



SIN-HKG bubble off

A SPIKE in COVID-19 cases in Singapore (**TD** yesterday) has seen the planned 26 May launch of the travel bubble with Hong Kong now deferred indefinitely, with a new date to be announced after close monitoring of the health situation in both cities.



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AFTA launches CEO search

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents has today formally begun advertising for a new Chief Executive Officer (see **page five**), seeking a senior leader with at least five years of travel industry experience.

The recruitment program notes that the CEO, in partnership with the Board, is “responsible for the success of AFTA,” with the successful applicant taking a major role in engaging and advocating at a strategic policy level with a range of key stakeholders, including state and federal governments, ensuring that AFTA members’ interests are well represented.

Key responsibilities will include creating a “financially sustainable organisation focused on delivering value to all members,”

UK “travel charter”

THE UK Govt has launched a new “COVID-19 Charter for holidaymakers,” outlining rights and responsibilities for passengers as restrictions ease and they resume travel following the British vaccine rollout.

Consumer protection, refund rights and health standards all feature - see www.gov.uk.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news including our PUZZLE page.

as well as representation of the sector as an industry figurehead and key media spokesperson.

The CEO will oversee all operations and business activities, lead and motivate AFTA’s staff and have full oversight of the organisation’s budget, P&L and finances.

Applicants will need to demonstrate “diplomacy and negotiation skills” as well as experience in developing profitable strategies and implementing vision, with an ability to work across all business functions including marketing, PR, compliance and finance.

Experience in advocacy dealing with Government departments and proven experience in influencing key decision makers is also part of the job description.

Remuneration for the new CEO will be “consistent with the successful applicant’s experience,” with applications closing in two week’s time.

Baker cooks up role

FORMER TripTech CEO Nick Baker has been appointed to lead the caravan and camping business Reflections Holiday Parks from 01 Jul.

Baker, who has also held senior roles with RedBalloon and Tourism Australia, will be charged with taking the business through its next stage of growth and technology innovation.

“Through his previous roles, [Baker] has been instrumental in creating seamless travel opportunities, which align with our drive to create memorable holidays and entice more people to embrace the great outdoors through our parks with their fresh air and vibrant regional communities,” enthused Reflections Holiday Parks Chairperson Wendy Machin.

Baker led travel technology company TripTech for close to four years, presiding over the launch of a real-time road travel index last year (**TD** 29 Jun 2020).

Scenic’s New Zealand program includes:

- Seven unforgettable, handcrafted land journeys
- Smaller group sizes with a maximum of 34 guests
- Six exclusive Scenic Enrich experiences
- Six memorable Scenic Special Stays
- 46 included Scenic Freechoice activities and dining options

EARLY BIRD OFFERS END 31 MAY

Webjet sees fast rebound

WEBJET today confirmed a rapid recovery of online flight bookings in Australia, with Apr numbers sitting at 95% of the level for the same month in 2019.

The company reported nine months of trading (**TD** breaking news), in line with a switch to a new 31 Mar financial year end, with all divisions continuing to reflect the pandemic's impact.

Declines were recorded in TTV, revenue and EBITDA, with CEO John Guscic saying the focus "continues to be on managing costs and cash burn".

Earnings for the Webjet OTA continued to improve as state borders opened and the company was able to leverage its "highly scalable cost base," while TTV in the WebBeds business improved in some regions as domestic markets reopened.

"We are hopeful that vaccine rollouts will allow travel markets to reopen and continue to do everything we can to make sure we are optimally positioned to capture the significant global B2B market opportunity and accelerate bookings growth in our

B2C businesses," Guscic said.

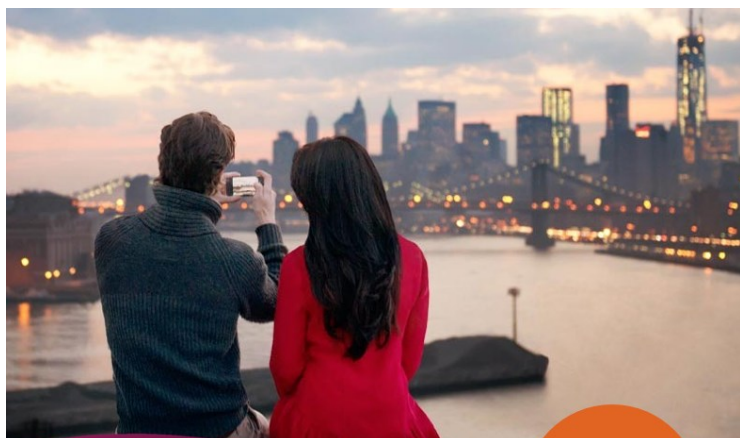
He said the Online Republic division had also returned to profitability in Apr, adding that "we believe there is considerable scope for that business as global leisure markets reopen".

WebBeds is already at 83% of pre-COVID TTV in the USA as it reopens, Guscic added, saying "WebBeds is committed to emerging from COVID as the number one global B2B provider".

Overall TTV for the nine months to 31 Mar was \$453 million, compared to \$3 billion for the full 2020 financial year, while the company recorded a \$156.6 million net loss after tax.

The company also released its full annual report, indicating Guscic's total package for the nine months increased significantly to \$2.4m, due to options issued in Oct, despite forfeiting previous long-term incentives and bonuses and having his cash salary cut 60%.

Webjet Chief Operating Officer, Shelley Beasley, who is also an AFTA Director, saw her package reduced from \$1.25m in 2020 to \$803,000 for the nine months.



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WoAG HLO renewal

HELLOWORLD today confirmed a further one-year extension to its long-running QBT Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) Federal travel management contract (**TD** breaking news).

It's the second time the original deal, sealed six years ago (**TD** 28 Aug 2015), has been extended, after the Department of Finance first exercised an option for a two year extension (**TD** 25 Jun 2019).

An ASX update from the company also advised of a "strong recovery across all its corporate businesses" including QBT, Show Travel, TravelEdge & NZ's APX.

Corporate TTV was up 580% in Apr compared to the same month last year, but is still down 45% on 2019 levels, while HLO's NZ-based agencies and wholesale operations are seeing a booking surge following the announcement of the Cook Islands bubble (**TD** 04 May).

AAT Kings agents

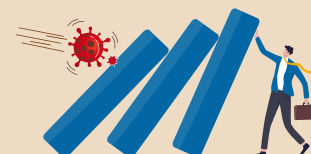
AAT Kings is celebrating National Travel Agents Day today by offering travel advisors 50% off on Guided Holidays across both the AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys range.

Travelling companions can also access a 35% discount, with the offering including the five-day Flavours of South Australia from \$1,505, and the seven-day Iconic North trip in NZ from \$1,860.

To book, agents can contact their AAT Kings Sales Manager.

An Epic reminder

VAIL Resorts is reminding skiers that its 2021 Epic Australia Pass is on sale to 15 Jun, priced at \$1,049 for adults, \$819 for seniors and \$599 for students, the Pass runs from 12 Jun through the Northern Hemisphere 21/22 snow season.



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Travel Daily

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Crystal heads north

OFFERING an exploration of Scandinavia's landscapes and fjords, a new *Crystal Endeavor* Iceland and Norway expedition has been announced for departure in Sep this year.

The 10-night expedition will depart Reykjavik for Tromso on 05 Sep, with highlights including visits to the cities of Dynjandi, Akureyri, Seyðisfjörður & Olden.

Prices for the sailing start from \$13,999ppts, including limited-time Book Now Savings of \$3,000 and As You Wish shipboard credits of \$300 per person, with reservations opening tomorrow.

MSC in the Baltic

MSC Cruises will restart Baltic Sea sailings in Jul from Germany.

The cruise line's *MSC Seaview* will operate seven-night voyages from Kiel to Sweden and Estonia, with protected shore excursions.

The voyages mark the debut of a Seaside-class ship in the Baltic.

Serko sees booking hope

SERKO has reported improving travel booking volumes across its core businesses, according to figures released this morning for the 12 months to 31 Mar.

Total income (including grants) for Serko for the year totalled \$16.9 million, while total operating revenue added up to \$12.4 million, down 52% against the \$25.9 million reported in the previous corresponding period.

Travel booking volumes fell by 63% against the 2020 financial year, but after reaching a trough in Apr 2020, booking numbers steadily recovered and for the month of Mar 2021, were recorded at 73% of the volume in Mar 2019.

Cash balances and short-term deposits of \$80 million at 31 Mar 2021 included the net funds received from last year's capital raise of \$65 million (**TD** 02 Oct 2020), while cash burn for the year was \$27.5 million, equating

to an average monthly burn rate of \$2.3 million, while recurring product revenues declined by 53% to \$11.3 million.

Serko's net loss after tax for the year was \$29.4 million, driven by increased operating expenses and reduced revenue streams.

EBITDAF declined by \$16.2 million to a loss of \$22.3 million, a further slide from the \$6.1 million loss posted last year.

Chair Claudia Batten said despite the uncertainty of the pandemic, Serko had retained resources and capacity in order to invest in key growth initiatives, largely thanks to the capital raise.

"Consequently, the company is well positioned and is participating in the recovery of corporate travel markets around the world," she said.

Serko also said it had made good progress positioning itself for an expected recovery in its Northern Hemisphere markets.



Window Seat

SEEKING a more creative place to stay in Victoria?

Well, Visit Victoria has you covered with the launch of the Silo Art Hotel - a street-art themed pop-up which will be located at Sea Lake in the northwest of the state.

Created from discarded shipping containers, the unusual accommodation will be situated alongside the Lake Tyrell, revered for its pink colour, with guests able to take advantage of a luxury bathroom, a minibar stocked with local products and a heated swimming pool.

Interested travellers can book some time in the quirky hotel between 11 Jun and 12 Jul - for more information on amenities and bookings - **CLICK HERE**.

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Wine not Georgia?

ARCADIA Expeditions has unveiled a new food and wine expedition to Georgia departing in 2022, a tour designed to trace the evolution of cuisine in the Caucasus region country.

Highlights of the trip include visits to ancient monasteries, cathedrals and the Caucasus Mountains, all while sampling some of the best food each region has to offer.

“We will forage in the forests for wild food, visit farmers markets, drink at hidden wine bars and dine in the very best farm to table restaurants,” said Arcadia’s co-founder David Mannix.

The 16-day tour is priced at \$12,600pp and departs either 16 May or 06 Sep 2022 - for more information call 1300 907 819.

SQ weathers storm

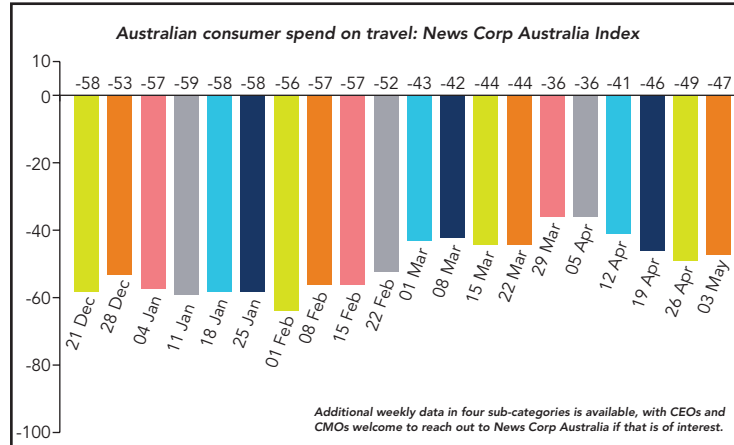
SINGAPORE Airlines (SQ) has grown its global passenger capacity by almost 700% in Apr, figures from the carrier reveal.

The number of passengers carried in Apr also increased more than 10-fold when compared to Apr 2020, recording 95,900 guests on its flights during the period.

In the South West Pacific region, load factor also saw an upward trend of 1.4% to 12.5%, up from 11.1% in Apr last year.

Meanwhile, low-cost carrier Scoot has also spiked sharply to 14,400 passengers, up from only 1,100 in Apr last year.

Air and tours drive spend



CONSUMER travel spend has managed to make minor gains for the week ending 03 May, exclusive figures produced by News Corp Australia show.

Bookings clawed back two percentage points to sit at -47% of pre-pandemic levels when compared to the previous week, fuelled mainly by a growth in air ticket and touring sales.

The sharpest improvement was seen in the airline category spend under \$500, with expenditure surging by 15% to be only -15% of pre-pandemic levels, now on par with the best week since reporting began.

“What drove this would’ve been a combination of the Flight Centre Qantas sale fares to NZ for under \$500 return ex-Eastern seaboard major cities and Rex Airlines and Jetstar releasing sale fares between Melbourne and Sydney,” believes News Corp’s Head of Travel Dwayne Birtles.

Touring also enjoyed its second best week since COVID caused the shutdown, sitting at -61%, but Birtles cautioned the sector will likely dip following the Federal Govt’s bleak Budget forecast about international borders.

“While businesses such as Flight Centre have had strong e-commerce sales for flights, with the business heavily reliant on the physical store network this category needs the int’l travel outlook to improve,” he said.

Qantas WA deal

TOURISM WA and Qantas have partnered to offer travellers based on the east coast cheaper flights to Western Australia.

The Take a Mate to WA promotion means that Qantas flights from Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne to Perth are \$299 per person when return Economy flights for two or more passengers are booked.

Travellers booking WA accommodation through Qantas Hotels will also receive triple the frequent-flyer points during the flight sale period - promo ends 21 May and can be accessed at Qantas.com/perthsale.

Abu Dhabi on 01 Jul

UNITED Arab Emirates capital Abu Dhabi will scrap quarantine restrictions on inbound tourists from most countries from 01 Jul.

Australia is already on the country’s green list of sanctioned countries, which means Aussies don’t have to serve the 10 days of mandatory quarantine on arrival.

We’re on the hunt...

Advertising Operations and Social Media Coordinator

Are you looking for a new role that offers a variety of responsibilities to keep your day invigorated?

The Business Publishing Group is the leader in B2B publications across travel, cruise, business events and pharmaceutical sectors and is after a team player to join our sales and marketing unit.

The role will require assistance with development of the daily editions, liaising with clients, social media activities as well as an assortment of other tasks – for which on the job training will be provided.

If you have a penchant for design, a keen eye for detail and a willingness to learn, this could be the role for you. Candidates with customer service, travel industry experience, organisational skills and Adobe Suite proficiency would be highly desirable.

Applications close 21st May 2021.

Send your CV and covering letter to jobs@traveldaily.com.au



Sustainability - a focus for the "travel egression"

OPINION

Mark Carter is an international keynote speaker, trainer and coach with over 20 years' experience as a global learning and development professional.



Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.

AS WE egress (from a devastating enforced regression), regardless of whether you're an agency looking to increase bookings, a carrier keen to transport travellers or a boutique operator, perhaps excursion provider, delivering wow factor, sensory first-hand end-user travel experiences, there are several pillars worth significant attention in order to be successful in the re-emerging markets.

One of these is sustainability in all its forms: including environmental protection, social equity and economic viability. To avoid the subject will hinder your business growth - especially given the first born amongst Gen Z are now in their early to mid 20s.

These are a new demographic of customers and decision-makers who consider environmental impact and sustainability a non-negotiable aspect of final buying decisions.

You may have seen Contiki recently announced its plan to be carbon-neutral from next year onwards. This solid directional signpost is a sound strategy and says plenty. We know Contiki as an iconic brand for the 18-35 group. In fact I'm hoping Europe is comfortably on the cards sooner too: potentially to join former colleagues in Austria for the brand's 60th birthday in 2022.

Since the ten years I worked with Contiki (90s through to the noughties) sustainability shifts are nothing short of seismic.

Dietary requirements back

then were more often associated with health or a smaller pool of passengers with a strong personal ethos to a specific lifestyle choice.

To have had more than three or four pax with special dietary requirements was considered challenging (even painful) to accommodate by many service providers even in hospitality.

Some of you may even recall being served a lump of cheese and lettuce if you were flagged

“
As we emerge make sure your sustainability strategies (environmental, economic, social impact) are easily found on websites, in marketing and collateral
”

as vegetarian! These days I'm sure half a coach, myself included, would have dietary considerations: many of which are based on personal choice or environmental impact in addition to health and allergies.

Contiki's new vision is clear and they aim to achieve carbon neutrality through several strategies.

They'll measure emissions from global offices in addition to tours and trips. Shifting to renewable energies in offices and properties will reduce their emissions.

Bromley going solar, or something similar, who'd have thought! (And might I say the Chateau de Cruix, already looking resplendent with facelifts and interiors will be well suited!)

I'm sure the investments the brand is committing to in nature-

based carbon removal solutions and carbon credits offsetting all their trips, will be significant.

A strategy that also resonates with me is the investment into continual learning. This includes adapting with new technologies (think biofuels and the like) or creating new itineraries including staycations or collaborations with rail. The new generation of travellers may miss out on the old school morning song first thing every travel day but surely it's a small price to pay to take better care of our collective home.

As we emerge, make sure your sustainability strategies (environmental, economic, social impact) are easily found on websites, in marketing and collateral. Consumers are more hyper aware of eco-credentials.

The emerging generations, who have grown up around digital, will discover any ambiguities or questionable alliances. Any ticks of approval from surface style associations (watch the documentary 'Seaspiracy'!) will be found out, called out, less likely to be booked or, cancelled.

Mar flight recovery

PASSENGER numbers on Australian domestic airlines in Mar this year were 5.8% lower than 12 months ago, when traffic began to decline amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The total of 3.1 million passengers were carried on 42,800 flights over the month, 10% lower than Mar 2020, according to figures released today by the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Regional Economics.

The top city pair for the month was Melbourne-Sydney with 341,000 passengers, followed by Brisbane-Sydney at 190,000.

Oklahoma road trip

DESTINATION Webinars will host the team from Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation in a travel trade webinar next Tue 25 May.

Two sessions will take place, one at 9am AEST and the second at noon, with participants set to enjoy a virtual journey around the state and \$300 worth of prizes to be given away.

Register for a spot on the session by **CLICKING HERE**.

Do you have what it takes to lead AFTA?

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is seeking an experienced business leader to perform the role of Chief Executive Officer. Reporting to the AFTA Board, this is a full-time position based in Sydney, with the need for interstate and some international travel (when allowed).

The CEO will have a major role in engaging and advocating at a strategic policy level with a range of key stakeholders and bodies including state and federal governments.

If you have proven experience as a CEO or in other senior leadership positions with five plus years in the travel industry, experience in advocacy and developing profitable strategies and demonstrated diplomacy and negotiation skills, this might be the role for you.

Applications close 2/6/21.

[Click here for a full job description and details on how to apply.](#)





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Travel Daily

Pub quiz

1. What road travels over London's Tower Bridge?
2. The Sydney Harbour Bridge begins and ends at which two 'Points'?
3. What city is often known as the vegan capital of the world?
 - a) Tel Aviv
 - b) Los Angeles
 - c) Warsaw
4. The Great Ocean Road lies between which two towns?
5. Japan has hosted the Summer Olympic Games twice, in 1964 and 2020, but how many times has it hosted the Winter Olympic Games?
 - a) Once
 - b) Twice
 - c) Three times
6. The Carnation Revolution occurred in what country?
7. The Wars of the Roses was fought between which "Houses"?
8. The Remarkables are a mountain range in what country?
9. The Petronas Towers are located in what city?
10. If you wanted to stroll the Hollywood Walk of Fame, you might head to the intersection of which two major streets?

Seen it at the movies



LOCATED in downtown Savannah, Georgia, Chippewa Square is the location of one of the most incredible life stories told by an iconic character. In the film there is a bench where the character sits

waiting for a bus with his box of chocolates, but today the seat is no longer there. A replica of it can be found in the Savannah History Museum. Can you name the movie that was filmed here?

Sudoku

MEDIUM

THE aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Numbers can only be used once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

			5					
	1	3			9		8	
		7	2		6			5
	6			5	2	4	7	
	2	1	9	8				6
6			4		3	8		
	5		8			3	9	
					5			

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 11 Aug 2014:

SYDNEY'S annual City2Surf Fun Run each year is a celebration of fitness and activity and always provides an amazing sight, with thousands of runners streaming down William St at the start.

In line with yesterday's event, Creative Holidays has compiled a list of other unique running festivals around the world, some more unusual than others.

Take the Medoc Marathon in Bordeaux, which allows runners to partake in wine tasting at 23 stations over the course - if you're still running by that point.

In the Cook Islands, runners can participate in the Rarotonga Round Race, which laps the island - a distance of 32kms.

The Empire State Building run-up in New York City also always lures a crowd for the run up 86 flights of stairs, or 1,576 steps.

ANSWERS 18 MAY

Unscramble: dower, drew, empower, EMPOWERED, ewer, meow, meowed, mewed, mowed, mower, owed, powder, power, powered, prow, rowed, weed, weeder, weep, weeper, were, word, wore, worm, wormed

Celebrity faces: Eyes - Lisa Pile, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Nose - Scarlett Johnansson, Mouth - Johnny Depp



EK narrows the field

THE search for a successor to Tim Clark at Emirates appears to be narrowing, with the airline's Chairman Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum revealing two internal executives were in the running to be promoted.

Al Maktoum told *Bloomberg TV* this week that EK COO Adel Al Redha and head of Emirates' regional partner Flydubai Ghaith Al-Ghaith were both strong candidates for the job, but said an outside hire was also possible.

South Australia Youtube series

SEE South Australia has just launched its first YouTube series called *Stories of the South*.

The six-episode documentary-style program will be released monthly, and has been inspired by some of South Australia's "most curious characters", utilising the state's picturesque scenery as its backdrop.

Watch episode one of the new series by **CLICKING HERE**.

See Auckland in luxury



NEW Zealand's waterfront Park Hyatt Auckland is launching a new collection of luxury suites.

On the top floor, the Presidential suite enjoys sweeping views from floor-to-ceiling windows, taking in the beautiful Waitemata Harbour, the Westhaven Marina, Auckland Harbour Bridge and the iconic Sky Tower (**pictured**).

The Presidential suite is the

largest hotel room in New Zealand at 370m², and also includes an internal courtyard, wrap-around balcony, and a range of mod-cons.

There are six specialty suites available for guests to book in total, including the Chairman's suite, the Executive Rooftop suite, the Executive suite, and the Harbour suite.

ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



The **Margaritaville Beach Resort Nassau** is set to make its debut in Jul, situated on the eastern end of the famous Junkanoo Beach. Located at the entrance to downtown Nassau and within walking distance to cruise ship terminals, the resort features

300 rooms, including 68 suites, a cocktail lounge open in the evenings and a whopping 12 restaurants to choose from. The property also offers guests a private movie theatre and multiple water rides.



W Brisbane has launched a cocktail menu for its Living Room Bar which has been curated by three expert mixologists from East London. Available from today are 15 new exclusive drinks on the menu including the Old World Bo-Kaap Royal, a beverage

described as tangy with a minty aftertaste, as well as the Alajuela, made up of cognac, vodka, vermouth, cold brew coffee, banana praline foam, and topped with grated chocolate and amaretti biscuits.



Marriott International has announced the expansion of its Aloft Hotels brand by flagging the opening of the **Aloft Al Mina, Dubai** in the UAE. The property features 192 stylish guestrooms that are designed with the brand's "artful and innovative loft-like

layout" featuring nine-foot-ceilings, 55-inch flatscreen televisions and complimentary wi-fi. Rooms also offer guests modern bathrooms featuring walk-in showers with rainfall showerheads.

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