

# Interpretation Australia



## quiet flowers blazing dragons

180 years in hiding.

The story of *Jessamine Vera Adelaide Buxton* (1884-1966), a highly skilled and posthumously forgotten artist, is a not uncommon story that can be learned from, be pondered on and inspire speculation on what could have been.

Her meticulously acquired talent is palpable in her artworks. Many of these pieces have never been shown or have been hidden from public view for almost 180 years.

From a long line of people who were "good at art", it is barely surprising that Buxton was gifted with natural talent. The "good at art" trait, according to the family, showed itself through art, music, singing, drawing, cooking and a myriad of other creative pursuits, and appears indelibly throughout the family tree.

Jessamine Buxton certainly was "good at art". In her lifetime she exhibited prolifically, won countless awards and prizes and was regularly featured in local news. Yet to contemporary society she has become virtually invisible.

Revisiting her artwork affords reflection not only on her remarkable talent but on her quiet and modest life. The rediscovery of the beauty captured on her canvases gives an opportunity to explore the person and artist she was and bring to light her inner life and thoughts, obscured by time, a life of isolation and lost opportunity. Through contemporary eyes she may be finally seen, understood, and celebrated anew.

Her story reinforces the importance of pursuing life's possibilities. Much can be learned from this mysterious artist.

I would like to acknowledge the generosity of *Jessamine's* relatives. In sharing stories, memories, her artwork, art making materials and keepsakes we see in many of her works. Thanks particularly to Hannah and Lisa Robson, John and Jenny Hendrickson, Rosemary Taylor and David Hendrickson. It is through them that *Jessamine Buxton* has been brought back to life in this retrospective of works never before seen in one gallery, proudly presented by the Unley Museum.

Karen Paris, Curator



## acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the staging of this exhibition. Thank you to everyone who was involved, in particular:

Hannah & Lisa Robson  
John & Jenny Hendrickson  
David Hendrickson  
Rosemary Taylor  
Jenny Brown  
Professor Catherine Speck  
Royal South Australian Society of Arts  
Lane Communications  
Artfact Interactive  
City of Unley

Curated by Karen Paris



Follow the QR code to explore the story with all and learn more about the dragons you can explore.



## Medals won at the SA Chamber of Manufactures All Australian Peace Exhibition

1920  
Silver - Marble Grapes  
Bronze - Blue Macaw, watercolour  
Bronze - Art, watercolour, cushion cover  
"Silver is the highest award"

Private Collection

## Pekin Nightingale (Lodovic Adams)

1917  
watercolour  
12 x 15 cm  
Exhibited at the South Australian Society of Arts exhibition 1917.

## Blue Macaw

1920  
watercolour  
20 x 38 cm  
This painting was awarded a bronze medal at the All Australian Peace exhibition in 1920.

Private Collection

In the immediate years after art school, embarking on her first years of teaching and with her life ahead of her Buxton must have felt the heady excitement of simply being alive. Her works reflect this in their focus on the outside, outdoors and the living. The repetition of birdlife in the works of her first years of exhibiting emulate the feeling of freedom she must have felt and anticipation of what lay ahead. The birds, not yet in flight are captured at the cusp of take-off, the very moment before they spread their wings to their full potential and take to the skies.

In 1920 she won a bronze medal for her watercolour *Blue Macaw* at the All-Australian Peace Exhibition. This painting is the most complex of her paintings, with foreground, midground and background components, demonstrating her artistic development and growing confidence with watercolour.

Buxton was experimenting with a range of media including silverpoint, watercolour, pastel and ink. Her subject choices were varied, tended toward life and living, depicted in more imposing tones. This period she began exploring still life, painting objects, shadow and light, which she was at the time of the local paper and would be increasingly important in her work.



# Annual Report 2024-2025

## Sketch PT Adelaide

1921  
watercolour  
24 x 15.5 cm

A rare example of a landscape scene, titled in watercolour, the painting is a sketch of the Adelaide area, showing the city and the surrounding landscape. It is a rare example of her later work, showing a more mature style and a focus on the landscape.

Private Collection



Compiled by Interpretation Australia Association  
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Cover Image: 2024 IA Medal Recipient – Unley Museum  
Source: Project Team

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# 1. President's Report



Communication and collaboration — these are your super-powers. Interpretation Australia's Members are a dynamic community of passionate and knowledgeable experts dedicated to storytelling, meaning-making and the creation of powerful connections between people and place. What an inspiring thing to be part of!

Since the new Committee stepped up in October 2024, we have been excited to continue the work of developing and revitalising the Interpretation Australia community, guided by the Strategic Plan. An important part of this was the appointment of Jennifer Waithman to the role of IA Membership Engagement Officer. Jennifer's boundless energy, knowledge and enthusiasm has been pivotal to the creation of new professional development opportunities for Members.

You may recall that early in the new committee's term, we held a Members' feedback webinar and published an online survey to seek input on what types of events you wanted to see more of, and what topics were most relevant to you.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to let us know your thoughts — the schedule of events rolled out over the subsequent months was informed by you.

The new webinar series aimed to strengthen connections between Members so we can all continue to learn from each other, as well as celebrate inspiring interpretative projects. We also trialled a new digital gathering format— the 'Community Cuppas' with experts in First Nations Engagement and Digital Interpretation leading more informal and organic conversations.

We continue to expand opportunities for connections in the digital realm: Relying on the technological expertise of IA Administration Coordinator Jerry Retford, the Committee has been crafting a revitalised website to be launched in the new year, and excitingly, a new Members' digital chat hub.

All in all, 2025 has been a fantastic year. Many thanks to all the IA Committee for their dedication, positivity and hard work. Thank you to all the experts who contributed to webinars, Working Groups and the enews, to our panel of Award Judges, and to the whole IA Membership community for your ongoing support and involvement.

I hope everyone has time for some well-deserved rest and rejuvenation over the coming Festive Season — time in nature, time with family and friends, time just for you.

I'm sure 2026 will be another energising year of interpretation ... and I'm very excited for the upcoming Interpretation Australia National Conference in Canberra. I hope to see all of you there for some inspiring and innovative communication and collaboration!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sophie Daniel'.

Sophie Daniel  
President, Interpretation Australia

## 2. Administration & Governance

### 2.1 Administration Report

Jerry Retford was appointed Administrative Officer (AO) in September 2024, jumping in towards the end of the 2023-2024 Committee term which helped in facilitating the hand-over to the new 2024-2025 members.

Whilst Jerry was initially wearing a lot of 'behind the scenes' hats, with the appointment of the new Membership Engagement Co-ordinator, Jennifer Waithman he is now mostly focused on managing our IT, Microsoft Exchange resources, Zoom and the web design/development in the transition to the new platform in 2026.

### 2.2 IA Membership

IA membership costs have stayed static this term but for 2025-2026 the Committee is examining options to further simplify the options, especially for Corporate subscriptions.

| Year Ending | Total Memberships |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 2010        | 269               |
| 2011        | 320               |
| 2012        | 277               |
| 2013        | 236               |
| 2014        | 288               |
| 2015        | 191               |
| 2016        | 226               |
| 2017        | 230               |
| 2018        | 214               |
| 2019        | 196               |
| 2020        | 158               |
| 2021        | 160               |
| 2022        | 193               |
| 2023        | 157               |
| 2024        | 108               |
| 2025        | 173               |

### 2.3 Structure & Executive

Interpretation Australia relies on the voluntary input of members who join our Executive Committee. Their actions ensure that the Association provides events and resources for its members and takes advantage of new opportunities.

The current office bearers at end 2024/25 are:

|                                        |                                    |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>President</b>                       | Sophie Daniel                      |
| <b>Vice President</b>                  | Scott Killeen                      |
| <b>Secretary</b>                       | Holly Maclean                      |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                       | Claire-Anne Halford                |
| <b>General Executive Members (GEM)</b> | Leigh Atkins<br>Kalkani Choolburra |
| <b>Membership Engagement</b>           | Jennifer Waithman                  |
| <b>Admin Officer</b>                   | Jerry Retford                      |
| <b>State Representatives</b>           |                                    |
| ACT:                                   | Vacant                             |
| NSW:                                   | Vacant                             |
| NT:                                    | Vacant                             |
| QLD (STH):                             | Vacant                             |
| QLD (NTH):                             | Maree Treadwell Kerr               |
| SA:                                    | Jessica Wilson                     |
| VIC:                                   | Meighen katz                       |
| WA:                                    | Vacant                             |
| TAS:                                   | Meighen Katz                       |

### 2024/25 Portfolio Managers & Chapter Representatives

|               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Engagement    | -                  |
| Website       | -                  |
| Membership    | Robyn Stocks       |
| Awards        | -                  |
| Sponsorship   | -                  |
| Podcasts      | -                  |
| Newsletter    | -                  |
| First Nations | Kalkani Choolburra |
| Resources     | -                  |

### 3. Professional Development + Events

#### 3.1 Website Management

Whilst the website has been providing a great point of information and contact for our members, we have noticed a drop-off in visitors over the past 12 months (from 7,000 to 5,845). We are currently undergoing a re-design and re-platforming of the site in the hopes of offering more benefits and engagement to our members.

- 5,845 visitors logged to the site over the past 12 months.
- Over 80% of web visitors are from Australia.

#### 3.2 IA Online

Responding to Members' input, we hosted a number of 'Community Cuppas' and other engaging online 'meet-ups', sharing knowledge and stories amongst members. The Committee hopes to continue to develop these across the coming year.

#### 3.3 Digital Engagement

Jennifer Waithman

Following the transition to the new IA Executive Committee for 24-25, access to IA's Meta social media accounts proved troublesome, the efforts of all involved notwithstanding. While we currently have full control over our LinkedIn presence, we have only just recently gained access to both Instagram and Facebook. We welcome the restoration of these channels as they play a key role in member engagement and public visibility.

#### LinkedIn

As of the 2024–2025 reporting period, Interpretation Australia's LinkedIn following grew to 363, reflecting a 35% increase from the previous year (269 followers).

- 27% of followers are based in the Greater Sydney Area (down slightly from 28% last year)
- 19% are from Greater Melbourne (down from 22%)

The remaining audience is spread across Australia, with a small percentage of international followers.

This growth reflects IA's expanding reach, while the proportion of followers from Sydney and Melbourne has slightly decreased, our national and international footprint continues to diversify.

#### Awards Webinar – June 2025

IA's June Awards Webinar was showcased excellence in interpretation across Australia. The event drew attendance from members, with engaging presentations that spotlighted innovative projects, inclusive storytelling, and community impact.

The webinar format allowed for broad accessibility, and post-event feedback reflected appreciation for the recognition of diverse voices and the opportunity to connect virtually. The success of the event reinforced IA's commitment celebrating interpretive excellence and fostering professional pride across the network.

#### IA eNews

Jerry Retford

We continue to send out the monthly eNews to approximately 400 subscribers. Since Jennifer's engagement things have been a lot more organised in this regard with each month having a pre-planned topic and specific content scheduled. We are also hugely grateful to our resident pen-man John Pastorelli for his most excellent wordsmithing and insightful content.

Whilst reporting is generally hit-and-miss with these kinds of things (and to be honest, that's not a bad thing, all things considered) we have around a 20% open/click rate and a minimal (less than 5) unsubscribes in the past year.

## 4. IA National Awards 2024



### IA Medal Winner

Quiet Flowers Blazing Dragons  
Jessamine Buxton Retrospective

*Unley Museum*



### Interpretation Project Temporary Event or Display\

Quiet Flowers Blazing Dragons  
Jessamine Buxton Retrospective

*Unley Museum*



### Interpretation Project Indoors over \$75,000

Ned Kelly Discovery Hub

*Convergence Design*



### Interpretation Project Outdoor under \$75,000

Dharug Yana

*Supersense*



### Interpretation Project Outdoors over \$75,000

Ngilgi Caves

*Gibson International*



### First Nations Interpretation Project

Murrook Cultural Centre

*Art of Multimedia*



### Interpretive Planning & Design

Western Sydney Airport  
Cultural Interpretations Design Report

*Sydney Metro*



### Digital Design

Murrook Cultural Centre

*Art of Multimedia*

## 5. Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan was launched by Interpretation Australia in April of 2023. It sets out a framework to guide Interpretation Australia in the successful creation, delivery and implementation of innovative opportunities and events that will strengthen the organisation's capacity to meet and exceed the membership's expectations.

The Plan aligns our future goals with our capacity to deliver and we have been working towards this outcome throughout 2023 and 2024.

The next couple of years will see the full implementation of the goals of the Strategic Plan and the benefits to the IA organisation will be felt.

To date, we have completed a data review of the membership, created group accounts for our corporate memberships, redesigned the supplier's hub interface to better service our members and increase their visibility within the marketplace, ensured the security of our information and collaborated with other like-minded organisations throughout Australia and internationally.



## 6. Treasurer's Report

This year has been characterised by careful financial stewardship as we welcomed a new executive, contracted a new Member Experience Officer, and navigated major changes to our conference model and revenue streams.

Following the challenges of coordinating and delivering our 2024 Conference in Brisbane, we made the strategic decision to restructure our conference program to bi-annual delivery, reducing reliance on human and financial resources while creating sustainable pathways for other professional development opportunities across our community.

The Association has delivered a modest surplus of \$491 for the 2024-2025 financial year, demonstrating financial discipline during a period of significant organisational change. Our total income of \$42,711 closely aligned with expenditure of \$42,220, reflecting our commitment to investing in member value while maintaining financial sustainability.

### Membership and Revenue Performance

Our membership base has shown resilience, with total membership income of \$23,866 compared to \$19,928 in the previous year, representing a 17% increase. This growth, predominately across individual and corporate categories, reflects the ongoing value members find in our organisation, even in a non-conference year. However, student membership is still an untapped pathway and IA may consider strengthening university relationships in future years for both memberships, expertise and guest speakers. Our ambitious goal of reaching 500 members will require sustained effort. Although we have attracted and experienced member growth, we are also experiencing a churn in membership

renewals, with many members choosing not to renew. This is partly due to corporate legacy management, when employees leave organisations, but also the nurturing and support of our individual members. This trend demands urgent attention and encourages us to deepen our relationships with existing members to build loyalty, provide compelling value, and align our offerings with member expectations and career development needs.

In alignment with our Strategic Plan, the Executive has identified the need to diversify revenue streams to strengthen our financial position. With the majority of our revenue concentrated in membership fees, the Executive recognises that over-reliance this income stream creates financial vulnerability. We must actively develop alternative revenue sources; including grants, partnerships, sponsorships, and expanded professional development offerings, to build a more resilient and diversified financial foundation.

### Investment in Infrastructure and Governance

We've made a small financial commitment through migrating to Microsoft 365 for email management and file storage, moving away from Google Drive and Dropbox. This transition represents a strategic upgrade to our digital infrastructure, providing enhanced collaboration tools, improved security, and better integration across our operations, providing the Association with premium-grade systems that have already seen more productive collaboration and will support our work for years to come. Xero, our accounting software, continues to be a valuable tool. As our membership and invoicing activity has grown, our monthly subscription cost has increased accordingly - a positive indicator of organisational growth!

### Administration and New Member Experience Officer

Our Administrative Officer, Jerry, continues to be invaluable to the organisation on an 8-hour contract, managing day-to-day administration, website and technology integration, and member communications. His support ensures ongoing smooth operations and ongoing expertise in technological decisions and opportunities. For this financial year, Interpretation Australia elected to invest in a new position: the Member Experience Officer. We welcomed Jennifer Waithman in May. Jennifer was brought on with a 16-hour contract for an 11-month initial period, with the brief to build membership value and improve financial strength through her role. With considerable support in the development of regular member webinar opportunities, vital contributions to the design and administration of our Awards, and the 2026 Conference, Jennifer and the MEO position has already proven to be invaluable to the association's mission. We are actively working towards developing a financial strategy to ensure this new role becomes permanent.

### Conference Evolution

A defining feature of this year has been the thoughtful evolution of our conference program. The decision to move from annual to bi-annual conferences, with Canberra scheduled for 2026, represents a significant strategic shift. After a small loss from the 2024 Conference, the bi-annual model was designed to reflect the volunteer board capacity to host a major event, alongside providing a longer runtime to build an incredible and financially viable program, meeting the desires and demands that the IA community have come to expect. We are enormously grateful to The Australian Museum, for the partnership as the host venue for 2026 IA

Conference. These types of partnerships provide a meaningful way for venues to showcase their site and programming, members to experience place-based relevant conference locations, and to support the mission of Interpretation. If your workplace or organisation is interested in showcasing their spaces and expertise as a host venue for the 2028 conference, please reach out to the Board to express your interest.

## **2025 Interpretation Australia Awards**

With the shift to bi-annual conferences, the transition presented a new opportunity for us to explore innovative models of member engagement. We introduced a new program for our 2025 Interpretation Australia Award Presentations, with two modes of participation at our 2025 host location—Botanic Gardens, and an easy online livestream. We extend our thanks to the host venue—Sophie Daniel and the Botanic Gardens of Sydney—for their hospitality. If your workplace or organisation is interested in being the host venue for either the flagship or satellite awards in 2027, please reach out to the Board to express your interest.

The financial investment of this pilot, including all Award costs and catering for free member participation, will be covered by the association. To build financial sustainability in the delivery of this excellent event, we will be seeking sponsorship in future years, an opportunity ideal for industry suppliers to build visibility and trust.

## **Looking Forward**

As we approach the 2026 fiscal year with our bi-annual conference in Canberra on the horizon, we are well-positioned financially and operationally. The groundwork laid this year, such as strategic restructuring, infrastructure

investment, and gathering critical information and insights gained through member feedback this year will inform our financial strategy and budget for 2026 onwards, ensuring it reflects the needs of our members and our strategic priorities.

In 2026, we look forward to the launch of our new website and member portal. The investment in the website will fundamentally drive new membership, better exposure to suppliers in the supplier's Hub, and highlight upcoming events & opportunities to a broader community. The new website will be accompanied by a Member Portal, aligned with the feedback from an earlier forum where members voiced their desires. This member portal will include an active forum where professionals can share, ask questions and discuss with their colleagues, creating an active and valuable repository of knowledge accessible on demand and across Australia. While this transition will require investment in setup and training, it represents essential infrastructure that will serve the organisation for years to come.

I thank the Board for their guidance and support throughout this year of change, for the endless spirit of efforts, the positivity and patience as we all navigate new landscapes, and for the excitement of new opportunities. I also thank the community for their ongoing commitment to the provision of interpretation excellence. Without the passion and desire to tell better stories, we would not be here.

Claire  
Treasurer, 2025

## 6.1 Balance Sheet

| ITEM                                        | 2025<br>\$        | 2024<br>\$        | 2023<br>\$       | 2022<br>\$        | 2021<br>\$        |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                               |                   |                   |                  |                   |                   |
| Total Bank                                  | 104,130.33        | 104,123.61        | 88,505.12        | 109,830.06        | 107,191.23        |
| Accounts Receivable                         | 7,105.00          | 3,045.00          | 768.54           | -                 | 612.20            |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                         | <b>111,235.33</b> | <b>107,168.61</b> | <b>89,273.66</b> | <b>109,581.06</b> | <b>107,803.43</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                          |                   |                   |                  |                   |                   |
| Accounts Payable                            | 0.00              | 443.85            | 0.00             | 4,314.11          | 1,741.39          |
| Stripe AUD                                  | 83.45             | 0.00              | 0.00             | 0.00              | 0.00              |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>                    | <b>83.44</b>      | <b>443.84</b>     | <b>0.00</b>      | <b>0.00</b>       | <b>1,624.28</b>   |
| <b>Net surplus/deficit</b>                  | <b>491</b>        | <b>15,619</b>     | <b>-20,221</b>   | <b>1,381</b>      | <b>5,365</b>      |
| <b>Net Assets (Total Accumulated Funds)</b> | <b>111,151.89</b> | <b>106,724.77</b> | <b>89,273.66</b> | <b>109,581.06</b> | <b>106,179.15</b> |

## 6.2 Income Statement

| Income                                 | 2025<br>\$    | 2024<br>\$    | 2023<br>\$    | 2022<br>\$    | 2021<br>\$    |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Conference income                      | 14,985        | 18,725        | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Conference sponsorship                 | 1,800         | 500           | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Directory listing                      | 319           | 472           | 203           | 0             | 0             |
| IA Awards entry fees & sponsorship     | 1,740         | 1,336         | 1,793         | 782           | 1,961         |
| interest received                      | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 40            |
| Magazine advertisement and sponsorship | 0             | 0             | 100           | 0             | 0             |
| Membership Fees                        | 376           | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Membership fees: individual-reduced    | 900           | 1,084         | 2,005         | 1,913         | 1,776         |
| Membership fees: corporate-4           | 10,393        | 8,698         | 4,656         | 6,640         | 5,644         |
| Membership fees: corporate-8           | 3,800         | 2,280         | 1,464         | 1,464         | 1,569         |
| Membership fees: individual            | 8,217         | 7,610         | 9,423         | 10,164        | 9,590         |
| Membership fees: student               | 180           | 256           | 752           | 768           | 372           |
| Total Trading Income                   | <b>42,711</b> | <b>40,961</b> | <b>20,396</b> | <b>21,731</b> | <b>20,951</b> |
| Gross Profit                           | 42,711        | 40,961        | 20,396        | 21,731        | 20,951        |

## 6.3 Operating Expenses Statement

| EXPENSES                                     | 2025<br>\$    | 2024<br>\$    | 2023<br>\$    | 2022<br>\$    | 2021<br>\$    |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Accounting software                          | 698           | 2,511         | 550           | 440           | 440           |
| Admin officer/ professional fees             | 11,201        | 6,103         | 15,866        | 11,945        | 11,162        |
| Annual report / secretarial                  | 371           | 0             | 363           | 445           | 154           |
| audit fees                                   | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 59            |
| Awards admin and prizes                      | 2,416         | 1,340         | 791           | 1,448         | 614           |
| bank charges                                 | 0             | 0             | 79            | 18            | 0             |
| Conference expenses                          | 19,713        | 11,459        | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Credit card merchant fees                    | 0             | 0             | 532           | 411           | 329           |
| Event <u>brite</u> charges                   | 0             | 1,037         | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| MEO Admin                                    | 2,127         | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| other / <u>misc</u> expenses                 | 0             | 0             | 98            | 188           | 0             |
| Postage and couriers                         | 0             | 0             | 301           | 151           | 173           |
| Publications / <u>ENews</u> <u>Admin</u> etc | 3,210         | 988           | 187           | 35            | 262           |
| Stationery                                   | 0             | 0             | 341           | 0             | 0             |
| Strategic Plan                               | 0             | 0             | 19,388        | 0             | 0             |
| <b>STRIPE CHARGES</b>                        | <b>712</b>    | <b>390</b>    | <b>1,750</b>  | <b>(9)</b>    | <b>0</b>      |
| STRIPE refunds                               | 0             | 0             | 0             | 1,404         | 1,259         |
| Teleconference                               | 0             | 0             | 231           | 231           | 0             |
| telephone and fax                            | 217           | 0             | 96            | 192           | 30            |
| Website                                      | 1,554         | 1,514         | 2,800         | 1,491         | 1,104         |
| Workshop expenses                            | 0             | 0             | 2,416         | 1,960         | 0             |
| Total Operating Expenses                     | <b>42,220</b> | <b>25,343</b> | <b>45,787</b> | <b>20,350</b> | <b>15,586</b> |
| Net Profit                                   | 491           | 15,619        | -20,221       | 1,381         | 5,365         |

## 6.4 Financial Summary

| Item                           | Amount \$ |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Opening Balance (1 July 2024)  | 106,428   |
| Total Income                   | 42,711    |
| Total Expenditure              | 42,220    |
| Closing Balance (20 June 2025) | 106,919   |
| Net Position (Surplus/Deficit) | 491       |



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