

The Casual Dress Policy

By Catherine Symons, Madgwicks



Welcome to the Firm. As part of your induction, we ask that you familiarise yourself with our policy on casual dress, as set out below.

Objective

To give staff, clients and competitors the impression that we are a progressive, forward-thinking organisation, while at the same time providing human resources with an opportunity to create yet another policy.

Staff are encouraged to wear casual attire on designated "Casual Days", provided that they are able to satisfy themselves that they will not have contact during that day with people falling into any of the following categories: (a) clients; (b) judicial staff and officers; and (c) members of the public.

The casual dress consultant

Before making a final determination on the question of what to wear, staff are *strongly* advised to submit a 'proposal for casual dress' (a copy of this form can be downloaded from the Firm's intranet site). The proposal will be reviewed by the Firm's in-house casual dress consultant, who will then advise on its suitability and/or make recommendations for change.

However, staff acknowledge and agree that the Firm's casual dress consultant cannot be held liable for any loss or damage (including blows to pride and ego) suffered in connection with adherence to an approved casual dress proposal.

Staff are advised that the Firm's casual dress consultant will be guided by the following factors when reviewing casual dress submissions:

1. Denim, plaid, dots, florals, synthetics (particularly lycra), flannelette and fabric manufactured out of hemp are not permitted under any circumstances.
2. Thongs, loafers, flip-flops, sneakers, sandals, runners, high boots and clogs are not considered suitable attire for the feet.
3. Monochromatic outfits, particularly those that demonstrate a preference for black, will be held in high regard. However, staff are not encouraged to emulate the Wiggles, particularly the purple one.
4. Clothing that is considered appropriate for the beach (refer cl 2), a nightclub, the supermarket, walking the dog, relaxing around the home, eating out with friends or gardening is not appropriate for the workplace.
5. Clothing that reeks of personality will be considered equally offensive.

Disciplinary procedures

Any member of staff who reports for work in clothing that has either been deemed unsuitable by the casual dress consultant, or otherwise is considered to constitute "a crime against fashion", will be asked to appear before the Casual Dress Tribunal ("the Tribunal").

The Tribunal can be constituted at short notice and has jurisdiction to determine matters of bad taste, as well as resolving conflicts of dress interest (where two members of staff, usually female, wear the same outfit).

The Tribunal has a wide discretion to award compensation to victims of fashion crime, and may subject a fashion offender to a period of solitary confinement within the office and a ban on participating in future Casual Days.

In the case of conflicts of dress interest, orders for the imposition of a Chinese Wall are the usual remedy. However, where the conflict involves a partner and a more junior member of staff, there may be grounds for summary dismissal of the junior fashion offender.

Maintaining a professional demeanour

Whilst Casual Days are an outward manifestation of the Firm's balanced approach to work and lifestyle, staff should firmly bear in mind that the opportunity to dress casually is not a licence to have fun.

Staff should treat Casual Days as they would any other day and maintain a professional demeanour at all times. This means that laughing, smiling and acts of frivolity continue to be prohibited. ■

Quotables – Judges Brush Up on their Geography

Setting out the facts in a recent New South Wales Court of Appeal case, *JPQS P/L v Cosmanran Construction P/L* [2003] NSWCA 66, Meagher JA referred to land "situated at Bossley Park (wherever that is)".

In concurring with the reasons of Meagher JA, Mason P could not resist this barb:

"1. I have had the benefit of reading in draft the reasons of Meagher JA.

2. I also have had the benefit of having access to a street directory. Accordingly, I do not share his Honour's customary doubts about the location of well-known Sydney suburbs lying to the west of Darling Point which sit cheek by jowl with his Honour's customary lack of doubts about most other matters. A useful resource for those who need to locate Bossley Park is www.travelmate.com.au. By clicking on 'map maker' one can find easy ways of getting from, say Darling Point to that suburb. (www.nowhereroute.com/travelmate/mapmaker/mappage.asp?Type=darling%20point-nsw_bossley%20park_nsw)

3. Otherwise I agree with Meagher JA in the dismissal of this appeal, substantially for the reasons he gives."

And Beazley JA delivered this one-liner:

"I agree with Meagher JA and the perspicuous remarks of Mason P."

This led to the following appearing in the headnote:

"HELD per Mason P (Beazley JA agreeing)

A useful resource for those who need to locate Bossley Park is www.travelmate.com.au. By clicking on 'map maker' one can find easy ways of getting from, say, Darling Point to that suburb."

The case can be found at: <http://caselaw.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/isysquery/irf4b9/6/doc>.