DEFENCE RESERVES ASSOCIATION SUBMISSION - DEFENCE WHITE PAPER 2015

Executive Summary

Due to the need to defend the maritime approaches to Australia, as well as being able to meet a range of other contingencies in its region, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) as currently structured is unable to sustain prolonged operations in a mid or higher level conflict. Further, Australia’s small population cannot afford a large standing full time ADF.

Since Australia’s involvement in East Timor in 1999/2000, there has been greater recognition of the value of Reservists in providing capability to the ADF. Importantly, all three ADF Services have moved to incorporate their Reserve Forces as part of their ‘total force’.

The Defence Reserves Association (DRA) makes a number of recommendations for consideration in the Defence White Paper 2015 process that are aimed at optimising the use of Reservists in the three ADF Services in enhancing the capability of the ADF out to 2030.

The principal recommendations are that the 2015 Defence White Paper must define an appropriate set of roles and missions for each Reserve Force, that implementation of these roles and tasks are fully funded and that a timeline for implementation is specified.

Background Issues

- General public apathy to National strategic Defence matters/issues, hence there are limited votes in Defence
- National Security issues require more community exposure and discussion
- Border protection of such a huge continent is problematic
- Australia’s population cannot support a large standing full time ADF
- Compulsory conscription is an anathema to the Australian society
- Australia cannot be militarily completely self reliant
- Current inability of the ADF to sustain prolonged operations in a mid or higher level conflict
- The lesson of East Timor where we almost ran out of people appears to have been forgotten in the absence of plans for a ‘surge’ capacity
- The ADF has no significant military reserve in a strategic sense
- The Reserve Forces are fundamental to providing a surge capacity
- Australia’s Defence industry cannot totally support our current weaponry
- Australia has minimal strategic fuel storage
- A Whole of Government (WOG) approach is required in determining the capability required of the ADF out to 2030 and the funding of this capability.

DRA’s Outline View of the ADF in relation to Current Reserve Capability

Royal Australian Navy (RAN)

- The RAN is basically platform centric and therefore its Reserves are a people capability
The RAN is an integrated workforce

RAN seagoing would be restricted without Reservist augmentation of crews

The RAN appears to have ignored its shore based requirements that would suit Reservists

The RAN has no surge capacity in terms of platforms

The RAN has two distinct streams of Reservists: supplementary capability for sea going war fighting, support, planning, etc; while complementary capability comes from Reservists with civilian skill sets, not in the Permanent Naval Force (PNF)

About 93% of the RAN’s ‘supplementary’ Reserves are ex-PNF personnel. As Navy Port Divisions have been disbanded, there is no base for individual Reservists

Planning and management of the Naval Reserve is deficient

Although the Active Naval Reserve consists of around 4500 personnel, less than 50% of it is actually used

Identification of personnel capability ‘hollowness’ is required to plan and recruit to cover skill sets not available to the PNF, but are latent within the community

Naval Reservists’ skill sets diminish quickly unless re-employed, therefore the effective ‘life’ of an ex-permanent member who is not re-employed is restricted to around 4 or 5 years.

Current Capability Shortfalls for the Naval Reserve

The Naval Reserve should continue as a vital component of the RAN contributing capability to the ADF.

The Naval Reserve is a people capability integrated with the PNF to achieve the RAN’s mission ‘to fight and win at sea’.

As stated earlier, Naval Reservists provide both complementary and supplementary capability. Complementary capability is provided by Reservists with skill sets that are not available within the PNF or not in sufficient numbers, e.g. Health and Maritime Trade Operations. Supplementary capability is provided within the integrated workforce in the mainstream activities of Maritime Warfare, Logistics and Engineering.

The planning for the complementary Naval Reserve capability contribution and its management in higher operational states is developed and at a mature stage. However planning for supplementary capability enhancement in higher operational states requires development to address future contingencies and requirements.

The Naval Reserve lags behind the Army Reserve, for example, in this type of planning. In particular the Naval Reserve supplementary capability can be a force multiplier, especially for sea going crews and merits greater attention by Navy leadership.
The better monitoring, management and engagement of individual Naval Reservists who have the potential to contribute supplementary capability with minimal further training will enhance RAN capability.

The DRA considers that there are two myths about the Naval Reserve that obstruct the discussion of the way ahead for the Naval Reserve and consequently enhancement of the maritime protection and defence of Australia. The first is that those in the community who have any interest, government and politicians believe we have a trained and ready Naval Reserve available for operational support and surge. Second, the RAN puts very little effort into ab initio recruiting to its Naval Reserve.

The DRA considers that Plan SUAKIN (see later) is vital in providing a transparent structure that will allow meaningful discussion about the capability that should be provided from the Naval Reserve and the funding requirements of the Naval Reserve.

Meanwhile the 3000 plus volunteers in the Naval Active Reserve Awaiting Employment hear nothing, see nothing, and therefore do nothing. Similarly, the RAN lacks relevant current information about the capability and availability of its Standby Naval Reserve. Both groups of Naval Reservists need to be properly managed and ‘kept in the picture’ with regular communication (ForceNet will assist in this regard).

The RAN would also benefit from more ab initio direct entry recruiting of Reservists from the wider Australian community, to provide a range of skill sets not found within the PNF and to fill areas of hollowness within the PNF workforce.

**Army**

- With only one Regular Division Headquarters plus enabling/supporting Brigades, Army can only maintain one Brigade Group on operations at any one time and/or provide niche support to our allies or a UN coalition force
- Defending against an aggressive military force in our region on our own, would at best be problematic
- To provide an appropriate deterrent and balance within our region, ideally we need to expand the size of the Army
- Army appears to be posturing itself to fight wars within its capability, rather than assessing the potential threats and structuring accordingly (a case of situating the appreciation)
- Under Plan BEERSHEBA, the 2nd Division (>80% of Army Reservists) is committed to providing three Battle Groups (and other capability) to round out the three Regular Multi-Role Combat (Manoeuvre) Brigades
- The Army Reserve is committed in its current form to that round out priority and to meet other tasking and operational demands (such as border protection) and has very limited capacity to provide ‘surge’ for mid and higher level conflict
- It follows therefore that Army has no strategic reserve as such
- The Army Reserve needs to be expanded significantly to provide a strategic reserve and structure to build on, in the event of the need to mobilise and to provide a surge capability
- Army Reserve Unit/Sub Unit and Formation Headquarters all provide capability, contrary to some current thinking in Army Headquarters.

For discussion on the above Army points – see below.

**Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**

- The RAAF is basically platform centric and therefore its Reserves are a people capability
- The RAAF now operates as a totally integrated workforce
- The RAAF cannot totally support/service its aircraft without augmentation by its Reservists and use of its maintenance contractors
- The Air Force Reserve is made up of some 76% ex-permanents with currently minimal ab initio direct entry Reservists
- The RAAF has disbanded its (Reserve) City Squadrons and posted those Reservists out to nearly all its Squadrons, with a large number subsumed into Base Management Squadrons.
- Other Air Force Reservists have been posted against war time establishments irrespective of location
- Airfield Defence Squadrons (now Security Squadrons) covering internal, close perimeter and outer perimeter defence are a perfect capability fit for Reservists
- The Air Force Reserve is a latent asset that needs to be managed better and communicated with on a regular basis; good communications is one of the key issues of an integrated workforce.

**Current capability shortfalls for the RAAF Reserves**

The RAAF is basically platform centric and therefore its Permanent, Reserve and Australian Public Service (APS) workforce are a people capability. However, only on rare occasions has the RAAF deployed whole units. It usually deploys individuals to meet Coalition Force support needs and sends formed ‘packets of capability’. The integrated nature of the Reserve and Permanent Force supports this strategy.

The Reserve comprises some 76% ex-permanent members. Given the technical nature of the RAAF, there are many trades and officer specialisations that cannot be grown from direct entry reserve. Therefore, it is crucial that the retention of expertise developed within the
Permanent Air Force (PAF) is encouraged. Nevertheless, there are a number of less complex areas of employment that Reserves can do particularly well, e.g. security, clerical and logistics support, etc.

Aircraft no longer require the level of maintenance needed for pre-1990’s aircraft, but are more complex, especially in avionics. The RAAF has sufficient PAF technicians and consequently are not so reliant on Reservists to maintain the fleet, which is also supported by civilian contractors, even in areas of operations. That may not be so in future conflicts.

The RAAF Air Force Security Forces (SECFOR) workforce concept (2011) is based on three SECFOR squadrons in Combat Support Group, with a proposed total establishment of 1216 personnel. The security force capability being developed in the RAAF will be highly reliant on Reservists to fill positions Australia-wide, as 43% of the positions for these squadrons are to be filled by Reservists. (The DRA understands that as of mid 2014, around 33% of the 908 personnel posted to the SECFOR squadrons were Reservists).

Training and recruitment are the biggest issues currently facing the full development of this capability. The DRA proposes that recruiting and training be expedited in order to fully develop this important capability.

The RAAF no longer has dedicated Reserve units/squadrons. Its ‘City’ squadrons were rerolled into its Base Management Squadrons. Also with integration in 2005, Reservists were posted to units/squadrons across the RAAF. Integration has been generally successful, although not without some management issues. It remains a ‘work in progress’.

Project SUAKIN (see later) is pivotal to the successful development of an integrated force within the RAAF.

Although not identified as a capability requirement, DRA would support the re-establishment of RAAF University Squadrons to assist the RAAF to attract new talent, especially related to advances in IT technology and avionics.

Critical issues in determining the enhanced capability to be provided by RAAF Reservists include:

- modernisation of the Reserve establishment post-integration
- recruitment of ab initio (direct entry) Reservists
- development of an effective Reserve training system
- management of and communication with all Reservists
- seamless transfer of PAF personnel to the Reserve and Reserve personnel to the PAF.

**Army Reserve Matters/Issues**

**The Nature and Characteristics of Army Reserves**

Whereas RAN and RAAF structures are basically platform oriented, Army is unit structured.

Reservists are part of and from their community and as such train part-time but are prepared to serve full-time as need arises.
Reserve Unit training should be aligned with the civilian individuals’ lifestyle; providing a unit identity from enlistment to optimum proficiency. The local Army Reserve unit is community aligned, provides a home base, a social outlet and develops its own esprit de corps. This is especially so in regional areas.

Army Reservists require a different training methodology to their Regular counterparts, despite learning the same ‘must knows’ and some ‘should knows’. Their courses should be shorter, fit for task(s) only, modular and phased with acceptance of appropriate civilian qualifications.

In addition, Reservists provide a range of civilian skills and attributes that add value to the ADF. Their Units are the public face of the ADF within the community.

Army Reserve Units need a minimum 150% of a Regular Unit Establishment to cope with recruiting, enlistment training, initial employment training (IET) and other functions that do not impact on Regular Units. They also need to have at least twice the cover for their required role/task to ensure a trained standard and availability of trained personnel.

Similarly they need reasonable or declared notice and longer lead times to deploy on operations. However to offset the above, the Army Reserve provides at reasonable cost an expansion base and can look after the higher end longer lead time capabilities that may be required.

**Role and Tasks – Army Reserve**

Under the Total Force construct of Plan BEERSHEBA that – ‘restructured the Regular and Reserve components to complement each other, avoid duplication, and respond to complexity of operations and readiness requirements, within a Whole of Government (WOG) construct,’ the approved role for the Army Reserve is ‘to deliver specified capability to support and sustain ADF preparedness and operations’.

The core tasks of the Army Reserve are:
- deliver specified war fighting (main) including stabilisation operations
- provide domestic humanitarian aid and domestic security as part of WOG construct
- maintain and provide specialist individual capabilities, and
- contribute to Army surge capability.

In addition, Plan BEERSHEBA identified a ‘non-aligned supporting task’, to ‘Promote Army/ADF in the Community’. Given the tendency to concentrate the Regular Army (and other permanent elements of the ADF) in ‘super bases’, the Reserve and/or the Australian Cadet Forces, are often the only ADF presence in an area. The French are so concerned at the lack of a military presence in parts of France (a phenomenon they call ‘desertification’), that they are establishing Reserve units in these areas to remedy it.
This ‘non-aligned supporting task’ should be elevated to a core task and the French practice be investigated to determine its applicability to Australia.

The DRA welcomed the complete change for the role of the Army Reserve as articulated in Plan BEERSHEBA from a dwindling mobilisation/expansion base of ‘just in case’ to an operational role of ‘just in time’, with clearly defined roles and tasks.

Nevertheless, the DRA considers that the architects of Plan Beersheba may not have given sufficient thought to how Reserve Armoured Corps (RAAC) and Reserve Royal Regiment of Artillery (RAA) units could or should be used in rounding out or supplementing Regular Army Units and capability.

For example, Army Reserve RAAC units are tasked with generating a protective mobility capability using the Protected Mobility Vehicle ‘Bushmaster’. These units are not tasked or equipped to undertake a Cavalry role of conducting reconnaissance, defending vital assets, providing convoy protection, staffing listening posts and undertaking surveillance tasks. Consequently, the Army Reserve cannot properly supplement the Regular Army Cavalry capability – which is an important capability required in any operations within Australia or overseas.

In the case of Artillery, the six Army Reserve RAA Regiments were disbanded and reduced to sub-unit size, but retained their traditions in that they were designated as a Light Battery under command of an Infantry Battalion. They now operate with mortars that suit the embedded infantry support role, but still fire the M2A2 howitzer on ceremonial occasions.

Experience has shown that the Light Battery Commander can advise the Battalion Commanding Officer on all aspects of fire support, but is limited in coordinating anything more than the fire of the mortar line. There is no integral Command Post. Experience has required the re-introduction of Joint Fires Teams (JFT) to observe and direct the fire of the mortar line, but what about all the other aspects of JFT’s suite of capability?

Reserve artillery is currently in a half-way situation that needs to be seriously rethought as to what is required in terms of its fire support role and how to provide surge capability.

**The Case for Expanding the Army Reserve**

Australia has no strategic Reserve, therefore irrespective of the size of the Regular Army component, we need to at least plan for and develop a ‘surge’ capability.

It is essential to have some basic structure of officers and senior non commissioned officers on which a surge capability can be built.

As is the case in the Naval Reserve and Air Force Reserve, Army has on paper significant numbers in its Standby Reserve, but lacks current information about what individual skills/capabilities these Standby Reservists could provide, where they live, their medical condition, their civilian employment, their availability and other relevant factors. There is no
ongoing training or annual assessment to evaluate the depth of the Standby Reserve lists and/or to discharge non-effective.

**Army Reserve Recruiting**

Subcontracted recruiting seems to be meeting the current needs of the RAN and RAAF Reserves given their miniscule ab initio intake and their lack of effective Reserve training systems.

The Army Reserve is in a different situation. The current recruiting system for the Army Reserve is wasteful in that it takes too long, turns away/off many interested individuals, probably is not cost effective and does not suit the Reserve Unit culture of developing a ‘team’. The lack of Reserve officer recruitment is having a serious detrimental impact on Army Reserve units, particularly in regional Australia.

Recruiting of Reservists needs to be more streamlined and where possible potential recruits need unit induction prior to enlistment.

Reserve Units should be responsible for their own recruiting. Reserve Units need to have their own ‘over strength’ establishment, as stated before, to provide cover for their assigned augmentation, or specific to task function and to carry out ‘Reserve Unit only’ functions, viz recruiting against known target numbers, holding awaiting/pre Recruit Courses, initial employment training and early career employment management.

**The ‘face’ of Defence South of the Brisbane Line?**

The military and naval presence has over time shifted from Sydney and Melbourne to the north. Hence significant pockets of the Australian population have little day-to-day involvement with the ADF.

In addition to the recommendation above to make ‘Promote Army/ADF in the Community’ a core task under Plan BEERSHEBA, to overcome this shift of military and naval presence to the north, it is proposed that greater use should be made of our Australian Universities and by expanding the number of University Regiments and/or sub-units.

We have historically only six University Regiments to train Reservists and Army Officer Cadets, when we now have more than 30 Universities located on many campuses, with their extensive diverse student base, that also replicates the ADF’s recruiting demographic target. Many of the extant University Regiments have outstation companies so that they cover a number of universities, but there is no military presence in a significant number of university campuses.

University Units can provide a military education to tertiary students as well as produce quality Army Reserve Officers and/or a gateway to recruitment to a fulltime position in the ADF. University Regiments should be fully staffed and given an expanded role to include
their historical role of “military training for undergraduates”. This would facilitate access to ADF Reserve service for one of the valuable groups of our target population - tertiary students, who are the right age, generally fit, intelligent and quick to learn, and the leaders of tomorrow.

With the current training strain imposed by the demise of the Army Reserve Training Groups on the six University Regiments, and the large number of Initial Employment Training (IET) courses they have to run, there is a case to also expand their establishments and cadre staff to cope with the training load.

Collaboration with interested Universities can also provide graduate and post graduate courses for ‘specialist’ Officers for all three Services, including their Reservists.

The DRA proposes that a Reserves ‘think tank’ be established to provide the structure and location for staff officer groups to study strategic matters/issues, mobilisation planning, re-establish an Industry Mobilisation course and sponsor the Civil and Military Cooperation (CIMIC) capability. This Reserves ‘think tank’ could liaise/link with the Australian National University Study Group on defence strategic matters and with other appropriate ‘think tanks’.

**Other White Paper Issues Affecting the Reserves**

From the DRA experience of previous Defence White Papers, due to financial constraints and cultural issue, there is a tendency for the Services to ignore those recommendations that they do not want to do – e.g. ‘high end, long lead time, capability being implemented by Reserves’ – or they have a higher priority imposed on them by the Defence Budget – e.g. ‘surge’ capacity.

When budgetary constraint kicks in, it is normally funding of the Reserve Forces, particularly funding of the Army Reserve, that is cut with devastating morale issues of not feeling wanted, adversely impacts on training and recruiting, with consequent diminution of operational capability. The DRA accepts that the RAN and RAAF are maintaining budgets in real terms for their Reserve forces and that principally due to the current decline in active Army Reservist numbers, there is currently no issue with the provision of training days for Army Reservists.

Nevertheless, the only way to overcome the ebbs and flows in funding of the Reserve Forces is for the Government to mandate hypothecation of the Reserve Forces component(s) of the Defence Budget, the same way the USA Congress allocates funding to its Reserves and National Guard.

**It is the DRA position that it is critical in the 2015 Defence White Paper that an appropriate set of roles and missions are defined for each Reserve Force in the three Services, that implementation of these roles and tasks are fully funded and that a timeline for implementation is specified.**
Following on from the budgetary issue is a cultural issue, where often Reserve issues or the impact of decisions on the Reserves are an afterthought. Plan BEERSHEBA is certainly mitigating this attitude/mind set within Army, however to ensure that the impact on the Reserves is properly taken into account in all decision making processes, Reservists should be represented on all senior committees across the three Services and in Headquarters ADF.

In the procurement area, equipment ‘scales’ for Reserve Forces often don’t get a mention, or are not funded, thereby continuing or creating interoperability issues – e.g. the ‘analogue digital lag’ with radios; as well as with other specialist equipment (battle management systems) and vehicles required for the Army Reserve Battle Groups to be able to train and to carry out their role and tasks. Greater use of simulation equipment/systems and the establishment of training pools of essential equipment are required in order that Reservists can maintain their skills on such equipment and platforms.

Although many Reservists do not join the Reserves to use their civilian skills in a military setting, they are willing to use those skills on operations/deployments and this provides significant enhancement of capability for the ADF.

More use could be made of the civilian skills possessed by Reservists, especially in the areas of Civil Military Cooperation and Regional Engagement. For, example, the US National Guard has a State Partnership Program (SPP) where US State National Guard components are paired with other countries to enhance engagement and support security cooperation.

The US Pacific Command (PACOM) currently has SPPs with Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Tonga. The DRA recommends that Defence investigates the utility of joining Army Reserve Brigades with the US State National Guard in either existing or new SPP relationships to aid regional engagement. A regional Reserves forum, such as that attempted in 2012, should be considered as a means of improving regional engagement and the general standard of Reserves in the region.

A Reserve skills and qualifications database project was commenced approximately 10 years ago. Despite the resources expended on this project, it appears that the project was either not finalised or any database created was not maintained. Accordingly, Reservists have advised the DRA that they have been requested on three separate occasions to complete surveys of their skills and qualifications.

The UK Defence Department has for years maintained a comprehensive database of the skills and qualifications of its Territorial Forces (Reserves) that it uses to select Reservists for deployment on operations.

If the ADF is serious about fully utilising the skills and qualifications of its Reservists, then the skills and qualifications of all Reservists must be properly maintained on an appropriate database, such as PMKeys or any replacement system.
New Workforce Plan for all three Services - Project SUAKIN

The genesis for Project SUAKIN emanated from the DWP 2009 and like Plan BEERSHEBA, embraces two key strategies:

- ‘the better integration of Reserve and Permanent components in order more effectively to utilise Reserves in generating Defence capability’ and
- ‘the smarter use of the Reserves, including rebalancing capability between Permanent and Reserve components, in order to reduce costs’.

Key areas were:

- Increase permanent transfers to their respective Reserves rather than transitioning them out of the ADF
- Reduce ab initio training wastage especially in the Army Reserve
- Rationalise conditions of service (initially for the High Readiness Reserve)

DRA has been involved with the Cadet, Reserve Employment Support Division in its work on ‘Rethink Reserves’ that put the case for:

- different employment options, including to attract permanent ADF members to transfer to the Reserves
- streamlining transfer processes
- utilising latent Reserve civilian skills
- providing a security layered eportal to communicate with Reservists
- better knowledge of and ‘intelligent’ use of the Reserve component and
- implement Reserve workforce initiatives for each Service.

This became Plan SUAKIN. The main outcome of the plan was to develop a contemporary employment model with associated conditions of service based on the concept of an ADF career for life, particularly to allow permanents to move seamlessly to part-time work in their work life balance and for Reservists to move seamlessly to fulltime work in the ADF.

The DRA is seeking for Plan SUAKIN to be expedited and fully implemented across the three Services.

DRA Recommendations for Consideration in the Defence White Paper 2015

Structural:

- Define an appropriate set of roles and missions for each Reserve Force in the three ADF Services
- Determine the funding arrangements to be able to implement these roles and tasks
- Set out a timeline for implementation of these roles and tasks
- Elevate to a core task the current Plan BEERSHEBA ‘non-aligned supporting task’, to ‘Promote Army/ADF in the Community’ and investigate the French measures to counter ‘desertification’
• Hypothecate (quarantine) minimum funding levels for Reserve Forces in each of the three ADF Services to allow the Reserve Forces to effectively plan for and implement their assigned roles and tasks
• Have senior Reserve Officers represented on all higher levels of command (including CNASC, CASAC, CAFSAC) and capability planning committees
• Make Army Reserve Units responsible for their own recruiting within an expanded establishment and defined target numbers; to provide from ‘interest to enlist’ through to a qualified Reservist and thereby assist unit cohesion and esprit de corps
• Expand the establishment of Army Reserve Units to cover two requirements: unique functions not required in Regular Units, including recruiting, and fit for task, trained and availability within notice time
• Give consideration to expanding the Army Reserve to plan for and develop the Army’s surge capability
• Determine how Reserve RAAC and Reserve RAA units could or should be used in rounding out or supplementing Regular Army Units and capability.
• Provide necessary current equipment, or simulation equipment/systems, to Reserve Units to facilitate appropriate training and therefore interoperability to work with their Regular counterparts
• Expedite the recruiting and training of the RAAF Security Squadrons
• Encourage ab initio recruitment of individuals with ‘complementary’ skills that Navy needs to have or enhance and to provide appropriate orientation training to their position/rank
• Consider raising/re-raising, University Regiments and/or sub-units and RAAF University Squadrons
• Increase the establishment cover of current University Regiments to facilitate their IET training load
• Make more use of Reservists in regional cooperation, and in particular investigate the utility of involving Army Reserve Brigades in the National Guard State Partnership Program and/or a regional Reserves forum
• Establish a Reserves ‘think tank’ to provide the structure and location for staff officer groups to study strategic matters/issues, mobilisation planning, re-establish an Industry Mobilisation course and sponsor the CIMIC capability.

Conditions of Service:
• Expedite Plan SUAKIN’s introduction to all three Services in the ADF to:
  - provide a range of service categories (SERCATS) or employment options to aid retention especially of ex-permanents,
  - streamline the transfer process between categories,
  - capture all Reservist civilian skills/qualifications on PMKeys or any replacement system, and
  - provide a security-layered eportal (ForceNet) to communicate with Reservists.
• Critically review each Service’s Standby Reserve to:
- establish each individual’s skill set, length of time on the list, availability, degradation of military skills and whether or not they could be effective, provide an annual ‘muster’ to check/test the above, and provide an appropriate management system including restorative training or short-term employment where/when necessary.

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