

Down Under:

How Care Opinion works on the other side of the world

Sarah Higgins | Administration and Project Officer

Ellen McGovern-Greco | Moderation and Reporting Officer



Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners on whose land we are meeting from today.

I would like to pay respect to elders past, present and emerging.

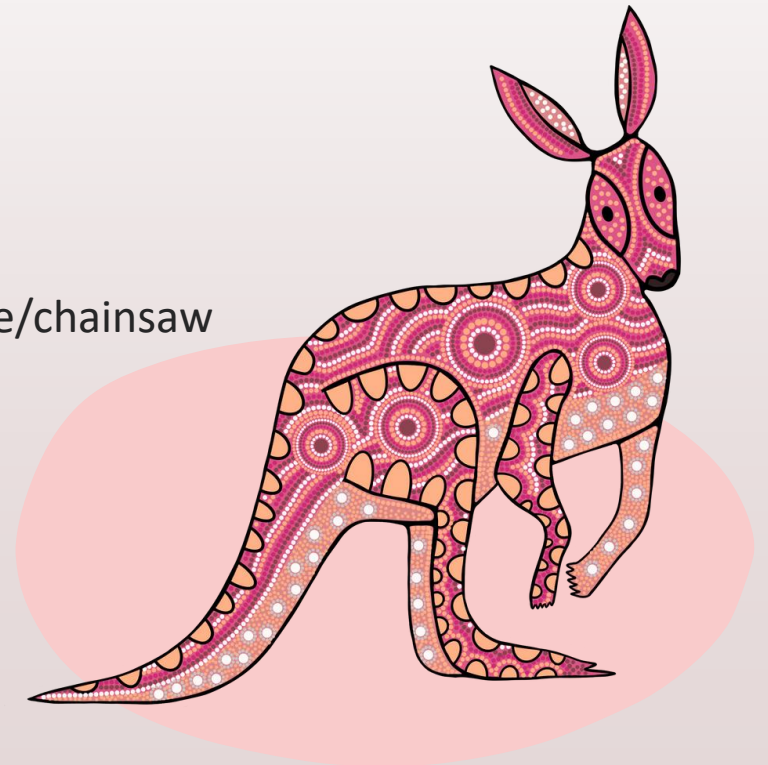
I'd also like us to take a moment to reflect on the special place that storytelling has to sharing experiences and learning through stories.



Some Aussie moments...

There are some quintessentially Australian moments captured in stories told on Care Opinion Australia

- **3** stories where someone says Maccas
- **16** stories that use the word “bloke”
- **13** stories about snake bites
- **9** stories where someone has severed some part of themselves with an axe/chainsaw
- **193** Indigenous stories



Some more Aussie moments...

Posted by [sierrarj34](#) (as the patient), 15 months ago

I was attacked by a shark whilst diving South of Coral Bay, Western Australia. Bite to my left hand, extensive lacerations. In extreme pain and distress, taken to Nursing Post at Coral Bay for initial treatment. Then to Exmouth hospital for care whilst awaiting transport to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Perth for surgery. The care I received from every professional along the way was fantastic.



Shark attacks

Kangaroo attacks

Posted by [Dee Mac](#) (as the patient), 9 years ago

Earlier this year, I was savagely attacked by a male kangaroo, requiring emergency surgery and 6 nights in hospital. The care I received was of the highest standard, professional but very personable. I felt safe and cared for in a very difficult time. From the management to cleaning staff, I was treated with great respect and gentle consideration.



Posted by [learningcx86](#) (as a parent/guardian), 6 years ago

Our young child was bitten by a Western Brown Snake in Coral Bay earlier this year. While I was extremely thankful to emergency services for saving my little one's life I remained concerned that anti-venom is not being distributed to remote locations.

Western Brown snake bite (9th most venomous snake in the world)

What we will cover

Challenges and accomplishments in the Australian context

- Identifiability
- Moderating Australian speak
- Australian tagging system
- Feeling used (and proud of it)
How we've been 'made the most of'



Dealing with identifiability | Rural/Country Health

How rural can one get?

UK / Scotland

- Population density (UK):
~280 people per km²
- Population density (Scotland):
~70 people per km²
- The most remote mainland village, Inverie, is 105km (65 mi) from Inverness - just inaccessible by road.



Australia

- Population density:
~3.4 people per km²
- Kiwirrkurra (WA) is over 1,200 km from the nearest city, roughly the same as driving from **London to Warsaw**

Kiwirrkurra (roughly)



Dealing with identifiability | Rural/Country Health

In small or rural communities where *everyone knows everyone*, there's a higher risk of identifying staff or patients in stories, especially negative ones.

- Our main goal: ensure safety for both staff and patients.
- We often communicate with the service involved to discuss how to manage this safely.

Example: If there's only one gastroenterologist in a hospital and the story is negative, how can we make it safe to share?

Here are some story examples...



"Presenting during my second trimester"



About: Small Rural Health Services - Victoria

Posted by *violetfr79* (as the patient), 3 years ago

Recently, I called the local hospital to notify them I would be coming in as directed by my local GP.



The nurse on the phone was very helpful and reassured me it was ok to come in the back way as I told them I have tested positive to covid.

When I got there I was isolated in a room where the nurse did their job, asked me questions and took my obs.

They then said the doctor will be in shortly at lunch (I got to the hospital an hour before roughly).

I then waited in that little isolated cold room in excruciating pain for I reckon it felt like 3 hours before the doctor came in. They assessed me and said they have seen there was some little blood in my urine which they didn't think I needed treatment for. They then listened for my baby's heartbeat using a doppler. I know the sound of a baby's heartbeat with a Doppler. I thought this certainly wasn't the baby's heartbeat. The doctor told me my baby was fine. I asked for an ultrasound and it seemed they said no because of covid. They then reassured me again that my baby was fine. They then left.

Dealing with identifiability

Rural/Country Health

Challenges:

- Criticality 5
- Rural Victoria
- 4 doctors working at the hospital



Response from Care Opinion Australia 3 years ago



Response is **public**

Care Opinion Australia has withheld the name of the specific small, rural health service this story relates to in accordance with the moderation policy. This is to ensure all staff members remain anonymous due to the small number of staff working in the service.



Dear *violetfr79*,

Thank you for your valuable feedback. Our health service is sorry about the loss of your baby and our condolences are with you and your family at this sad and difficult time.

We take all feedback very seriously and our organisation is committed to providing safe and high quality care.

We will undertake a formal independent review of the care you received and we will use learnings from this process to make improvements to the care our patients receive in future. At the conclusion of the review we will be in contact with you to share information about the review findings and what we will do to improve our services.

I hope you are receiving support to assist your healing process. I have left you a message and am available should you wish to discuss these matters further.

Kind regards,

Kellie Byron-Gray

Chief Executive Officer

Dealing with identifiability

Rural/Country Health

Solution:

- Assigned story to 'Parent' group on the platform
- Removed specific job titles. Changing this to 'clinician' or 'doctor'
- Published the response for the service

Dealing with identifiability | Staff

What about negative stories?

- Identifying staff member to the service only
- Emailing the author so they know what we've done

Subject: Staff Member Mentioned Negatively in story on Care Opinion (Ref# [REDACTED])

Dear [REDACTED]

I hope you are well.

We have received a story from a patient regarding their experience with [REDACTED]. While we have published a moderated version of the story online at a criticality 2, we wanted to inform you about its content, as it raises concerns about the staff member, [REDACTED] at: [https://www.careopinion.org.au/\[REDACTED\]](https://www.careopinion.org.au/[REDACTED])

To ensure privacy and protect the individuals involved, we have removed identifying details such as the name and title of the staff member from the publicly visible story. However, we felt it was important to notify you of this feedback to ensure any necessary internal actions can be taken.

If there are concerns with how we've approached the moderation of this story, or if you would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kindest regards,

Email sent to hospital

Subject: Update on your story on Care Opinion (Ref# [REDACTED])

Importance: High

Dear [REDACTED]

(Please note: your username has since been changed to [REDACTED] in order to protect your identity in the public domain)

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience regarding [REDACTED]. We are so sorry to hear that this has been such a difficult and upsetting experience for you, and we truly appreciate your openness in sharing these concerns.

To ensure your story is publicly shared while protecting your privacy and that of those involved, we will be moderating the online version to remove specific identifiers, including the name of the Special Care Nursery and the staff member you mentioned. This helps ensure that your feedback can be shared safely without unintentionally identifying individuals in a small service like this one.

At the same time, we understand how important it is for your full experience to be acknowledged by the service. For this reason, we have shared the name of the staff member with [REDACTED], so they are fully aware of your concerns and can take any appropriate actions.

Kindest regards,

Email sent to author

Dealing with identifiability | Staff

We love it when staff are mentioned positively, we love giving them a shout-out!

CO Hero was the brainchild of Bec, our manager, created to recognise and celebrate great staff moments.

How CO Hero Works

1. When a story mentions a staff member, we tag it with “CO Hero.”
2. The service can run weekly or monthly reports.
3. A certificate is printed for the staff member to acknowledge their CO Hero story.



4,184 stories tagged with CO Hero

that is **21.1%** of all stories told



Dealing with identifiability | Authors

We promise **de-identification**, not complete **anonymity**, and that distinction is important.

- We distinguish between identifiability to the service, the public, or both
- May publish stories identifiable to the service (often unavoidable or unknown)
- Public identifiability is handled carefully - we remove or edit details
- Encourage services to acknowledge when they may know the author - helps authors feel heard
- Sometimes it is better for the author to be heard, even if this means they may be identified - provided they understand the risks.



Dear *scorecardqr33*,

I am delighted that the arrival of your daughter at Leongatha Hospital was a positive person-centred experience. We will share this lovely feedback with the team.

It was wonderful to have a conversation with you this morning and to reassure you that our organisation is well represented by our CEO, Board Chair and other senior leaders in the many components of the merger planning. The whole Health Service Reform has been built around the need for Victoria to provide equity of access to care and care close to home, which seems well aligned with the goals you express for keeping the services we have. Keeping care local very much supports the human experience as you note.

Language and moderation

Original: Meals that you would die for!

I was in hospital subsequent to coronary procedure, a night stay over. Breakfast didn't arrive by midmorning the day after night stay.

I made my way to administrative counter and was informed it is on it's way, and what a culinary delight!

Reconstituted orange juice, imported, **nothing like fruit juice!**

Two satchels of Australian sugar! **how sweet is that?**

Two slices of white bread! **yummo!**

One punnet of hydrogenated vegetable oil!

One punnet of extra gooey sweet transparent jam!

This is my second overnight stay in 3 months, my earlier stay offered the same **unwavering standard!**

What I have learnt is that diet is crucially important in prevention of cardiovascular disease and with the hospital providing such interesting examples of diet to their **patients every patient** will **soon be bouncing around full of energy and insulin overload followed by insulin resistance** bring on the diabetes!!!

Moderated: Food after coronary procedure

I was in hospital subsequent to coronary procedure, a night stay over. Breakfast didn't arrive by midmorning the day after night stay.

I made my way to administrative counter and was informed it is on its way.

Reconstituted orange juice, imported!

Two satchels of Australian sugar!

Two slices of white bread!

One punnet of hydrogenated vegetable oil!

One punnet of extra gooey sweet transparent jam!

This is my second overnight stay in a few months, my earlier stay offered the same!

What I have learnt is that diet is crucially important in prevention of cardiovascular disease and with the hospital providing such seemingly interesting examples of diet to their patients, I worry this will bring on the diabetes!

Tagging project | the anatomy of tags

Tags need to serve dual purposes:

- **Locate** the stories which are about that specific tag
- **Report** to services 'what was good' or 'could be improved'

Appointment – confirmation

finder / base tag reporting / polarised tag

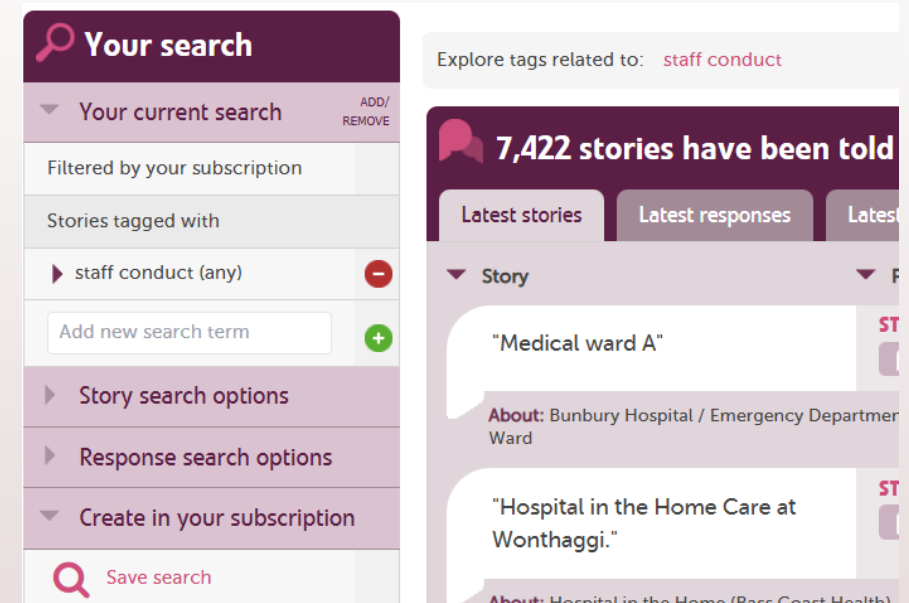
By tagging each story with a 'finder' tag and 'reporting' tag, we serve the dual function.

Most common tags added by authors to these stories

<i>What's good?</i>		<i>What could be improved?</i>	
staff conduct - professionalism	393	staff conduct - rudeness	76
staff conduct - caring	325	clinical treatment - pain relief	46
staff conduct - kind	297	some staff	34
person centred care - support	241	person centred care - empathy	33
staff conduct - friendly	201	staff conduct - bedside manner	32
staff conduct - helpful	100		

Finder tags:

locating all stories about staff conduct



Reporting tags:

appear in reports for what was good/could be improved

" My appointment at the hospital "



CHANGE PLANNED



This story may lead to a **change**



About: Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital / Hepatology Department and Liver Transplant Service

Posted by **bonanzatj99** (as *the patient*), 2 years ago

I had an appointment to see a specialist for the liver. As was told that the specialist wasn't available and was asked did I receive any notification. I said No no email, messsge No correspondence. I waited for nearly 3 hours and I was there before any other 10 people after me. Finally I approached the reception and asked why have I have been waiting for so long. I thought that being from the remote region it takes precedence!



I was seen my a Clinical Nurse not a specialist so I was angry, frustrated! When I understand the surgeon who operated for my condition was there! So my question is why didn't I see them! I am from the remote region of WA it cost me \$194 in taxi fares and public transport. I took 2 days off work and didn't see the liver specialist not happy at all.

More about:

appointment

cost

hospital

liver

public hospital

specialist

travel

WA

waiting



Story summary

What could be improved?

appointment - confirmation

appointment - time

cost - travel

waiting - prioritisation

waiting - response time

How did you feel?

angry

frustrated

In practice



Activity

21 staff members have read this story

Who has Care Opinion Australia told about this

Feeling used (and proud of it!) | How we've been 'made the most of'

" Coming back from holiday "



STORY HAS A RESPONSE



This story has had a response

About: Jurien Bay Health Centre

Posted by [matarbk94](#) (as the patient), 14 months ago

We went on holiday in Vanuatu with the entire family. We had wonderful time but when we came home one of my grandkids said "oh Pop, your leg is bleeding" and there was an inch of blood- it was nothing, I didn't even know I'd done it so we put a band aid on it just to protect the clean white bed sheets but everything was fine, it was a little sore.



My daughter is a retired Silver Chain nurse and we put a bit of Betadine on it we've been farmers all our life so that's our go-to for any cut or injury. About 2 days later it started looking a bit angry and so I went and got some cream for it. When my daughter saw it and she said you've got to get to the doctor but it was a Sunday so I made an appointment for a GP on Monday and they gave me antibiotics.

Story summary

What was good?

clinical treatment - wound care

continuity of care

staff conduct - consistent

Activity

I'm all fine now I've totally recovered and it was just the most beautiful care, so my highest recommendation to them as that's all I can offer them. I wanted to give them a bunch of flowers but they said to post on here instead.

- Staff use us to show their managers

Feeling used (and proud of it!) | How we've been 'made the most of'



Using Care Opinion as an evaluation tool

Prince of Wales Hospital in New South Wales Community Management Program during COVID

- Used the Care Opinion QR code to collect stories
- Provided the Care Opinion phone line (knowing their consumers) - and called to check it worked first
- Collected a mass of data that proved their service was effective!

“Receiving positive and constructive feedback from our patients was so rewarding to me personally, as it was an acknowledgement that I was making a real difference to the people in our community and the patients in my care.”

CMC Staff Member

Feeling used (and proud of it!) | How we've been 'made the most of'



- Consumers use us to educate themselves and ease their healthcare worries

User details

- **Name:**
- **Email:**
- **Contact Number:**
- **Job title:**
- **Organisation:**
- **Topic:** Other
- **Sent:** 11/10/2025 - 09:12 AM

Subscriptions

This user does not have any subscriptions.

Message

Hi, I will like to extend many thanks for this website. As one who needs constant medical care, it is very important for me to know of personal experiences people have when they are in hospital and the care they receive. This is an outstanding service and I am blessed to have found it online yesterday night. Thank you and keep up the good work. Best regards,

Feeling used (and proud of it!) | How we've been 'made the most of'

"Nurses station noise"



About: Wonthaggi Hospital / Emergency Department

 Posted by [jazzyg44](#) (as the patient), 3 years ago

I have no complaints regarding my actual care at Wonthaggi ED apart from the seemingly 'party like' disturbances overnight while I was awaiting transfer and in active heart pain! No, I recall it wasn't work noise related but excitable chattering ! Just a suggestion.... I believe a different hospital has signs on their Cardiac Ward saying "A quiet hospital is a healing hospital"! Hard for a busy ED I realise but speaking with an 'inside voice' would create a calmer atmosphere, in my opinion! I feel maybe some retraining could be helpful?



Lastly, I do appreciate the staff and how hard they work to look after us in difficult circumstances!

- Responders use us to have their say

Feeling used (and proud of it!) |

How we've been 'made the most of'



Response from Jan Child, CEO, Bass Coast Health 3 years ago

Response is public



Dear jazzyg44,

Thank you for your feedback.

ED's are definitely not quiet places - they are active 24 hours a day, unlike inpatient areas where we try very hard to create the 'healing' environment overnight and at other times.

The thing that makes the current Wonthaggi ED particularly tricky is that it was not designed to be an ED - we moved into this recently renovated space because our demand was greater than our old ED could cope with. In this current space, the staff station has no barriers to deflect the noise and the openness of the corridors and rooms don't help. The good news is we are in the final stages of building our new ED (due to open end of this year) which will offer a state of the art, purpose built environment, and rooms where you will be able to rest and not be disturbed by the noise.

Sorry that we can't fix this interim issue - glad everything else was positive.

Take Care, Jan

Author's follow up response

Update posted by jazzyg44 (the patient) 3 years ago

Response is public

Thanks for your response Jan! My main issue isn't addressed however ... the 'party atmosphere' ... is not actually, I believe, work-related! In my opinion, the loud greetings and responses could be toned down! As I said in my feedback, I have no issue with the busyness of ED and resultant sounds! I actually love the current space, so spacious and modern with en-suites! Definitely more comfortable!

Best regards.



Feeling used (and proud of it!) |

How we've been 'made the most of'



▼ Response from Jan Child, CEO, Bass Coast Health 3 years ago

▶ Response is public



Hi jazzyg44,

Apologies. I didn't quite understand from your initial feedback that your concern is what I will describe as 'the loudness of the interpersonal chatter that was occurring between the staff? Is that the key issue? I assume that is what is meant by the partying atmosphere.

I will make sure the staff are aware that their conversations impacted on your experience while you were no doubt worried about your own health and wellbeing, and we will remind them that it is important to make sure their conversations are appropriate. I don't know the date of your visit, and am very happy to take a call from you to get the details, (0472 846 355) to understand that particular night.

I will also say, a bit in defense, that our ED staff have been slammed for over two years. They frequently go without breaks because we are so short staffed, or so busy; they frequently work 12 hour shifts or double shifts; **they work in the morning and come back at night to make sure we have enough staff on duty;** and they often spend the whole shift in the ED without being able to leave because of their PPE requirements and the need for staff to be available just in case people crash. **The ED team has been simply extraordinary** in maintaining services during the times of increased demand and acuity, and staff shortfalls, and they are fatigued. Sadly while the rest of the community is winding into a normal life, our ED staff are doing nothing of the sort. As such, they use their work time to reconnect and to find some normalcy. **I have actively encouraged them to do this** and to stay connected as a team, and to be supportive of each other and other colleagues during these tough times. Often when staff go home at the end of a shift, the people they go home to don't quite understand the pressures or distress and so the social banter at work is helpful. **I have encouraged all my staff to do what they need to, to maximize their personal and professional wellbeing in the workplace.**

Bringing it all together...

- Our stories are uniquely Australian
- We face challenges with the remoteness and identifiability
- Sarcasm is an ever-present moderation hurdle
- Our tags represent the good and the bad in Australian healthcare
- Even in the way our services and consumers “use” us

What does this all mean?...



Care Opinion is... a letter in a bottle

- Care Opinion is a cultural record
- Historical, primary accounts of Australian healthcare
- Told in the voices of the consumer, they carry a sense of embodied historicity

“While the act of patient feedback transverses time and culture,
the stories themselves are very much embedded in them”



Care Opinion is... a letter in a bottle

What could stories mean in 200 years time?

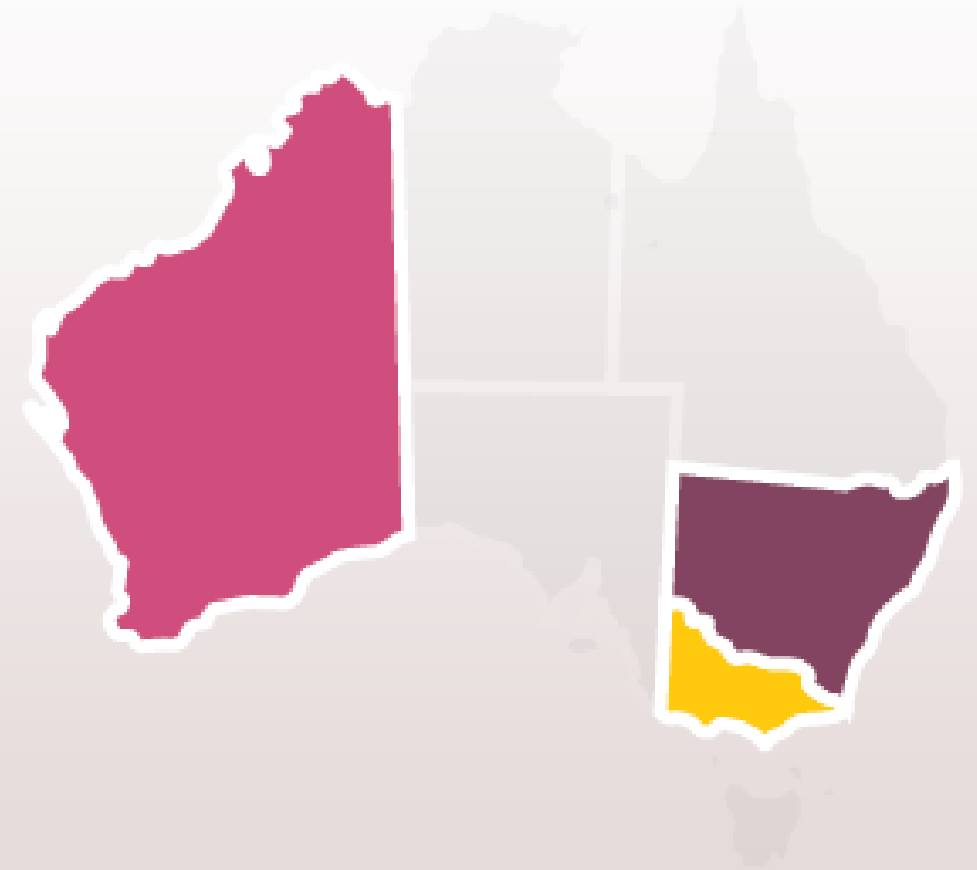
What is your story?



Where to from here?

Embed Care Opinion nationally
Amplify the voices of **all**

Welcome Fraser in November!



Connect with Care Opinion Australia

Sarah Higgins | Administration and Project Officer



Ellen McGovern-Greco | Moderation and Reporting Officer



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