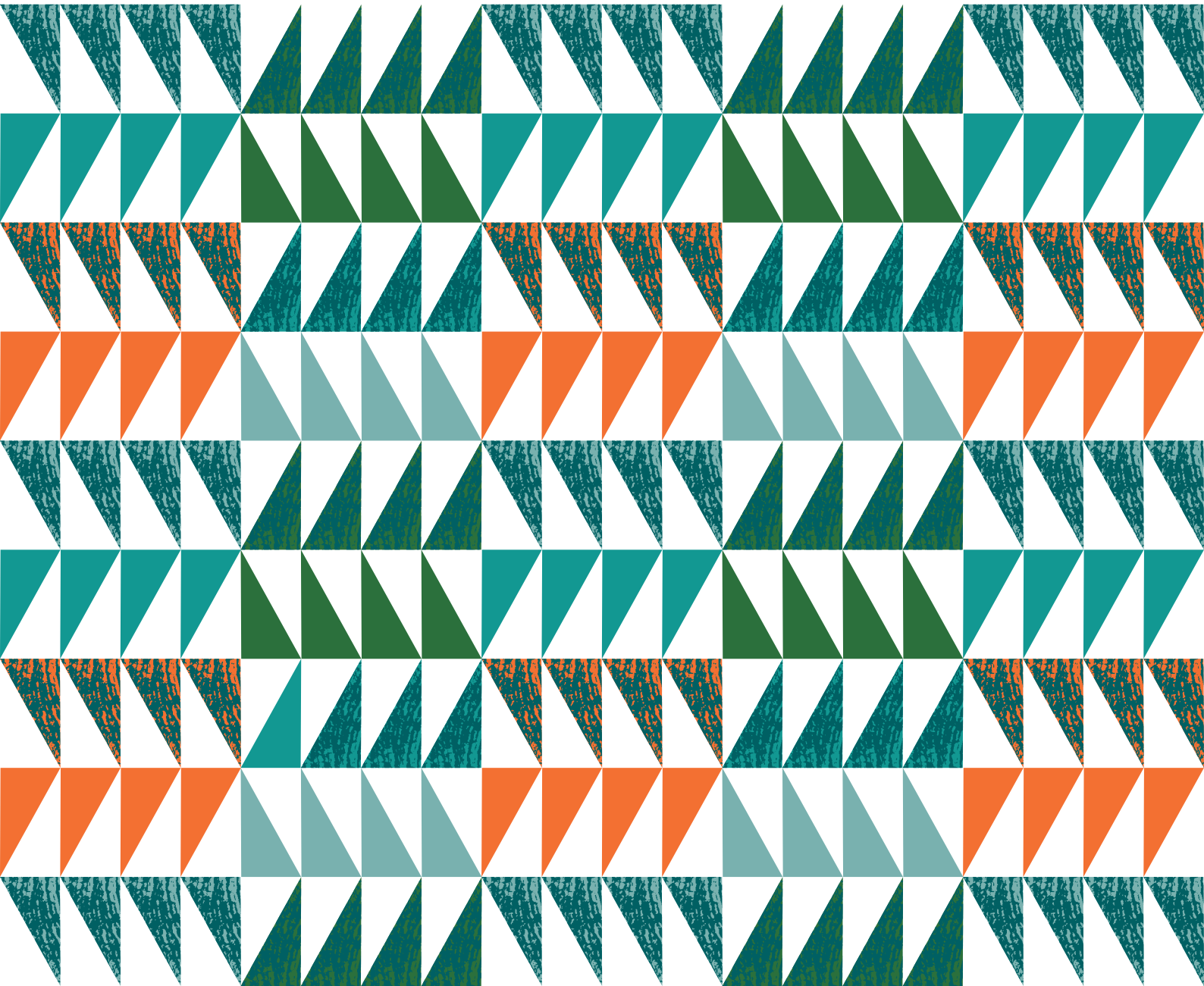




Australian Government

Australian Institute of Criminology

Corporate Plan / 2025–26



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Director's foreword

As the accountable authority of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), I am pleased to present the 2025–26 corporate plan, as required under 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

This corporate plan reflects the functions of the AIC, as set out in the *Criminology Research Act 1971*, and the AIC's objectives and performance measurement framework.

The plan has been prepared for the 2025–26 reporting year and covers the four-year period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.



Heather Cook

Director
Australian Institute of Criminology

Mission statement

To promote evidence-informed crime and justice policy and practice in Australia.

Purpose

The purpose of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is to inform crime and justice policy and practice in Australia by undertaking, funding and disseminating policy-relevant research of national significance.

/ Role

The AIC is Australia’s national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice. We undertake and disseminate crime and justice research and provide policy advice.

/ Outcome

The AIC’s outcome for 2025–26 to 2028–29, as stated in the Portfolio Budget Statement, is informed crime and justice policy and practice in Australia. This is achieved by:

- undertaking impartial, policy-relevant research to inform policy and practice in the crime and criminal justice sectors;
- working cooperatively with the Department of Home Affairs, portfolio and other federal agencies, and state and territory government agencies, as the Australian Government’s national research centre on crime and justice;
- administering an effective and efficient annual Criminology Research Grants program that results in policy-relevant research of value to the nation; and
- actively disseminating research findings to policymakers, practitioners and the general public, across Australia and internationally, in a timely manner.

/ Functions

To perform its role and achieve its objectives, the AIC undertakes the functions set out in section 6 of the *Criminology Research Act 1971*:

- (a) to promote justice and reduce crime by:
 - (i) conducting criminological research; and
 - (ii) communicating the results of that research to the Commonwealth, the States, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and the community;
- (b) to assist the Director in performing the Director’s functions;
- (c) to administer programs for awarding grants, and engaging specialists, for:
 - (i) criminological research that is relevant to the public policy of the States, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory; and
 - (ii) activities related to that research (including the publication of that research, for example).

The functions of the Director include:

- conducting criminological research, including the collection of information and statistics on crime and justice matters;
- communicating the results of that research, including through the publication of research material and seminars and courses of training or instruction;
- providing information and advice on the administration of criminal justice to the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments; and
- collaborating both within and outside Australia with governments, institutions and authorities, and with bodies and persons, on research and training in connection with the administration of criminal justice.

Operating context

/ Supporting the Commonwealth

The work of the AIC is designed primarily to support the requirements of the Commonwealth in addressing crime and justice issues of national concern. The research priorities reflect this by focusing on Commonwealth offences and significant crime issues that are of concern to the Australian government.

/ Crime and justice environment

The AIC conducts and disseminates crime and justice research characterised by:

- **evolving crime problems**—some traditional forms of volume crime have declined significantly over time, while new and emerging crime problems become issues for the future. The AIC continues to shape its research program to address these emerging problems;
- **multiple criminal justice systems**—while many crime and justice issues are important from a national perspective, the information available on such issues is often collected by state and territory agencies operating within their own criminal justice systems and subject to their own legal systems. The AIC therefore addresses research questions by negotiating access to relevant information from each criminal justice system. This creates opportunities for innovation at the state/territory level that can be examined through AIC research;
- **access to data**—access to crime and justice data is often restricted and these data are only released on limited terms. As an independent Australian Government research agency, the AIC has negotiated access to data not otherwise available to researchers; and
- **an expanding academic criminology sector**—criminology as an academic discipline has experienced long-term growth, offering opportunities for the AIC to identify, fund and disseminate high-quality applied criminological research through its grant programs and publication series.

/ Cooperation

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

The AIC works closely with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). The Chief Executive Officer of the ACIC is also the Director of the AIC. Although the AIC remains an independent entity, AIC staff were transferred to the ACIC under a machinery-of-government process in 2015. The AIC's corporate services are provided by the ACIC.

Stakeholders

The AIC works with stakeholders both nationally and internationally to produce a research knowledge base that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The AIC relies on data provided by the Australian Government and state and territory governments in order to undertake much of its research. Stakeholders include:

- **the Australian Government**—national law enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies, and justice agencies;
- **states and territories**—state and territory law enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies, and justice and corrections agencies;
- **international agencies**—the AIC is a member of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network of Institutes; and
- **the private sector**—academia, non-government organisations, and the general public.

/ Governance

The AIC is accountable to the Minister of Home Affairs as part of the Home Affairs portfolio.

The Criminology Research Advisory Council, representing Commonwealth and state and territory justice agencies, is responsible for providing advice to the Director of the AIC on strategic priorities for research and priorities for communicating research results.

AIC research is also subject to ethical standards and overseen by an ethics committee, in accordance with National Health and Medical Research Council requirements.

Values

In delivering on its purpose, the AIC's ethos is underpinned by five core values that guide the way it undertakes its business. These are:

- **Integrity** / Integrity is at the core of the AIC's activities. This includes being objective, making ethical decisions, obeying the law and complying with policy. It also involves making difficult decisions and being accountable for those decisions. Demonstrating integrity also means being trustworthy, doing what is expected, being accountable, admitting mistakes and avoiding repeating those mistakes.
- **Respect** / Respect is shown to all colleagues, partners and stakeholders. This involves being tolerant, kind, valuing diversity and inclusion and valuing everyone's contribution. In making decisions, alternative views are acknowledged and considered and trust is placed in the expertise of others. Other key attributes of respect include being reasonable, fair, flexible and caring for the well-being of staff, stakeholders and research participants.
- **Innovation** / Innovation is rewarded. Staff are encouraged to be curious, to be problem-solvers and to be world leaders in their field. The AIC is committed to continuous improvement and is open to change. The focus on innovation also requires staff to be efficient, nimble, dynamic and to anticipate what is over the horizon.
- **Excellence** / The AIC strives for excellence in everything it does. This includes being responsive, delivering on expectations and being driven to succeed. All staff of the AIC are supported to be experts in their fields.
- **Courage** / Staff are encouraged to be audacious in their thinking and bold in their actions. This includes engaging positively with risk and being prepared to try and fail. Staff are encouraged to be resilient and tenacious.

These values are complementary to the Australian Public Service (APS) values that are also adhered to by the AIC. These values are:

- **Impartial** / The APS is apolitical and provides the government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.
- **Committed to service** / The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the government.
- **Accountable** / The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.
- **Respectful** / The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.
- **Ethical** / The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.
- **Stewardship** / The APS builds its capability and institutional knowledge, and supports the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what it does.

Activities, capability and performance

The AIC is Australia’s national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice, compiling trend data and disseminating research and policy advice. Our activities are grouped as follows:

- research services;
- grants and awards; and
- communications and information services.

The contribution of these activities to achieving our purpose, the investments we are making in maintaining our capability and the means by which we will measure our performance are outlined below.

/ Research services

Undertaking research is the core function of the AIC. The AIC conducts timely and policy-relevant research on crime and justice issues for the Australian Government and other key stakeholders. The work involves a mix of statistical monitoring of crime and justice trends, research on the priority themes and consultancy research for stakeholders.

The AIC’s research priorities are set by the Director in consultation with the Criminology Research Advisory Council.

The AIC’s research priorities for 2025–26 are:

- transnational serious and organised crime;
- cybercrime;
- violent extremism;
- domestic, family and sexual violence;
- online sexual exploitation of children;
- human trafficking and modern slavery; and
- Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system.

Statistical monitoring

In addition to undertaking projects on each of the research priorities, the AIC also administers six statistical collections on crime and justice—the Fraud Against the Commonwealth census, the Australian Cybercrime Survey, the National Homicide Monitoring Program, the National Deaths in Custody Program, the Australian Sexual Offences Statistical Collection and the Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery National Minimum Dataset.

/ Grants and awards

The Criminology Research Grants program provides funding for criminological research relevant to crime and justice policy at both the national and state or territory level. The program also promotes funded research by publishing and disseminating the findings.

The priority themes for the Criminology Research Grants in 2025–26 are:

- Identifying culturally safe and effective approaches to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system.
- Understanding and addressing victimisation of vulnerable cohorts (e.g. older people) and in specific contexts (e.g. online).
- Understanding and addressing offenders living with disability or mental health conditions in the criminal justice system.
- Innovative responses to address children at risk of entering the criminal justice system (including young people with harmful sexual behaviours).

The AIC also administers the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards. These awards recognise good practice in delivering local crime prevention projects. Awards are available for both local community projects and police projects. They provide another means of promoting approaches that reduce crime.

/ Communications and information services

Communications

The AIC produces high-quality publications, including the peer-reviewed Research Reports and *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* papers, as well as Statistical Bulletins and Statistical Reports based on the Institute's data holdings. The AIC's work is disseminated in a range of ways, including via the website, email subscriber lists, social media, targeted media releases, conferences and occasional seminars.

Information services

The AIC hosts a substantial collection of criminal justice and related materials. The collection is housed in the AIC's JV Barry Library and is made available online, through the AIC website and via the CINCH database, to inform and assist in the development of evidence-based policy and programs.

Seminars and conferences

The AIC hosts a series of seminars, roundtables, workshops and other forums to promote and disseminate crime and justice research of national importance. Many of these events are recorded and made available on the AIC's YouTube channel, CriminologyTV.

/ Capability management

To deliver these activities, the AIC seeks to manage its workforce, infrastructure and information and communication technology capabilities in an efficient and effective way. The AIC continues to work closely with the ACIC, which provides the corporate services that allow for the AIC's requirements to be met.

Workforce requirements

The AIC employs specialists in research, library services and grant management to ensure its core activities are delivered. Researchers are typically recruited into early career positions and are then given in-house training and development to build their capabilities.

Retention rates are relatively high in the AIC, with more than half of staff having worked for the Institute for five years or more. This is supported by flexible work conditions and ongoing staff development. Corporate services provided by the ACIC include a range of support services aimed at ensuring employee welfare.

The AIC is committed to developing a highly capable workforce, based on the principles articulated in the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework, including:

- Rigorous planning.
- Treating APS employment as the default.
- Using APS networks first.
- Using external support in limited circumstances.
- Maximising the benefits and minimising the risk of any external arrangements.
- Applying merit when converting roles.
- Ensuring monitoring and accountability.

In 2025–26, the AIC will:

- Employ APS staff to undertake its core functions associated with delivering research services, grants and awards, and communications and information services.
- Continue to outsource its corporate services to another APS agency – the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC).
- Fund external researchers in universities, under Section 6(c)(i) of the *Criminology Research Act 1971*.
- Use external consultants in exceptional circumstances where the work is time sensitive and the requisite skills and capabilities are not available in-house. In 2025–26 this will include engaging:
 - A web designer to redesign the Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse website.
 - A media company to create videos for the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards and to film presentations at our conferences.

All staff of the AIC are employees of the ACIC. Targets established as a response to the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework are included under the auspices of the ACIC.

Infrastructure requirements

The AIC provides a positive working environment through its office space in Barton, Canberra, which also houses the AIC’s JV Barry Library collection. The ACIC provides the AIC with its office space through a shared services arrangement.

Information and communication technology requirements

Technological requirements are continually monitored and systems are updated on an ongoing basis. AIC’s ICT requirements will continue to be delivered through a shared services arrangement with ACIC. In 2025–26, the AIC will move its IT infrastructure to a cloud environment to allow for greater flexibility in future.

All staff in the AIC use laptops that allow for flexible working arrangements.

The website was refreshed in 2022–23 and is subject to continuing improvement to make the AIC’s research and statistical collections available in a user-friendly manner. Hosting services are provided by GovCMS.

In 2025–26, the AIC will redesign the Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse, which will be incorporated into the main AIC website.

/ Performance management

The AIC’s achievement against its purpose will be measured against the performance criteria presented below. It is anticipated these will apply for the duration of this plan. Performance against these criteria will be reported in the Annual Performance Statement contained in the AIC’s annual report.

Performance measures 2025–26 to 2028–29	
Performance criteria	Target
Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice papers, Research Reports and Criminology Research Grant papers are peer reviewed to ensure the quality of the AIC’s research outputs	100%
Reports produced for each of the monitoring programs are issued according to schedule, annually	On schedule
Research and statistical publications released on AIC websites.	At least 35
Evidence that AIC research has contributed to Australian Government policymaking	Qualitative case studies
Roundtables, workshops, seminars and other forums to be held annually	At least 10
Satisfaction with events attended by more than 100 people	At least 90%

Risk management

The Institute actively manages risks through strong internal processes, committee oversight, and peer review. Internal audits are reviewed by the joint AIC and ACIC Audit and Risk Committee.

While previously operating under the ACIC Risk Management Framework, the AIC introduced its own framework in 2024–25 to enhance risk awareness and better align with its objectives. This framework addresses AIC-specific enterprise risks and complies with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Risk Appetite

The AIC has a low appetite and tolerance for risk given the complex ethical and legal environment the Institute operates in and the potential for reputational damage which could lead to the Institute suffering loss of confidence by the government and public.

Risks which are outside of tolerance and rated medium are required to be owned by the Deputy Director. High rated risks are also owned by the Deputy Director; however, they must be escalated to the Director for visibility.

Enterprise Risks

The AIC's operating environment is not inherently high-risk. However, key risks for the AIC relate to the safety and welfare of researchers undertaking their duties, the integrity and quality of the research produced, and ensuring that the agency is operating within the Commonwealth, state and territory legislation that impacts its national program of work.

The AIC's enterprise risks provide oversight of the Institute's risk exposure and highlight potential areas for additional focus or consideration. There are 7 enterprise risks as shown below:

Risk Category	Enterprise Risk Description
Legal	Failure to adequately consider and treat legal risk and/or failure to comply with policy and statutory requirements.
Health and safety	Failure to support the safety and wellbeing of all workers and manage health and safety hazards presented by our varied operating environments.
Ethics	Failure to produce ethical and unbiased criminological research to stakeholders and/or manage AIC staff integrity
Stakeholder	Failure to effectively manage stakeholder relations and produce high quality research in line with expectations
Data	Failure to adequately manage storage and destruction of physical and digital data including cyber security.
Transition	Failure to effectively transition the independence of the AIC to meet future purpose and objectives
Finance and resources	Failure to adequately manage financial requirements, contracts, procurement and prevent and detect financial fraud.

/ Reporting and Responsibilities

The Director of the AIC has overall responsibility for risk management in the AIC and is supported by the Deputy Director.

- The AIC executive considers strategic advice on research directions from the Criminology Research Advisory Council and oversees the management of the agency's budget and risk management activities. The Director also receives reports from other subordinate management committees. The AIC Human Research Ethics Committee has been operating since 1992. Its eight members have backgrounds in law, religion, social work and research, as stipulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines for ethics committees. The ethics committee's role is to advise the Director whether approval to proceed should be granted for proposed research involving human subjects. It regularly reviews proposed projects to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure the research is consistent with ethical standards.
- The AIC's Research Managers Committee considers both strategic and operational aspects of the AIC research program and provides advice to the Director on research priorities and risks.

The joint AIC and ACIC Audit and Risk Committee is established in accordance with section 45 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The committee's objective is to provide independent advice to the Director on the Institute's financial and performance reporting, risk management and internal controls.

Appendix: Compliance Index

PGPA Rule Reference	Description	Requirement	References
16E(2)	<p>Introduction</p> <p>States that the plan has been prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the PGPA Act. The statement may also refer to any other legislation applicable to the preparation of the plan;</p> <p>Specifies the reporting period for which the plan is prepared (this would usually be the first reporting period of the minimum 4 year period covered by the plan); and,</p> <p>Specifies the reporting periods covered by the plan (this would usually be the minimum 4 year period covered by the plan; for example, 2024–25 to 2027–28).</p>	Mandatory	Page 1
16E(2)	<p>Purposes</p> <p>Including objectives, functions or role.</p>	Mandatory	Page 2
16E(2)	<p>Activities</p> <p>Must set out how the activities of the entity contribute to achieving the priorities and objectives.</p>	Mandatory	Page 7
16E(2)	<p>Operating Context</p> <p>Environment in which the entity will operate.</p> <p>The capability required by the entity to undertake its key activities and to achieve its purpose.</p> <p>The risk oversight and management systems, the key risks the entity will manage and how those risks will be managed.</p> <p>How an entity works with others to achieve its purposes.</p> <p>How any subsidiaries will contribute to achieving the entity's purpose.</p>	Mandatory	Page 4 Page 4 Page 9 Page 12 Page 5 N/A
16E(2)	<p>Performance</p> <p>Including performance measures and targets for each reporting period covered by the plan.</p>	Mandatory	Page 11

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