

VicRoads Association

Newsletter No. 243



West Gate Tunnel Project

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Dear Members,

I originally started this newsletter with a rant about the deterioration of good manners of drivers on the road, but when I read it through I thought it showed me up as a grumpy old man. However, I have not altogether deleted it. I have saved it for another day.

Later this year, we will be exercising our democratic right to vote in a referendum for a change (or not) to the Australian Constitution with regard to better serving the country's First Nations' peoples. It is better known as the 'Voice' referendum. I am not going to discuss this particular issue with you as it is up to each person to consider the matter and to vote either 'Yes' or 'No' according to their preference. However, I thought a general discussion on referendums or referenda – both are correct - might be appropriate. I especially want to explain the background to the 1967 referendum on counting Aboriginal people in population counts.

Australian Referendums

First of all, the Australian Constitution can only be altered by referendum with all Australians of voting age voting yes or no for the proposed changes. To succeed, a majority of voters nationwide and a majority of States (four out of six) must approve the changes. More than half the voters in more than half the States must vote yes. This 'double majority' provision makes alterations to the Constitution difficult. Looking at the results of past referendums, in a number of cases, the majority of Australians have voted yes by a clear margin on a proposal, although the referendum failed because a majority of States opposed it.

Voting in a referendum is compulsory for all registered voters. Familiar in our recent memory was the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey. This was a national survey designed to gauge support for legalising same-sex marriage in Australia. The survey was held via the postal service between 12 September

and 7 November 2017. This was not a referendum. Unlike voting in elections and referendums - which is compulsory, responding to this postal survey was voluntary.

However, prior to the survey, the Liberal-National Coalition government had pledged to facilitate a bill to legalise same-sex marriage in the event of a "Yes" outcome. This allowed parliamentary debate and a vote, eventually leading to the legalisation of same-sex marriage. Both the Coalition and the opposition Labor Party allowed their MPs a conscience vote on the legislation. Had the survey returned a majority "No" result, the government said it would not allow a parliamentary debate or vote on legalising same-sex marriage.

Since Federation in 1901, only eight referendums out of 44 proposals to amend the Constitution have been approved. The first referendum, in December 1906, 'to enable elections for both Houses to be held concurrently' was carried with over 82 per cent of votes in favour.

I have been eligible to vote for the last 20 referendums. I have forgotten most of them. The only exceptions are:

May 1967 – 'to enable the Commonwealth to enact laws for Aboriginal people. To remove the prohibition against counting Aboriginal people in population counts in the Commonwealth or a State'. This was supported by 90.77 per cent of the vote – the highest 'Yes' vote ever.

May 1977 – 'to ensure, as far as practicable, that a casual vacancy in the Senate is filled by a person of the same political party as the Senator chosen by the people. And that the person shall hold the seat for the balance of the term. This was carried with 73.32 per cent in favour. On the same day, another referendum was held 'to allow electors in Territories, as well as in the States, to vote in constitutional referendums'. This one was carried by 77.72 per cent of the voters.

November 1999 – 'To alter the Constitution to establish the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic with the Queen and

Introduction continued

Governor-General being replaced by a President appointed by two thirds majority of the Commonwealth Parliament'. This one failed in all states with 45.13 per cent of voters in favour of it. My personal view of the result of this question revolves around the second part as to how the President would be appointed. With its typical distrust of politicians, the Australian populace voted against the politicians influencing the appointment of the President. Had the rider not been inserted, the outcome may have been different.

There was also a second question in this referendum seeking to insert a preamble to the Constitution. This failed by an even smaller margin voting 'Yes' – 39.34 per cent.

All the other referendums I voted in were not carried except for one which provided for the retirement age of judges of the Federal Court.

The 1967 Referendum

In fact, there were two referendums conducted in May 1967 – the one relating to Aboriginal rights as described above and the other 'to increase the number of Members of the House of Representatives without necessarily increasing the number of Senators'. This last one failed in five states with NSW the only state to support it and only 40.25 per cent of the Australian population. Reading contemporary sources of the times, it appears that the Aboriginal referendum proposal had wide support with both political parties in favour of it. It was the referendum about the number of Members in the House of Representatives which generated most debate at the time and, after counting was completed, one major newspaper's headlines declared the referendum lost – although they were referring only to the membership issue and not the Aboriginal one. The general consensus was that the Aboriginal referendum was a *fait accompli*.

After the 1967 Referendum was announced, community organisations ran many campaigns to help promote the Yes vote. The government also ran a campaign and as none

of the parliamentarians voted against the legislation the government only prepared a 'Yes' campaign.

In 1901, the then Attorney General, Alfred Deakin, provided a legal opinion on the meaning of section 127 of the Constitution. Section 127 excluded "aboriginal natives" from being counted when reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth or a state. His legal advice was that "half-castes" were not "aboriginal natives". The general view at that time was that there were only a handful of aborigines left in Australia and that they would eventually die out. Deakin was a giant in Australian politics. He served as Prime Minister three times and was universally liked and respected across the entire country on all sides of politics. He is regarded as the 'founding father' of the modern Liberal Party. If he could not see the bias in the construct of Section 127, then no-one could.

Prior to 1967, censuses asked a question about Aboriginal race to establish numbers of "half-castes" and "full-bloods". "Full-bloods" were then subtracted from the official population figure in accordance with the legal advice from the Attorney-General. It is really quite difficult to imagine that this was the general feeling of the Australian populace at the time.

However, before the First World War, there were calls for Aboriginal issues to be dealt with at the Federal level. Aboriginals enlisted in the services but were not eligible to receive the benefits and allowances of their white comrades. In 1944, there was a referendum put to the people which – in part – aimed at the Commonwealth legislating on aspects relating to 'the people of the Aboriginal race'. It was just one issue among many but it failed with only 46 per cent support.

Despite the failed attempt in the 1944 referendum, minimal changes were instigated for Aboriginal rights until the 1960s, where legal issues and petitions highlighted the negative treatment of Indigenous workers in the Northern



Campaigning for the 'Yes' vote in 1967. The Aboriginal woman in the photograph is Faith Bandler – a leading campaigner for Aboriginal rights from the 1950s through to the 1980s.

Territory. Thereafter, the overall plight of Aboriginal Australians became a fundamental political issue.

In 1965, the Menzies Government decided that it would seek to repeal section 127 of the Constitution but made no firm plans or timetable for such action. It wasn't until the Holt Government that a referendum was prepared in 1967 and the Australian Parliament was unanimous in voting for the Alteration Bill.



Results of the 1967 referendum on counting Aboriginals by State – the darker the colour the more the strength of the Yes vote.

Aboriginal Voting Rights

I want to stress that the 1967 referendum was not about Aboriginal right to vote. For most of Australia's political history, tens of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people couldn't vote in state or federal elections. Before Federation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian colonies had varied voting rights. While Aboriginal men could vote in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, it took until 1896 for Tasmania to give Aboriginal men the franchise. In 1895 South Australia gave equal voting rights to men and women, including Aboriginal women.

Laws that stopped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from voting were introduced in Queensland (1885), Western Australia (1893) and the Northern Territory (1922). The *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902* gave all men and women around Australia the right to vote, but it excluded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people unless they already had the right to vote before 1901.

In Queensland Aboriginal people had been unable to vote since the late 1800s, and this restriction included Torres Strait Islander people from 1930 onwards. In the Northern Territory, most Aboriginal people were declared 'wards of the state', meaning they couldn't vote. In Western Australia, the *Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act 1944* allowed Aboriginal people to vote only if they could speak English, had 'industrious habits', i.e. they worked hard, and didn't have certain medical conditions. Many had to show they were no longer part of their own community, and these regulations were referred to as the 'dog-collar act' or 'dog-act'. This was because these laws were offensive to Aboriginal identity and limited what Aboriginal people could do.

From 1944 Aboriginal people in Western Australia could apply to become citizens of the state, which gave them

various rights, including the right to vote. This citizenship was conditional on adopting "the manner and habits of civilised life" and not associating with Aboriginal people other than their parents, siblings, children, or grandchildren, and could be taken away at any time. This situation continued until 1971. It is hard to believe this now.

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1949* gave Aboriginal people the right to vote in federal elections only if they were able to vote in their state elections (they were disqualified from voting altogether in Queensland, while in Western Australia and in the Northern Territory the right was conditional), or if they had served in the defence force.

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1962* gave all Aboriginal people the option of enrolling to vote in federal elections. It was not until the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Act 1983 that voting became compulsory for Aboriginal people, as it was for other Australians.

The success of the 1967 referendum had a significant symbolic effect. It came at a time of rapid social change and was a catalyst for the federal government to take more action in Aboriginal affairs. It enabled the national government to attempt to eliminate the discriminatory practices of state governments and to introduce policies of self-determination and financial security for indigenous people. It provided Aboriginal people with a symbol of their political and moral rights. The referendum occurred at a time when Aboriginal activism was accelerating, and was a first step in the subsequent actions such as land rights, equal pay cases and the elimination of segregation.

In 1962 the Australian Parliament passed a landmark Act to give all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the option to enrol and vote in federal elections. But it was not until 1984 that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were finally treated like other voters and required to enrol and compulsorily vote in elections.

Voice to Parliament Referendum

So the upcoming referendum on the Voice to Parliament is the next step along the way to give indigenous communities a route to help inform policy and legal decisions that impact their lives. The Voice would advise the Australian parliament and government on matters relating to the social, spiritual and economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Parliament and government would be obliged to consult it on matters that overwhelmingly relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as native title, employment, housing, the community development program, the NDIS or heritage protection.

The Voice would be able to table formal advice in parliament, and a parliamentary committee would consider that advice. But all elements would be non-justiciable,

Introduction continued



The three official flags of Australia – the Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

meaning that there could not be a court challenge and no law could be invalidated based on this consultation.

Soon it will be time for the Australian population to say what they think about an Aboriginal Voice to parliament via the referendum and I hope this brief history may provide wise guidance for you.

David Jellie,
Chairman and Editor

What's coming up

Occasional Lunches at Shoppingtown Hotel 12 noon

Our next lunch will be held on Monday 19 June 2023. Others are scheduled for 7 August, 5 October, and 6 November. There is no longer a requirement to contact Kelvin York – just turn up.

Annual Golf Day Friday 10 November 2023

Details will be provided later in the year.

Other events

We are currently negotiating a visit to Anzac Station on the Metropolitan Rail Project.

Dates have not yet been finalised but we will let you know once arrangements have been fixed.

Ballarat/Bendigo Trip November 14 to 17 November 2023

We are planning a trip later in the year – November 14 to November 17. We will keep you informed on the progress of details – but we will be seeking a briefing on Regional Roads Victoria's approach to road maintenance and the planning for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Ballarat and Bendigo.

What's been happening

Occasional Lunch at Doncaster Monday 3 April

We had another good attendance with 25 people turning up. This is becoming a very popular event. It was great to welcome a new member, David Austin, and to see Merv Williams in fighting fitness at 92 years of age. However Merv has made one concession in that, unlike previous years, he won't drive to Far North Queensland this year.

Briefing on Road Management in Victoria Monday 20 March

This was held in the theatre at Head office in Kew. It was our first technical visit for the year.

By way of introducing the content of the briefing, I think it is appropriate to describe the relationship between VicRoads – as most of us knew it – and the new management structure of the Department of Transport and Planning. The following statement is on the Department's website.

On 1 July 2019, VicRoads and Public Transport Victoria came together with the Department of Transport (DoT) to create a properly integrated transport department – in step with other global cities.

On 1 January 2023, DoT was renamed the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

The DTP doesn't plan or operate our road, tram, or rail systems separately – they run a transport network.

The new Department of Transport and Planning provides a singular, integrated focus on tackling the big issues – from improving buses in growing suburbs to making it easier to walk and cycle places and embrace new technology.

Effective from 1 January 2020, all road management functions and responsibilities of the Roads Corporation (VicRoads) were transferred to and vested in the Head, Transport for Victoria (established under Section 64A of the Transport Integration Act 2010).

As a result, a reference to the Roads Corporation or VicRoads in the road management standards, manuals, guidelines, codes of practice, technical notes, drawings, specifications and other technical information and documentation must now be construed as a reference to Head, Transport for Victoria.

I was unable to attend the briefing on 20 March so I am grateful to Jim Webber for providing the following report.

33 members and partners attended the presentation at the Kew HO. Two were from regional areas- Geoff Lawrence (Ballarat) and Glyn Jones (Geelong).

The speakers were David Barton, Chief Engineer- Roads Assets & Engineering Division, Fiona Green, Director of Metro Capital Delivery, and Paul Rogers, Director of Metro Maintenance Delivery.

Many of our members consider that the funding for metro and rural road maintenance is insufficient for the work required. This results in maintenance activities being reactive rather than proactive. The Department has made the case for increased maintenance funding in the May budget.

But there are other factors that impact on maintenance works such as materials supply, a shortage of staff generally, but engineers in particular, and the need for four-year maintenance funding to allow for the necessary planning and design pre-construction activities.

Other issues raised by members in questions included:

- the lack of access to as-built drawings means that the link between pavement failures and drainage is difficult to establish
- the ability to perform construction surveillance
- the possibility of delaying one or two level crossing projects to free up funds for maintenance
- poor pothole patching works on rural roads
- updating road and bridge specifications
- asset management systems used by DTP
- bicycle works not receiving adequate funding
- inability of members to get flaws in major projects addressed by the Project Teams
- it was suggested that LC Precast in Benalla may be an option for concrete pipes

Vale

We send our most sincere sympathy to families and friends of the following members who have died.

Gary Liddle AO



I have received many expressions of sorrow on the occasion of Gary's untimely death due to Motor Neurone Disease. He was only 70 years of age.

Gary was a former CEO of VicRoads. He worked in the transport sector in Victoria for 50 years and dedicated his entire working career in shaping

the transport network in Victoria. Above all, Gary will be missed for his generous nature, his kindness and his sense of humour. He was the quintessential 'good bloke' who mixed easily with everyone and was willing to listen to all points of view and respect other peoples' opinions.

I have received personal messages from ex-VicRoads colleagues Norm Butler, Mal Kersting, Bruce Phillips, Kevin Fox, Bruce Gidley – and others - and read tributes from colleagues in other government departments and AustRoads. This obituary is based on these messages.

Gary commenced as an engineering cadet at the Country Roads Board in 1971 and rose through the ranks to become Chief Executive of VicRoads – a position he held from 2006 to 2014 – after which he was appointed Deputy Secretary – Transport for the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. He was the interim CEO of Public Transport Victoria in 2015 and also acted as CEO of V/Line in both 2016 and 2020-21.

Gary started work at the Country Roads Board in 1974 in Plans and Survey Division where he met Meredith, who was to become his wife. They married in 1976 at St George's in Malvern and had two children, Jarod and Bec.

Early in his career, he rotated through various locations under the engineer's training scheme before moving to Traralgon where he became the Project Manager for the Morwell Bypass. Gary also made significant contributions to VicRoads' Regional roads. In addition to his work in Traralgon, he also worked in Bendigo and Ballarat regions. He had a key role in the establishment of the newly formed Northern Region, initially as Acting Regional Manager pending Bruce Phillip's arrival to the position, then as one of two Operations Managers with Lance Midgley. At that time there were 34 municipalities in the region and an expanded regional boundary that included Mildura. Gary then moved on to manage the Ballarat Bypass project.

He loved construction work and worked on numerous projects across the State ending his direct project

Vale continued

management career delivering the Eastern Freeway Project between Bulleen Road and Springvale Road which, for its time, represented state of the art freeway construction with its award winning noise walls and adjacent bike paths and parklands. Gary really enjoyed being directly involved in the delivery of physical infrastructure and built many strong relationships across the industry including with contractors and businesses associated with the planning, design and construction.

Following the opening of the Eastern Freeway, Gary went into the policy area where he was the General Manager responsible for Road System Management including assessing the bids for funds coming from each of the VicRoads business areas which were ultimately presented to Government for endorsement. He moved back into project management as the Executive Director Major Projects before moving into the Deputy Chief Executive role and ultimately becoming the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Gary made a great impression on those in Government ranks during his time as the VicRoads CEO as he seemed to become the person of choice to fill major roles when vacancies occurred for various reasons - first as the Deputy Secretary of Transport and then CEO of Public Transport Victoria as well as two stints as the CEO of V-Line. These appointments were a great testament to the Government's confidence of him as a leader.

Bruce Gidley commented that, while Gary loved being involved in construction work, his true passion was mentoring others and encouraging them in their chosen pursuits. Everyone held Gary in great regard for the way he treated people as equals. He always made time to discuss issues and encouraged people to participate in decision-making by expressing their opinions. He was renowned for keeping his cool, never raising his voice in anger, and making his message known in a very controlled manner.

Although Gary spent a much shorter time in his leadership roles after departing VicRoads, his style continued to be valued by his new colleagues. This can be best evidenced in the note that Paul Younis sent to all Department of Transport staff on Gary's passing with his concluding remark, "Gary was incredibly obliging, kind, patient, wise and generous with his time. He was a wonderful leader and friend to us and we will miss him. He tried on a number of occasions to retire, but whenever the 'transport family' needed a kind and compassionate leader, it was Gary we called.

VicRoads industry partners recognized Gary's exceptional qualities at a time when relationships were strained. He was approachable and genuine and had the highest level of integrity. He was an honest broker and expected honesty in return. At a time when the industry was characterised by poor relationships Gary was a transformational leader for positive change. He was highly principled and demonstrated the high standards he expected of others,

which were recognised and appreciated. He made himself available to industry through many after-hours functions and always attracted a full house because he was open, honest and forthright and always listened to feedback and looked for ways to make positive change.

In his various leadership roles Gary had a very close relationship with many Ministers and their staff. He was respected and trusted by all he engaged with and the words of Paul Roth – a Ministerial adviser on roads sums it up.

"Gary was the ultimate public servant. He provided the perfect combination of frank and fearless advice, while recognising the role of the bureaucracy was to deliver on behalf of the government of the day, even if that meant doing things you didn't 100% agree with.

Gary displayed an excellent combination of credibility, reliability and an appropriate balance of interest. He knew his stuff, but unlike many people with an abundance of technical knowledge and subject matter expertise, he never confused people with technical jargon and acronyms - he did something that requires much more knowledge, intellect and skill - he made it simple."

Dean Mathews – Executive Director – Safety, Sustainability and Risk, V/Line Corporation gave a eulogy at Gary's memorial service. He said:

"I've had the privilege to know Gary for the last seven years initially as my manager but also as a wonderful mentor and friend. It was very sad to watch Gary's health deteriorate over the last two years however I never heard a complaint, just pragmatism on how he would work through his health issues, and be ready to manage the new challenges as they arose. To Gary, this was just another issue to address and work through - just as I'd seen him do almost daily during his time at V/Line.

The dignity and courage he showed was truly inspiring and his rare and generous spirit was evident right to the end. Gary loved V/line and I need to talk about that contribution.

Gary was known as the 'go to' man .. the gun for hire .. the Mr Fixit ... the 'machine' as I called himand those skills were called on to help V/Line with its growing pains. V/line was having an increase in passenger numbers and there was unprecedented Government spending on the network through the Regional Rail Revival Project. Someone like Gary was needed to help V/line navigate through all this complexity. It was an extremely high pressure and relentless job, which actually was a perfect fit for Gary's skills, energy and knowledge.

I'd like to make the point that Gary's last, permanent, full time role however officially ended in July 2015 as the Deputy Secretary for Transport - much to the delight of Meredith - who I'm sure was thinking she would have more of Gary's time (accounting also for the various Boards and University work that would continue)

After finishing his last permanent role before starting at V/Line, amazingly Gary took six weeks off, and then agreed to help out as Head of Public Transport Victoria as they needed an experienced set of hands at the time - not a small job. Shortly after settling things down and setting a path forward for them there was a call to help out with another urgent, and important role - the CEO of V/Line. This was needed after the sudden departure of the incumbent CEO in July 2016.

Talk about jumping out the saucepan and into the fire. V/Line had numerous significant issues that needed the skills of someone like Gary. Calm, intelligent leadership. There was no issue too daunting and no problem that couldn't be resolved. Gary righted the ship and regained the confidence of both Government and the Rail Regulator. I can't do justice in this short time to detail the positive impact of Gary's work during this first period of just under 12 months. I mentioned 'first period' because Gary would be back.

After almost four years away doing other things, in September 2020 Gary was asked to help once again, to come back as interim CEO after the job became vacant through the well-publicised termination of the incumbent CEO. Gary picked up where he left off amazingly quickly and was into the role full steam ahead, as if he had never left, at an unrelenting pace. Once again, the ship was righted; stakeholder relationships mended and a thorough Governance reform process commenced. Gary headed back into semi-retirement and a quieter time.

Well we thought the organisation had also seen the final contribution from Gary. But no, there was one more request for help. In late 2021 Gary returned as a Projects mediator to support a very large, complex infrastructure project on the V/Line network. This was a great move as the issues were resolved in a way very typical of Gary. Logical and no fuss.

To the very end Gary was the planner, always thinking ahead. Like how he planned the stages of his health decline by selling his two story house in Torquay, to move into a more practical single level dwelling like how he planned ahead and changed his car to one that would eventually accommodate his wheelchair when needed, to being able to drive to his regular coffee shop that had the disabled parking right out the front, to letting me know months in advance that I may need to pick him up for our coffees when he was unable to drive.

Whilst managing his major health challenge, Gary was always grateful and was the eternal optimist. The last coffee we had was a week before he passed. It was a beautiful day and I'll always remember this last catch-up where we discussed how he planned to modify his wheelchair so he didn't keep slipping forward on bumpy paths."

Bruce Gidley said, "In summary I guess we all want to feel we have left our mark in some way and Gary has certainly

done that. In the physical form there are the many transport facilities that Gary has contributed to building over the years but in my view at least, it is the contribution Gary has made to helping people around him to be the best that they can be. Gary was potentially the most loved person at VicRoads and I am sure that many of us feel that our careers and lives have been richer for having Gary in them. He will be missed but never forgotten."

Gary served on many road associations and boards throughout his career, including Chairman of the Australian Road Research Board, AustRoads and iRAP (the International Roads Assessment Program). He was also Chairman of iMOVE (National Centre for Transport and Mobility Research and Development). He was a member of the Australian Chapter of the Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia (REAAA), and the Linking Melbourne Authority.

He was a member of numerous industry committees and forums, including the Australian Intelligent Transport Systems Advisory Group and the Australian Smart Communities Association. He was also a member of the Advisory Board for the Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress, which brought together global experts to discuss the latest developments in smart mobility.

Working with the late Dr Alf Smith AM in the introduction of the world's first fully integrated electronic tolling system, Gary helped to change the way motorists paid tolls in Victoria, a development that had global implications. Passionate about sharing his knowledge with the next generation, Gary also enjoyed his role as Enterprise Professor, Transport, at the University of Melbourne. At the World Road Congress in Prague in 2023, they established the Gary Liddle Trophy.

His massive contribution to transport was recognised when he was made an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) in 2017 for "distinguished service to public administration in the Victorian transport sector through leadership in policy direction, infrastructure development, road safety and regulatory reform.

Gary was keen on photography, squash, cycling and sport in general. He was a passionate member of the Collingwood Football Club. He also loved surfing and cars. He bought a Porsche in his retirement.

He and Meredith loved international travel and established a charity for the children of Cambodia which assisted 3,500 students in ten schools over the last 12 years. The full name of the charity is Children of Cambodia Foundation (childrenofcambodia.com.au). The website provides the story of how the foundation was established and has a place to make a donation if members wish to do so.



Vale continued

Kevin Thomas 'Tex' Tehan



Kevin worked for VicRoads from September 1982 to February 2014 (32 years) and was initially employed as a Licence Testing Officer. He tested motorcycles, cars and heavy vehicles. Kevin later transferred to road design as a draftsman.

He was a founding member of the Motorcycle Riders Association of Australia and was a committee member of that organisation.

Kevin was born in East Melbourne in 1955 and had interests in music and the arts, which he studied at school at Parade College. He lived in Kew and he maintained a life-long friendship with a host of people who grew up with him – affectionately known as the Kew Boys. They still have regular get-togethers. He started his working life as a telegram boy with the Post Master General's Department (PMG) and later trained as a linesman. He then took a job as a draftsman with the Navy and later joined the CRB.

He was always known as 'Tex' and his sister, Helen, was able to tell me the origins of this nickname.

Back in the 1970s, cowboy-style clothing became quite fashionable. Kevin was one of the first around East Kew who started wearing it. One of his friends commented that he 'looked like a Texan', and then declared he would call him Tex from then on. It stuck. Some people only knew him as Tex, never as Kevin. Helen made sure that his black Akubra was on his coffin, along with his North Melbourne scarf.

Kevin loved motorcycles from a pretty young age and owned many (five Tridents, two Triumphs, one BMW and two Harley Davidsons). He went across to America to buy his first Harley Davidson. His cowboy-style gear matched the bikes. He loved going on bike runs in the mountains.

Kevin was retrenched in 2014 and had trouble starting a new career at that age. He became a volunteer at Vinnies op-shop in Auburn and he loved working there. He was also an affiliated member of RSL Victoria and on the committee of Kew RSL.

He also stood for membership of the Legislative Assembly in Victoria in the seat of Kew in August 1981 representing the motor Bike Riders Association.

Kevin's mother, Margaret, also worked at VicRoads and was a committee member of VicRoads Association.

Kevin was a gentle soul and a loyal member of the VicRoads Association and attended many of our functions.

Stewart Gavin

Stewart must have been our oldest member. His daughter, Deb, wrote to me to say that he died on 1 March 2023 at the age of 106. She said he always loved reading the newsletter especially the back page.

Deb said that he retired in 1976 and remained living in his own home in Mt Eliza until his death. She said:

Peter McCullough, Dad, and Des Chappel, shared the driving for their commute from Mt Eliza to the CRB on a daily basis at that time (1969 - 1976). I heard a lot of very funny stories about their travels together!"

Deb has written a lovely tribute to her father which I will hold off publishing until the next newsletter pending the arrival of some photographs.

Maureen Lawrence

Maureen died on 17 February 2023. She was not a member of the Association but many members would remember her working in the VicRoads Bookshop with Angela Molinaro and later in Planning Investigations with Clive Mottram.

News from members

Max Lay

Max is a very proud man.

One of his grandsons has recently been awarded a PhD (in mining rare minerals). His father and mother both have PhDs, which means that the Lay family has three generations of PhDs in their ranks. Wow!

New members

I extend a warm welcome to the following members: Peter Carter, Heather Thompson and Raj Ramalingam.

We hope to see them at some of our events.

LEST WE FORGET



In the month when we celebrate Anzac Day, I include the war time stories of a few more of our colleagues. They all served in the Second World War.

Warrant Officer Stewart Maxwell Doig 401923



Stewart Doig at enlistment – 1941.

Stewart enlisted in the RAAF in April 1941. He was born in Sandringham in October 1920.

I have no record of his career at the CRB but in the electoral roll of 1949 he is described as a draftsman and in the 1989 one he is an engineer – meaning that he qualified after the war. His wife's name was Joan Margaret and they lived in Hampton.

Stewart had three years of experience with the Metropolitan Gas Company in their drawing office and structural workshop before joining the CRB where he worked as a draftsman in the Bridge Design office. At enlistment, he was in the third year of a civil engineering course at the Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT).

His initial training was carried out in many places – including Camden, Laverton, Benalla, West Sale, Mildura and others. As an Airman Pilot he trained in many different types of aircraft including Wirraway, Kitty Hawk, Oxford, Battle, Ryan, D.H. 82, Wackett Trainer, Avro Trainer and Avro Anson. His total flying hours on completion of his service was 899.50 of which 47.40 hours was flown while serving with No. 80 Squadron, and 168 hours flown on test and ferry duties with No. 5 Aircraft Repair Depot (ARD) in Wagga.

No. 80 Squadron was formed at Townsville in September 1943 and was equipped with Kittyhawk fighter aircraft. It became part of the RAAF's main mobile unit, No. 10 Operational Group. This group's main role was to support the rapid advance of Allied units along the north coast of New Guinea. Once its training was completed the squadron moved to Nadzab in New Guinea in February 1944.

Probably because of the breadth of his training, Stewart became a test pilot. A confidential report written by the Commander of No. 15 ARD said:

'W.O. Doig has shown outstanding keenness and efficiency. While test flying aircraft he has been involved in four accidents due to mechanical or structural faults and in each case exhibited coolness and sound airmanship. These accidents have in no way reduced his enthusiasm for test flying duties. He has a quiet retiring nature and is thought highly of by his fellow mess members. His service outlook is good.'

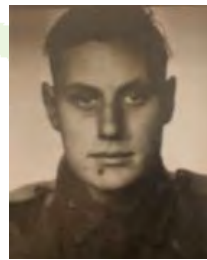
This report implies that he was test flying planes that had been repaired, mechanically and structurally, to ensure that they were fit for service.

At the time of his discharge in February 1945, Stewart was a Warrant Officer in No. 15 ARD in Port Moresby, New Guinea. There is no record of him returning to the CRB after the war.

Stewart died in Carrum in June 1996.

Sergeant Jeffrey (Jeff) William Barton

VX57942 (V1193, VE292725)



Jeff Barton's paybook photograph – 1941.

Jeffrey was born in Malvern in 1919 and, as a 19 year-old student, he joined the CMF in January 1939. He enlisted in the AIF in June 1941. He described himself as a physical culturalist. Jeff certainly had a physical presence. His Attestation Form indicated that he was 6 feet 2½ inches tall but from my personal recollection, I think he was taller. He was certainly solidly built.

He was a well-known figure in the CRB as he distributed the pay packets of cash to the staff every fortnight. He was always accompanied by an armed guard with a holstered pistol. This practice was stopped in 1988 when Victoria Police exposed a plan by the notorious criminal, Russell 'Mad Dog' Cox, to rob the CRB payroll.

Jeff trained at Puckapunyal for four months and in November 1941 he sailed from Sydney to the Middle East on a journey lasting three weeks. Stan Hodgson (Ex-Divisional Engineer Dandenong) remembered Jeff well and said that he played football as a ruckman with the Melbourne Football Club Reserves. Because of his athletic prowess he was put in charge of physical training on the troop ship transporting the men overseas.

I have personal knowledge of him as a footballer. When I joined the CRB in 1961 I was drafted to play in the annual Engineers versus Administration football match. I was selected to play full forward for the Engineers and Jeff was full back for the Administration. He would have been 41 or 42 at the time – about twice my age. In fact, he sailed for the Middle East when I was three months old! I have guilty memories of the game as we collided and Jeff was injured, but he didn't hold a grudge and still delivered my pay packet.



LEST WE FORGET



His archive is not clear about the unit in which he served but it must have been involved with artillery because he was initially a Gunner, then a Bombadier and then a Corporal. In January 1942, while still serving in the Middle East, he was promoted to Sergeant. His archive is not clear as to where he served. The siege of Tobruk was over before he arrived so I suspect he may have served in Palestine – but this is conjecture.

He embarked from the Middle East on 23 May 1942 aboard the SS *Félix Roussel* bound for Sydney. The *Félix Roussel* a French ship, had an interesting story to tell. Soon after the beginning of the Second World War, she was requisitioned by the United Kingdom when she was turned back to Aden (in Yemen) from Port Said, Egypt. She was then sailed to Bombay and later manned by a mixed crew of French volunteers and British, sailing under the Free French flag. The first trip as a troop transport took place in October 1940 when she took Australian and New Zealand troops to Egypt in a convoy.

She made numerous troop transport trips between Bombay and Egypt, and in February 1942, participated in the evacuation of Singapore, having earlier been a member of the last convoy to reach Singapore prior to its capitulation. En route, she had sustained damage during heavy air attacks. In the evacuation, *Félix Roussel* carried at least 1,100 evacuated women and children, RAF personnel and some survivors from HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*. The *Félix Roussel* continued to serve as a troop ship in the Indian Ocean until mid 1944 after which it moved to the Mediterranean theatre until the end of the war.

On his arrival back in Australia, Jeff was posted to the Watsonia Detention Barracks and in September 1942, he was transferred to the Provost Corps in Geelong. The Provost Corps is the Military Police. Its role is to aid the Army in maintaining law and order including custody of prisoners of war, security and law enforcement. They were also responsible for military detention within Australia. The Corps in the Middle East also helped Australian soldiers in directing them to their attack lines as well as handling and guarding prisoners of war.

Jeff's physical presence would have suited the role of policing and warden duties. Although his archive is not specific, he may have carried out a provost role during his service in the Middle east.

During World War 2, the Geelong Gaol became a military detention barracks known as the 8th Australian Detention Barracks or Geelong Detention Barracks. It housed those members of the Army, Navy and Air Force along with a couple of international soldiers, who were incarcerated for offences. It held up to 192 soldiers under sentence during its five year history. These soldiers performed the largest breakout in Victorian prison history when 22 men escaped in July 1945.

Jeff was discharged from the Army in January 1946. His demobilization was deferred as no trained replacements were available to take over the provost duties.

Jeff married Meral Glen Boyd in 1944. He retired from the Chief Accountant's Branch of the CRB in 1980 with 33 years of service. The date of his death is unknown.

Warrant Officer Class 2 Albert John Deverall VX397

Albert was born in Swan Pool in December 1899 and he enlisted in October 1939 at the age of 39. His file states that he was a clerk doing 'secretarial and accounts at the Country Roads Board'. He married Irene May Nimmo in 1931. He was posted to the 9th Australian Ordnance Stores Company and was discharged in September 1943.

The various companies of the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC) were concerned with supply and administration, as well as the demolition and disposal of explosives and salvage of battle-damaged equipment. The Corps contained clerks, logistic officers (including quarter-store staff, warehouse staff and food technicians), petroleum operators, parachute riggers and ammunition technicians. Members of the Corps were nicknamed Roaches.

Albert embarked from Melbourne for the Middle East on HMT X4, arriving at Kantara in Egypt on 17 May 1940. There is mention in the file of him being at Gaza in Palestine. In March 1941, he was evacuated to the 2nd Australian General Hospital in Cairo, Egypt, suffering from an inguinal hernia.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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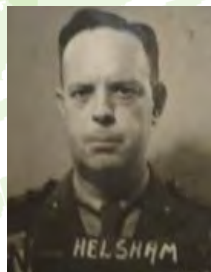
The 2nd Australian General Hospital in Cairo.

Albert had other afflictions that required hospitalisation including lymphangitis – the inflammation of the lymphatic system caused by an infection. There is also mention of injuries to his right arm, his left leg and both thumbs. He spent time in the 60th British General Hospital and, in April 1942, he was transferred to the HQ of the AIF in the Middle East where he received support from the Australian Comforts Fund – an organisation which, like the Red Cross, provided assistance to service men and women.

Albert's health deteriorated further and he was evacuated back to Melbourne on the SS *Coptic* in June 1942. His medical category was downgraded from B to D. He suffered from psoriasis (a skin condition) and Buerger's disease – a disease that affects blood vessels in the arms and legs leading to pain, tissue damage and in the extreme – gangrene. The disease is closely linked to smoking. Back in Melbourne, Albert was assessed as having peripheral circulatory disability and he was discharged from the Army in September 1943 as medically unfit.

I don't know if he returned to work at the CRB.

Albert died in Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital in 1966 and is buried at Fawkner Cemetery.



Frank Helsham's enlistment photograph – 1940.

Major Frank Kyle Helsham

QX42591 (Q185112)

Frank was the long-serving Accountant in Warrnambool Division of the CRB. He was born in Perth, Western Australia, in November 1901 and enlisted in Brisbane in January 1940 at the age of 38. He was married and he described himself as a public accountant and secretary.

His Q185112 service number indicates that he had earlier joined the Australian Army Reserve before enlisting. There is a written statement in his archive – lodged before his enlistment - saying that he had made his will and lodged it with the Bank of Adelaide in Brisbane. After enlistment, he served as a Lieutenant in the 3rd Australian Chief Engineer (Works) and the 53rd Regiment of the Royal Australia Artillery. He was promoted to Captain in October 1940 and became a Temporary Major in September 1942 and a Major in August 1943. Later, he rose to Lieutenant Colonel on the Reserve List.

Frank's work was involved in stores. From May to November 1943, he worked at Adelaide River and Coomalie in the Northern Territory both of which are north of the 14.5 degree (south) parallel thus entitling him to the award of the Defence Medal. From January 1945 to January 1946, he served in Lae and Bougainville in New Guinea and in May 1947 he was Mentioned in Dispatches for his work in

the South West Pacific theatre. In October 1947 he was awarded the Australian Efficiency Medal. This medal is awarded for 12 years of efficient service, meaning that Frank joined the Army Reserve in 1935.

At the time of his discharge in August 1948, he was a Major in the 1st Chief Engineer (Works). Frank joined the CRB in 1948 and retired in 1966.

Frank was active in various groups in Warrnambool – The Warrnambool Theatre Group (as one time Secretary, player, and backstage staff), member of the Rostrum Club and President of United Services Institute, and the CRB's representative for the National Disaster Group.

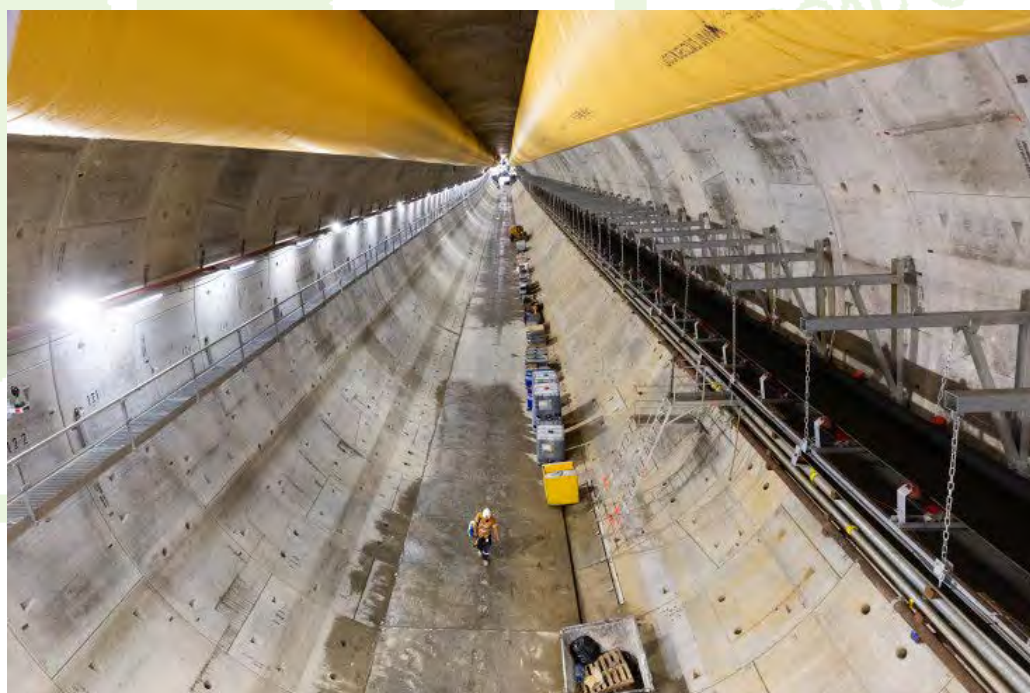
He died in Warrnambool in September 1972.



West Gate Tunnel Project

Here are two photographs showing the progress on the West Gate Tunnel Project.

Tunnel Boring Machine Vida has broken through on the West Gate Tunnel Project, completing a 2.8 kilometre journey and marking the completion of excavation on the first of two tunnels. This milestone was reached after 7000 hours of tunnelling and marks a significant step in the project, with TBM Bella to complete a four-kilometre journey in just a few months.



And now for something beautiful

For this newsletter, I am going to completely go off track and tell you – what I think is – a beautiful family story.

My eldest daughter, Sara, is a huge North Melbourne fan and for her birthday each year I buy her a membership and reserved seat for all of the Kangaroos home games in Melbourne. The photograph below is of her setting out for a Kangaroos game – festooned in blue and white.

Dugald, my eldest son, washes dishes every Monday at the Galleon Café in St Kilda.

The story below appeared on his FaceBook page last Monday night. It is exactly as he wrote it.

"Clarko came into the café this morning.

Alastair Clarkson, the coach of North Melbourne.

With his wife, returned from a game in Perth, the two of them sharing a quiet Monday morning celebration of the weekend that was.

I waited.

Breakfast finished, a lull in their conversation, I knelt by their booth, rubber gloves on, asked if I could tell them a short story.

Told them both about my sister, how she is disabled, how she's a mad keen North supporter. Said how this morning – after doing school drop-off, before starting at the café – I had texted my sister and my father (an Essendon fan), and said how I barrack for Richmond. The text was about how all our teams won on the weekend, a rare occurrence, and when might it happen next.

I thanked him.

Not for North's dramatic win on Saturday night, but for his decision to go coach North.

Said how it has made so many people happy.

People like my sister and by extension, it has made me happy.

What I didn't tell him is how my sister usually texts me when she's at the game – always sitting alone, but in the crowd. And how I often text her before North play.

I did on Saturday night before the game and I watched the last quarter, and we texted each other, sharing in her excitement and relief.

Go Norf! She always texts.

This is my sister.

Scrubbing pots at the back sink, long after they've paid and left, he returns and leans into me. Asks, "What's her name?"

He has a black marker pen and a brand new Kangaroos cap.

Oh, this is so lovely. I tell him my sister will cherish this cap for the rest of her life.

And she will.

A moral of the story? If someone does something that makes you, or makes others happy, let them know. It brings them much joy.

The smile on his face, on his wife's face as I told them this story was true, and wide, and they might remember it forever.

Offered by a dishwasher with rubber gloves on.

Because it means something."

A beautiful story so simply told – about love.



Sara in all her Kangaroo gear.

From the archives

Senior staff of the Country Roads Board and interstate delegates at the Conference of Interstate State Road Authorities Conference held at the Exhibition Building in November 1951.



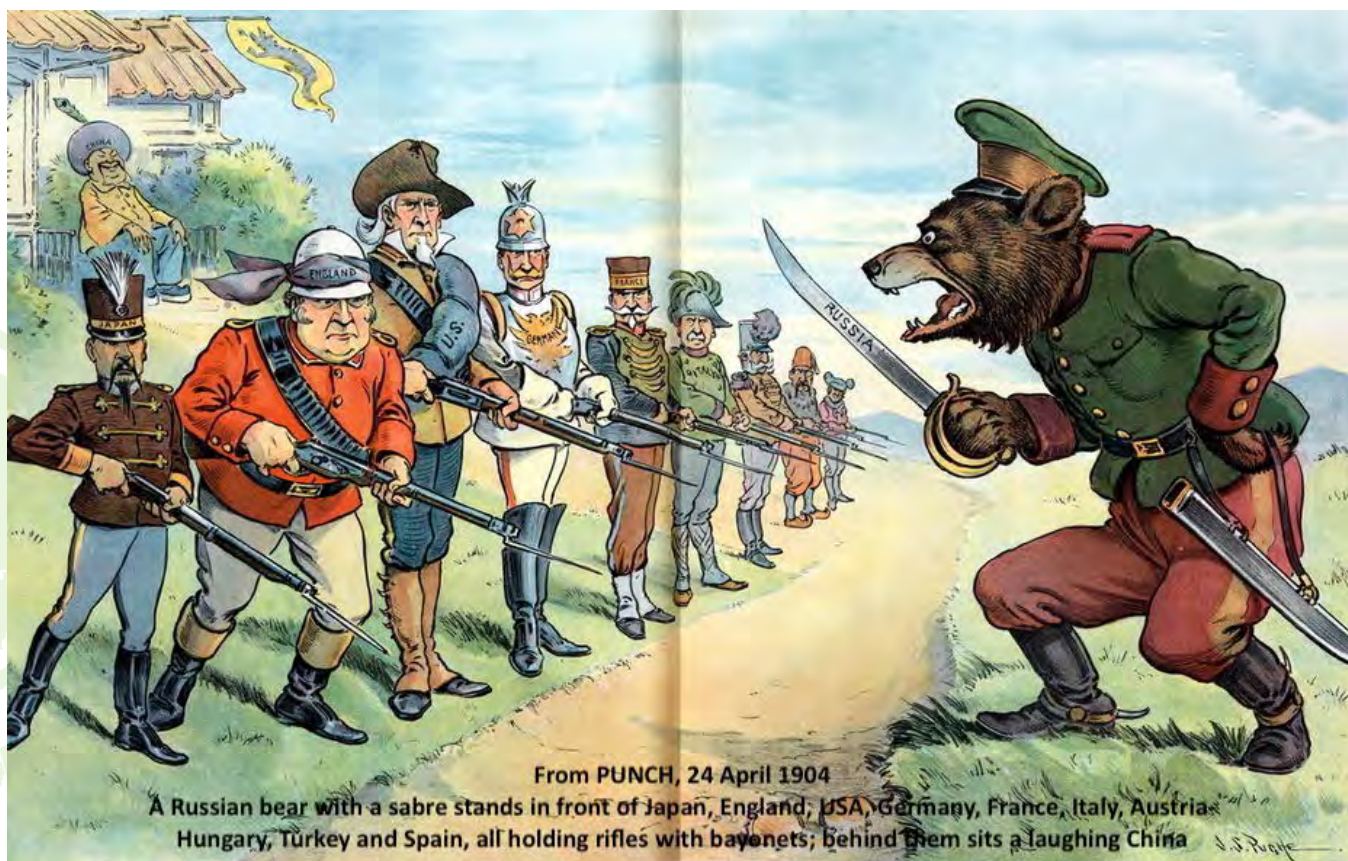
The CRB people are: Frank Corrigan (Chief Engineer) on the extreme left, Donald Darwin (Chairman) fourth from the left, Louis Loder (ex-Chairman who was at this time, the Director-General of the Commonwealth Department of Works) is fourth from the right and Rolf Jansen (Secretary) is on the extreme right.

Building Queen's Bridge over the Yarra River in 1888



Trivia and didactic whimsies

What's changed?



Reliable service

Peter and his wife were cleaning out the attic one day when they came across a ticket from the local shoe repair shop. The date stamped on the ticket showed that it was over eleven years old. They both laughed and tried to remember which of them might have forgotten to pick up a pair of shoes over a decade ago.

"Do you think the shoes will still be in the shop?" Peter asked.

"Not very likely," his wife said.

"It's worth a try," Peter said, pocketing the ticket. He went downstairs, hopped into the car, and drove to the store. With a straight face, he handed the ticket to the man behind the counter.

With a face just as straight, the man said, *"Just a minute. I'll have to look for these."* He disappeared into a dark corner at the back of the shop. Two minutes later, the man called out, *"Here they are!"*

"No kidding?" Peter called back. *"That's terrific! Who would have thought they'd still be here after all this time."*

The man came back to the counter, empty handed. *"They'll be ready next Thursday,"* he said calmly.

Who wants hearing aids?

Kelvin, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical. A few days later, the doctor saw Kelvin walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Kelvin and said, *"You're really doing great, aren't you?"*

Kelvin replied, *"Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful'."*

The doctor said, *"I didn't say that. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful'."*

Trivia and didactic whimsies continued

Mistaken identity

Hospital regulations require a wheel chair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital.

After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator.

On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him. *'I don't know,'* he said. *'She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown.'*

Mother of Invention

It is interesting to see the evolution of invention. Take for example the importance of the wheel to our everyday life.

Millions of years ago, there was no such thing as a wheel. One day, some primitive men were watching their women drag a dead mastodon from the forest to the fire pit. It was exhausting work, The men got tired watching.

Then they noticed some large, smooth, rounded boulders and they had a great idea! They could sit on top of the boulders and get a better view of the women working.

This was the first in a series of breakthrough inventions that ultimately led to television ... and later to the remote control.

David Jellie
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