



Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Women's Health, Body Image

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.24 am): According to the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, 72 per cent of young women aged between 18 and 22 years want to weigh less and only 25 per cent of those in the healthy weight range are happy with their current weight. The 2005 National Health Survey reported that nine per cent of females aged 18 to 24 years were classified as underweight. A 2006 survey of young people by Mission Australia found that body image was a significant concern for close to 30 per cent of young Australians both male and female.

Frankly, these statistics are staggering. When it comes to body image many Queensland women struggle with self-esteem issues and feel growing pressure to be thin. Images of rake thin, airbrushed models do nothing to help our young women chart the often difficult journey through adolescence. The Bligh government wants young Queensland women to start feeling good about themselves. We want young women to enter adulthood confident and determined to achieve their best—not to be held back by concerns about how they look. I am pleased to announce today two important projects to help our young women develop a healthy body image and positive self-esteem.

The Eating Disorders Association will receive \$100,000 to undertake research to reach out to families and young people affected by an eating disorder and provide them with information and support about services available, how to deal with young people and body image, how to promote healthy eating and how to deal with self-esteem issues experienced by young people with eating disorders. The Minister for Health and I have contributed \$50,000 each to this project. This will complement the \$223,000 in recurrent funding that the organisation will receive from the Department of Communities for 2010-11. We want to ensure that Queenslanders suffering from eating disorders receive the best treatment possible. But to do that we need to ensure that we have proof that we are channelling our funding into the right area. We are determined to do more.

Today I am pleased to announce that we will also give \$29,000 to Isis—the Eating Issues Centre to offer a series of workshops aimed at schoolchildren and community groups promoting healthy eating, body image and self-esteem. This initiative will give young people the support they need to seek help early in the hope of preventing hospitalisation for an eating disorder.

The mental health of Queenslanders is an issue that the Bligh government is working very hard to address. We need to act early to stop these young people entering our hospitals. We want to give them the support that they need, we need to help them with their self-esteem and we need to ensure that they do get the very best start in life.