

office for **youth**

sizing up body image

what South Australia's young people
say about body image



Government
of South Australia

Office for Youth

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acknowledgments

The Office for Youth would like to thank the following organisations that supported the development of this project and the young people who participated and engaged in the discussions around body image throughout the summit.

Through the assistance of these organisations, the Office for Youth is able to provide this report, which summarises and captures those young people's thoughts and views on body image, how it affects them, and offers ideas that can be taken forward by policy makers within government and the youth sector to ensure we can better respond to the needs of South Australia's young people.

With thanks to:

- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Adelaide
- Anglicare
- Mission Australia
- Women's Health State-wide
- Multicultural Youth SA
- Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive and Eating Disorders Association (ACEDA)
- Youth Affairs Council of South Australia (YACSA)
- Young Media Australia
- Department of Education and Children's Services
- Service to Youth Council
- University of South Australia
- Flinders University
- South Australia Aboriginal Young Women's Committee
- Office for Women, Attorney General's Department
- Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth

message from

The Minister for Youth

When young people are asked what their biggest concerns are, the issue of body image rises to the top time and time again, but what exactly does it mean? What are the underlying factors that contribute to a consistently high level of young people being concerned about how they look or how they believe others perceive them? An even more important question is what can we do about it?



As the Minister for Youth it is my role to provide opportunities for young people to talk about the things that are important to them and to listen to their concerns and suggestions. It is also my role to support policy makers and service delivery organisations to better understand the needs of young people, so that they can develop responses that are reflective of what young people are telling us they need.

This report summarises and presents the ideas provided by the young participants of the Body Image Summit. It also presents the results of the Body Image Survey.

I present this report to you in the hope that it provides a better understanding of the issue of body image from a youth perspective. It will be useful in the development of appropriate and targeted responses to support young people to feel more positive about their body image.

I would like to thank all of the young people who were such passionate and active participants of the Body Image Summit, held at Parliament House this year, as well as those who took the time to complete the Body Image Survey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Grace Portolesi".

Hon Grace Portolesi
Minister for Youth

introduction

Young people have been telling us for quite some time that one of their biggest concerns is body image. For example, in Mission Australia's *National Survey of Young Australians 2010: key and emerging issues*, almost one third of the 50,000 respondents indicated that body image was a major concern for them.

In South Australia, 62% of respondents to the 2010 *SpeakNow Youth Survey*, conducted in partnership by *The Advertiser* and the Office for Youth in November 2010, identified body image as an issue for them. Furthermore, the Office for Youth's Body Image Survey undertaken to inform the planning of the summit also supported these findings.

Having a poor body image can be devastating; especially for a young person who is moving through a period of rapid growth and change. Finding a place to 'fit in' and the ability to feel part of a community is extremely important. Having a positive body image can play a major role in a young person's ability to be positive about their health and wellbeing in general.

Governments and non-government organisations, the youth sector, the medical community and broader community have been working to respond to this growing issue through the development of programs, policies and initiatives.

To build on current activity in this area the state government is also providing young people with the opportunity to be part of the conversation. The Office for Youth conducted a Body Image Summit and a pre-summit survey in early 2011. The summit and survey aimed to bring a youth voice to the discussion and to enable young people to contribute their perspectives, opinions and ideas about how to tackle this issue. The purpose of this report is to share the information gained through the Body Image Summit and Survey with the hope that policy makers in government and the wider community consider what young people have said about body image, why it is an issue of concern, how it affects them and what can be done to support them through appropriate responses to build resilience to negative body image.

executive summary

Body image is about what a person thinks and how they feel about and value their own body. The term body image can mean different things to different people.

This report provides a summary of the findings from the Office for Youth's Body Image Summit and Body Image Survey conducted during April 2011.

Young people have been saying that body image has been an issue of concern for them for some time. The issue around body image has been widely examined with research into *'what body image is'* and how it can negatively affect a young person's self-esteem, confidence, mental and physical health and their overall wellbeing.

The state government released *youthconnect* South Australia's Youth Strategy 2010-2014 in November 2010. *youthconnect* represents a whole-of-government framework for delivering state government programs and services for young people aged between 12 and 25. Delivering a body image summit for young people at Parliament House was a key action under the strategy.

Body image survey

Prior to the Body Image Summit, the Office for Youth undertook an online survey that provided the opportunity for a wide range of young people to contribute to the discussion and put their views forward.

Three hundred and forty-four people responded to the survey. Of these, 82% were female and 18% were male. Young people of all ages responded to the survey; with the majority of respondents aged 16, 17 and 25 years old. The survey results showed 82.9% of respondents said they had concerns about their own body image.

The opinions and suggestions expressed through the survey provided important data on a range of body image related issues and informed the development of the forum discussion topics: family; sport and school; friends; media; and 'you' (i.e. themselves).

Body image summit

On Thursday 14 April 2011, the Office for Youth Body Image Summit was held at Parliament House. The summit provided the opportunity for young people to express their concerns about body image, what positive body image means to them, and to develop ideas on how young people could be supported to develop positive body image.

Fifty-eight young people attended the summit. Of those, eleven were young men.

From the summit, participants developed forty ideas under the five discussion topics. The discussion topics assisted young people to assess the different influences that affect their body image and how they relate to them. From the forty ideas participants were asked to prioritise their top ideas in each discussion topic resulting in the selection of sixteen top ideas.

The participants top ideas have been grouped against the priority areas of *youthconnect* South Australia's Youth Strategy (health and wellbeing; engagement and participation; education, training and skill development; and better connections). Grouping the participant's ideas in this way provides a solid foundation for progressing them into action and supports further collaboration through the structures that support the implementation of *youthconnect*, such as through the Intra Government Youth Action Committee (I-YAC), the *youthconnect* grants, the youth networks as well as building on existing actions within the strategy.

In conclusion, the summit and survey provided an opportunity for young people to contribute to the discussion around body image and to develop practical ideas that can be used by government, service providers and the youth sector. It is hoped that this information informs the development of policies and initiatives to focus on building a young person's resilience to negative body image.



*“Surrounding
myself with people I
love and care about
makes me happy”*

the body image summit

The Body Image Summit was held in response to an increasing awareness that body image is a major concern for young people and that the government, community and young people need to come together to discuss the issue and develop actions to ensure that into the future young people feel more positive about body image.

youthconnect South Australia's Youth Strategy 2010-2014, was released by the South Australian Government in November 2010. The strategy represents a whole-of-government framework for delivering state government programs and services for young people aged between 12 and 25.

One of priority areas of *youthconnect* is to support young people to feel positive about their health and wellbeing. Delivering a body image summit for young people was a key action under this priority area.

Action 3, youthconnect 'hold a body image summit for young people at Parliament House that informs the development of the state-wide project plan on eating-disorders, and contributes to the development of community resources to complement those being delivered through the Body Image and Schools initiative'.

The Body Image Summit was held on the 14 April 2011 at Parliament House.

The Office for Youth engaged Rebecca Sparrow, a talented facilitator who has significant experience in

working with young people, to facilitate the summit. Rebecca has an interest in body image and the issues associated with poor body image. Rebecca is the author of Find Your Tribe (and 9 other things I wish I'd known in high school), which includes a dedicated chapter on body image, diet and exercise.

Participant recruitment and youth facilitators

The Office for Youth recruited participants for the summit through our partner organisations within the youth sector, specifically targeting those linked to the Body Image and Eating Disorder Consortium. Organisations were asked to identify individuals (aged between 12 and 25 years) who had an interest in attending a summit around body image and had some experience or exposure to the issues.

The rationale for this recruitment method, in place of an open call for applications, was to ensure that the nominated organisation would play a role in supporting the young people's participation and involvement in the summit. Those involved in the development of the summit felt that an open call for nominations would have generated more interest than could have been supported through the venue, and would have necessitated a selection process. Furthermore, finding fair selection criteria for distinguishing between young people based on experience or another factor was deemed to be an unsuitable and an unfair way of selecting young people to participate.

To maximise young people's participation in the summit it was decided to utilise and train young people to play the role of facilitators for the small group work exercises. Our partners at Southern Primary Health – Marion Youth and YWCA Adelaide were contacted to assist in providing young people to be trained as group facilitators. The group facilitators led the small group discussions, with the aim that all young people in the group were given an opportunity to share their experiences, views and ideas on each of the topic areas.

A three-hour training session was delivered to the group facilitators prior to the summit in which the young people were given the opportunity to view and input into the agenda. Specific training was provided to the young people on group work and how to encourage discussion.

The small groups were organised around age and gender. The age of the participants ranged from 12 to 25 years, with the majority of participants being in the 16 to 19 year age group.

The group facilitators for the Body Image Summit were:

- Kate Bryson, *YWCA Adelaide*
- Malisa Klicke, *YWCA Adelaide*
- Merrin Hambley, *YWCA Adelaide*
- Ian Hooper, *Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth*
- Chris Gogler, *Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth*
- Gordon Wong, *Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth*
- Jess Langer, *Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth*
- Elean El Massih, *Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth*
- Courtney Kirkwood, *Southern Primary Health-Marion Youth*



*“no photoshop
required”*

Body image summit program

The summit was opened by the Minister for Youth, the Hon Grace Portolesi MP.

The program was divided into a number of activities throughout the day including:

- **Group discussions**

During this activity the young facilitators guided small groups to maximise the discussion and provide each participant with an opportunity to contribute in a non-confrontational peer environment.

The Office for Youth engaged Ms Maria Scicchitano, Family Therapy Consultant, from the Women's and Children's Hospital's Department of Psychological Medicine, for the day to provide support for participants should any of the discussion topics raise personal or upsetting issues.

The groups worked through each of the five discussion topics of family, sport and school, friends, media and you, and developed ideas that aimed to support young people to achieve a more positive body image. In total, forty ideas were developed by the groups.

- **Voting**

The entire group of participants were then asked to prioritise the ideas for each discussion topic by voting on the top three ideas in each topic area. An automated audience response system was used to capture the votes and was also used so that the results could be

displayed immediately for the summit participants. This resulted in the selection of the top sixteen ideas (in one discussion topic there were four top ideas identified).

- **Panel discussion**

A panel discussion was held with facilitator Rebecca Sparrow, and guest panellists Emma Codrington and Louise Heinrich. The panel members had previously been asked to develop responses to the following two questions:

- What does positive body image mean to you?
- How do you maintain positive body image?

The panellists shared their own life experiences and how they have helped shape their self-belief and maintain and build their resilience to negative body image.

- **Creative component**

Participants were again divided into their small groups and provided with a range of creative materials. This activity provided an opportunity for the participants to creatively develop ideas, send a message or promote positive body image in a non-traditional form. During the creative component of the summit the facilitator, Rebecca Sparrow, asked each participant to write two messages on large sheets of card which were then photographed. The first was a negative message about body image; the second was a positive message on body image.

- **Presentation of creative component**

Each small group presented their creative efforts to all the participants. Two groups made short films,

one group wrote a script for a community service announcement and the other groups made posters.

Evaluation of the summit

Participants of the summit were asked to complete an evaluation. Forty-eight feedback forms were received, with feedback generally being extremely positive.

Highlights from the feedback included:

- Participants enjoyed the opportunity to interact with other young people who had an interest in body image and the issues surrounding it.
- Young people reported that they felt they were being listened to and welcomed the opportunity for young people to inform policy making.
- Participants liked working with people from diverse backgrounds towards a common goal in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Participants liked meeting new people, especially young men who felt passionate about the issue.

- Participants liked being with a group of people that recognise change is needed.
- There was a productive atmosphere with interesting points raised.
- Participants would like another summit be run to discuss the issue(s) further.
- Forty of the participants indicated they would like to hear about other opportunities to be involved in other Office for Youth programs/events.



*“negative body
image stops me
wearing bathers”*

the body image summit participants top ideas

Through the summit, participants developed forty ideas under the five discussion topics of:

- family
- sport and school
- friends
- media
- you.

The five discussion topics the small group discussions were framed around the key areas identified through the survey. Framing the discussion in this way provided structure and support for the discussion and a tool to not only gather information about how young people feel about body image but how the influencing factors play a part in the development of a young person's body image.

As previously outlined, participants were asked to prioritise their top three ideas under each discussion topic through a voting process. This resulted in the selection of the top sixteen participant ideas.

The top ideas have been mapped against the four priority areas of *youthconnect* South Australia's Youth Strategy:

- health and wellbeing
- engagement and participation
- education, training and skill development
- better connections.

This will enable government and non-government agencies looking to use the report, with a solid foundation for progressing any of the ideas and supports further collaboration through the structures that support the implementation of *youthconnect*, such as through the Intra Government Youth Action Committee (I-YAC), the *youthconnect* grants, the youth networks as well as building on existing actions within the strategy.

Education, training and skill development

Predominantly, the top ideas voted by the participants at the Body Image Summit centred around:

- better education and training to ensure people are more aware of the issues associated with body image
- how behaviour affects other people
- education about what to do
- how and where to seek help.

Interestingly, most of these ideas focus on education and training for the individuals (young people), and secondly, education for people that are close to the individual such as family members, friends and other significant adults. Consistent with the survey responses, this suggests, that body image is still very much a personal issue, with peers, parents and significant adults being major influences in young people's lives.

The top ideas in the education, training and skill development area are:

- Education for parents (such as making parents aware that their attitude and actions have a huge impact on their children, about modelling healthy lifestyles, about language used).
 - Giving young people opportunities, tools and education to raise and discuss parental impacts on their body image and building resilience in young people so they have confidence to stand up to what is said.
 - Seminars and curriculum to include body image and critical analysis of the media beginning in primary school and continuing to year 10.
 - Teacher training on body image and self-esteem (at university and on-the-job).
 - Promote mindfulness – helping to educate young people to be mindful of what they say and how it affects people.
- Provide education to young people on the impact of attitudes, comments etc on peers.
 - Education about what is actually healthy, too fat or too skinny, rather than the perfect image in advertising and educate people about healthy eating and how the body functions.
 - Educate people that an eating disorder is about the behaviour not the person.



*“every shape is
beautiful”*

Better connections

These ideas focus on better linkages and partnerships between governments, the health and youth sectors and the media to ensure a better message about body image and how it affects young people is promoted.

They also focus on collaboration and coordination in relation to access to available services, campaigns that promote positive body images, and avenues to debate body image in the wider community arena.

The top ideas in the better connections area are:

- Using current affairs programs as a vehicle to promote discussion of thinking about parental impacts on young people's body image.
- Government campaign along the lines of *'you're beautiful just the way you are'* in bus shelters, public toilets etc.
- In the media, providing positive, realistic, individual people for young people to look up to.
- Access to support (counsellor etc) made easier and reducing stigma for asking for help.

Health and wellbeing

These ideas focus on supporting young people who 'don't fit in' and more appropriate images in the media and community about what healthy body image looks like.

Having a poor body image can be devastating; especially for a young person who is moving through a period of rapid growth and change. Finding a place to 'fit in' and the ability to feel part of a community is extremely important. Having a positive body image can play a major role in a young person's ability to be positive about their health and wellbeing in general.

The top ideas in the health and wellbeing area are:

- Out-of-school social events and support groups for young people who don't 'fit in'.
- Disclaimer on TV and other images that "the following images are not realistic" and warning that the pictures are digitally edited – including fines for not including a warning.
- Keep pushing for a code of ethics and implement a reward scheme for media to stick to code of conduct.

Engagement and participation

A young person's ability to participate in decisions that affect their lives and to engage in their communities is critical to their ability to successfully transition from childhood to adulthood and for them to reach their goals and aspirations.

In relation to body image, being part of the conversation is very important. Young people said that they face issues around body image that are concerning for them

and that they need meaningful support to assist them to feel positive about their body image.

The major idea around engagement and participation is the ability to be able to discuss activities or events that may raise body image concerns for young people, such as the participation in physical exercise as part of the school curriculum.

The top idea in the Engagement and Participation priority area is:

- Physical exercise (PE) to incorporate having a choice about doing sports or not, sex-segregated classes, offer choices to students in what types of physical education they'd like to participate in that encourage participation for girls (yoga, zumba-exercises), students to have choice about male or female instructor.

(The full list of all participants' ideas can be found in Appendix 3)



*“negative body image
is when I feel guilty
when I pig out”*

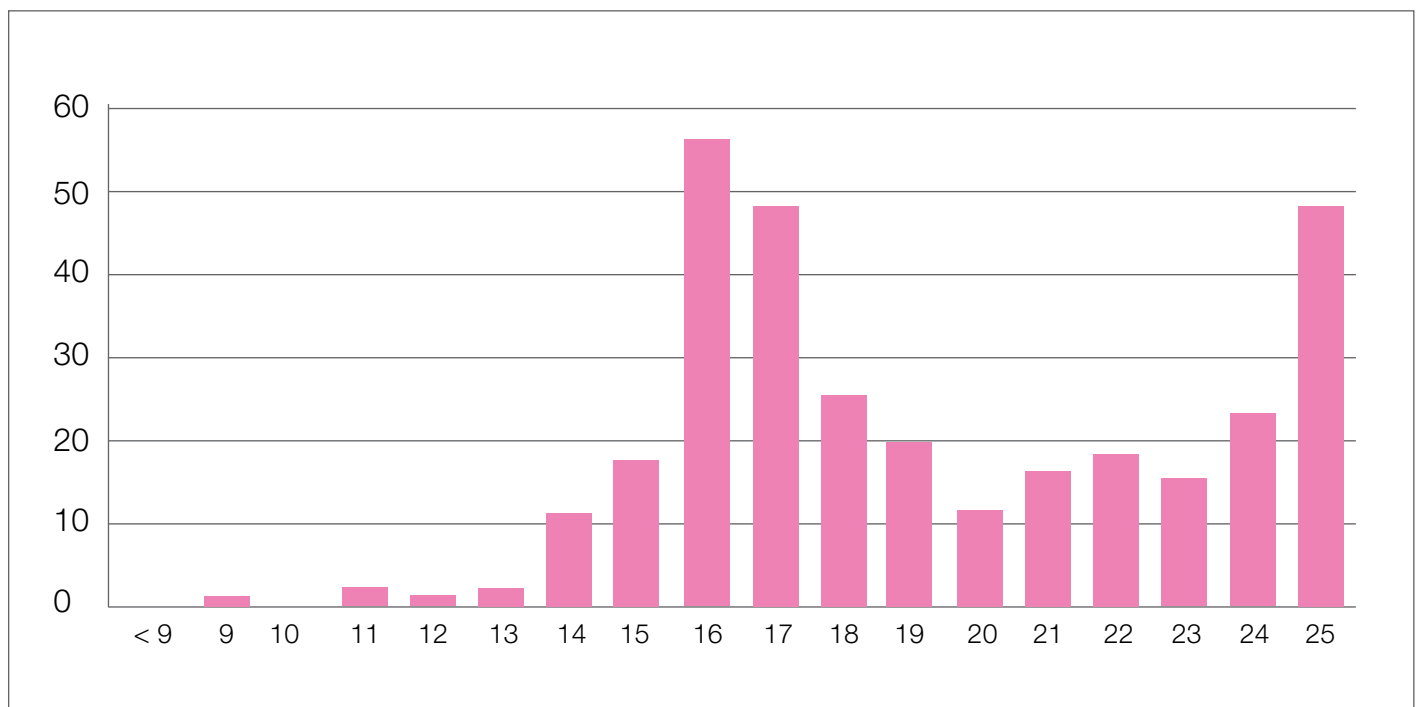
body image survey responses

Prior to the Body Image Summit the Office for Youth conducted an online survey about body image to find out more about why it is an issue for young people. Three hundred and forty-four people responded to the survey. Of these, 82% were female and 18% were male.

Young people of all ages responded to the survey; however, the majority of respondents were aged 16, 17 and 25 (see figure 1).

The text of the survey is included in Appendix 2.

Figure 1: Age of survey respondents



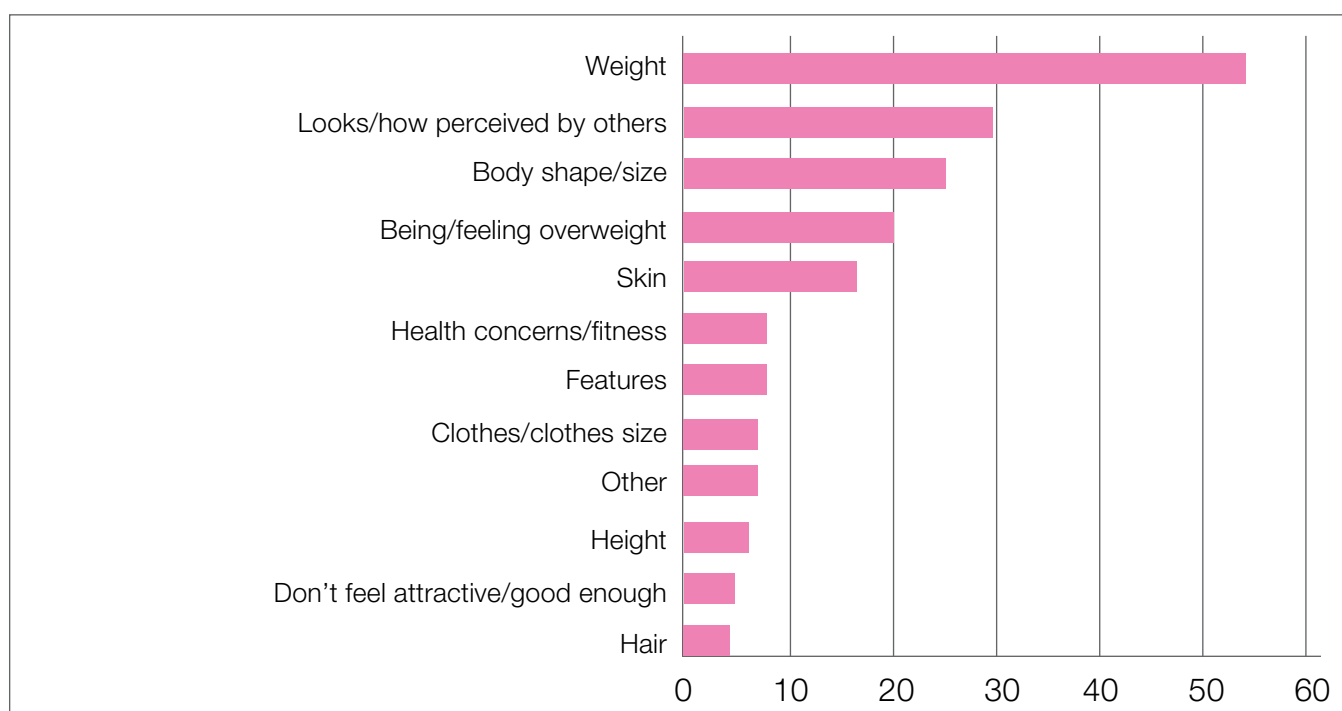
Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

Young people are concerned about their body image

Reports such as Mission Australia's Survey of Young Australians have already told us that body image is a huge issue for young people. Our own survey confirmed this, with 82.9% of respondents saying they have concerns about their body image. (Males and females were equally concerned about this). Forty-four per cent of respondents also said they were concerned about other people's body image.

In conducting our survey, the Office for Youth wanted to find out what it is that young people are concerned about. Of the 82.9% of respondents who said they were concerned about their body image, they are overwhelmingly concerned about their weight, how they are perceived by others/their looks, their body shape/size and being or feeling overweight (see figure 2).

Figure 2: What concerns you about your body image?



Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

A huge range of factors influence young people's body image

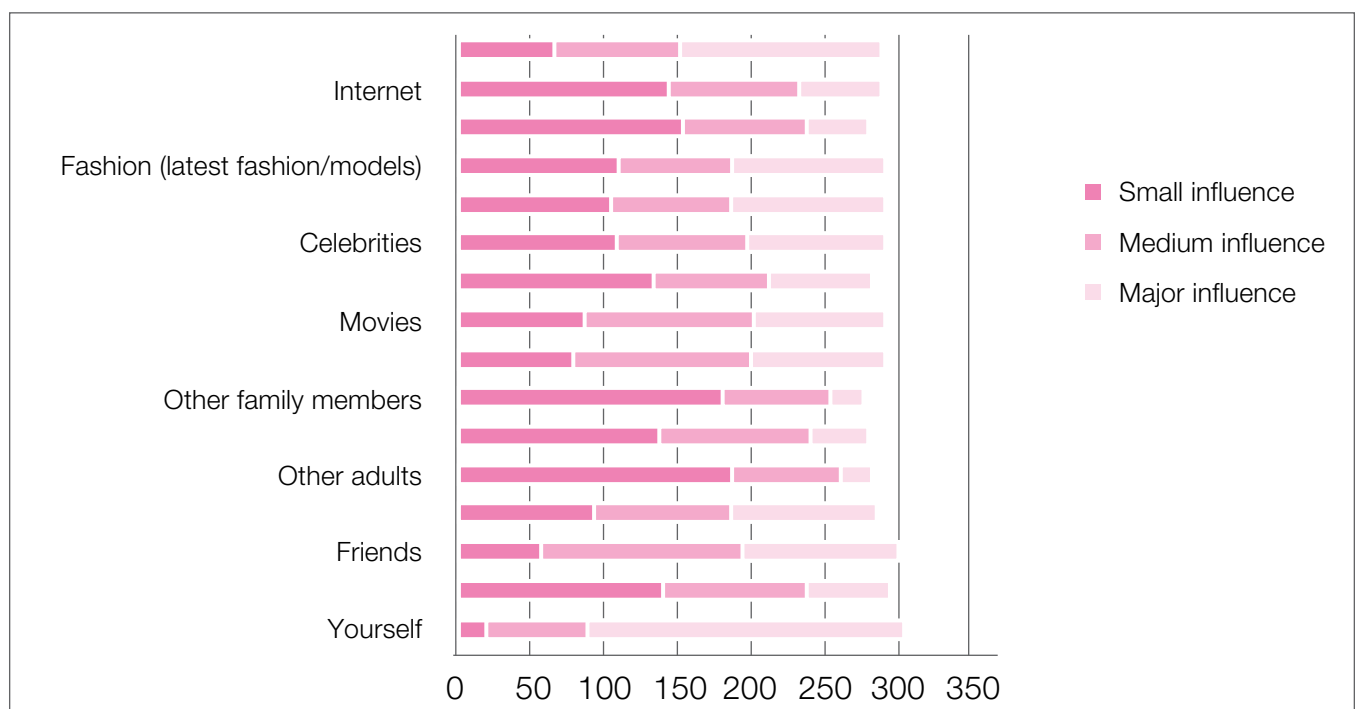
Over 88% of respondents answered the question about 'who or what influences your body image'. This question included 16 possible categories and an 'other' category.

As shown in figure 3, all of the 16 categories were shown to have an influence on a young person's body image.

While 'themselves', 'clothes sizes' and 'friends' are the leading major influences (see Figure 5) and 'themselves', 'friends' and 'parents' the leading influences overall (see Figure 4) all of the available categories were fairly evenly ranked as having an influence.

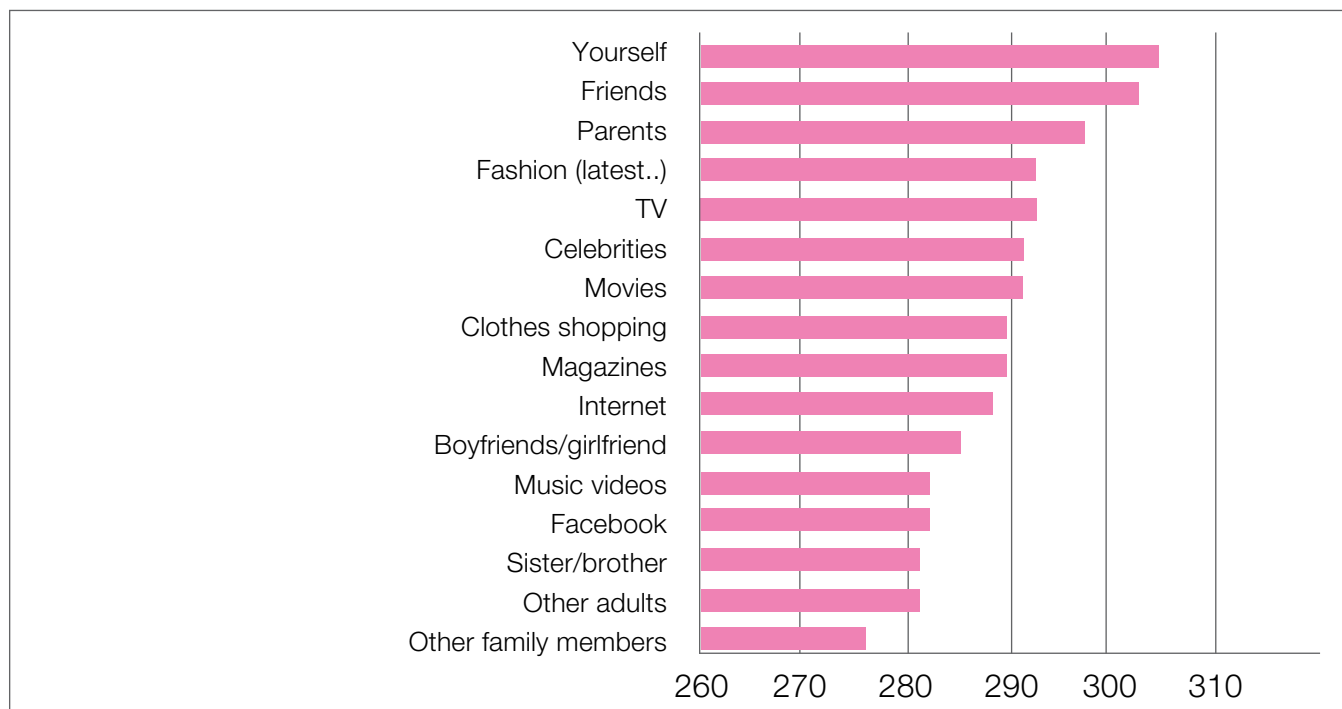
Not one of the categories was shown to not have an influence.

Figure 3: Who or what influences your body image?



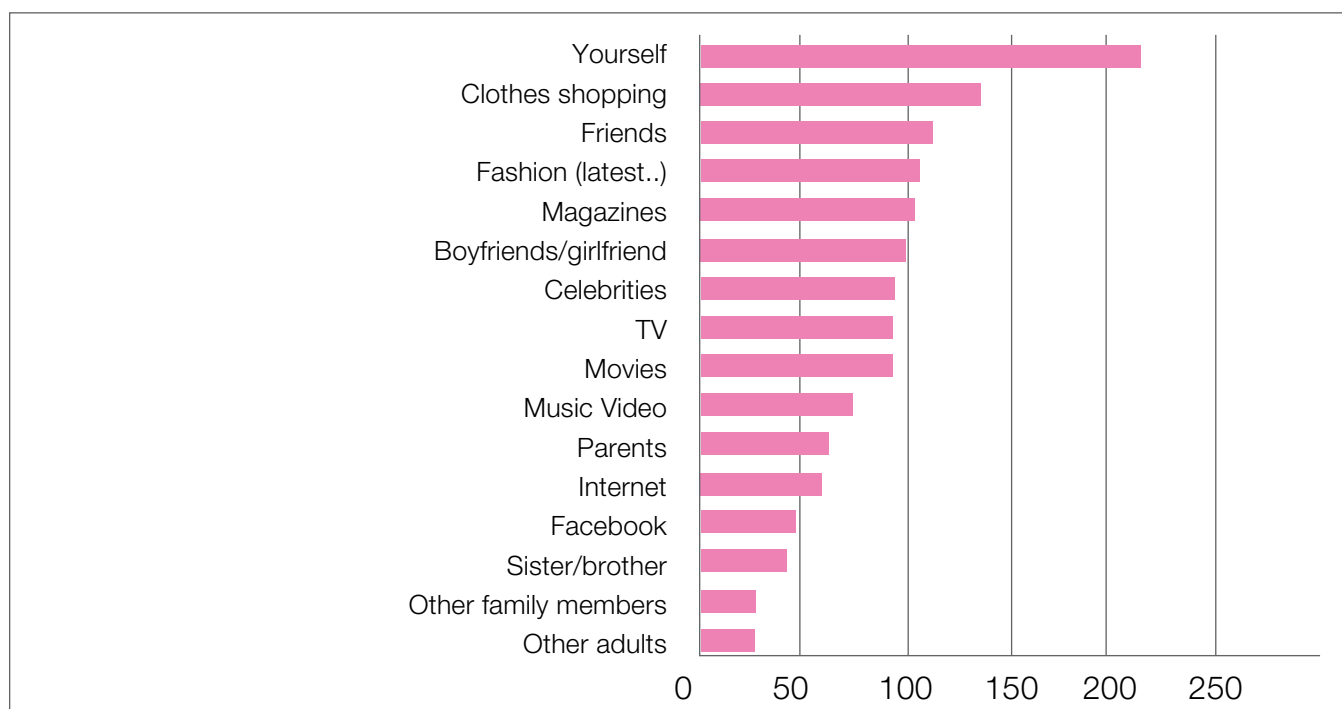
Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

Figure 4: Who or what influences your body image? (Total)



Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

Figure 5: Who or what influences your body image? (Major influences)



Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

Body image is having a big effect on what young people do

Eighty per cent (80%) of respondents said that the way they feel about their bodies stopped them from going out with friends, wearing particular clothes, going swimming, wearing bathers, playing sport, going to the gym or doing physical activity and buying clothes.

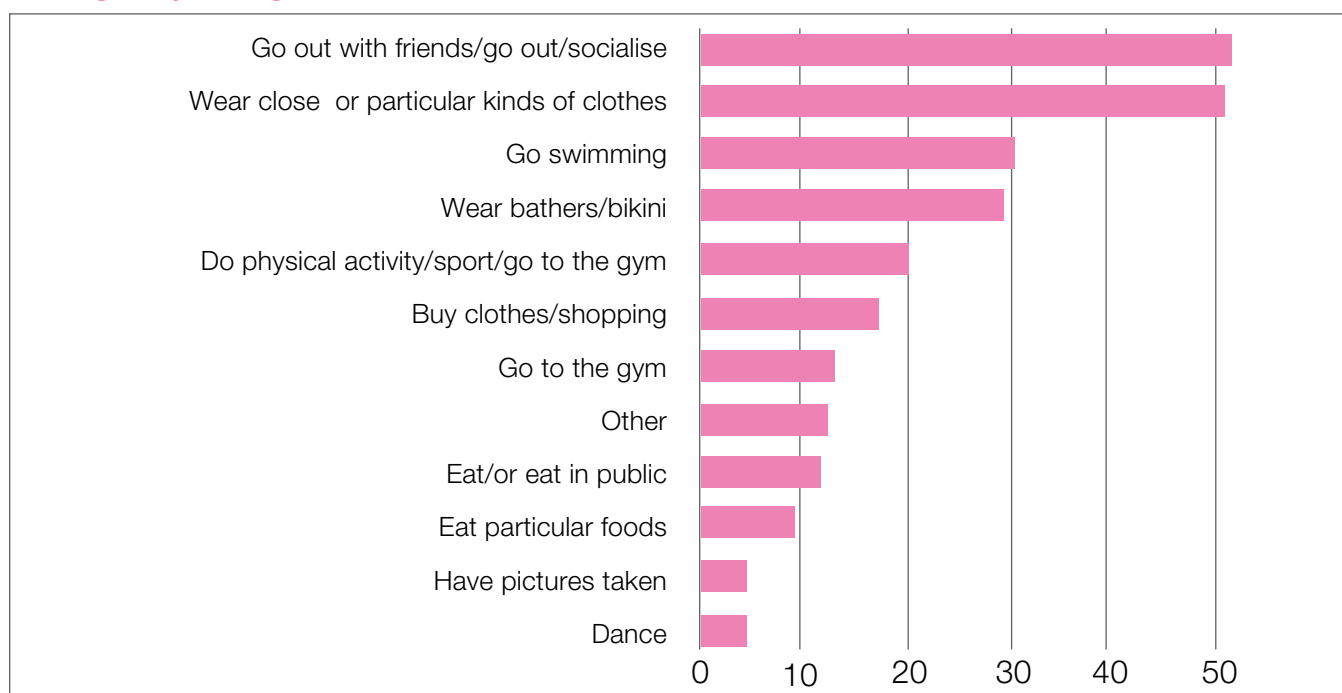
Ninety-six per cent (96%) of respondents said that either sometimes, most of the time or all of the time, they try to control the way they look.

What young people think will help

In response to the open question 'what would help you to feel more positive about your body image?' Young people responded with a range of suggestions including:

- Seeing realistic bodies/people in media
- Positive body image messages/role models
- Losing weight
- No pressure/expectation that thin is best/you should look a certain way

Figure 6: Does the way you feel about your body image stop you from doing anything?



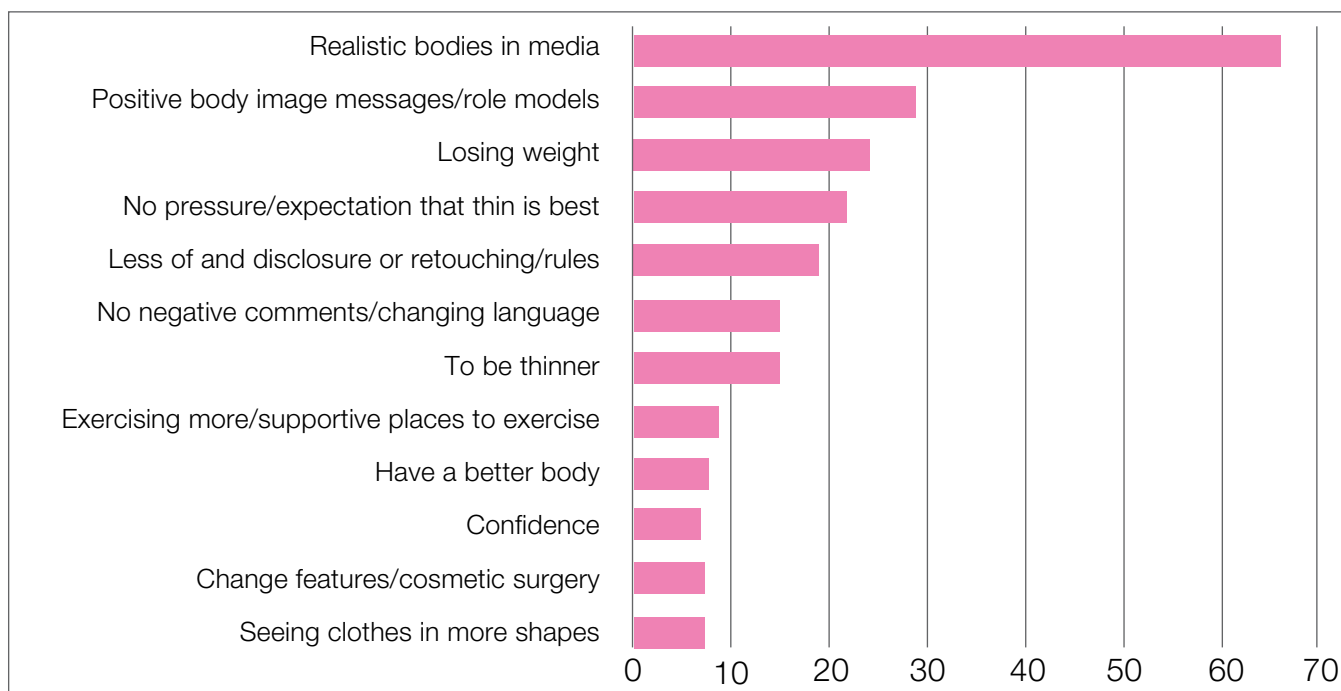
Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

- Less retouching/rules for media
- To be thinner
- No negative comments/changing language/ more accepting
- Exercising more/supportive places to exercise
- Have a better body
- Seeing clothes in more shapes
- Change features/cosmetic surgery
- Confidence

The survey also asked what could be done to help young people generally to feel more positive about their body image.

The most common responses to this question was that the media should show realistic people (e.g. photoshop images less) and broaden the idea of what is 'beautiful'; that there should be less focus on weight and more on health; that young people should be given more positive messages from those around them and each other; that there should be workshops and education about positive body image; and that there is a need for positive role models.

Figure 7: What would help you to feel more positive about your body image?



Source: Office for Youth Body Image Survey, 2011

presentations of participant's top ideas

As a result of the summit, participants developed a total of forty ideas, including the prioritisation of sixteen top ideas, which aim to assist young people to be more positive about their body image.

The focus of engaging and consulting with young people was to make sure that a youth voice was heard in government and in the community in relation to body image.

To promote the outcomes and ideas from the summit and survey, the Office for Youth has taken up a number of opportunities and forums and has used these opportunities to promote the outcomes of the summit, the survey and especially the young people's ideas around supporting positive body image. This work will continue with the distribution of this report to state ministers, state and local governments and the wider community through key stakeholders.

Body image and eating disorders forum

The participant's top ideas from the summit were presented to the Body Image and Eating Disorders Forum on Tuesday 10 May 2011. This forum was aimed at service providers and researchers and will contribute to the development of the State-wide Project Plan on Eating Disorders.

• Kate Bryson, YWCA Adelaide, a group leader from the Body Image Summit, presented the participant ideas to the forum. Kate discussed her own experience at the summit and gave a detailed insight into the discussions of her group.

• During the Body Image and Eating Disorders Forum, a panel discussion was held about body image. The panel comprised of young people under the age of twenty-five. Two of the panellists, Megan Alvers and Marissa Ortman, had also attended the Body Image Summit and spoke positively about their experience and the importance of young people being listened to and highlighted some of the ideas that they personally related to.

Presentation to the Minister for Youth

• On Thursday 19 May 2011, the small group facilitators were invited to present the participants ideas from the Summit to the Minister for Youth the Hon Grace Portolesi MP.

• Three group facilitators attended and presented; Elean El Massih and Ian Hooper, Southern Primary Health – Marion Youth, and Kate Bryson, YWCA Adelaide.

• The young people discussed their personal experiences of the summit and also discussed ways in which the ideas could be actioned.

media coverage

Appendix 1

Media support for the Body Image Summit was excellent with coverage from most of the television and radio stations. The Minister for Youth and young people participating in the summit were interviewed and asked their opinions around body image, their personal experiences and possible ways to support young people to be more positive about their body image.

A summary of the media cover has been provided below:

- Channels seven, nine and ten featured stories on their news services at six o'clock on the day of the summit.
- Radio news reports were broadcast on ABC Adelaide 891, Mix 102.3, Cruise 1323 and 5AA 1395.
- On Friday 15 April 2011, two articles were published in The Advertiser. One article reported the Body Image Summit and featured three male participants who talked about their issues with body image. The second article was an opinion piece written by the Minister for Youth, the Hon Grace Portolesi MP,

regarding body image issues influencing children at a younger age and the need to build resilience in children.

- The Advertiser published a further article on Saturday 21 May 2011 about the ideas from the Body Image Summit.
- On Saturday 21 May 2011, ABC Adelaide 891 and their regional affiliates ran news articles about the ideas at 9am, 10am, and Noon.



“perfectly imperfect”

body image survey

Appendix 2

This survey is your chance to tell us what worries you about body image and what would help to make you feel better about it. Body image is about how we view ourselves in this world. It is linked to our self-awareness, self-perception and self-esteem.

1. Age?

- Under 9
- 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

2. Are you:

- Male
- Female

3. Are you concerned about your body image?

- Yes
- No

4. If yes, what are you concerned about?

5. Are you concerned about other people's body image?

- Yes
- No

6. If yes, what are you concerned about?

7. Who/what influences the way you see yourself? (tick any that apply)

- Yourself
- Parents
- Friends
- Boyfriend/girlfriend
- Other adults (for example, teacher/counsellor/coach)
- Sister/brother
- Other family member
- TV
- Movies
- Magazines
- Fashion
- Facebook
- Internet
- Clothes sizes
- Other (please specify)

8. How do they influence you?

9. What Kind of messages do you hear about body image from others? (e.g. friends, family, the media)

- Positive messages
- Negative messages

10. Does the way you feel about your body ever stop you from doing things?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

11. If so, what don't you do?

12. Do you try to control the way you look?

- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- All the time
- Never

13. If yes, can you describe how you do this?

14. What would help you to feel better about your body image?

15. What do you think would help young people generally to have better body image?

16. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about body image and how it affects you?



“positive body image means feeling happy with myself despite others”

complete list of summit participant's ideas

Appendix 3

Family

1. Education for parents (such as making parents aware that their attitude and actions have a huge impact on their children, about modelling healthy lifestyles, about language used).
2. Using current affairs programs as a vehicle to promote discussion of thinking about parental impacts on young people's body image.
3. State-wide/nationwide pamphlet/booklet about body image.
4. Giving young people opportunities, tools and education to raise and discuss parental impacts on their body image and building resilience in young people so they have confidence to stand up to what is said.
5. Tackling weight indirectly with children, creative ways to eat healthy.
6. Doctor's don't step outside what young people go to see them for.

Sport and school

1. PE – having a choice about doing sports or not, sex-segregated classes, offer choices to students in what types of physical education they'd like to participate in that encourage participation for girls (yoga, zumba-exercises), students to have choice about male or female instructor.
2. Uniforms – choice, no make-up policy, not to be so forceful about wearing your hair up.

3. Canteens – services sizes, cheaper healthy options, balanced food pricing, open for breakfast, schools offer healthy lunch to students who can't afford it.
4. Teacher training on body image and self-esteem (at university and on-the-job).
5. School policy on teacher behaviour about body image (such as not making comments on weight changes, neutral about clothing and students' appearance).
6. Peer leaders in school to change school culture from within.
7. Seminars/curriculum to include body image and critical analysis of the media beginning in primary school and continuing to year 10.
8. As part of disciplinary proceedings in school provide education to bullies to make them aware of the impact they have on their victims.
9. Home Ec skills so people can cook healthy and have fun.

Friends

1. Asking friends to talk positively about food and body image, not to talk about weight, no 'fat talk'.
2. Peer mentors to help facilitate group conversations.
3. Promote mindfulness – helping/educating young people to be mindful of what they say and how it affects people.
4. Promote compliments in lockers, pigeon holes – have a specific time to write anonymous compliments to each other (to promote self-esteem).

5. Talk to friends about how you feel.
6. TV ad with friend – girls shopping together.
7. Providing good, healthy role modelling.
8. Out of school social events/support groups for young people who don't 'fit in'.
9. Provide education to young people on the impact of attitudes, comments etc on peers.

Media

1. Awareness campaign – such as advertising images are not real and that a model's job is to look good (emphasis that it is a full time job).
2. Information to show people (young people and parents) how to use social networking and highlight its potential effect and how they can reduce the impact.
3. Stop encouraging the idea that the perfect magazine image is good and provide images of all body types.
4. Disclaimer on TV and other images that "the following images are not realistic" and warning that the pictures are digitally edited – fines for not warning.
5. Keep pushing for a code of ethics and implement a reward schemes for media to stick to code of conduct.
6. Music videos – regulation of singer's film clips so that unrealistic images of women are not normalised.
7. Government campaign along the lines of 'you're beautiful just the way you are' in bus shelters, public toilets etc.

You

1. Eliminating negative people in your life and positive self-talk.
2. Educate people that real women have cellulite and teaching males that advertising sells a specific image.
3. Positive messages accessible via internet – such as a feed update in facebook.
4. Access to support (counsellor etc) made easier and reducing stigma for asking for help.
5. Teach people to accept compliments.
6. Education about what is actually health, too fat or too skinny, rather than the perfect image in advertising and educate people about healthy eating and how your body functions.
7. Acknowledge influences on our body image (fashion, media, judgements) and that we're all self-critical.
8. Educate people that an eating disorder is a behaviour not the person.
9. Provide positive, realistic, individual people for young people to look up to.



Government
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Office for Youth

contact us

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