



BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES PLAN



Buloke Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations and the Dja Dja Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of parts of the land now known as Buloke.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and value their ongoing contribution to our heritage and our community.

TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call Buloke Shire Council on 1300 520 520.

Our business hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

You can also visit the TIS National website for translated information about the service TIS National provides.

Visit: www.tisnational.gov.au



RELAY SERVICE

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS):

TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for 03 5478 0100 or 1300 520 520 (local calls only)

SMS relay number 0423 677 767, then then ask for 03 5478 0100 or 1300 520 520

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 03 5478 0100 or 1300 520 520

Internet relay users connect to www.relayservice.com.au, then ask for 03 5478 0100 or 1300 520 520. Everyone who uses the National Relay Service (NRS) to make calls needs to first register as an NRS user, visit Accesshub: www.relayservice.com.au.



STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT:

✓	Operational/Business
✓	Sustainability
✓	Financial Viability
✓	Occupational Health and Safety
✓	Compliance, Governance and Legal
✓	Public Image and Reputation

RELEVANCE TO LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN 2022-2025

✓	Priority 1: Our Built and Natural Environment
✓	Priority 2: Our Community Wellbeing
✓	Priority 3: Our Economy
✓	Priority 4: Our Council and Community Leadership

COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW

Directorate: Community Development

Responsible Manager: Manager Customer Engagement

Date adopted: July 2023

Date to be reviewed: July 2025

INTRODUCTION

Child and adolescent development plays a key role in setting the stage for life success in adulthood.

There is increasing understanding that early childhood offers a crucial 'window of opportunity' for investment and early intervention, not only to prevent or reduce adverse outcomes but to maximise the life chances of children and young people so that they can thrive (Emerson, Fox and Smith, 2015)¹.

The Children, Youth and Families Plan (CYFP) is that the Buloke Shire Council is well-placed to facilitate positive outcomes for both younger residents and their families. The plan will guide planning, advocacy, and Council's delivery of services, programs, events, and spaces for children, young people, and their families over the next ten years.

Council is committed to supporting positive child, youth and family outcomes in collaboration with community, partner organisations and State and Federal governments. The Building a Better Buloke vision identifies the community's vision for and focus on a healthy, connected, inclusive and prosperous community.

The Children, Youth and Families Plan (CYFP) supports and links with key directions of the Buloke Shire Council Long-Term Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025; specifically:

- Quality, safe and accessible infrastructure
- Social connections, service access and advocacy for services
- Strong economy, employment and population stability
- Active partnerships, community engagement and authentic advocacy

Buloke Shire Council's Children, Youth and Families Plan is focussed on Council's roles and responsibilities. The four key strategic directions were shaped by the community consultation process:

Priority Area 1: Health and Wellbeing

Priority Area 2: Community Engagement

Priority Area 3: Learning and Earning

Priority Area 4: Engaging Places and Spaces

The CYFP will strengthen strategic focus and support improved outcomes across key life stages from birth to 24-years

¹ Emerson, L., Fox, S & Smith, C, 2015. Good Beginnings: Getting it right in the early years. The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

OUR CHILDREN, YOUTH PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

AS THE TIME OF THE 2021 CENSUS THERE WERE 6,178 RESIDENTS LIVING IN THE BULOKE SHIRE

1.5%

were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Victoria 1.0%)

83.7%

were born in Australia (Victoria 65.0%)

571

children aged 0-9 years (9.3%)

690

children/young people aged 10-19 years (11.2%)

246

young people aged 20-24 years (4%)

CHILDREN (0 – 8 YEARS)



1.9

ASR per 100 of children aged 0-14 years reported they had a mental health condition (including depression or anxiety) (Victoria 2.0)

4.2

ASR per 100 of children aged 0-14 years reported that they had any other long term health condition (Victoria 3.8)

45.1%

of children were developmentally on track on all five domains (Victoria 57.2%)

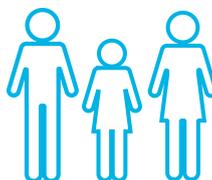
33.3%

of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (Victoria 19.9%)

14.0%

of children were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (Victoria 10.2%)

YOUNG PEOPLE (9 - 24)



84.6%

were participating full-time in secondary school education at age 16 (Victoria 88.5%)

36.4%

of school leavers were participating in higher education (Victoria 57.5%)

84.2%

of young people aged 15-24 years were learning or earning (Victoria 87.5%)

6.3%

of young people were receiving Youth Allowance (Victoria 4.2%)

FAMILIES



34.3%

were couple families with children
(Victoria 45.5%)

12.4%

were one parent families
(Victoria 15.2%)

20.5%

of families were single parent families with children aged less than 15 years
(Victoria 18.2%)

9.2%

of families with children under 15 years were jobless
(Victoria 9.9%)

4.6%

female sole parent pensioners
(Victoria 2.5%)

4.8% of families were low income, welfare dependant (Victoria 4.3%)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Children, Youth and Families Plan Consultation Summary report draws upon community feedback and engagement sought through surveys, key stakeholder workshops and focus group conversations. The information gathered represents the views of those who responded to the opportunity to provide feedback to Council.

Our engagement activities were mixed and varied and included:



Children's Drawing Activity

Through primary schools, children were invited to draw/write the things they loved the most about where they live.



Parent Focus Groups

The researcher attended a playgroup to speak with parents and spoke with a parent advisory group of an Early Years Centre.



Youth Survey

The Buloke Shire Youth Survey was promoted through schools, key stakeholder organisations, through social media and promoted by 'youth researchers'. The survey was completed by over 30% of all young people aged 12-24 years in the Buloke Shire.



Service Provider Workshop

Service providers were invited to a workshop to hear consultation results and to share their thoughts for what Council could be doing.



Youth Focus Groups

Secondary school student leadership groups were invited to share their thoughts and ideas for the strategy.



Service Provider Survey

The service provider survey was circulated broadly and promoted through networks.



Parent/Carer Survey

Secondary school student leadership groups were invited to share their thoughts and ideas for the strategy.

PRIORITY AREAS

Consultation with children, young people, parents and service providers has informed the four overarching Priority Areas for the Buloke Shire Council Children, Youth and Families Plan:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Connected Communities
3. Learning and Earning
4. Engaging Spaces and Places



Health and Wellbeing You told us....

Children/Young People

Children most loved:
home, family, friends, pets, playing,
outdoors and nature.

Buloke Youth Survey

79% rate their mental health as good,
very good or excellent

84% of young people play sport

50% of young people are using social media

39% spend 3-4 hrs/day on social media

35% are gaming

35% are going to parties

Top Five Concerns:

Boredom (44%)

Mental health (39%)

Body image (38%)

Friendship problems (32%)

Verbal bullying (19%)

You told us you want:

More events, activities and programs

Access to support services

Better access to mental health services

Community gyms

Parents/Carers

Key Issues/Challenges

Access to Pediatricians

Availability of Childcare

Access to Antenatal, Postnatal and Midwifery Care

Access to medical services

Access to disability, Maternal and Child Health,
Speech and Occupational services

Parent/Carer Survey:

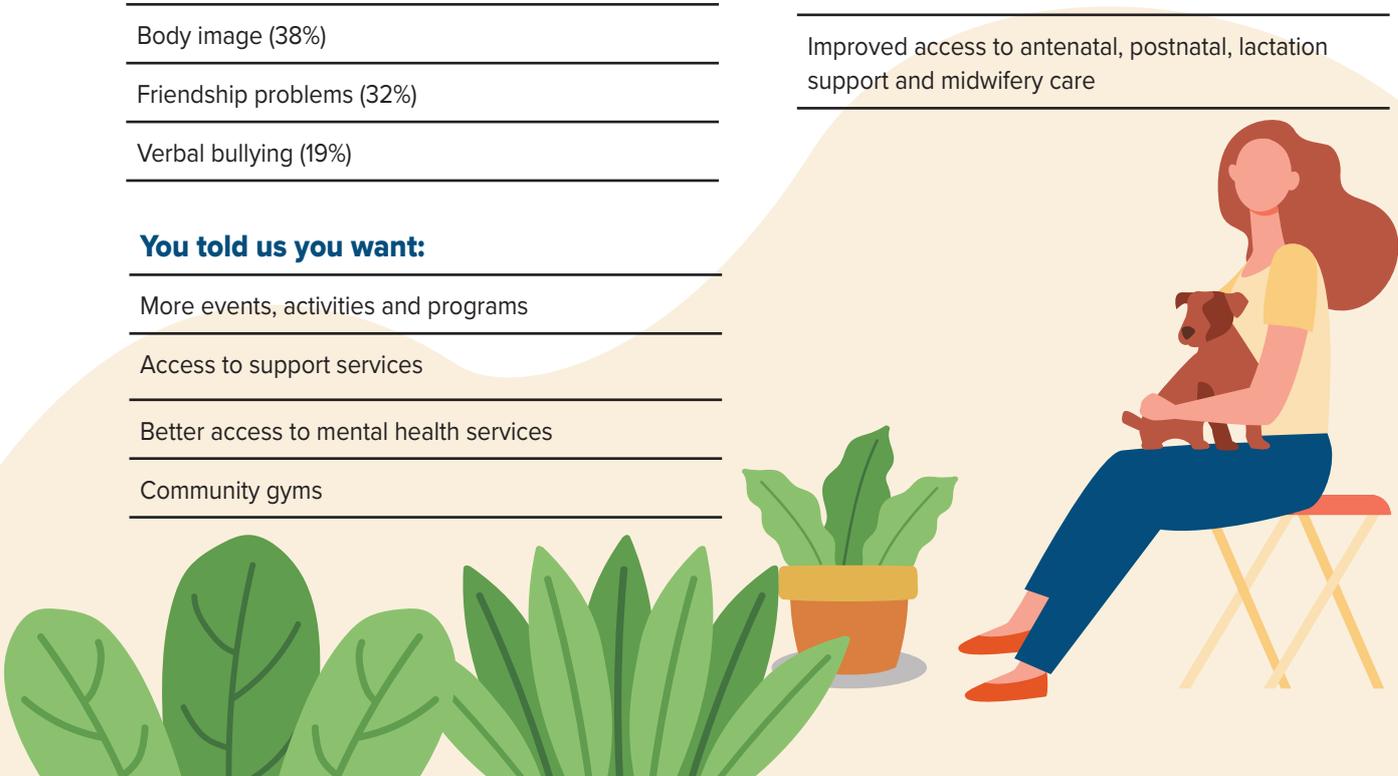
66% of parents couldn't access a service/support in
the past 12 months

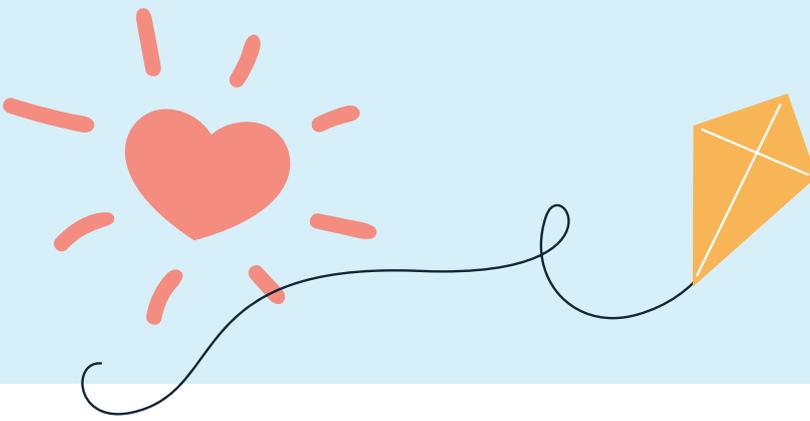
You told us you want:

Medical and Allied Health Support

More local access to medical services to cut down on
travel

Improved access to antenatal, postnatal, lactation
support and midwifery care





Service Providers

Key Issues/Challenges

- Program sustainability
- Underage drinking
- Drug use in 18-24 year olds
- Vaping
- Access to alcohol/drug programs for young people
- Duplication/overlapping services
- Communication across services/organisations
- Access to services is a challenge
- Families have to travel: service access
- Youth mental health service access
- 9-5 service availability
- Access to allied health services
- Speech therapy services are lacking
- Access to dental checks
- Understanding local data

You told us you want:

- Wellbeing Networks - Council to join so they hear from schools
- "Red Frog" volunteers for FReeZA
- Service directory
- Lobby/advocate for services to come into the municipality
- Advocate for mental health services for young people
- Youth support worker at council

Buloke Shire Council will:

1. Continue to provide quality Maternal and Child Health and Immunisation Services.
2. Collect, share and use key community data to plan for and advocate for the health and wellbeing needs of children, young people and their families.
3. Work together with key stakeholders to increase community knowledge of available support services, programs and referral pathways for children, youth and families.
4. Advocate for increased locally available mental health services for children and young people.
5. Advocate for improved access to paediatricians and general practitioners.
6. Together with key stakeholders develop and lead an early years and youth network.
7. Work with key stakeholders to advocate for improved local access to an allied health model which better supports children, young people, and families to reduce travel.
8. Attend school wellbeing networks to strengthen relationships and collaboration with schools to support improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.



Connected Community's You told us....

Children/Young People

Children most loved:
home, family, friends, pets, playing,
outdoors and nature.

Buloke Youth Survey

79% rate their mental health as good,
very good or excellent

84% of young people play sport

20% are involved in youth groups

17% volunteer

13% are involved in SRC's

8% are involved in arts/culture activities

Top Five Concerns:

Boredom/nothing to do (44%)

Money problems (14%)

Lack of transport (12%)

Fitting in (22%)

Discrimination (4%)

You told us you want:

More events, activities and programs

Festivals and events

Play spaces

Youth Spaces

Freezas

Access to support services

More non-competitive sport/recreation options

Parents/Carers

Positives

Caring people/community spirit

Infrastructure-sports, playgrounds, education

Playgroups/Kindergartens

Services: MCH, Library, - Limited places to meet safely
for childcare

Safe Community Sports

Key Issues/Challenges

Access to entertainment for children/youth **(60%)**

Access to activities/recreation **(48%)**

Geographic isolation **(42%)**

Financial issues **(34%)**

You told us you want:

Youth spaces and support

Parent groups/supports

Entertainment for young people

Free/low cost family friendly activities/events

More opportunities for young people to have a say

Promotion of activities and events



Service Providers

Key Issues/Challenges

Cost of transport makes it difficult to bring children/young people into activities

Need transport to go out and be social

Limited places and spaces for young people to meet safely in the evenings

You told us you want:

Young people involved in planning events

Yearly calendar of events

A session to understand data

Drop in sessions for children/youth

Acknowledging/celebrating youth volunteers

Youth support worker at Council

More opportunity for youth voice

Buloke Shire Council will:

1. Celebrate, promote and acknowledge the achievements of young volunteers.
2. Seek further funding for an ongoing Buloke Shire Council Youth Support Worker position. Council to allocate ongoing resources to a youth worker position.
3. Offer activities, programs and events that strengthen social, intergenerational and cross community connections.
4. Work together with key stakeholders to create a calendar of events for children, young people and families and regularly promote to the community.
5. Offer school holiday activities, 'pop-up' events and programs for children, young people and families.
6. Advocate for improved transportation funding to better support children, young people and families to attend events and programs.
7. Strengthen engagement with the 19-25 age group to better understand and support their needs and aspirations.
8. Consult, engage and involve children and young people in matters that are important to them.
9. Support families and young people with educational opportunities to improve health and learning outcomes.
10. Facilitate a genuine youth voice in Council and Community Planning to achieve better outcomes for young people's health and wellbeing.



Learning & Earning You told us....

Children/Young People

Children most loved:
home, family, friends, pets, playing,
outdoors and nature.

Buloke Youth Survey

24% are working part time

49% of young people plan to go to university

49% of young people plan to go to work

12% plan to attend TAFE

11% plan to do a trade

Top Five Concerns:

School or study problems **(34%)**

Money problems **(14%)**

Lack of transport **(12%)**

Career/employment opportunities **(9%)**

You told us you want:

Better transport

Good schools

Job opportunities

Parents/Carers

Positives

Education, Playgroups/Kindergartens

Services: Maternal Child Health, Library, Childcare

Key Issues/Challenges

Lack of access to childcare

Early Childhood Education. Model needs work to better support kindergarten changes and ensure access to childcare

Parent/Carer Survey:

46% of parents said their childcare needs were not met by existing services

61% of parents said the lack of childcare access has greatly affected a parent's ability to work

You told us you want:

Childcare

Parent groups/supports

Playgroups

Early years focus

Advocacy so Buloke children have the same level of access to services as urban children

Jobs, career pathways and further education



Service Providers

Key Issues/Challenges

Lack of childcare is a big issue - impacting on employment

Transportation between towns for work and work placements

Less businesses providing training opportunities for young people

You told us you want:

Smoother transition for parents through the early years and onwards

Better support for parents

Lobby/advocate for childcare

Council involved in careers week

More work placements/traineeships and employment opportunities for young people at Council

Buloke Shire Council will:

1. Continue to support families with young children (birth-to-school age) through providing and sustaining quality facilitated playgroups and community led playgroups.
2. Work together with communities and the Federal and State governments to support place based infrastructure planning for early childhood education and care.
3. Actively advocate for childcare policy, service models, infrastructure and funding to increase access to high quality childcare and after school care to enable greater workforce participation and ensure that families have access to the same level of childcare that is afforded to their regional and metro counterparts.
4. Partner with the Department of Education and key community stakeholders to create a five-year workforce plan to support three and four year old kindergartens.
5. Increase opportunities for work placements, traineeships, cadetships and employment pathways for young people across the municipality.
6. Partner with schools to promote working in Local Government as a career option.
7. Advocate for improved public transport and ride sharing options.
8. Support and connect Young Professionals Networks and address skills training gaps as identified in the 2019 Nous Workforce Development and Training Needs in the Buloke Shire report.
9. Promote the education facilities and opportunities across the municipality.



Engaging Spaces and Places You told us....

Children/Young People

Children most loved: home, family, friends, pets, playing, outdoors and nature.

Buloke Youth Survey

84% of young people play sport

33% enjoy camping and the outdoors

Young people valued:

Public pools

Sport and Recreation facilities

Outdoor spaces

Natural environment

Concerns:

Boredom

Lack of meeting places

Body image

You told us you want:

Great recreation infrastructure

Play spaces

Youth Spaces

Parents/Carers

Parents Value

Sporting clubs

Playgrounds

Public pools

Walkable footpaths

Natural landscapes

Libraries

Community gym

Key Issues/Challenges

Geographic isolation **(42%)**

Population decline **(32%)**

Parks & play spaces **(27%)**

Youth friendly spaces **(34%)**

Social isolation **(21%)**

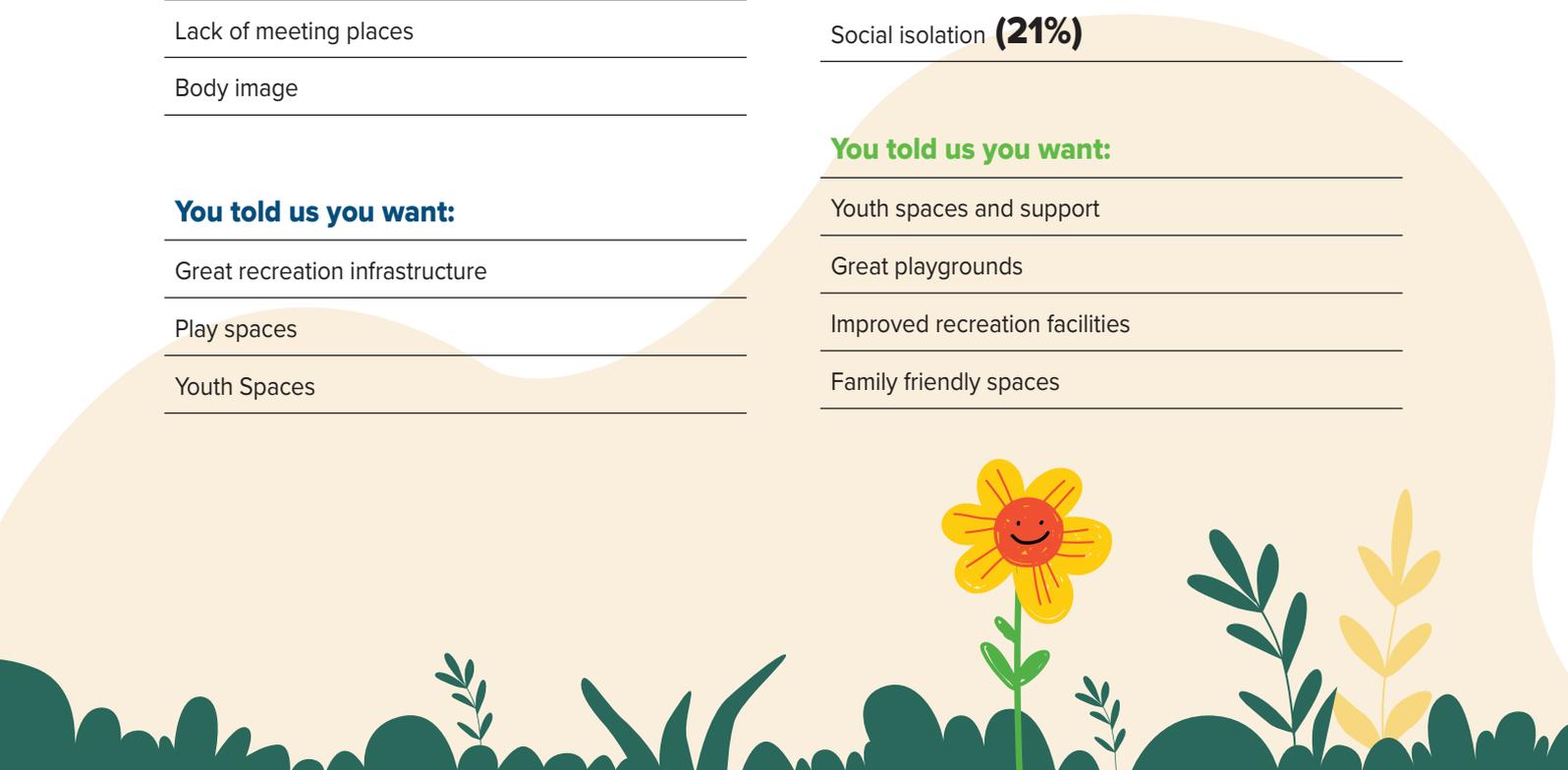
You told us you want:

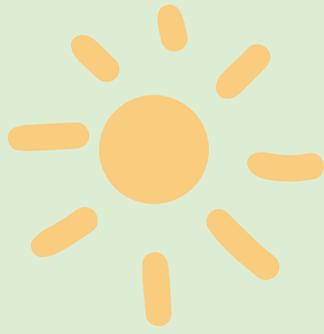
Youth spaces and support

Great playgrounds

Improved recreation facilities

Family friendly spaces





Service Providers

Positives

Recreation facilities

Playgrounds - open space

Key Issues/Challenges

Geographic isolation **(50%)**

Parks and play spaces **(17%)**

Population decline **(25%)**

Social isolation **(67%)**

You told us you want:

More appealing recreation spaces

Walkable public spaces - family friendly spaces

Buloke Shire Council will:

1. Collaborate with young people and key service providers to identify and develop 'youth friendly spaces' for young people to socialise across the Buloke Shire.
2. Ensure Early Years Centres meet population and demographic needs.
3. Work together with communities and sporting and recreation groups to maintain, improve and plan for sport and recreation infrastructure.
4. Offer engaging and safe playgrounds and play spaces.
5. Ensure public facilities and spaces are child, family and all-ability friendly, with change tables, seating, disabled toilets and shade available.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Council will monitor progress towards delivery of these priorities on an ongoing basis and will provide regular feedback to the community.



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