

ACTIVE SCHOOLS INNOVATION GRANTS

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) has developed these guidelines to support prospective applicants to apply for an Active Schools Innovation Grant. The innovation grants are included as part of the Behaviour Intervention Trials component of the Active Schools initiative.

Four grants of up to \$160,250 each are available for organisations to trial an innovative solution that addresses barriers to Victorian secondary school students' physical activity levels. Funding for these innovation trials has been allocated to the end of 2022.

There is currently a lack of evidence about effective programs and successful incentives to encourage physical activity among adolescents. It is among this demographic where the data shows the most dramatic decline in physical activity. The Department has identified a need to trial new and innovative interventions to affect change and provide greater support to secondary schools to enable their students to be more active.

These guidelines outline the requirements of organisations applying for an Active Schools Innovation Grant focused on the priority areas 'Active Recreation', 'Active Travel' and 'Quality School Sport' as part of the Active Schools Framework (see below for further information).

BACKGROUND

Australian students are becoming less physically active and more sedentary, which increases the risk of poor academic performance and other health challenges, including obesity. For example:

- only one in four students in years 5, 8 and 11 meet the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines of 60 minutes of physical activity per day.^[1]
- 30 per cent of year 1 to 8 Victorian students do not participate in any organised sport outside of school. Participation in organised sport decreases throughout adolescence, and drops suddenly in year 9, with 71 per cent not participating in any organised sport outside of school.^[2]

Research shows that secondary schools are traditionally more inactive than primary schools and there are a variety of barriers that may prevent students in late adolescence from participating in physical activity. Responses to the AusPlay survey indicate that 30 per cent of 15 to 17 year olds do not like physical activity or are not interested in sport, and 24 per cent of Australians in this age group do not have enough time or have too many commitments to participate in physical activity.¹ During the adolescent years, school and community sport tends to become more competitive, with research in Victoria finding that this can be a barrier for young people with lower levels of skill or fitness and those who have not been engaged in a sport from a young age.²

Other factors that influence physical activity participation include:

- attitudes to physical activity
- whether activity is competitive or fun
- perceived competence
- body image
- social stereotypes
- lack of time
- cultural or gender barriers
- influence of peers, family and friends

^[1] Department of Education and Training Victoria, Victorian Student Health and Wellbeing Survey, 2016

^[2] VicHealth, Sport Participation in Victoria, 2015

¹ Australian Sports Commission, AusPlay survey data, 2016-17, in Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) Physical activity across the life stages, cat no. PHE 225.

² VicHealth (2018), Victorians' physical activity across life stages, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

- long term disengagement from sport or physical activity
- accessibility issues
- environmental opportunities such as access to programs and infrastructure
- transition periods between year levels or into work.³

Cost is a key barrier to increased student physical activity levels

The greatest cause of poor health in Victoria is socio-economic disadvantage⁴ and children of adults with lower levels of education are less likely to take part in organised sport.⁵ Therefore health is an economic problem in Victoria.

Children and young people who are disadvantaged or have additional needs face more barriers to being physically active and are particularly vulnerable to experiencing poor health and wellbeing outcomes, which in turn, impacts on educational outcomes. Missing out on key educational milestones has long term implications and costs associated with underemployment or unemployment, poor health, crime, and welfare.

Cost barriers are limiting the capacity of families and schools to effectively provide physical activity opportunities for students.⁶ Research also shows that cost is one of the key barriers to sport participation in Australia.⁷

ACTIVE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

In 2019, the Victorian Government set an ambitious Education State target of ‘Happy, Healthy and Resilient Kids’ with the aim of building resilience and increasing physical activity in Victorian children and young people. In support of this target, the Government funded the \$24.2 million Active Schools initiative to build on existing programs and funding to boost support and resources for schools to get kids moving. Active Schools was announced in November 2020 to contribute towards the achievement of the Education State target for physical activity that by 2025, the proportion of students doing physical activity for an hour a day, five times a week, will grow by 20 per cent, to 65.5 per cent.

A [Joint Ministerial Statement Active Schools, Active Kids, Active Communities](#) between the Minister for Education, Minister for Health, and Minister for Community Sport highlights the commitment of government to improve the physical activity of children and young people. Detailed in this Statement is the Active Schools Framework (see image below), which supports schools to take a whole school approach to physical activity. The Active Schools framework outlines six key priorities of an Active School recognising there is no single solution to shifting inactivity; it takes a multifaceted and system wide effort. The six key priorities of Active Schools are:

- Quality Physical Education
- Quality School Sport
- Active Classrooms
- Active Travel
- Active Recreation
- Supportive School Environments



An active school is a school that promotes a whole school approach to physical activity, who values and commits to promoting physical activity through curriculum, general school

³ Martins et al., Heart Foundation

⁴ State of Victoria's Children Report, 2016

⁵ VicHealth, Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour 2016 Evidence Summary

⁶ Department of Education and Training Supplementary Census, 2018

⁷ Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card, 2016

life and the local community, and can support a child to become physically literate and active for life.

Information about the range of support and activities being undertaken through the Active Schools initiative, including the Active School Toolkit for all schools, funding boosts and grants, and a new expert workforce of physical education leaders, is available on the [Active Schools](#) webpage.

2. ACTIVE SCHOOLS INNOVATION GRANTS

BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTION TRIALS

Of the \$24.2 million funding for the Active Schools initiative, funding has been allocated to Behaviour Intervention Trials that seek to increase the amount of physical activity undertaken by secondary school students.

Three separate behavioural intervention projects will be funded as part of this component of the Active Schools initiative:

TRIAL	DESCRIPTION
Transform Us in Secondary Schools	The Department is working with Deakin University to adapt the Transform-Us! program (addressing the Active Classrooms priority area of the Active Schools Framework) and pilot in three secondary schools to explore innovative solutions to changing the teaching, physical and policy environment to get students more active throughout the school day.
CivVic Labs Program	The Department is working with Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) to explore innovative solutions to getting teens more active through the use of technology.
Active Schools Innovation Grants (The focus of these guidelines)	The Department is inviting organisations to put forward a grant proposal for an innovative trial to address barriers to Victorian secondary school students' physical activity levels.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS INNOVATION GRANTS

The Department is seeking detailed proposals from organisations to deliver physical activity innovation trials for adolescents in Victorian government school settings. This may include secondary, P-12, specialist, and alternative settings schools. The selected organisations will refine the design of their project during the remainder of 2021 and will work closely with schools to deliver the projects over the whole 2022 school year.

Four grants are available of up to \$160,250 each.

The innovation trials will address declining physical activity rates in this cohort and focus on one key priority area of the Active Schools Framework, including:

- Active Travel (**one** grant available)
- Quality School Sport (**one** grant available)
- Active Recreation (**two** grants are available due to the wide range of active recreation activities available and the many opportunities to increase the use of active spaces)

The Department is looking specifically for innovative trials in these three key priority areas that will be sustainable, affordable and scalable for schools, as well as provide an evidence base to inform future policy and program design. Sustainable innovation trials should include building the capacity of teachers, equipping schools with resources and the ability to scale up and potentially implement beyond the trial. The Department is also looking to encourage physical activity through a whole-school approach that goes beyond traditional physical education and sport to promote physical activity at every opportunity.

Any technology interventions proposed must comply with the Department's [Student Use Mobile Phone policy](#) and any other relevant Department policies relating to privacy and use of technology.

The priority area related to Quality Physical Education will be addressed through a new workforce of Physical Education Leaders and the Active Classrooms priority area will be addressed through the Transform Us! in Secondary Schools Behavioural Innovation trial with Deakin University (outlined above).

OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

The main objectives of the Active Schools Innovation Grants are to:

- identify and trial innovative, effective, sustainable and scalable behavioural interventions which incentivise physical activity among adolescents.

The selected organisations will deliver:

- design of innovation trial and research instruments, and recruitment of partner schools in January 2022
- rollout of innovation trials in a school setting over Terms 2 – 4, 2022
- Due to the short time available, organisations may be required to test their ideas in an efficient but comprehensive manner such as a sprint or development and testing of a prototype
- An interim report and a comprehensive final report that details the project's design and delivery process; successes and areas for improvement; and recommendations for sustainable, scalable delivery across other schools in the state. Where appropriate, organisations may use some of the allocated funding to engage a third party to conduct the evaluation or write the final report. The final report will be deliverable mid- Term 4, 2022.

3. FOCUS OF THE TRIALS

Organisations are invited to submit a proposal that focuses on **one** of the following key priority areas of the Active Schools Framework:

- Quality School Sport
- Active Travel
- Active Recreation

Organisations may submit more than one proposal, but each priority area will require a separate proposal.

The following information provides background on each of the above priority areas and examples of innovative approaches from other jurisdictions in these areas.

QUALITY SCHOOL SPORT

School sport is defined as any form of sport (inter or intra) within the educational setting which is timetabled into the school week.

Quality school sport provides opportunities for all students to participate in a format suitable to their age, skill and ability whilst also linking students with local sporting clubs. It:

- is inclusive and accessible
- encourages participation over performance
- teaches resilience, teamwork and fosters a sense of school pride
- includes a diverse range of sporting activities to cater to varying interests

There are many options for year-round school sport delivery within schools including:

- sport education programs
- intra-school sport events (e.g. school swimming carnivals)
- inter-school sport
- inter-state school sport opportunities.

[School Sport Victoria](#) (SSV), as part of the Department of Education and Training (DET), coordinates interschool sport and representative school sport for schools and students in Victoria. In collaboration with various state sporting organisations, SSV offer a range of sports to Victorian students in Years 4 - 12.

School sport is one of many priorities of schools, and it is valued differently across schools and communities. Whilst there are many sporting programs delivered across the school system, student engagement and participation tends to be with students who enjoy, and who are good at competitive sport.

The Quality School Sport innovation trial aims to provide opportunities for students whose skills and interests lie outside of this paradigm. This includes those who are disengaged from traditional sport, however, may enjoy social non-competitive sport activities during leisure time. Examples of non-competitive sporting activities may include but are not limited to lawn bowls, ultimate frisbee, fun runs, martial arts, dodgeball or modified social sports such as 3x3 basketball, cardio tennis or sixes cricket.

The Department is seeking detailed proposals for from organisations to develop an innovative trial focusing on the Quality School Sport priority area of the Active Schools framework, with the aim to engage and increase physical activity participation for adolescents in Victorian government school settings.

In particular, this trial should consider:

- engaging students whose skills and interest lie outside traditional competitive sport
- inclusivity and accessibility (e.g. consider students with a disability, LGBTIQ students, and students with different cultural needs; and ability for the program to be delivered to metro and regional schools)
- encouraging participation over performance
- teaching resilience, teamwork and fostering a sense of school pride
- including a diverse range of sporting activities to cater to varying interests
- options for continuing the program through remote learning, in the event that there are further lockdowns due to Covid-19 outbreaks
- how quality school sport can be implemented as part of a whole school approach to promoting physical activity (through policies, teaching and learning, building partnerships and school structures).

One organisation will be offered a grant of \$160,250 to trial their proposed innovative idea in a government secondary school. A small portion of this grant may need to be provided to the schools involved in this trial to cover any associated costs for participating (e.g. purchase of equipment, upgrade to facilities).

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

First Step PE Department Enrichment Programme:

UK based First Step PE Department launched a new Enrichment Programme designed to provide primary school children who aren't attracted to traditional sporting activities, access to a wide range of alternative sports and activities.

Schools choose from a range of alternative sports programs run in half day and full day six-week blocks. Sports include archery, fencing, ultimate frisbee and Paralympic sports.

The programme encourages the introduction of learning into PE lessons by fusing academic learning with physical activity. The programme includes active maths and English, as well as Aball1 – an innovative educational tool that brings literacy, numeracy and social skills together in a range of fun, active games.

For more information see: [First Step PE Department Enrichment Programme](#)

StreetGames

UK based organisation StreetGames comprises of local organisations delivering sporting initiatives to disadvantaged, disengaged young people, ensuring everyone has access to sport and physical activity opportunities and feels connected to their community.

‘Sport for Good’ sessions provided by community organisations are tailored to the community area and create opportunities for disadvantaged young people to play sport. For example, an intervention designed to improve the community’s physical activity levels and mental health may run an hour-long sports activity, followed by a group discussion about a healthy lifestyle every week.

StreetGames also offer training to upskill their workforces in delivering physical activity and community-based programs. Their range of workshops cover running sport and physical activity programs for youth, programmes delivering impact on social outcomes and volunteer recruitment.

For further information see: [StreetGames](#)

ACTIVE TRAVEL

Active Travel involves walking, cycling, scooting or other active ways of getting to or from school, for the whole journey or as part of the journey.

Being active on the way to and from school contributes significantly to a student’s daily physical activity and increases social and community connectedness. It also has many other benefits including:

- increasing social interactions with family and friends
- fostering school and community connectedness
- supporting mobility independence and familiarity with the neighbourhood
- reducing road and public transport congestion and pollution.

Schools can support active travel by:

- encouraging parents to support their children to actively travel to school
- providing facilities that support active travel to and from school for students, staff and families (e.g. bike racks, bike shelters)
- offering bicycle education programs and guidance on safe routes to school
- working with families and local councils to provide for safe and convenient routes to schools.

Currently, programs focused on supporting students to engage in active travel to school are predominantly focused on primary aged students.

The Department is seeking detailed proposals from organisations to develop an innovative trial focusing on active travel, with the aim to engage and increase physical activity participation for adolescents in Victorian government school settings.

In particular, this trial should consider:

- how to promote and support safe and engaging active travel strategies
- inclusivity and accessibility (e.g. consider students with a disability, LGBTIQ students, and students with different cultural needs; and ability for the program to be delivered to metro and regional schools)
- options for continuing the program through remote learning, in the event that there are further lockdowns due to Covid-19 outbreaks

- how active travel can be implemented as part of a whole school approach to promoting physical activity (through policies, teaching and learning, building partnerships and school structures).

One organisation will be offered a grant of \$160,250 to trial their proposed innovative idea in a government secondary school. A small portion of this grant may need to be provided to the schools involved in this trial to cover any associated costs for participating (e.g. purchase of equipment, upgrade to facilities).

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Step2Get program:

The Step2Get program is an incentive for pupils to walk to school developed by Transport for London, incorporating swipe card technology, gamification, and rewards to incentivise students to walk to school.

Secondary students were given cards to swipe on machines set up on lamp posts on the students' routes to school. Students would earn points for swiping and for the distances they walked. They could redeem their points for movie tickets and track their progress compared to peers.

A third of the students signed up to the Step2Get program. This increased the number of children walking to school by 18 per cent and resulted in getting more students to class on time. The increased visibility of the lamp swipe machines (combined with seeing more students walking to school) created a new social norm of walking to school.

Please see this paper ['New way of encouraging an old form of mobility'](#) for more information on the trial program.

ACTIVE RECREATION

Active recreation includes active play and recreation before, during and after school (inclusive of recess and lunch), outdoor learning, incursions, excursions and school camps. Active recreation is leisure time physical activity engaged in for the purpose of relaxation, health and wellbeing or enjoyment. Active recreation is extremely diverse, it can be undertaken alone or with others and ranges from walking, yoga, and tai chi to skateboarding, martial arts, dance and parkour.

Unstructured, leisure-based physical activity is vital to children and young people's daily activity levels. Providing access to a range of developmentally appropriate, fun and non-competitive active recreation options allows all children and young people to find activities they enjoy.

Schools can support active recreation by:

- encouraging outdoor play and recreation to help students develop fundamental movement skills and physical strength whilst being adventurous and having fun
- using outdoor learning to increase physical activity by connecting classroom-based learning with field-based experiences
- offering and promoting active recreation options to students who are disinterested in traditional organised school sports
- appropriate provision of free time and unstructured lunch and recess breaks.
- providing age-appropriate spaces including well-maintained and safe equipment for play and recreation.

Whilst there are many programs delivered across the school system, and throughout the community to promote physical activity, the impact disproportionately lies with students who are engaged with and enjoy competitive organised sport. The Active Recreation innovation trials aim to provide physical activity opportunities for students who may enjoy physical activity in the form of alternative leisure activities. Active

Recreation activities may occur before, during or after school and could include but are not limited to downhill, dance, orienteering, parkour, obstacle courses, pilates or active play.

The Department is seeking detailed proposals from organisations to develop an innovative trial focusing on Active Recreation, with the aim to engage and increase physical activity participation for adolescents in Victorian government school settings.

In particular, this trial should consider:

- how it will encourage outdoor play and recreation to help students develop fundamental movement skills and physical strength whilst being adventurous and having fun
- use of outdoor learning to increase physical activity by connecting classroom-based learning with field-based experiences
- how to engage students who are disinterested in traditional organised school sports
- solutions to encourage students to be physically active during lunch and recess breaks
- provision of age-appropriate spaces including well-maintained and safe equipment for play and recreation.
- inclusivity and accessibility (e.g. consider students with a disability, LGBTIQ students, and students with different cultural needs; and ability for the program to be delivered to metro and regional schools)
- options for continuing the program through remote learning, in the event that there are further lockdowns due to Covid-19 outbreaks
- how active recreation can be implemented as part of a whole school approach to promoting physical activity (through policies, teaching and learning, building partnerships and school structures).

Two organisations will each be granted **\$160,250** to trial their proposed innovative idea in a government secondary school. Two grants are available due to the wide range of active recreation activities available and the many opportunities to increase the use of active spaces. A small portion of each grant may need to be provided to the schools involved in this trial to cover any associated costs for participating (e.g. purchase of equipment, upgrade to facilities).

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Parkour for Schools

Parkour for Schools is a UK based organisation that delivers Parkour as an after-school activity and within the physical education curriculum in primary and secondary schools. Parkour for Schools offers training and resources packs for physical education staff to implement the program. The resource pack includes movement flashcards, sample drills and lesson plans. Parkour for Schools also provides PE teachers access to specialist professional development workshops.

Schools have the option of purchasing portable equipment for students to participate in Parkour anytime during the school day. Direct coaching opportunities from qualified coaches and end of year awards for students keep students interested in participating year-round.

For more information see: [Parkour for Schools](#)

4. APPLYING FOR A GRANT

ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Organisations eligible to apply for an Active Schools Innovation Grant include

- not-for-profit community groups,
- government-funded bodies including local government, and
- commercial enterprises.

All applicants **must** hold a valid Working with Children Check.

INELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Organisations ineligible to apply for an Active Schools Innovation Grant include:

- government departments
- government and non-government schools

HOW TO APPLY

Applications will open from **9am Monday 15 November 2021** and close **5pm Monday 13 December 2021**.

Organisations will be required to complete an Active Schools Innovation Grants application via the [SmartyGrants platform](#), and to provide a link to a 90 second video introducing your organisation and summarising the key points of the proposal. Smart phone footage is acceptable.

Organisations may attach support letters from potential partners, local community or other relevant parties to their application.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

EXCLUSIONS

The Department will not consider any proposals that include the following:

- trialling an intervention in primary schools or non-government secondary schools
- technology-based solutions which do not adhere to existing Department policies
- an existing program that is already being implemented in Victorian government secondary schools and that cannot be scaled up, is not accessible, affordable or sustainable in an education setting.

5. ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Proposals will be assessed in line with the Department's [Grants Policy](#) as well as against the criteria outlined below by a panel comprising of Victorian Government representatives.

Proposals will be assessed by a panel and will be randomly allocated for review by **two** assessors, with their average scores being taken as their final scores. In the event of the tied score between the highest scoring proposals, a third assessor will assess the applications. An average of all three scores will then be used as the final score.

Successful organisations will also be required to:

- submit a [Research in Schools](#) application
- complete the [School and Early Childhood Infection Prevention and Control During Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) eLearning module](#) prior to commencing any work with schools
- comply with any conditions of the Covid-safe plans of schools that they partner with.

All applicants will be notified on the outcome of their application by email.

RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS (RISEC)

The RISEC application process is managed by the Department. It aims to ensure that research conducted with the involvement of government schools and early childhood settings is appropriate to the goals of the education system and upholds the Department's duty of care for students and staff.

Projects commissioned by the Department are subject to the same application and review process as projects which are initiated externally.

The application will include a plain English statement about the nature of the pilot program, and all research instruments including consent forms, surveys, and questionnaires.

Where research will cover sensitive topics, applications may also be required to include evidence of a HREC (Human Research Ethics Committee) application, or a plain English statement on how the research complies with The National Statement on Ethical Conduct In Human Research.

In planning project timelines, applicants should allow a minimum of four weeks for the RISEC approval process.

The RISEC guidelines and application form are available [here](#).

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All applications will be assessed and scored based on the following criteria:

- Overview – clear summary of the key objectives, activities and outcomes to be achieved
- Target group(s) and barriers – aimed at inactive and/or disengaged teens, with considerations of multiple cohorts of teens e.g. students with a disability, Koorie students, LGBTIQ students. Also, issues and barriers that teens face to being physically active identified with a strong rationale/need and evidence of what works to increase physical activity for teens
- Innovation – innovative approach to improving physical activity levels in teens compared with other approaches already trialled in education settings
- Understanding the school environment – takes into consideration a secondary school context and considers a whole school approach to promoting physical activity (through policies, teaching and learning, building partnerships and school structures)
- Sustainability and scalability – innovation trial can be made sustainable and scaled up across different school settings
- Outcomes and measures – clear outcomes and effective methods to measure whether outcomes have been achieved
- Organisational capacity – capacity of organisation to deliver on proposal
- Successful completion of a RISEC application.

FUNDING AGREEMENT

The successful grant recipients will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Department. This agreement will set out the conditions of the funding.

The chosen organisations will be required to engage in regular project meetings with the Department, and to deliver an interim report part-way through the project, and a final report on the project at the end of the funding period. The final report will need to address the details of the project's successes and areas for improvement, and recommendations for sustainable, scalable delivery across other schools in the state. (Note: questionnaires, surveys etc intended to support the final report should be included in the organisation's RISEC application).

6. TIMELINES

GRANTS PROCESS

Please refer to the table below for a timeline of the Active Schools Innovation Grants process. Applications will close at **5pm Monday 13 December 2021**. The chosen organisations will also be required to engage in regular project meetings with the Department.

Date	Milestone
15 November 2021	Grant guidelines disseminated to key stakeholders and networks
15 November 2021	Grant applications open
13 December 2021	Grant applications close
End-January 2022	Shortlisted applicants notified and RISEC application process begins

INNOVATION TRIALS

Please refer to the table below for a proposed guideline of the timeline of the Active Schools Innovation Behaviour Intervention Trial.

Date	Milestone
January 2022	RISEC application process (minimum four weeks) and contracts with successful applicants developed
February 2022	Contract commencement
Mid-March 2022 (3 weeks after commencement of contract)	<p><i>Deliverable 1: Plan for Pilot</i></p> <p>A detailed plan for the pilot including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project plan - Timelines - Communications plan - Evaluation plan - Budget - Recruit schools to participate in trial
26 April 2022 (Start of Term 2, 2022)	Innovation trials commence in schools
End May 2022 (End of Term 2, 2022)	<p><i>Deliverable 2: Implementation Progress Report 1.0</i></p> <p>A report on progress of design and implementation process, including implementation plan for each school.</p>
Mid-September 2022 (End of Term 3, 2022)	<p><i>Deliverable 3: Implementation Progress Report 2.0</i></p> <p>A report on status of interventions at the end of implementation phase.</p>
End October 2022	<p><i>Draft report</i></p> <p>Draft report to the Department presenting findings of pilot at each school.</p>
End November 2022	<i>Deliverable 4: Final Report</i>

	Formal report to the Department presenting findings of pilot at each school.
Early December 2022	Contract expiry

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For Active School Innovation Grant enquiries and application support, please contact the Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Team:

Key contact: Jessica Kelly

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