

Oxford Australia Word of the Month

July 2009

Dak – verb: pull down or remove the trousers etc. of (a person) as a joke or punishment.

Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary

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Betty Hew

Marketing Coordinator
General Division

Phone:
(03) 9934 9131

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Dak

The story behind the Word of the Month

In the *Herald-Sun* on 14 May 2008, the former AFL footballer Shane Crawford was interviewed. 'You **dacked** Sam Newman on TV, said the interviewer,' 'Can we expect more surprises?' Crawford answered: 'It wasn't an accident that I **dacked** him but it was that his private parts were revealed. It was a spur-of-the-moment thing. Being involved in footy clubs, things like that happen at times.' This verb **dack** appears just as often with the spelling **dak**. In the *Melbourne Age* on 24 July 1994, another footballer recalled suffering the indignation of **dakking** at footy pie nights: 'I was the little fella, so mine was getting **dacked** every pie night.'

In the records at the Australian National Dictionary Centre, the activity of **dakking** often occurs in association with footballers, but it is clear that its origin lies with schoolchildren, as in this passage from the surfing magazine *Tracks* in March 2001: 'I was **dacked** on the beach and dragged over to where these filth chicks I went to school with were sunbaking, and they were all pissing themselves.' It is not, however, limited to these footballers and schoolchildren. Royalty and royalty-to-be can be **dakking** participants:

When McDonald [the author of the book *Something about Mary*] was first hired to follow Mary, there were only two other people on the job: a Danish reporter and Sydney paparazzo Jamie Fawcett, who was paid \$20,000 to spend two weeks photographing Mary in the final days of her normal life. Later Fawcett, dubbed 'the black prince of the paparazzi', scored photos of Frederik (in board shorts) and his fiancée (in a string bikini) skylarking on a Sydney beach. 'She **dacked** him,' he recalls. 'I got a photo of the royal arse.' (*Australian*, 15 November 2005)

This verb **dak** is the Australian version of the British *debag*. Both terms refer to the activity of pulling down or removing a person's trousers as a joke or punishment. The Australian verb **dak** is an abbreviation of the noun **daks**, an Australian generic term for 'trousers'. These terms, which are now exclusively Australian, have their origin in Britain. **Daks** was a British proprietary name for a make of clothes, especially a style of men's trousers with a self-supporting waistband. The term was trademarked in Britain in 1933, and is thought to be a blend of *dad's slacks*. It has now been completely Aussiefied.

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