report into issues of concern to young people found body image continued to be the number 1 issue for them (consistent the past four years), is the Minister/Department concerned that there appears little improvement in the level of body image dissatisfaction for young people, despite its initiatives? What is the Department doing to address this? 7. Does the Minister/Department plan to step up pressure for the adoption of the voluntary industry Code of Conduct and best practice principles? 8. In the last two years we have seen significant legislative changes overseas because of the seriousness of eating issues and body shame, and their devastating impact. These have specifically been around such things as models size/ ages, and advertising of diet products. Further regulation is also being proposed internationally regarding the diet industry. Has the Government considered legislative approaches at all? "

Answer

1. Industry response to the Voluntary Code of Conduct has been positive.
2. No.
3. As the Code is voluntary, no indicator has been developed to measure how many companies, organisations or groups have taken steps to promote body image in response to the Code.
4. No.
5. The terms "sustained period" and "broad failure" were used by the National Advisory Group on Body Image in their report and clarification of these terms was not provided. In her announcement on 27 June 2010, the former Minister

for Youth, the Hon Kate Ellis MP, stated that the Government wanted to work in partnership with industry and was not taking legislative action to punish those who do not comply with the Code.

6. The Mission Australia statistics referred to reflect young people's level of concern about body image and are not an indicator of body image dissatisfaction. Promoting the importance of positive body image, such as through Government action in this area, has the potential to increase young people's awareness of body image as an issue. This in turn could lead to more young people listing it as an area of concern in surveys such as the Mission Australia survey. The increase in concern does not necessarily equate to an increase in body dissatisfaction.
7. The Department will continue to promote the Voluntary Industry Code of Conduct on Body Image as guiding principles on this issue for the media, fashion and advertising industries.
8. The Government recognizes the seriousness and complexity of the issue of body image and is considering a range of options and approaches.