

# Murray Bridge Safe Youth Ambassador Program

Promoting social, emotional and mental wellbeing  
in young people



Australian Government

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Foundation

24–25 June, Melbourne

# Murray Bridge Safe Youth Ambassador Program

## Our Partners

Rural City of Murray Bridge, Murray Mallee GP Network, Moorundi Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service, Murray Bridge High School, headspace Murray Bridge, Rotary Murray Bridge (financial contributor)



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## Local challenge

### The Murray Bridge Council region and surrounding area

- High prevalence of socio-economic issues
- More disadvantaged in terms of level of income, educational attainment and unemployment compared with the state average
- Higher than state average concentration of young people aged 0 – 14 years
- Region has higher level of mental health disorders than both country SA and Australia

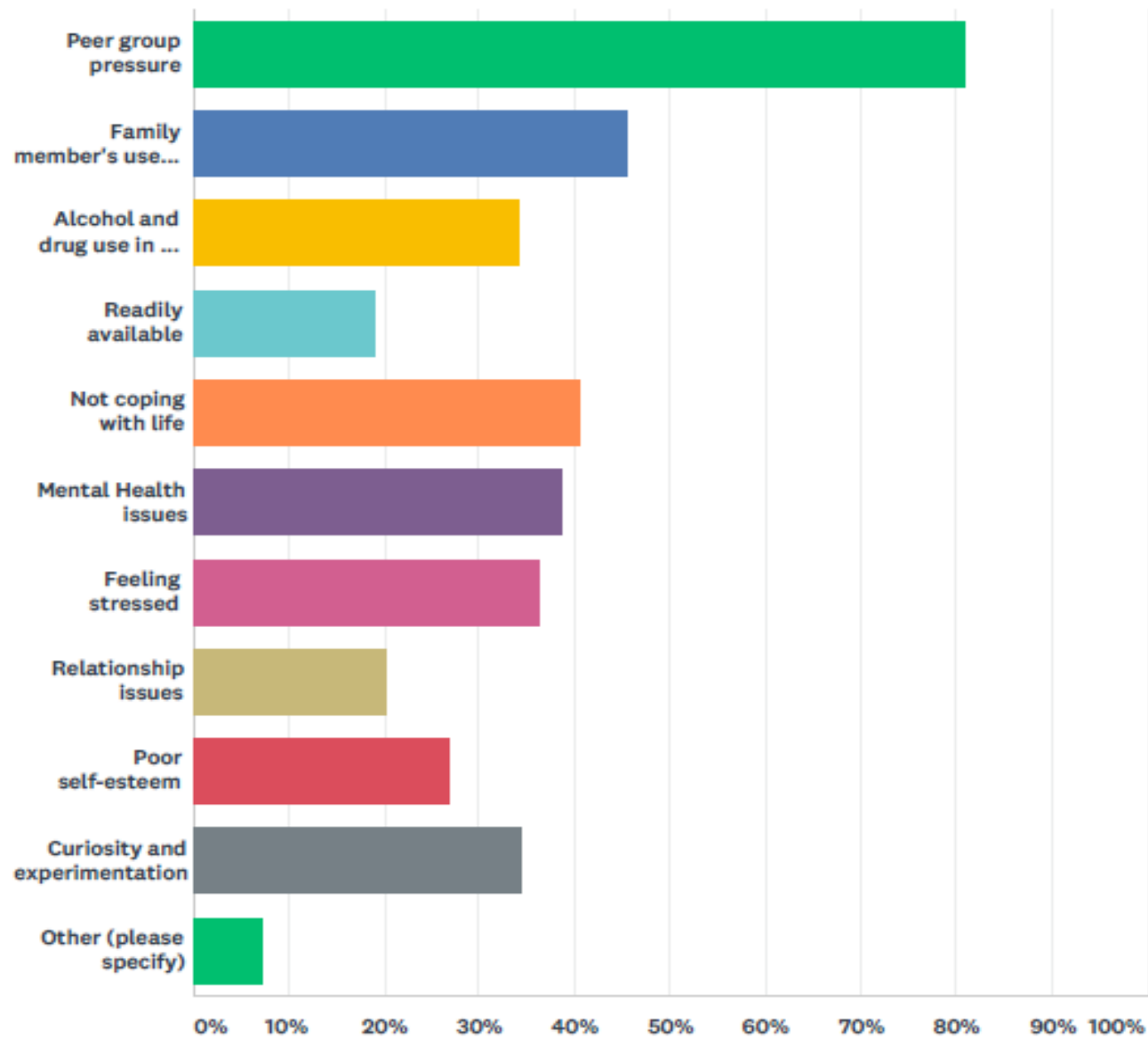
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## Local Challenge

- Incidence of mental health disorders the highest in 18 – 24 year age group
- A significant indigenous population (4.2% in MB, 3.3% in region, 1.6% state average in SA)
- A rapidly expanding refugee population (400 between 2006/10; 300 settled in MB; Afghan, Uzbek, Bhutanese and Sudanese)
- Considerable housing trust population and private housing needs (39% of rental accommodation is provided through Housing SA)

# Solution

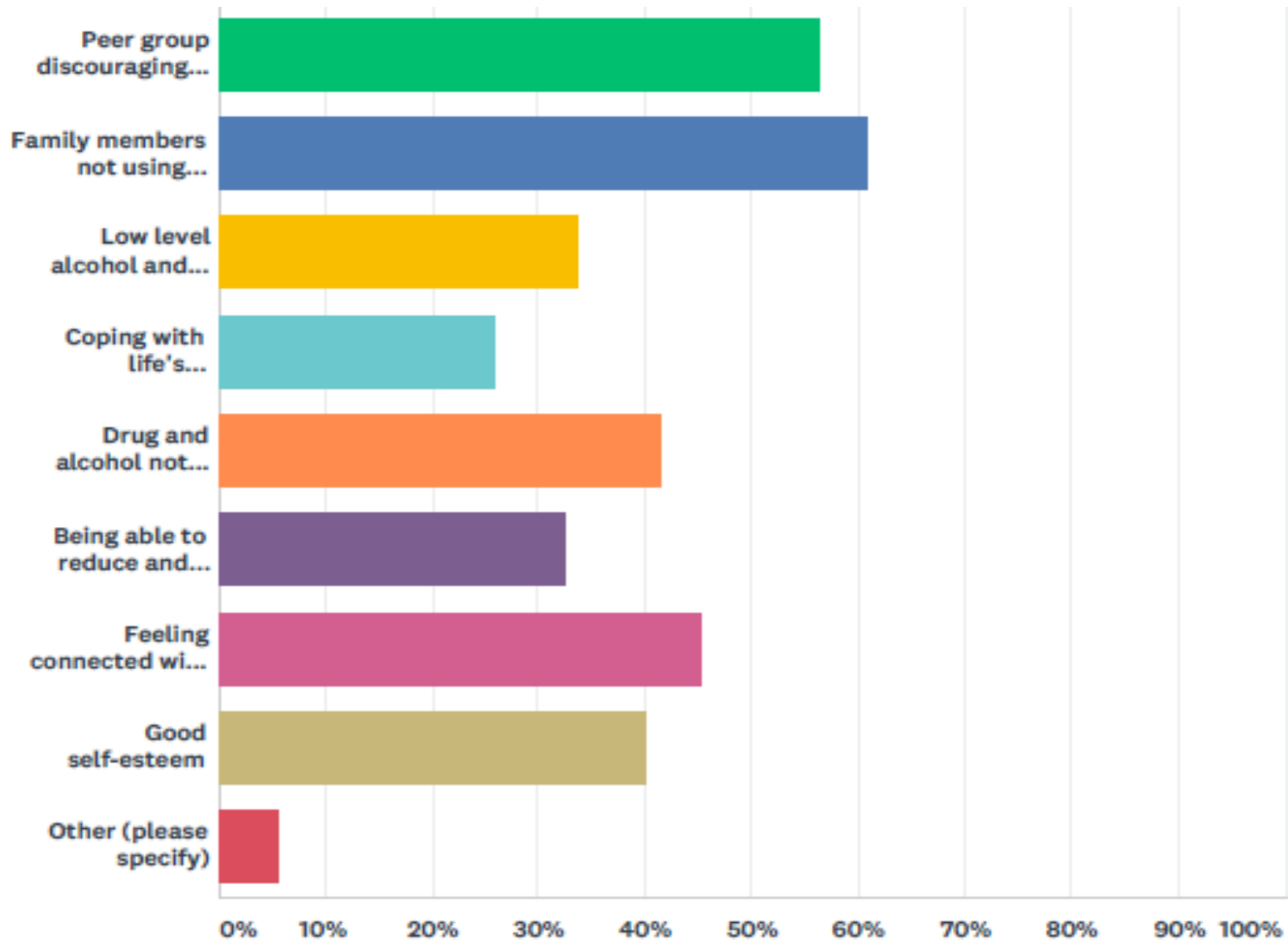
- The Murray Bridge Safe Taskforce – Reducing Community Harm
- Community Consultation via forums, workshops and surveys
- Engage with local Young People and Community, Schools, local Council, Sporting Clubs, Aboriginal Health Service
- Outcomes from 500 'Have Your Say' surveys
- What influences young people to use alcohol and other drugs - peer pressure, family context and wellbeing issues
- Develop and implement a peer support & leadership program to promote social, emotional and mental wellbeing in young people



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MURRAY BRIDGE SAFE  
PRESENTS

WED 13 JUNE, 6.30PM

# BOUNCING BACK FROM ROCK BOTTOM

WITH HEATH BLACK  
'HOW TO DEVELOP HIGH PERFORMANCE  
MOTIVATION AND RESILIENCE'

AT THE IMPERIAL FOOTBALL CLUB,  
ADELAIDE RD, MURRAY BRIDGE

**FOLLOWED BY A COMMUNITY FORUM**

Please RSVP to:  
Marc from STARClub on 0438 973 511 or  
Frauke from headspace Murray Bridge on 8531 2122

FREE  
COMMUNITY  
EVENT



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# Implementation steps and time frames

- Youth Ambassador program design; July – August 2018
- Establish Youth Ambassador Coordinator position; July 19 – Aug 2019
- Recruit, screen and train Youth Ambassadors; Sep 2018 – July 2019
- Engage up to 4 schools, 2 sporting clubs and 2 community venues to deliver peer led group programs; Oct 2018 – July 2019
- Provide ongoing supervision, mentoring and upskilling of Youth Ambassadors, monthly booster sessions; Sep 2018 – July 2019
- Target audience 12 – 30 years old, ATSI, LGBTIQ+

# Impact

- 12 Youth Ambassadors joined the project, received training in presentation and peer leadership skills, as well as in Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Youth Ambassadors have developed personal and social skills, gained confidence, are feeling less anxious, and are less self-conscious
- A lot of young people in the target audiences struggle with stress, anxiety, low moods, peer pressure and body image issues
- Impact of raising young people's awareness of social, emotional and mental wellbeing is being achieved/continues to be evaluated
- Use of an audience response system to interact with the audience, gain instant feedback and measure impact of Youth Ambassador presentations

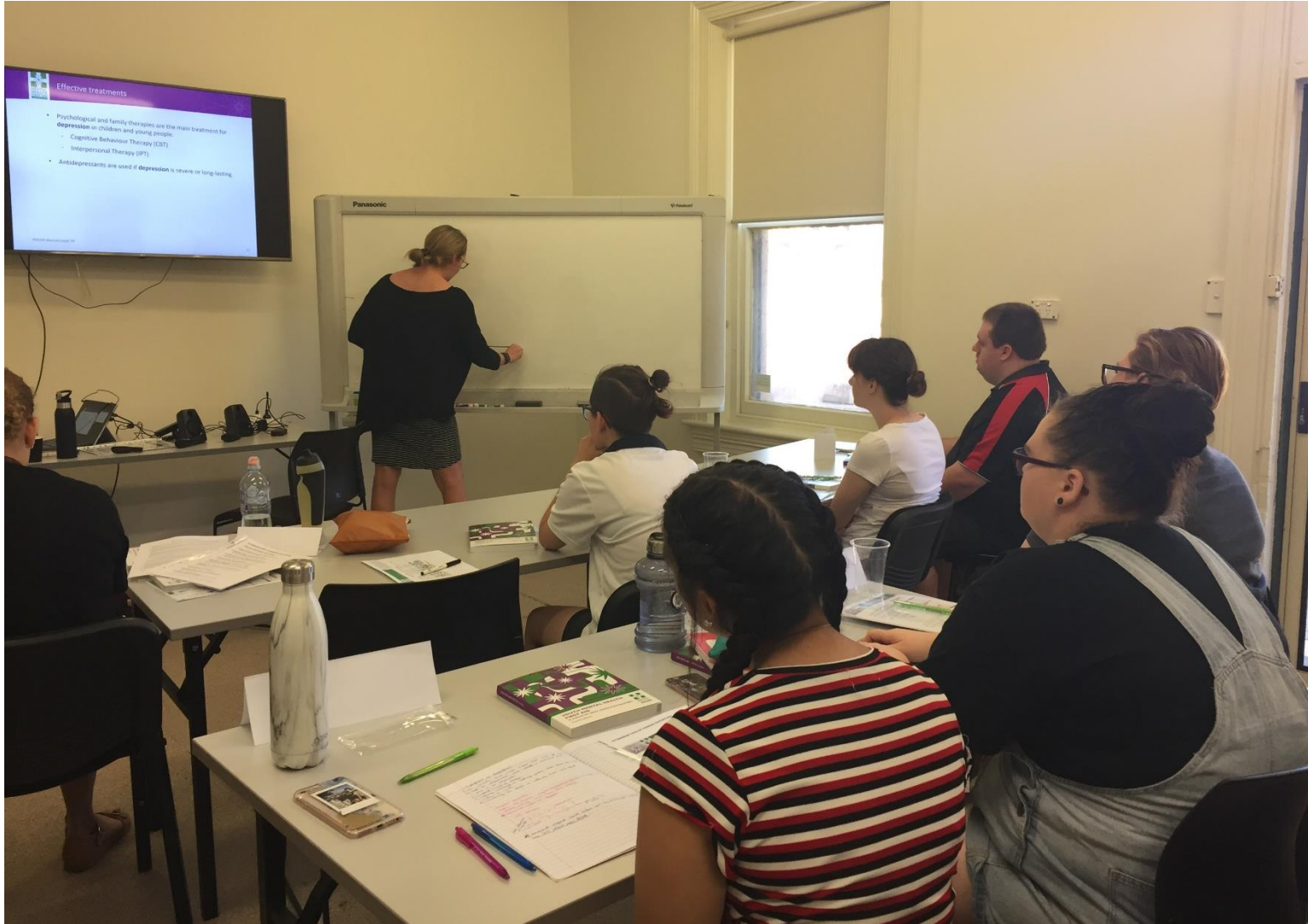


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## Next steps ...

- Practice public speaking of Youth Ambassadors in separate meetings and at Family & Friends Information nights
- Extend to other sporting communities in the local area, such as netball, basketball, soccer
- Fine tune and develop the Pop Up Hang Out delivery mode
- Recruit, foster and utilize high impact peer leaders, eg local high level playing footballers, young people representing marginalized groups, including ATSI and LGBTIQ+
- Increase the number of Youth Ambassadors to spread work load
- Develop peer mentor skills in the Youth Ambassadors
- Gain SACE accreditation for training and presenting of Youth Ambassadors



# Experiences, challenges, learnings

- Recruiting, upskilling and participation of Youth Ambassadors
- Achieving active partner input via LDAT governance group
- Managing funding limits in relation to resource needs of the project
- Speak with schools and sporting clubs early in the year – plan for plenty of lead-up time and follow-up
- Young people prefer an interactive and informal approach, such as the Pop Up Hang Out
- Caution is needed when presenting about alcohol and other drug issues to young people
- Have whole of community embrace the project

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## Top tips

- Achieve as much community buy-in as you possibly can to achieve pro-active broad LDAT membership, participation and ownership of the project (CAP)
- It takes time to establish, run, manage and achieve tangible outcomes in your project, likely more than one year of LDAT funding
- Look at the bigger picture of alcohol and other substance use, including broader causes and patterns of addictions in your community and beyond
- Keep your view beyond the LDAT funding opportunity and cycle; look at other funding sources/partners and sustainability of the CAP



# For more information . . .

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# The Cook, the Chef and Us

Hepburn LDAT



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# Hepburn LDAT: The Cook, the Chef and Us

Hepburn Health Service  
Daylesford College  
Hepburn Shire Council  
Victoria Police  
Neighbourhood Houses  
Local community members

Hepburn Shire, Central Highlands Victoria  
Population: 15,330



# Local challenge

## Reported increase in poor youth mental health

- Increased use of alcohol and other drugs
- School disengagement and or/study problems
- Lack of job readiness (Mission Australia, 2014)

## Hepburn Shire strengths and challenges

- One Secondary College
- Thriving hospitality industry
- Connected community
- Strong volunteerism
- Diverse and inclusive
- Low socio-economic families
- Lack of transport
- Rural isolation
- Cold climate



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## Relevant Local Data

- Early school leavers (21.1%) vs VIC average (10.3%) (2016 Census data)
- Higher average rates of psychological distress, mental health issues
- Higher average rates of low income families (DHHS, 2014; CHPCP, 2016)

## Program Target Audience

- Young People

## Priority group

- Yr. 9-10 Daylesford College students at risk of disengagement from learning





# Solution – The Cook, The Chef & Us

## Youth mental wellbeing program

- Re-engage young people at risk of school non-completion
- Utilise hospitality as learning vehicle

## Partners engaged

- Andrew Dennis (Independent chef)
- Range of weekly program hosts
- School Focus Youth Service (Ballarat Community Health)
- Highlands Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN)

## Community engaged

- School- teachers, students, parents & guardians
- Hospitality sector- local businesses & chefs



## Protective factors we are addressing

- Education and skills development
- Peers and mentorship
- Achievement & self esteem
- Resilience & developing aspiration

## Methods – steps

- Develop program plan
- Interview and select students
- Link students with mentors
- Visit range of food & hospitality settings
- Graduation



# Implementation

## Timing

- 2017, 2018 & 2019
- Weekly during terms 2 & 3
- Immersive industry based education experience
- Learn life long skills through hospitality lens

## Experience with partners

- Intersectoral collaboration
- Sense of pride amongst partners
- Strong support and advocacy from external organisations
- Planning, operational and emotional support
- Hepburn Youth Strategic Partnership team





## Experience with target audience

- Cooking and catering skills
- Self- development skills
- Leadership skills
- Responsible Service of Alcohol certification
- Safe Food Handling certification
- Barista training
- Nutritional education
- Job interview techniques & resume writing
- Menu preparation and event planning
- Community engagement & employment opportunities



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# Impact

## Participation

- 30 students graduated in 2017/18

## Feedback

- 100% identified feeling a sense of achievement during the program
- 93% discussed increases in self-confidence and assurance for a more positive future
- 80% increased social connections

## Impact

- increased student engagement in learning
- enhanced employment pathways and opportunities
- reduction of risk factors that increase alcohol and other drug use



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## Key Learning

- Student contribution to program development

## Currently measuring

- Attendance & employment
- Professional skills and competencies
- Personal skills development
- Anecdotal feedback

## Next steps...

- Future sustainability of program



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# Top tips

1. Identify local people/organisations/businesses with a shared interest in your project goal
2. Include target groups in project development
3. Highlight project outcomes/results
4. Explore ways to continue to improve project
5. Build community capacity to ensure sustainability of program





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**Australia**  
[www.stormboy.com.au](http://www.stormboy.com.au)

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# For more information . . .

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\*We acknowledge Photographer, Rodney Dekker for some images used within this presentation

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