



Comments Informing the Employment Strategy

The strategy highlights the University's
commitment to ensure the development of the
employment strategy



UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Employment Strategy 2019-2024

une
University of
New England

People & Culture
Workforce Capability
& Inclusion



UNE Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England wishes to acknowledge the custodians of the many lands on which it conducts its business.

In doing so UNE also acknowledges the Elders of those lands past and present as knowledge holders and as key stakeholders in the education and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2024

People and Culture,
University of New England,
Armidale, New South Wales

December 2023



Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor

I am pleased to introduce the University of New England's 2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy, which reflects UNE's commitment to reconciliation and addressing historical disparities. The 2019 - 2024 Strategy is a one-year extension that provides a solid foundation for the University to conduct an extensive review of the current, strategy, objectives and actions.

The Strategy aligns with our national responsibility to address inequalities in education and employment for Indigenous Australians. This Strategy represents a comprehensive and deliberate effort to create an inclusive and equitable environment for all members of the University community.

By positioning UNE as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, and by increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members, we not only contribute to breaking down barriers to employment and education but also to fostering an environment

that values cultural diversity and embraces a multitude of perspectives.

As we work through the extensive consultation required for UNE's next Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy, the 2024 extension emphasises our dedication to immediate and tangible progress as well as a University community that truly supports Aboriginal advancement.



**Professor Chris Moran,
Vice-Chancellor and CEO**

Overview and Guiding Principles

The University of New England (UNE) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2024* (Employment Strategy) provides strategic objectives and actions to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2024 will guide the development of action and principles that support culturally aware work places and practices, improved employment opportunities, career development options, including academic career pathways, for current and prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students.

The *Closing the Gap: Annual Report 2022* identified a number of key principles that can contribute to successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

These principles have been incorporated into and inform the implementation, actions and governance of the Employment Strategy including:

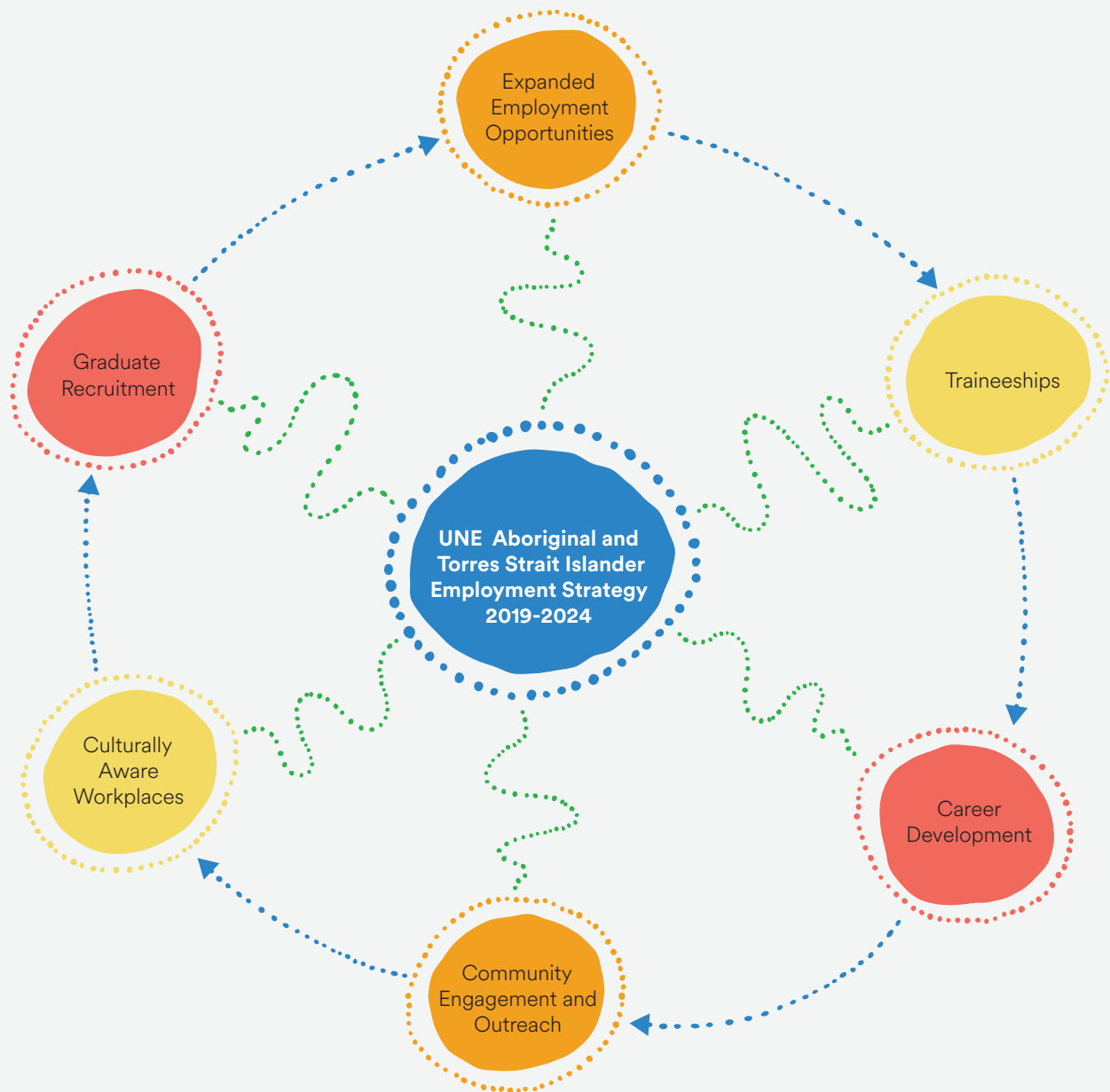
- A deeper appreciation of formal partnerships and shared decision making with local communities and organisations.
- A deeper commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision making authority through formal partnerships arrangements in order to improve policy outcomes.
- A commitment to providing more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve higher level qualifications and a recognition of the improvement such opportunities can have on employment prospects as well as social, health and economic outcomes.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are engaged in employment, education and training have significantly improved outcomes including long-term employment prospects and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Supporting strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities .
- Providing ongoing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers while also undertaking transformation into the workforce
- Ongoing employment growth combined with improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational attainment.

UNE has identified four key objectives for the Employment Strategy:

1. At least three per cent of the University's workforce will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2024 including:
 - a. Recruit at least one Australian Aboriginal/ or Torres Strait Islander person as a senior executive employee at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor or equivalent.
2. UNE will develop a culturally aware and inclusive workplace.
3. UNE will be positioned as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2024.
4. We will build a connected community, sharing knowledge and ways of seeing to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2024



Population Profile

At the last census (2021) there were 2,205 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Local Government Area (LGA) of Armidale Regional Council. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 7.6% of the total Armidale population, up from 7.4% in the 2016 census. The median age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Armidale is 22 years compared to 24 years for the national Aboriginal population. These figures indicate that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Armidale and surrounding areas is a growing one. Figure 1 provides an overview of the population by age.

Tamworth

At the last census Tamworth recorded an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Tamworth, up from 6033 in 2016 census to 8032 in the 2021 census during the period. The median age in Tamworth is 21. By the figures it suggests Tamworth is growing at a rapid rate compared to other areas in the UNE footprint, a total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 12.8%.

Taree

The last census suggests Taree is also growing with an increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Taree, up from 3702 in 2016 to 4731 in the 2021 census, which makes up 8.4% of the population. The median age in Taree is 22 compared to the previous census which had a median age of 20.

Current Staff Profile

As at 1 December 2023, UNE employed 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at varying levels across its Faculties and Directorates.

There are 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, 21 professional staff members. Of the professional staff are employed up to and

including HEO8. Academic Staff are employed at Academic Level A (1), B (5) and C (2) with three of the current academic staff holding a PhD qualification. The Director of the Oorala Aboriginal Centre is the senior officer reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Figure 1: Armidale
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Population
by Age 2021, (ABS, 2021)

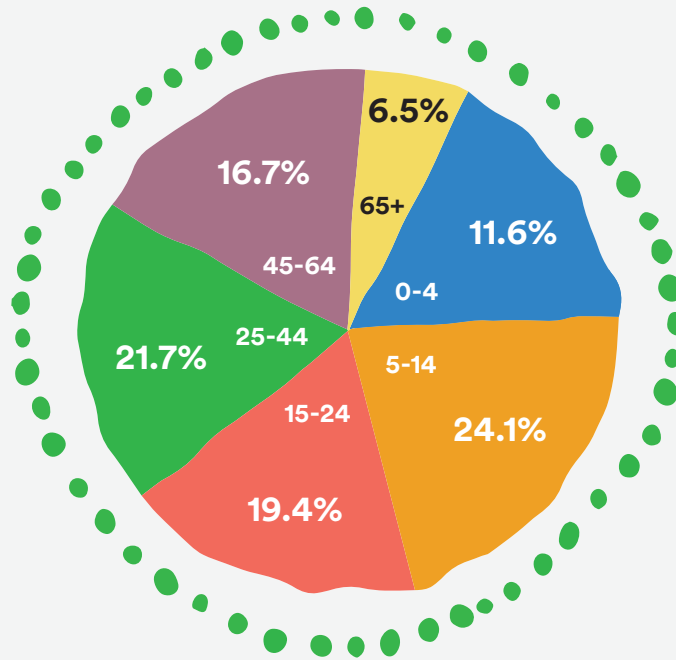


Figure 2: UNE Campus Locations
and Community Reach



Key Documents Informing the Employment Strategy

The documents highlighted in Figure 3 have informed and/ or guided the development of the Employment Strategy.

Figure 3:



Governance

Governance of the University of New England Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2019-2024 include:

- Annual internal reports on the successes and learnings associated with the implementation of each of the four objectives identified in the Employment Strategy by Faculties and Directorates to the Vice-Chancellor through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy Governance Committee.
- External reports to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet consistent with the Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines 2017. The existing Governance Committee (already established under the Enterprise Agreement) will provide overview and monitor the implementation of the Employment Strategy and recalibration as appropriate, to progress each of the four objectives.
- Engagement with the Armidale Aboriginal Interagency Committee and/or other peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies representing the Nations on whose land UNE's campuses reside.

Objectives and Actions

1. At least 3% of the UNE's workforce will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Increase entry level continuing and fixed-term employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a particular focus on youth and young adults.	Reapply for exemption under Section s126 of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977 (NSW) (ADA) to facilitate recruitment into identified positions across UNE.	1st quarter 2024	Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in continuing positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional positions x two annually for the life of the Employment Strategy. • Academic positions x one annually for the life of the employment strategy. NB: increased numbers will be calculated based on the number of continuing positions as at 1 January 2024.	Annually	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Directors
	Develop a strategy to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that haven't already done so to update their information in the Ascender payroll system identifying their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.	1st quarter 2024	Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture

1. At least 3% of the UNE's workforce will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (cont.)

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Recruit at least one Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person as a senior executive employee at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor or equivalent.	Go to market to recruit for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior Executive at the level of Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent).	4th quarter 2024	Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Identify opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Academic and Professional Staff positions with a particular focus on continuing and fixed-term roles.	Develop and implement strategies and initiatives to support Faculties and Directorates to identify opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics in continuing and fixed-term research positions at UNE through an employment structure that develops skills and increases the number of early career academics.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Deans, Associate Deans Research

2. We will develop a culturally aware and inclusive UNE workplace

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
All staff are encouraged and supported to participate in Cultural Connections workshops.	Senior Executive Team (or equivalent) and all Senior Managers are to attend a Cultural Awareness workshop.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Deans and Directors
	All staff are expected to attend Cultural Connections workshops.	Ongoing	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff participation in cultural leave and NAIDOC celebrations.	UNE will continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to access cultural leave and participate in significant historical events such as NAIDOC week and/or Sorry Day.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Deans and Directors

2. We will develop a culturally aware and inclusive UNE workplace (cont.)

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Recognition of additional cultural workload for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.	Where responsibility for activities such as pastoral care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students fall disproportionately on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, this is recognised in workload planning and is considered in a non-prejudicial way in Performance Planning, Development and Review (PPDR) and academic promotions processes across UNE.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans and Directors
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are encouraged to participate in the engagement and/or culture survey.	Provision in the UNE Voice Project engagement and/or culture survey for staff to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and have their responses de-identified and aggregated to enable their collective views and opinions to be heard.	2nd quarter 2024	Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to share and report on collective responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to the culture survey and collectively develop actions to build cultural safety and awareness at UNE.	4th quarter 2024	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans and Directors
Decision making and advisory committees to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and representation.	Where it is feasible and appropriate to do so, decision making and advisory committees should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff representation. Particularly where decisions or advice is given on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	4th quarter 2024	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans and Directors
Our UNE environment is culturally inclusive.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artefacts are visible across all UNE's campuses.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director Estate and Built Environment
	The UNE environment including infrastructure will promote the languages of those Nations on which our campuses are located. Key venues and buildings to be co-named in language and/or artistically through the use of totems, imagery or other culturally appropriate artefacts.	Ongoing	University Librarian Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director Estate and Built Environment

3. We will be positioned as an Employer of Choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Induction and on-boarding	Develop an induction process for all new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff that includes the allocation of a culturally appropriate buddy and/or mentor.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Directors
Traineeships and apprenticeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Identify potential traineeship and apprenticeship positions within Faculties and Directorates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.	1st quarter 2024	Senior Executive Team, Deans, Directors Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Develop clear guidelines and processes for traineeships and apprenticeships including engagement and support mechanisms for trainees and apprentices for the duration of their appointment.	4th quarter 2024	Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
	On successful completion of the traineeship or apprenticeship, it is incumbent on the hosting Faculty or Directorate to make every effort to provide or source a continuing position for the trainee or apprentice in the University	Ongoing	Senior Executive Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Directors
Graduate Recruitment	Investigate options and develop a Graduate Recruitment program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates for implementation in 2024.	4th quarter 2024	Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
Professional and Personal Development	Promote the Professional Staff Development Fund to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional staff and encourage applications consistent with the fund guidelines.	Date on which nominations are open—three rounds per year	Senior Executive Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Directors Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Develop and document scaffolded career paths at UNE for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	1st half 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Directors, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture

3. We will be positioned as an Employer of Choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (cont.)

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Professional and Personal Development (cont.)	Review current study leave options to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to participate in accredited study that considers their ways of knowing and learning.	Annually	Senior Executive Team Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Support the participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in UNE Leadership Programs aligned with their classification.		Deans and Directors
	All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Career Academics in continuing and *fixed term positions are supported to participate in the UNE Early Career Academic.	1st half 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Directors, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture

4. We will build a connected community, sharing knowledge and ways of seeing to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Involve local communities in the life of UNE.	Provide genuine opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders from the communities in our footprint to engage in day-to-day operations and significant events of the University.	Ongoing	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team,
	Develop and implement an Elders and Valued Persons policy that guides and recognises the significant contribution and positive impact these individuals have on the life of the University.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer, Contributor: Director Oorala Aboriginal Centre, Director People and Culture

4. We will build a connected community, sharing knowledge and ways of seeing to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (cont.)

Objective	Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
Building collaborative relationships founded on mutual respect and two-way communication.	Engage with secondary schools to promote UNE as a genuine option for work experience placements and school-based traineeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Engage with secondary schools in Armidale, Taree and Tamworth to promote UNE as an Employer of Choice for post-secondary employment and education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	4th quarter 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans and Directors, Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture
	Build on existing, and establish new partnerships, with local communities to identify opportunities for genuine and meaningful engagement across all aspects of university life including employment, curriculum development and research.	3rd quarter 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities to plan significant events including NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week, in Armidale, Tamworth, Taree and Sydney.	Annually	Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive Team, Directors
	Ensure UNE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on community consultative forums, working groups, etc in Armidale, Tamworth, Taree and Sydney, that are tasked with the promotion of employment and career development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Ongoing	Chief Operating Officer Contributor: Director People and Culture

References

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Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Closing The Gap Prime Minister's Report, 2022
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Indigenous Student Assistance Grants Guidelines, 2017
National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy
Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy, 2022 - 2025
University of New England Indigenous Education Statement, 2018
University of New England Strategic Plan, 2021 – 2030
2021 Higher Education Statistics – Staff data – 2021 Indigenous staff data set
Woorl Koorliny 2022, Australian Indigenous Employment Index, National Report, Monderoo Foundation, 2022

Cover Artwork by Larissa Ahoy



Larissa's story:

Long ago in the Dreamtime when the echidna reaches a certain age he must go 'Walkabout'. He must travel throughout the lands, in order to become one with Mother Earth. This is where he will learn life skills and become the master he was born to be. On his journey he will face obstacles and challenges that will guide him

throughout the rest of life. One of the challenges he faces on this journey, is that he is amongst the bountiful surroundings of the Anaiwan Nation, whilst at the same time, he must be careful as to not step into his neighbouring Nations, as this would be seen as breaking the laws of our people.



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