

# 2016 Community **HART** Awards

Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together

## FINALISTS





## About the Community HART Awards

The 3rd annual Community HART Awards (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) are the result of a partnership between Reconciliation Victoria, Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) and Bank Australia, designed to recognise Victorian partnerships and initiatives that contribute to local reconciliation outcomes.

Since the success of the inaugural awards in 2014, each year has seen an impressive number of quality nominations. Nominations are submitted by Victorian local governments and community organisations for initiatives that demonstrate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together, and initiatives that have contributed to reconciliation through relationships, respect and understanding.

### 2015 HART Awards

#### Local Government Category

Winner: Yarra City Council, for the Smith Street Dreaming Project

Highly Commended:

- Darebin City Council, for their Wurundjeri Week Event: Insight into the Batman Treaty Event
- Western Regional Local Government Reconciliation Network (comprised of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham City) for their Rivers to Recognition Partnership Project

#### Community Organisation Category

Winner: Shearwater Festival Working Group, for the Annual Shearwater Festival on Phillip Island.

Highly Commended:

- Geelong's Deadly Dancers and Corrina O'Toole
- Uncle Boydie's Dream Team for activities to honour the work of William Cooper

### 2014 HART Awards

#### Local Government Category

Winner: Glenelg Shire, for the Glenelg Aboriginal Partnership

Highly Commended: Mornington Peninsula Shire, for its Aboriginal Support and Development Team

#### Community Organisation Category

Winner: Northern Indigenous Employment Working Group

Highly Commended: Framlingham Aboriginal Community, for its 150th Anniversary Celebration



# Congratulations to the 12 finalists in the 2016 Community HART Awards!

## Message from VLGA, Reconciliation Victoria and Bank Australia

Now in their third year, the Community HART Awards have again showcased the efforts of local governments and community organisations across Victoria, which are Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together.

We are inspired by the variety of nominations. From the development of forums and events, to teacher resources, reflection spaces and history projects, the nominations show there are a myriad of ways to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together in our journey toward mutual understanding, respect and genuine reconciliation.

As the stories from the finalist nominations show, when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and organisations commit to meaningful, long-term, two-way relationships, we can achieve tremendous change.

In sharing these stories, we are shining a light on the local initiatives and the champions who are making a real difference in their communities, so that others might take ideas and inspiration forward into their own workplaces and communities.

We thank each nominee and finalist for the important work they are doing.

We are thrilled that Bank Australia has joined the partnership this year to help sponsor the Community HART Awards as part of its commitment to increase awareness about reconciliation. We look forward to a long a fruitful relationship.

We are proud to present the finalists for the 2016 Community HART Awards – Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together.



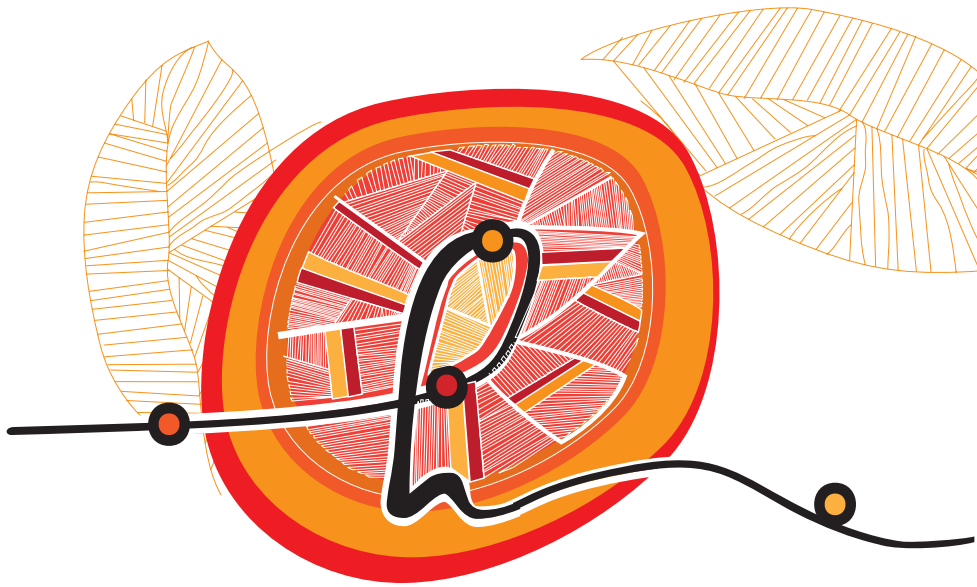
Cr Sebastian Klein  
President, VLGA



Belinda Duarte and Keith Gove  
Co-Chairs, Reconciliation Victoria



Damien Walsh  
Managing Director, Bank Australia



## Local Government Finalists

## DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL: Stolen Generations 'Empty Coolamon' Marker

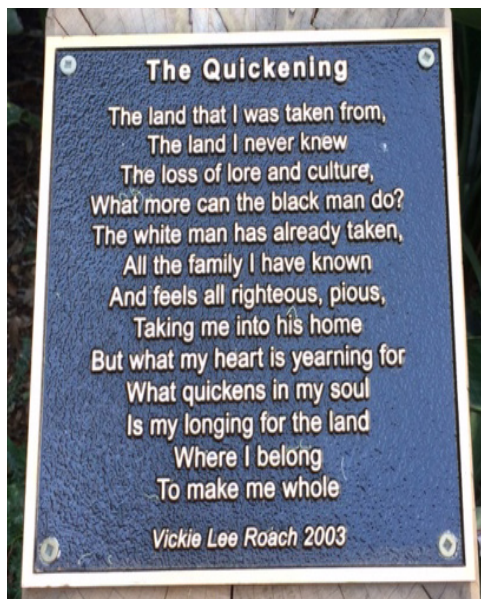


After the 2008 National Apology, to formally acknowledge and recognise Australia's Aboriginal Stolen Generations, discussions commenced between the Darebin Aboriginal community and Darebin City Council to include a marker that honoured the Stolen Generations.

Darebin Council engaged both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and organisations to complete the Stolen Generations Marker project through a survey. The survey then led to the establishment of an Aboriginal Stolen Generations Steering group consisting of representatives from across Council departments (Public Realm, Parks and Gardens, Arts and Culture) and project specific Aboriginal organisations (Connecting Home, Link-Up Victoria, VAACA, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee), as well as Aboriginal Elders of the Stolen Generation.

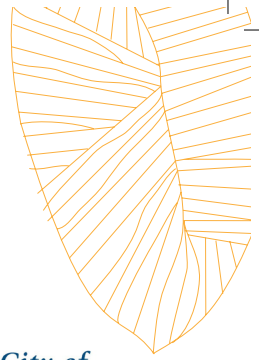
The Darebin Council 'Empty Coolamon' Stolen Generations Marker has created a heightened awareness and whole-of-community sense of connectedness to understanding and embracing a significant part and time in Australia's Aboriginal history. The creation of the Marker has provided a culturally safe space for all people to meet and reflect upon the meaning and symbolism of the 'Empty Coolamon'.

*The Marker's presence also serves to highlight a wider community vision of reconciliation and harmony between Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal peoples...*



# CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG; CITY OF CASEY

## Reconciliation in Early Childhood Forum



The Reconciliation in Early Childhood Partnership Working Group was established in 2015 to plan and deliver a forum to highlight the need for reconciliation in the early years, and to build the capacity of staff in the early childhood sector to engage and provide culturally safe service delivery.

The Reconciliation in Early Childhood Partnership Working Group consists of representatives from: City of Greater Dandenong, City of Casey, Dandenong & District Aborigines Co-Operative Ltd (DDACL), Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Assoc Ltd (VACSAL), Inclusion Support Agency

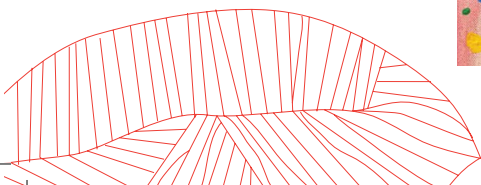
South East Region and the Department of Education and Training – Koorie Education Support Officers.

The forum utilised the expertise and knowledge of local Aboriginal communities by engaging Wurundjeri and Bunurong Aboriginal Elders, leaders, researchers and professionals who live and work in the local community to present and deliver the forum.

The event provided a safe space for people to come together to share stories, build connections, hear key messages about reconciliation, identify the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities and develop actions that could be implemented within the contexts of the health service delivery and educational environments.

The Forum was acknowledged by participants as a platform for discussions to begin around culturally safe service delivery and reconciliation.

*After participating in the forum, almost half of the attendees committed to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for their organisation.*



## MELTON CITY COUNCIL:

### Historical Sharing Through Partnership: Creating sound-scapes of local Aboriginal women's personal histories



The Historical Sharing through Partnership project was a collaborative project between Council, the Marla Aboriginal Women's Group and the Melton Historical Society, with the aim of collecting oral histories to be included in the local history collection.

Members of the Marla group along, with the Melton Historical Society, developed and implemented this initiative, with support from Melton City Council and Djerriwarrh Health Coranderk Services.



Through the partnership, Marla and the Melton Historical Society created a series of recorded interviews, which document the stories of how Marla women from different traditional lands across Australia came to settle in the municipality. The interviews were made available at the Melton Library and Learning Hub and the Caroline Springs Library and a launch event was held at the Melton Library as part of Reconciliation Week 2015, celebrating and promoting the oral history collection.

The project also produced a DVD which aims to help bridge the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members. The DVD showcases a rich cultural collection of the journeys and life histories of members of the Marla Women's Aboriginal Group, including their personal experiences on discovering their Aboriginality.

An example of reconciliation in action, the partnership bridges the divide between Aboriginal and post-colonial historical narrative. The recordings explore the issues of intergenerational dispossession and loss, and celebrate the vibrancy and resilience of Aboriginal culture.

*The project has been the catalyst for ongoing relationships between Marla and the Melton Historical Society. The sharing of stories has resulted in empathy and stronger bonds between the two groups and members of the wider community.*



## CITY OF PORT PHILLIP: Aboriginal Interpretative Signage Project

The City of Port Phillip commenced the development of an Aboriginal interpretative signage project in 2015 with the aim of designing and constructing a set of 10 Aboriginal interpretative signs for 10 locations across Port Phillip.

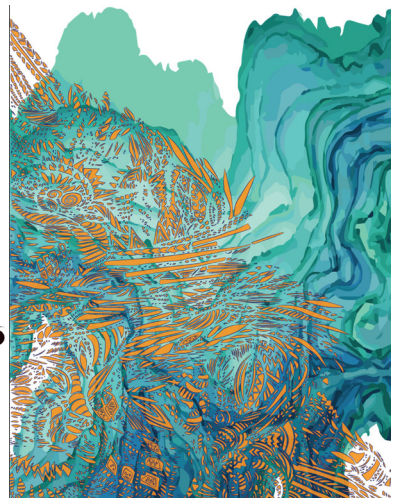
The interpretative signage project, to be officially installed and launched by June this year, has been developed to raise awareness of the First Peoples of Port Phillip amongst both residents and visitors to the city.

A key stakeholder in the project has been the Boon Wurrung Foundation, which has been instrumental in providing content, assisting in editing drafts and finalising the signage.

The signs, located in 10 culturally significant sites in St Kilda, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and Point Ormond, are designed to be multi-functional. They are a prominent and permanent visual reminder of the living culture of the Yalukit Willam clan, which will foster an environment of good will and instil a sense of pride for members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as they travel around the city.

The project will also provide a potential framework for the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism, operated and managed by Aboriginal small businesses.

*The design and construction of the 10 interpretative signs aim to promote a welcoming and inclusive community and fosters an educative and 'information sharing' environment which will raise awareness of the local Boon Wurrung culture.*



## CITY OF WHITTLESEA:

### Sorry Space and associated Sorry Day Activities



The City of Whittlesea Sorry Space, the annual Sorry Walk and the Reconciliation Fire Ceremony are interwoven Sorry Day initiatives that offer an opportunity for Whittlesea's local community to engage with Aboriginal cultures, Australian history, the legacy of the Stolen Generations and reconciliation.



The Sorry Space and related activities were developed as a result of Council's community led journey to design and create a permanent commemorative space in which to display a plaque gifted to the City of Whittlesea by the Victorian Stolen Generations organization, Connecting Home, who gifted the plaque to acknowledge Council's efforts in commemorating National Sorry Day.

Local Aboriginal and members of the broader community were actively engaged throughout the development and construction of the Sorry Space.

The City of Whittlesea Sorry Space is a space used to facilitate community involvement in acknowledging and understanding our past in order to engage with a future dedicated to reconciliation.

The guided walk explores the processes and outcomes of the past forcible removal of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children and encourages participants to understand that past, to be part of an apology process, to promote healing and to be part of a reconciled future.



*The Sorry Space provides an opportunity for reflection and is a symbolic acknowledgment of past wrongs and injustices inflicted upon Aboriginal people, in particular the Stolen Generations.*

## **YARRA CITY COUNCIL:** **Connecting with the Aboriginal** **History of Yarra: A Teachers' Resource**



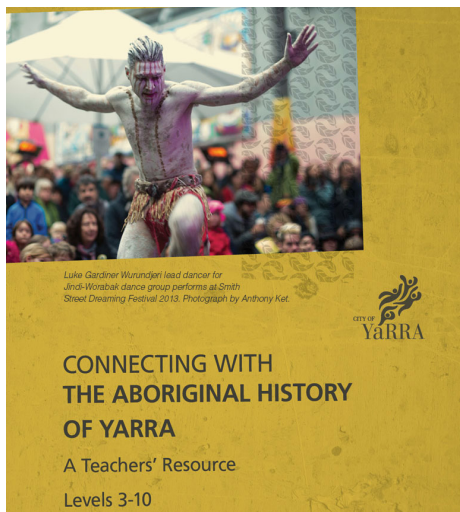
Yarra City Council's project Connecting with the Aboriginal History of Yarra: A Teachers' Resource gives local teachers a roadmap and resources for teaching local Aboriginal history and engaging with Traditional Owners.

In the true spirit of reconciliation, the initiative was guided and reviewed, from start to finish, by local Wurundjeri Elders, other Aboriginal Elders and local teachers.

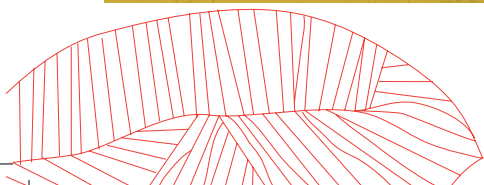
The Teacher's Resource is a compilation of a number of online resources, book excerpts, excursions and videos with over 100 hyperlinks – organising them according to AUSVELS cross-curriculum priorities for students in Years 3 to 10.

The Teacher's Resource lays a solid foundation for increased understanding and respect between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples – starting with young people coming through the school system. By engaging with these complex issues through the critical years of schooling, students are given the opportunity to steer away from snap judgments or assumptions and move towards more meaningful connections.

Teachers benefit from the resource by feeling confident that they are teaching material that has been reviewed and approved by local Elders.



*By learning the Aboriginal history, students deepen their understanding of the Wurundjeri as Traditional Owners. They also begin to understand the complex link between the impacts of colonisation and the disparity we continue to see today.*





## **Community Organisation Finalists**

## 94.9 MAINfm: Dja Dja Wurrung Radio

MAINfm is a community radio station based in Castlemaine which has over 70 presenters, broadcasts 24 hours-a-day and reaches from Harcourt, to Daylesford and Avoca.

With the help of a grant from the Mount Alexander Shire Council, MAINfm created a year's worth of Indigenous content with presenters Alison Hanly and DjaDja Wurrung Elder Rick Nelson. In this weekly 10 minute segment they talked to local Aboriginal community members, historians and local advocates and played Aboriginal music.

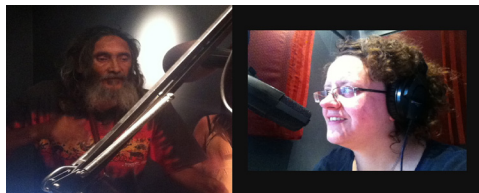


The series focused on sharing the voices of living members of the local Aboriginal community and also included interviews with non-Aboriginal community members, such as advocates and allies to the local Aboriginal community, and local Aboriginal historians and archeologists.

The project is unique in the area as it offers the local Aboriginal community a voice in the media where otherwise they would not have one. This radio series aims to share the history, knowledge and beauty of the culture that still lives and breathes.

The project has recorded local oral history, which can now be heard across the globe - on the internet.

*We are capturing the voices of young Aboriginal people who are learning Creation stories and telling them back to us. We are hearing from experts in pre-colonial life and hearing first hand stories of the impact of stolen generations.*



## THE GADHABA LOCAL INDIGENOUS NETWORK: Raising the Flags

The Gadhaba Local Indigenous Network is a unique network that includes both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members. Gadhaba, is a Taungurung word meaning 'Together', a traditional name adopted by the network to reflect its vision of working together alongside non-Aboriginal people to achieve its goals and aspirations.



**Gadhaba Local Indigenous Network**

Working together, the Gadhaba Local Indigenous Network (GLIN) and Mansfield Shire Council installed flagpoles to permanently fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at the entrance to town. The 2015 NAIDOC week celebrations marked the flags being raised for the first time. The flags welcome visitors to the town, recognise that we are three cultures living together and acknowledge Aboriginal people's deep connection to country.

The event truly was a celebration; the achievements of individuals were recognised as well as that of the community as a whole. The flagpole project and NAIDOC event was a positive way to share and recognise Aboriginal culture and identity with the broader community, and as well provided an opportunity for local Aboriginal people to get together, have a good 'yarn' and celebrate.

The Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are now proudly flown permanently at the entrance to Mansfield.



*Not only is this statement of acceptance and recognition, it is a project that the GLIN are proud of and provides local Aboriginal people with a focal point and gathering place.*

## GEELONG ONE FIRE RECONCILIATION GROUP & WATHAURONG ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVE:

### Reconciliation in the Park - Geelong

In 2009, a conversation between Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Group (One Fire) and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative (Co-op) resulted in the decision to partner together to trial a free public event in central Geelong, led by the Aboriginal community, to build community awareness and relationships for reconciliation.



Now in its seventh year, Reconciliation in the Park has grown and is recognised as the major interactive Reconciliation Week activity for the region.

Reconciliation in the Park has contributed to local relationships between Aboriginal people and the wider community. It has supported initiatives in Geelong through the community, not-for-profit and Government sectors, including the development of Reconciliation Action Plans and a range of reconciliation activities.

Families and individuals attend the event for the opportunity to listen and learn from local Aboriginal people as well as to participate in hands-on activities. Each year it attracts new participants who frequently comment on the breadth of music, diversity of participants and collaborative atmosphere.

Reconciliation in the Park employs a young Aboriginal adult to coordinate the event, who is mentored by a Co-op Elder and supported by a One Fire member in order to build confidence, implement the plan and gain skills for future employment.

*Reconciliation in the Park is led by community organisations with understanding about reconciliation: the need for it to be based on relationship building, led by Aboriginal community members and backed by non Aboriginal community in collaborative learning roles.*



## THE NARA DREAMERS: The Nara Dreaming Exhibition

In 2009 a group of artists got together and agreed there was a niche in the local Bendigo area for an event such as what was to become the Nara Dreaming Exhibition. They decided to run their event during Reconciliation Week as “reconciliation in action”, since the artists involved were both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

The Nara Dreaming Exhibition has been running since 2010 and in this time has established itself as an annual reconciliation event for the community.

All six Nara Dreamers are very involved within the Bendigo community - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - and they have used these connections to create a powerful bridge and method of reconciliation. They like to call what they do “Reconciliation in Action” in that they involve everyone in the Exhibition and at the same time educate people with regards to local Aboriginal culture and history in a non-confronting manner.



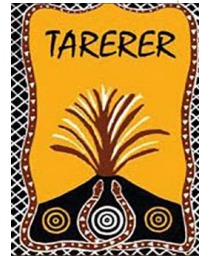
The Nara Dreaming exhibition is primarily an art exhibition, featuring various mediums of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art. Activities include a concert that features both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal entertainers, an explanation of the importance of dingoes in Aboriginal culture, as well as providing bush tucker and a Devonshire tea. Information on local Aboriginal history and culture and reconciliation is also provided to attendees.



*New relationships and friendships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants have been formed through the exhibition and each year new community members attend along with returning community members.*

## TARERER GUNDITJ PROJECT ASSOCIATION INC:

### Tarerer Showcase, 'Back to the Land' 2015



Based on original meetings of the Tarerer Gunitj Clan, Tarerer Festival was formed in 1995 by a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members. Through the medium of music and the arts the first Tarerer Festival was held in 1996. Over its 20 year lifespan the festival has been inclusive of all cultures - Irish, Scottish, Sudanese, Portuguese, Maori and many others, acting as a strong role model for reconciliation for the broader community. In 2015, the Tarerer Gunitj Project Association partnered with the AusMusic Festival Warrnambool to hold the Tarerer Showcase at the Warrnambool Lighthouse Theatre.

In 2015, the Showcase partnered with non-Aboriginal organisations: the AusMusic Festival Warrnambool, the Lighthouse Theatre Warrnambool and staff, and the City of Warrnambool.

The Tarerer Showcase created harmony and social relations between the members of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, as members experienced reconciliation through working collaboratively and in harmony together, inspiring further relations and support from the broad community. The initiative has led to positive off-shoots, such as increased Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal collaborations in the arts (e.g. public art projects), continued invitations from non-Aboriginal communities to participate in activities such as art exhibitions and competitions, Indigenous garden projects, Welcome to Country ceremonies, etc.

*Throughout our initiative collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people has been continuous with music and song writing workshops and forums, public performance, youth workshops ...*



## WANDOON ESTATE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION: Coranderrk

Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation (WEAC) is the local Traditional Owner group responsible for Coranderrk Aboriginal Mission Station on the outskirts of Healesville.

WEAC have held a series of festivals and events on Coranderrk to honour the pride and dignity of the original inhabitants and also make its story available to many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. WEAC have provided the opportunity for all to experience the power of Coranderrk, ensuring local Aboriginal culture and history remains alive and influential. Activities to date have included reconciliation festivals, a performance of Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country held onsite at Coranderrk, and facilitation of regular Coranderrk Reconciliation Walks.

WEAC have underpinned their reconciliation initiatives at Coranderrk on a strong reconciliation model working at the individual and organisational levels. For example, they have embraced the opportunity to have non-Aboriginal people assist in the planning and facilitation of festivals and events.

WEAC have also established a strong organisational partnership with the Yarra Ranges Council and they are now connected across a range of portfolio areas including funding, land improvement, environmental and cultural development.

The events and festivals undertaken by WEAC have brought the power of the story of Coranderrk to the lives of many people. By reclaiming and retelling their story and by welcoming and embracing all people, WEAC have empowered Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal to value each other. This reconciliation model has fostered deep personal relationships, enriching the lives of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people involved.

*The power of the performers, the performance of the story, and the story of the Country itself combined to generate an experience of overwhelming emotional synergy.*





**VLGA, Reconciliation Victoria and Bank Australia would like to thank the following people:**

**Deadly Design and Jodie Brennan** (Mazart Studio Design) for the creation of the Community HART Awards branding / artwork

**Hubert Lobo and his team at Kwik Kopy North Melbourne** for printing this 2016 Community HART Awards booklet



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