



**SECURITY &
DEFENCE+**

ASU Arizona State
University

KING'S
College
LONDON

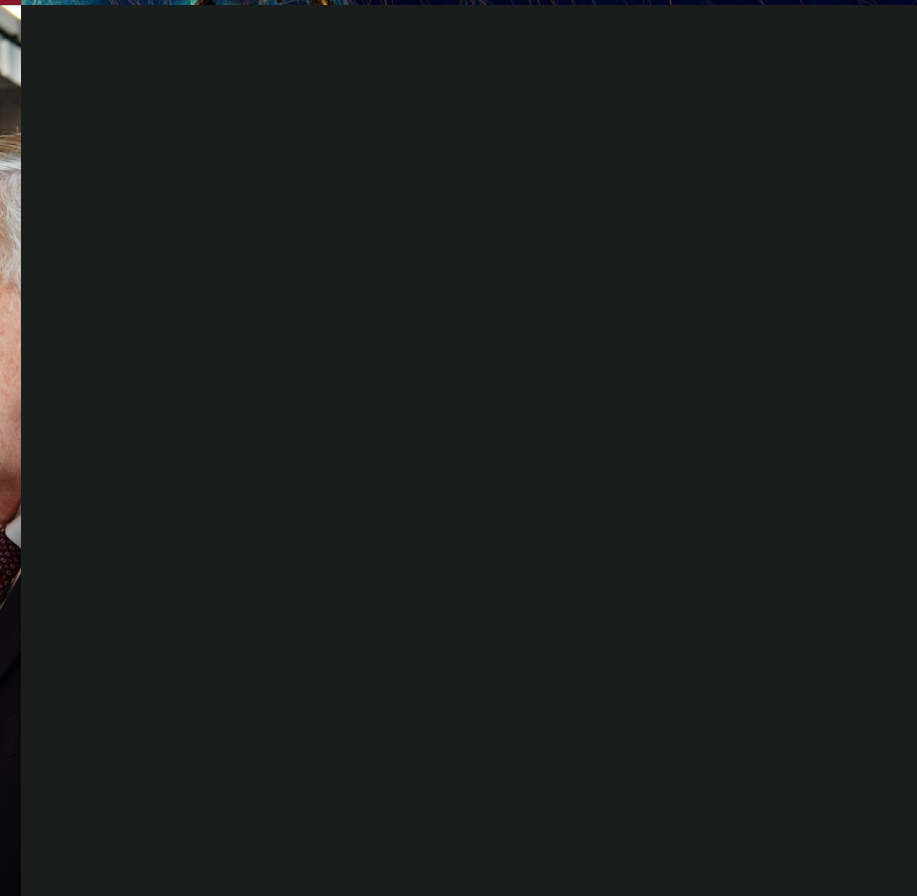
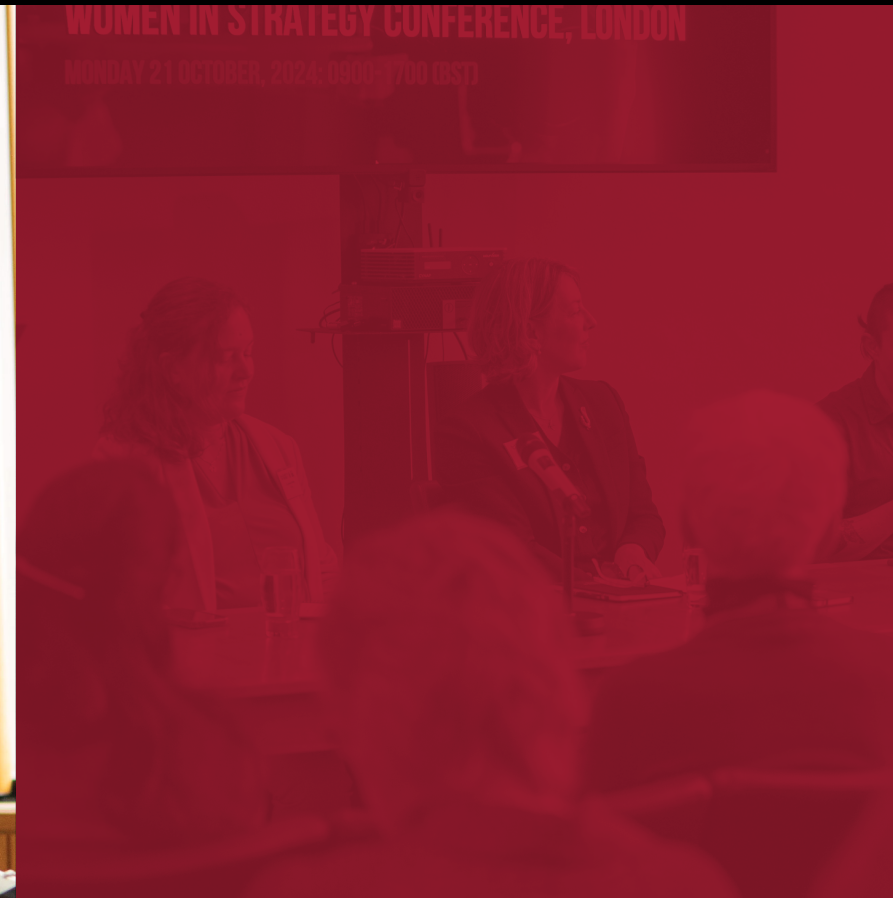


UNSW
SYDNEY

SECURITY & DEFENCE PLUS

ANNUAL REPORT

2024





ABOUT SECURITY & DEFENCE P_LU_S

Security & Defence P_LU_S is the flagship program of P_LU_S Alliance, a global partnership which combines the strengths of three leading research universities on three continents – Arizona State University, King’s College London, and the University of New South Wales – to solve global challenges. Security & Defence P_LU_S deepens this partnership, advancing research, education, and policy to support statecraft in the spirit of the AUKUS trilateral agreement.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2024 has been a transformative year for Security & Defence PLS. The initiative has made significant strides in advancing global security dialogue, applied research, and collaboration, particularly in areas relating to AUKUS, strategic partnerships, and inclusive security, leveraging the collective expertise of three world-leading institutions.

This progress comes against a backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions, the rapid evolution of emerging technology, and the increasing intersection of security with global challenges such as climate change and economic instability. In the Indo-Pacific region, AUKUS is emerging as a critical pillar of stability, while nations face increasing threats from cyber warfare, hybrid conflicts, and infrastructure disruptions.

In this increasingly complex and volatile landscape, Security & Defence PLS stands as a vital bridge between academia, government, and industry, equipping stakeholders with the tools to navigate and mitigate emerging security risks.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR UNDERScore THE POWER OF COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION:

Advancing AUKUS Priorities

We supported research, policy briefs, and advocacy on AI and advanced undersea capabilities, with several initiatives from 2024 still pending and more announcements expected in early 2025.

Fostering Global Dialogue

We convened leaders from government, defence, and academia through events like the Future Security Forum in DC, the Integrated Deterrence Symposium in Phoenix, and the first Athena Series in London to tackle critical security challenges.

Seeding Solutions

S&D+ launched a seed grant initiative to fund innovative, cross-institutional research in areas including cybersecurity, AI, and climate security, promoting collaboration across partner institutions.

We've also significantly grown our team, adding expertise in communications, program management, and strategic leadership to bring fresh energy to tackling today's challenges and advancing our mission.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025, WE'RE BUILDING ON THIS MOMENTUM WITH AMBITIOUS PLANS:

Education Development

S&D+ will launch new short courses on emerging technologies, leadership, and cross-sector collaboration to equip security professionals with practical skills. Efforts to bring degree programs to market will also continue.

Expanding Seed Grants

We'll increase funding for interdisciplinary projects addressing emerging threats and technologies. A new 'year 2' follow-on grant will support select 2024 recipients in advancing their work towards commercialisation and collaboration.

Security & Defence PLS is a testament to the power of partnership. Together, we've tackled complex challenges, advanced inclusive leadership, and helped pave the way for a secure and resilient future. As we enter 2025, I'm excited to build on this foundation and continue making a meaningful impact in an evolving world.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Langford'.

Brig (R'td) Dr Ian Langford, DSC and Bars, PhD
Executive Director, Security & Defence PLS

Global Convenings

S&D+ will host the inaugural Indo-Pacific Security Forum in Hawaii, Athena Series events in Phoenix and Canberra, and continue collaboration on the Future Security Forum.

Strategic Partnerships

We'll aim to deepen relationships with government agencies, industry leaders, and international organisations, creating new opportunities for collaboration and innovation.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS



JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

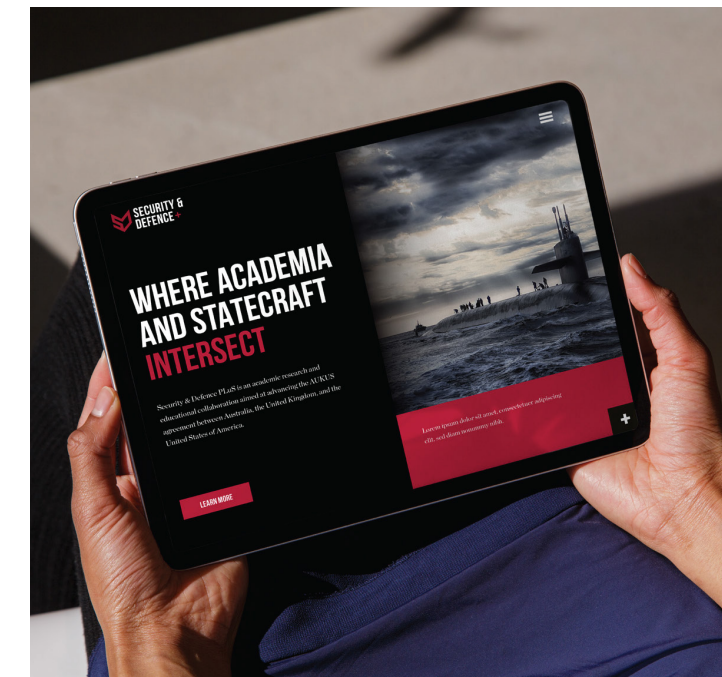
NOVEMBER

DECEMBER



Updated AUKUS Briefing Book

The second edition of the S&D+ AUKUS Briefing Book was launched, incorporating developments from the announcement of AUKUS in September 2021 through mid-December 2023.



Branch Refresh and Newsletter Launch

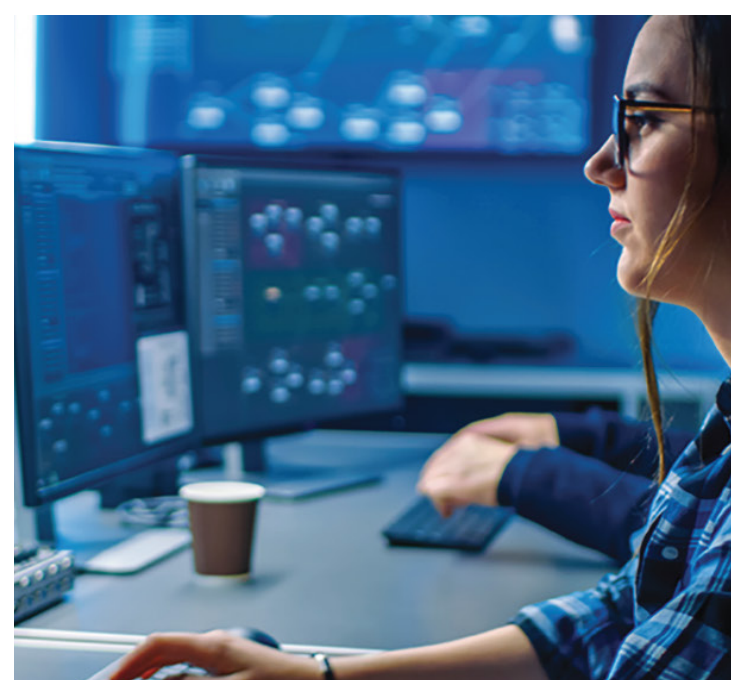
A refreshed branding and logo were introduced, alongside the launch of Alliance Alert, the a monthly S&D+ newsletter.



+375 subscribers



+ 71% LinkedIn Followers



Seed Grant Program Opens

Applications opened for the inaugural Seed Grant Program, designed to support the development and expansion of research collaborations across the PLSu partner universities. Funded areas align with security and defence priorities, including AUKUS-related initiatives.



AmCham Delegation Hosted at King's College London

A panel discussion on AUKUS was hosted at King's College London as part of the 2024 AmCham Alliance Summit, which took place in Washington DC, New York, and London.

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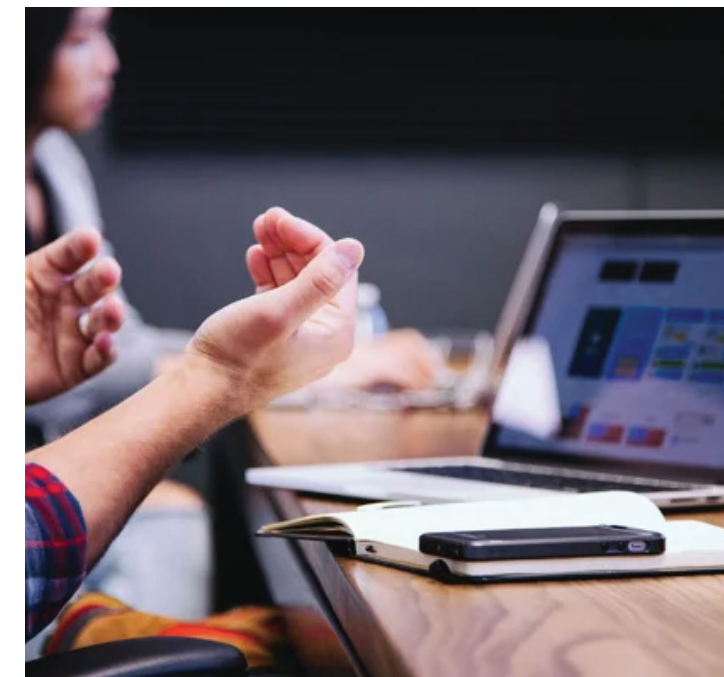
NOVEMBER

DECEMBER



Letter of Intent with Naval Postgraduate School

A Letter of Intent to partner was signed with the Naval Postgraduate School, emphasising collaborative research, convening opportunities, and initiatives aligned with the AUKUS agreement.



Third Edition of AUKUS Briefing Book and Online Event

The third edition of the S&D+ AUKUS Briefing Book was released, accompanied by an online panel discussion featuring Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, Professor John Blaxland, and Professor Alessio Patalano.



Three New ASU Short Courses

The S&D+ educational portfolio was expanded with the addition of three new ASU online short courses: Satellite Operations, SciTech Leadership and Foundations of Narrative Conflict.



PLoS Alliance Joint Steering Committee Meeting

The three university Presidents, Professor Michael Crow, Professor Shitij Kapur, and Professor Attila Brungs, along with PLoS Chair Sir Malcolm Grant, were joined by the wider PLoS leadership and Security & Defence PLoS team at King's College London.

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Seed Grant Awards Announced

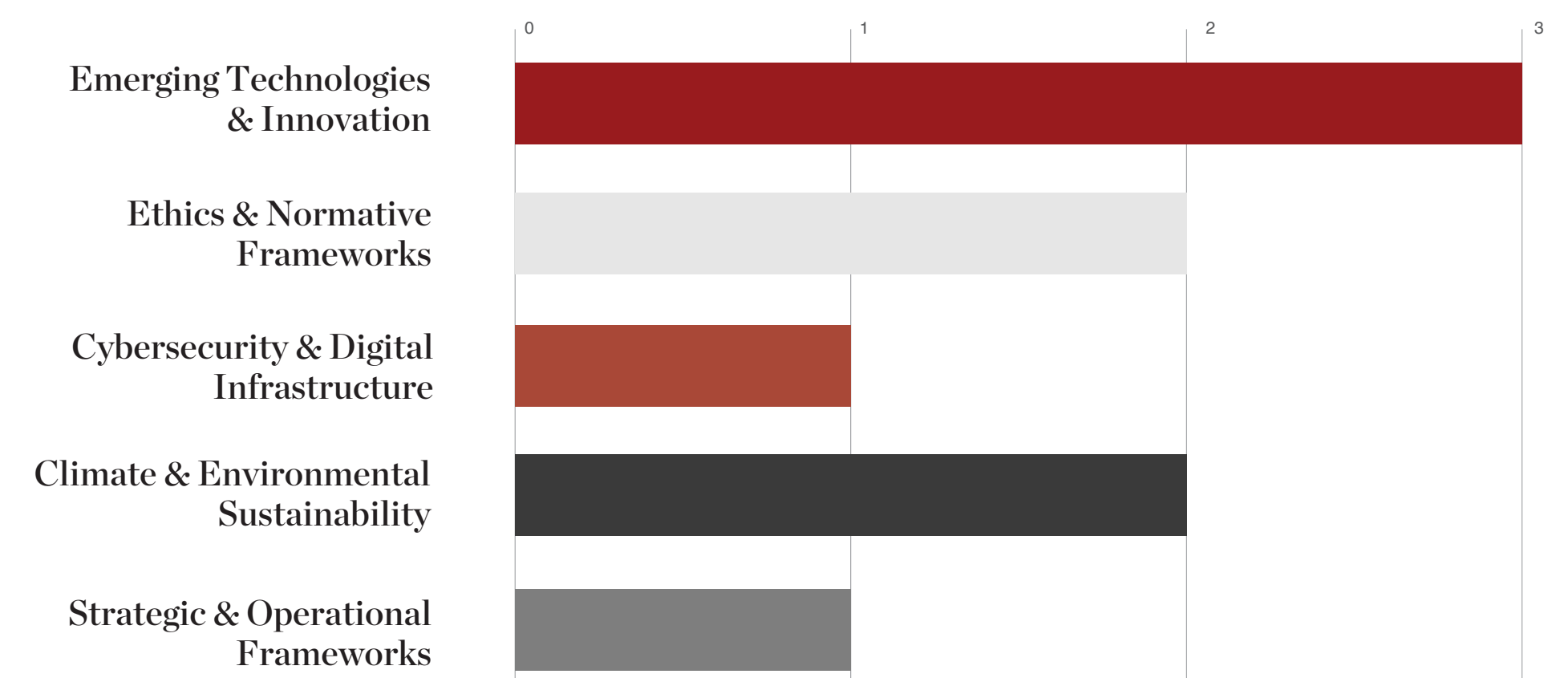
4 trilateral projects / 5 bilateral project

The program provided seed funding to nine groundbreaking research initiatives addressing critical challenges in security and defence.

With up to \$15,000 in grants available for trilateral university collaborations and \$10,000 for bilateral projects, the grants are designed to support the very early stages of academic-led research, helping projects establish a foundation for future development and positioning them to seek additional funding.

A series of videos were produced to spotlight these projects, featuring insights from the academics driving them as they outline their focus, proposed solutions, and intended outcomes, offering a glimpse into the future impact of their research.

Project Core Theme



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**UNDERSTANDING INTEGRATED DETERRENCE:
A FRAMEWORK FOR THE AUKUS CONTEXT**

SECURITY & DEFENCE | ASU Arizona State University | KINGS College LONDON | UNSW

**INNOVATING DEFENCE
SIMULATION FOR MILITARY
ETHICS TRAINING**

SECURITY & DEFENCE | ASU Arizona State University | KINGS College LONDON | UNSW

**MACHINE LEARNING
FOR DESIGNING
DAMAGE-RESISTANT ALLOYS**

SECURITY & DEFENCE | ASU Arizona State University | KINGS College LONDON | UNSW

**SEAWATER AND SEA SAND CONCRETE
FOR NAVY MILITARY-USE OFFSHORE
INFRASTRUCTURE**

SECURITY & DEFENCE | ASU Arizona State University | KINGS College LONDON | UNSW

**AI FOR DEFENCE ASSET MANAGEMENT
AND SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE**

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**EMERGING SPACE NORMS:
AN ONLINE DATABASE**

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Future Security Forum

Collaboration with New America and Arizona State University's Future Security Initiative for the 10th anniversary of the Future Security Forum. The second day of the event, led by S&D+ focused on security and stability in the Indo-Pacific with a keynote from Australian Ambassador to the United States and Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

Dinner event at the ASU Barrett & O'Connor Washington Center with a keynote from Arizona Senator Mark Kelly.



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Integrated Deterrence Symposium

The inaugural S&D+ Integrated Deterrence Symposium, hosted at ASU, addressed deterrence challenges in the 21st century, emphasising international partnerships and emerging technologies.



Online Event: Emerging Threats in the Indo-Pacific

An online panel event featured insights from Professor David Kilcullen, Dr Richard Dunley, Veerle Nouwens, and Julia Balm, focusing on emerging threats in the Indo-Pacific region.



Athena Series: Women in Strategy Conference London

A one-day conference at King's College London explored the critical role of women in strategic leadership, in partnership with the Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre.



New UNSW Canberra Short Courses

Four new online short courses were added to the S&D+ educational portfolio: International Criminal Justice, Systems Thinking, Conflict in the Indo-Pacific, and Chinese Politics and Strategy.

CONTRIBUTORS & SUPPORTERS

We extend our sincere gratitude to the partners, collaborators, and contributors whose dedication and support have been integral to the successes of Security & Defence PLS in 2024. This collective effort has strengthened our impact and advanced our mission. Our special thanks go to:

Professor Michael M Crow
President, ASU

Professor Shitij Kapur
Vice-Chancellor and President, KCL

Professor Attila Brungs
Vice-Chancellor and President, UNSW

**Professor Sir Malcolm Grant, Chair, PLS Alliance,
and members of PLS Leadership:**
Professor Bashir M. Al-Hashimi (incoming PLS Chair)
Professor Nancy Gonzales
Professor Colin Grant
Professor Sally Morton
Professor Linda McKie
Professor Emma Sparks
Casey Evans
Vanessa Morrison
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