



Skin Deep:
Body Image Self Esteem and Eating
Disorders in the Northern Territory

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December 2010



The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is an independent advisory body. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily reflective of those of the Office of Youth Affairs or the Northern Territory Government.

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Note: As at 11 November 2010, without having full knowledge of what would be defined as a ‘mild or moderate mental illness’ the Skin Deep Team is unable to predict whether the recommendations contained within this publication will be the responsibility of the Northern Territory or Commonwealth Governments as at 1 July 2011. It is expected that the Northern Territory Government will take carriage of this report and, should the topics become responsibility of the Commonwealth, ensure that the recommendations are followed through.

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- the young Territorians that met with us individually and in focus groups and to those who filled out a survey on such sensitive topics - without you the human element of such issues is lost;
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- to the rest of the Youth Round Table who have been available to bounce ideas and always gather a few more surveys; and
- last but not least, our families and partners who have made suggestions, put up with us being slightly manic and supported and encouraged unconditionally. Without you this project would not be what it is.

Index/Abbreviations

Pro-Ana/Mia: Pro-anorexia/pro-bulimia. There are many websites dedicated to 'pro-ana' or 'pro-mia' groups, that support young people to continue disordered behaviours and many offer tips on how to hide the illness from others in order to continue behaviour¹, and other ways in which to avoid food or purge.

¹ Brotsky, S. PsyD, LLP (2007), *Starving in Cyberspace: The Pro-Anorexia/Bulimia Websites*, Eating Disorders Recovery Today

Executive Summary

This project was established to make recommendations to the Northern Territory Government in relation to body image, self esteem and eating disorder services in the Northern Territory for young people.

In order to have a greater understanding of these issues and their place within the Northern Territory context we undertook a number of research activities including a survey of young Territorians, focus groups, a literature review, meetings with local health practitioners, national organisations and local leaders and liaison with local health services.

As part of the Skin Deep project we also launched a community campaign consisting of printed t-shirts, a facebook group (membership at 17 December 2010 was 180) and a Skin Deep email account for the anonymous sharing of stories.

Based on our campaign and research we would like to make the following recommendations. It is recommended that the Northern Territory Government:

1. establish a Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group made up of community members (including at least one youth representative) and local health representatives;
2. establish a position, or allocate further duties to an existing position to oversee the administration of the Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group
3. create a policy framework setting measurable goals in the areas of body image and self esteem enhancement and eating disorders amongst young people;
4. map services currently available for those experiencing eating disorders;
5. employs the services of a qualified consultant to conduct a review of the mental health system in relation to eating disorder treatment, particularly in regards to young people, in 2011;
6. immediately review the Department of Health and Families Tip Sheets 69 and 70;
7. establish a community campaign around encouraging positive body image and self esteem amongst Territorians;
8. establishes a greater presence on the internet in terms of body image, self esteem and eating disorder advice, perhaps through the continuation of the Skin Deep branding;
9. incorporates compulsory programs and course modules for body image, self esteem, nutrition, fitness and media literacy into the curriculum in every year of schooling;

10. runs community programs annually that train young people to facilitate workshops and to have the ability to enhance the self esteem and body image of their peers through accurate information and delivery methods, to capture youth older than school age (18 – 25 years of age);
11. commits to investigating the issues of body image, self esteem and eating disorders amongst our young people, including the public release of statistics relating to these areas;
12. commits funding to assist the Skin Deep team to produce promotional events and materials; and
13. annually reviews and evaluates the recommendations implemented and provides the information on progress publicly.

Introduction

The issue of body image is one that has garnered much national media attention in recent months, with the former Federal Minister for Youth, Hon Kate Ellis MP, releasing the proposed [National Strategy on Body Image](#). If all recommendations contained within this document are adhered to by the Australian Government, then implications should result for the Northern Territory Government.

This project was initially undertaken as a result of the release of the 2010 Mission Australia's Survey of Young Australians, and discussion with young Territorians that revealed that some felt embarrassed about selecting 'body image' as the issue most concerning to them – the released results have shown that body image is the number one personal concern of 31.1% of young Australians surveyed, which is the highest ranking personal concern². The Victorian Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders reveals that one in 20 Australian women reported that they had experienced an eating disorder of some kind and that one in four individuals know somebody who has³, and it is little publicised that anorexia is the most common disease in young females (aged 15 – 24 years) after obesity and asthma⁴ (Ibid, 2000).

A search on the popular search engine 'Google', using the key words 'Northern Territory Eating Disorders' paints a dismal picture. The description of the first match explains that "*there are no eating disorder specific associations in the Northern Territory*" and so began what revealed to be a painstakingly difficult process to simply gain information on the appropriate place to get help for issues related to body image, self esteem and eating disorders in the Northern Territory.

You may not be familiar with the terms 'Pro-Ana' and 'Pro-Mia'. However, it is terrifying that many young Territorians with internet access do – and these sites are much easier to find than those offering help in the Northern Territory. Pro-Ana and Pro-Mia sites are websites that are created with an aim to support those with eating disorders to *continue* their disordered eating, as opposed to supporting those experiencing the illness through to treatment and recovery.⁵

² Mission Australia (2010), *Mission Australia National Survey of Young Australians 2010*, Key and Emerging Issues

³ The Victorian Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders, *Facts and Findings*, 2009

⁴ Mortality rates for anorexia nervosa after 20 years are between 15-20%. Ibid, 2000. p80

⁵ Brotsky, S. PsysD, LLP (2007), *Starving in Cyberspace: The Pro-Anorexia/Bulimia Websites*, Eating Disorders Recovery Today

Aims

The ultimate aim of this project is for young Territorians to have access to information, services and programs that allow them to be happy, healthy and confident. In addition, to increase the level of information being disseminated to young Territorians, establish a Northern Territory Framework for body image, self esteem and eating disorder policies to allow the rollout of educational resources and to raise awareness of the issues in order to encourage the flow of communication in our community.

Discussion and Major Findings

How research was conducted

Surveys

The consultation of young Territorians through surveys had 257 respondents from a range of cultural, socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. The demographic breakdown of respondents was as follows:

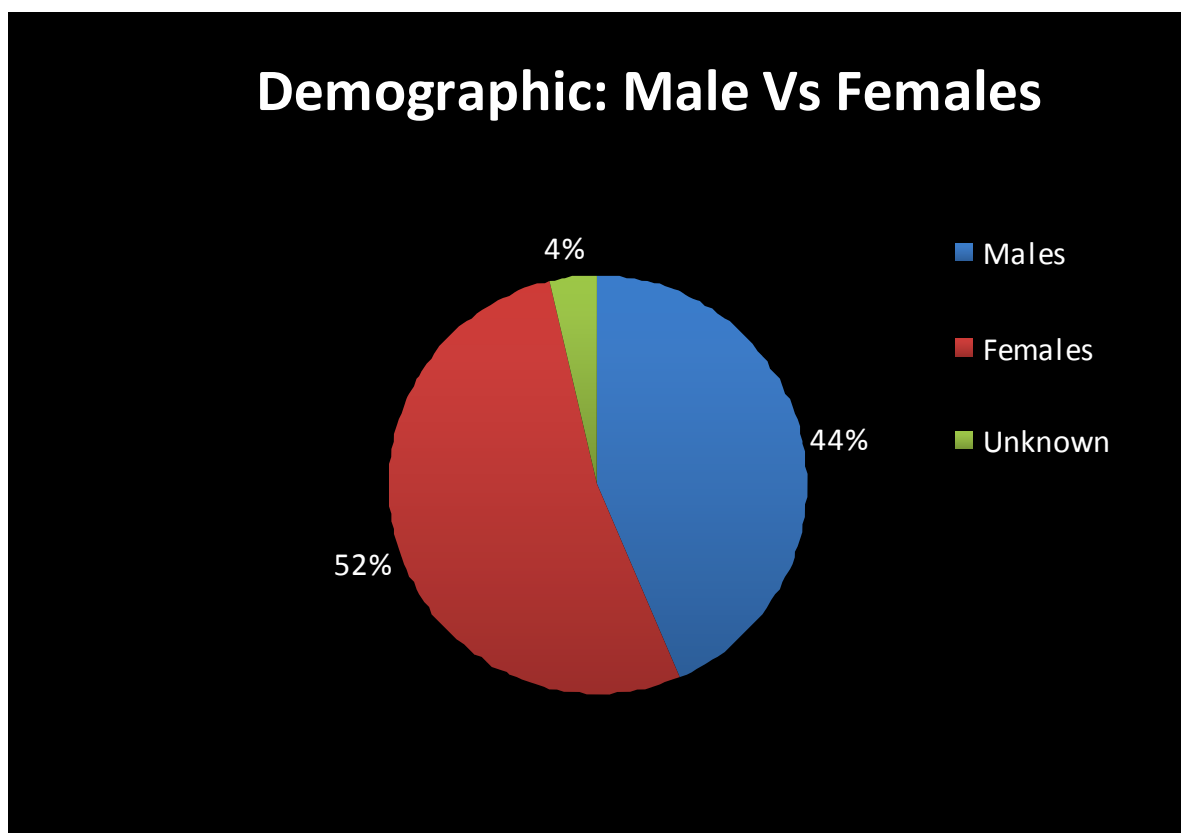


Figure 1: The gender break down of respondents to the Skin Deep survey.

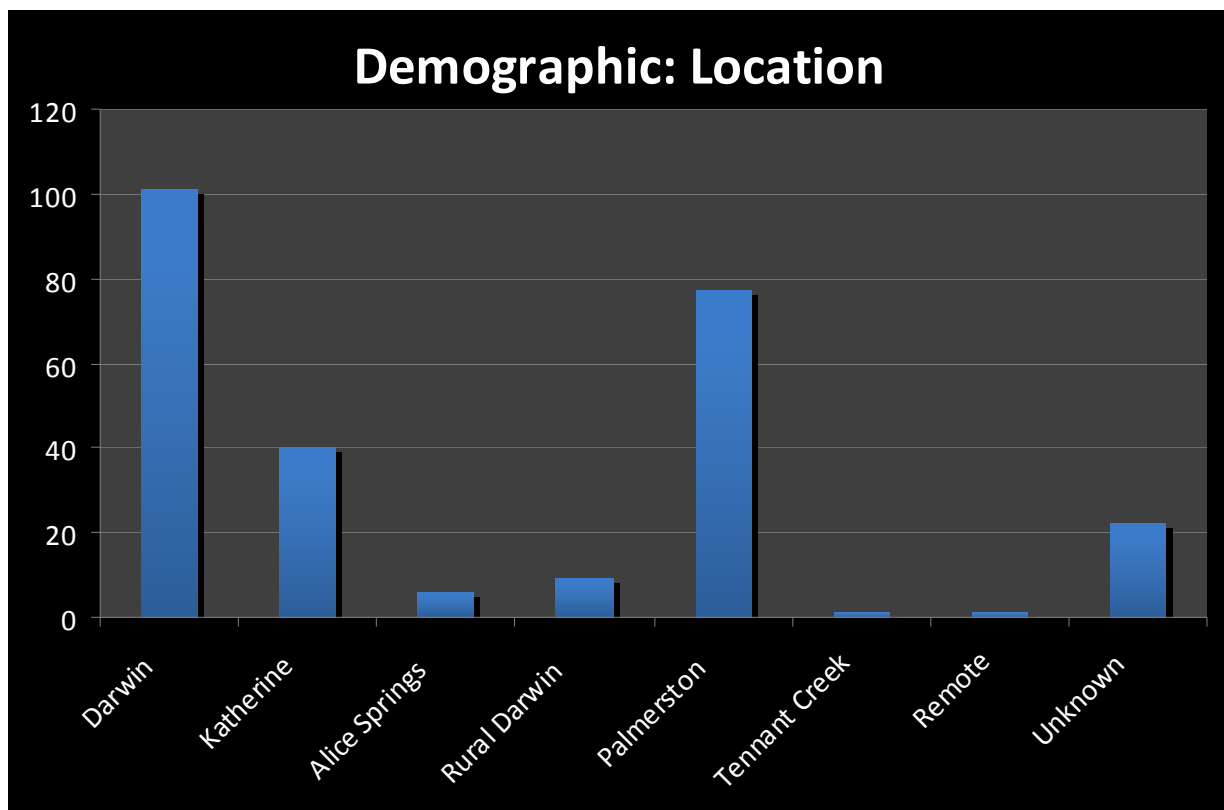


Figure 2: Location breakdown of respondents of the Skin Deep survey.

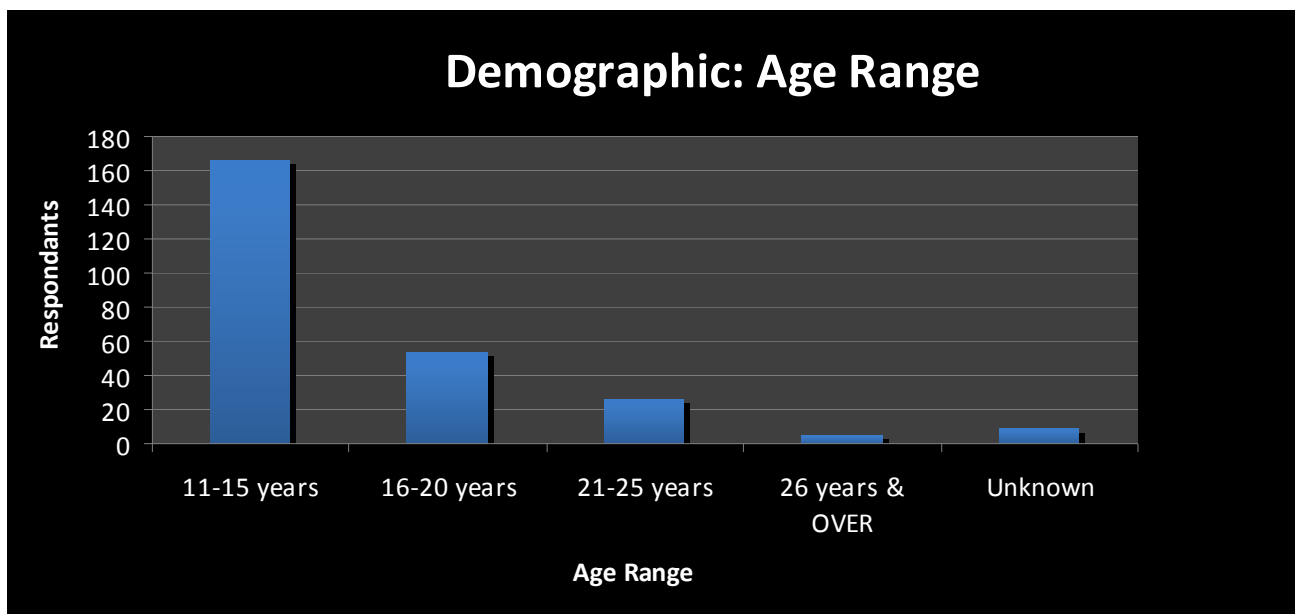


Figure 3: Age breakdown of respondents of the Skin Deep survey.

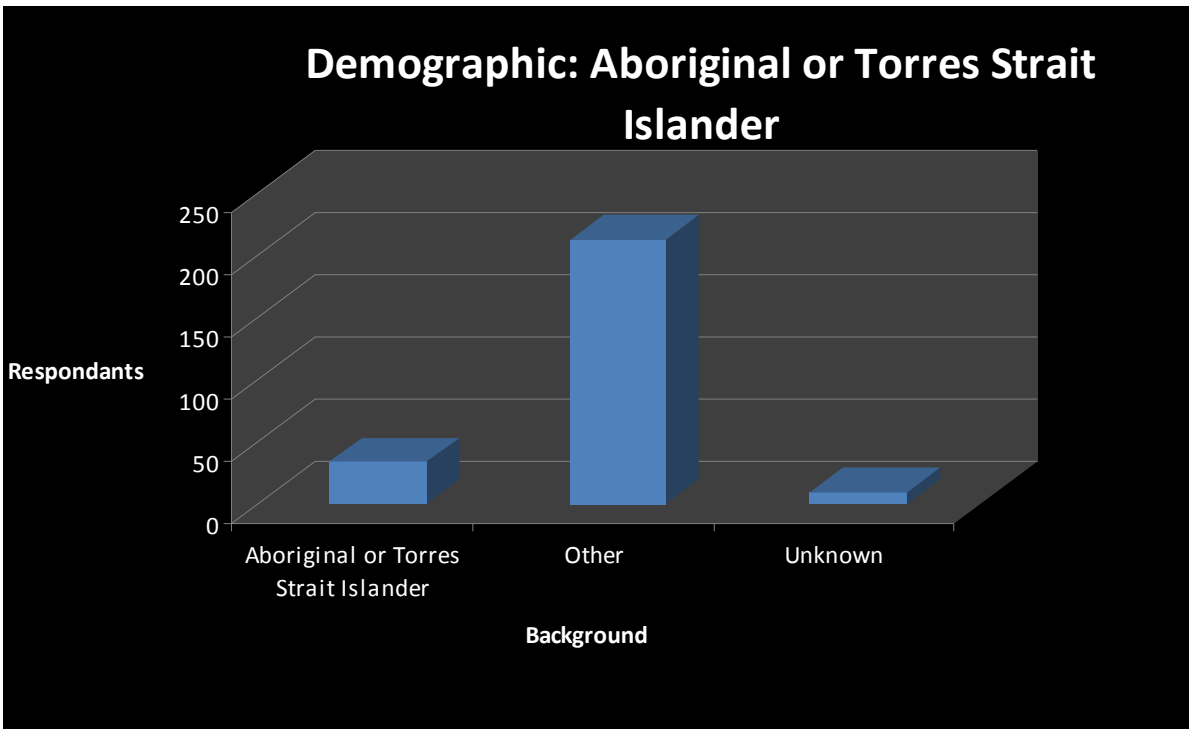


Figure 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island breakdown of respondents to the Skin Deep survey.

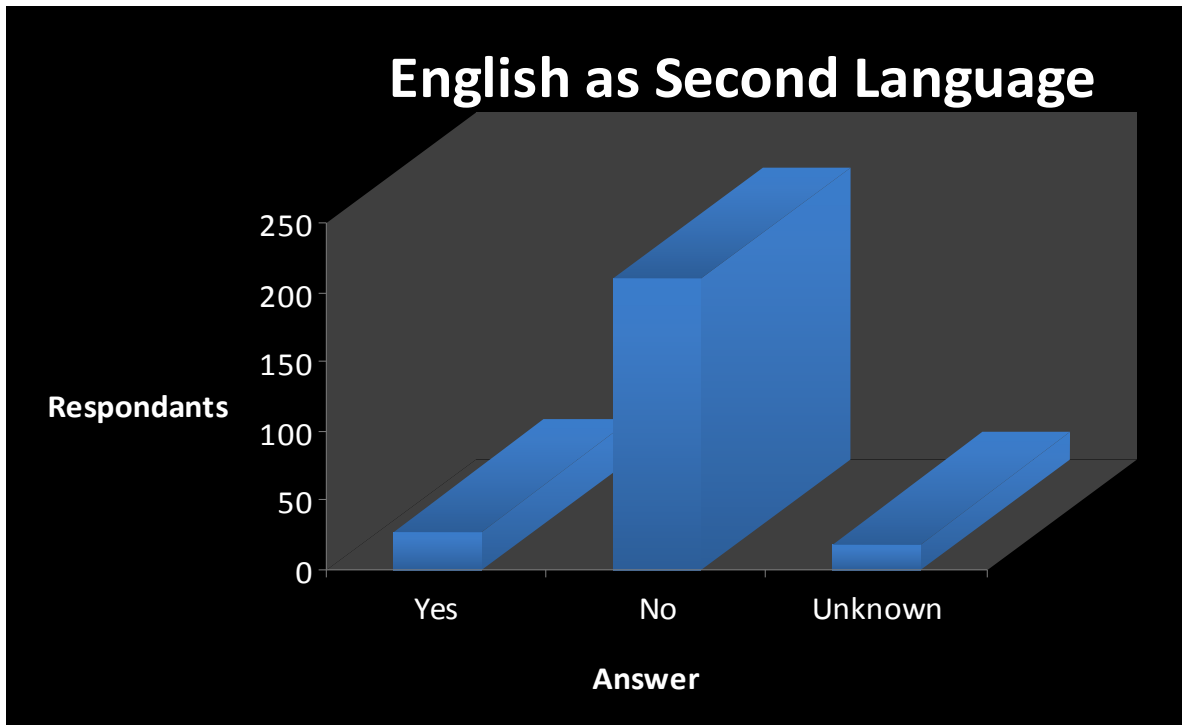


Figure 5: English as a Second Language breakdown of respondents to the Skin Deep survey.

The survey (Appendix A) asked questions pertaining to the way the individual felt about different aspects of themselves, whether or not they had participated in body image or esteem building programs and experiences regarding eating disorders and the recovery process, if applicable.

It was important to the integrity of the project that participants were kept anonymous and had a range of ways in which they could submit their responses. It was also important that surveys with uncompleted questions (such as question 8, regarding whether or not the individual had suffered or known somebody who had suffered from an eating disorder) still had their other responses counted. This is due to our understanding that body image, self esteem and eating disorder issues can be incredibly hard to deal with or admit, and does not make their other responses less valid. The survey also included the contact information for headspace Top End, in the case that any respondents may need to seek assistance with any of the issues covered.

Challenges with the Skin Deep survey process have been gaining responses from young people in the remote areas of the Northern Territory. As the project has been created in a voluntary capacity and relies as much as possible on free resources, the survey was unable to be created in a number of formats that could have increased responses from the remote areas. The survey was too large to be created using free survey software, although it was suggested to us that using such software may increase responses in the remote area through better accessibility.

Despite these challenges, we found young Territorians to be very receptive, with many even extending thanks for broaching this topic. Many health services and youth workers were also

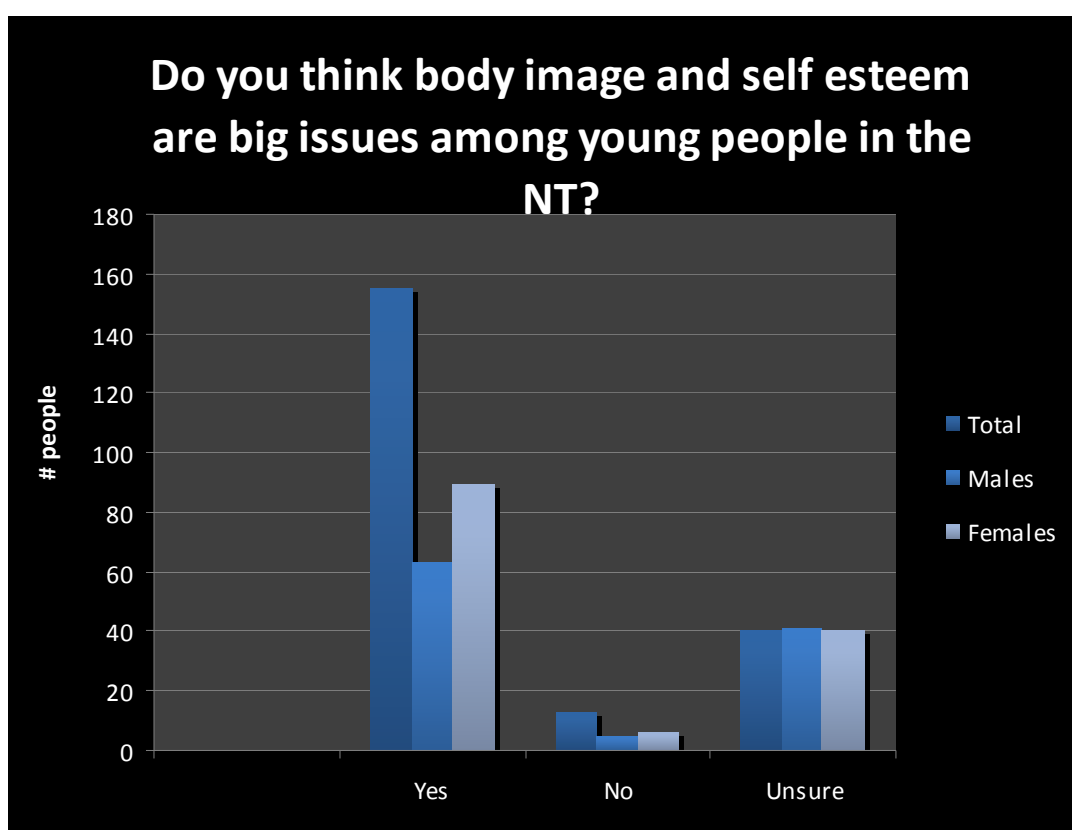


Figure 6: Number of survey respondents that believed body image and self esteem to be big issues in the Northern Territory.

supportive, forwarding our survey through their networks. It is important at this point to note that 60.31% of young Territorians canvassed believed body image and self esteem to be big issues in the Northern Territory.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held, one with six females between the ages of 22 and 24 years of age at Dripstone Cliffs, Darwin, and one held with four females and one male ranging from 16 to 24 years of age at the Office of Youth Affairs, Darwin City.

These focus groups allowed us to expand on the questions within the survey and on comments that came from the further discussions.

Meetings

Meetings were held with Catherine Keen, nurse at headspace Top End (June 2010); Christine Morgan, CEO, and Kirsty Dbais, Centre Manager, The Butterfly Foundation Resource Centre (Sydney, June 2010) Janette Galton and Sarah O'Rourke, Office of Women's Policy, Northern Territory Government, and with Minister for Women's Policy, Hon Malandirri McCarthy MLA and Minister for Young Territorians, Hon Rob Knight MLA, Northern Territory Government.

These meetings gave us an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of services and programs available in the Northern Territory, plans for the future and what should be in operation.

Email and telephone liaison

Emails were exchanged between ourselves and local health organisations the Tamarind Centre, Top End Mental Health and TEAMhealth in order to ascertain what the process was from diagnosis of an eating disorder through to treatment, if the patient took this option.

Emails and phone calls were also exchanged with the Butterfly Foundation's Education Manager and staff members in the Australian Government Office of Youth regarding various programs and the National Strategy on Body Image.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted of prior research results, journals, publications and articles which backed up much of what was revealed through our surveys of young Territorians. A review was also conducted of measures taken in other states and territories regarding body image, self esteem and eating disorders by way of comparison, and investigating what could be viable in the Northern Territory.

Recommendations and Rationale

Recommendation 1

Establish a NT Body Image Advisory Group made up of community members (including at least one youth representative) and local health representatives.

“The breadth, complexity and multi-faceted nature of issues relating to body image challenges families and carers, communities and Governments.” - Government Response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Issues Relating to the Development of Body Image Among Young People and Associated Effects on their Health and Wellbeing, January 2006

In 2004, the Australian Parliament held an inquiry into the *Issues Relating to the Development of Body Image Among Young People and Associated Effects on their Health and Wellbeing* (VicHealth, 2004). In 2006, the Australian Government responded to this inquiry. In the foreword by Jacinta Allen, then Minister for Youth Affairs, it was acknowledged that body image issues are a confronting to many sectors of our community (Australian Government, 2006). It was also recommended that a *“Community Reference Group is established to advise Government”* to which the Victorian Government agreed, with commitment that the terms of reference, structure and functions of the Community Reference Group would be first Developed by the Department for Victorian Communities together with the Department of Human Resources.

The Australian Government’s response to body image was to create a National Body Image Advisory Group, headed by Mia Freedman, magazine editor, and the Australian Government Minister for Youth at that time, Kate Ellis MP (website of Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010), showing that a multifaceted approach to preparing such an important document for the community is highly valued by leaders around the country.

If the Northern Territory Government were to agree with this recommendation and establish a Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group made up of community stakeholders, it would be imperative to include at least one youth representative as per the [Northern Territory Government Youth Policy Framework](#) guiding principal '*Empowerment – To give young people the opportunity to influence decision making*' and the key direction '*Make sure that young people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives*'.

It is envisaged that the Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group would assist the Northern Territory Government to create a framework which would then serve to assist in the roll out of educational resources as they are released (which can be anticipated from the proposed National Strategy on Body Image), review current government information regarding these issues and have direct input into any new published information (whether that be in the final stages or from conception) and to discuss ideas for community campaigns.

Recommendation 3

Establish a position, or allocate further duties to an existing position, to oversee the administration of the Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group.

If the Northern Territory Government agrees to establish a Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group it is recommended that support is allocated to oversee the administration and to act as a liaison between the government and the group, forwarding on relevant material and information. It is also recommended that the duties of this role include a research and liaison function to ensure the group is aware of new developments in the areas of body image, self esteem and eating disorders and that other bodies are aware of the work of the group.

Recommendation 2

Create a policy framework setting measurable goals in the areas of body image and self esteem enhancement and eating disorders amongst young people.

It is recommended that a core function of the Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group be to work with the Northern Territory Government to create a framework for the provision of services, programs and education relating to body image, self esteem and eating disorders. The Australian Government Office of Youth has held meetings with state and territory representatives regarding these issues. State and Territory representatives differ depending on whose portfolio is deemed most appropriate to oversee this, for example Ministers for Education and Ministers for Health. This group have discussed the roll out of educational

resources over the next year⁶. The Butterfly Foundation have expressed that they will be working on resources regarding media literacy that can be incorporated into schools over the next year⁷. A framework would put the Northern Territory in a better position to ensure the effective roll out of any available resources to the community.

Recommendation 4

Maps services currently available for those experiencing eating disorders.

“I didn't seek help partly because I didn't know that there was any available...” – Female, 17 years old, Darwin

“Advertising targeted at young people that broadcasts programs and services available to people suffering from low self esteem, eating disorders or who need assistance in designing an exercise regime and healthy diet that will aid them in losing weight.” – Female, 21 years old, Darwin in response to the question: What do you believe should be implemented in the Northern Territory to promote healthy body image and enhance self esteem?

In 2006, the Victorian Government agreed to the Parliamentary Inquiry recommendation that they map existing eating disorder services (Recommendation 5, Victorian Government 2006), also noting that such a map would need to be comprehensive as there are many involved in the treatment of eating disorders, including general practitioners, psychiatrists and hospitals.

We recommend that the Northern Territory Government map all services in relation to body image and eating disorders to identify any current gaps, areas that need urgent attention and also to allow existing community organisations to promote and distribute information that is available.

Of those surveyed 102 respondents (39.69% of the 250 respondents to the question) indicated they had either experienced, or knew somebody (in the Northern Territory) who had experienced an eating or body image disorder; 66% of respondents to the following question “did this person seek help?” indicated ‘No’.

It is imperative that the Northern Territory Government and non-government health organisations are fully aware of what services are available for young people experiencing these issues, and that these services are promoted as heavily as possible.

⁶ Discussion with staff member at the Federal Government Office for Youth, July 2010

⁷ Meeting with Christine Morgan, CEO, and Kristy Dbais, Manager of the Sydney Resource Centre, The Butterfly Foundation, June 2010

It is also important to note that the Department of Health and Families, which the Royal Darwin Hospital comes under, is unable capacity wise to provide ‘dietetic input required for effective weight management of anorexia’⁸ and as this is the case, it is important to understand what alternatives are available. Anecdotally the Skin Deep team is hearing from many members of the community that sending young people with eating disorders to facilities interstate is currently the only available option and in addition to the associated costs with this, such an upheaval would only cause more upset to a young person experiencing mental illness.

Recommendation 5

Employs the services of a qualified consultant to review of the mental health system in relation to eating disorder treatment, particularly in regards to young people, in 2011.

In 2009 the Australian Capital Territory employed the services of Professor Janice Russell to perform what is now known as the *Review of Services for People With an Eating Disorder Across the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)*, and put forth recommendations for the improvement of such services. The review identified a number of gaps in the delivery of mental health services for those experiencing eating disorders and proposed the Australian Capital Territory Government take measures to improve such services. In response to a request from the senate in 2005, the New South Wales Centre for Eating and Dieting Disorders put forward a submission titled *Submission to the Select Committee on Mental Health Eating Disorders – Core Business for Mental Health [Focus on Service Needs for New South Wales] NSW Centre for Eating and Dieting Disorders (CEDD)* regarding the areas of priority and the costs of providing the needed improvements to services. The submission outlined that as at that time, the state was very new to the journey of providing adequate services this form of mental illness and that they required urgent funding for the identified priority areas. The Skin Deep team were unsuccessful in finding any similar documents in relation to the Northern Territory. A number of health professionals advised that there was very little in terms of services and support in the Northern Territory. An internet search reveals that all other states and territories have had these issues addressed by their respective governments, or, if not, in the very least, every other state and territory has publicised dedicated services for eating disorders.

As identified at the beginning of this report, the Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders revealed that one in 20 women shared that they had experienced an eating disorder, while

⁸ Staff member in dietetics, Royal Darwin Hospital, email correspondence

one in four individuals know somebody who has⁹. Out of 250 respondents to the Skin Deep survey:

- in answer to the question 'have you experienced, or known someone (in the NT) who has experienced an eating or body image disorder? e.g. Anorexia, Bulimia, excessive exercising, or body dysmorphia' a stunning forty one percent of respondents indicated 'yes'.
- Sixty six percent of the 132 respondents to the question 'did that person seek help' indicated 'no'.
- Forty one percent of 58 respondents to the question 'in your view, was this treatment successful' indicated 'no', with thirty eight percent of 82 respondents to the question 'did this individual receive ongoing support from professionals' indicating 'no' (forty percent 'unsure' and twenty two percent 'yes').
- Out of 69 respondents to the question 'if yes, was this support a free service?' thirty eight percent indicated 'no' (forty percent 'unsure' and thirteen percent 'yes').

These results reveal that not only is it essential that more research be done in terms of eating disorders in the Northern Territory and the services that deal with them, but in addition that more needs to be done to investigate all possible factors of why young Territorians are not seeking help when faced with mental illness, from all angles.

To perform a public and independent review in relation to eating disorder services would be in keeping with benchmarks set out in the Territory 2030 Strategic Plan under *Health and Wellbeing* (page 45);

"Objective 1: Reforming the Territory Health System

Our Targets

- *All Territorians will have improved access to essential healthcare services by 2030.*
- *By 2030, there will be a greater service-provider mix in the health system.*
- *Have a health workforce that meets the needs of all Territorians.*
- *Establish the Territory as a world leader in remote area and Indigenous health service delivery, linking education, research and policy and service provision by 2030.*
- *Increase the focus of the Territory health system on prevention. "*

⁹ The Victorian Centre for Excellence in Eating Disorders, Facts and Findings, 2009

(Only targets relevant to the project were included).

A review would certainly be important in assuring that the services currently provided are understood, reviewed and potentially improved and that any improvements made will reflect the need for a specialised workforce in these areas. Identifying and filling gaps will allow the Northern Territory Government can be a world leader in urban, rural and remote health service delivery; and show that the Northern Territory Government puts a great focus on all aspects of mental health and the prevention of associated disorders.

Recommendation 6

Immediately review the Department of Health and Families Tip Sheets 69 and 70.

The Department of Health and Families Tip Sheets 69 and 70 should be reviewed and amended, or new tip sheets created. In their current form they do not contain specific information and contact numbers for services or general practitioners who specialise in eating or body disorders. Taking into account the current information landscape for these topics, that being that it is extremely difficult to locate this information elsewhere, it is of immediate importance that these be updated in the short term and in the long term. In addition, through consultation with young Territorians and health professionals, a youth friendly and accessible fact sheet that tells young people specifically where to go for help should be considered, such as the Mind Your Mind resource.

Fact Sheets 69 and 70 do not address an individual looking for help but those who may be concerned. This information is also very important and should be distributed more widely for example in doctor's offices and through schools, to allow parents, friends and others to recognise the signs of poor body image, self esteem and eating disorders and to know what to do. It is important that there is a youth friendly version of these sheets as friends may be aware of behaviours that parents/guardians are not.

Recommendation 7

Establish a community campaign about encouraging positive body image and self esteem amongst Territorians.

At present there are no community campaigns in the Northern Territory to foster positive body image and self esteem amongst Territorians. It was suggested by a participant of Focus Group 2 that a campaign would have to be separate to, but tied in with, advertisements regarding healthy living (healthy weight, good nutrition etc) as provided by the Australian Government, to create a more holistic approach. This is particularly important as obesity is an identified problem in the Northern Territory and is addressed in the Territory 2030 Strategic Plan, with the plan setting the target that *"By 2020, the rates of childhood obesity in the Territory will be the lowest in Australia"*.

There were differing views about the role of fitness in healthy body image, as some participants felt they were less linked than suggested as they knew young people who exercised a lot and had very poor body image, although overall, many agreed that regular exercise contributed to a healthy body image and self esteem. The responses from the focus group imply that the impact of exercise on body image depends on the reasons that the individual is exercising in the first place, however more research is needed in this area in the Northern Territory context and the Skin Deep team recognises the importance of sensitivity when looking at exercise, body image and eating disorders concurrently. Also interesting, was the perception that survey participants had of the term body image – many tied this with a need to exercise and eat less junk food, perhaps demonstrating a lack of understanding of this concept within our young community.

To the question: *What do you believe should be implemented in the Northern Territory to promote healthy body image and enhance self esteem?* Many respondents felt that a campaign, or advertising, was needed to counteract the current messages being received by the media. Some comments included:

"Communicative media that informs people the facts about unrealistic body images portrayed in popular media. Information via different media outlets about the dangers of trying to achieve a certain body image." – Male, 23 years, Darwin

"More campaigns/promotions erasing stereotypical views on beauty." – Female, 16 years, Rural Darwin

“There needs to be more awareness.” – Male, 13 years

The Skin Deep Campaign, as described later in this report, was officially launched by Minister for Young Territorians, Hon Rob Knight MLA, on Wednesday 24 November 2010 and a media release distributed. The campaign has been in operation since 10 August 2010 with a view to provide contact numbers for local mental health organisations and to provide information and initiate discussion on the topics of body image, self esteem and eating disorders under one over arching message – Celebrate You. The facebook page can be accessed at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=117037448349215>. It is hoped that the Northern Territory Government will continue to support this initiative and build on the dialogue that both the media and the Skin Deep Campaign have brought about this year to reduce the stigma attached to talking about bodies.

The campaign and this recommendation complement the Territory 2030 *Health and Wellbeing* Objective 1 (page 45):

“Our Targets

- By 2030, all Territorians will have a better understanding of their own health issues and the health system and be more engaged in their own healthcare. “

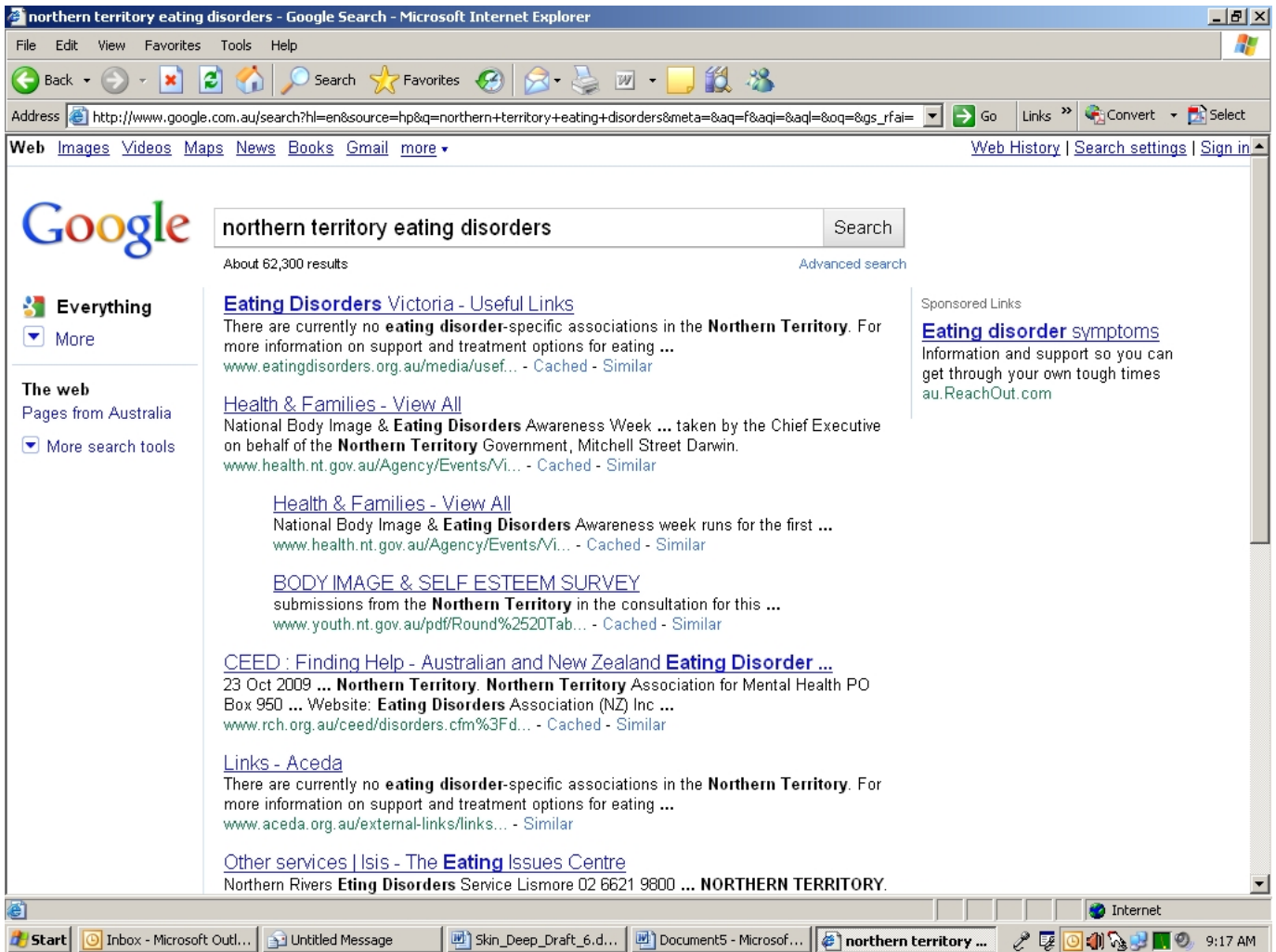
In order to achieve this, a greater range of mediums needs to be used to educate young Territorians on all aspects of their health and well being.

Recommendation 8

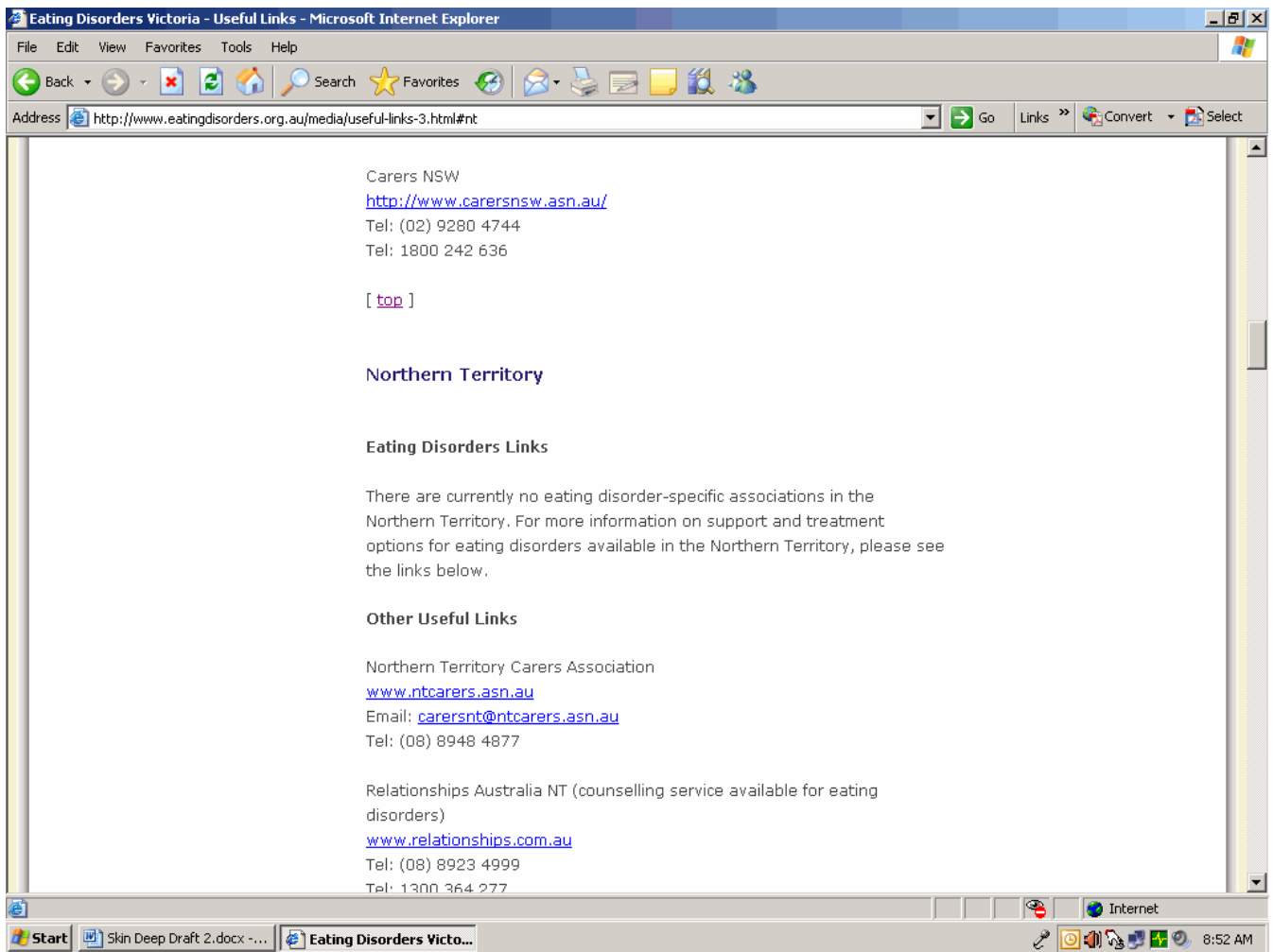
Establishes a greater presence on the internet in terms of body image, self esteem and eating disorder advice, perhaps through the continuation of the Skin Deep branding.

As mentioned in Recommendation 5, all other states and territories have accessible information on the internet regarding body image, self esteem and eating disorder advice, including publicly released reviews of their mental health services and a great presence from both government and non-government agencies in regards to these areas. Information available is multi-faceted and comprehensive, where the Northern Territory currently has very little (and inadequate) information available. It is of great benefit to young Territorians that so much information, research and support is available from national organisations regarding these and many other aspects of mental health.

As touched on in the introduction of this report, a search of the key words 'Northern Territory Eating Disorders' reveals the first hit, which is the Eating Disorders Foundation Victoria. Under Northern Territory links the description is 'there are currently no eating disorder specific associations in the Northern Territory'.



The results of a Google search containing the keywords 'Northern Territory eating disorders'



The Northern Territory section of the first link from above search

While there are prominent links to reputable mental health websites such as ReachOut and SANE through such a search, there are no links that outline contacts that can help Territorians with eating disorders. One website gives the contact details for Top End Association for Mental Health, which contains contact details for TEAMHealth.

TEAMHealth advised that they have a Family and Youth Service that assists young people (aged 16 – 24 years) who are affected by mental illness - that would include young people referred to in the Skin Deep Project - with a focus on prevention and early intervention. However they do not specialise young people with eating disorders and such young people would be referred on to Top End Mental Health Services, where the two organisations would then work in partnership. TEAMHealth also acknowledged in their correspondence that services for people with eating disorders are limited and that many have to go interstate for help.

This information was further supported through an interview with a nurse at Headspace Top End. Headspace Top End, a free support service for young people, deals quite often with individuals who experience poor body image, often in conjunction with other issues. Headspace works with these young people, using various methods including positive self talk, however if the illness is at the point that it is diagnosable as an eating disorder the individual would be referred to a health service such as the Tamarind Centre in Darwin.

Simply researching the process to finding out where help is available and what the process is was quite strenuous, and simply not good enough for young Territorians – it is essential that there are accessible and well publicised contact details for our young people to obtain help (for both themselves and others) and bouncing from one service and/or website to another means that we risk young people giving up on trying to find help.

Interviews by the Skin Deep team with young people who had experiences with poor body image, self esteem and eating disorders revealed that one had unhealthy eating behaviours that could have lead down the path of having an eating disorder. Had her family not intervened and sought help the outcomes could have been very different. Another story explained that the individual had been told by a friend when they were quite young that she had an eating disorder and the individual had no idea what to do. This story was also echoed in a survey response and this repetition clearly indicates the importance of the whole community having access to not only the specific contact details to access help, but also the information to recognise signs and what can be done to help.

It is recommended that the Northern Territory Government establishes a greater presence on the internet in terms of these issues in the Northern Territory context.

The Skin Deep team would be happy to take on the task of creating a website (working in collaboration with local and national health providers and the government) however asks that it is noted that this project is undertaken on a voluntary basis with limited funds and would require the support of the Northern Territory Government.

Recommendation 9

Incorporates compulsory programs and course modules for body image, self esteem, nutrition, fitness and media literacy into the curriculum in *every* year of schooling.

Many written responses on the surveys suggested that education should be implemented in the Northern Territory to promote positive body image and self esteem. This included a

strong recommendation for education through schools and targeted and issue based workshops. Examples include:

“A government funded, health awareness clinic set up that runs workshops to enhance teenagers self esteem” Female, 15 years old, Darwin

“More emphasis on teaching about it at school and workshops” Female, 14 years old, Katherine

“There should be a workshop where they tell us what food to eat and not to and what is healthy and not and they should have a workshop and teach us how to gain confidence” Female, 16 years old, Katherine

“Programs that involves [sic] people (anyone) to promote healthy body image and to enhance self esteem” Male, 16 years old, Katherine

“More education about these issues should be implemented into schools so that children and young adults don't have a choice but to learn about these issues.” Female, 24 years old, Palmerston

Interestingly, seventy seven percent of respondents had participated in a workshop designed to enhance body image and self esteem in the Northern Territory (98% of overall respondents answered this question).

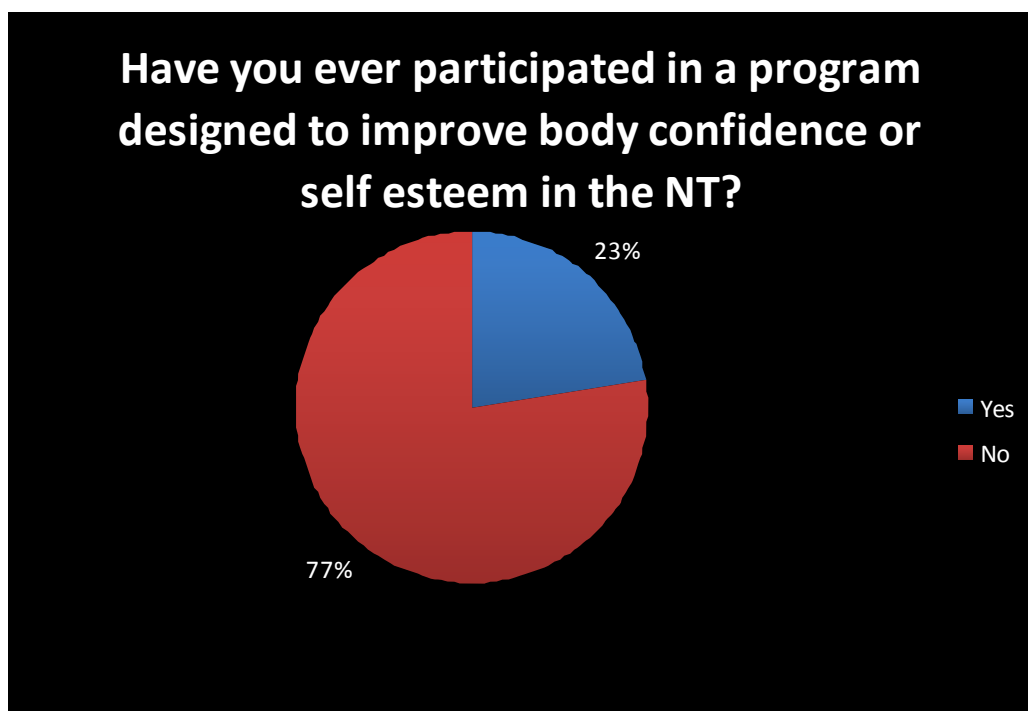


Figure 7: Number of respondents who had participated in a program designed to improve body confidence or self esteem in the Northern Territory

Focus Group participants also reflected the response that education is important and education in a wider community sense was acknowledged as a need, with one participant, a primary school teacher, sharing with the group that although nutrition and fitness are part of

her program at school, she finds much of this education is defeated when the students go home. This was reiterated by our second interviewee, a mother of one, who spoke about the fact that many young people are making their own lunches with food that their parents have purchased thinking that it is healthy – e.g. muesli bars – without taking into account factors such as sugar content. This participant also agreed that parents need to be involved. It is apparent that a community health education approach needs to be taken.

Ten written comments in the surveys related directly to education in schools, with more relating to the promotion of existing services and healthy living through schools, and healthier food sold in school canteens. These respondents felt there needed to be more emphasis on teaching about body image and identity in schools, a health based workshop with a focus on sleep and a healthy lifestyle, school-based exercise and healthy eating programs and that education needs to be compulsory.

The focus given to nutrition and fitness by the respondents is no isolated incident, with focus group responses and the proposed National Strategy on Body Image all reflecting that a holistic view needs to be taken when taking action in terms of body image; it is not just about advocating for young people to accept who they are, but advocating for young people to have the knowledge and tools to live a healthy life both physically and mentally and maintain a healthy weight. An interesting discussion to come out of Focus Group 1 was the idea that fitness and a positive body image do not necessarily go hand in hand, as participants knew others who exercised every day and were still deeply unhappy with themselves. Further investigation needs to be conducted into the importance of exercise on a positive body

Figure 7: Number of respondents who had participated in a program designed to improve body confidence or self esteem in the Northern Territory

The overwhelming response that it is a positive contributing factor, team to concur that perhaps the *reason* behind the individual to whether their body image is affected in a positive or negative

Recommendation 10

Runs community programs annually that train young people to facilitate workshops and to have the ability to enhance the self esteem and body image of their peers through accurate information and delivery methods, to capture youth older than school age (18 – 25 years of age).

The YMCA currently runs programs in the Top End regarding body image, and it is recommended that the Northern Territory Government either commits to supporting a greater distribution of such programs or establishes its own. It is important to note that the youth age bracket extends from 12 – 25 years of age, and therefore beyond compulsory

education age. Such programs are available in many other states and territories, for example Tasmania, Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria all have the Dove BodyThink program delivered (run by The Butterfly Foundation) which aims to equip parents and those that work with young people with the knowledge and tools to distribute positive body image messages throughout their networks.

Approximately 25 written comments on surveys related to community involvement, workshops and programs addressing body image including the need for more whole of community active events, free workshops where young people can talk to experts regarding these issues and workshops for parents to help teach how to boost self esteem and body image to their children.

52% of respondents to the question “would you attend a community based workshop that would equip you with the tools to promote healthy body image amongst your peers and networks?” indicated that they would do so. This shows that there could be scope to not only run workshops for youth service providers and parents/guardians but the ability to foster a large peer-to-peer information network in the Northern Territory in regards to these aspects of mental health.

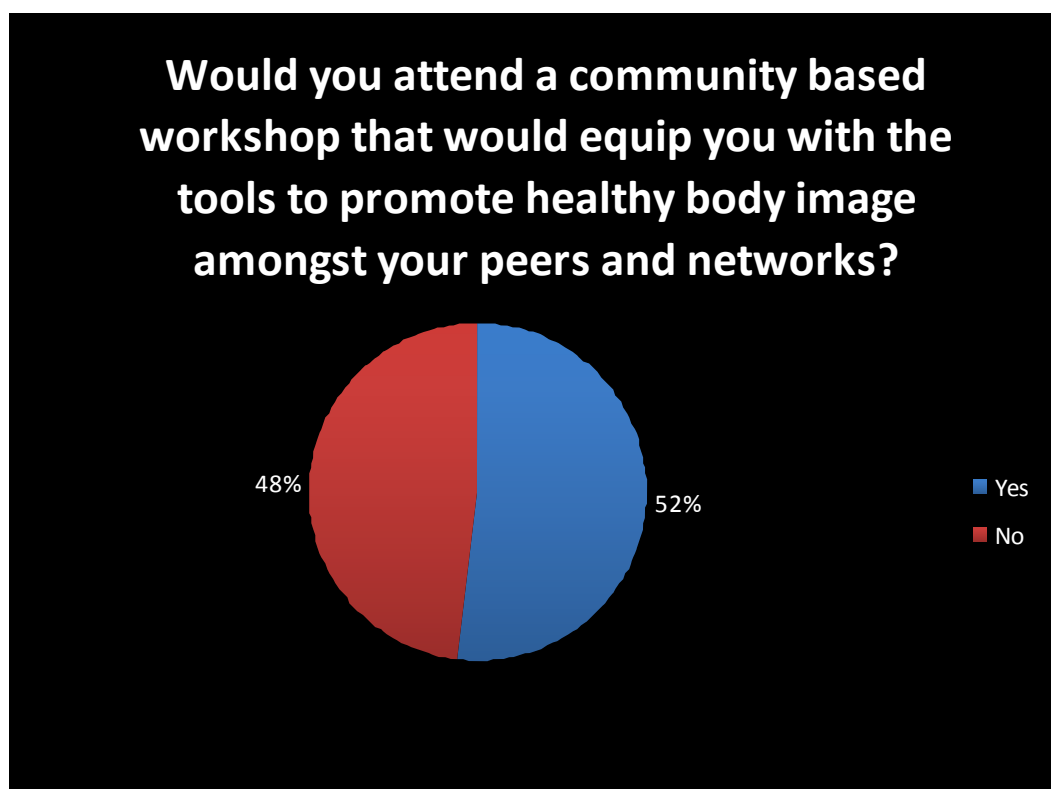


Figure 8: Number of respondents who would attend a workshop that would equip them with the information to promote healthy body image to their peers.

Recommendation 11

Commits to investigating the issues of body image, self esteem and eating disorders amongst our young people, including the public release of statistics relating to these areas.

The main finding from the background research for this project has been that there is very little information regarding the status of body image, self esteem and eating disorders in the Northern Territory, let alone amongst its young population.

The Northern Territory is currently behind in its research of such areas of mental health and more research must be done to gain a clearer picture of these issues. This will allow for future bench marking and a better knowledge base from which decisions relating to mental health can be made.

Dieting is known to be the main risk factor for the development of an eating disorder in individuals¹⁰ - 30% of respondents to the question 'have you ever dieted?' indicated 'yes' and American news and medical news sites on 29 November 2010 contained stories pertaining to the need for more attention to be paid to eating disorders as they are increasing and the changing face of those that experience these disorders¹¹

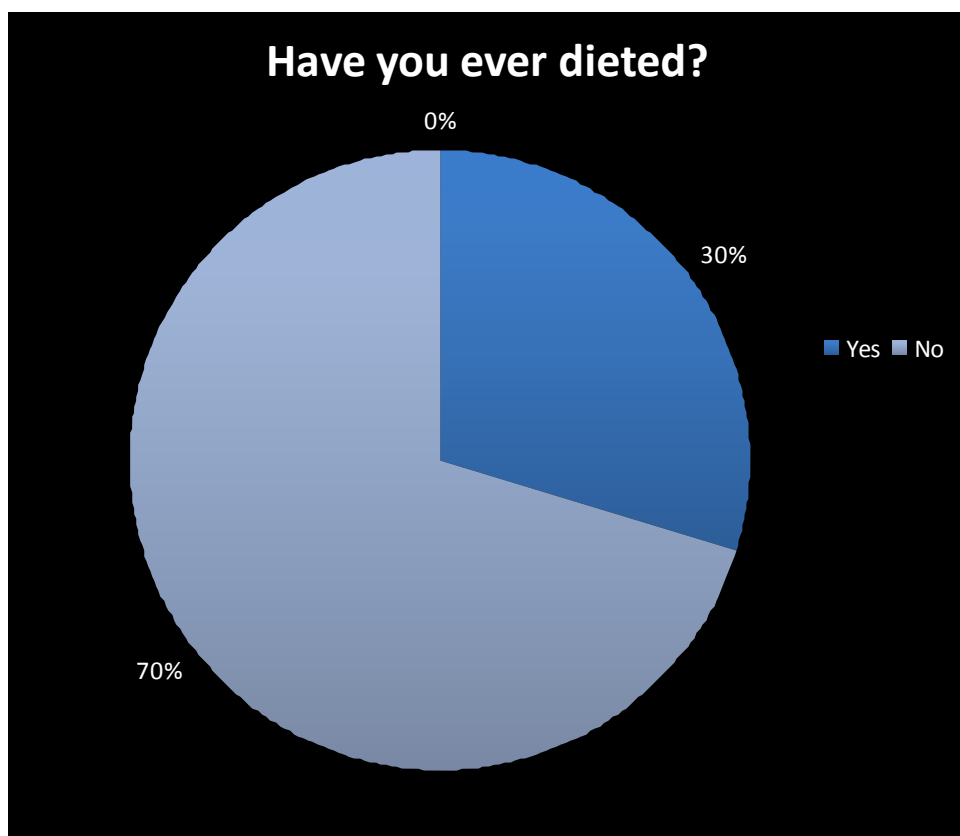


Figure 9: Number of survey respondents who had dieted.

¹⁰ Eating Disorders Victoria website (2009), Dieting

¹¹ Phend, C. (29 November 2010), *Eating Disorder Awareness Urged for Paediatricians*, MedPage Today; The Associated Press (29 November 2010), *Rising Hospital Stays for Eating Disorders Sited*

It is important to note that the survey also included a question relating to individual use of illicit or restricted substances with an aim to change the body in either shape or ability, based on anecdotal information suggesting that there is a sub-culture in our society, particularly in young men, who regularly take substances combined with gym work to gain muscle quickly. 11% of respondents to the question indicated that they had indeed taken substances in order to do this and the majority of these responses were from the Darwin/Palmerston region and covered a range of different age groups beginning, somewhat scarily, at 14 years of age. This is an issue that requires further investigation to find out where and when this behaviour is most prevalent in young Territorians and the types of substances that they are taking.

Also important to this recommendation is that while there are current statistics relating to young Territorians and body image, there are currently no accessible up to date statistics regarding eating disorders in the same context. Communication with a staff member in dietetics at the Royal Darwin Hospital revealed that statistics pertaining to eating disorders, for example anorexia, are not available as when admitted to acute care they do not fall under a medical team and this disorder is not included in the hospital's current 'professional reasoning section'¹².

¹² Staff member in dietetics, Royal Darwin Hospital, email correspondence

Have you ever taken illegal or restricted substances with a view to change your body either in shape or ability?

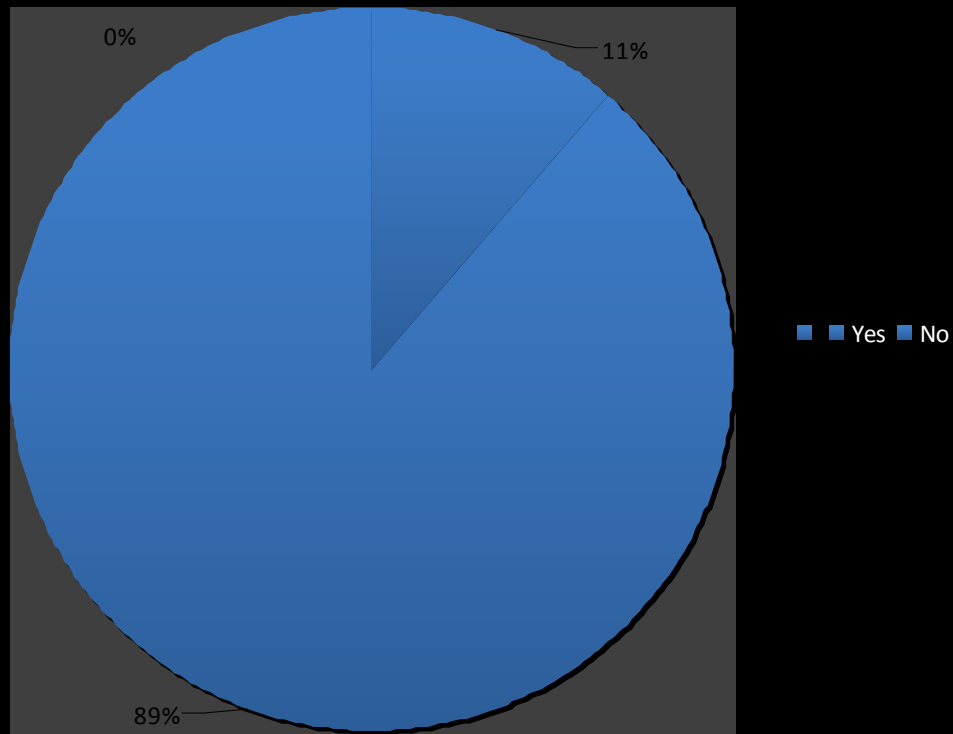


Figure 10: Number of respondents who indicated they had taken restricted or illicit substances with a view to change their body shape or ability.

Recommendation 12

Commits funding to assist the Skin Deep team to produce promotional events and materials.

The Skin Deep Team met with the Minister for Young Territorians, Hon Rob Knight MLA and the advisor for Women's Policy to Minister Hon Malindirri MacCarthy MLA, Lucy Lindbergh-Ostling, to discuss the Skin Deep project, the campaign and some of the desirable outcomes. The possibility of holding an event for National Youth Week has also been mentioned on numerous occasions to date. As the Skin Deep team have ideas for events that could be held not only in National Youth Week, but outside of this time and also in Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week in September 2011, the team would like to seek commitment that the Northern Territory Government will assist with the funding efforts for at least one Skin Deep event in 2011.

Recommendation 13

Annually reviews and evaluates the recommendations implemented and provides the information on progress publicly.

The Skin Deep team is hopeful that, if not all, many of the recommendations in this project are agreed to by the Northern Territory Government in conjunction with relevant stakeholders. If this is indeed the case, it is essential that the implemented recommendations and measures are regularly evaluated, and that such evaluations are available publicly. This not only allows for a transparent governance process but maintains accountability. Moreover, it provides other young Territorians, local health organisations and stake holders with information which we did not have access to, and information that can form the basis of positive social change in the areas of body image, self esteem and eating disorders in the Northern Territory.

The Skin Deep Campaign

A Skin Deep Campaign was officially launched on Wednesday 26 November 2010, has been under way since August of 2010. So far this has consisted of:

The Skin Deep Facebook Group – as at 17 December 2010, this group had 180 members, including some of the Territory's leaders and other Australian and International advocates. The idea of the group is that resources and information can be posted and accessible to the Territory's young people in a medium used largely by them. It also is a place to facilitate conversation about the issues, developments in other parts of the country and to discuss events. The page contains contacts for both the Butterfly Foundation and Headspace Top End and the Butterfly Foundation have posted a commendation on the page for our work.

Skin Deep T-shirts – A quick response grant of \$500 was awarded from the Office of Youth Affairs to produce t-shirts to promote the project and to raise awareness of the issues. These display the 'Proudly Supported by the NT Government' logo and again, we hope they will initiate conversation. There is still some money remaining from this grant which will also be used for body image awareness activities.

Art Exhibition – It is intended that regardless of whether or not the Skin Deep team has the Youth Round Table platform, the project is important and will be continued. There are currently discussions in place around the possibility of running a photography exhibition with

a documentary photographer in National Youth Week, with photography workshops for young Territorians who would then be able to display their works alongside that of the photographer.

Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week, September 2011- Discussions are in place regarding running a fundraising ball in Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2011.

It is the opinion of the Skin Deep team that if such work can be undertaken by three young women on a voluntary basis, in conjunction with work, university, sport and personal commitments then much more can be done with a larger team and with support from the Northern Territory Government and non-government organisations.

The Skin Deep logo, with the words making up the lower body of a woman, was generously created by local young Territorian Michael Morgan.

Conclusion

The Skin Deep team has made 13 recommendations to the Northern Territory Government based on discussions with both a national not-for-profit organisation for the support of those experiencing eating disorders, local health organisations and service providers and most importantly, with young Territorians through focus groups, surveys and face to face.

It is clear that the topics of body image, self esteem and eating disorders are areas in which the Northern Territory may potentially be failing in terms of awareness and service delivery and there is much more research that needs to be done into how these issues fit into the Northern Territory context.

The Skin Deep team forwarded the recommendations to health organisations with whom they had been conversing throughout the year for comment (see Appendix D for letter of support from the Butterfly Foundation). This resulted in additional recommendations provided by the Butterfly Foundation:

- Recommendation 6 – include a review of acceptable language standards in the press and media around the obesity issue. Poor and derogatory language around obesity has been found to be unhelpful across the population with regards to body image issues; and
- Additional recommendation – provision of an Early Intervention Program for educators, allied health professionals and other people working with young people. The early identification of unhealthy disordered eating and eating disorders allows for more effective intervention and, where necessary, treatment.

While the Skin Deep Team has not done research specifically relating to these recommendations we are supportive of the need for their implementation.

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Evaluation

It has become apparent through the months of work that went into producing this report, that there is much more research to be conducted into the perception young Territorians have of themselves and, if a larger investigation reveals similar trends as the survey did, work into how we as a community can initiate talk about these issues and assist young Territorians to be happy, healthy and confident young Territorians.

It is simply not good enough that so many young Territorians have, or know somebody who has, experienced an eating disorder considering that there is minimal support, funding and specific services for such mental disorders. It is also simply not good enough that so many do not seek help and that the information regarding where to find help in the Northern Territory is so hard to find.

Through this process we have learnt that there are many members of the community who are grateful a dialogue has begun and we are extremely proud of this.

Challenges have included gaining responses from our young male population and those in the remote area (as with many projects in the Territory) and we hope to continue this research next year to ensure that they are counted and a bigger picture of the situation is obtained. We have also faced the challenge of balancing our passion and desire to make positive and quantifiable change in these areas with our work, education and personal commitments.

The Skin Deep team acknowledges that there is a long road ahead but truly believes that the Northern Territory can lead the way in providing adequate programs and services that allow young Territorians to be happy, healthy and confident, and we are looking forward to still being involved when this happens.

APPENDIX A



BODY IMAGE & SELF ESTEEM SURVEY

Every year Mission Australia conducts a huge survey of young Australians to find out what matters to them the most. In 2007, this survey revealed that body image was the main concern of many young Australians and this is an issue that has ranked highly ever since. The amount of young people affected by poor body image also prompted the Federal Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis MP, to establish a Body Image Advisory Group who has since created the National Strategy on Body Image. There were only two submissions from the Northern Territory in the consultation for this Strategy. We would like to tell the Northern Territory Government how body image and self esteem issues affect young Territorians and make effective and viable recommendations on how we can create a positive young Territory within the frame of the strategy.

Your answers on this survey will be kept entirely anonymous, and your time in providing answers is greatly appreciated!

Age:	Gender:
Suburb/Community/Town:	Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? Y N
Main language spoken at home?	

Scale:

1 - Very happy	2 - Happy	3 - Neither happy or unhappy	4 - Unhappy	5 - Very unhappy
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1. Using the above scale, how happy are you with the following? (please circle)

Your body:	1	2	3	4	5
Your overall looks:	1	2	3	4	5
Your fitness level:	1	2	3	4	5

Your personality: 1 2 3 4 5

Your outlook on life: 1 2 3 4 5

2. How often do you have negative thoughts about your body?
 Daily Every few days Weekly Monthly Never

3. How important an issue is body image to you?
 Very Important Important Neither Not important

4. Do you think that body image and self esteem are big issues among young people in the NT?
 Yes No Unsure

5. Have you ever participated in a program designed to improve body confidence or self esteem in the NT?
 Yes No

6. Have you ever dieted?
 Yes No

7. Have you ever taken illegal or restricted substances with a view to change your body either in shape or ability?
 Yes No

8. Have you ever experienced, or know somebody (in the NT) who has experienced an eating or body image disorder? E.g. Anorexia, Bulimia, obsessive exercising, or body dysmorphia.
 Yes No (if 'No' proceed to question 13)

9. Did this person seek help?
 Yes No

10. In your view, was this treatment successful?
 Yes No

11. Did this person receive ongoing support from professionals?
 Yes No Unsure

12. If yes, was the support a free service?

Yes No Not sure

13. Do you believe enough is done in the Northern Territory to promote healthy body image?

Yes No Unsure

14. Would you attend a community based workshop that would equip you with the tools to promote healthy body image amongst your peers and networks?

Yes No Unsure

15. What do you believe should be implemented in the Northern Territory to promote healthy body image and enhance self esteem?

COMMENTS:

(Please feel free to add any further comments – words you would use to describe your body, personal experiences or general comments about the issue are welcomed).

Thank you for completing the survey.

Headspace is Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation with offices in both the Central Australian and Top End regions of the Northern Territory. They have a fact sheet on Eating Disorders at: http://www.headspace.org.au/uploads/documents/Fact%20sheets/Eating%20Disorders_web.pdf.

If you would like to speak to a counsellor please call Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800 or Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14.

Please return completed survey by Friday, 16 July 2010 to:

Email: oya@nt.gov.au

Fax: Att: Lauren & Gavin (08) 8941 5291

Post: Lauren & Gavin YRT, C/- OYA, PO Box 40596, CASUARINA NT 0811

APPENDIX B

Focus Group held at the Office of Youth Affairs, Darwin

NOTES

- Friends whinge about their bodies
- The gym and becoming bigger is now a thing for guys
- People are beginning to think about their body image from a younger age (e.g. 9 years old)
- Mothers are overdressing their kids
- Peer group is really important, people do what others do e.g. gym
- Parents are a huge influence – provide food, may create doubts
- Many are overweight and inactive
- The influence of others depends on how much value you place on them – how much you listen
- Depends on how often you get bombarded with negative messages – friends get bombarded
- Would not ask anybody for help – at the extreme you get help
- Education would have to be subtle; school based wouldn't work, could be done gradually through sport
- Start programs every year
- Participant knows people close to taking substances. They are easily accessible.
- Treatment interstate is intense – removal from support, more people you don't know and it would be stressful being away
- Indigenous communities are tight knit – would be more stressful and there would be a lack of translators
- Promote sport, health but not body image (subtlety, educate by default)
- You can't tell how fit and healthy people are from looking at them
- There needs to be a whole rounded view – people should be happy with themselves but they should also be healthy and fit. You need to see both sides and have two distinct campaigns
- Campaigns about health need to be more blunt
- Its ok for people to skinny people, commenting that they must have eating disorders, but it is not acceptable to comment on the weight of larger people
- There are too many comments – people pick on others to make themselves feel better
- Online training would be good
- Internet for more information

- There should be an information database for example a mental health directory (to help)
- Online quizzes to rank risk – there are plenty for depression
- Friends and family are important as you might not acknowledge you have a problem
- For males it is important to be muscular
- Fitness focus groups would be good for those 18 – 25 years old
- Promote to all fitness levels – all inclusive
- Go for runs, meet up with friends, gym
- Those undertaking fitness certificates should have to run community based classes as part of their assessment/competencies
- Classes can be intimidating – assume everyone has more knowledge/is at a higher level
- Young parents are feeding kids poor food

Appendix C

COMMENTS ON SURVEYS (direct quotes)

What do you believe should be implemented in the Northern Territory to promote healthy body image and enhance self esteem?

EDUCATION/WORKSHOPS

- More emphasis on teaching about it at school and workshops
- School. Programs that help young people feel better about their body, help them look good no matter if they are fat or no and help them get fit
- Classes of some sort
- Female and Male workshops
- Workshops, posters and brochures
- Have free workshops weekly, don't promote unhealthy food as often and more healthy food should be promoted
- A workshop can be in place for parents to help boost self esteem and positive body image
- Workshops, Include self esteem education curriculums
- Organise workshops that take a view at what poor body image does to you
- anti bullying programs
- There should be a workshop where they tell us what food to eat and not to and what is healthy and not and they should have a workshop and teach us how to gain confidence
- Workshops
- Programs that involves people (anyone) to promote healthy body image and to enhance self esteem
- More focus in schools about 'IDENTITY' students need to regularly consider who they are, what they want out of life etc
- Workshops to encourage youth and increase self-esteem.
- Classes for kids
- Workshops w/e activities dancing painting expressive activities competitions and group pampering days
- Youth groups that promote self esteem with the visiting mental health professionals available workshops and programs helping people of all ages to healthy body image and good self-esteem
- Activity programs for teenagers

- Little workshops for boys and girls during classes or recess lunch that girls would like to know about (boys)
- Workshops to show boys/girls interesting things about their body and how to take care of themselves
- School based healthy workshop ; teach about diet sleep and lifestyle
- There needs to be more fun and general workshops so large groups can get together. Dance/acting/music classes – These are perfect way to encourage young people to get out there. Even sport inspired workshops would be good too because many teenagers are resistant to joining groups, as they wish to stay in their comfort zone. Boys need to be encouraged to join these events as well because they are becoming more self-conscious day by day, as well as the girls
- More school based exercise and healthy eating programs to provide young people with a disciplined environment in which to learn about improving the perception of their own body image
- Education and fitness, because I believe the fitter you are the better you feel. You have more positive energy
- Free workshops where youth can speak to experts regarding their ongoing issues.
- The teenage years in my view is where the majority of issues begin due to puberty etc and these issues then continue into adulthood, which if not addressed directly may negatively impact an individual's life. It is important to educate teens regarding body image to prevent negative views
- Man walking around in an apple suit
- There should be more health programs that are specifically designed for self esteem
- There should be more activities for Territorians kids to promote self esteem
- Gov funded w/shops for teens to enhance their self esteem and their personal views on their bodies school based compulsory for grade 9-10
- more education about these issues should be implemented into schools so that children and young adults don't have a choice but to learn about these issues.
- better education thru schools
- revised health ed systems etc
- Workshops in Primary School- Should make compulsory

HEALTH/FITNESS/NUTRITION

- Making gyms affordable for everyone and healthy food cheaper
- boot camps should be put into motion
- Cheap Food
- Girls fitness classes, more healthy food

- More fitness classes for girls and watch you health
- More exercise programs
- More outgoing activities
- More exercise programs and fitness sports
- More out of school activities
- Eat healthy and do more exercise
- All healthy foods at the canteen at school
- I would have a local gym that government funded or something so the public can use it for free
- clean environment for better exercise
- BMI tests to show the reality of peoples bodies
- No Maccas
- Make people feel good about themselves
- Education and fitness, because I believe the fitter you are the better you feel. You have more positive energy
- A thing for kids to be fit
- healthy lifestyle, morning run
- From my experience, it's not just about promoting a health body image. It's about respecting your body by not subjecting it to things like smoking, alcohol and drugs (a major problem in the Territory). It's about promoting people who want to lead a healthier lifestyle so you feel good about yourself. If you party too hard, don't exercise and eat badly there isn't much chance you will have a very healthy body image either. Those people I know who lead active, healthy lives also have a positive attitude and healthy body image
- Less Junk food in the canteen
- More gym developed in schools etc
- More gyms and fitness centres around Darwin
- School gyms, confidence w/shops to help teens feel better about themselves
- The school should have gyms and the food served at the school canteen should be healthier
- There should be more fitness/sport and healthy eating ads on tv rather than the junk food ads promoting healthy eating and exercise
- More gyms for people to use
- Lunch time activities
- Exercise Days
- maybe group meetings and health and fitness classes held that were affordable enough for everyone
- Cheaper gym memberships, more exclusive gyms

- Offer healthier foods at canteens and promote food recipes that include vegetables and fruit
- More diets healthy food and work out machines
- good dieting and exercise
- School gyms before and after school, lunch time games netball etc
- A free gym
- fat camps
- better fast foods shops and cas, decrease cost of food at school canteens, construct equipped school gyms at schools for everyone
- Stop smoking and maybe fast food
- Eating healthy foods everyday
- Cheap healthy foods and exercise
- Gyms and cheap healthy food
- Provide more healthier options open to the public

MEDIA/CAMPAIGNS

- Ads on TV could help like showing that people in all shapes and sizes can be healthy and look good
- Some more advertising needs to be done because it is really bad
- Ads
- Workshops, posters and brochures
- Stop Maccas ads
- Stop fast food ads
- Get rid of junk food
- Good food and health, keep fit
- TV ads normal body weight, larger etc
- TV ads with regular people
- More sport healthy eating at canteen
- More sporting activities and health
- There needs to be more awareness
- Chubby models
- More campaigns/promotions erasing stereotypical views on beauty.
- Commercials
- More promotions at schools about weights and fitness I feel that there are too many outside influences that relate to unhealthy body images that can't be controlled in the NT. As long as the magazines movies and new carries on about 'the healthy body' people will also suffer form complexes

- Advertising targeted at young people that broadcasts programs and services available to people suffering from low self-esteem, eating disorders or who need assistance in designing an exercise regime and healthy diet that will aid them in losing weight
- To make more advertisements that being super model skinny is not always beautiful also being beautiful doesn't mean one has to be by exposing their bodies
- Communicative media that informs people the facts about unrealistic body images portrayed in popular media. Information via different media outlets about the dangers of trying to achieve a certain body image
- Adequate promotion of existing material regarding body image or new material written(encompassing issues of importance that might not be covered) to inform people about what is realistic in terms of body image and material regarding how to achieve a healthy realistic body image. Adequate promotion of counselling services and existing material or new material written to encourage positive self esteem. Warnings about media (printed or online) which negatively influences body image and self esteem. A charter which establishes guidelines for popular media content creators to follow to make sure that they do not negatively influence on a persons body image decisions and self esteem by making sure that they promote healthy realistic choices(realistic being the key)
- advertisements put real people forward not skinny minies
- More awareness of support groups and maybe dedicated website on everything to do with the issues not just one aspect e.g. not just weight also body shape, muscles etc. Maybe an anonymous chat area as people don't like to confront an issue when they are out of their comfort zone. Helpful tools and information
- Showing pictures of healthy body images may lower peoples self esteem
- Advertising
- forums
- bring back life be in it type ads or create cold with real people
- Average sized people in catalogues not everyone is pretty so give those people a chance to be seen and heard
- plus size shops, models and commercials should be used i.e. show there is more than one size
- more ad on TV
- Healthier choices at fast food outlets because Australian is the fattest country in the world

COMMUNITY

- Think there should be more community involvement such as community runs
- Hold a community event to teach people not to talk about or stare at people/kids with unclear skin (face)
- More outdoor activities with community
- A government funded, health awareness clinic set up that runs workshops to enhance teenagers self esteem
- More feel good events
- Sporting events, weekend events.
- programs with the youth that are outdoors and fun. (like those big blow up blob things on a lake, where one person sits on one eng, and another person jumps on it and launches the person off) It is hard to have low self esteem if you are having lots of fun
- gov funded get active activities free pool day fun runs and walks etc
- There should be more ads of healthy eating
- Regular youth activities inc sports days/tourn for gen youth (don't have to be in clubs)

OTHER

- There is not much government to do as this is a personal matter.
- More places to go
- More councillors
- No smoking at all in the NT
- There should be a service
- more variety for different sizes
- Some people are just lazy, there are enough gyms in Darwin for people to attend to get there body in shape.
- Should not cost anything and should be good service
- Self image is an extremely personal and private issue don't want to admit having it (hence why wouldn't attend self image workshops)
- There are a range of strategies that could be used to promote these issues, depending on the target age, ethnicity and gender. This issue should be addressed within healthy policies in different settings such as schools, workplaces, community health centres and other public events. For example, to target teenage girls, dance workshops in schools could incorporate the right strategies to promote healthy body image (sorry I cannot think of anything specific to recommend here, but it would have to be evidence-based strategies that have worked in other states / internationally).

- As Darwin grows, the problem of an unhealthy body image and low self esteem will only fester more. The low self esteem is not only a problem with girls and their dieting to achieve a size 2 dress, it has also become a sweeping epidemic for guys to only feel good enough about themselves if they get on the roids and use illicit drugs to achieve a large muscle build. For girls: the promotion need to be done in nightclubs, to find all the girls who take the time and put a lot of focus and effort into the way they look. There should be self esteem classes, and even semi modelling classes for all girls to show them how to stand in a certain way that works for their body. This will allow girls to know their best features and their flaws, then educate these ladies on how to work with or improve their flaws that cause them to feel so low about themselves. Gym memberships could also help out – so instead of not eating, these girls will find a way to lose weight, feel good about themselves the healthy way. For guys: the promotion should be done at the gym, but also to anti-social guys who are so down on themselves that they don't even want to obtain a job etc. Get these guys into sports, tell them they will all receive a free gym membership if they join a club and stay their for two months (hence they will make friends who can hopefully push them in the right direction), maybe a life coach is also needed, to give them makeovers, find them suitable jobs and help them feel good about themselves?
- Initiatives to try and influence the culture of Territorians so they can be who they want to be rather than trying to be fit in with some popular individual's body image who's lifestyle might be ill-maintained or dangerous to an average person
- To be seriously honest, I am not being cruel but I really don't care. I have my own problems to deal with
- Church
- Young girls (and boys) are out under a lot of pressure to keep up with the fashions and to have a good body. So I don't think much is gonna work

COMMENTS:

(Please feel free to add any further comments – words you would use to describe your body, personal experiences or general comments about the issue are welcomed).

DESCRIBING THEIR BODIES

- My body image is important to me especially my face. I have got unclear skin which doesn't always make me feel good. I sometimes cover my chin when I go out I am working on the problem though
- People say they are fat but they're not
- My friend thinks she is fat, but she isn't
- People should recognise their bodies as beautiful
- I don't like my body
- Ugly fat bad skin and not pretty
- Fat ugly need plastic surgery lypo and a nose job
- Black hair, wear glasses and yellow skin
- I think because I've gained 21 kg since the beginning of high school but I am only 56 kg I'm comfortable with my weight I'd like to have a flat stomach
- Tall Skinny, always teased about being anorexic
- When some friends say they are fat, I say their not, they say "just because your small and skinny". But just because I am small for my age they think that are being compared to me
- don't like how fat I am because I am I wouldn't mind losing some weight but even though I've tried it doesn't work for me. I wish that I could wear shirts without feeling ashamed of my arms and belly

FOOD AND EXERCISE

- In the shops the health food are dear and unhealthy foods are cheap
- I couldn't run more that 100 meters without tiring, so went to the PCYC gym for 6 months and come out feeling great and looking a lot better
- More places to get fit

THE MEDIA

- The problem is in the media and expectation of everybody being a size 6, it's not targeted at the short and long term benefits of eating well and exercising. The second thing is people are not educated about food and powerful fast food chains have too much influence over what people consume and the simple healthy foods like fruit and veg are neglected. Thirdly people seem to be getting lazier, too much TV and internet, being active like a child is lost. NOTE: "A very close friend was sent south to be treated for serious anorexia and I think she has gotten better, but will never be the same person"
- To boost people's confidence have normal size models. not stick people with handles on the sides to walk down the runway with fashion clothes on

THE ISSUES

- This is a big issue in the NT
- Teenagers are often left confused and are in danger of suffering depressions because on one side they are pressurized by fast food but are pressured by peers and magazine to be thin and lose weight
- What you guys are doing is going to help people around Australia
- You should restrict little kids under 16 going up to after 6pm roaming around
- Depression
- As you get older you tend to accept how you look and why you are. I'm glad I'm not a teen anymore, it's really difficult trying to work through identity issues
- I believe that if there is something you want to change you have to do it yourself
- I personally know self esteem is a difficult and persistent issue not so easily solved. It would be great to be more active in the NT to help and prevent such issues
- I have never had major body image issues but growing up you tend to have a lot more self doubt / low self esteem and how you look definitely plays into that. I have had three friends I can think of that have suffered from eating disorders. One of my best friends at high school was bulimic. I should have seen the warning signals and cries for help but I was too naïve, and probably too embarrassed to talk to her about it. I think young people should be made more aware of the issues and putting it on the social agenda will make them talk about it more and be able to recognise the signs. Another friend is still suffering from bulimia and this has increased her

- The problem is not necessarily the community you live in. It's what is on TV and what worlds image is on what a beautiful person looks like. It is sad the world does have a distinct image/figure for what is "beautiful" really is. Instead of being about how good a person is, we focus on what they look like to determine if they are beautiful
- There is too much pressure on teenagers and young adults to have the “perfect” body and looks – promoted through magazines/TV/fashion etc. In our local communities there needs to be more activities/workshops and advertisement directed at discouraging this kind of thinking and behaviour
- There seems to be a stigma associated with extreme dieting and eating disorders and I think more information needs to be made available to young people to help them understand that these are complex psychological issues and not just bad lifestyle choices. Until people feel they have a legitimate medical problem rather than just a self-imposed condition damaging to their health, many, including myself, will not feel confident in seeking help. When I was younger I suffered from bulimia and at the time, I didn't seek help partly because I didn't know that there was any available but also because I didn't know I was suffering from a psychological condition that warrants proper medical treatment. If more young people were properly informed about their condition maybe they would be more inclined to seek help
- Young people need a leadership program to undertake both in education and in physical health. Maintaining the body is the most important thing to a young person as they develop, the bodies capacity has an effect on our daily performance and our social self-esteem. It would not be difficult to pursue a program for young people to make them fit, healthy and happy. To get away from negative living young people need positive influence
- I think to encourage young people to have a healthy body image and enhance self esteem, there needs to be a focus on healthy lifestyles, exercise, and respecting your body. There is a pressure for girls to look a certain way but instead of blaming magazines, movies, and celebrities (yes, who are in the wrong). It might be better to promote a healthier lifestyle which in many cases will lead to a healthier outlook on

- Body image and self esteem can lead to serious issues with youth, this can lead to death. If workshops were to take place, it would be a bigger attraction to the NT youth if they were free. Young Territorians struggle to seek help due to financial restrictions
- Current level of emotions plays a huge impact on body image when I'm down I generally feel much more conscious and critical of how I look. You can't fix body image without addressing people's emotions and current headspace
- There is a large difference between body image and self esteem and people with issues may be offended. Consider that before giving another survey
- "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink", There is no point helping people get fit if there isn't any real reason why they should. "Because It's good for you" isn't very motivational. To motivate you will probably have to persecute
- Young girls (and boys) are out under a lot of pressure to keep up with the fashions and to have a good body. So I don't think much is gonna work
- I think you should be who you are and no one else. You should be happy you live in a wealthy country
- Man up!!! Australia
- get healthier food into canteens, bet more activities for kids to do at lunch etc, get kids to learn to cook healthier food and eat it from a young age- its not all about maccas
- everybody judges everybody else in appearance when there are far more important things to worry about life
- I think that more focus on mental health (youth) and general awareness and how it ties into body image, self esteem would be helpful to many youth

Appendix D



26th November, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Butterfly Foundation & The Skin Deep Project

Over the past year The Butterfly Foundation (Butterfly) has been working collaboratively with Lauren Moss and the Skin Deep Project.

Butterfly is a not for profit charity, established in 2002 to support Australians affected by eating disorders and negative body image. Butterfly's services include Prevention and Early Intervention programs which it provides nationally to the following sectors:

- Education – students, teaching staff and school counsellors
- Corporate organisations
- Community services – crisis centres, youth centres, parent and friends groups
- Private - allied health professionals including psychologists, pharmacists, dentists, anaesthetists.

One of Butterfly's most successful programs is Dove BodyThink. This program is aimed at addressing negative body image in young people and is based on the four 'pillars' of Self Esteem, Body Image, Media Literacy and Communication. We are currently planning to deliver Dove BodyThink workshops in the Northern Territory in 2011. The program is an evaluated 'train the trainer' prevention program for those working with young people including school teachers, counsellors and youth workers. It includes resources which can be used in the classroom. The program has recorded particularly strong results in the media literacy components. These are the components which, in turn, have the most direct impact on self esteem and body image issues for young people. To date, Dove BodyThink has been delivered to over 2,500 professionals and, based on feedback from participants, has had a reach to over 140,000 young people.

The Skin Deep Project Recommendations

Butterfly agrees with and supports the recommendations of the Skin Deep Project to the Northern Territory Government. Self esteem in young people is closely connected to their body image and positive body image is necessary for the development of resilience. It is imperative that these issues be addressed not only in the health and education sectors but also at the policy level in Government, in the community, and in the media.

In addition to supporting the Skin Deep Project recommendations (as detailed in the attachment to this letter), Butterfly would like to suggest the following inclusions:

- Recommendation 6 – include a review of acceptable language standards in the press and media around the obesity issue. Poor and derogatory language around obesity has been found to be unhelpful across the population with regards to body image issues;
- Additional recommendation – provision of an Early Intervention Program for educators, allied health professionals and other people working with young people. The early identification of unhealthy disordered eating and eating disorders allows for more effective intervention and, where necessary, treatment.

Butterfly looks forward to continuing involvement with Lauren Moss and the Skin Deep Project team in the Northern Territory and highly commends them for the excellent work they have done to date.

Yours sincerely

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Skin Deep Project Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Northern Territory Government:

1. Establish a Northern Territory Body Image Advisory Group made up of community members (including at least one youth representative) and local health representatives;
2. Create a policy framework setting measurable goals in the areas of body image and self esteem enhancement and eating disorders amongst young people;
3. Maps services currently available for those experiencing eating disorders;
4. Employs the services of a qualified consultant to review of the mental health system in relation to eating disorder treatment, particularly in regards to young people, in 2011;
5. Immediately review the Department of Health and Families Tip Sheets 69 and 70;
6. Establish a community campaign around encouraging positive body image and self esteem amongst Territorians;
7. Establishes a greater presence on the internet in terms of body image, self esteem and eating disorder advice, perhaps through the continuation of the Skin Deep branding;
8. Incorporates compulsory programs and course modules for body image, self esteem, nutrition, fitness and media literacy into the curriculum in *every* year of schooling;
9. Runs community programs annually that train young people to facilitate workshops and to have the ability to enhance the self esteem and body image of their peers through accurate information and delivery methods, to capture youth older than school age (18 – 25 years of age);
10. Commits to investigating the issues of body image, self esteem and eating disorders amongst our young people, including the public release of statistics relating to these areas;
11. Annually reviews the recommendations implemented and evaluates publicly on progress.