



City of Port Phillip

# Graffiti Management Plan 2013-2018



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# **I. Introduction**

## **I.1. Council's Position on Graffiti**

Graffiti has a negative impact on the presentation of a city and community pride. Public spaces that are subject to graffiti will often be avoided by legitimate users, and the possibility of more graffiti, other vandalism and crime increases.

Some graffiti can also personally offend individuals and community groups, particularly if it is racist or contains discriminatory themes. If it is removed quickly or its application is deterred, it sends a message to the offender that graffiti will not be accepted and that the local community cares about their neighbourhood.

Council's position on graffiti is that it will not be tolerated and the City of Port Phillip spends over \$330,000 annually on the removal and management of graffiti in the city.

Graffiti is a complex issue that is most effectively addressed through a multi-layered approach with a number of interventions implemented at one time. In addition to quick and effective removal of graffiti, it is vital that Council invest in increasing community awareness, as well as making graffiti vandalism less appealing to potential offenders, and providing more opportunities for potential graffiti writers to participate in legitimate forms of public art.

## **I.2. What is Graffiti?**

The word graffiti refers to words or images written, drawn, painted or etched onto property without permission.

There are different styles of graffiti, with the most common being 'tagging' (an identifying mark or signature of a graffitist). Stencil, poster/sticker 'paste up', and 'throw up' (a quickly executed graffiti piece) are other forms of graffiti.

Graffiti differs from legal aerosol or 'street art'. Street art is an artistic style that uses aerosol spray paint to achieve a colourful display of elaborate tags and cartoon style characters, which is usually legal and placed with consent from the property owner and found in public spaces.

## **I.3. Purpose of the Management Plan**

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction for the removal and management of graffiti from Council managed and privately owned assets, and to provide guidance for the implementation of community focussed programs that contribute to minimising the incidence of graffiti across the city.

## **I.4. Objectives of the Management Plan**

The objectives of the plan are as follows;

- a) To improve the overall appearance of Port Phillip by reducing the incidence of graffiti.
- b) To reduce the social, environmental and economic impact of graffiti.
- c) To ensure graffiti is removed from public property and public spaces in a quick, effective and targeted manner.
- d) To engage the community and develop relationships with other stakeholders to reduce the incidence of graffiti and assist in graffiti removal.
- e) To provide opportunities and encourage graffiti writers who illegally tag, to progress to more legitimate forms of art.

## **I.5. Legislation**

The Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 is a key aspect of the state government's graffiti management approach.

The purpose of the Act is to reduce the incidence of graffiti and provide Councils with a clear understanding of responsibilities regarding the removal of graffiti.

The Act recognises graffiti as a crime and acknowledges its potential severity through tough penalties. The offence of marking graffiti attracts maximum fines of more than \$29,000 and up to two years imprisonment.

## 1.6. Definitions

The following terms are used in this document, and definitions are clarified below;-

- a) The Act – the Victorian Graffiti Prevention Act 2007.
- b) Graffiti –any unauthorised inscription, word, design or graphic that is marked, etched, scratched, drawn, sprayed, painted, pasted, applied or otherwise affixed to or on any surface on public buildings, infrastructure, transport or private property.
- c) Graffiti Register – the register that is required to be developed and maintained in accordance with Section 13 of the Act.
- d) Writer – the person who creates or writes graffiti.
- e) Tag – a signature of the graffiti artist. ‘Tags’ can be created by spray paint, markers, scratching or etching and is the most common form of graffiti.



## 2. Current Situation

### 2.1. Removal and Management of Graffiti

The City of Port Phillip has an annual graffiti removal budget of \$332,000.

In comparison, the Cities of Melbourne, Stonnington and Bayside spend around \$1 million, \$400,000 and \$150,000 respectively.

Graffiti removal is carried out through an external contractor, who supplies a mobile service consisting of two graffiti removal specialists and up to two vehicles stocked with all required equipment and materials. The mobile service operates 8 hours per day, 5 days per week Monday to Friday, except for public holidays. The 8 hours work occurs between the spread of hours 7 am to 5 pm.

(It should also be noted that an additional amount of over \$10,000 is spent annually on graffiti removal from signs and street furniture through another external contractor).

Council provides a running sheet three times per week, listing sites where graffiti is required to be removed, and contractors regularly patrol the municipality (particularly identified hot spots), and report, identify and remove graffiti as they see it.

The contractors also provide council with a graffiti register that records graffiti incidents and data on removal work carried out, the description of the asset and the nature of the work carried out.

All obscene and offensive graffiti on Council property is removed within four hours of being reported. CRM requests and other reported graffiti issues placed on the weekly running sheet are removed within five working days.

The approach to graffiti removal in the City of Port Phillip is predominantly a reactive process. The current proactive method of graffiti prevention and removal is to regularly patrol identified 'hot spots' and areas highly visible to the public.

## **2.2. Removal from Property Types**

The City of Port Phillip removes all graffiti on all Council owned and managed sites across the municipality.

Council also removes graffiti on private and commercial buildings free of charge, and residents and business owners can contact Council's Customer Service to report incidences of graffiti or request removal.

Council also provides free graffiti removal kits to its residents.

Council can request consent from the property owner to remove graffiti that is visible from a public place, however if the owner or occupier does not provide written consent for entry to their property and written consent for the removal of the graffiti Council cannot take any action.

If entry to private property is not necessary to remove graffiti that can be visible from a public place Council must provide 10 days notice and if written consent is obtained or the owner or occupier does not object Council can remove the graffiti.

The 2012 statistics on graffiti removal in the City of Port Phillip by property type is as follows;

- a) 38% removed from Council property
- b) 32% removed from commercial property
- c) 30% removed from residential property

## **2.3. Amount and Type of Graffiti Removed**

A snapshot of the amount and type of graffiti removed in the City of Port Phillip in 2012 is outlined below;

- a) The monthly average of graffiti removal was 1,157 square metres
- b) The number of hits varied from between 70 and 125 per month (and were generally higher in the school holiday period)
- c) The suburb of St Kilda represents 36% of incidences and actual square metres removed (with Port Melbourne and South Melbourne also featuring highly)
- d) The Coles carpark in Balaclava had the highest number of incidences of graffiti
- e) The most affected site in terms of actual square metres is the Graham Street Skatepark, which represents 16% of the graffiti area removed (at an annual cost of around \$30,000 per annum)

The removal method for each job is dependant on a number of factors including the type of graffiti to be removed, the type of surface affected and how visible the graffiti is to the public.

Graffiti is sometimes covered by patch painting, other times an entire wall or surface must be covered. Paint out was the most common form of graffiti removal.

## 2.4. Graffiti Prevention Programs

There are currently no graffiti prevention programs run by Council in the City of Port Phillip.

In previous years however, a number of graffiti prevention programs have been implemented, the most successful being the St Kilda Junction Project. This project involved engaging with Vic Roads and local artists to commission a mural on a site that had regularly been a target of graffiti vandals, and cost around \$60,000 annually to clean. The mural project cost a total of \$60,000, however since it's completion in 2006 the annual clean up cost have significantly dropped to around \$5,000 annually.



## 3. Graffiti Management Strategies & Opportunities

Graffiti is a complex issue that is most effectively addressed through a multi-layered approach.

The City of Port Phillip Graffiti Management Plan provides recommendations categorised within the following five strategies to address the problem of graffiti;

- Eradication
- Engagement
- Education
- Enforcement
- Evaluation

### 3.1. Eradication

#### 3.1.1. 'Graffiti Blitz' Campaign

This Plan recommends that a 'Graffiti Blitz' Campaign be developed to strengthen Council's commitment to reducing graffiti throughout the city, and promote the ways in which the community can assist in the process.

It is envisaged that the Graffiti Blitz Campaign would include;

- a) Redevelopment of the graffiti section on Council's website to reiterate Council's position of graffiti and improve information on how to report and remove graffiti (see also item 3.3.1).
- b) The development of an online consent form for residents and businesses that can be submitted electronically, thereby reducing potential downtime for removal on private property.
- c) Increased promotion of the free Graffiti Removal Kits available to local residents and business owners.
- d) Development and launch of social media initiatives such as an anti graffiti video, accessible via Facebook, Twitter and You Tube etc (see also item 3.2.6).
- e) Investigation and implementation of an effective phone app to report graffiti, such as the VandalTrak GPS enabled app. (Residents currently use the 'Snap Send Solve' application; however there are some issues with the effectiveness of this technique).
- f) Letters distributed to local paint shops and hardware stores, advising them of their responsibilities under the Graffiti Prevention Act 2007.
- g) Engaging with local traders to consider providing and promoting incentives for private property and business owners with discounts on paint or screening plants.
- h) Front page promotion on Council's website and Divercity magazine (possibly including a consent form as an insert).
- i) Advocating for the adoption of a united approach with VicRoads and Yarra Trams for the management and removal of graffiti across the city on all buildings and assets

It is envisaged that the proposed Graffiti Blitz campaign would run for around a month and would be heavily promoted throughout the municipality.

### **3.1.2. Graffiti Removal Contract**

This Plan recommends that the City of Port Phillip graffiti removal contract is reviewed and renewed every three years, and awarded through a competitive tender process.

It is also recommended that new removal and preventative techniques and technologies should be investigated, particularly those that are environmentally sustainable.



## 3.2. Engagement

This Plan recommends more actively engaging with and developing partnerships with external stakeholders, to develop a broader approach to the management and removal of graffiti across the municipality.

Stakeholders in graffiti management include;

- a) Resident Groups
- b) Schools and Youth Services
- c) Local artists
- d) Commercial businesses
- e) Victoria Police
- f) Specific Community Groups
- g) Neighbouring Municipalities
- h) Vic Roads and Yarra Trams
- i) Department of Justice

It is recommended that Council investigate, develop and/or implement the following projects or programs with one or more external stakeholders;

### 3.2.1. 'Graffito Deleto' - Social Procurement Project

Council is currently working on the development of a pilot social procurement project called 'Graffito Deleto' with Inclusion Melbourne.

A purpose-built graffiti removal trailer is being established for use by up to 15 local residents with intellectual disabilities who will clean-up council assets under supervision of project partner Inclusion Melbourne. Participants will also have the opportunity to complete a Certificate I in transition education. Council's graffiti removal contractor has provided, and will continue to provide, the appropriate training and support for the participants.

While managing graffiti on its assets, this project also seeks to highlight the positive contributions people with disabilities can make to their local community. This project was developed through the Department of Justice's 2011-12 Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grants, and this Plan recommends that Council continue to support the development of the 'Graffito Deleto' Social Procurement Project.

### 3.2.2. Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grants

This Plan recommends that Council apply to the annual Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grant program through the Department of Justice. This grant program provides funding for Council's partnering with other community groups to deliver graffiti solutions.

The objectives of the Graffiti Grants are to:

- Encourage and support councils and communities to identify and develop options for graffiti prevention and removal in local areas
- Assist councils and communities to improve the visual amenity of neighbourhoods through the prevention and removal of graffiti
- Support the development of sustainable graffiti prevention and removal solutions in Victorian communities
- Increase the sense of community confidence in the safety and security of public places.



### 3.2.3. Graham Street Precinct Project

The Graham Street Skate Park is located under the Graham Street Bridge in Port Melbourne, in close proximity to Turville Place Reserve, Morris Reserve and the Port Melbourne Tennis Club. The area is also a heavily utilised pedestrian thoroughfare for commuters accessing the light rail.

The Graham Street Skate Park was built in March 2004 and has since become a popular hangout for local young people. Since its opening, the skate park has fast become an area of high graffiti activity, predominantly tagging with a small amount of stencil art and text commentary. Graffiti on this site costs Council around \$30,000 per annum to clean.

This Plan recommends that a Graham Street Precinct Project be developed to assist in the prevention of graffiti and vandalism of the facility. It is envisaged that this project would provide an opportunity for local artists and residents to work together to create an identifiable local arts space, by utilising existing structures and/or developing new spaces.

This proposed project would be developed with a number of stakeholders including local artists, youth services and Vic Roads who own and manage the Graham Street Bridge.



### 3.2.4. Legal Street Art Projects

This Plan recommends that Council identify opportunities to work in collaboration with respected local street artists to develop legal street art projects and programs, particularly in areas or sites where graffiti is an issue.

These proposed programs would aim to provide opportunities for people who graffiti illegally, to progress to more legitimate and legal forms of public art.

By providing more positive alternatives to tagging within the local community, the potential benefit is three-fold;

- a) Illegal graffiti writers are given the opportunity to develop their artistic skills through legal artwork with respected artists.
- b) Participants can achieve recognition for their legitimate work and develop a sense of ownership and engagement with their local community and local community spaces.
- c) The need, time and motivation for participants to tag may decrease, which could potentially also influence other illegal graffiti writers.

These initiatives could be in the form of mentoring programs, workshops or community based public arts projects at sites that have been identified as having an issue with graffiti, such as the St Kilda Adventure Playground.

### **3.2.5. Public art spaces and urban developments**

This Plan recommends that Council engage with external stakeholders, (including commercial businesses, developers, Vic Roads and Yarra Trams) to construct or create positive spaces for the public to legally practice street art.

Public art spaces, including street art spaces should be developed and implemented within the framework of a legitimate arts project in line with one or more of Councils place making projects, Urban Design Frameworks, masterplans or strategic plans.

The development or creation of legal street art spaces may not necessarily decrease the amount of tagging in an area, but will provide an opportunity for and encourage those who wish to progress beyond tagging. It may however, assist in decreasing the amount of tagging on a specific site (eg. a prominent wall) as it is generally not accepted within the graffiti culture to tag over another artists' work.

There is also an opportunity to engage with construction companies working on building sites around the municipality. Many sites have hoardings that are the target of graffiti taggers and street artists could be invited to carry out work on the hoardings which surround these temporary building sites.

### **3.2.6. Social media initiatives**

This Plan recommends that Council develop social media initiatives or communication tools, such as an anti graffiti video. These initiatives would aim to educate students and the broader community on the issues and dangers associated with graffiti and illegal tagging, as well as the opportunities for legal street art work in the area.

These initiatives would need to be developed in collaboration with a number of stakeholders including youth services, schools, street artists and police and would be part of the Graffiti Blitz Campaign (outlined in item 3.1.1).

The use of all current social media would need to be considered, including Facebook, Twitter and You Tube etc.

## **3.3. Education**

### **3.3.1. Council website**

This Plan recommends that promotion of graffiti removal services in the City of Port Phillip be improved and maintained through all promotional mediums and networks, particularly through the website.

The existing Council web page contains limited information on how to remove, prevent and report graffiti, as well as a link to the Graffiti Prevention Act, graffiti removal consent form and access to Council's contact details. It also provides advice on reporting graffiti and providing contact details of other Government agencies and departments responsible for frequently-graffitied assets in their neighbourhood.

In addition to the improvements suggested as part of the Graffiti Blitz Campaign in item 3.1.1 such as the development of an online consent form, improvements or additions to the website information around community education could include;

- a) Changing the perceptions of the community on illegal graffiti writers, including highlighting that people of all ages participate in illegal graffiti activities.
- b) More support and information for residents regarding methods to deter graffiti vandals, including research on which methods are effective, and also a listing on which local businesses stock suitable plants and materials.
- c) More support and information for residents on how to report offenders to police.
- d) Information on how to engage with local artists to commission murals on properties that are repeatedly tagged.
- e) The locations of legal public street art sites and information on whether a permit or another form of approval is required to use them.
- f) A schedule or calendar of legal street art programs, workshops or mentoring programs being run across the city (and neighbouring municipalities) throughout the year.
- g) Information for local artists who seek to take part in legal, commissioned works and/or a notice board through which Council can seek local artists to take part in commissioned street art works.
- h) Information on the benefits in taking part in legal forms of graffiti or street art.

### **3.3.2. School Education Programs**

This plan recommends that Council work with external stakeholders to develop and implement School Graffiti Education Programs.

Whilst evidence would suggest that it is the teenage demographic who is most likely to 'tag', it has also been found that young people who start to participate in illegal graffiti in their teens, often continue this activity well into their adulthood.

Therefore, it is imperative that young people are engaged, and provided with an opportunity to explore the legal and more artistic side of street art at an early age.

School education programs could include education on why people participate in illegal graffiti activity, the costs involved in its removal, the impact it has on the community and the legal opportunities for people to participate in street art.

The use of the social media initiatives as outlined in item 3.2.6 could assist in this process.

Council can also work with schools to create murals or art completed by local school students at selected sites across the municipality, develop new spaces to practice art, and/or develop student art programs with local artists.



### **3.4. Enforcement**

The Graffiti Prevention Act., Section 10 outlines that a person must not sell an aerosol paint container to a minor (anyone under 18 years of age), unless the minor produces to the person a letter or statutory declaration from the employer of the minor, stating that the minor requires an aerosol paint container for the purposes of his or her employment.

Council has an existing partnership with Victoria Police to identify and deter offenders. This Plan recommends that Council continue to support police with the provision of photo evidence on repeat taggers, and collaborate with police, neighbouring councils and other agencies to improve coordination of local action on graffiti issues.

Council can also encourage residents to report repeat offenders to police, and support them in this process.

This Plan also recommends that Council investigate the options for developing a program with local police, Juvenile Justice and/or Corrections Victoria, whereby offenders are required to remove graffiti around the city.

This type of program has been investigated and/or implemented by some other Local Government Authorities and would most likely specifically target local known graffiti writers, or writers who have been found to regularly graffiti in the Port Phillip area.

### **3.5. Evaluation**

Council has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to be used to manage the Graffiti Removal Contractor and evaluate the effectiveness of graffiti removal in the City of Port Phillip.

The graffiti removal contract will be reviewed and renewed every three years, and the KPI's will be used in this process.

It is also important to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of recommendations made in this plan, to identify progress in graffiti management and any issues that remain unaddressed. Council will review this graffiti management plan every five years to ensure it continues to achieve the objectives and address graffiti issues.

It is also imperative that any graffiti removal or prevention programs implemented utilise an evaluation process, to provide a thorough understanding of the outcomes, benefits and success removing and preventing the incidence of graffiti in the City of Port Phillip.

## 4. Conclusion

Graffiti is a complex issue that is most effectively addressed through a multi-layered approach with a number of interventions implemented at one time.

Council spends over \$330,000 each year on removing illegal tags and writing from Council owned and privately owned property.

This Plan outlines the five strategies of eradication, engagement, education, enforcement and evaluation in addressing the problem of graffiti across the city.

These strategies require Council to actively engage with a number of external stakeholders and adopt a number of approaches to deliver on the recommendations made in this document. The largest recommendation is the development of the 'Graffiti Blitz Campaign', which will require Council to use a variety of media avenues to heavily promote the anti graffiti message, and adopt new ways to reduce the amount of graffiti across the municipality.

Whilst it is generally acknowledged that our public places may never be completely free from the issue of graffiti, Council recognises that some methods of early intervention can be successful in effectively reducing the amount of graffiti across the City and potentially even the number of people who illegally 'write' or 'tag'.

Council will commit to continually monitor and evaluate the graffiti removal contract, and each recommendation implemented from this Plan, to ensure that graffiti removal, management and prevention remains effective and relevant in the fight against graffiti across the city.

## 5. Acknowledgements

Helene Agius (Project Officer), Jim MacLean (Coordinator Building Maintenance), Titus Bodikala (Senior Building Maintenance Officer), Keane Scheffel (Building Maintenance Officer), Fiona Blair (Manager Property Services), Sharon Lee (Building Maintenance Helpdesk), Elena Kalnin (Place Manager – Activity Centres), Melissa Hayes (Public Arts Officer), Martin Goffin (Youth Project Officer), Joanna Chambers (Youth, Development & Planning Officer), Marisa Uwarow (Coordinator Youth Services), Larry Shaw (Acting Coordinator Local Laws and Animal Management), Georgia Richards (Landscape Architect), Heather Betts (Manager Diversity and Ageing), Damian Dewar (Coordinator - Places and Projects), Virginia Miller (Economic Development Officer - Industry Investment & Research), Kirsty Reidy (Coordinator Recreation), Jessica Christiansen (Place Manager)

## 6. Implementation Plan

Eradication				
Recommendation	Lead Department	Key Council Departments	External Stakeholders	Priority
Develop and implement the Graffiti Blitz Campaign, including the following;	Property Services			High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redevelop the graffiti section of Council's website</li> </ul>	Property Services	Information Systems		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an online consent form</li> </ul>	Property Services	Information Systems		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased promotion of free graffiti removal kits for residents and property owners</li> </ul>	Property Services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and promote social media initiatives (such as an anti graffiti video etc)</li> </ul>	Property Services	Governance & Engagement, Information Systems, Family Youth & Children	Youth Service providers, media/businesses, schools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation and implementation of an effective phone app to report graffiti</li> </ul>	Property Services	Information Systems		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute letters to local paint/hardware stores regarding responsibilities under the Act</li> </ul>	Property Services	City Strategy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with local traders to provide incentives for discounts on paint etc.</li> </ul>	City Strategy	Property Services	Local traders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Front page promotion on webpage and Divercity magazine</li> </ul>	Property Services	Information Systems		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a united approach with VicRoads and Yarra Trams</li> </ul>	Property Services	Various	Vic Roads, Yarra Trams	

Review the City of Port Phillip graffiti removal contract every 3 years and renew through a competitive tender process.	Property Services	Finance		High
Investigate new environmentally sustainable techniques to assist with removing graffiti.	Property Services	Sustainability	Graffiti Removal Contractor	Medium
Investigate new technologies or applications to assist with reporting graffiti.	Property Services	Information Systems		High
Engagement				
Recommendation	Lead Department	Key Council Departments	External Stakeholders	Priority
Actively engage with and develop partnerships with a range of external stakeholders to develop a broader approach to graffiti removal and prevention.	Property Services	Community Development, Family, Youth & Children	Resident groups, schools and youth services, local artists, commercial businesses, Victoria Police, specific community groups, neighbouring municipalities, Vic Roads, Yarra Trams, Department of Justice	High
Continue to support the development of the 'Graffito Deleto' pilot social procurement project with Inclusion Melbourne.	Diversity & Ageing	Property Services	Program participants, Inclusion Melbourne, graffiti removal contractor, Department of Justice	Medium
Apply for Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grants	Various	Various	Various	Medium
Develop the Graham Street Precinct Project	Family Youth & Children, Culture & Leisure	Parks & Open Space, City Strategy, Assets, Project Management, Property Services	Vic Roads, youth services, local artists	High

Identify opportunities to work in collaboration with respected local street artists to develop legal street art projects and programs in areas where graffiti is an issue, such as the St Kilda Adventure Playground.	Culture & Leisure, Family Youth & Children,	Property Services	Local artists, street art groups	Medium
Engage with stakeholders to construct or create positive spaces for the public to legally practice street art.	City Strategy	Culture & Leisure, Family Youth & Children, Assets, Project Management, Property Services	Commercial businesses, developers, Vic Roads, Yarra Trams, construction companies	Medium
<b>Education</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Key Council Departments</b>	<b>External Stakeholders</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Improve communication with the public with regard to graffiti management, particularly via the City of Port Phillip website.	Property Services	Information Systems		High
Develop and implement School Graffiti Education Programs.	Family Youth & Children	Various	Schools	High
<b>Enforcement</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>	<b>Key Council Departments</b>	<b>External Stakeholders</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Continue the partnership with Victoria Police to identify and deter repeat offenders.	Property Services		Victoria Police	High
Encourage and support residents to report repeat offenders.	Property Services		Residents	Medium
Investigate opportunities to develop a program for graffiti offenders to remove graffiti across the city.	Property Services		Victoria Police, Juvenile Justice	Low

Evaluation				
Recommendation	Lead Department	Key Council Departments	External Stakeholders	Priority
Use the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to manage Council's graffiti removal contract and contractor.	Property Services			High
Review the Graffiti Management Plan every 5 years.	Property Services			Low
Develop an evaluation process for all graffiti removal or prevention programs implemented.	Various	Various		Medium

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