



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

24 April 2009

### **Health check recommended for underweight Miss Universe Australia Finalist**

Eating Disorders Victoria has serious concerns as to why pageant organisers didn't exercise a greater duty of care in the case of Miss Universe Australia finalist Stephanie Naumoska.

"While it is not possible to make a full assessment of a person's health based purely on physical appearance, Ms Naumoska's apparent extreme thinness and muscle wastage, combined with her reported low weight, should be sufficient to raise grave concerns in any organiser's mind," stated EDV's Executive Officer, Kirsty Greenwood.

"Organisers should have taken steps to exclude Ms Naumoska from the competition, both on possible medical grounds, and as an example to the wider community that it takes the health and wellbeing of young Australian women seriously".

"We accept that many models selected for pageants are naturally thin, however we do not accept this as an argument for dismissing concerns for a contestant's health," Ms Greenwood added. EDV strongly condemns the acceptance and use of dangerously or unhealthily thin models and contestants, both for the negative impact this may have on the body image of viewers and because of the health risk to the model or contestant.

Eating Disorders Victoria believes that organisers of fashion shows and beauty pageants have a responsibility to ensure that models and pageant contestants are healthy and reflect a healthy image to potentially vulnerable viewers. In cases where BMI is below that recommended by experts as the minimum for normal health, or where thinness or muscle wastage is a potential concern, EDV believes the organisers should exercise their duty of care, refer the model or contestant for medical assessment and require a certificate of health before allowing them to participate.

EDV takes the position that it is irresponsible for any public event to promote unhealthily thin body types as desirable.

If you have body image concerns or feel your diet is adversely affecting your physical and/or psychological health, contact the **Eating Disorders Helpline on 1300 550 236** (operates 9.30am - 5.00 pm Monday – Friday)

**For further information:**

**Megan O'Connor, Communications Officer, Eating Disorders Victoria 03) 9885 6563 or 0409 948 049**

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### **About Eating Disorders Victoria**

Eating Disorders Victoria is Victoria's foremost eating disorder charity and the primary source of support, information, community education and advocacy for people with eating disorders and their families in Victoria.

Services are free and confidential and include the **Eating Disorders Helpline 1300 550 236**, on-line Chat Room and Message Board, confidential support groups and education programs.