

Topic 1: How People Engage With Their Council

Community Engagement Charter

What requirements should be set for councils' community engagement for what decisions?

- The City of Adelaide (CoA) endorses the Local Government Association's (LGA) draft Community Engagement Charter (Charter) and supports the minimum consultation period for those activities outlined in that document.
- Standardised engagement approach for those items listed in Category A in the LGA's draft charter.

What should be included in the Charter and what should be left for councils' own community engagement policies?

- CoA considers the current proposal outlined in the draft LGA Charter appropriate.
- The engagement approach should be standardised for significant engagements and activities listed in Category A.
- Other engagements should be based on principles and what the council wants to achieve rather than being prescriptive about the how.

Should councils have the capacity to determine how they will engage with their communities, or should the Charter be more directive in its approach?

- Councils should have the capacity to determine how they engage.
- It is recognised, however, that there are some topics (such as those identified in Category A of the draft charter) that there would be a community expectation to a minimum consistent standard.
- As a Capital City Council, it is essential that CoA is able to develop a consultation policy appropriate for its community. As a capital city, a significant part of our community is non-residents. As such, we need to ensure our engagement approach is fit for purpose.

What other ideas do you have for councils' community engagement?

- Having a panel of hard-to-reach groups and stakeholders
- CoA recognises the community's expectation of having plain English documents with both summarised and detailed information.
- Councils must also communicate better regarding how community feedback has been incorporated into decisions.
- Focus on building a relationship with the community rather than a one-way relationship of 'obtaining feedback'.

Survey Responses

- **Genuine consultation needs to happen.**
- **Yes...engage with Advisory Groups charged with providing feedback who then engage with Council or Committee Meetings.**



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Council meetings

Should councils be required to livestream their meetings and make recordings available?

- CoA has live-streamed its meetings and made them available on the internet before COVID-19.
- Councils should ensure that the meetings are inclusive and accessible to all members of the Community
- Council considers live streaming an essential service for those members of the community unable to attend meetings in person
- It should remain the decision of individual Councils whether they do so.

Survey Responses

- **Continue livestreaming but more efficiently (CofA) livestreams often miss the start and drop in and out.) Add Subtitles (automatically generated) as the audio is not as good as it could be Make agenda for Council, Committee, Audit and Ris, Reconciliation etc. more widely available...including on paper at libraries and community centres.**

All metropolitan councils hold their council meetings during the evenings, but councils in regional areas often hold their meetings during business hours.

- This should be an individual decision for each council, as well as considering how this may impact community participation
- Some regional councillors may have to travel long distances to attend meetings.

Survey Responses

- **Strongly support this. Day time meetings would prevent many Elected Members from attending meetings**
- **Capital City Council meetings should be held at evenings when they are accessible to ratepayers with work or child-minding responsibilities.**

Should councils be required to hold their meetings at a particular time to maximise community participation?

- Rather than a prescriptive time and given that each community has different needs, where a council chooses to hold meetings during business hours, community consultation should occur.
- This could occur as part of the adoption of the Code of Practice for Access to Council Meetings and Documents.

Survey Responses

- **Formal Council and Committee meetings should continue to be held when ratepayers can attend outside of working or family responsibilities. It may be appropriate when discussing particular community matters to hold meetings or parts of a meeting in community locations at times other than outside of hours.**



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Support council members to engage with communities

How should members be supported to engage directly with their communities?

- There Needs to be a clear delineation regarding context and purpose, i.e are they representing a Council-endorsed view or their own?
- If Council Members speak on behalf of the Council, all correspondence and communications should be authorised.
- Council Members should remain responsible for their statements.

Should all council members be provided with a specific allowance to support constituent work, similar to the allowance that is provided to Members of Parliament?

- Should be a decision of council as part of the Allowance and Benefit policy.

Survey Responses

- **Should be a statewide amount set by the regulator.**
- **Communication is costly and an allowance or even assistance the printing and distribution would be helpful.**

What other ideas do you have to strengthen the relationship between council members and their local community members?

- Training as part of the Council Member Mandatory Training sessions on how to engage with communities.
- This training should provide guidance on using social media as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Survey Responses

- **Social Media Activity by elected members needs to be governed by stricter rules with potential bad behaviors detailed.**



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Topic 2: How Can We Encourage A Greater Number Of More Diverse Candidates?

<p>Increase council members' allowances</p>	<p>Would more, and a more diverse range of, people be attracted to the role if allowances were increased?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially, yes • Support a review of the construct of Council Member allowances, considering what the allowances are meant to be used for, and the expectations that community members have of Council Members. • Benchmarking should occur against interstate jurisdictions. • Awareness of what other reimbursements candidates are entitled to (such as babysitting, mileage, etc). <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Financial compensation should not be a driving factor, I think that being a Councilor and executing this role as well as you can is very time consuming If people don't have other financial support then this would be a deciding factor. Also if a person has a full-time role they may need to reduce hours to do the role justice so the allowance could be seen to compensate the loss of income. Community members who elect people want (or should) their representatives to have the expertise, skills and experience – therefore I shouldn't be just for people who can 'afford' to throw their hat in the ring. • A better explanation of the commitment would also be useful in ensuring those who accept the role understand the volume of reading and site visits necessary to understand what they are being asked to deliberate on.
<p>Make council meetings more flexible.</p>	<p>Should council members be able to attend some council meetings electronically?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic attendance may assist flexibility, allowing Council Members to attend when they otherwise may not be able to. • The ability to attend a meeting electronically should be a discretionary provision in the legislation. • It should be a decision for each Council regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If it will accommodate this and ○ Include in its Code of Practice for Meeting Procedures (including how confidentiality will be protected). <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although I said No this is more for Council Meetings. If Committer or 'other' I think that should be accepted especially if it is for a good reason and circumstances has put the Councilor in a situation where they didn't have the time to organize for example a babysitter etc. • Instead, meetings and venues should be inclusive including access, timing, support, and translation. The format and culture of meetings should consider diversity. • Electronic attendances in only extraordinary cases and under strict rules. We have had a Councilor reportedly flirt with the idea of living outside of South Australia for extended periods which is not acceptable. The CoA has also had Committee meetings chaired electronically by individuals seated in the offices of members of parliament....who, in turn, were closely identified with party politics. Moreover, confidentiality cannot be dealt with satisfactorily where the presiding member cannot be certain that all people hearing confidential matters in remote locations are, indeed, alone as can be determined when meeting in person. This is a very couple area other levels of government in Australia have



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	<p>not resolved and which required much serious discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would be supportive of special dispensation being given to councilors to attend committees virtually. But in person meetings for the main deliberative meetings unless entire council is unable to meet (ie Covid Lockdown)
<p>More local promotion</p>	<p>Are there other efforts that councils could make to increase interest in standing over a council term, for example, by working with ratepayers or other community organisations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils already work extensively with community organisations to raise awareness concerning Local Government Elections and Nominations. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think there should be more information sessions that includes existing Councillors and also the Governance Team. Even being a former CEO of a Council does not prepare someone for the complexities of being an Elected Member. Need a targeted strategy to ensure the make up of councils reflects their community. Also the need to live or work in the council area. This keeps people better connected and makes sure others see the council at work. This is a contentious area. In the last Council elections theCoA sent staff to locations where some ratepayers were in attendance, mainly offices and shops, and provided directions regarding enrolments. No similar initiative existed for other groups of ratepayers raising the possibility of accusations that this was a very subjective campaign. Even a Council subsidiary, AEDA, resolved in a minuted decision to target business to encourage greater voter turnout among that group and that group alone. The Council Administration and subsidiaries are supposed to be independent of the political process. If they become part of the process, then, as happens, at State and Federal levels, parts of the Administrations and subsidiaries are at risk of not being trusted by the politically elected and of being subject to change at each election. Generic campaigns about “don’t forget to enrol” are the only campaigns in which Council Administration should participate. <p>Would councils get a better local result if they make greater investments in local promotion and initiatives, particularly ahead of election periods?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Adelaide (and other councils) already do this



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<p>Term limits for council members</p>	<p>Should term limits for council members be introduced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noted that the institutionalised knowledge long-serving Council Members bring • These members have served for a long time because their community continues to choose them to represent this. • If term limits are to be introduced, three consecutive terms are proposed (12 years). <p>Survey Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IF the community wants to vote in an individual, they should be able to – democracy! • Just as the Council administration is served well by experienced staff with 10, 15 or 20 years experience, so too is the elected body. A mixture of experience and the exuberance and fresh approaches of the newly elected potentially serves communities well....and, indeed, this is the environment I most LGAs in South Australia. Bit it would be somewhat discriminatory for there to be no limit on Lord Mayoral terms, as is the case I the CoA, and limits on other elected members and no time limits at all on any elected member on any other level of Government...State or Federal....in South Australia. • No term limits. Voters to decide on elected member tenure.
<p>Required training for candidates</p>	<p>Should people be required to complete an online course before nominating?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, similar to Victoria. It is important for those wanting to be a Council Member to understand their roles and responsibilities and have had a thorough induction into Local Government. • This training should also include the legislative responsibilities of a candidate when campaigning. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As much information as possible communicated in various ways is what is required. <p>What forms of training could both benefit candidates and generate more community confidence in the people who are standing for election?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many more information sessions, Q&A's with candidates, Q&A's with existing Councillors – similar training session to the mandatory session especially around behaviours. • Roles and responsibilities and the three tiers of Australian Government • ICAC Training.



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<p>Consider real-time publishing of nominations</p>	<p>Should councils have a role in the nomination process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No <p>Survey Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely not as this would encourage factions. How does a body directed by and elected body ... often driven by party politics ... have an objective role in a key part of a democratic process? <p>If ECSA continues to receive nominations directly, should there be a requirement for nominations to be published throughout the nomination process, not just at the end? If so, how should these be published?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECSA should publish on their website daily. Extra resources should be assigned to ECSA for this purpose. <p>Survey Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The more transparency in the process the better and if people see other people they know nominate it may actually encourage them. This could be manipulated by candidates.
<p>Remove council wards</p>	<p>Should councils continue to have wards? If so, why? And if not, what would be the benefits of removing them? Should wards only be kept in councils where the council's size warrants their retention?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be up to the Community to decide how they want to be represented and what (if any) ward structure they think is appropriate. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm very much anti-ward person. Simply because Councilors have to vote on the entire LO area they are elected to and not just their Ward. There may be an argument if the Council if it is a Council over a large geographical area. If Compulsory voting then wards should continue but if voluntary voting then the electorate is too small to get quality candidates. I like local connection and knowledge. The principle is already established and vital for the proper functioning of LGAs – especially in regional areas. Why should City residents not have the advantage of country residents? I think removing wards would be beneficial to the CoA as we're such a geographically small council.



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Lack of nominations trigger for boundary reform

Should potential boundary changes be referred to the South Australian Boundaries Commission when a council receives significantly fewer nominations than it has vacancies?

- No. There are several reasons why Councils do not receive enough nominations.

Survey Results

- **IF this happens it is probably another problem than boundaries.**

What are other factors that might encourage—or dissuade—people to stand for election to their councils?

- Perception of a high-pressure culture for Council Members
- Adversarial nature of debate
- Public scrutiny
- Time commitment required
- Not knowing that training and support are provided for members to do their role
- Understanding of local government
- Lack of support for the campaign

Survey Results

- **All of the above including financial and family commitments I could not be an Elected Member if I had a full-time role and kids and especially if I was a single parent It is so much more than just having baby-sitters available.**
- **Also the ritual nature of some of the behaviour and the use of local government as a personal career move or stepping stone. Rigidity in meeting procedure and rules about caucuses. Being an individual is very hard and scary. We need the chance to discuss things before we are in the spotlight.**
- **The absence of administrative support which has diminished to a point where it is but a fraction of what was available. The increasing participation of political parties that resource candidates and elected members to the disadvantage of people who are independent. The onerous provisions of behavioural code complains.**

What ideas do you have to increase nominations?

- Link to promotion – understanding of the role, making known the support available
- Pre-mentor program started well before the election cycle
- Mid-term programs promoting the role of the Council Member

Survey Results

- **I've emphasized the importance of additional sessions with both current Councillors and Administration beyond just during election periods. Ideally, initiating these sessions a year in advance would be my preference. Furthermore, we must address the issue of encouraging more women to nominate for these roles. I've**



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encountered instances where younger women withdrew their nominations upon realizing the significant time and commitment demanded by the position. Balancing these responsibilities with personal and professional commitments can seem insurmountable, especially considering that women still predominantly assume the role of primary caregivers for their families, including children and elderly parents.

- Fix what's wrong with perceptions about the downsides too.



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Topic 3: How Can We Achieve A Better Voter Turnout?	
Make voting for councils compulsory	<p>Is there any particular reason why councils do not warrant compulsory voting when the two other spheres of Australian governments do? Should voting for councils be compulsory in South Australian council elections?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory voting should be introduced for the House of Assembly Roll in line with other jurisdictions across Australia <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By LG Elections not being mandatory makes it look like this level of government is less important than State and Federal. LG is essential for the 'health' of a community – I would like to see the other two levels of government take-over rates, rubbish and roads and all the other community services.
Change method of voting.	<p>How should people vote for their councils?</p> <p>Postal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postal voting is a very convenient method for the community. It is noted there were numerous complaints during the last election with residents not receiving voting material or receiving incorrect voting material. Delays by Australia Post meant some voting material wasn't reissued. If postal voting is to be continued - the Council should be able to reissue in the last week of the voting period <p>In Person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If compulsory voting was introduced, voting in person could be introduced. If compulsory voting is not introduced, voter participation will likely decrease. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting should reflect how we operate in other areas of our lives – so both postal and electronic should be an option – especially if not mandated. Strongly support in person voting. Compulsory, in person voting will lead to a highly politicised LGA environment where the candidates will be in training for higher political office. In the COA, it would also be difficult to overcome the particular problems with allowing votes associated with a supplementary roll for non resident property owners. Leave it voluntary, with .. as with State and Federal ... the possibility of postal votes and in person votes to assist in minimizing electoral vote rigging. I support compulsory (for HoA roll voters) with in person elections. (Postal remain for those that require it, similar to State and Federal elections.



Topic 3: How Can We Achieve A Better Voter Turnout?	
Consider who can vote for their council	<p>Should the franchise for council elections be changed in any way?</p> <p>Form One</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirements for non-citizens should be tightened to ensure that there is a reasonable interest in the outcome of the election, and, if a candidate, that the candidate will be able to fulfil their term of office. It is suggested that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a permanent resident or have the right to work. Provide proof of identity, status and residence when completing the forms. <p>This process should be managed by ECSA with consideration given to language barriers.</p> <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person should NOT be able to vote or nominate unless they have been a resident of the area for at least 1 year. Absolutely Citizens and permanent residents.
Change the timing of council elections	<p>Should council elections be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running the state and local government elections in the same year puts increased strain on ECSA's finite resources. A move to a different year may increase the local government elections profile. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the same year Year after State Elections A number of unsuccessful candidates from the state election might want to run in their local council area. The current timeline provides an adequate 7-8 month gap between the two elections.
Election promotion	<p>Should councils have a stronger role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils already play a large role in local promotion. Better coordination between ECSA and LGA campaigns and collateral would be beneficial. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more collaborative process between the LGASA, ECSA and the LG area should occur and not just at the 11th hour. Compulsory voting for H0A roll would significantly increase turnout.
Removing wards.	<p>Would removing wards provide voters with greater choice, and produce fairer results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the City of Adelaide, it could decrease voter turnout, some voters currently vote in a number of wards (as they may live in one ward and own businesses in other wards). The decision to remove wards should be up to that Community (as above). <p>Survey Results</p>



Topic 3: How Can We Achieve A Better Voter Turnout?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As stated previously I do not support Wards as them is making decisions on the entire LG area they represent NOT just their Ward. • Support removal of Wards • If it isn't broken don't fix it • Remove Wards
<p>Consider candidate information</p>	<p>Is it fair for someone who has 'served their time' to have to release this information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates should meet minimum eligibility requirement (similar to ASX director requirements, working with children check). • That a candidate meets the minimum eligibility requirements to nominate is what the community should be informed of, not personal details. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all the reasons why other Boards do this not just ASX Directors. People who are nominating should be required to have a DIN. • No opinion <p>What information should candidates be required to include with their nominations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political affiliations • Live in the council area (and what ward) • A Declaration form (similar to register of interest) which has the same public information as serving Council Members have <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it is critical that an Elected Member lives and or works in the area. The issue to address is people who "just move in" so they can nominate and then 'move out' when people aren't noticing. Also, if a person decides to run for State or Federal government they should be forced to resign from Council. It would be very clear at that time what political party they are supporting, and this would most likely influence their decision making and LG EM's should be 'A political'. • Political affiliations in the past five years ... not just a year. Also, residential address for the past two years must be declared as part of one's candidacy and there should be a constant requirement to update residential address where they address changes to one outside of the LGA represented. There have been shocking instances of candidates moving to a LGA 8 weeks before an election and then out of the same LGA to one they do not represent only weeks after an election. Such practices serve to destroy voter confidence in our system of government. <p>Is there a role for councils to play in enabling all candidates to reach potential voters?</p>



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- It is a decision for each Council if they would like to run information sessions such as candidate nights etc.

Survey Results

- **However this must be executed fairly.**
- **Some candidates work a lot harder than others to reach potential voters. It's not the councils job to prop up ineffective candidates**

What are other factors that might encourage—or dissuade—people to stand for election to their councils?

- Perception of a high-pressure culture for Council Members
- Adversarial nature of debate
- Public scrutiny
- Time commitment required
- Not knowing that training and support is provided for members to do their role
- Understanding of local government
- Lack of support to campaign

Survey Results

- **Time, money, and family commitments etc. as mentioned previously.**
- **Previously answered**



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Topic 4: Election Improvements	
	Do you have any ideas to improve council elections?
CITY OF ADELAIDE SPECIFIC	
All residential enrolments to be managed by AEC	<p>Currently individual councils manage Form 1 enrolment applications for residential individuals who do not currently qualify for entry on to the House of Assembly roll.</p> <p>An improvement would be for all residential enrolments regardless of the individual's status (citizen or not) be managed by the ECSA and included on the House of Assembly roll.</p> <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency
Statute Amendments are significantly problematic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes imposed on CoA under the recent Statute Amendments: • Impose obligations on Council staff which are very labour-intensive and costly, to be performed within very limited timeframes on top of current election activities and existing timeframes. • Additional FTE/s required as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new template correspondence will need to be drafted and sent to all bodies corporate and groups on the voter's roll; • dealing with nominations received from bodies corporate and groups will require data entry, and will also require checking whether the nominated person already appears on the voters roll or is entitled to be enrolled on the voter's roll (in which case they are not eligible persons); • the process for nominating 'default persons' for bodies corporate (and groups which include bodies corporate) which do not nominate their own eligible person relies upon data held in ASIC's database and therefore might not be possible to automate to any great extent; • the process for nominating 'default persons' also requires checking whether the potential default person already appears on the voters roll or is entitled to be enrolled on the voters' roll; • redactions will need to be made to the version of voters roll available for inspection by the public; (In practice would be problematic) • all of the above must occur within strict timeframes; and • There are a significant number of bodies corporate and groups on the Council's voters roll compared to other councils, and the above steps must be applied for all of those bodies corporate and groups. • These obligations are in addition to the Council and the CEO's existing obligations which are already complex and challenging and may well require changes to the current system in place that produce the voter's roll.



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Topic 4: Election Improvements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoA nominating a default nominee may disenfranchise a number of bodies corporate and groups solely on the irrational basis of what letter people’s surnames begin with; and • In some cases, invest the Council’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with the unusual power to ‘choosing’; who can vote. • No similar amendments are being made with respect to any other Council. • In relation to achieving the above obligations, Council believes the costs associated with additional FTE requirements, postage and potential changes to systems would be well in excess of \$100,000. <p>Survey Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •and I think it would be well worth the investment as the ‘fish rots from the head’ and 4 years can be a long time. So having more resources to assist can only be a good thing – maybe it could be o a ‘fixed term’ contract. • Turn as much of the process for elections over to ECSA. Council administrations should not be tasked with any role that puts them at odds with elected members, potential elected members, enrolled voters or potential enrolled voters. The process must be seen to be completely independent in order or electors to have confidence in the systems.
<p>Suggested change to existing voting eligibility for Head Lease holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently a holder of a headlease who is not in occupation of the land (i.e. a head lessee who has wholly sub-let property to another) is considered an ‘owner’ under the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>. • When this situation occurs, under <i>the Act</i> neither party is eligible to be enrolled to vote in their own right. Instead, they must be enrolled as a group of owners. • An unattended consequence is that each unique owner and head lessee combination would constitute a unique voter’s group. • In relation to the above, there are significant practical issues in that Council is expected to somehow know of and record the details of all owners, including people who hold leases but do not occupy the land.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the Council learns of changes to ownership through the LTO, there is no practical way to learn of changes to commercial leasing arrangements. • The Council’s system can record the property owner and the occupier but is not able to accurately record and capture head lessees and reflect the correct voting entitlement. • Further, it is unlikely that property owners and headlease holders would be aware they are only entitled to a group voting entitlement. <p>Survey Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a very complicated topic as I deal with the LTO on a daily basis, I think this needs to be reviewed in its own right and at the momet there is probably no real ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answer however more ‘maybe’



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