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## Hairs apparent in boardroom

Natasha Hughes  
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Hirsutes you, sir ... Flight Centre chief Graham Turner. Photo: Glenn Hunt

Beards have made their way from urban hipster haunts to the sports field, and now to the office.

Just months ago, they were regarded as the preserve of the pious and the criminal, but they are now being seen positively in executive circles and are being embraced by businessmen - especially the under 40s - for the first time since the 1970s.

"Beards give corporate Australia the opportunity to get out of the doldrums," Graeme Lewsey, the chief executive of the L'Oreal

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#### BASE jumpers take off in style

Suited, booted and refreshed, four BASE jumpers enjoyed cocktails before leaping from the Vue de Monde restaurant on the Rialto tower's 55th floor.

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Melbourne Fashion Festival, says. "It's a way to dress up a suit and have some fun and show some innovation. It's happened in Europe, and now it's happening here."

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The rise of the beard is a reaction to the metrosexual ideal that has feminised men for the past 10 years, model agency director Matthew Anderson says. "It tells people it's all right to be different, to be individual; that there's a broader ideal. More power to them."

A beard can make a man look more powerful, more mature, more in-touch - and wiser, sexier, even thinner, high-profile clipper Richard Kavanagh says, but stylists emphasise it must be worn well for work.

And that takes work. A "laughing cavalier" beard and biker-style moustache, sported by David Beckham when he met the US President, Barack Obama, last week, will not cut it in the boardroom. Nor will a full beard, unless on the chief executive or a confident under-30 in an immaculately cut suit, and then never with a shaved neck.

And beards must not look scruffy, image consultant **Annalisa Armitage says**. "In the



David Beckham's "laughing cavalier".  
 Photo: Getty Images



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same way that hair and nails need to be neat and well looked after, so does facial hair. It's not the facial hair on its own but actually the way it is worn."

It doesn't have much relevance to whether you get - or keep - a job. A 2006 survey found that a beard on a job candidate had no influence on 73 per cent of interviewers, whereas the candidate's grooming had a strong influence.



Jason Stewart, of Melbourne, who has had a beard for 18 months.  
Photo: Simon O'Dwyer

But beards can be open to interpretation and "can be confronting", Philip Barwick, the heavily bearded Redken hair director of Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Australia, says. "All styles are out there at the moment but it depends on what you want to project. If you want a trustworthy image, your beard will be groomed and cropped and kept in good condition. If you're the boss of the company, the first partner, then the big white beard will say 'the wise man' to your subordinates."

The decorative beard of early US cowboys, the full but groomed beard of the rural lord of the manor, the very long beard of the Edwardian gentleman (or Australian bushranger), which are all being duplicated in the fashion pages and on the streets of Milan, Surry Hills and Brunswick, must be treated with extreme caution by suit wearers.

But beards complement most hairstyles and lengths, including the popular "bald pate" office look, and "can enhance or diminish facial features", Barwick says, sculpting a thinner face or reducing a round face.

"For different reasons, many men are happier with how their face looks when they've got a beard," Barwick, who recently trimmed back his full-blown beard, says.

Melbourne milliner Richard Nylon devotes a lot of time and effort to his signature facial hair - this month it's Piccadilly weepers, that is, long sideburns with a clean-shaven chin (think Victorian-era circus strongman).



Melbourne milliner Richard Nylon.  
Photo: Paul Rovere

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"I keep it trimmed and neat. I use a toothbrush to comb it, and use strong hairspray and squish it through so it doesn't cake up," Nylon says.

"The Piccadilly weepers take 10 minutes and a fully curled moustache 25 minutes. If I can't be bothered shampooing and don't want to undo all my good work, I'll attach those little plastic coin bags to the ends of the moustache with hair clips. They're little shower caps."

### **Wearing it well**

Beards need to be worn with confidence: do so only if you have flair or power. They are no longer for the weird spotty kid in IT or the old codger who we all know is on his way out in the next wave of retrenchments.

Beards need to be rinsed, if not shampooed, daily. Hair oils keep them conditioned. Don't let them get straggly.

Keep hair away from the top lip and do not shave the neck. "No hard lines or cut-off points," stylist Richard Kavanagh says. Avoid an uneven trim with haphazard tufts.

The skin underneath a beard needs to be kept in good condition.

Be mindful of your beard. "Food caught in the beard is a serious distraction for lunch companions," [Annalisa Armitage of My Image Consultant](#) says.

Women either love them or hate them - there is no middle ground.

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