



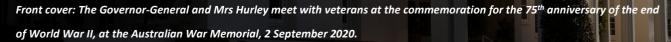
## OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

**CORPORATE PLAN** 

2021-22

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This page: State Entrance of Government House, Canberra.

#### Official Secretary's Statement

The Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (the 'Office') supports the Governor-General to encourage, comfort, inspire and uplift Australians from all walks of life and to celebrate their achievements.

On 1 July 2019, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) was sworn-in as Australia's 27<sup>th</sup> Governor-General. In his swearing-in speech at Parliament House, the Governor-General spoke of a 'richness of spirit' that exists in Australian society. In so doing, he outlined his approach for his term and set the direction for the Office. The Office has assisted the Governor-General to highlight to Australians their inherent strengths, their concern for the common good, their humanity and decency, and their desire for a 'fair go'.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the back of the devastating bushfires in the summer of 2019-20 will continue to influence the Governor-General's term over the next three years. In an environment where the nation's social fabric has been stretched and tested, the Governor-General's priority will be to help bring Australians together, uplift the discouraged and give hope. This will be delivered through a broad program of meaningful outreach and engagement and incorporating the Australian honours and awards system.

As an Office we are motivated by supporting the Governor-General to reinforce the nation's shared values, promote community cohesion, and represent our broad national interests here and overseas. We see our role as imagining new and powerful ways to enhance the impact of the Governor-General's work. We do this by thinking innovatively and strategically; engaging and empowering our staff; and using the resources available to us effectively, efficiently, economically and ethically to achieve planned outcomes.

As the accountable authority of the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, I am pleased to present the Office's 2021-22 Corporate Plan for the period 2021-22 to 2024-25, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act).

Paul Singer MVO

Official Secretary to the Governor-General

31 August 2021



#### **Purpose**

The Office was established in 1984, by amendment to the *Governor-General Act 1974*, to support the Governor-General in the fulfilment of his or her responsibilities.

The planned Outcome for the Office is the facilitation of the performance of the Governor-General's role through the organisation and management of official duties (which are constitutional, statutory, ceremonial and community-focussed in nature), management and maintenance of the official households and properties, and administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

The Office achieves this through a single program which comprises two components:

- 1. Support for the Governor-General
- 2. Administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

#### Key activities to support our Outcome

During the period of this Corporate Plan, the Office will focus on the following key activities to assist the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to perform their roles:

- support the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to uplift, encourage, inspire and celebrate Australians
- deliver effective governance and management arrangements in support of the official duties of the Governor-General
- ensure efficient and effective stewardship of the properties (Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney) in accordance with heritage requirements and approved capital works and maintenance programs
- understand, preserve and share the rich stories of the properties
- inform Australians about the role of the Governor-General in contemporary society
- carry out the efficient and effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system, including to increase the number of nominations for Australians from parts of the community which have been historically underrepresented and help ensure that the Order of Australia is, and is perceived to be by the Australian public, the highest form of recognition of the efforts and achievements of Australians.

In fulfilling our purpose, the Office's key activities will support the Governor-General to recognise, encourage and reward community achievement; complement the work of Parliament and government agencies; represent our broad national interests here and overseas; and highlight the inherent goodness of Australians and our ability to overcome adversity, particularly in the context of responding to the health, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



the Governor-General

The Governor-General thanks frontline staff at the Devonport COVID-19 Testing Clinic, Tasmania, 24 November 2020.

#### Operating Context - Support for the Governor-General

#### **Environment**

The Office is a small Commonwealth budget-funded statutory agency with offices located at Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney. It is not part of the Australian Public Service and employs staff under section 13 of the *Governor-General Act 1974*. It has a unique role and a diverse workforce that performs functions that are both typical and atypical (e.g. hospitality and horticulture) of other Commonwealth agencies. The Office operates within its departmental budget and robust financial management is a priority. This ensures that emerging or ongoing cost pressures, including significant costs arising from the maintenance of the heritage properties, do not impact the Office's performance.

The Office's operating environment is complex and changing. The COVID-19 pandemic and other localised challenges caused by fire, flood, drought or other disasters influence the way the Governor-General engages with the community. Importantly, while the 'how' may change because of the operating environment, the 'why' does not. The Office continues to support the Governor-General to uplift, encourage, inspire and celebrate Australians, and facilitates engagement with as many Australians as possible through face-to-face events (as conditions permit), digital engagement, and traditional and social media.

In providing support to the Governor-General, the Office is subject to varying degrees of influence by external factors. These include:

- maintaining the Governor-General's program of national community engagement when travel and gatherings are restricted as a result of measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- managing the properties, including treatment of latent conditions associated with project works
- administering the Office and operation of the internal budget in a manner which is responsive to Government policy and community expectations
- increasing awareness and improving processes to mitigate risks and align with external requirements relating to the overall physical and cyber security environment.

Looking further ahead in the reporting period, a fundamental influence on the Office's operating environment will be the expected changeover of the Governor-General in 2024. While there is no set term for a Governor-General, it is notionally for a period of five years.

#### **Capability**

#### Workforce capability

The Office has a highly skilled, diverse and flexible workforce. Investment in the development and welfare of staff is a priority. We seek to support and empower our people to be innovative, embrace change and work collaboratively to deliver outcomes that we are proud of.

- Leadership and development the Office's leadership and development framework aims at improving staff skills, job knowledge, and to support personal and professional growth. The Office has an online e-learning system which complements regular inperson training that is delivered to individual staff, teams, and the Office as a whole.
- Diversity and inclusion the Office has established a Diversity and Inclusion working group to promote and reflect the diversity of our staff, our stakeholders and the community we serve.
- Geographic location the majority of Office staff are located in Canberra and there is
  a small team based in Sydney. Effective internal communication within and between
  sites and with travelling staff is a critical enabler of our performance objectives. The
  impacts of COVID-19 have accelerated the Office's uptake of videoconferencing
  platforms to ensure continuity of purpose and collaboration of staff across both
  locations and support staff while travelling with the Governor-General or remote
  working.

A key focus is providing an adaptive and flexible workplace, particularly in light of the current and anticipated ongoing challenges created by COVID-19.

In response to those challenges and the changing operating environment, the Office has established a creative team (drawing on existing staff across the Office) to explore and identify new and innovative ways to ensure our performance objectives can be met.

In 2021, a new Enterprise Agreement is to be negotiated for the period 2022-25.

#### *Infrastructure capability*

The Administered Capital Budget funding provided to the Office supports a program to sustain the condition and capability of the Commonwealth Heritage Listed properties for which the Office has statutory stewardship responsibilities.

This property program is proceeding under the direction of the Management Committee through the Property Sub-Committee (PSC). Planned expenditure under this program is approximately \$2.7 million per annum and will be prioritised to meet work health and safety, accessibility and compliance requirements. The Office received additional Administered Capital funding at Additional Estimates in 2019 for a project to protect and preserve the historic Kirribilli Point Battery precinct at Admiralty House and this project is due for completion in the 2021-22 financial year.

The Office also has a program in place, under the broad oversight of the PSC, to replace departmental assets and equipment to maximise operational effectiveness and support performance objectives. This program utilises Departmental Capital Budget funding of approximately \$0.4 million per annum.

#### *Information and communications technology capability*

The Office is responsible for its own Information and Communication Technology (ICT) environment and provides a system that meets the needs of the Governor-General and staff while ensuring reliability, security, timeliness, control and management of associated risks. While some components are outsourced or managed by third-parties, the Office maintains control over them. The Office's ICT framework and resources are managed under the direction of the Management Committee through the Information Technology Sub-Committee (ITSC).

The Office's approach to ICT innovation seeks to identify opportunities that can maximise benefit within available resources. In 2020, the government approved additional funding for the Office to modernise and strengthen its ICT capabilities. This funding will ensure the Office has the appropriate capability to manage current and expected future requirements, while minimising ICT-related business continuity and security risks. The ICT uplift is being overseen by a Project Implementation Cell within the Office and is due to be completed in early 2023.

#### **Cooperation with others**

The Office works closely with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, its portfolio department, on matters including the Governor-General's constitutional and statutory duties. The Office also works with the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in relation to the Governor-General's role as Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Defence Force; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with regard to international engagement and protocol; the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Federal Police on security matters, and numerous other government and non-government bodies.



### Operating Context - Administration of the Australian honours and awards system

#### **Environment**

The Australian Honours and Awards branch supports the Governor-General to carry out his responsibilities relating to the independent administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

In addition, the branch provides secretariat support to the independent Councils and Committee responsible for making recommendations on awards to the Governor-General. The branch works with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on matters including policy, administration and promotion of Australian honours and awards.

The Office places a high priority on ensuring that the Australian honours and awards system is, and is perceived to be by the Australian community, the pre-eminent way to recognise and celebrate the service and achievements of Australians. In relation to the Order of Australia, ensuring that awards (both in administration and outcome) reflect the diversity of the Australian community is essential to this objective. While the Office is not responsible for nor resourced to undertake promotion or engagement in relation to the Australian Honours and Awards system, the Office does seek to leverage opportunities to increase awareness of the Order, particularly among parts of the Australian community that have been historically underrepresented in the number of nominations and, therefore, awards.

In administering the Australian honours and awards system, the Office is subject to challenges resulting from external factors. These include:

- Community expectations reflected in commentary around the Order of Australia and other awards, such as the National Emergency Medal.
- Community engagement and nomination volumes the introduction of an on-line nomination form and the streamlining of the nomination process have resulted in a notable increase of nominations over recent years. This places demands on current resources and requires the Office to introduce initiatives to assist in meeting that demand.
- Government policy the honours system is responsive to changes in honours policy, regulations and the creation of new awards. This places new demands on staff and budgets, through administration and procurement of insignia.

#### **Capability**

#### *Workforce capability*

In addition to the workforce capability factors listed for component 1 (page 6), the Office has a successful program for developing new case officers in the Honours and Awards branch. This provides structured training and development over a two-year period to prepare trainees for careers in the Office and the wider public sector.

Following several years of transition from paper-based to electronic workflow solutions, the branch undertook an internal review of its responsibilities and capabilities in 2020. This work has helped shape and streamline workforce operations to better suit current and future needs.

#### Information and communications technology capability

The Office appreciates the increasing demand by the public to access the Australian honours and awards system online. The Office has streamlined and simplified the nomination process for honours and awards by making user-friendly smart forms available on the Governor-General's website. The Office will continue to automate processes within the system to assist with reducing the time between the nomination and the announcement of an award. A priority for the reporting period will also be to make better use of available data within the honours and awards system to help promote greater diversity of recipients to better reflect Australian society. This work is being aided by the additional funding to uplift the Office's overall ICT capability described in component 1 (page 7).

#### **Cooperation with others**

The Office works with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on matters including policy, administration and promotion of Australian honours and awards; and with the Department of Defence in relation to Defence honours and awards.

The Office also works with state and territory government departments and organisations, including emergency service agencies around Australia, to administer some of the awards, along with state and territory Government Houses to provide insignia and warrants for use in local investiture ceremonies.

# **Osvald & Dagy Talmet** Albert Lam Fun Soo & Linda Nap King Soo Risk oversight and management systems The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley meet with a multicultural women's reference group in Sydney, New South Wales, 9 June 2021.

#### Risk oversight and management systems

Risk oversight and management is an integral part of sound management practice and an essential element of good governance. It is a primary focus and is taking on an even greater importance in 2021-22 as the Office proactively plans and manages risk to ensure business continuity, workplace health and safety, and delivery against outcomes during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Office continues to actively manage risks associated with a changing physical security and cyber security environment to ensure that our systems remain robust, responsive and secure.

The Office actively manages risk in accordance with its Risk Management Framework, placing a focus on:

- Support for the Governor-General, including:
  - o managing internal and external events
  - o advising on a broad range of matters
  - o developing and executing an effective community engagement program
- The effective stewardship of the official properties
- The effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system
- Maintaining and executing efficient and effective management systems
- Building and maintaining a strong, engaged and capable workforce.

The Deputy Official Secretary performs the role of the Chief Risk Officer for the Office. In accordance with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, the Office regularly reviews its risk management framework, risk register, settings and supporting plans to ensure risks are appropriately identified and risk controls are effectively implemented. Management and mitigation of these risks is further reinforced through the Office's daily operations and administrative practices.

The Office's risk assessment found that the types and levels of risk faced by the Office are consistent with those of other organisations of a similar size and complexity. Strong risk management processes exist, however a number of improvements to current controls have been identified that will further mitigate the potential for risks to impinge on the achievement of business objectives.

There are six strategic risks being managed by the Office which are outlined in the following table with their corresponding controls.

Strategic risk	Selected controls <sup>1</sup>
Failure to provide sound advice on constitutional, policy and contextual matters	<ul> <li>Written professional advice sought where required</li> <li>Broad internal consultation with senior management</li> <li>Reference to precedent</li> <li>Management framework and processes</li> <li>Increased individual accountability/responsibility through internal control framework</li> </ul>
Failure to manage the internal and external events program	<ul> <li>Management framework and processes</li> <li>Communications strategy</li> <li>Reference to precedent and experience</li> <li>Engagement of high quality staff to manage the program</li> <li>Standard Operating Procedures in place</li> <li>Liaison with relevant third parties</li> </ul>
Failure to manage and maintain the property portfolio	<ul> <li>Regular meetings of the Property Sub-Committee</li> <li>Capital projects identified in the Property Works Plan</li> <li>Heritage Plans</li> <li>Landscape Management Plans</li> <li>Annual Condition Audits and Surveys</li> <li>Works and Maintenance programs</li> <li>Compliance programs</li> <li>Building Management Systems</li> </ul>
Physical and/or cyber security environment and/or incident/event affecting the performance of official duties	<ul> <li>Specialised armed security services operating 24 hours at both properties, and accompanying the Governor-General for external commitments</li> <li>Technical security surveillance</li> <li>Staff security clearances and checks</li> <li>Strict visitor control policy and procedures</li> <li>Business continuity planning and exercises</li> <li>Threat Assessments</li> <li>Secure IT gateway and internal firewalls, paired with close engagement with the Australian Cyber Security Centre</li> </ul>
Failure to provide adequate research and secretariat support services to the Honours advisory councils and committee	<ul> <li>Policies, processes and procedures</li> <li>Targeted training (such as the program for developing new case officers)</li> <li>Quality Assurance methodology</li> <li>Liaison with PM&amp;C and promotion strategies</li> <li>Targeted recruitment and retention strategies</li> </ul>
Failure to maintain a robust governance system and culture and appropriate management systems and practices	<ul> <li>Management, governance and compliance frameworks</li> <li>Audit Committee, Management Committee, and Sub-Committee scrutiny on processes and outcomes</li> <li>Mandatory training and leadership and development programs</li> <li>Establishment of relevant project teams to meet performance objectives</li> <li>Annual Performance Agreements</li> </ul>

 $^1$  This list represents the high-level strategic risks for the Office. A full list of risks and their treatments is maintained in the Office's Risk Management Framework, which includes a Risk Register.

#### Governance

The Official Secretary, in his role as Chief Executive Officer and the accountable authority, is accountable for the efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of resources and performance. The Office recognises the need for a high level of accountability and places a strong emphasis on meeting its governance obligations and responsibilities.

The Deputy Official Secretary, assisted by the branch Directors and the Chief Financial Officer, supports the Official Secretary's overall governance responsibilities by facilitating the development of corporate and business plans; establishing policy and accountability frameworks; and managing risk, fraud, legal issues, people, budgets, property, information management, and security within the Office.

The Office has established several committees to support the Official Secretary:

- Management Committee (including the Property Sub-Committee, Information Technology Sub-Committee and the Security Sub-Committee)
- Audit Committee
- Workplace Consultative Committee (WCC)
- Work Health and Safety Committee (WHS).

The Management Committee comprises the Official Secretary as Chief Executive Officer; the Deputy Official Secretary as Deputy Chief Executive Officer; branch Directors of People and Services, Honours and Awards, Project Implementation, and Strategic Engagement; the Director of Communications and Creativity; and the Chief Financial Officer. The group meets monthly to monitor performance outcomes and consider strategic issues including emerging or ongoing risks. The Committee assists the Official Secretary to meet his statutory responsibilities under the *Governor-General Act 1974* and the PGPA Act.

A three-person Audit Committee is responsible for providing independent advice and assistance to the Official Secretary on the Office's risk oversight, control and compliance frameworks and performance and financial accountability. The Audit Committee comprises an independent external Chair and two independent external members.

The WCC, representing all staff of the Office, provides a forum for management and employees to discuss matters affecting the workplace. Meetings of the WCC are chaired alternately by a representative of the Official Secretary and a representative of employees.

The WHS Committee is chaired by the Director, People and Services. Membership includes management representatives and health and safety representatives from across the Office. The Committee's responsibility is to facilitate discussion and cooperation on work health and safety issues in the workplace.



#### **Performance**

The Office has identified three organisational objectives to achieve its purpose.

#### ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1.

Support the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to uplift, encourage, inspire and celebrate Australians. 2.

Understand, preserve and share the rich stories of Government House and Admiralty House.

3.

Support and empower our people to be innovative, embrace change and work collaboratively to deliver impressive outcomes.

#### HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE IT

Consistent with the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley's priorities, design and deliver a program of meaningful outreach and engagement.

Celebrate endeavour and achievement, including through an honours and awards system that represents the diversity of Australia.

Use established networks, such as patronages and media channels, to engage, reach a broad range of audiences and amplify activity.

Optimise the guest experience at Government House and Admiralty House so that it is welcoming, warm and special.

Present the Houses and grounds to a high standard consistent with community expectations.

Preserve the condition of the Houses and grounds.

Make Government House and Admiralty House accessible for the benefit of all Australians.

Understand and document the history of the properties and provenance of our collection.

Become a leader in implementing sustainable environmental practices.

Be proud of where we work.

Promote a culture of accountability and innovation.

Apply project management and design thinking methodology to encourage new ideas, enhance collaboration across work areas and deliver impressive outcomes.

Empower and grow our people by building capability and capacity.

Maintain a robust governance framework.

Provide our staff the direction, resources, information and autonomy they require to deliver performance objectives.

#### Performance measures

**Outcome 1:** The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official households and properties and administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

**Program 1.1** – The objective of this program is to support the Governor-General and official functions. It comprises two components: support for the Governor-General and administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

Component 1 Support for the Governor-General

Objective/s	Key activities	Performance measures	Primary stakeholder/s	Qualitative and quantitative targets	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1, 2 and 3	Executive support - providing advice to the Governor- General, planning, implementing and managing Their Excellencies' forward program of engagements, and liaising with representatives of governments, related authorities, and community	The Governor-General is satisfied with the level of advice and administrative support provided that enables him to successfully perform official duties.	Governor- General, the Australian public, government agencies, community organisations	The Governor-General expresses satisfaction with the support he receives to perform his official duties.	Governor- General's level of satisfaction to be assessed. Feedback to be sought from relevant stakeholders.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.	As for 2023-24.
2 and 3	groups.  Personal support - providing support for Their Excellencies and hospitality services for official	The Governor-General is satisfied with the management of the households.	Governor- General	The Governor-General expresses satisfaction with the management of the official households and properties.	Governor- General's level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.	As for 2023-24.
2 and 3	functions.  Administrative services - providing governance advice and administrative services to the Office and managing the Governor-General's official residences, including maintenance of property, equipment and grounds.	The properties are managed in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and government policies relating to heritage properties, and with due consideration of advice provided by the National Capital Authority and other relevant authorities.	Responsible department, National Capital Authority, local government	Baseline of property condition to be established in consultation with independent property services provider.	Targets to be established after analysis of baseline of property condition.  Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.	Targets to be established after analysis of 2021-22 baseline.  Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.	Targets to be established after analysis of 2021-22 baseline.  Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.	Targets to be established after analysis of 2021-22 baseline.  Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.

Component 2 Administration of the Australian honours and awards system

Component 2	Administration of the Australian honours and awards system							
Objective/s	Key activities	Performance measures	Primary stakeholder/s	Qualitative and quantitative targets	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1 and 3	Researching and preparing nominations for considerationby the Council for the Order of Australia, the Australian Bravery Decorations Council and the National Emergency Medal Committee.  Providing secretariat support to the Australian honours advisory bodies.	The Governor-General and other key stakeholders are satisfied with the administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system and support provided.	Governor-General, Council for the Order of Australia, Australian Bravery Decorations Council, National Emergency Medal Committee, the Australian public, government agencies	The Governor-General, the Councils and Committee supported by the Office and other key stakeholders, express satisfaction with the support provided and activities conducted.  The Office will, over the course of 2021-22, implement outcomes	Governor- General's, the Councils' and Committee's level of satisfaction to be assessed. Feedback to be sought from relevant stakeholders.	Target to be established after analysis of 2021-22 baseline.	Target to be established after analysis of 2021-22 baseline.	Target to be established after analysis of 2021-22 baseline.
1 and 3	Undertaking the administrative tasks associated with the approval of recipients in the Australian honours system and subsequent announcement where applicable.	Activities comply with the governing instruments for honours and awards, including the Constitution for the Order of Australia.	Governor-General, Council for the Order of Australia, AustralianBravery Decorations Council, National Emergency Medal Committee, the Australian public, government agencies	from the review of performance criteria to enhance and further develop data sources and measures.  Documentation to contain references to compliance with any activities related to governing instruments.	Assessment of compliance with targets.  Governor- General's and the Council's level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.	As for 2023-24.
1	honours insignia, warrants and investiture items.  Facilitating the approval of, and changes to, governing instruments within the Australian honours system.	The medals and insignia meet design specifications, adequate stock levels are maintained and control processes are adhered to.	Governor-General as Chancellor of the Order of Australia, State and Territory Government Houses	Quality assurance and compliance checklists completed.	Assessment of compliance with targets. Feedback to be sought from relevant stakeholders.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.	As for 2023-24.

#### Component 2 Administration of the Australian honours and awards system (continued)

Objective/s	Key activities	Performance measures	Primary stakeholder/s	Qualitative and quantitative targets	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1 and 3	Providing insignia to State/Territory Government Houses, service organisationsand individuals for issue, and arranging local investitures.	Insignia and other resources for investitures and honours list announcements are accurate and issued in a timely manner.	Governor-General, Council for the Order of Australia, Australian Bravery Decorations Council, National Emergency Medal Committee, the Australian public, state and territory Government Houses	As above.	Governor- General's, the Councils', Committee's, and state and territory Government Houses level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.	As for 2023-24.

#### List of requirements

This corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- Subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act; and
- The PGPA Rule 2014.

The table details the requirements met by the Office's Corporate Plan and page number for each requirement.

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