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## **AMA SUPPORTS PROPOSED NATIONAL STRATEGY ON BODY IMAGE**

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said today that the AMA supports the objectives of the *Proposed National Strategy on Body Image* to encourage the media, advertising and fashion industries to promote realistic and positive body images.

The strategy proposes a voluntary industry code of conduct which recommends that advertisers, the media and fashion designers portray healthy body images, disclose the use of digitally-altered images, and employ models from a diverse range of body shapes, sizes and ethnicities.

“The promotion of extremely thin and unhealthy body images in the popular mediawhere ‘perfection’ is air-brushed in, has been recognised as a problem for many years,” Dr Pesce said.

“These unrealistic portrayals place significant pressure on children, adolescents and teenagers to conform, with sometimes devastating effects.

“An unhealthy body image can affect behaviour and mental health, and can cause unhealthy dieting and eating disorders, excessive exercise, and even desires for unnecessary surgical intervention.

“A significant change in industry attitudes and behaviour is an important step in preventing these unhealthy outcomes for young Australians. It is long overdue, and the Government needs to encourage all members of the relevant industries to get on board, and it needs to monitor compliance closely.

“If the media, advertising and fashion industries do not adequately comply with the voluntary code of conduct, the AMA believes government regulation should be considered.”

Dr Pesce said medical practitioners play an important role in the detection and treatment of people at risk of developing unhealthy body image or eating disorders – a role that should be recognised in a national strategy on body image.

The AMA's Position Statement on Body Image and Health 2009 can be found at:

<http://www.ama.com.au/node/4584>

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