





BUSHCARE SPRING 2022 – ISSUE 55

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

by Gareth Debney Bushland Management Coordinator

After such a soggy start to the year, it's nice to have had the opportunity to enjoy some winter sunshine at last! Unfortunately, the "big wet" that characterised the first 4-5 months of this year has played havoc with the resumption of our Bushcare groups, post the COVID-19 lockdown of 2021. Volunteer participation rates are significantly reduced compared to prepandemic levels, and the wet weather cancellations to Bushcare hasn't helped! We are working to rebuild the program's profile in the North Sydney community and encourage new and existing volunteers back to Bushcare. We'd appreciate your help in spreading the word about volunteering among your friends, neighbours, and social networks.

Speaking of environmental volunteering, the Bushland Team coordinated a very successful National Tree Day community planting event on the last Sunday in July. We welcomed around 60 volunteers to Forsyth Park and managed to get 1,466 native tubestock plants into the ground over two 45-minute planting sessions. Brenda Park from Forsyth Park Bushcare and Victoria Whitney from Brightmore Reserve Bushcare both helped on the day and were fantastic ambassadors for Bushcare. Thank you, Brenda and Victoria – we really appreciated your time and enthusiasm!

As winter wanes into spring, the number of complaints Council receives regarding Brush Turkeys will start to ramp up, largely prompted by one-track-minded males gathering leaf litter, mulch, and soil from wide and far to build their nest mounds. It is important for residents to understand that Brush Turkeys are a protected native species that are endemic to the Sydney basin, despite being absent for much of the 20th century. Unfortunately, the plentiful availability of resources in North Sydney have allowed the adaptable Brush Turkey to build in numbers over the past decade, creating many conflicts for house proud residents, keen gardeners, and



Caption: National Tree Day at Forsyth Park, Sunday 31 July by Andrew Scott.

public amenity. One of the key drivers of this population growth is likely to be the availability of food and the deliberate (or inadvertent) feeding of Brush Turkeys. Most of the complaints we've received are linked with wildlife feeding near-by. It is very difficult for Council to address these issues without the support of locals – community education and signage are key to raising awareness of the issue and leading to behaviour change.

Many of you by now will have received one or more requests from our Bushcare Officer Andrew Scott to undertake some short online training courses that were designed over the past two years. Those who have already completed the training say they found it informative and valuable use of time. So, if you haven't had the chance to complete the training – check your emails (including the junk folder) and follow the directions provided by LITMUS – Council's online training provider.

For the first time in what feels like a long time, the Bushland Team are back to full

strength, with all positions in the team filled! I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our new starters Lauren Walker (Bush Regenerator), Larissa Kabakov (Adopt-a-Plot Supervisor / Bush Regenerator) and Karina Hanemann (Bushland Projects Officer) to the team. The new skills, experiences, and wisdom that each of you bring to North Sydney is truly valued and I look forward to seeing these attributes put in to practice!

Having a full team also means that our Bushcare Group Supervision duties can finally be allocated on a permanent basis, providing much-needed continuity and group rapport building. I'd really like to thank Tom, Clare, and Andrew for taking on many additional group supervision duties during the period when the team was understaffed – your commitment to our volunteers and the program was very much appreciated.



My name is Ren Ai Lee. I am a Year 9 student studying in Wenona and a member of the Wenona Environment Group. We attended an event at Stanton Library on 7 July marking World Environment Day 2022. These are some of the key ideas I took away.

Firstly, Danielle Birkbeck discussed the Council's objective of "Reaching Net Zero" by 2030. I learned that 70% of North Sydney's waste diversion in landfill is from food organics and recyclable items. To reduce this, Council is considering more recycling options. Council also aims to reduce personal car ownership, encouraging trips to and from North Sydney by foot, bike, or public transport. They will also be installing more electric vehicle charging stations. Finally, there are plans to increase solar panels and to encourage the community to electrify everything through renewable energy. about the Bushcare Volunteer Program. This volunteer program started in 1994 and there are currently 12 active Bushcare groups in North Sydney. It is a social activity that happens once a month in many local councils and to be a volunteer all you need to do is signup on your local council's website. The program is a fun way to meet and connect within communities and maintain bushland reserves, through controlling weeds, propagating native plants and more.

Lastly, we heard about *The Bradley Sisters* by Kate Eccles, President of Mosman Parks & Bushland Association. I believe it was important for Wenona students to be present at the event as Joan and Eileen Bradley were Wenona Alumnae, and the pioneers of the minimal disturbance method of assisted natural bush regeneration, a core practice of bushland management today.

Secondly, we heard from Andrew Scott The Bradley's bush regeneration method

REVIEW OF WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY TALKS AT STANTON LIBRARY

by Ren Ai Lee – Wenona student

Caption: Kate Eccles - President MPBA speaking about the Bradley Sisters and the development of their minimal disturbance method of bush regeneration at World Environment Day Talk in Stanton Library on Tuesday 7 July.

encourages the native plants to grow by freeing them from the competition of weeds, rather than extracting the weeds. The method they developed had three main principles: removing weeds from less infected areas to more seriously infected areas, disturbing the soil as little as possible and allowing bush to regenerate. Their legacy lives on today in the form of the Bushcare movement and community advocacy for the protection of urban bushland.

The last speakers for the evening were Carly Robertson from Climate for Change on their volunteering program and hosting 'climate conversations', a party-plan model made famous by Tupperware[®] and Karyee Chiu who spoke of volunteering opportunities and developing skills in public relations with the Australian Conservation Foundation for climate change activism.

Through this event, I learnt new facts, volunteering opportunities and the importance of community involvement. As a part of this community, if everyone makes a small contribution like volunteering in Bushcare, installing solar panels or recycling waste, we can become more sustainable, green, and hopefully even reach net zero before 2030.

Seconary, we near a nom Anarew Scott

FROG ID WEEK - 11-20 NOVEMBER 2022

FrogID Week is Australia's Biggest Frog Count, held annually for Australians to help record frog calls through the free FrogID app. These findings serve as a measurement of frog health and distribution around the nation. It aims to monitor frog distributions over time, helping us to understand how frogs and their ecosystems are responding to a changing planet.

From croaks and barks, to whistles and bleats, every frog species makes a unique sound. Using the free FrogID app, you can record the frogs calling around you and help us count Australia's frogs.

Join our growing team of citizen scientists this FrogID Week.

For more information visit www.frogid.net.au/frog-id-week



WILDLIFE WATCH UPDATE (WINTER 2022)

Many interesting, common, and unusual sightings have occurred this winter! Your sightings help to inform others and help species management as it builds a picture of what's living in the North Sydney Council area.

Some of the recorded sightings in the North Sydney Council area during winter 2022 include:

- White Bellied Sea Eagle (Balls Head Reserve)
- White-faced Heron (Balls Head Reserve)
- Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard (Neutral Bay urban)
- Pied Cormorant (Cremorne Point)
- Eastern Long-necked Turtle (Gore Cove Reserve)
- Rakali (Australian Water-rat) tracks (Berry Island Reserve)
- Red Triangle Slug (Primrose Park)
- Tawny Frogmouth (Neutral Bay urban)
- Eastern Whipbird (Badangi Reserve)
- Masked Plover (Berry Island)
- Yellow Thornbill (Tunks Park)
- White-browned Scrubwren (Badangi Reserve)
- Welcome Swallow (Anderson Park)
- Grey Butcherbird (Wollstonecraft urban)
- Laughing Kookaburra (Neutral Bay urban)
- Elegant Snake-eyed Skink (Cremorne Point)
- Wood Duck (Berry Island Reserve)
- Australian Brush Turkey (North Sydney urban)
- Superb Fairy-wren (Tunks Park)



Caption: Brown Thornbill (C) Michael Hamel-Green 2020 birdlifephotography.org.au

- Silvereye (Balls Head Reserve)
- Brushtail Possum (Primrose Park)
- Brown Thornbill (Primrose Park)
- Pacific Swallow (Forsyth Park)
- Spotted Pardalote (Primrose Park)
- Poecilasthena fragilis moth (Neutral Bay urban)
- Variegated Fairy-wren (Primrose Park)
- Tussock Moth caterpillar (Neutral Bay urban)
- Black Jezebel butterfly (Tunks Park)
- White-browed Scrubwren (Kirribilli urban)

For a full listing of species, see NSC Wildlife project at biocollect.ala.org.au

If you wish to contribute a sighting of wildlife, or have related comments about what you have seen, from the unusual to the funny, please contact Council's Bushland Project Officer via **council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au** or 9936 8100. Find out how to get involved by searching for Wildlife Watch on our website: **www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au**

Karina Hanemann – Bushland Projects Officer

PECULIAR SIGHTING...

Indian Myna bird trying to nest inside the guard of an amber traffic-light!

TIP...

Being as organic as possible in the house and garden can prevent toxins going through the food chain, to species that feed on other creatures (e.g. tawny frogmouths eating cockroaches, blue tongues eating snails and boobook owls eating mice/rats). Where possible, avoid poisons and let the wildlife eat your 'pests'.

DID YOU KNOW...

Male brush turkeys build a large mound for females to lay their eggs in. The warmth of the rotting mulch incubates the eggs. The males test the temperature of the nest with their bill – if it is too hot, they will take off some mulch, if it is not hot enough, they will add some! Once hatched, the chicks must fend for themselves.

BUILDING BRIDGES TO BOOROWA 2022



North Sydney Council Bushcare and Boorowa Community Landcare Groups' (BCLG) annual tree planting weekend was held from 27 to 29 May and went off without a hitch after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fourteen North Sydney Council and Sydney Bushcare volunteers and a dozen Landcare Volunteers planted just under 4,000 plants across four properties over the three-day weekend to help provide habitat for wildlife, including the threatened Superb Parrot. The planting activities were organised by Linda Cavanagh – Boorowa Community Landcare Coordinator.

The recent rain and well-prepared sites assisted our efforts greatly. We experienced cool and overcast conditions for the most part. This was our first autumn planting, a departure from the usual September weekend introduced in response to unreliable spring rainfall that dominated the most recent drought, threatening the survival of plantings through the hot, dry summer months. We hadn't accounted for the shorter workdays at this time of year, but still managed to complete the job.

Friday afternoon, the first planting site was a 10-minute drive from town, here we met Sam and Nikki Burton Taylor on their family farm Kenny's Creek Angus Beef Stud. We planted a well-prepared site on a hillside where there were many thistles decorated with wispy long white strands of spider web that waved in the wind and stuck to our clothes. Sam was accompanied by his giggly twin boys in a Rough Terrain Vehicle (RTV). They ferried tree guards (modified milk cartons), cane stakes and local native tube stock plants as it was tiring walking up and down the slope to retrieve these planting materials. We planted 1,120 plants and completed the job at dusk.

Day two was an early start at 8am, for a 22-minute drive from town to Box Range at Vince and Debbie Rheinberger's farm where we met their daughters Lucy and Edwina. We experienced heavy showers that lifted by mid-morning – most of us were unfazed by the rain as we were well prepared with wet weather gear. We planted either side of a quaint stream in a gully under the gaze of a large bald hill. We struggled to plant a 1,000 tube stock plants in the allotted time and the volunteers were forced to bugout and leave the Bush Team behind to finish up so we could keep to schedule.

From there we travelled a further 15km along the unsealed Kenyu Road to our

BY ANDREW SCOTT



second planting site at Willowbend, Chris Komor's property. There we met Matt Frazer, the property manager, and enjoyed an assortment of sandwiches for lunch, catered by The General on Marsden & Boorowa Ex-services club. Pat Downey - Volunteer Bird Surveyor and resident of Boorowa spoke to us about the Saving Our Superb Parrot project during our break. We planted a further 1,636 tube stock by sunset.

The celebratory dinner on Saturday night, a highlight of the weekend's activities, was held at the Boorowa Ex-Services Club, courtesy of our hosts BCLG & Hilltops Council. It was a great opportunity for the local landcare community to extend an invitation to connect with the newly elected councillors. It was wonderful to see the local community brought together Caption: Photo of Boorowa tree planting weekend volunteers and staff at Chris Komor's property, Boorowa 28 May 2022 by Andrew Scott.

by this event after two years of social isolation. Dignitaries in attendance included Mayor Marg Roles & John Roles, Councillor Mary Dodd and husband Phil Dodd, Councillor John Piper and wife Sandy Piper, Councillor Patrick Fitzgerald, and his wife Adrienne Beck. Paul Cavanagh – President of BCLG provided witty commentary as MC of the night. BCLG expressed appreciation for the wonderful show of support from Landcare NSW's recently appointed CEO Turlough & his wife Louise Guerin for travelling to and participating in the weekend's plantings.

Sunday 9am, bags packed, we set off for Hawkhill, Elizabeth and Richard Mason's property 27km from town. The Masons have been involved since the start of this Landcare collaboration in 2000. Tree lanes crisscross their property and can be observed from the highest point, its namesake Hawkhill where a tall radio tower stands. The site preparation was exceptional, as usual, and made for easy planting. We completed a paddock planting at the bottom of a hill and a tree lane that ascended a steep slope. We were reunited with Richard's partner Tomoe and their sons who planted alongside us. It was sad not to have Peter Mason's help (Elizabeth's late husband) who passed away last year. Turlough spoke to the group, mentioning that this project was much more than planting as it was about communities coming together, for shared interest in our common welfare and that of the environment. He gifted the volunteers with Landcare caps on our departure.

North Sydney Council's Bushland Team would like to thank Linda and Paul Cavanagh, Boorowa Community Landcare Group and Hilltops Council for their ongoing support. Linda said, Boorowa Landcare already has landholders expressing interest to host 2023 NSBC volunteers at their planting sites and that the autumn planting suited the landholders.

ADOPT A PLOT PROGRAM UPDATE

The Adopt a Plot program has now recommenced after a several month freeze, due to staff turnover, COVID-19 restrictions, Council recruitment delays and weather conditions.

I introduced myself to several participants at the annual Adopt a Plot meeting in June. Thank you to those that attended. We reviewed our work to date and discussed the objectives for the future. Gareth spoke about current bushland management projects and issues – meeting minutes have been sent out to all program members.

The program has now reduced to two days per week, in line with the current 17 participating plots, though also allowing some scope for further expansion.

Due to the program interruption, weed growth has developed. However since the program is back in full swing, the site conditions will be back on track in no time. The Bushland Team is grateful for the ongoing support and patience!

Larissa Kabakov - Adopt a Plot supervisor

KEEPING CATS SAFE AT HOME

Native wildlife in NSW will be better protected thanks to an innovative project officially launched by the NSW Government and RSPCA NSW encouraging cat owners to keep their pets safe at home. The NSW Government has awarded a \$2.5 million grant to RSPCA NSW to deliver the Keeping Cats Safe at Home project.

Environment Minister James Griffin said nationally, domestic cats kill about 390 million animals every year in Australia, including mammals, reptiles, and birds.

"Owners who let their cats roam might not think their moggie is doing much damage, but we know that on average, each roaming pet cat kills an average of 186 reptiles, birds, and mammals per year in Australia," Mr. Griffin said.

The majority of animals killed by pet cats are native Australian species, including some threatened species. Cats being allowed to roam is disastrous for our native species and ecosystems.

For more information visit www.rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

LAUREN WALKER – BUSH REGENERATOR

Hello Bushcarers one and all! My name is Lauren Walker and I'm a new member of North Sydney Council's Bushland Team.

My love for the bush stems from my long love of animals and curiosity about the great outdoors. Being surrounded by animals from a young age, every interaction with wildlife only seemed to confirm to me that I wanted to live and work outdoors alongside them.

It was only natural that upon leaving school I should continue by turning my passion into an academic pursuit as I started studying a Bachelor of Natural Science (Animal Science). The practicals were always my favourite and they also made me aware that I simply enjoyed being outside Caption: Lauren Walker – NSC Bush Regenerator at Boorowa tree planting weekend, 28 May 2022.

even without the animals too.

I struggled to break into the job market for the longest time until I discovered the Green Army project. It was perfect, aimed at young people exactly like myself, I was privileged to take part in something that was not only a rewarding job but one that also let me explore parts of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. I was so thrilled to be part of it that I even returned for a second project and then a third!

As passion feeds passion, I found a more long-term position with Waratah Eco Works. I'd been with them for nearly four years when I was lucky enough to join North Sydney Council earlier this year.

I decided to give myself a trial by fire of sorts by attending the Building Bridges to Boorowa trip only two weeks after starting, but I ended up having a great time. I look forward to bringing more of my insight and experience to the team as I engage with this most wonderful community.



Hi! My name is Larissa, and I am a new member in the North Sydney Council Bushland Management Team. I will be managing the Adopt a Plot program and taking part in Bushcare Supervision. I am very excited to meet all the Adopt a Plot and Bushcare volunteers.

My interest in bushland conservation began when starting my university degree at the University of Wollongong studying Conservation Biology. It was so fascinating learning about Earth's biodiversity and the methods of management and protecting species and ecosystems. After completing university, I started bushcare volunteering at one of my local reserves in Sylvania and thoroughly enjoyed working Caption: Larissa Kabakov – Adopt a Plot Supervisor at North Sydney Council Chambers, August 2022.

LARISSA KABAKOV – ADOPT A PLOT SUPERVISOR

outdoors, getting hands-on experience.

I then took part in two Green Army projects – one at Lower Prospect Canal Reserve in Greystanes and the other at Salt Pan Creek in Riverwood. Carrying out this work made me realise that I wanted to pursue work outdoors in nature.

Afterwards, I worked for a private bush regeneration company called Waratah Eco Works where I gained more of an insight into environmental conservation. I worked for the company for nearly five years and supervised for over three years managing sites across a variety of vegetation communities all over the Sydney Region (including North Sydney).

Recently starting as a team member at North Sydney Council, everyone has been so welcoming, and I am excited to learn about this amazing community and share my knowledge of bushland conservation.

KARINA HANEMANN - BUSHLAND PROJECT OFFICER connection with nature? I'd



I have recently begun working with our local community through the Native Havens and Wildlife Watch programs and feel privileged to be Caption: Karina Hanemann at North Sydney Council Chambers, 17 Aug 2022.

able to share in the joy of improving gardens while increasing available habitat and corresponding biodiversity in the area.

With so little of the original natural bushland remaining around Sydney, every local native plant or habitat element that people can support on their properties can help wildlife to survive. Together, we can improve ecosystems!

How did I develop my

connection with nature? I'd say through spending much time looking after animals, bushwalking and growing vegetables when young. Observing plant and animal relationships came with that, so studying ecology was a natural choice.

I bring with me experience from a range of environmental roles such as: bushland regenerator, environmental radio show host, threatened species monitor, home sustainability advisor, wildlife carer, interpretive bushwalk guide and a teacher in Environmental Education Centres, skilling schoolchildren to understand and be stewards of the natural environment.

Whether you know what you want to do, or would like to know where to start, I am here to assist you. This program is possible with support from our nursery staff and volunteers, who grow the local native plants from scratch.

People's sightings of fauna through Wildlife Watch are helping us all to know what is living around us, enabling us all to be better caretakers.

I look forward to hearing from and working with you all.

NATIVE PLANT PROFILE HAKEA SPECIES

Name: Hakea = in honour of botanical patron Baron Hake of Hanover

Family: Proteaceae



Hakea is an endemic Australian genus of around 150 species, found in all states, with seven occurring in the Sydney area: *Hakea sericea* (Needle Bush), *H. gibbosa, H. teretifolia* (Dagger Hakea), *H. propinqua, H. dactyloides* (Broad-leaved Hakea), *H. bakerana* and *H. salicifolia* (Willow-leaved Hakea).

These local species comprise woody shrubs, most with needlelike leaves, although *Hakea dactyloides* and *H. salicifolia* have flat leaves.

Hakeas are found in heaths, scrubs, and woodlands on sandstone, although *H. salicifolia* prefers protected, moist gullies where it may develop into a small tree.

Flowers resemble those of grevillea, usually white or cream, occasionally yellow or pink (as in *Hakea bakerana*) and occur in clusters in the leaf axils. These are followed by distinctive, persistent, woody fruits (follicles) containing two winged seeds. Fruits remain closed on the plant for many years until the plant or branch supporting them dies. Plants are killed by fire, although *Hakea teretifolia* may form a lignotuber, allowing it to resprout from the base after a low intensity burn.

Hakea flowers are very attractive to insects and the dense, prickly branches provide cover and nesting sites for fauna.

In the garden

Although lacking the spectacular features of some of their West Australian cousins, our local hakea species are perfect for habitat gardens and their pretty flowers make them far from grevillea's ugly stepsister! Plants are fast-growing, make excellent barrier hedges, and the woody fruits offer year-round interest. They grow best in a sunny to part-sun position, with Hakea teretifolia and H. gibbosa tolerating wetter soils.

Hakea or grevillea?

Hakeas have woody, persistent fruit, often warty and beaked; grevilleas have generally smooth, non-woody and nonpersistent fruit. Upper and lower leaf surfaces are similar in hakeas but different in grevilleas.

The ovary and style in Hakea are always glabrous (hairless) and so any hairiness on either would indicate a *Grevillea* species.

Clare McElroy - Bushcare Nursery Supervisor

GREEN EVENTS CALENDAR

The Bushland Team is committed to providing activities and events where social distancing measures can be applied. Please refer to the events listing on the North Sydney Council homepage and Green Events page for the most up-to-date information. BOOKINGS must be made for all events at: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/greenevents or 9936 8100 unless otherwise stated

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Community Nursery Visit | Thurs 9am to 2pm
- 10 Native Havens Garden Tour | Sat 9am to 1pm
- 11 Wildlife Watch Walk & Talk | Sun 7.30am to 11am
- **16 Bushcare Visit Kurrajong** | Frid 7.30am to 2pm
- 17 Community Nursery Open Day | Sat 9am to 12pm
- 27 Family Bush Walk Berry Is. | Tues 10.30am to 12pm

OCTOBER

- 9 Seed Propagation Workshop | Sun 9.30am to 12.30pm
- 12 & 13 Preschoolers Bush Scramble | Wed & Thurs 10am to 11.30am Bookings: Willoughby.nsw.gov.au
- 22 Weed Recognition Walk & Talk | Sat 10am to 1pm

NOVEMBER

- 13 Floating Landcare Hungry Beach | Sun 7am to 4pm
- 27 Family Bush Walk | Sun 10am to 12pm Bookings: Willoughby.nsw.gov.au

DECEMBER

- 7 & 8 Pre-schoolers Bush Christmas | Wed & Thurs 10am to 11.30am Bookings: Willoughby.nsw.gov.au
- 11 Bushcare Volunteer Xmas Party | Sun 5pm to 8pm By Invitation. Enquiries Bushcare Officer 9936 8100

FAREWELL TO MARET VESK by Lynne Cook - Balls Head Bushcare Convenor

The Balls Head Bushcare Group was very sad to hear of the sudden death of our fellow Bushcarer, Maret Vesk, who passed away in late June while on a bird-watching holiday in North Queensland.

Maret and her husband Mart have been very dedicated Bushcarers with our group for decades and attended the Streets Alive sessions in Waverton. They were only absent from our Thursday sessions when they were otherwise employed doing similar work on their own property at Wallis Lake which they had been rehabilitating for many years, or off exploring yet another interesting Australian ecosystem.

Maret joined Bushcare with Mart on 5 May 1999 and her final session was 5 May 2022. She contributed 208 hours of voluntary service to the program since 2007*

We understand Maret had a long and impressive career at Sydney University as a Senior Electron Microscopist with an extremely lengthy publication list in Plant Physiology. Maret and Mart were active and well-known in bird-watching circles. In her retirement years she also volunteered with Digi Vol - the digital recording of specimen material at the Australian Museum.

Maret obviously had a great commitment to the natural world, and we will miss her quietly unassuming presence at Bushcare. We would like to extend our sincere condolences to Mart and his family.

Andy Craig – Balls Head Bushcare Volunteer said "Maret was always fun, had a huge knowledge of birds, and worked hard. I guess she must have been an environmentalist ahead of her time. I miss her."

*The Bushcare Register (database) only holds volunteer hours since 2007, paper records were not transcribed before this time.



Caption: Water colour painting of a Variegated Fairy-wren by Rebecca Farrell.



Did you know North Sydney Council Bushcare has a Facebook page? Like us at www.facebook.com/bushcare



Visit regenTV the Australian Association of Bush regenerators video platform, recordings of webinars, field days and forums. www.aabr.org.au/regenTV

For more information or to make a booking for any of these workshops or special events please contact the Bushcare Officer on 9936 8100. Printed on 100% recycled paper.

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