

## Public protest action - all for a good cause

Tomorrow, Friday, 5 September 2008, is Casual Day and, through a public 'protest' action, Absa has been encouraging corporate South Africa to lose its suits and ties this Friday in a bid to help the organisers meet a new record fundraising high of R15 million.



Every year, on the first Friday of September, South Africans around the country shed their suits and ties in favour of jeans and "tees". It's Casual Day, a project that was launched in 1995, with the aim of raising funds to support South Africans with disabilities. In its first year of operation, Casual Day raised just over R400 000. This year, its 13th, the organisers have set their sights on R15 million.

Determined to help the project reach this new record high, stalwart supporter Absa covertly launched a 'protest group' called People Against Suits & Ties (P.A.S.T.), which has as its central message the fact that suits and ties actually make people sad.



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The group has received a great deal of publicity over the previous few weeks, through its staging of a series of protest marches in Johannesburg and its 'defacing' of a number of high-fashion billboards around town.

P.A.S.T. members Mark Fish, Tansey Coetzee and many others have added their support to Absa getting behind People Against Suits & Ties, saying that Absa's continued commitment to creating a better future for persons with disabilities was unparalleled.

Kenneth Leigh, P.A.S.T founder and spokesperson commented on the group's controversial strategy to

raise awareness of the danger of wearing suits and ties: “We must reiterate that we're not supporting the e of suits here. They have their place in society. We're supporting the encouragement of a group of people who deserve everyone's attention for more than just one day. In fact, persons with disabilities deserve nothing less than our full support over the entire year - but if it takes us one day a year to get that started, than so be it.”



Leigh continued that while there probably is no way to stop the business world from suiting up for good, he strongly believes that the group can encourage corporate SA to do so for just one day - particularly when it stands to benefit so many worthy causes. All donations raised on Casual Day go towards The National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa, the South African Federation for Mental Health, Disabled Persons South Africa, the Deaf Federation of South Africa, Epilepsy South Africa and the South African National Council for the Blind.

“It's a small step, but it's in the right direction,” he says.

Perhaps it's time all South Africans took that one step. You can start by grabbing a Casual Day sticker for R10 from any Absa branch and dressing down for a day, on Friday 5 September.

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