

APRIL 2017

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**RE-FRAMING  
PUBLIC TRUST  
IN BUSINESS**

Fostering moral  
accountability in  
business students

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**JABS AND  
BARBS**

How authorities  
could defeat  
anti-vaxxers

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**WHEN WAR  
COMES HOME**

Understanding how  
combat trauma can  
be transmitted from  
parent to child

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**ASK THE EXEC**

**Dwyer**  
**Anne**

**deputy vice-chancellor**  
**(corporate services)**

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**What does Corporate Services have planned for 2017?**

We have another big year planned for 2017, of course! When you look at what has been achieved in the last few years I feel confident that we can continue to build on these successes. While there are many projects and priorities on the go, it's the important cultural and foundational projects that make this a great place to work that interest me the most.

These projects are the improvement focus we bring to particular areas because you highlighted the need through the UTS Staff Survey or they are fundamental to building excellence into our culture.

I was very impressed that 92 per cent of our continuing and fixed-term staff and more than 300 casuals provided input into last year's survey. There were many areas where the results have kept improving over successive surveys (health and safety, career development, communication, recruitment and selection) which correlate with areas your feedback indicated we should focus on. You should by now have had local area feedback on the survey results and local plans to address agreed areas for action will be underway.

At the university-wide level, your feedback from the 2016 survey has again guided us in determining our key priorities for

improvement. These include process improvements, technology capability and collaboration/cross-unit cooperation. We will also continue to focus on career development, health and safety and wellness and work/life balance.

**Which artwork is hanging in your office?**

My favourite painting from my office pre-Chancellery reno (an untitled ink and wash on paper by Gao Xingjian) no longer fits, but it does have a new spot in the Chancellery on level 4A. The painting(s) I love most in our new space is called *Yipirinya (Yeperenye) - Caterpillar Dreaming (2016)*. It is hanging in the dining room in the refurbished Chancellery and is 12 sheets brought together into one image of their landscape. It has been painted by five artists – Reinhold Inkamala, Kevin Namatjira, Lennie Namatjira, Gloria Pannka and Mervyn Rubuntja. It was 'discovered' by our Art Curator Tania Creighton in Alice Springs when she visited for the Desert symposium. It is the most perfect fit for the new Chancellery, and that space in particular.

In January, I had the pleasure of joining Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Michael McDaniel in welcoming these Indigenous artists to see their work in situ.



**Do you have any pets?**

No pets – just plants and it took me a long time to learn to keep them alive! I think I might be also keeping alive some caterpillars, worms, aphids, et cetera!

**What do you consider to be UTS's hidden gem?**

I think there are some lovely less-well-known spaces around UTS, however the real hidden gems, to me, are the many staff working tirelessly and quietly in the background. Many of them are not known more broadly for their work and are not seeking the limelight. But I do have the opportunity to celebrate them every year at the annual Career and Professional Development Awards lunch. It's my favourite time of the year.

There are so many more staff in all areas across the university though, who are making a difference to keeping things going, solving problems, building solutions, et cetera. A simple 'thank you' from colleagues, supervisors and leaders to show your appreciation, whenever you interact with each other, can make a very big difference to how all of us engage with our work and colleagues.

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Photographer: Jesse Taylor

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The next issue will be released on  
**Monday 1 May 2017**

All U: articles are available to read online via [newsroom.uts.edu.au](http://newsroom.uts.edu.au) or follow us @utsnewsroom  
 Send your story ideas, opinions and events to [u@uts.edu.au](mailto:u@uts.edu.au)

Page 19 images: *A Beach (Beneath)* installation detail – Biljana Jancic, 2016, two channel video projection, aluminium tape, *Primavera 2016*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, courtesy the artist; Lynda.com; UTS PhotoSoc

## Issue 02

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# Success Fulbright

**At a time when closed borders seem to dominate the news, academic exchange supported by the USA-run Fulbright Program continues to promote international collaboration and cultural understanding.**

This year, UTS celebrates two alumni Fulbright Scholarship wins.

Bachelor of Business (Honours) alumnus Arjun Bisen is the recipient of the 2017 Fulbright Anne Wexler Scholarship in Public Policy. Bachelor of Communication and Bachelor of Laws (Honours) graduate Alison Whittaker (who's also an academic in the Faculty of Law and Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges) has received the 2017 Fulbright Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship.

For Bisen, currently working as a diplomat in Cambodia, the Fulbright Scholarship represents "a life-changing opportunity" to study a Master in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School in the USA.

"It gives me the chance to interact with renowned thought leaders, the space to unpack problems I've worked on as a foreign policy practitioner, and the resources to support my efforts," he says.

"Navigating geopolitical power shifts in the Indo-Pacific region will be a central challenge for Australian diplomacy in the coming decades. I plan to research these dynamics and hope to propose practical responses to these challenges."

For Whittaker, who finished her undergraduate degrees last year, the scholarship represents the next step in her academic journey.

"Having now learned the technical guts of Australian law, what I needed was more of the big picture; the dynamic and conceptual perspective," she says.

"I had spoken to other Indigenous students who had gone to the States to study law, and when you examine the contexts, shared and distinct, between Indigenous Australians and Native Americans it's clear we have much to learn from each other. It is crucial for us to share perspectives and expertise – especially on nation-building and treaty law as Australia now moves into treaty talks."

Whittaker, a Gomeri woman, will use the scholarship to complete the Harvard Law School's Master of Laws program. It will, she says, enable her to continue researching contemporary forms of Indigenous lawmaking and its relationship to Indigenous self-determination and gendered violence.

While both Bisen and Whittaker forge ahead in their ambition to become future-ready leaders, these awards also represent huge personal achievements closer to home.

Says Whittaker, "The Fulbright Program is incredibly generous – but so is the 23 years of support I've had from my community up to now. I hope this will make me a better practitioner, researcher and advocate for my mob."

Bisen agrees. "The scholarship also means a tremendous amount to my family who could not have imagined this when we moved to Australia in 1992. It has not always been an easy journey for us, so such opportunities are ones to savour!"

**HANNAH JENKINS**

Marketing and Communication Unit

Photographer: Hoc Ngo



Arjun Bisen and Alison Whittaker



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**AROUND U**  
BUS

# Free and clear



Anna Wright

**“It’s like Google Maps, but for the inside.” That’s how Senior Lecturer in accounting Anna Wright describes her new free app, BanjoMaps.**

BanjoMaps (beacon assisted navigation journey and orientation) is an app-based navigation system that’s been developed for the vision-impaired, but can be used by anyone. This month, UTS students will be testing a beta version on campus. The data they collect, in addition to improving future iterations of BanjoMaps, will be used in a research project Wright is running with her colleagues at the university.

So, how does BanjoMaps work? Wright explains: “You open up your BanjoMaps app and say, ‘I need to find the information desk’ or ‘the exit’ or ‘the ladies toilets’ and then Siri will lead you through the internal space to where it is you want to go.”

While the beta version is only available in English and will focus on finding bathrooms, exits and information centres, Wright says, “Long term, absolutely, it will be in every language we can possibly think of”.

Wright admits the idea for the app has been percolating for a while. Twenty years ago, she was diagnosed with an eye condition that leads to vision loss. It made her think, “What am I going to do? How am I going to be able to work? How am I going to get around? How will I get my kids to school? How am I ever going to find a public toilet in a public shopping centre?”

“Imagine the lack of dignity you’d experience trying to feel your way around to find the lifts or the bathroom. It’s ridiculous!”

“In our visual world we don’t even think about that – we can see where the lift call mechanism is. We know how to operate it. We’re just not very aware of what the world might be like for someone with a visual impairment.”

Last year, serendipity intervened. In October, Wright, who also works in private practice, was chatting with a client who specialises in augmented and virtual reality. They told her about beacons – small devices that send signals to a user’s phone giving accurate, real-time, location-based information.

That same month, Australian start-up and innovation group BlueChilli launched SheStarts – a national accelerator program giving 10 female entrepreneurs \$100,000 seed capital and support to launch their own start-ups. Wright applied and eventually become one of the top 10.

The beta testing of BanjoMaps is the most recent step in Wright’s SheStarts journey. By the beginning of May, each of the top 10 need to have developed a “minimal viable product so we can show people how it works,” she explains. In August, participants will be able to apply for a second round of funding. And, “hopefully by then we will have the commercially viable product”.

Wright is adamant that BanjoMaps is just the beginning. But, to find out what her future innovations entail, we’ll just have to wait and see (or hear).

**To find out more about BanjoMaps and its beta testing, email [Anna.Wright@uts.edu.au](mailto:Anna.Wright@uts.edu.au)**

**FIONA LIVY**  
Marketing and Communication Unit

Photographer: Shane Lo



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# Jabs and barbs

**“Public health has a tremendous product to sell; it’s just sometimes very bad at selling it”**

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**Childhood immunisation has been one of the last century’s most successful public health measures. Yet, for some, vaccination remains a highly politicised and contentious issue. Naturopath, academic and former nurse Jon Wardle reveals how his latest research project is set to bridge the gap between childhood vaccination and the vaccine hesitant.**

Vaccine hesitancy is an emerging public health problem. Though the high rate of childhood vaccination coverage in most high-income countries indicates that paediatric vaccination remains a widely accepted public health measure, support for paediatric vaccination is not universal.

The problem with this is that even relatively small levels of non-vaccination can affect ‘herd immunity’. Immunisation rates of up to 95 per cent are required to prevent the spread of infectious disease within a community and protect against outbreaks.

What this means is that even a small minority of parents choosing not to vaccinate their children can have a significant impact on the emergence of childhood infectious disease. For example, in the last six months we’ve seen measles outbreaks in Sydney, Perth and Adelaide. They come just two years after the World Health Organization declared the elimination of measles in Australia and show the dangers of complacency.

However, very few people are truly ‘anti-vaccine’ – only around 1.5 per cent of the population. It’s a number that has remained consistent since Federation, but the reasons for opposition have changed.

In fact, the largest group of Australians that don’t vaccinate aren’t necessarily against vaccines, but are often sitting on the fence of the issue. Many of these parents have valid concerns and questions around vaccination. However, the emotive, highly politicised and inflammatory rhetoric means they either don’t raise their concerns with their healthcare provider or they’re not given the chance to ask at all.

These are the parents who often get pushed to alternative sources of information.

Both groups are right to be frustrated. Parents should have questions about vaccination; they should have questions about everything that involves their children. They’re ultimately quite selfish when it comes to their children. That’s what makes them parents; it’s evolutionarily built in.

Similarly, health professionals and vaccination advocates are right to be frustrated at parents not immediately seeing the obvious and apparent benefits of vaccination. The benefits are extraordinary compared to the very minor risks – the most dangerous part of vaccinating your child is driving to the appointment.

The problem is these two groups are not speaking the same language. Health professionals and vaccination advocates are making their case using data, facts and figures. But parents don't think like that. When it comes to their children, parents think emotionally. You can't engage with them by just throwing numbers at them.

Unfortunately, alternative information sources promoting misleading anti-vaccination material are much better at this emotional engagement than health practitioners or public health agencies. This starts from the very first contact ('We understand you have questions ...').

Conversely, many public health and medical professionals can come across as dismissive of parents' concerns.

Indeed, last year, our research of 'attachment' parents (those who espouse natural principles and philosophies towards child health) found that unwillingness or inability of conventional health providers, like doctors and nurses, to answer questions was often a driver for non-vaccination.

My latest research aims to identify ways to better tailor vaccination messages to specific audiences who are known to have high levels of vaccine hesitancy and to develop resources to help health professionals better communicate with parents about their concerns. Already, it appears, much of this could be adequately addressed through better, respectful, empathic communication.

For example, research from the Australian Research Centre in Complementary and Integrative Medicine at UTS suggests that although users of complementary medicine tend to be vaccine hesitant, most complementary medicine practitioners are actually supportive of vaccination.

Vaccination itself aligns with many natural health approaches – it's low dose, preventive, and encourages the body's own healing processes through the development of natural immunity.

I myself was a naturopathic practitioner and teacher and met many patients and students who wanted to vaccinate their children. But they thought they couldn't if they wanted to have a natural approach to health.

In fact, most vaccine literature is aimed at a low health-literate audience, but those who are vaccine-hesitant are often better educated than the general population and demand more detailed and highly technical sources of information. If public health advocates won't provide them, it is a gap that will be (and has been) readily filled by those with an anti-vaccination agenda.

The case for vaccination is as overwhelming as the arguments against it are underwhelming. What is truly extraordinary is that public health has a tremendous product to sell; it's just sometimes very bad at selling it. Hopefully my work can make that sales job a little easier.

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**JON WARDLE**

Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Health

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This research is funded by: NHMRC TRIP Fellowship

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Photographer: Shane Lo

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Jon Wardle



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# When war comes home



Anna Denejkina

**All too often, children are the innocent victims of war. Even those far from the battlefield, waiting to welcome returning soldiers home, can be left with scars. But just how does combat trauma in a parent affect a child's development? PhD candidate Anna Denejkina is drawing on her own experience, and that of others, to find out.**

On 24 December 1979, 30,000 Soviet Union troops invaded Afghanistan to support the communist government's attempts to quell a violent uprising. It was the start of a 10-year war that saw five million Afghans flee their country, one million civilians die and more than 100,000 Afghan soldiers, Soviet soldiers and rebel Mujahideen fighters lose their lives.

For those who survived, and their loved ones back home, the trauma of the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989) would be felt long after the guns fell silent.

PhD candidate in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Anna Denejkina was born just one year after the war ended. At the time, her father was a captain in the Soviet army.

"I was born in Mykolaiv, in Ukraine, in 1990," says Denejkina. "My father's Russian and my mother is Ukrainian-Russian."

In 1993, Denejkina and her family (which includes an elder sister and younger brother) moved to Ulyanovsk in Russia, 900 kilometres east of Moscow. Six years later they emigrated to Australia.

In 2014, the then 23-year-old Denejkina watched, stunned, as armed Russian troops invaded the Ukrainian territory of Crimea and seized control of the parliament. "When Russia invaded Ukraine I was asking myself a lot of questions about what it meant for me because I am both Ukrainian and Russian," recalls Denejkina.

The resulting war left an already-inquisitive Denejkina asking: Why are we here? Why are we the way we are? And why do we do the things we do?

Denejkina, then a Master of Arts in Journalism student at UTS, discovered a way to start finding the answers – writing about the invasion, and the Euromaidan protests, for her master's major project.

About the same time, she says, "One of my lecturers, now my PhD supervisor, Sue Joseph, was talking about her PhD and said, 'Just do it'. So I thought I'd apply and see what happens, and then I got accepted."





A monument honouring and listing the names of Ulyanovsk soldiers who died in Afghanistan, 1979-1989



The Volga River, the largest river in Europe, flowing past Ulyanovsk, Russia

## “I’m looking at how that potentially unhelpful environment is detrimental to a child’s development.”

It’s a journey that’s led Denejkina through the ethics of auto-ethnography (the study of one’s self) and all the way back to the Soviet-Afghan war. Today, the PhD candidate says, “I’m looking at how combat-related trauma transmits from parent to child, but I’m specifically looking at the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan and speaking with veterans and the children of returned Soviet veterans to see if there’s any link in the trauma being transmitted.

“As part of my research I’ve been reading books and papers pertaining to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and trauma transmission. I realised there was a gap in knowledge, that more research still had to be done, and that hopefully I could add something to that,” says Denejkina.

“A lot of the research suggests that if a parent has combat-related PTSD they have anxiety, they try to either isolate themselves or become possessive of the people in their family. So I’m looking at how that potentially unhelpful environment is detrimental to a child’s development.”

To do this, Denejkina has been conducting interviews and surveys with the children of Russian and Ukrainian veterans (all of whom are now over 18). “I’m also looking at my familial experience,” she adds.

“It can be confronting, and that’s when the ethics really comes into play; not only when you speak with participants, but in terms of how you write about yourself and how you write about people close to you and the questions of ‘Is it my story or is it their story?’.”

To navigate these issues, Denejkina has developed a unique research methodology that combines auto-ethnography with the history of the self, including how indirect experiences can impact a person by proxy.

Eventually, says Denejkina, she’d like to complete a transdisciplinary project by “teaming up with someone who’s done a PhD in psychology or psychiatry and work on something similar, but on a much larger scale; perhaps to do with Australian veterans.”

But for now, she hopes, “that when I come to the end of my research I’ll have a body of work that could potentially be used to influence social policy – how veterans are treated when they finish their tours and how combat-related trauma is treated, because when you put children into that equation, if there aren’t programs and funding allocated for their support and veterans are just left to their own devices, the veterans aren’t the only people who are going to suffer.

“There’s a chance their children will also face the repercussions of what happened while at war.”

**If your parents fought in the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989) you can participate in Denejkina’s research by completing her survey online in Russian at [uts.ac/2lfego8](https://uts.ac/2lfego8) or in English at [uts.ac/2miBEID](https://uts.ac/2miBEID)**

**FIONA LIVY**  
Marketing and Communication Unit

Photographer (A Denejkina): Stella Thai  
Photographer (monument): Anna Denejkina  
Photograph (Volga River) supplied by: Anna Denejkina



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# Re-framing public trust in business

**Since the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, public trust in business education has been falling. At the UTS Business School though, academics like Natalia Nikolova and Walter Jarvis have been reimagining contemporary business education. They're moving away from teaching practices that institutionalise greed and towards those that foster moral accountability and public trust.**

The concepts of 'business' and 'moral accountability' don't always go hand in hand, but a postgraduate subject in the UTS Business School is pushing students to put their views on ethics front and centre.

The subject Managing, Leading and Stewardship (MLS) is the brainchild of Business School Senior Lecturer Natalia Nikolova and Lecturer Walter Jarvis. "It foregrounds the stewardship of public trust in challenging students to make, defend and be morally accountable for their judgements and to guide others to meet collective responsibility in morally challenging situations," explains Jarvis.

The course content responds to what Jarvis and Nikolova see as a global shift, over the last 30 to 40 years, which has entrenched a neo-liberalist approach to business – one that reduces business to incentivising and prizing shareholder profits over everything else.

"We're not anti-globalisation," says Jarvis, "but neo-liberalism champions globalisation in that it seeks to find the lowest cost opportunity for creating value. In other words, it doesn't give too much credence to alternative perspectives other than the shareholder."

Both Jarvis and Nikolova, who have been collaborating since 2013, believe passionately in a business system that recognises the importance of all business stakeholders – customers, suppliers, employees, the community and government – and the responsibility that businesses have to recognise and respond to broader and deeper societal needs. Such systems, though, are more likely to be found in some parts of Europe than in the US or Australia.

"A stakeholder approach to business and economics generally says that all these different groups have stakes in companies, in organisations – they all have needs and expectations, and then businesses have to try to accommodate those, rather than focus singularly and simplistically on one stakeholder, which in neo-liberalism is the shareholder," says Nikolova.

**"It challenges students to make, defend and be morally accountable for their judgements"**



Walter Jarvis  
and Natalia Nikolova

These values are reflected heavily in the MLS curriculum. And they are, in part, a response to the growing public distrust of business schools and management education precipitated by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis.

MLS is compulsory for students studying the Master of Business Administration or Master of Management program. It pushes students to think critically and reflectively about their professional practice and their responsibilities and accountabilities as UTS graduates, not just about how they can deliver on corporately mandated key performance indicators.

“What we’re doing is preparing them to realise that they, as an individual, as a graduate with a higher education qualification, will need to accept responsibility for the judgements they make,” Jarvis says.

“We question and challenge the role of the charismatic leader, we champion the notion of the follower, and the responsibilities of followers and citizens to hold leaders to account.”

To do this, Jarvis and Nikolova have developed a series of tailored activities that are based on principles of active and experiential learning – students learn what it’s like to be in commonplace situations, recreating, discussing and critiquing a series of real-world business problems in order to understand them at a human level.

In week one, for example, they’re asked to interview the person next to them and get to know everything they can about that person’s life – their background, fears and dreams. After building a personal connection, they are then abruptly told to role-play some challenging events they might face in the workplace.

In another lesson, after watching *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*, they’re asked to imagine being young traders who’ve been told to do something they know is wrong. The students are then asked to reflect on their options and choices, becoming aware of the ‘slippery slope’ nature of arguments and decisions when facing pressure.

One key activity, based on a real-life event, recreates a sudden and unexpected factory closure in regional Australia – the result of a cost-cutting directive from the overseas parent company. Students are asked to take on different roles, such as the managing director, factory manager, and the now-jobless employees, and try to imagine and then play out their responses. The activity is followed by an in-depth discussion about managerial responsibility, alternative and broader perspectives.

William Bruce is a Master of Sport Management student who took MLS last year. He played the manager when his class did the factory role-play, and says the experience made him think carefully about his professional responsibilities.

“The pressure from above can really push a manager to make a decision they don’t want to, and I think the learning was you’ve got to try your best to say ‘no’ if you feel like your ethics are being compromised,” he says.

For their work, Nikolova and Jarvis received a 2016 UTS Learning and Teaching Citation for ‘cultivating moral accountability (stewardship) and self-reflection’ in the classroom. Despite the challenges of opening students’ eyes to such a vastly different approach – the duo are often met with opposition in the early weeks of the course – the subject is clearly changing hearts and minds once the learning experiences sink in.



William Bruce and  
Monica George

“We have a lot of former students saying that they’ve taken these types of insights and used them in future practices. We’ve had students who have come back to us to tell us about the changes they have started making in their workplaces,” Nikolova says.

Master of Engineering Management and Master of Business Administration graduate Monica George is one of those students.

“In my business practice, my role requires me to be ethically correct and customer-centric simultaneously,” she says. “And this course made me aware of how I need to meet and exceed the expectations of all stakeholders in the business, including society. We need to be accountable. It’s just good practice.”

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CLAIRE THOMPSON

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Photographer: Shane Lo

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# Up the creek with a paddle



UTS Waterdragons competing at the 2017 corporate dragon boat races

**Dayle English oozes enthusiasm. Her smile is big, her laugh is loud and her wit is quick. But there's a lot more to English than meets the eye. In addition to being the Executive Assistant (EA) to UTS's Chief Financial Officer, Mark Leigh, she's also a nutritionist, wellness coach, and dragon boat racer.**

"In early 2015 I had a look around," English recalls. "I wanted to do a team sport and I was sick of the gym and I was getting a bit fat, so I went and had a paddle down at Blackwattle Bay with the ACCA Dragon Boat Racing Team."

One-and-a-half hours later, as she climbed out of the boat, puffed, English was hooked.

"When it comes to dragon boat racing, the main thing is timing," explains English. "No matter how fit you are, no matter the age of the team, if someone is out of time you won't win."

For English, the only thing better than the camaraderie of her beloved Nowra Waterdragons (in 2015 she moved from Sydney's inner west to Wollongong) is that of UTS's Financial Services Unit (FSU).

Late last year, she combined the two, corralling her colleagues to race in the Dragon Boats NSW Chinese New Year Corporate Dragon Boat Races. Despite having had just one team training session and only three of the 23 team members having any race experience, the FSU team placed fourth, fourth and second in their three heats.

It's just one of many team-building experiences English is involved in at UTS. Within FSU, she also coordinates the unit's bi-monthly town hall meetings. The two-hour events include unit updates, staff achievements and a half-hour-long presentation by a UTS researcher talking about their work.

"I like it because it showcases research I wouldn't normally know about and it gets me up close and personal with the impressive impact UTS is making in the world," says English.



Dayle English

The effervescent EA is also a member of the Executive Assistants and Admins (EAAA) Forum on StaffConnect. It's an online network for executive assistants at UTS where they can collaborate and find out interesting and useful information. It's also where English writes her "nutty blog".

"Nutrition is my other passion," she reveals. "I do a blog for them every few weeks. It includes some recipes and some of my opinions and sometimes I'll attach a research paper. I really just want to help people understand they can take control of their health and change things to make them feel better and healthier."

"I call it my 'nutty blog' because some things, like applying pineapples to warts to remove them, sound crazy, but I'm like, 'go on try it!'"

And English is always up for a challenge. In between stints working at UTS (she was an EA in the Faculty of Engineering from 2001 to 2008, then returned to the Faculty of Science in 2013 and moved to FSU last year), English has also run her own nutrition and massage business. "But it just wasn't the right path," she says.

Now, English couldn't be happier. "I love it here, and I'm not leaving again. Until I retire."

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#### FIONA LIVY

Marketing and Communication Unit

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Photographer (D English): Shane Lo  
Photographer (dragon boat): Marcos Da Silva

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**ALUMNI PROFILE**  
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# Life and legacy



Remembering Nicole at the Lantern Floating ceremony in Hawaii, May 2015

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Kate Fitzsimons

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**Kate Fitzsimons is a woman on a mission: to save as many people as possible from her sister's tragic fate.**

Having landed a marketing grad's dream job in the final year of her business degree at UTS, Fitzsimons seemed to be well on her way to a successful corporate career. Then, in the early hours of Saturday 20 October, 2012, her world was turned upside down.

She received a call from her mother saying her beloved sister, Nicole, had been killed in a motorbike accident in Thailand. Nicole and her partner Jamie weren't wearing helmets as they rode their motorcycle back to their resort. As they turned into the driveway, another speeding rider crossed onto their side of the road and t-boned the pair. Jamie survived. Nicole didn't.

Three months later, a devastated Fitzsimons quit her corporate job and formed The Nicole Fitzsimons Foundation. She has worked tirelessly every day since to ensure her sister's legacy lives on.

The Nicole Fitzsimons Foundation has two goals – to educate young Australians on safe travel, and to assist young, talented and financially strapped performers and sportspeople achieve their dreams.

Over the past four years, Fitzsimons has travelled the country, speaking to more than 30,000 young Australians. She says, "I just thought my sister's story could be that one story that stops a young Aussie from making a foolish decision overseas. And if that means one less family suffering what we've been through, and one more beautiful life that gets to achieve the dreams that my sister didn't, then it's worth it."

The impact of Fitzsimons' message has even transcended the school system, in which her work is based. In 2014, she was recognised by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop. Fitzsimons says she was "in awe" of Bishop at their first meeting.

"She did a speech, at a Smartraveller event, and she gave me a personal mention. I remember being in the crowd and I jumped up and I put my hand up and waved and she waved," gushes Fitzsimons. "She seriously waved back. It was so beautiful to see!"

Late last year, Fitzsimons, who is also a fully certified life coach, was named one of the *Australian Financial Review's* 100 Women of Influence.

"I believe that tragedy touched my life so I could touch the lives of others," says Fitzsimons. "I like to think the foundation is built around the lessons I learned through my sister's accident and the life coaching is about everything I've learned since.

"I'm a big dreamer. I sometimes get excited by the big picture and have to pull myself back in," she enthuses. "Life isn't about being happy, it's about being fulfilled. In these presentations, I'm not necessarily happy to stand up and talk about my sister's death, but I am so proud that I talk about it in a way that touches and inspires others.

"Nicole was destined to touch a lot of people just because of who she was – she always supported and encouraged others to pursue what they loved. I'm so grateful I have the honour of being her sister and helping her do that still."

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**AMY GRADY**

Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism)

Photographer (K Fitzsimons): Cam Bloom Photography  
 Photographer (lanterns): Tarah Cooper Photography

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# Against all odds

**In 2012, international student Alireza Ahadi began a PhD under the supervision of Associate Professor Gyorgy Hutvagner from the Centre of Health Technologies. When funding for the PhD was cut, the pair nonetheless continued their research. Four years on, their work has resulted in an online tool that will help to identify and develop targeted treatments for disease.**

## Gyorgy Hutvagner

These days, biologists generate data on a scale that was never seen before. We sequence everything – in space, soil, the sea, humans. We collect a lot of information and to try to make sense of things. For instance, if you decode the full genome of a hundred thousand people, which data could predict that you're going to get cancer? Or you're going to respond to a certain drug? So there's a big need for advanced mathematics and bioinformatics.

Al's background is in IT. He was an international student who had these skills, and he was interested in carrying out research in biology. He became my PhD student, and from the beginning he had a lot of input from the computational point of view.

But in biology-related subjects, producing a quality peer-reviewed paper takes time. At that point no-one was in a position to invest, so his PhD tuition was cut, our project was left in half and he had to find a new path to complete his PhD. Despite this, I still considered him as one of my lab members.

Al recognised that the set of skills he's using for his new PhD in computer science education research is perfectly applicable for biology. And he applied part of this mathematics, from a totally different subject, to what we're doing.

We're working on something called microRNAs. They're very small, but they are key for regulating the expression of most of your genes and their proper function is absolutely required for maintaining healthy cells. If something's going wrong with these guys, you can get cancer, dementia, Alzheimer's – all sorts of diseases. To understand how they work, you need to understand how they target some of your protein coding genes. And to do that, we need some very heavy bio-informatics.

Al provided the approach that combined existing data sets from the field and pulled them together in a novel algorithm. He set up a website that lets you select from about 2600 microRNAs, and his prediction tool will tell you which genes are likely to be targeted by these microRNAs.

It's for biologists mainly, but it can be used by clinicians because microRNAs are good biomarkers for diseases. If they identify microRNAs that are changing in a certain disease, they can use the tool to find the potential genes that are affected by that change. It can be a good indication of what drug you can use or develop in the future.

From this work, Al has published a paper in a very prestigious journal, which he can be proud of in any circumstances. But he had to teach, he had other jobs and he had to do a full PhD at the same time. He was going against all the odds. At some point you would give up, right? You would expect this guy to stop showing up, but he just kept coming and I kept pushing him.

I have to mentor my students, to help them prevail. It's not even a philosophy. As a supervisor, that's part of your job description. And honestly, as an academic, it's my favourite part.

## Alireza Ahadi

I came to UTS to do a master's degree in information technology. I didn't have any research background – it was a coursework degree – but I was interested in research and I started doing some along with my coursework. It was not compulsory; research was just something I was interested in moving into.

I began my research with Raymond Lister, an Associate Professor in the School of Software, who is now my PhD supervisor. But my main interest was in biology – cancer, mostly.

Something is wrong with my mother's side of my family. I lost three aunts and one uncle to cancer, and that's too many for one family. So I have a personal interest. I always wanted to contribute to something, because it's important to me to leave something behind. I don't just want to be here, then just disappear from the planet.

When the funding was cut for my project with Gyorgy, I didn't start the new PhD straight away. I didn't want to do just any research; I was really interested in this particular area of gene expression. Still, we kept working on it on and off for a few years. I was working in lots of different jobs – I didn't say no to anything because I was trying to save funds for at least one more semester to work on this research.

Then I started tutoring a programming subject for Raymond. I developed a successful thesis proposal with him and began my current PhD on the psychology of programming. Sometimes all of these competing priorities made it frustrating, but if you don't give up, eventually the reward will be a juicy fruit.

In the last year, it was really tense. We were working on this paper on a daily basis. We published it at the end of last year, and I'd say the prediction tool we developed is pretty comprehensive and fills a niche in the field.

Now, I've just completed my PhD thesis on how novice programmers develop their critical thinking when it comes to writing a programming language or an application based on a programming language. None of this would've been close to possible without the faith and trust Gyorgy has in me.

**You can find and use the cell-specific MicroRNA Target Prediction Tool at [mirtar2go.org](http://mirtar2go.org)**

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**RACHAEL QUIGLEY**  
Marketing and Communication Unit

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Photographer: Shane Lo

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Alireza Ahadi and  
Gyorgy Hutvagner



# The fast and the fabulous

**At just 17 years old, less than a year after being introduced to Rugby 7s, Tiana Penitani was called to the world stage to debut as Australia's youngest-ever rugby player at a World Cup.**

Penitani's early success coincided with her family's move from Sydney to Queensland. It wasn't easy, admits Penitani. "I grew up really quickly and mostly independent. So that was tough for the first couple of years, but the freedom and the opportunity to play for Australia kind of trumped it all."

Rugby 7s is the 'big bash' of the rugby world. As Penitani explains, "It's like a modified version of the main 15s game, so there are seven players on a full-size field, rather than 15. They are 14-minute games, with seven-minute halves, so it's a lot quicker, and there's a lot more room to run."



Tiana Penitani

It's a demanding game that takes its toll. Two years after co-captaining Australia to a gold medal victory at the Youth Olympics in Nanjing, China, Penitani missed out on the 2016 Rio Olympics Rugby 7s squad due to injury. The young rugby player was instead forced to go under the knife for her fourth knee operation.

While recovering, she turned her focus to the media. Penitani became one of the presenters on Fox Sport's *The Other Rugby Show*; a job that quickly developed into a passion. While she used her on-screen time to (sometimes) prank her male counterparts, her highlight was traveling to Fiji in 2016 where she interviewed the Fijian Rugby 7s team as they were returning home with their Olympic gold medals.

"They'd been so busy for the past two weeks just doing media and whatnot in the main town," recalls Penitani. "But when we got there, they were on their way home to see their families for the first time after winning the gold medal. So we got all of that on camera. It was pretty amazing."

Now 21, Penitani is taking the next step in her already impressive career – a Bachelor of Communication (Journalism). She's studying part-time while continuing her work in front of the camera and on-field.

Penitani is part of the Australian team currently competing in the HSBC Women's Sevens World Series. With just three games left – in Kitakyushu, Japan (April), Langford, Canada (May) and Clermont-



Ferrand, France (June) – Penitani's team is on-track to defend their world series win last year.

And, though she admits her time with *The Other Rugby Show* gave her a lot of hands-on experience, Penitani says, "I'm obviously not very experienced in terms of going behind the scenes and knowing how TV is made. That's what I want to learn through my degree."

"You can't coast off raw talent. If you've got the talent there, then put in the hard yards and the hard work and it will always pay off."

**ANITA DAWSON**  
Marketing and Communication Unit

Photographs supplied by: Australian Rugby



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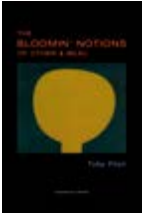
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**U READ IT**


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# UTS in print

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**THE BLOOMIN' NOTIONS  
OF OTHER & BEAU**


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By: Toby Fitch  
Publisher: Vogabond Press

Toby Fitch's third collection, *The Bloomin' Notions of the Other & Beau* is a beguiling delight. Fitch takes the prose poems of Arthur Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* and reworks them into a collection that is surprising and new. The poems are highly visual; text, font and word size become a means of expression themselves. There are collages with text-filled paper cut-outs rearranged to form a cloud, an arrow, a sun and a city scape, there are concrete poems that swirl across the page, and there are more traditional lyric poems. A standout for me was 'Being Beau' – 'ashen face from cookies & cream/hurled over the canon into Sydney/Harbours such a melee/helps to keep me regular my guns/crystal clean she lips me'. Although Fitch's influences are distinctly European, his subject matter is uniquely Australian and seeing familiar places through Fitch's kaleidoscopic lens is one of the collection's highlights. He draws on a rich poetic tradition but doesn't use its references as a crutch; his poems stand up on their own. They are fun, playful, and can be enjoyed by anyone (even if your knowledge of poetry is limited to *The Man from Snowy River*). Creativity is never purely original; *The Bloomin' Notions* is certainly 'standing on the shoulders of giants', but it has a great time poking fun at those giants along the way.

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**HOLLY ISEMONGER**  
Marketing and Communication Unit

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Poet and author **Toby Fitch** completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communication at UTS in 2005.

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**HOT METAL:  
MATERIAL CULTURE AND  
TANGIBLE LABOUR**


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By: Jesse Adams Stein  
Publisher: Manchester University Press

Jesse Adams Stein's book is a fascinating and accessible study of the declining fortunes of the Government Printing Office, located on Harris Street, Ultimo. It is greatly enriched by the oral histories of the (mostly) men and some women who found themselves in an almost Kafkaesque position, facing rapid technological change, corporatisation – which undermined traditional unionism – neo-liberalism and post-industrial capitalism in the later decades of the 20th century. Its special contribution comes from its thoughtful analysis of the role of objects in this process. 'Work', the author notes, "is inextricably bound up with a world of things, with and through which the social and gendered processes of workplace life are enacted and experienced. Understanding how we interact with and interpret design is crucial for appreciating the complexities of the labour experience, particularly at times of technological disruption." This original and cross-disciplinary book brings together design, design history, oral history, labour history, gender and material culture studies. It sheds a powerful light on the transformation and loss of blue-collar work and the demise of printing as a craft.

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**PAUL ASHTON**  
Adjunct, Australian Centre for Public History

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Jesse Adams Stein is a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow in UTS's Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building. *Hot Metal* is her first book.

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**LUXURY: A RICH HISTORY**


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By: Peter McNeil and  
Giorgio Riello  
Publisher: Oxford University Press

Peter McNeil and Giorgio Riello's *Luxury: A rich history* is a compelling read because it is about the dynamics of the term luxury and not the semantics. The book is structured and written in such a way as to show the changing meanings and history of the word as it is used in different periods, in different places and by different people. As historians, McNeil and Riello compose a book that is less theories or concepts and more about specifics and character. In this sense, *Luxury* reads like an exhibition, museum or epic performance, rather than a forceful, singular argument. The style of the prose is wandering and digressive and the scope of examples, encyclopaedic. The reader can't help but enjoy the cast of characters and settings that flit by in an almost cinematic fashion. *Luxury* is a book likely to strike sparks off the minds of those with an amateur or academic interest in design history.

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**THOMAS LEE**  
Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building

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Distinguished Professor in Design History  
**Peter McNeil** is an art and design historian and one of the world's experts on 18th century men's dress.

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Mention U: magazine at the Co-op  
Bookshop on Broadway during April 2017

## FEATURED EVENT

SCI

# New ways to fight drug crime

**Between 2008 and 2015, more than 600 new psychoactive substances were reported worldwide. Some, like 'bath salts', sound innocuous, while others, like 'zombie drugs', do not. However, all are dangerous and their numbers continue to rise.**

So, how do authorities and forensic laboratories deal with a growing, borderless illicit drug market that seems to stay one step ahead of the law?

The first, free, UTS Science in Focus public lecture for 2017 is being held on Thursday 27 April. Entitled *Synthetic drugs – are we fighting a losing battle?*, it will delve into the latest developments in drug detection and enforcement, and reveal how scientists are developing new ways to fight drug crime.



Marie Morelato  
and Morgan Philp

Headlining the event are Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Forensic Science Marie Morelato and PhD candidate Morgan Philp.

Morelato says, "Illicit drug seizures and arrests are at record levels for nearly all drug types with 23.5 tonnes of illicit drugs seized nationally between 2014 and 2015."

In the lecture, Philp will be discussing the rise of these new psychoactive substances and how they're produced (often it's by slightly altering the chemical structure of existing drugs or mimicking their effects).

Up until recently, Philp says, many were technically legal because they weren't specifically listed in legislation. But they're definitely not 'safe'.

"When new psychoactive substances began appearing on the drug market, they were technically legal to use," Philp explains. "Many countries, including Australia, have now included these compounds in the legislation under a generic ban of structurally similar compounds."

"The major problem with these substances is they are particularly potent and have serious abuse potential. At higher concentrations, they often exhibit adverse side effects such as panic attacks, paranoia and suicidal thoughts, to name a few."

Morelato, meanwhile, will explore a new way of fighting the drug problem and highlight how, through the use of forensic intelligence, authorities can gain the upper hand.

"Forensic scientists detect, collect, analyse and interpret the traces of criminal activities," she says.

"Through the traces they collect, they attempt to reconstruct an event that happened in the past and detect patterns of repetitive criminal activities. This could then be used to disrupt criminal activity, better evaluate the risks associated with new substances, better allocate resources and better inform policy makers. And potentially lead to future arrests."

***UTS Science in Focus: Synthetic drugs – are we fighting a losing battle?* will be held on Thursday 27 April. Visit [scienceinfocus.uts.edu.au](http://scienceinfocus.uts.edu.au) to register for the event and to view videos of previous public lectures.**

**JAMES RAPTIS**

Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism)  
Bachelor of Laws

**MAREA MARTLEW**

Marketing and Communication Unit

Photographer: Shane Lo



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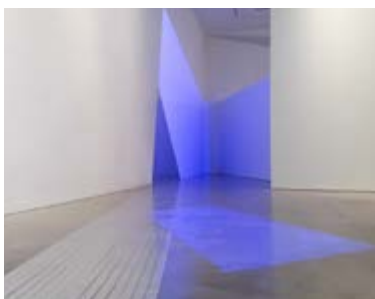
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**WHAT'S ON**

# April

Email your events for May 2017 to [u@uts.edu.au](mailto:u@uts.edu.au) by Friday 7 April

FROM  
01




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**EXHIBITION**

Responding directly to the architecture of UTS Gallery, *Surface Tension* aims to fold space and time, and create ways for the viewer to become a part of the work, through projected images and the insertion of reflective surfaces

 UTS Gallery, building 6, level 4  
 Until 28 April  
 Mon-Fri 12pm-6pm,  
 Saturday 12pm-4pm  
[art.uts.edu.au](http://art.uts.edu.au)


04




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**WORKSHOP**

Are you looking to make the most of Lynda.com? Then head to HRU's first face-to-face Lynda.com session for 2017

 Building 1, level 22, room 6  
 (IT Training Room)  
 10am-11am  
[uts.ac/2lzWbk4](http://uts.ac/2lzWbk4)


15




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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Check out *My Career at UTS: The Seasons of Your Career* – UTS's first staff career expo for 2017. No matter what stage your career is at, this full-day event offers academic and professional staff the latest tips and tools you need to take control of your career. Registration essential

 Building 1, level 22  
 9am-5pm  
[uts.ac/1YzxIJP](http://uts.ac/1YzxIJP)

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**ART & U**


Nike Savvas, *17 seconds (1)*, 2016, foil and acrylic on canvas 199cm x 480cm, UTS Art Collection, purchased 2016

Nike Savvas is a Sydney-based artist with an extensive international career, including several years spent in London. Her paintings, sculptures and large-scale installations explore the boundaries of painting, introducing materials and elements that blur conventional distinctions between the different disciplines.

In this painting from her most recent body of work, Savvas has referenced JMW Turner's *Snow Storm – Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*. *Snow Storm* was first exhibited in 1842 and outraged Turner's critics – his bold dissolution of the subject was taken as a sign of madness.

Turner's audacity extended to his method. To record the experience of a boat caught in a hurricane, the 64-year-old had himself lashed to the ship's mast for several hours and in genuine peril. In retrospect, his painting (now in the Tate,

London) has been hailed as one of his finest, and a significant harbinger of the development of abstraction in painting. Savvas's tribute to Turner, *17 seconds (1)*, has taken the dissolution another step further, reducing the painterly image to a swirling screen of tiny foil dots.

Nike Savvas has several important awards and commissions to her name, including the ACT Creative Arts Fellowship and the Australia Council Fellowship. Her work is represented in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, and the V&A Museum London.

For more information, visit [art.uts.edu.au](http://art.uts.edu.au)

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**JANET OLLEVOU**  
UTS Art

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Art & U profiles a piece of work from the UTS Art Collection every issue.

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# Going global



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Site-mapping and visual research of the Wellington foreshore produced by interdisciplinary design students exploring the layered colonial and Maori history of New Zealand. The project was part of a two-week Global Studio undertaken by the students as part of their degree.

Photographer: Jennifer Hagerdorn

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UTS has done its bit for the environment by using environmentally friendly paper and ink to produce U:  
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