



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Gridiron Australia  
Limited

ACN 073 881 811

Prepared by

Board of  
Directors / CEO

# Table of Contents

→	03	Company Overview
→	04	Executive Summary
→	06	Letter from the CEO
→	07	Membership Numbers
→	08	Digital Presence
→	09	Board Appointments
→	10	The Search
→	11	High Performance Committee
→	12	IFAF Flag Continental Championships
→	13	Partnerships
→	14	Financial Statements
→	15	Contact Information

**ANNEXURE A** 2023 Profit & Loss Report

**ANNEXURE B** 2023 Balance Sheet

# Company Overview



## Our Vision

Put an American Football in every hand.

## Mission

Create and maintain a **safe and inclusive** pathway for anyone who wants to participate, **to go as far as they choose.**





# Executive Summary

2023 was a big year for Gridiron Australia. As a national sporting organisation, we embraced some big positive changes and faced some challenges that come along with becoming a dual code NSO. As a board we remain committed to the goal of expanding our participation levels and providing improved support and resources for our existing and new members across both tackle and flag.

Throughout the year the GA board went through some changes as some of our directors stepped away from their roles and we welcomed new faces to continue with the ongoing work sitting with the team.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our former directors Erin Lubowicz, Megan Harris and Michael Datta. Their contribution to our governance, change management and strategic partnerships has been invaluable. And most notably we want to extend a huge thank you to the GA former Chairman Bret Mullavey. Bret led the GA board through a considerable transition phase. Due to Bret's passion for the sport, he worked tirelessly towards the goal of growing the sport of American Football here in Australia and we are grateful for all his efforts.

We recently welcomed Matt Croasdaile to the board. Matt's impressive business acumen and finance background is proving to be invaluable. This combined with his personal history in Gridiron here in Australia has him well placed to support the board.

Throughout the first half of 2023 we undertook the huge task of migrating our registration platform over to Assemble Sports. The decision to move to the Assemble platform was a commitment to our future. We are in an unprecedented phase of opportunity for our sport, and we wanted to ensure we had the foundations to support our future growth. Assemble has allowed us to quickly transition to a truly national platform that has the flexibility to deal with all formats of our sport in tackle and flag, from registration to competition management and participant engagement. It is the most modern, contemporary, and financially viable solution we identified on the market. This was undeniably a huge body of work and comes with some learning curves for all involved. We believe this was all worth the effort and time invested from all our members to work through the change and we thank everyone for adapting to this throughout 2023.

In February 2023, Gridiron Australia, in partnership with Jesse Williams, launched the First Step Foundation. The primary function of the foundation is to provide financial and mental support to teenage athletes working towards their American football dreams. The foundation was launched at the American Chamber of Commerce Superbowl event and Jesse Williams' winning Superbowl jersey was offered as a raffle prize to kickstart the foundation's funding.

Aligned with the GA strategic plan to increase participation in our junior tackle football programs, The Search tour was purely targeted at high school age athletes to provide exposure to the amazing opportunities that exist in the US high school and college systems. These youth athletes were able to participate in a combine style camp and knew they would be in with a chance to win a trip to the US to see these programs up close and personal. GA aims to continue to provide these opportunities and communicate the reasons why choosing American Football is a pathway to many opportunities, including a US education.

# Executive Summary (cont'd)

We increased dialogue with IFAF and IFAF member nations within the Pacific region to increase and add international fixtures in a regular and sustainable basis with a strong emphasis on introducing a U16's and U18's age group. Recognising the want of our members to have more, regular internationals, balanced with the understanding of the individual financial investment that those fixtures require.

As our states began their new tackle seasons across the country, we saw several states adopt the split season dates (October – February) and the remaining playing their seasons from September to December. This past year saw the return of women's football in Gridiron Queensland after a short hiatus. We recognise and celebrate the commitment of the GQ board in working towards this goal and joining Gridiron West and Gridiron NSW in hosting another great year of football across all 3 divisions.

Flag Football entered the conversation in 2023. We saw the first state team competition in the GNSW Flag Football invitational in July which was quickly followed by the IFAF Asia Oceania Continental Championship in October. We assembled our first ever national flag football squads and travelled to Malaysia. With the announcement that Flag Football will be an Olympic sport in LA 2028, a new wave of interest and opportunity came with it. This opened the door for GA to apply for Olympic funding in the next 4-year cycle, an unprecedented opportunity for our organisation. This is no small feat and has been a big investment in our human resources to set ourselves up for the best chance to be granted funding, an investment we as a board are fully supportive of.

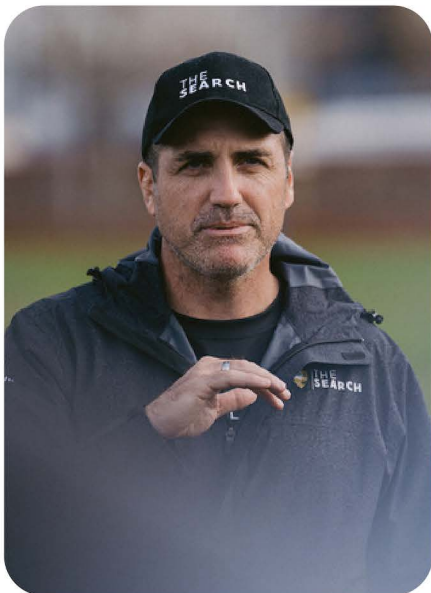
Perhaps the most significant body of work was laying the foundations to be accepted into the Australian Sports Commissions Sporting Schools program. This is a twelve-month process with a large amount of documentation, lobbying and planning needed to satisfy all stakeholders. Sporting Schools will allow every single student in the country, from kindergarten to year eight, to experience American Football. A program that will go a long way to our strategic goal of putting an American Football in every hand.

## 2023 Highlights

→ Tackle	<b>The Search</b>
→ Flag	<b>Australian Representative Team</b>
→ Board	<b>First Step Foundation Launch</b>



# Letter from the CEO



Eighteen months into the role and brick by brick we are building towards what the number one priority is, a better experience for all our members.

Servicing our members through better processes, faster communication, higher standards, increased opportunity, and more value for money requires additional financial investment.

With the introduction of Flag Football under the Gridiron Australia banner and the October 2023 Olympic announcement, we have had a window of opportunity to access significant Australian Sports Commission (ASC) support. This new support stream will introduce our game to the masses, grow our participation base, thus increase revenue streams. Revenue, that I will personally ensure, will be poured directly into enhancing the experience for all our members.

In the last 6 months we have covered every age demographic for Flag Football participation. We have:

- officially been added to ASC Sporting Schools program, accessing 9500 schools across Australia
- been in discussions with State School Sporting Councils wanting to introduce Flag as a Summer Sport
- been awarded a \$72,000 ASC grant to run pilot leagues in Universities
- submitted High Performance planning documentation for the next Olympic funding cycle

All of this is working towards the aim of introducing and recruiting the masses to our game, with a particularly focus on primary and high schools. The key will be the converting those kids into clubs. Why? To build the next vital brick. A dramatic increase of teenage tackle players in every state alongside a dramatic increase in coaches and officials to get involved at that level.

For forty years Gridiron Australia has proudly stood tall against the giants of Australian sport. A small but passionate, hard-working group of volunteers, a current playing base of 2500 players and now one employee. It's David v Goliath and we have been ignored. Not now.

We have an amazing opportunity to lay the foundations to become one of the top four participation sports in Australia. With that comes the revenue streams that will allow the sport to provide a much better service to our members. For me, that's my only focus.

Best,

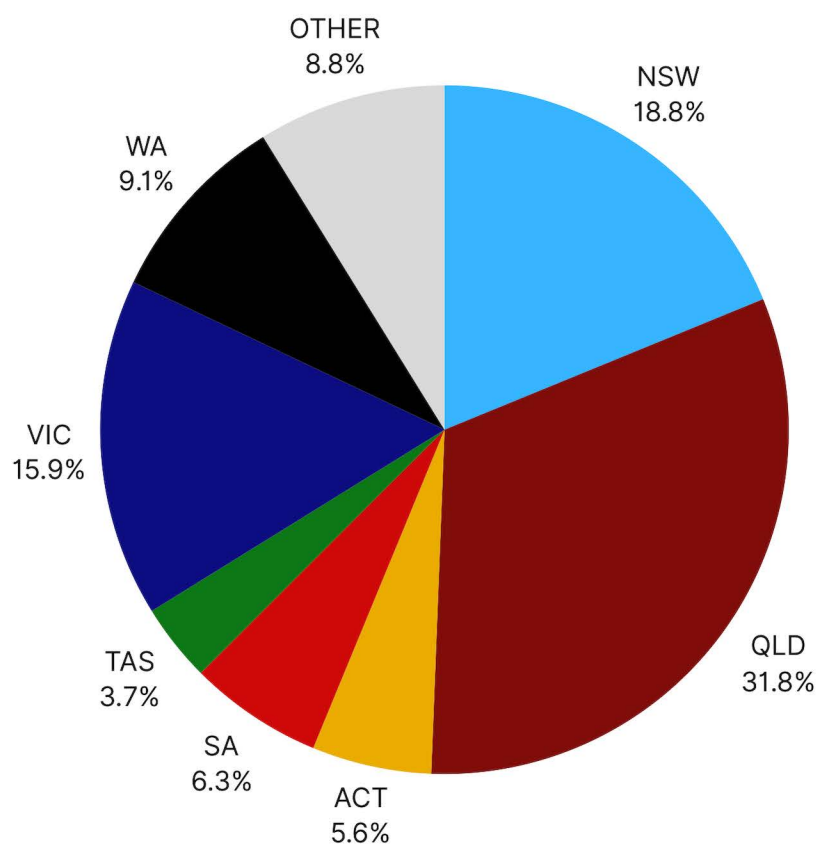
**Wade Kelly**  
CEO

# Membership Numbers

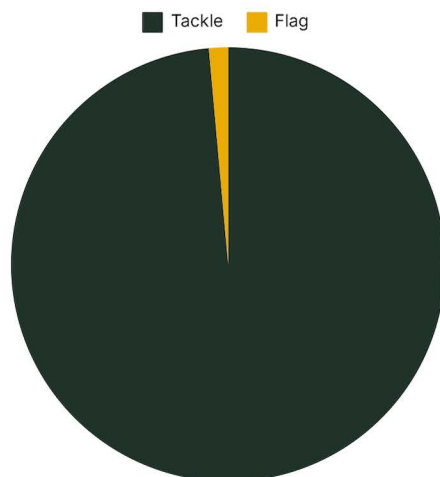
## TOTAL REGISTRATIONS - 3223

For the calendar year, Jan-Dec 2023. This represents a decrease in total members from 2022. The state breakdown data also reflects a collection of registrations without a state allocation. The board will review this in Assemble for the 2024 year.

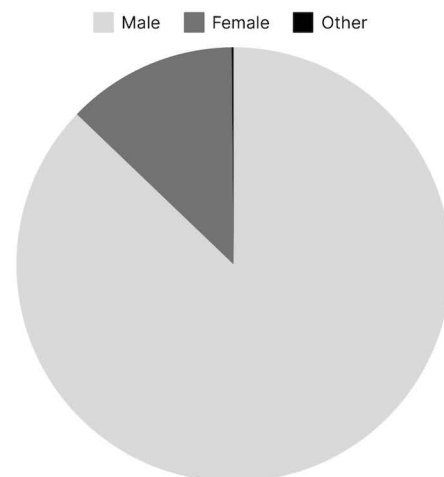
### State



### Code



### Gender



\*Note flag registrations in Assemble commenced officially 1st Jan 2024. As at May 2024 there are 860 registered flag players.

# Digital Presence

## Increased online reach via social channels and new website.

Throughout the previous year, there was a conscious effort made to improve the overall digital presence of Gridiron Australia.

The notably improved aesthetics and overall professional presentation on our social media channels resulted in strong increased reach and engagement. In addition to the organic growth in followers across the three platforms, there was a marketing investment in boosted Instagram posts throughout the 12 months.

There were 12 boosted Instagram posts at a total cost of \$2497.81. This generated 5,835 link clicks and an overall reach of 627, 735.



The combination of these boosted posts, along with new collaboration posts and promotions, resulted in a significant increase in the number of follows for this platform. As we now we have a baseline, going forward the plan will be to add a year on year for reach and engagement.

With the acknowledged improvement and success of the initiatives over the past year also comes recognition of the areas for improvement. The board is working towards a social media calendar and utilising external resources to maintain a level of quality and consistency in the overall digital presence of the organisation.

### Analytics from May 2023 to May 2024

→ Facebook	Follows: 12,000 Net Growth: 1,059	Reach: 262,000 Engagement: 25,100
→ Instagram	Follows: 6,993 Net Growth: 1,682	Reach: 417,400 Engagement: 18,500
→ LinkedIn	Follows: 780 Net Growth: 273	Page Views: 2,816 Unique Visitors: 1,338
→ Website	Page Views: 31,878 Bounce Rate: 49%	Site Sessions: 13,232 Unique Visitors: 9,754



# Board Appointments



**Liam Price**  
National Flag Director

Liam comes with a wealth of Flag experience, having established the successful Brisbane Flag Football competition and coaching at a State & National level. Liam is tasked with building frameworks for new flag leagues across the country along with state and national competition structures for flag.



**Russell Hewitt**  
High Performance Director

Working across tackle and flag representative programs, Russell oversees all national team coaches and Australian team programs and pathways. With an impressive background with the NFL Academy, USA Football, IFAF and BAFA, Russell brings a wealth of experience to the role.



**Carl Jennings**  
Head of Athletic Performance

Appointed through to Flag WC in Finland, Carl is working with key partners as we build out our 'What It Takes to Win' plan for ASC Olympic funding applications. Carl has been HAP at 3 NRL Clubs, Leeds United, GB Rugby League and Canterbury Crusaders. We are extremely fortunate to have someone of Carl's calibre working with our national flag team.



**Layke Rossiello**  
National Coaching Director

With an extensive 18-year coaching career, Layke has held roles as HC and DC for men's, women's, and junior teams across Australia and is also involved in grassroots development and training. As GA aims to establish a national coaching framework, Layke quickly set to work providing an extensive coaching resource library available to all coaches across Australia.

# The Search

## Coaches

**Jesse Williams**



**Ray Stowers**



**Russell Hewitt**



## Partners

**Athletes Authority, Vald Performance, Lumin Sports, AFS Group, Wilson Sports, Valour, Astute Financial**

**3rd-14th July.**

**7 stops. 350 participants**

In July 2023 GA hosted The Search, targeted at High School Athletes aged 13-19. Alongside a list of quality partners, we brought an NFL style combine tour across the country. In this first tour run we were able to visit all states except Tasmania and the Northern Territory. It was a phenomenal success and proved a cost neutral tour. Spurred off the back of the previous Jesse Williams camps of 2022, this new tour format for 2023 was enhanced with the addition of Russell Hewitt from the NFL Academy and Head Coach Ray Stowers from Layton Christian Academy, Utah, USA. The primary goals were to:

- Promote participation in junior leagues around the country and,
- Promote the pathways to USA High School and College scholarships via GA clubs and representative teams.

Within the first 30 mins of our first camp in Brisbane, five players had been offered scholarships to US schools, proving what we already knew, Australia is home to some top-quality talent in American Football. Talent good enough to gain US scholarships was identified in each state during the tour.

At the completion of The Search tour, we selected the Top 10 Athletes nationally who were awarded with a trip of a lifetime to the USA, gaining exclusive access to see up close and personal top US football programs.

The USA trip was taken in April 2024 and supported by Astute Financial Services and The First Step Foundation. Jesse Williams and Coach Ray Stowers took these Australian athletes to Los Angeles for the USC Spring Game at the LA Memorial Coliseum. The Top 10 were hosted by USC, UCLA, West LA College and St John Bosco where they had unlimited access to all facilities. A valuable insight on just what it takes and feels to be part of the US's biggest college and high school football programs.

We look forward to a return of The Search and providing further opportunities for our high school athletes to gain the benefits of both education and football in the US.



# High Performance Committee

The GA Flag High Performance (HP) Committee has made significant strides in its strategic planning and collaborations over the past year, aiming to enhance this program through to 2028 and beyond.

The committee, led by Wade Kelly, has been working towards establishing several key partnerships to increase the opportunities and outcomes for the high-performance program. The hope is that we can share these with all members in the coming months.

A key body of work for the committee has been the preparation of required Australian Sports Commission (ASC) funding applications which were submitted at the start of Q2, 2024.

The committee has also created and commenced a comprehensive data collection and analysis program, unprecedented in the sport globally, to demonstrate that Australian athletes can compete with their American counterparts. This leverages collaborations with various sports institutes and will look to advance further with the integration of a full-time PhD student for skill acquisition research.

The first HP camp was very successful, with exceedingly high standards set by Russell Hewitt and Carl Jennings, with the data collected currently being processed for further analysis.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) has responded to our efforts with a significant show of support by hosting the HP camps at the AIS Canberra. At the time of this report, discussions on future funding for HP are ongoing, pending upcoming federal budget decisions.

## GA Flag High Performance Committee

**Chair: Wade Kelly**

**Members: Paul Devlin, Katie Culbert, David Joyce**



Paul Devlin



Katie Culbert



David Joyce



# IFAF AOFFCC 2023



## Asia Oceania Flag Football Continental Championship

In 2023 IFAF hosted a series of Flag Football Continental Championships. Starting in the US then Europe and finally Asia-Oceania. Hosted in Shah Alam, Malaysia from 26th-29th October, nine Asian nations along with Australia and New Zealand competed for the title in the 3rd series of IFAF Continental Championships.

This event represented the perfect opportunity for GA to form the inaugural national flag football teams for both men's and women's division. One of the three criteria set out by the ASC for Olympic funding is that we can demonstrate our ability to provide results. This IFAF tournament provided an opportunity to match Australia's best against world class nations such as Japan and New Zealand.

24 players, 5 staff and 4 officials all travelled (self-funded) to Malaysia for the tournament and were accompanied by digital content creator, Jack Foley. We are so grateful for their recognition that flag football was in its infancy as a sport in Australia and it is due to everyone's commitment to being part of this flagship program that we have seen the rewards of this on their return to Australia.

A huge amount of work went in by a small group of people in organising the program. From uniforms to medical exemptions, to hotel/Airbnb bookings, to player, coach and officials' preparation. Jack Foley's excellent work captured not only the tournament but also the people central to the execution of the flag football program. The resulting social media campaign and content shared throughout the tour and beyond generated a huge amount of interest in the sport here in Australia.

Both our teams had an exceptional result for the first ever national flag team under what was a challenging schedule and competitive tournament pool allocation. Australia is now ranked #2 in the women's and #4 in the men's divisions for IFAF Asia Oceania.

Following this tournament, we continued to prepare our HP programs for the IFAF WC 2024 and beyond. As a Board we are excited to see our national teams take the world stage, backed by the experience and support being poured into the national team program.

### Women's Team Overall Result

**2nd Place**

### Men's Team Overall Result

**4th Place**

# Partnerships

Over the past year, Gridiron Australia has established some key partnerships to support the delivery of our tackle and flag programs. These partners assist GA to increase the exposure of American Football and help provide additional resources and potential revenue streams.

## SportsLink Travel

Australia's premier sports group travel company has come onboard to look after all of GA's team travel. Having a dedicated team with decades of experience not only helps ease administrative demands but ensures our members get access to the best deals and service from airlines, hotels, and car hire. We also launched GA's first ever US College and NFL tour with SportsLink in 2024.

## First Step Foundation

Partnering with Australia's only ever Super Bowl Winner Jesse Williams, we have launched the First Step Foundation. The Foundation's primary objective is to financially and mentally support Australian teens to chase their American Football dreams.

## Engage Digital Media

Supported by the First Step Foundation, The Search brings awareness and opportunity to USA college pathways via Gridiron Australia. Following combines across Australia we identified 10 athletes aged between 13-19 to take to the US and get unlimited access to some of the biggest College Football programs in America. Global media giants Engage Digital Media saw an opportunity to document the process and bring to life the story behind the process and the athletes selected. Negotiations are ongoing with global broadcasters including CBS and Foxtel.

## GSE - Jason Moore

Having brought the MLB Season opener between the LA Dodgers and Arizona Diamondbacks to the Sydney Cricket Ground, Jason Moore from Global Sports Enterprises has come on board as Gridiron Australia's Commercial agent as we start build assets that partners can leverage for commercial gain.

## AFS Group

Australian Frontline Services offer complete solutions in Safety Leadership, WHS & Compliance, Public & Workplace Training, Frontline Solutions and First Aid & Safety Equipment. AFS came on board as partner providing event operations and risk as well as medical requirements for all of Gridiron Australia's major events.

## Bring It On Sports

In what should be the biggest development in Gridiron Australia's history, in terms of participation numbers, we have been officially included in the ASC Sporting Schools list. Partnering with Bring it in Sports, all 9500+ schools across Australia will now be able to access fully-funded Flag Football programs from Term 3, 2024.

## Tattersalls Club

Sydney's premier business club has partnered with Gridiron Australia's National Flag Teams as they start to build towards the LA Olympics. Hosting fundraising events and allowing access to its illustrious Membership Base provides us with opportunity to bring some of Australia's biggest companies and philanthropists to the table.



# Financial Statements

For the financial year end 31 December 2023, Gridiron Australia provides the Profit & Loss report and Balance Sheet as annexures to the Annual Report. Below summarises the financial position for the 2023 financial year.

## Profit & Loss

See Annexure A.

A net loss for year end 2023. With the retained earnings supporting the increased expenditure of the company.

### Income

**\$233,471.98**



### Expenses

**\$289,365.17**



### Net Profit/Loss

**(\$55,893.19)**



## Balance Sheet

See Annexure B.

Reflects the positive cash position of the company at year end 2023.

### Assets

**\$252,192.23**



### Liabilities

**\$65,370.95**



### Net Assets

**\$186,821.28**





# Contact Us

**Acting  
Chairperson**

pamela.tuft@ga.org.au

**CEO**

wade.kelly@ga.org.au

**Board of  
Directors**

daniel.noonan@ga.org.au  
paul.devlin@ga.org.au  
ryan.lenegan@ga.org.au  
cameron.baranski@ga.org.au  
matt.croasdaile@ga.org.au

**Address**

www.gridiron.org.au  
1/21 Waterloo Rd, Collingwood VIC 3066



# Profit and Loss

## Gridiron Australia Limited For the year ended 31 December 2023

2023

### Trading Income

Fundraising	8,497.18
Grants	450.00
Gridiron Australia Capitation	173,873.26
Interest	740.58
Outback Registration	33,547.33
Sponsorship	16,363.63
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>233,471.98</b>

### Gross Profit

233,471.98

### Operating Expenses

Accounting and Bookkeeping	614.85
Administrative Expenses	1,199.90
Advertising and Marketing	74,382.29
ASIC Fees	547.06
Bank Fees	237.15
Event Management	4,329.09
Face to Face Meeting Expenses	8,010.63
Field Hire	1,518.18
Flights	6,292.34
Freight and Storage	2,079.09
Ground Expenses	120.00
Insurance	30,101.36
Officials	2,260.95
Online Expenses	604.26
Registration Expenses	8,265.45
Road Travel	750.00
Sundry Expense	54.02
Superannuation	11,954.02
Travel incidentals	164.53
Uniforms - Players	3,266.48
Wages	110,000.03
World Cup Expenses	22,613.49
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>289,365.17</b>

### Net Profit

(55,893.19)

# Balance Sheet

Gridiron Australia Limited  
As at 31 December 2023

31 DEC 2023

## Assets

### Bank

Debit Card Account xx61	951.65
Savings Account xx04	34,194.01
Savings Account xx09	57,524.95
Trading Account xx96	95,575.12
Transaction Account xx05	2,729.23
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>190,974.96</b>

### Current Assets

Accounts Receivable	34,785.00
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>34,785.00</b>

### Non-current Assets

Intangible Assets	2,039.82
Non Current Accounts Receivable	24,392.45
<b>Total Non-current Assets</b>	<b>26,432.27</b>

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>252,192.23</b>
---------------------	-------------------

## Liabilities

### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	2,102.43
GST	(41.43)
PAYG Withholdings Payable	33,434.00
Superannuation Payable	13,790.72
Wages Payable - Payroll	16,085.23
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>65,370.95</b>

<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>65,370.95</b>
--------------------------	------------------

<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>186,821.28</b>
-------------------	-------------------

## Equity

Current Year Earnings	(55,893.19)
Retained Earnings	242,714.47
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>186,821.28</b>