

# Creative Cultural Diversity Network

## Creative Cultural Diversity Network Submission to the Review of REVIVE: Australia's National Cultural Policy (FINAL)

This submission is still in draft form, and we are continuing to consult with CCDN members and partners. Please feel free to reference it or adapt sections for use in your own submissions to the Revive Review.

### Definitions

#### Culturally and Racially Marginalised

Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CaRM) is commonly used as an umbrella term for people and communities who experience marginalisation because of race, culture, ethnicity, language, migration history, refugee experience, religion or perceived difference from dominant Anglo-Celtic norms. This includes, but is not limited to, underrepresented Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities, People of Colour, racialised migrants and refugees, and members of the Global Majority.

Throughout this submission, we also use the term “underrepresented CaLD”. Like CaRM, the term focuses on communities who experience structural barriers due to race, culture, ethnicity, language, migration or refugee background. We also acknowledge that these terms are imperfect and contested, and that individuals and communities have the right to self-identify.

#### Global Majority:

Global Majority refers to Black, Indigenous and racialised peoples who collectively constitute most of the world's population, yet have been historically marginalised through colonisation, racism and unequal power structures. Used across international anti-racist, cultural and human rights discourse, the term reframes communities often described as “minorities” by recognising their demographic, cultural and political significance globally.

#### Community Arts and Cultural Development

Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) refers to arts and cultural practice developed with, by and for communities. CACD centres community participation, self-determination, cultural expression, local knowledge and social connection. Its practice supports communities in telling their own stories, strengthening cultural identity, building solidarity, and addressing social, cultural, or systemic issues through creative processes.

#### Social Cohesion

CCDN understands social cohesion as the conditions that allow communities to participate, tell complex stories, disagree safely, navigate difference, build solidarity, exercise cultural rights and participate in cultural life, rather than assimilation, passive harmony, silence or consensus.

#### Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism

Cultural diversity and anti-racism are related, but not interchangeable. Supporting cultural diversity is essential to representation, participation and cultural rights. Anti-racism is required to address structural barriers, racial hierarchies and institutional practices that determine whose stories are valued and funded for programming, reviewing, collecting and protecting.

**Equity-tested** means assessing whether a policy, program or funding stream is accessible, fair and effective for communities that experience structural barriers. For CaRM communities, this means considering who can access and benefit from a program, who may be excluded, who holds decision-making power, and whether the program responds to intersectional barriers including

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class, caste, language, religion, migration pathway, education, visa status, Disability, geography and proximity to institutional power.

## AI Assessment and Language

CCDN notes that digital tools may be used to review submissions. This makes clear definitions essential, and also raises concerns about whether such tools may misinterpret or soften community-specific and anti-racist language. CCDN therefore uses explicit terms throughout this submission, including those defined by migrant, refugee, diaspora and forced migration communities.

## About the Creative Cultural Diversity Network (CCDN)

This submission is made on behalf of the Creative Cultural Diversity Network (CCDN), a national network facilitated by Diversity Arts Australia (DARTS). CCDN brings together more than 120 creative workers, arts and cultural organisations, advocates, and local government representatives, committed to racial and cultural equity across Australia's arts, screen, and creative sectors. It strengthens connection, solidarity and collective advocacy, and supports structural change for CaRM and underrepresented CaLD creatives and communities.

The network operates through two interrelated streams: Sharing and Solidarity, which centres the lived experience and priorities of CaLD, CaRM, migrant, refugee, People of Colour and Global Majority creative workers; and Advocacy, which brings together organisations and local government representatives working with CaLD and CaRM creatives and communities.

In preparing this submission, CCDN held two member roundtables and also invited written feedback to ensure the recommendations reflect a broad range of perspectives from across the network.

## Introduction

CCDN welcomes this review as an opportunity to strengthen Australia's cultural policy and ensure it reflects contemporary realities in the arts and creative industries. The network acknowledges REVIVE as a significant positive policy that delivered renewed investment, structural reforms and a stronger national framework for Australia's arts, culture and creative industries. Yet structural gaps remain.

Equity is critical to Australia's arts and creative sectors. It determines participation and representation, which contribute to growth, innovation and sustainability. Although REVIVE reflects these principles, the policy does not explicitly recognise CaRM and underrepresented CaLD communities, their central role in Australia's cultural life in building connection, belonging and solidarity, and their ongoing underrepresentation in arts leadership and organisational funding.

This omission excludes these communities from processes that determine how and what is measured, funded, prioritised and held accountable<sup>1</sup>. This has material consequences. Communities that are not explicitly named are often left out of the systems that determine what is measured, funded, prioritised and held accountable beyond the creative sector amid rising racism, social fragmentation and economic precarity. A policy that fails to explicitly recognise CaRM and underrepresented CaLD communities risks devaluing their complex and varied stories, reducing understanding, belonging and participation across communities that reflect contemporary Australia, and weakening the culturally inclusive, democratic and connected society it aims to support<sup>2</sup>.

Community-led and CaCD practice is vital for providing meaningful ways for people to engage with arts and culture. It must be seen as part of Australia's cultural and social resilience, especially at a time when climate disruption impacts marginalised

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<sup>1</sup> Reference research on underrepresentation of CaRM/CaLD creatives across arts leadership, grant outcomes, workforce, screen/media representation and/or cultural participation.

<sup>2</sup> Add evidence/ or case study showing social, cultural or democratic benefits of culturally diverse creative participation.

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communities hardest<sup>3</sup>. CCDN recommends the next phase of REVIVE positions anti-racism, cultural safety, accountability, freedom of expression and equitable participation at the heart of Australia's cultural and creative systems.

## Recommendations

1. Strengthen First Nations self-determination and protect Indigenous Cultural Authority and Intellectual Property.
2. Explicitly name CaRM, underrepresented CaLD, migrant, refugee, diaspora and forced migration communities and identify direct, measurable actions to address them.
3. Resource a national Anti-Racism and Cultural Equity Strategy aligned with REVIVE and other national frameworks.
4. Protect freedom of artistic expression, including independent safe reporting mechanisms for censorship, racism, political targeting, institutional interference and discrimination.
5. Recognise and resource CaCD as a distinct, essential sector and provide regional and CaRM cultural infrastructure.
6. Create protected funding streams, including a Creator Fund for CaRM creatives and organisations.
7. Develop career development pathways in leadership, workforce and participation for CaRM, CaLD, migrant and refugee creatives.
8. Embed mandatory anti-racism, equity and cultural safety training, action planning, benchmarking, auditing and public reporting for funded organisations.
9. Reform funding processes, assessment and access pathways to improve equity for CaRM creatives, CaCD, community-led and small-to-medium organisations.
10. Regulate AI and emerging technologies across the arts and creative industries.

## Recommendations in detail

### **Recommendation 1. Strengthen First Nations self-determination and protect Indigenous Cultural Authority and Intellectual Property.**

CCDN strongly supports retaining First Nations First as the foundational pillar of REVIVE, recognising First Nations sovereignty, self-determination and cultural authority as central to Australia's cultural life and identity.

Anti-racism and cultural equity work must foreground First Nations communities and must not conflate their experiences of dispossession and colonisation with those of settler-migrant communities. While these experiences may intersect, they require distinct policy, governance and self-determination approaches. This includes continued investment in First Nations-led arts and cultural infrastructure, governance and decision-making across publicly funded cultural institutions and programs, stronger ICIP protections and strengthened truth-telling and language revitalisation processes<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Cite climate justice or disaster resilience evidence relevant to migrant, refugee, regional and racially marginalised communities

<sup>4</sup> Align/cite REVIVE Pillar 1 commitments and current ICIP reform status.

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## **Recommendation 2. Explicitly name CaRM, underrepresented CaLD, migrant, refugee, diaspora and forced migration communities and identify direct, measurable actions to address them.**

The revised policy should explicitly name Culturally and Racially Marginalised communities and recognise racism as a structural barrier in the arts and cultural sector.

Consistent language shapes equity in institutional priorities, funding, reporting and accountability. CCDN recommends using CaRM terminology across policy, funding, evaluation, and reporting frameworks, alongside underrepresented CaLD groups, where relevant, to ensure these communities' visibility and decision-maker accountability.

Policy must recognise that forced migration, temporary migration, settlement, refugee status, diaspora identity, and intergenerational marginalisation cannot be collapsed into a single category of experience. Funding frameworks must address barriers facing temporary residents, international students, new migrants and refugees, including eligibility restrictions, visa precarity, and limited access to training, employment and funding<sup>5</sup>.

REVIVE must align with national multicultural, settlement, migration and anti-racism policy, including the Multicultural Framework Review. Recommendations 8, 9 and 10 of the Multicultural Framework Review Roadmap are directly related to arts and cultural policy: Recommendation 8 calls for Creative Australia to undertake a whole-of-government review of investment in community cultural programs; Recommendation 9 calls for Creative Australia to lead the development of a pilot multi-year seed fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges; and Recommendation 10 calls for the Office for the Arts to establish a program for multicultural community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation. Many migrant, refugee and forced migration creatives first connect through settlement or community organisations rather than arts institutions. Policy must support creative pathways and artistic development, not just showcase multicultural art<sup>6</sup>. This must include place-based and community-led cultural practices, such as CACD, that position CaRM communities as decision-makers and shapers of cultural narratives.

## **Recommendation 3. Resource a national Anti-Racism and Cultural Equity Strategy & Code of Practice aligned with REVIVE and other national frameworks.**

Embed anti-racism in all cultural infrastructure. CCDN recommends a national, industry-led Anti-Racism and Cultural Equity Strategy aligned with REVIVE, the Australian Human Rights Commission National Anti-Racism Framework<sup>7</sup>, and the Multicultural Framework Review Roadmap.<sup>8</sup>

Co-design and lead the strategy with First Nations, CaRM, Disability, and other equity-led organisations. Define sector standards, accountability, and practical tools for workplaces, governance, programming, collections, criticism, commissioning, funding, and partnerships.

Support independent CaRM artists, freelancers, and sole traders by improving access to advice, advocacy, reporting, training, legal and copyright support, and assistance in cases of racism, political targeting, censorship, or exclusion.

Embed racial literacy across government agencies, funders, panels, boards, risk frameworks, and policies. Ensure decision-makers have cultural knowledge, anti-racism capability, and lived-experience expertise.

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<sup>5</sup> Cite evidence or examples on eligibility barriers for temporary residents, international students or newly arrived creatives.

<sup>6</sup> *Multicultural Framework Review, Towards Fairness: A Multicultural Australia for All*, Australian Government, 2024, pp. 56–57, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/multicultural-framework-review/Documents/report-summary/multicultural-framework-review-report-english.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *National Anti-Racism Framework: A roadmap for governments, businesses and community organisations to address all forms of racism in Australia*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2024, <https://humanrights.gov.au/resource-hub/race/anti-racism-framework>

<sup>8</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *National Anti-Racism Framework: A roadmap for governments, businesses and community organisations to address all forms of racism in Australia*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2024, <https://humanrights.gov.au/resource-hub/race/anti-racism-framework>

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Review funding and risk frameworks through an anti-racism and equity lens, including who defines “risk” and how creative work addressing racism, human rights, diaspora politics, and social justice is assessed<sup>9</sup>.

Allocate dedicated funding for research, case studies, best practice exemplars, and tools to understand and address racism in the arts and cultural sector. Build on resources like the Creative Equity Toolkit<sup>10</sup> and Anti-Racism & The Arts campaign<sup>11</sup>.

Develop and implement a National Anti-Racism and Cultural Equity Code of Practice to set standards and accountability for publicly funded bodies, institutions, festivals, media, and independent practice. The code should address culturally safe workplaces, governance, programming, curatorial decisions, collections, criticism, partnerships, complaints handling, audience engagement, reporting, benchmarking, and independent assessment. [Note: bodies like Creative Workplaces and SaCSA are well-placed to support aspects of this work.]

## **Recommendation 4. Protect freedom of artistic expression, including independent safe reporting mechanisms for censorship, racism, political targeting, institutional interference and discrimination.**

CCDN recommends REVIVE explicitly protect freedom of expression, CACD and anti-racism as interconnected and essential to democracy and a culturally diverse creative sector.

Freedom of expression challenges racism and dominant narratives by enabling documentation of lived experiences of CaRM, underrepresented CaLD, migrant, refugee and diaspora creatives, preserving cultural memory, building solidarity and engaging public participation.

Community-led artistic practice can transform exclusion and harm into collective expression, protest, memory and cultural power.

Scrutiny, censorship, political targeting and risk of institutional interference are increased for racialised and marginalised artists addressing racism, colonisation, war, displacement or social justice, and greater for freelance and precarious workers<sup>12</sup>. CCDN recommends safe, independent ways for artists and creative workers to raise concerns without retaliation and protections that address how racialised or faith-based communities experience racism and religious discrimination—without setting communities against each other.

REVIVE must require publicly funded institutions and programs to uphold artistic freedom, transparent arm’s length decision-making and peer assessment in sectoral funding, grants governance, complaints, public commissions, contracts and processes for withdrawal, cancellation or alteration of artistic work.

*[Note: aim to include examples of how AHRC and Creative Workplaces can play a role in this]*

## **Recommendation 5. Recognise and resource CACD as a distinct, essential sector and provide regional and CaRM cultural infrastructure.**

CCDN recommends REVIVE formally recognise CACD as a distinct, skilled and essential practice arena and provide dedicated investment, coordination and support for regional, Western Sydney, outer-suburban and remote CaRM and underrepresented CACD.

CACD arts community-led, place-based and participatory cultural practice.

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<sup>9</sup> Venice Biennale example? // add example of political or racialised “risk” limiting artistic work.

<sup>10</sup> Diversity Arts Australia, *Creative Equity Toolkit*, <https://creativeequitytoolkit.org.au>. The toolkit provides practical resources, case studies and guidance to support equity, diversity and inclusion across the arts and cultural sector.

<sup>11</sup> Diversity Arts Australia, *Anti-Racism & The Arts*, <https://www.antiracism.art>. The campaign and resource kits were initially developed for New South Wales and support individuals and organisations to build racial literacy and implement anti-racist practice across the arts and creative sector.

<sup>12</sup> example of censorship or political targeting affecting a racialised artist or organisation

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CACD practice requires skill, time, trust, cultural knowledge and long-term relationships that enables communities, particularly those historically excluded, to express and document lived experience, build local cultural knowledge, develop creative leadership, participate in public dialogue and shape the stories about their lives and places. It must not be treated as informal outreach, unpaid community engagement or a secondary pathway into “real” arts practice<sup>13</sup>.

REVIVE must support capacity-building infrastructure, grant-writing assistance, touring support and strengthened support for Regional Arts Development Organisations and intermediaries working with CaRM communities<sup>14</sup>.

## **Recommendation 6. Create protected funding streams, including a Creator Fund for CaRM creatives and organisations.**

CCDN recommends protected funding streams and a dedicated CaRM Creator Fund to support CaRM, underrepresented CaLD, migrant, refugee and diaspora artists, creatives, organisations and community-led projects.

Funding systems remain difficult to navigate for many small, independent and community-led organisations. Existing models often favour established organisations, institutional networks and applicants who have the time, language, confidence and grant-writing resources to compete<sup>15</sup>. Properly protected resource streams facilitated by devolved funding models to reduce mainstream institutional gatekeeping must provide direct funding for CaRM-led organisations and initiatives.

CCDN recommends REVIVE publish clear and transparent investment targets, budgets and data to facilitate equitable funding applications, outcomes, leadership opportunities, workforce participation and sector programs for CaRM and underrepresented CaLD creatives. Funding reform must integrate capacity-building support, grant-writing assistance, organisational development, accessible information, longer lead times, language support and, where eligibility allows, guidance for newly arrived, refugee-background and temporary resident creatives.

Equity, anti-racism and cultural safety planning must be legitimised as a necessary funded activity involving staff time, facilitation, community consultation, implementation and evaluation.

## **Recommendation 7. Develop career development pathways in leadership, workforce and participation for CaRM, CaLD, migrant and refugee creatives.**

Representation without leadership pathways, governance participation, curatorial authority, funding access, institutional employment and long-term career progression inhibits systemic change. CCDN recommends a national leadership, workforce, and participation pathways strategy supporting CaRM, underrepresented CaLD, migrant, and refugee creatives across all career stages.

The strategy must include sustained leadership and mentoring programs, paid internships and traineeships, mid-career development, governance and board development, curatorial and producing pathways, representation on peer assessment panels and decision-making bodies, and organisational support to ensure culturally safe workplaces capable of retaining and supporting diverse leadership. This must recognise that unpaid roles and pathways can exclude CaRM, working-class, Disabled, regional, and early-career practitioners, and that marginalised people often contribute lived experience and governance labour without remuneration.

Institutions must be supported in recruiting, retaining, and supporting CaRM staff, leaders, curators, producers, and decision-makers, and in sharing power with them. Organisational diversity targets and accountability measures must address leadership, governance, programming, commissioning, curatorial, collections and acquisitions, recognising that decisions about

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<sup>13</sup> cite CACD sector research, existing national CaCD advocacy or examples of effective CaCD practice

<sup>14</sup> cite regional arts infrastructure evidence, Western Sydney cultural infrastructure data or Regional Arts Development Organisation examples

<sup>15</sup> cite data on grant success rates, application rates or structural barriers for CaRM creatives and small-to-medium organisations.

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what is collected, conserved, exhibited and interpreted shape Australia's cultural memory. This must be accompanied by investment in pathways, organisational capacity-building, and culturally safe support structures to enable the long-term retention and advancement of CaRM, CaLD, migrant, and refugee creatives across the sector.

## **Recommendation 8. Embed mandatory anti-racism, equity and cultural safety training, action planning, benchmarking, auditing and public reporting for funded organisations.**

Public investment must require measurable commitments to equity, participation, cultural safety and anti-racism. CCDN recommends that publicly funded arts organisations be required to develop, resource and implement Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Action Plans.

Plans must include commitments to workforce and leadership targets, programming and commissioning, curatorial and collections, cultural safety policies, complaints pathways, reporting and evaluation frameworks, clear timelines and accountability through measurable benchmarks and public reporting across the organisational workforce<sup>16</sup>.

Accountability must build independent auditing, benchmarking and public reporting into funding and evaluation frameworks, rather than rely solely on self-assessment. Arts, screen and media organisations must conduct regular, independent audits of programming, collections, criticism, content and workplace representation, and public reporting on targets, progress and gaps.

Training must be embedded as a core workforce capability across publicly funded organisations. It must include executive and board-level training, workforce-wide anti-racism education, organisational capacity building, practical implementation resources, ongoing mentoring and support.

Institutional equity and inclusion roles must be properly resourced, appropriately recruited, culturally competent, empowered and accountable, rather than treated as symbolic evidence of progress while limiting racialised and marginalised staff authority, increasing isolation or failing to act on identified structural issues. [Reference: SACSAs and Creative Work; UK Diversity Standards.]

## **Recommendation 9. Reform funding systems, assessment processes, access pathways and definitions of excellence**

CCDN recommends reform that embeds intersectionality, racial equity and cultural safety in funding systems, programs and assessment processes, access pathways, and Creative Australia and Office for the Arts governance. This includes improving equity for CaRM creatives, CACD, socially engaged and community-led practice, and small-to-medium organisations, and requires genuine co-leadership and equitable remuneration where projects involve CaRM communities.

Public funding processes must limit box-ticking practices that name CaRM individuals or organisations as partners without genuine input, ownership, decision-making power or equitable remuneration. Projects involving CaRM communities must require formal partnership agreements for co-leadership, decision-making authority, intellectual property, cultural rights, and fair payment.

Funding systems must interrogate how "excellence" is defined. Dominant measures of artistic excellence often privilege Western, Eurocentric and institutionally validated art forms, training pathways, and cultural hierarchies. Assessment processes must value diverse cultural practices, community-based expertise, oral traditions, multilingual practice, traditional and contemporary forms, and creative work developed outside dominant institutions<sup>17</sup>.

Equity initiatives must not operate in isolation. All Creative Australia programs, initiatives and funding streams should be diversity- and equity-tested to ensure intersectionality is embedded across workforce development, funding, governance, audience engagement, digital policy, Disability access and community participation. An intersectional approach recognises differences within CaRM communities, including class, caste, Disability, language, religion, migration pathway, education, visa status and proximity to

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<sup>16</sup> cite examples of public diversity reporting in arts, screen or cultural institutions

<sup>17</sup> Cite research or sector example showing how "excellence" frameworks can exclude culturally diverse or community-led practice

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institutional power. Cultural equity policy must not treat CaRM communities as homogenous and must support those most structurally excluded within and beyond these communities.

CCDN also recommends equitable tax and social security reform to address the precarious conditions of creative work, particularly for freelance, contract and project-based artists and small-to-medium organisations<sup>18</sup>.

## Recommendation 10. Regulate AI and emerging technologies across the arts and creative industries

CCDN recommends that REVIVE incorporate a robust regulatory and ethical framework for the use of AI, data extraction and emerging technologies, grounded in artist consent, remuneration, copyright, ICIP, cultural rights and equity. These technologies raise urgent concerns about artists' work being scraped, extracted, reproduced or reused without consent or remuneration. Most at risk are First Nations cultural material, CaRM artists, community-held knowledge, language, archives, storytelling and works grounded in cultural identity or collective memory<sup>19</sup>.

Artists, including CaRM artists, must have control over where their work is seen, how it is used and payment for use. Policy settings must protect cultural sovereignty, copyright, moral rights, attribution, consent and community-held cultural rights.

Policy responses to emerging technologies must regulate harm and support community-led experimentation with digital participation, gaming, online storytelling and cross-sector models that expand cultural engagement for diverse communities<sup>20</sup>.

## Conclusion

The next iteration of REVIVE presents an important opportunity to build on recent reforms and strengthen Australia's cultural policy amid national and global uncertainty. It can play a crucial role in building community, expanding employment and participation pathways for CaRM creatives, and fostering strong, diverse audiences.

Anti-racism, cultural safety, freedom of expression, participation, workforce sustainability, community-led practice and accountability are interconnected elements of cultural infrastructure and democratic participation. For REVIVE to realise its vision of "a place for every story," CaRM and underrepresented CaLD communities must be more than visible. They must be named, resourced, protected, represented and empowered to shape the sector's future.

This requires explicit recognition, sustained investment, meaningful accountability, independent oversight and a long-term commitment to cultural equity across the creative ecosystem. Community-engaged and participatory cultural practices are essential to achieving these outcomes, especially amid social fragmentation, climate instability, economic precarity, censorship and rising inequality.

CCDN welcomes the opportunity to continue contributing to this work and to support a national cultural policy that reflects the full complexity and diversity of contemporary Australia.

This submission is endorsed by CCDN members, including [insert endorsing organisations and/or note "individual members of the CCDN" if names are not listed].

We welcome further discussion of this submission.

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<sup>18</sup> Cite relevant tax reform recommendations, arts income data or evidence on precarious creative labour

<sup>19</sup> Cite current copyright, AI or ICIP policy discussions, and any arts-sector submissions on AI and artist consent

<sup>20</sup> Example of community-led digital participation, gaming, online storytelling or creative technology initiative

# **Creative Cultural Diversity Network**

Kind regards

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