

From: Ashton
To: Leigh
Cc: Adela; Tony; Martin
Subject: Closed voting places on Election Day
Date: Thursday, 26 October 2023 1:33:11 pm

Hi Leigh,

Just following our chat yesterday, here is a list of voting places that were changed for election day and approved by Karl.

E#	Region	Electorate	Voting Place	New location	Reason for closure	What options were considered:	Reasons	Who was consulted
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
32	Auckland & North	Northland	Whangaruru School	Ōakura Hall (5.6km / 7 mins away)	Unavailability and health & safety of voting place staff. Note security team does not believe staff are at risk.	Use of security guard Nearby marae or church	No considered effective by the school School did not consider these to be suitable	Regional Manager & Security Advisor
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

I have cc'd in others who may be aware of other Election Day closures that happened on the morning of Election Day that I'm not aware of.

Cheers,
Ashton

From: [Martin](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Tony](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place
Date: Wednesday, 25 October 2023 1:48:52 pm
Attachments: [Request to close Whangaruru School.pdf](#)

From: Martin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 11:04 AM
To: Peter [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place

Kia ora Peter. Please see the attached. This has been approved by Karl. Martin

From: [Clare \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [OIA Enquiries](#)
Subject: FW: RNZ Media Request - Northland
Date: Monday, 13 November 2023 12:13:29 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

From: Media Enquiries
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 4:12 PM
To: Krystal Gibbens <[REDACTED]>; Media Enquiries <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: RNZ Media Request - Northland

Hi Krystal

I was just sending this to you - the voting place at Whangaruru School did not open today because of staffing issues, not security issues. Signs were put up at the school on Friday night redirecting people to the voting place at Ōakura Hall, 153 Ōakura Rd, which is a short drive away.

Ngā mihi

Clare

Clare [REDACTED] (she/her) | Senior Media and Communications Advisor | **Electoral Commission** | **Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri** |
PO Box 3220 | Level 4, 34-42 Manners St, Wellington | Phone +[REDACTED] | Mobile [REDACTED] | [vote.nz](#) |
[elections.nz](#)



From: Krystal Gibbens <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 4:08 PM
To: Media Enquiries <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: RNZ Media Request - Northland

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Hi just following up on this request. Police seemed under the impression you had a statement on this already.

Cheers

Krystal Gibbens | Journalist
RNZ, PO Box 123, Wellington, New Zealand, 6140
DDI: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]
[www.rnz.co.nz](#)



From: Krystal Gibbens
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 2:25 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RNZ Media Request - Northland

Afternoon,

In addition to our previous requests, are you also able to confirm that a voting station in Northland at Whangaruru School was not opened this morning due to a security threat as reported by local residents? What was the security threat and are there concerns for any other polling stations?

Thanks

Krystal Gibbens | Journalist
RNZ, PO Box 123, Wellington, New Zealand, 6140
DDI: + [REDACTED]
Mobile: + [REDACTED]
www.rnz.co.nz



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From: [Martin](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Tony](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Whangaruru School
Date: Wednesday, 25 October 2023 1:47:17 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[VP Risk Assessment Whangaruru School .docx](#)

From: Sarah [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 6:36 PM
To: Adele [REDACTED]; Martin [REDACTED]
Subject: Whangaruru School

Hi Martin and Adele,

Quick update on the Whangaruru School situation. We had some wrong information that the intended VP staff were also staff members at Whangaruru School. This is not the case, none of the VP staff work at the school, the only connection was that the VPM was going to pick up the keys from a school staff member.

With this information in mind, we have reviewed our recommendation and believe there is no additional risk in using Whangaruru School as a VP.

I have attached the report from Mark [REDACTED] above, which has also been sent to Phillipa and Peter. I have also updated Karl on the revised recommendation.

Any questions, please let me know.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [REDACTED] ([she/her](#)) | Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience
Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
[REDACTED] | PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140
| [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



From: Sarah [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED], Paris; Media; [REDACTED], Barry
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Voting station threat - Northland
Date: Saturday, 14 October 2023 3:55:00 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Kia ora,

The following response has been provided by our Comms team:

The voting place at Whangaruru School did not open today because of staffing issues, not security issues. Signs were put up at the school on Friday night redirecting people to the voting place at Ōakura Hall, 153 Ōakura Rd, which is a short drive away.

Any questions, please let me know.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [REDACTED] ([she/her](#))

Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience | [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED], Paris <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 2:32 PM
To: Media <[REDACTED]>; [REDACTED], Barry <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Sarah [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Voting station threat - Northland

Electoral Commission Cyber Security Warning: This email originated from outside of the Commission. Please take extra care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the IT Service Desk.

I'm speaking with EC Sarah now. This appears to be a situation which the media have misunderstood. Sarah has context and will follow up within EC now. Nothing to be done from our end pending that thanks Media.

Regards.

P

Inspector Paris [REDACTED]
Major Events | Police National Headquarters |
PO Box 3017 | 180 Molesworth Street Wellington | New Zealand
Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]



From: Media [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 14 October 2023 14:23
To: [REDACTED], Barry <[REDACTED]>; [REDACTED], Paris <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Voting station threat - Northland

Hi both,

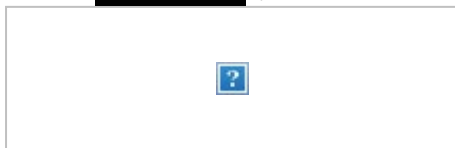
Are you aware of the below?

From: Peter de Graaf <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, 14 October 2023 2:18 PM
To: Media <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Voting station threat - Northland

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Kia ora – are police aware of any threats to voting stations in Northland today?
If so, what was the nature of those threats?
In particular I am told the voting place at Whangaruru School, in Punaruku, did not open today due to security concerns.
Are police investigating the source of the threat?
Do police have a presence at other voting places as a result?
Regards,
Peter de Graaf

Peter de Graaf | Northland reporter
Mobile [REDACTED] | www.rnz.co.nz



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Also note, the views expressed in this message may not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Police. If you have received this message in error, please email or telephone the sender immediately

From: [Martin](#) [redacted]
To: [Sarah](#) [redacted]
Subject: RE: Closure of ED Voting Place
Date: Friday, 13 October 2023 11:53:13 am

Karl has approved the closure. M

From: Sarah [redacted] <[redacted]>
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 11:52 AM
To: Martin [redacted] <[redacted]>
Subject: RE: Closure of ED Voting Place

Thanks for the update Martin.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [redacted] ([she/her](#))

Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience | [redacted]

From: Martin [redacted] <[redacted]>
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 10:40 AM
To: Adele [redacted] <[redacted]>; Ashton [redacted]
<[redacted]>; Sarah [redacted] <[redacted]>
Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place

FYI

From: Martin [redacted]
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 10:40 AM
To: Karl [redacted] <[redacted]>
Cc: Anusha [redacted] <[redacted]>
Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place

Kia ora Karl

Ashton has sent through additional requests relating to closing voting places. Please see the email below and attached in relation to Whangaruru School. I note this is in contrast to the advice provided by our Security team members. As it stands, we do not have staff to work at the voting place as below.

I am happy to meet to discuss this.

Martin

From: Peter [redacted] <[redacted]>
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 8:33 AM
To: Martin [redacted] <[redacted]>

Cc: Ashton [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; Adele [REDACTED]

<[REDACTED]>

Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place

Martin,

This is a situation we need to talk about:

-Our security advisor has spoken to the police; they don't believe the dispute will put our staff at risk.

-None of the local community will work in the VP due to the dispute

-We were planning to send three staff from Whangarei to work at the VP, about a 50-minute drive.

-The three staff don't now want to work at the VP following their discussions with the local community

-Two of these staff have now been allocated to other VPs to fill the gaps as ED staff pull out due to various reasons

-The backup staff pool in Northland is now down to a relatively small number, which is a concern.

-Phillippa [REDACTED] the EM, doesn't feel comfortable sending staff to this school, despite the feedback from the police.

Let me know when you are free to talk.

Thank you,

Peter.

From: Peter [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 12:27 PM

To: Ashton [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Adele [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place

Ashton, we are recommending closing this school on election day. Happy to discuss

From: Phillippa [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 11:01 AM

To: Peter [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Closure of ED Voting Place

Here is the completed form. Let me know if I need to add more information

Ngā Mihi

Phillippa

Phillippa [REDACTED] ([she/her](#)) | Electorate Manager Northland | **Electoral Commission** | **Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri** Ph [REDACTED]
| [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)

From: Peter [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 10:28 AM
To: Phillippa [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Closure of ED Voting Place

From: [Peter](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Ashton](#) [REDACTED]
Cc: [Phillippa](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Closure of ED Voting Place
Date: Friday, 13 October 2023 12:32:25 pm

Thank you Ashton.

From: Ashton [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 12:18 PM
To: Peter [REDACTED] Phillippa [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Closure of ED Voting Place

Hi both,

I can confirm Karl has approved the voting place's closure.

Phillippa – I have inactivated the voting place in EMS.

Thanks,
Ashton

From: Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 12:27 PM
To: Ashton [REDACTED]
Cc: Adele [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Closure of ED Voting Place

Ashton, we are recommending closing this school on election day. Happy to discuss

From: Phillippa [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 11:01 AM
To: Peter [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Closure of ED Voting Place

Here is the completed form. Let me know if I need to add more information

Ngā Mihi
Phillippa

Phillippa [REDACTED] ([she/her](#)) | Electorate Manager Northland | **Electoral Commission** | **Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri** Ph [REDACTED]
| [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)

From: Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 10:28 AM

To: Phillippa [REDACTED]

Subject: Closure of ED Voting Place

From: [Sarah \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [Mark \[REDACTED\]](#)
Subject: RE: Risk assessment Whangaruru School
Date: Thursday, 12 October 2023 5:28:00 pm
Attachments: [VP Risk Assessment Whangaruru School v1.1.docx](#)

Hi Mark,

Thank you so much for all your work on this and getting back to me so quickly with this report.

I have made some edits to the report in order to clarify the concerns I believe VS have.

Any concerns, give me a call. Otherwise should be good to go to Peter and Phillippa. If you could CC me that would be great.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [REDACTED] ([she/her](#))

Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience | [REDACTED]

From: Mark [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 4:19 PM
To: Sarah [REDACTED]
Subject: Risk assessment Whangaruru School

Hi Sarah,

As discussed, my risk assessment for Whangaruru School. The school came back to me and said there are two teachers prepared to help. I have told the EM but she says she can get the staff that were originally going to work there.

Please advise when I can report to Peter.

Best Regards,

Mark

Mark [REDACTED] | Regional Security and Resilience Advisor
[Electoral Commission](#) | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
Phone [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

From: [Tim](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Sarah](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Security threat at polling place
Date: Saturday, 14 October 2023 5:00:39 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

Thanks Sarah

Jo has received a response, loop closed.

Ngā mihi,

Tim [REDACTED] | Legal Policy Support Officer | **Electoral Commission** | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140
Phone [REDACTED] | Fax [REDACTED] | [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



From: Sarah [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 4:50 PM
To: Tim [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Security threat at polling place

Hi Tim,

This is the response from Comms. We have also passed this on to Police comms as RNZ made an enquiry to them about the same issue:

The voting place at Whangaruru School did not open today because of staffing issues, not security issues. Signs were put up at the school on Friday night redirecting people to the voting place at Ōakura Hall, 153 Ōakura Rd, which is a short drive away.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [REDACTED] ([she/her](#))
Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience | [REDACTED]

From: L & P Enquiries [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 2:25 PM
To: Sarah [REDACTED]
Cc: Returns [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Security threat at polling place
Importance: High

Hi Sarah

We have received this report from National Party.
Could you follow up when you have information, VS copied in.

Ngā mihi,

Tim [REDACTED] | Legal Policy Support Officer | **Electoral Commission** | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140
Phone [REDACTED] | Fax [REDACTED] | [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



From: Jo de Joux <jo.dejoux@national.org.nz>

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 2:20 PM

To: L & P Enquiries [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Security threat at polling place

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Kia ora

We have been advised that the Punaruku voting place in Northland is closed due to a "security threat". Our local team have been unable to get any further information about this.

Our local team report that while they were there, there were people are turning up to vote but there is no information available at the location.

Please advise.

Regards

Jo

From: [Karl](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Clare](#) [REDACTED]
Cc: [Sarah](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Whangaruru School
Date: Saturday, 14 October 2023 4:01:59 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

That looks good thanks.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Clare [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 4:00:55 PM
To: Karl [REDACTED]
Cc: Sarah [REDACTED]
Subject: Whangaruru School

Hi Karl – are you happy with this response on Whangaruru School? I have talked to Sarah [REDACTED]

The voting place at Whangaruru School did not open today because of staffing issues, not security issues. Signs were put up at the school on Friday night redirecting people to the voting place at Ōakura Hall, 153 Ōakura Rd, which is a short drive away.

The original enquiry was:

In addition to our previous requests, are you also able to confirm that a voting station in Northland at Whangaruru School was not opened this morning due to a security threat as reported by local residents? What was the security threat and are there concerns for any other polling stations

Clare [REDACTED] (she/her) | Senior Media and Communications Advisor | **Electoral Commission** | **Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri** | PO Box 3220 | Level 4, 34-42 Manners St, Wellington | Phone [REDACTED] | Mobile [REDACTED] | [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



CLOSURE OF AN ELECTION DAY VOTING PLACE

Details: Current Location

Electorate	32 Northland		
Voting Place Name and Number	119 Whangaruru School	Voting Placed Address	2916 Old Russell Road Punaruku

Details: ALTERNATIVE Location

We will direct voters to an existing VP at Ōakura Hall which is 5.6km or 7minutes drive

Electorate	32 Northland –		
Voting Place Name and Number	114 Ōakura Hall	Voting Placed Address	153 Oakura Road Ōakura, Whangaruru South

Reason for Closure

Due to some unrest in the local community the school and staff have been subjected to a number of incidents recently. This has included serious harassment of the staff. The admin staff are now working from home and one of them is on stress leave due to receiving death threats.

I am concerned about the Health and Safety of both our staff and voters and do not feel comfortable putting them into this situation. As we were unable to recruit locals to this VP the staff were travelling from Whangārei or Ōakura to work there.

Details for request to move:

What options were considered:	Keeping the VP open and placing security guards on the premises either from Fri eve until Sunday morning or just on Election Day I considered using the nearby marae or LDS Church but after consulting with the school they didn't feel either would be neutral ground in the circumstances.		
Why were the options unsuitable:			
Request completed by:			Date: 12/10/2023
	Phillippa	Electorate Manager	

National Office Response

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINED	
Chief Electoral Officer:	[REDACTED]	Date: 13/10/23

From: [Sarah](#) [redacted]
To: [Mark](#) [redacted]
Subject: Take two.
Date: Thursday, 12 October 2023 5:44:00 pm
Attachments: [VP Risk Assessment Whangaruru School v1 2.docx](#)
[image001.jpg](#)

Hi again,

If you could check **that** this all looks accurate, that would be great

Any concerns, give me a bell. I'll go and talk with Martin to clarify the situation.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [redacted] ([she/her](#)) | Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience
Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
[redacted] | PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140
| [vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



VP Risk Assessment

Prepared by: Mark [REDACTED]

Date: 12 October 2023

This document is a risk assessment for Whangaruru School, Russell Road, Punaruku 0184.

Executive Summary

The Electorate Manager for Northland has information that there is a local dispute between two groups associated with Whangaruru School, which has resulted in school staff being harassed [REDACTED]

My enquiries reveal the threats are directed solely to two members of school staff.

There is no identified heightened risk to any electoral staff, or to voters.

I recommend that this VP is suitable and safe to be used.

Introduction

Whangaruru School is a small rural school with a principal, three teachers and two administration staff.

Phillippa [REDACTED] (Northland Electorate Manager) has received information of an ongoing dispute between two groups associated with the school. This dispute has resulted in death threats being made to school staff. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Information suggests the dispute is not connected to the election in anyway and is purely a dispute between the groups and the school. This has resulted in a principal leaving in the last two months.

I have enquired into the nature of the dispute and have discovered it is related to the last principal, who left suddenly. The nature of the dispute is subject to an NDA (non-disclosure agreement).

The inability of the staff to counter accusations made by the community, because of the NDA, is the reason for the ongoing dispute and the threats.

One of the staff affected by threats has assured me there is no risk to any of our election staff. The threats have only been directed at two members of the school staff.

Checks with the Northland Police Operations Manager [REDACTED] indicated there have been no incidents connected to the school reported on Police systems.

The EM is investigating whether we can get a Māori warden to be present at the site.

Recommendations

I recommend that from a security perspective, Whangaruru School can safely be used as a Voting Place on Election Day.

I further recommend we do have a security guard for reassurance. An additional briefing should be given to the guard to ensure they are vigilant and aware of a small but potential risk.

From: [Sarah](#) [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] (Steve)
Cc: [Mark](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: Whangaruru School VP
Date: Thursday, 12 October 2023 1:54:00 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

Hi Steve,

As discussed, there is a planned Voting Place at Whangaruru School (2916 Russell Road, Punaruku 0184) in the Northland electorate on Election Day.

The Electorate Manager has heard that there is a local dispute which has resulted in Whangaruru School staff being harassed [REDACTED]

We are conducting a security and risk assessment to determine whether it is still safe for EC staff and voters to use this facility on Election Day, and would appreciate any context or background info Police are able to provide to assist us with this process.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [REDACTED] ([she/her](#)) | Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience
Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
[REDACTED] | PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140
[vote.nz](#) | [elections.nz](#)



From: Sarah [REDACTED]
To: Adele [REDACTED]; Martin [REDACTED]
Subject: Whangaruru School
Date: Thursday, 12 October 2023 6:35:00 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[VP Risk Assessment Whangaruru School .docx](#)

Hi Martin and Adele,

Quick update on the Whangaruru School situation. We had some wrong information that the intended VP staff were also staff members at Whangaruru School. This is not the case, none of the VP staff work at the school, the only connection was that the VPM was going to pick up the keys from a school staff member.

With this information in mind, we have reviewed our recommendation and believe there is no additional risk in using Whangaruru School as a VP.

I have attached the report from Mark [REDACTED] above, which has also been sent to Phillippa and Peter. I have also updated Karl on the revised recommendation.

Any questions, please let me know.

Nga mihi,
Sarah

Sarah [REDACTED] ([she/her](#)) | Senior Advisor, Organisational Security & Resilience
Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri
[REDACTED] | PO Box 3220 | Level 10, 34 – 42 Manners Street | Wellington | 6140
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