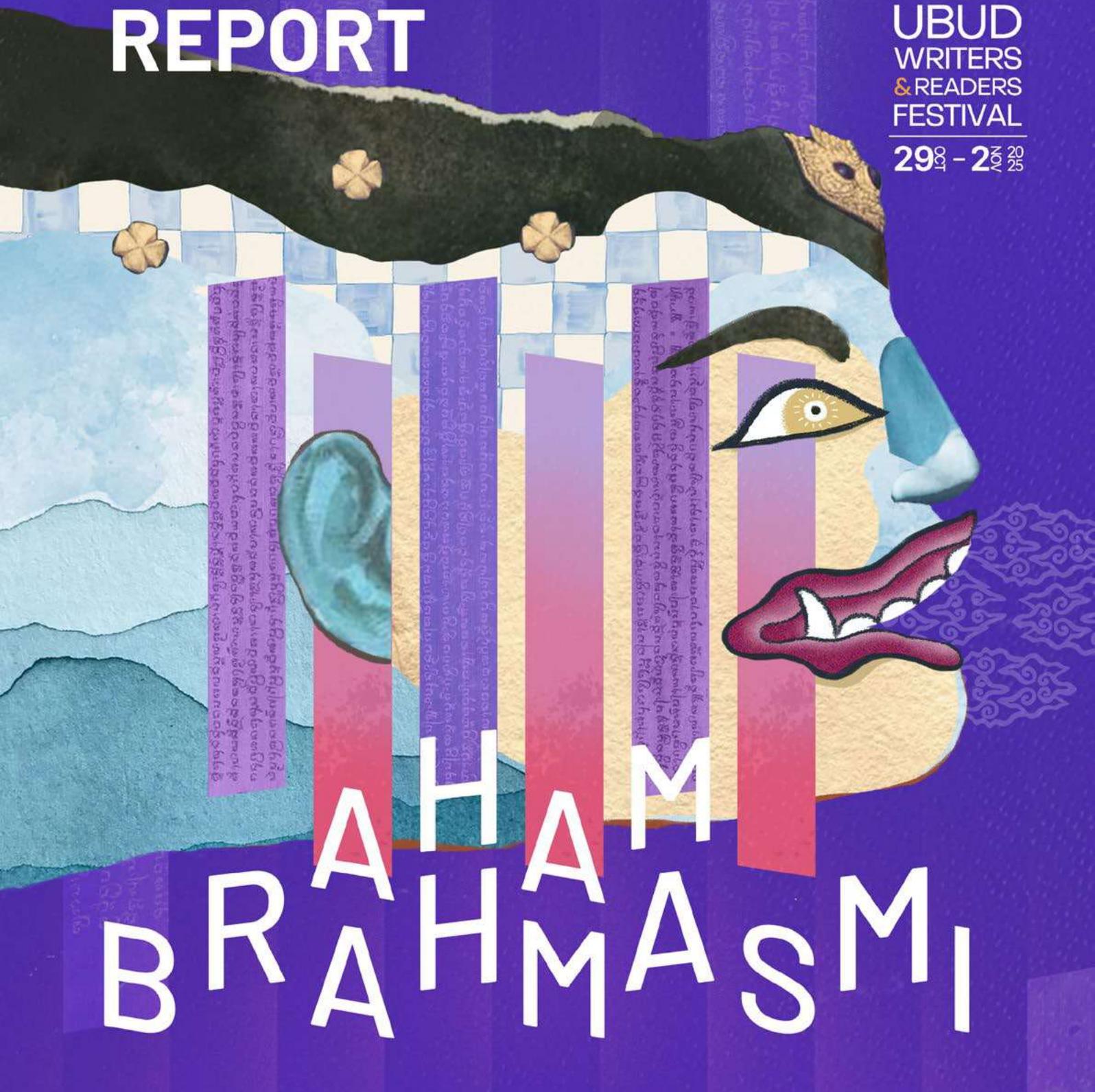


2025 FESTIVAL REPORT



UBUD
WRITERS
& READERS
FESTIVAL

29th - 2nd 20²⁵



BRAHAMASMI

I AM THE UNIVERSE



FROM THE FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

2025 was an extraordinary year for the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, building on its 22-year legacy as Southeast Asia's largest, longest-running, and most diverse literature and cultural event.

This year, over 16,000 audiences attended our Festival, witnessing exceptional 300 talents from 30 countries, who shared bold new ideas, powerful stories, and joyful moments of connection. We held 260 performances and events across 70 venues throughout Ubud, including electrifying conversations, thoughtful debates, and joyful celebration of literary culture, as well as a wide-ranging offering of dance and performances, late-night comedy, spoken word galas, workshops, and events designed to enrich and inspire.

We were proud to present 43% of our festival programming free of charge, ensuring that everyone could experience the power of words in our city. Alongside our exciting film screenings and striking art exhibitions, we hosted over thirty free book launches and created a meaningful platform at the grounds of Bumi Kinar, focusing on sustainability, activism, and climate change, with space to connect, learn, and share ideas. Also, for the first time ever, we took over the Honeymoon Garden venue for some epic performances, welcoming artists and performers who delivered unforgettable live experiences under the watchful gaze of Shiva and Ganesha.

Our educational programmes provided valuable opportunities to hundreds of pupils and students through ongoing partnerships with local schools and universities. These initiatives connected young people and storytellers-in-training with established authors, offering hands-on experience through collaborative sessions as part of the festival's vibrant learning environment. In partnership with *Penguin Random House SEA*, we also built on beloved traditions to create life-changing opportunities for Indonesian emerging writers, inviting ten to get their work published for the first time, helping these fresh voices pave the way for future collaborations and exciting career opportunities.

Our Festival and year-round initiatives would not be possible without the support of our wonderful corporate and government partners, alongside the community of donors, whose sustained support is invaluable. A heartfelt thanks also goes to the generous volunteers and the hardworking staff, who go above and beyond to make the festival happen. And finally, a huge thank you goes to the incredible authors, activists, and artists, and to the magnificent audience who came out in droves to make magic happen. In a time when challenges face us both domestically and globally, the continued support for our festival has bolstered and heartened us.

We are immensely proud of what has been shared together and look forward with excitement to doing it all again next year!

Janet DeNeeffe
Founder and Director

“

The Festival felt like returning to a place that has been waiting patiently for stories. I have taken with me the generosity of the Balinese, of the Festival team, the voices of writers and artists, and the hum of gamelan drifting from somewhere.

Banu Mushtaq

International Booker Prize Winner



OUR SPEAKERS

An extraordinary lineup of global and local storytellers graced our festival stages, from Booker Prize winners and shimmering poets to towering historians, transcendent artists, and emerging writers who will shape Indonesian literature for years to come.

Adinda Olivia | Adisti Sukma Sawitri | Aditya Ananta Toer | Agnes Christina | Agustinus Wibowo | Ahmad Zaki Yamani | Akhyari Hananto | Alex Chula | Alex Florschütz | Alief El-Ichwan | Alison Hadley | Amanda Katili | Ana Filomena Amaral | Anak Agung Bagus Wirawan | Andara Fembriarto | Andi Muhammad Akbar | Andrea Hilaria Li | Andreas Kurniawan | Andrew Lam | Angelina Enny | Anna Anderluh | Annabel Laura | Annelien De Greef | Annisa Ivana | Annisa R. Beta | Antoinette Lattouf | Antonia Maria Oy | Aparna Bhatnagar Saxena | Aranindy | Arfan Sabran | Arimbi Heroeputri | Asief Abdi | Awi Chin | Ayşegül Savaş | Bagus Ari Maruta | Bandem Kamandalu | Banu Mushtaq | Basri Amin | Bella Li | Bhimanto Suwastoyo | Bonnie Kelana Blyth | Bonnie Triyana | Bottlesmoker | Bri Lee | Brigid Delaney | Bruce W. Carpenter | Chaitanya Srivastava | Charlotte Diana | Chris Walker | Christian Winkler | Christopher Kerrigan | Clare Wright | Claudia Koch | Claire Betita de Guzman | Cokorda Ngurah Rupini | Conchita Blanco | Courtney Collins | Craig Leeson | Daan Roosegaarde | Dana Dajani | Danton Remoto | Darryl Jones | David Van Reybrouck | Debra H. Yatim | Dee Lestari | Deepa Bhashti | Devi Asmarani | Dewa Kresnanta | Dewi Setiawan | Dian Elvira Rosa | Dian Sonnerstedt | Dinny Jusuf | Drew Ambrose | Dyan Anggraini | Edward Speirs | Edward Wong | Ege Dündar | Eko Krisna | Elizabeth D. Inandiak | Elle Wibisono | Emte | Enda Kaban | Erin Woodward | Erwin Arnada | Eva Fernandes | Faiza Nuralifah Khairunnisa | Faisal Tehrani | Fajar Merah | Febiola Rumangkang | Gacanti Swastika | Gail Jones | Garin Nugroho | Gatari Surya Kusuma | Gede Maha Putra | Ghayath Almadhoun | Gilang Propagila | Gill Westaway | Gina Chick | Gratiagusti Chananya Rompas | Greta Georges Habib | Gretchen Liu | Gus Dark | Haidar Bagir | Haifa Beseisso | Hamzah Muhammad | Harry Surjadi | Hasbunallah Haris | Hendrick Tanuwidjaja | Herald van der Linde | Hilmar Farid | Husnara Khanom | Hyalea Beryl Gono | I Ketut Suardana | I Komang Adiartha | I Made Bandem | I Made Julio Saputra | Ian Yee | Ida Fitri | Ilyia Sumanto | Iluh Sudianing | Inaya Rakhmani | Ingrid Rojas Contreras | Intan Andaru | Isabella Roberts | Ita Siregar | Ivy Ngeow | Iyas Lawrence | Jajang Ramadhan R. Warsito | Jalu Norva | Janak Rogers | Janet DeNeefe | Janet Steele | Jasmine Floretta Vasthia Devi | Jazz Money | Jean Couteau | Jean Pascal Elbaz | Jeffrey Neilson | Jenny Erpenbeck | Jenny Valentish | Jennifer Mackenzie | Jero Penyarikan Duuran Batur | Jewel Topsfield | John H. McGlynn | Jonathon Moran | Josephine Ferguson | Joss Wibisono | Judith E. Bosnak | Juhea Kim | Julia Prendergast | Julia Winterflood | Juli Sastrawan | Kadek Krishna Adidharma | Kadek Sonia Piscayanti | Kam Raslan | Kantarin Leelahuta | Kate Sawyer | Kelly Falconer | Ketut Yuliarsa | Khan Wilson | Kinchem Hegedus | Kirsten Han | Kirsti Melville | Kirk Johnson | Kismet Krystle | Klaas Stutje | Komunitas Seni Lemah Tulis | Krishna Sen | Kuncarsono Prasetyo | Kukuh Yudha Karnanta | Kylee Quitugua | Laksmi DeNeefe Suardana | Laksmi Mutiara Prameswari | Lech Blaine | Leila S. Chudori | Leo Zulfikar | Luna Vidya | Lydia Khalil | Lynn Nandar Htoo | Ma Thida | Made Bayak | Made Rusmartini | Maja Klarić | Malcom Seah | Manuela Sauter | Margareth Meutia | Mario Blanco | Marlowe Bandem | Marissa Saraswati | Mark Heyward | Marten Schmidt | Maurice O'Riordan | Max Gheraldi | Melati Wijssen | Meredith Costain | mhyajo | Michael Schindhelm | Michael Vatikiotis | Miles Merrill | Mirandi Riwoe | Mona Schnell | Nadia Habibie | Nago Tejena | Namal Siddiqui | Natalie Kyriacou | Ndari | Neal Hall | Ni Made Purnama Sari | Ni Nyoman Ayu Suciartini | Ni Putu Rastiti | Ni Wayan Jero Jemiwi | Nina Karnikowski | Ning Ken | Noah Somera | Nora Nazerene Abu Bakar | Ochie Chandra | Oktaria Asmarani | Olamide | Olin Monteiro | Olivia Fraser | Omar el Akkad | Omar Musa | Pamela Allen | Patricia Edlyn | Patricia Tanumihardja | Patrick Winn | Paul v. Walters | Peter Greste | Petty Elliott | Petra Molnar | Philip Jacobson | Pico Iyer | Priyambudi Sulistiyanto | Purwita Sukahet | Putu Sridiniari | Rain Chudori | Ratih Kumala | Ray Shabir | Reza Kurniawan | Ridwan Malik | Rie Arshaka | Rio Helmi | Rizal Iwan | Rob Waters | Robbyan Abel Ramdhon | Robin Hemley | Ronny Agustinus | Rosul Jaya Raya | Rossy You | Rueben Dass | Rutvik Bhandari | S. Shakthidharan | Salha Obeid | Sally Breen | Sam Dalrymple | Samira Anderson | Sanggar Kerta Art Performance Club | Sara Agah Franti | Saraid de Silva | Sarah Kushairi | Sarah Macdonald | Sasti Gotama | Satria Muda | Sean Nino Lotze | Seruni Sekarpuri | Shannon Ada | Shelf Therapy | Shinie Antony | Shinta Febriany | Shinta Oktania Retnani | Shiori Itō | Si Luh Ayu Pawitri | Sidhi Vhisatya | Sinéad Gleeson | Sofie Dewayani | Sophie Navita | Srijan Pal Singh | Stebby Julionatan | Steph Harmon | Steve Stine | Sunaring Pangastuti | Susan Allen | Suzy Hutomo | Suzanne Scott Tomita | Swaady Martin | Syafiudin Vifick | Tan Lioe Ie | Taufik Agus Purnomo | Taufiq Ismail | TBird Luv | Thammika Songkaeo | Theresa Devasahayam | Thomas Mayo | Tigra Rose | Titan Sadewo | Titah AW | Tito Ambyo | Tommy Sastra Wijaya | Topilus B. Tebai | Udiarti | Umah Pupa | Uni Lubis | Victoria Yam | Virginia Haussegger | Wawan Kurniawan | Wayan Karja | Wayan Wardika | Wilda Yanti Salam | William Dalrymple | Windy Ariestanty | Wulan Dewi Saraswati | Xin Wei Thow | Yayan Indrayana | Yudiati Kuniko | Zech Soakai | Zhou Bou

OUR PROGRAMME

Through the lens of this year's festival theme, *Aham Brahmasmi – I am the Universe*, the programme invited festival-goers to consider the deep connection between the self and the universe. The following summaries highlight how the 2025 programme brought the highest level of literary excellence to life in myriad ways.

INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Festival presented a diverse lineup of international artists, including headliners such as the 2025 International Booker Prize winners: Indian author and women's rights activist Banu Mushtaq, whose debut short story collection *Heart Lamp* won alongside its translator Deepa Bhashti; and German novelist Jenny Erpenbeck, who won the 2024 International Booker Prize for *Kairos*, a novel set against the collapse of East Germany. The Festival also welcomed outstanding society-shapers, including Egyptian-Canadian novelist Omar El Akkad; British-born essayist Siddharth Pico Raghavan Iyer, known as Pico Iyer; Japanese writer and journalist Shiori Itō; as well as Lebanese-Australian journalist Antoinette Lattouf. In celebration of Indonesia's 80th anniversary of independence, festival-goers heard analysis from Belgian historian and author David Van Reybrouck on his widely acclaimed *Revolusi*, as well as British historian and bestselling author William Dalrymple, who explored his latest work *The Anarchy* and its examination of the rise of the East India Company.

PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT:

- 82 Main Programme
- 27 Special Events
- 13 Masterclasses
- 13 Art & Cultural Workshops
- 37 Book Launches
- 6 Art Exhibitions
- 11 Film Screenings
- 2 Satellite Events

INDONESIAN HIGHLIGHTS

As Indonesia's premier platform for showcasing its writers to the world, the Festival was also honoured to once again welcome novelist and journalist Leila S. Chudori, together with Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa 2025 winner Sasti Gotama and rising literary talents such as Ray Shabir and Hamzah Muhammad, who, along with Balinese novelist Ni Made Purnama Sari, explored the new wave of poets reshaping form, language, and media. They were joined by prolific Indonesian travel writer Agustinus Wibowo; writing superstar Dee Lestari, who launched her new collaborative book with her late husband, Reza Gunawan; and beloved Balinese writer Ni Nyoman Ayu Suciartini, whose works have repeatedly won national literary competitions, as well as former Festival Emerging Writer Juli Sastrawan, among others.

SUPPORTING INDONESIAN VOICES

This year, we built on beloved traditions to create new pathways for brave Indonesian voices from across the archipelago through our Emerging Writers Programme. We were proud to present 10 remarkable writing talents to the literary world, selected from 637 submissions by Indonesian writing superstars Ni Made Purnamasari, Ratih Kumala, and Shinta Febriany, and we were delighted to partner with *Penguin Random House SEA* to expand the impact for each of the selected finalists. All finalists were given a life-changing opportunity to connect with established industry professionals at the Festival, with their work published in both English and Bahasa Indonesia as part of the *Stories from the Islands* anthology.

LITERARY EXPERIENCES

For the first time, we toured Borobudur in Central Java for an exciting cultural experience, presenting a five-day, four-night cultural tour guided by William Dalrymple, Dyan Anggraini, David Van Reybrouck, Herald Van Der Linde, and Petty Elliott. This exclusive programme offered in-depth explorations of Borobudur's history, Indonesia's path to independence, and the legacy of the Majapahit Empire. Committed to offering rich and intimate conversations, the Festival also presented nearly 30 Special Events, ranging from an intimate brunch with British essayist Pico Iyer in the dining room of Di Sini Di Sana, to the Festival's renowned Literary Long Table Lunch at the charming open-air Herb Library, and a powerful storytelling gathering at Uma Cucina. This event featured some of the Festival's most impressive writers, including Banu Mushtaq, Deepa Bhashti, Thomas Mayo, Dana Dajani, among others.

WRITERS RETREAT

Following the exceptional success of the writing retreat with International Booker Prize 2024 shortlistee Charlotte Wood in early 2025, the Festival was also excited to host its second Writing Retreat at Plataran Ubud Hotel & Spa, guided by acclaimed authors Kate Sawyer, Mirandi Riwoe, and Robin Hemley. Running alongside the Festival, the literary programme not only offered participants writing workshops and dedicated time for personal writing, but also provided full access to the Festival, including an invitation to the Festival's Grand Opening Gala, creating an unmissable seven-day literary experience.

CLIMATE DAY

Now in its third year, the Festival's Climate Day once again brought Indonesia's climate activists and advocates on stage alongside regional voices to discuss questions around sustainability, activism, and climate change. This full-day, free programme invited participants to hear from those working on the frontlines of the climate crisis, while also enjoying festive joy through hands-on workshops that offered space to connect, learn, and share ideas. The day, held on the grounds of Bumi Kinar, featured full-time change-maker Melati Wijsen, Australian award-winning filmmaker Craig Leeson, environmentalist Natalie Kyriacou, and Balinese academic Jero Penyarikan Duuran Batur, along with others.



As a documentary filmmaker, the Festival opened up a new, energising world. It reminded me just how vital scriptwriting is – not simply as a step in the process, but as a craft in its own right, and one that demands precision, honesty, and a certain fearlessness.

Craig A. Leeson

Awarded Documentary Filmmaker

FREE PROGRAMMES

We also continued to make the Festival as accessible for everyone, with dozens of free events. Alongside over 35 free Book Launches presenting new work from the pens of emerging and established authors, there were film screenings of some of the most celebrated recent films and documentaries, including *The Last Glaciers* by Australian award-winning filmmaker Craig Leeson; the Indonesian blockbuster *Samsara*, directed by award-winning filmmaker Garin Nugroho; among others. We also supported the presentation of multiple performances, including an outstanding live presentation of *Empire*, a unique interlingual performance about colonialism directed by Austrian theater-maker Franz von Strolchen.

OUR AUDIENCE

Reflecting the diversity of its programming, the Festival attracts a wide-ranging audience, which survey results show is roughly evenly split between Indonesian and international participants. Overall, our audience tends to be culturally active, with a wide range of interests, and both media-literate and socially savvy.

GENDER

74,6% Female	23,7% Male	1,8% Prefer not to say
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AGE BRACKET

30,7% 65 or older	20,2% 26-35	14,9% 36-45
14% 46-55	12,3% 25 or younger	7,9% 56-65

OCCUPATION

38,6% Employed full-time	22,8% Self-employed	16,7% Retired
7,8% Employed part-time	4,4% Unemployed	4,4% Working reduced hours
3,5% Student	1,8% Engaged in home duties	

50,9%
Indonesian Citizen

49,1%
International Citizen

TOP VISITOR ORIGIN

- Indonesia
- Australia
- United States
- United Kingdom
- Netherlands
- Malaysia
- Singapore

MAIN PROGRAMME ATTENDANCE

Alang-Alang Stage
Day 1: 1,036 People
Day 2: 789 People
Day 3: 720 People
Day 4: 638 People

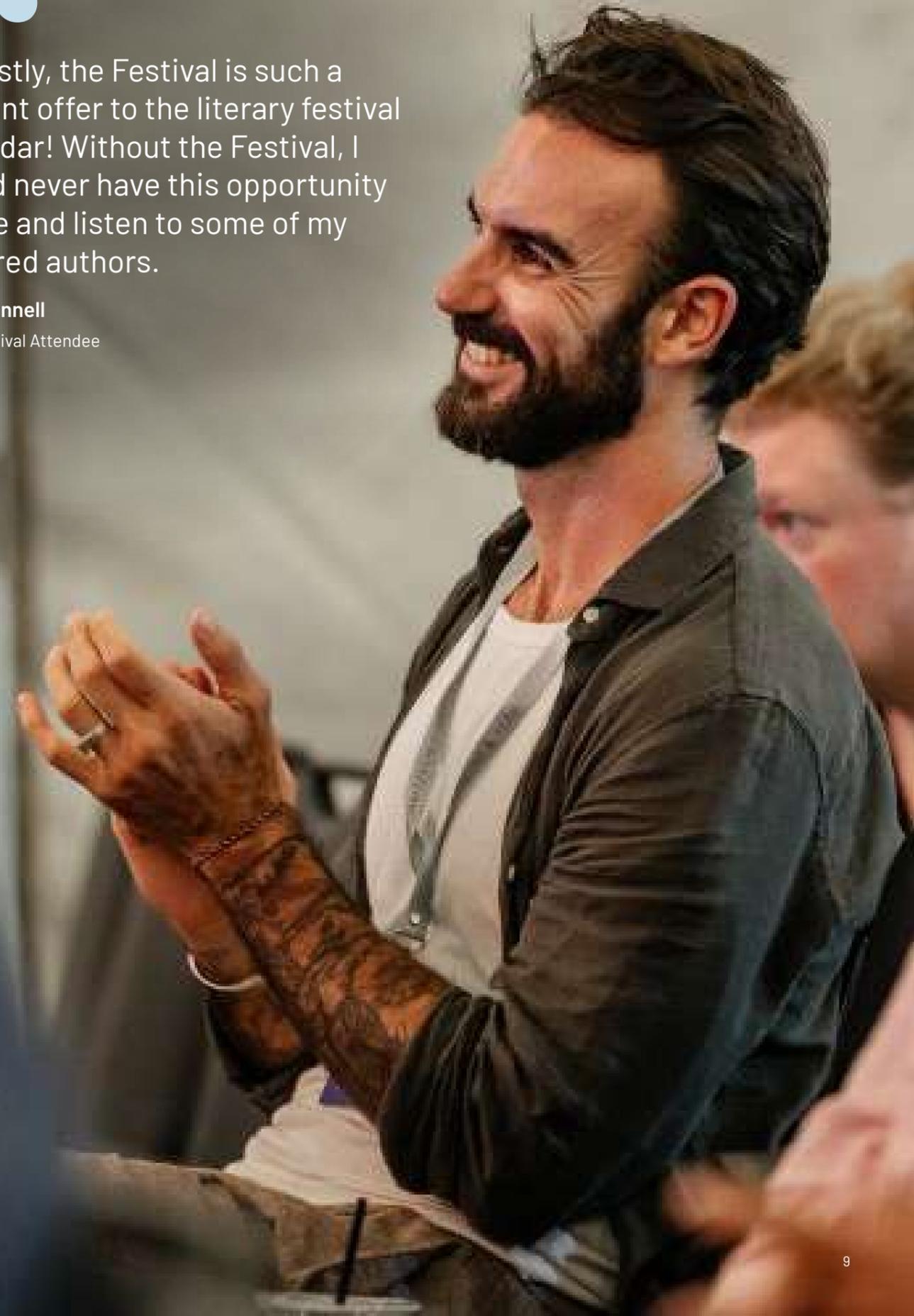
Indus Restaurant
Day 1: 1,205 People
Day 2: 703 People
Day 3: 742 People
Day 4: 466 People

Valley Stage
Day 1: 992 People
Day 2: 1,347 People
Day 3: 965 People
Day 4: 800 People



Honestly, the Festival is such a brilliant offer to the literary festival calendar! Without the Festival, I would never have this opportunity to see and listen to some of my admired authors.

John Cannell
2025 Festival Attendee



FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

All surveyed audience members were asked to rate their overall Festival experience, covering everything from ticket purchasing and event participation to the atmosphere and venue facilities. Responses were recorded across five categories: very poor (1), poor (2), satisfactory (3), very good (4), and excellent (5)

PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Attendees are very satisfied with the Festival programme, with an overall average satisfaction score of 3.9 out of 5. Satisfaction scores for individual categories of the programme were as follows:

- **Main Programme: 4.2**
- **Masterclasses: 3.7**
- **Special Events: 3.9**
- **Book Launches: 3.9**
- **Film Screenings: 3.7**
- **Music & Performances: 3.8**

OPERATIONS EXPERIENCE

With an average satisfaction score of 3.9 out of 5, the results show that the overall operational festival experience continues to perform strongly, with audiences united in their appreciation of the Festival's operations and amenities.

- **Venue facilities: 3.9**
- **Signage and directions: 4.0**
- **Wi-Fi/internet connectivity: 3.5**
- **Seating comfort and availability: 3.6**
- **Navigating the programme: 3.9**
- **Purchasing tickets: 4.3**
- **Food and Drink options: 4.0**

PROMOTER SCORE

With an overall promoter score of 4.5 out of 5, this reflects a strong likelihood of attendees recommending the Festival to others.

AUDIENCE EXPENDITURE

The Festival makes an invaluable contribution to Ubud's and the region's cultural life, while also stimulating spending in the economy that wouldn't have otherwise occurred. To measure this impact, its survey asks attendees to identify how much they spent on expenditures such as travel and accommodations.

ACCOMMODATION

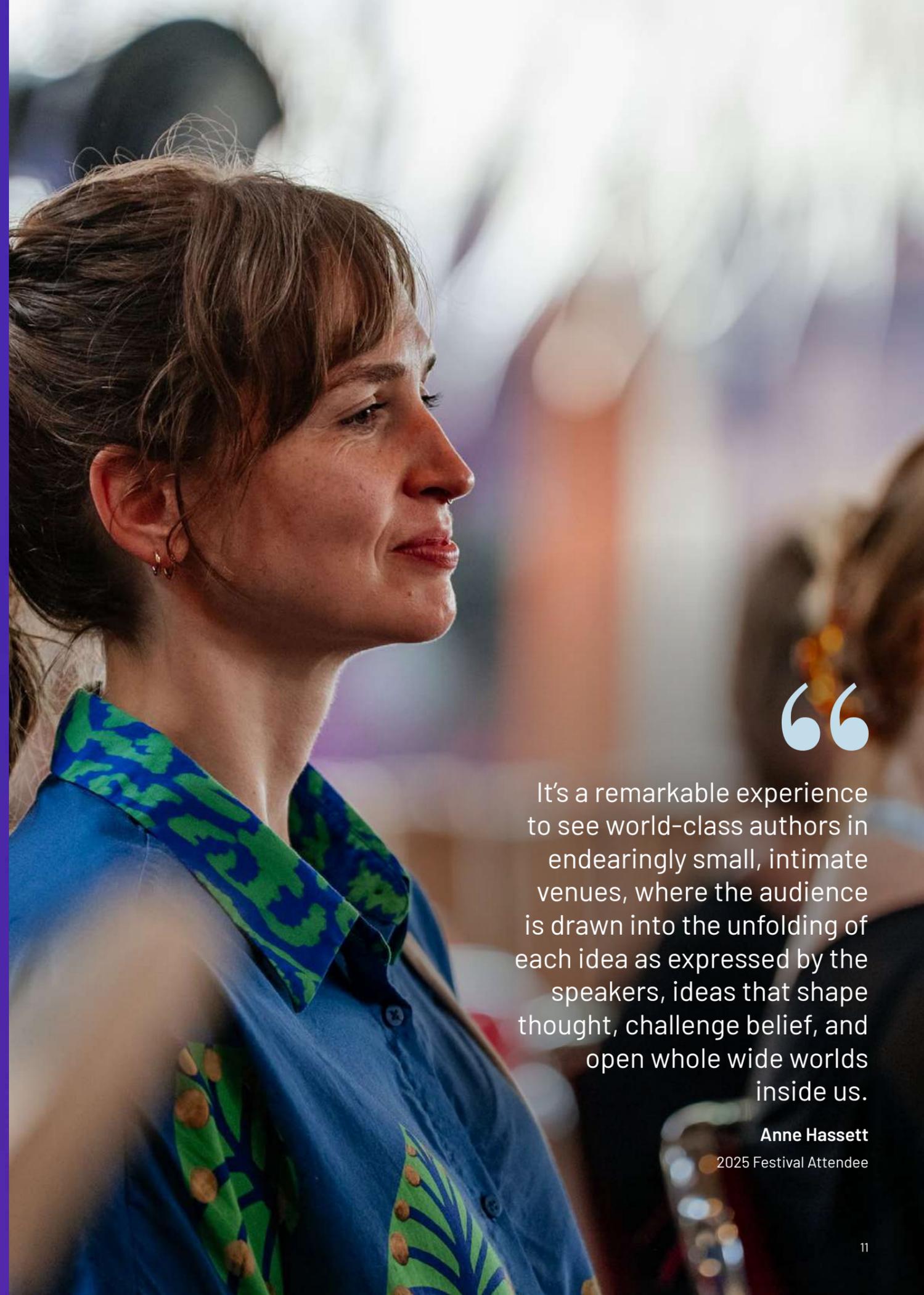
Attendees were asked to indicate their average daily accommodation expenditure while in Ubud for the Festival. Around 3% reported spending over IDR 2,000,000 per night, 18% spent between IDR 1,000,000 and IDR 2,000,000, 15% between IDR 500,000 and IDR 1,000,000, 34% between IDR 250,001 and IDR 500,000, and 11% reported lower expenditure.

AIRFARE

Of those who flew in by airplane to join the Festival, 38% spent between IDR 8,000,000 and IDR 15,000,000, 11% spent between IDR 15,000,000 and IDR 25,000,000, and 7% spent under IDR 8,000,000. A notable 44% of attendees did not pay for their airfare tickets, either because they were provided or because they were already in Bali prior to the Festival.

GENERAL SPENDINGS

Attendees were also asked about their daily spendings during the Festival. On average, they spent approximately IDR 400,000 on books, IDR 384,000 on food and beverages, IDR 242,000 on art and souvenirs, IDR 246,000 on transportation, IDR 172,000 on outdoor activities, and IDR 326,000 on personal expenses such as shopping and entertainment. Overall, attendees spent an average of around IDR 1,870,000 per day during the Festival.



It's a remarkable experience to see world-class authors in endearingly small, intimate venues, where the audience is drawn into the unfolding of each idea as expressed by the speakers, ideas that shape thought, challenge belief, and open whole wide worlds inside us.

Anne Hassett

2025 Festival Attendee

MARKETING

The Festival delivered a high-impact marketing campaign that brought Ubud's streets to life with vibrant collaterals, generated strong engagement across digital platforms, and highlighted its commitment to improving the overall online experience.

WEBSITE

The Festival has made significant investments in its online presence and ticketing in recent years. Among the key improvements are a calendar reminder feature for festival-goers, a sharing function that allows attendees to spread content to literary-minded friends, and a more intuitive, mobile-friendly navigation experience. These improvements were rewarded by an increase in page views, which grew from 133,660 in 2024 to 166,278 in 2025 over a three-month period.

SNAPSHOT

166,278

Page Views

65.852

Website Sessions

59,342

Website Users

NEWSLETTER

The Festival newsletter has long been a key communications channel within the festival campaign, serving as a trusted point of reference for festival-goers, partners, and industry professionals. Running from June to early October, this year's extensive campaign featured 19 editions, up from 15 during the same period last year. The increased activity helped boost the total number of newsletter openings from 104,121 to 175,131, representing a growth of 68%.

SNAPSHOT

24,709

Subscribers

19

Campaigns Sent

175,131

Newsletters Opened

35.5%

Open Rate

3.9%

Click Rate

PRINTING COLLATERALS

The extensive printed marketing campaign delivered a wide range of materials across Ubud and Bali, including distributed flyers, clips on videotrons, and balihos. A key piece of the campaign collateral was the Festival's 80-page programme book, of which 3,000 copies were printed and distributed to audiences and partner venues across Ubud.

SNAPSHOT

5,500

Flyers

300

Posters

3,000

Programme Book

2

Billboards

2

Videotron

SOCIAL MEDIA

Growth was recorded across all platforms, with existing channels on Facebook, Instagram, and X showing strong engagement. Now in its second year, WhatsApp was used creatively to share the Festival's story and reach new audiences.

During the 90-day peak festival period from 1 August to 1 November 2025, the Festival reached millions of users and generated impressions across its social media platforms.

INSTAGRAM

Total Reach: **708.8K**

Total Views: **5M**

Total Profile Visits: **38K**

New Followers: **3.7K**

Total Followers: **44.9K**

Content Interactions: **47.9K**

Link Clicks: **4K**

FACEBOOK

Total Reach: **849.8K**

Total Views: **1.5M**

Total Page Visits: **5K**

Total Page Followers: **29.8K**

Content Interactions: **3K**

Link Clicks: **12.3K**

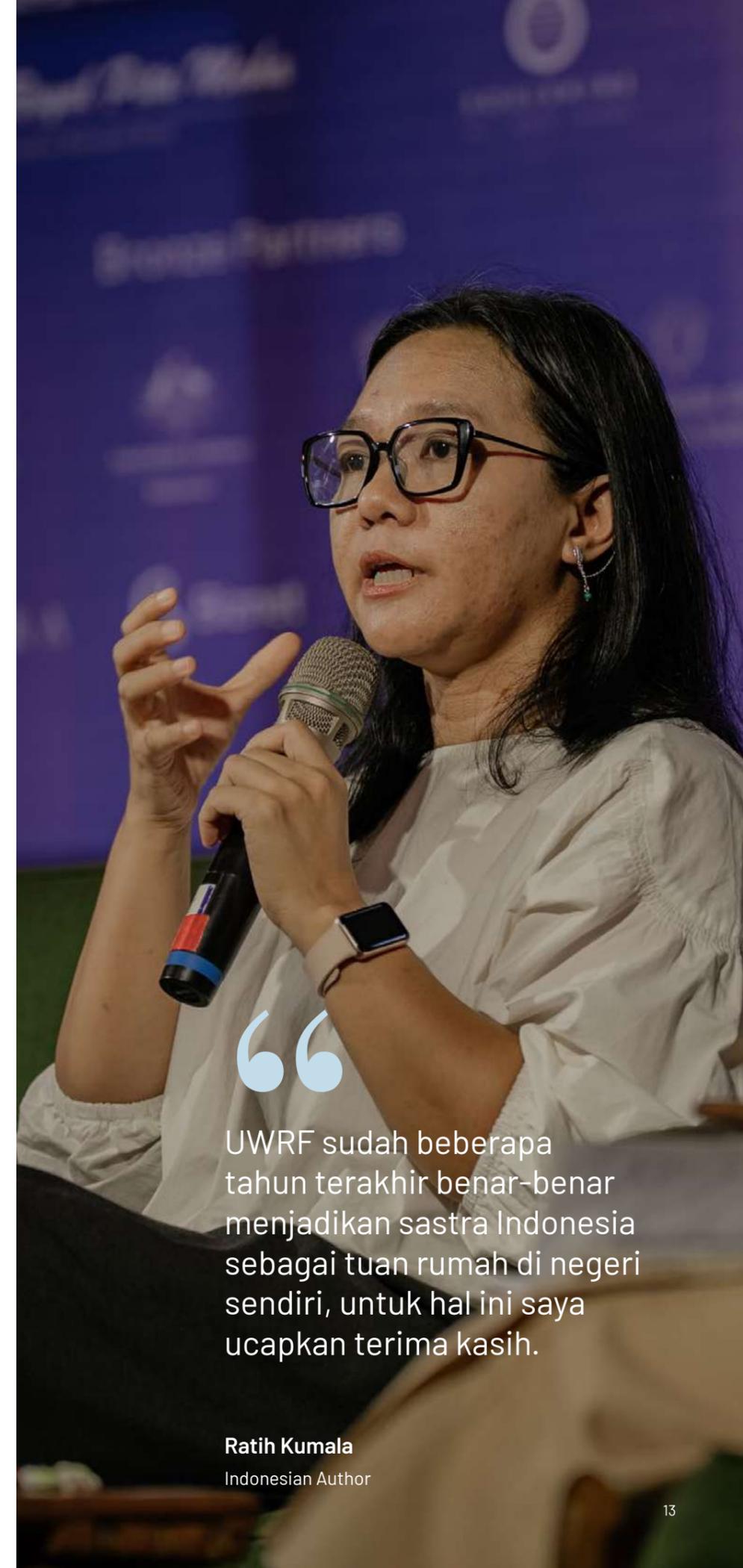
WHATSAPP

Total Contacts: **8,200+**

Total Messages Sent:

35,245

Read Rate: **36%**



UWRF sudah beberapa tahun terakhir benar-benar menjadikan sastra Indonesia sebagai tuan rumah di negeri sendiri, untuk hal ini saya ucapkan terima kasih.

Ratih Kumala
Indonesian Author

MEDIA COVERAGE

The 2025 Festival captivated hearts and headlines alike, cementing its status as a fixture on Southeast Asia's cultural calendar.

From Festival highlights, exciting reviews and interviews, to timely stories, this year's event generated widespread media attention with over 180 reports, marking a significant increase from 2024. Coverage spanned online and digital outlets, print media, TV, and radio, amplifying the Festival's cultural significance to audiences everywhere, alongside content published on social media.

The Festival's visibility within the nationals was significantly boosted by coverage in major outlets such as IDN Times, The Jakarta Post, and Tirto, alongside national TV shows on CNN Indonesia. Additionally, the Festival reached a younger audience through platforms like Makna Talks, Whiteboard Journal, and Seasia News, which offered fresh perspectives and engaged the next generation of cultural enthusiasts, as well as more academics and activists through niche media such as Omong-Omong Media and Magdalene.

Equally important in boosting the Festival's name in the local market was extensive regional media coverage. In Bali, prominent outlets like Detik Bali, Nusa Bali and Tatkala provided significant attention, while in other regions, Jawa Pos, Inside Lombok, Gorontalo Post, and many others helped expand the Festival's reach across the archipelago.

Standout international coverage included three Festival pieces in The Sydney Morning Herald, as well as coverage from Tatler and ABC Australia. Further features in Garuda Indonesia's inflight magazine and AirAsia's 3Sixty inflight magazine offered vibrant focal points that helped amplify the Festival's visibility among international guests travelling in Indonesia and across the region.

Three press conferences took place in Jakarta, Denpasar, and Ubud, attracting more than 100 journalists in total. Our Festival partners, Wisma Habibie & Ainun and ARTOTEL Sanur, generously opened their venues to host these important media gatherings in the lead-up to the festival.

MEDIA SNAPSHOT:

- Over 180 articles and stories across various platforms, including online news outlets, magazines, television, and radio.
- Over 30 accredited journalists from Indonesia, Australia, Poland, India, and other countries.
- Three press conferences were held in Jakarta, Denpasar, and Ubud, with a total attendance of more than 100 journalists.
- 28 media partnerships – 9 Media Partners and 19 Media Supporters.



The bold claim is that this festival changes lives. This is true. The chance meetings, conversations, sessions, launches, dinners, drinks and chats all add up to an experience far in excess of the sum of its parts. Back on home turf, my head is turned towards wider horizons.

Stephen Brook

The Sydney Morning Herald



Growing up on the island of Bali, the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival has always been the event of the year that I looked forward to most. The energy, the excitement, and the kindness of everyone towards each other's stories has been so beautiful to see in action.

Melati Wijzen

Environmental Activist and Author





OUR PARTNERS

This year, once again, we collaborated with dozens of partners who share our passion for literature and our commitment to bringing life-changing books and extraordinary writers to captivate our audiences and engage the global spotlight on Ubud each year.

The partnership with the Ministry of Culture and its Center for Book Affairs, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Ministry of Tourism was crucial in ensuring that as many audiences as possible could access the Festival.

Alongside our local government, hospitality, and corporate partners listed below, who helped us create unforgettable moments, tell compelling stories, and showcase their brands on the world's stage, we also thank our key partners, namely Honeymoon Guest House, Plataran Ubud Hotel & Spa, Plataran Heritage Borobudur, Bumi Kinar, Casa Luna, Indus Restaurant, The Pita Maha, and Soulshine Bali, for not only providing excellent hospitality but also for opening their breathtaking venues to hold our events.

THANKS TO: 2080 Burgers | Adiwana Bisma | Adiwana Monkey Forest | Adiwana Resort Jembawan | Adiwana Suweta | Alaya Ubud | Alila Ubud | Ananda Ubud Resort | AnandaDara Ubud Resort & Spa | ANTIDA Music Production | Apéritif | Arcadia Restaurant Ubud | ARTOTEL Sanur | Arkamara Dijiwa Ubud | Aura Bisma Guesthouse | Australian Embassy Jakarta | Austrian Embassy in Jakarta | Away Bali Legian Camakila | BaleBengong | Bambu Indah Resort | Bali Firefly Bnb | BaliSpirit Festival | Beji Ubud | Begawan Biji Restaurant | Bespoke Hospitality Management Indonesian Blooks | Blibli | Blue Karma Dijiwa Ubud | Bumi Kinar | Breman Brewery | Cap Karoso | Campuhan College | Casa Luna | Citilink Indonesia | Cinta Bahasa - Indonesian Language School Ubud | COMO Shambala Estate | COMO Uma Ubud | Cocoon Medical Spa | Consulate General of India, Bali | ContentAsia | Creative Australia | Creative New Zealand | Croatia Ministry of Culture and Media | Culture Ireland | Di Sini Di Sana by Rachman & Sons | Dharma Kula Ubud | Dijiwa Sanctuaries | Dough Darlings | Dragon Tea Temple | Eco Tourism Bali | Emana Akatara | Embassy of Colombia in Indonesia | Embassy of Ireland, Jakarta | Embassy of Switzerland in Indonesia | ENVI Media | Erasmus Huis | Exquisite Media | Flanders Literature | Ganesha Bookshop | Gelato Secret | Gdas Bali | Gramedia | Gayatri Hotel Ubud | Hatten Wines | Herb Library | Honeymoon Guest House | Hotel Tjampuhan Spa | IBAH | IDN Times | Inara Alas Harum | Indonesia Book Party | Instant Karma Magazine | InJourney Airport | Indus Restaurant | JAPA Suites & Villas | Jaen Spa | James Kalleske Wines | Jeevawasa | Kano Sari Ubud Villas | Karusotju | Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia | King Media Asia | Kopi Nako Daur Baur Ubud | Kura Kura Beer | Lebah Villas | Leona Suweta by Nakula | Leona Valley View Ubud | Literature Translation Institute of Korea | Lotte Van Merwyk | Luung Natural Body Care | Lynked Restaurant Ubud | Makna Talks | Malaysia Airlines | Maison Aurelia Sanur, Bali by Preference | MaxOne | Maya Ubud | Mekong Review | Metland Venya Ubud | Modern Women Bali | Monjue Bali | Mossca Mooi | MUD Literary Club | Musotrees Magazine | NamaStay | NARI Ubud | NOW! Bali | NOW! Jakarta | Nakula: Bali Villa Management and Private Villas | Omong-Omong Media | OzAsia Festival | Paradiso Ubud | Paramatex | Pariveša | Penguin Random House SEA | Pita Maha Resort & Spa | Plataran Heritage Borobudur | Plataran Ubud Hotel & Spa | Planet Wheeler | Powder Room by R4D | Prambors FM | Puri Gangga Resorts | Puri Kantor Legacy | Pusat Perbukuan; Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan; Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah | Qatar Airways | Rob Peetoom | Royal Casa Ganesha | Sakti Garden Resort & Spa | SAKA Museum | Sama's Cottages | Samhita Garden | Samsara Ubud | SereS Springs Resort & Spa Singakerta, Ubud | Seasia News | Secret of The Green Room | Sensorial | SenS Hotel & Spa + Conference Ubud Town Centre | Shelter Island | Six Letters Coffee | SOERABACA | Soulshine Bali | Styrian Arts and Culture | Sudamala Resorts | Tandjung Sari Hotel | Taksu Book Cafe | Tanadewa Resort Ubud Bali by Cross Collection | TempeMan | Terra Water | The Blanco Renaissance Museum | The Elephant | The Eitel Resort Ubud | The Kanma Resort | The LUXE Ubud | The Lokha Ubud Resort, Villa & Spa | The Nani | The Nusantara Bulletin | The Pari Sudha | The Pita Maha | The Public Book | The Royal Pita Maha | The Westin Resort & Spa Ubud, Bali | Threads of Life | TOFFIN Bali | Ubud Coffee Roastery | Ubud Village Jazz Festival | Unicare Clinic | Viny! Book Club | Villa Kitty Foundation | Wapa di Ume Ubud | Whiteboard Journal | Wisma Habibie & Ainun | Word Travels | Yoga Barn | Zest

PARTNER SNAPSHOT:

- **142 corporate and private sponsors, and venue partners**
- **19 government entities and foreign embassies in Indonesia**
- **35 international and Indonesian media partners**
- **20 % small-medium enterprises**
- **60 % long-time partners participated**



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have been part of the Festival story from the very beginning. Their energy and enthusiasm have helped us to stage over 23 festivals and counting.

This year, a total of 169 culturally and linguistically diverse volunteers joined us, welcoming back 14 returning volunteers and introducing 155 new volunteers, each of whom devoted an average of 20 hours over four days. Their roles included supporting the teams in dozens of ways, from helping behind the scenes at the ticket office to liaising with the world's most exciting authors, all working together in a collaborative and friendly environment.

Thank you to all the wonderful people who give their whole heart to the Festival and played a vital role in bringing a major cultural event to life.

SNAPSHOT:

- **442** Applicants with **169** Volunteers Joined
- **79.88%** Female, **19.53%** Male, **0.59%** Prefer not to say
- Origins: **92.90%** Indonesian, **1.18%** Australian, **1.18%** Malaysian, **2.96%** United States, and **1.78%** Other
- **8.28%** Returning Volunteers, **91.72%** New Volunteers



It is addictive to be part of something so amazing, where work feels like play and the energy is pure warmth. The friends who stuck around are the characters in my favourite chapter.

Majorie Jatining Surya

2025 Volunteer



Festival memberi ruang kolaborasi dan koordinasi dengan penulis dan pecinta sastra yang kaya pengalaman untuk volunteer.

Satya P. Enrico

2025 Volunteer

SUSTAINABILITY

This year again, the Festival was committed to embedding sustainability at the heart of our practices and using our leadership position within the Indonesian festival industry to drive meaningful change.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

To reduce our footprint in the short term and reinforce our commitment to cleaning up Bali and Ubud, we minimised single-use plastics throughout our organisation and promoted recycling among our festival vendors. Around our main Festival hub, bins were provided for the audience to easily separate their waste.

We also worked with Daur Ulang Movement, a Bali-based social initiative that responsibly manages and upcycles the Festival's food waste, employing twelve local workers for collection, sorting, education, and machine operation.

Through this partnership, 1,166.14 kg of waste was successfully sorted, representing 67.9% of the total. A further 549.82 kg was mixed waste, representing 32.1%.

Waste Sorting Breakdown

- **Non-organic Waste: 389.63 kg**
- **Organic Waste: 558.62 kg**
- **Food Waste: 199.99 kg**
- **Residual Waste: 17.90 kg**

SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE

As a leading arts festival in the region, we are committed to advancing sustainability across the arts sector and providing a meaningful platform for climate actions that drive real change. At Bumi Kinar, we hosted a full day of climate-focused events, with expert panels of local and regional changemakers discussing strategies to empower action, alongside showcases of local organisations and vendors who are leading the way toward a better future.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CAN BE SEEN ACROSS SEVERAL AREAS:

Environmental Rescue

1,166.14 kg of waste was diverted from landfill, reducing the risk of accumulation, methane gas emissions (CH₄), and groundwater pollution through leachate.

Carbon Reduction:

A reduction in carbon emissions equivalent to planting 150–200 trees or saving the energy used to drive a car for 1,500 to 2,200 kilometres.

Utilisation of Non-organic Waste:

389.63 kg of material was recycled, conserving natural resources (petroleum, silicon, sand) and reducing energy usage in the production of new goods.

Soil Nutrition Creation:

558.62 kg was converted into compost, producing natural fertiliser for organic farmland, improving soil health, and reducing reliance on chemical fertilisers.

Food Waste Reduction:

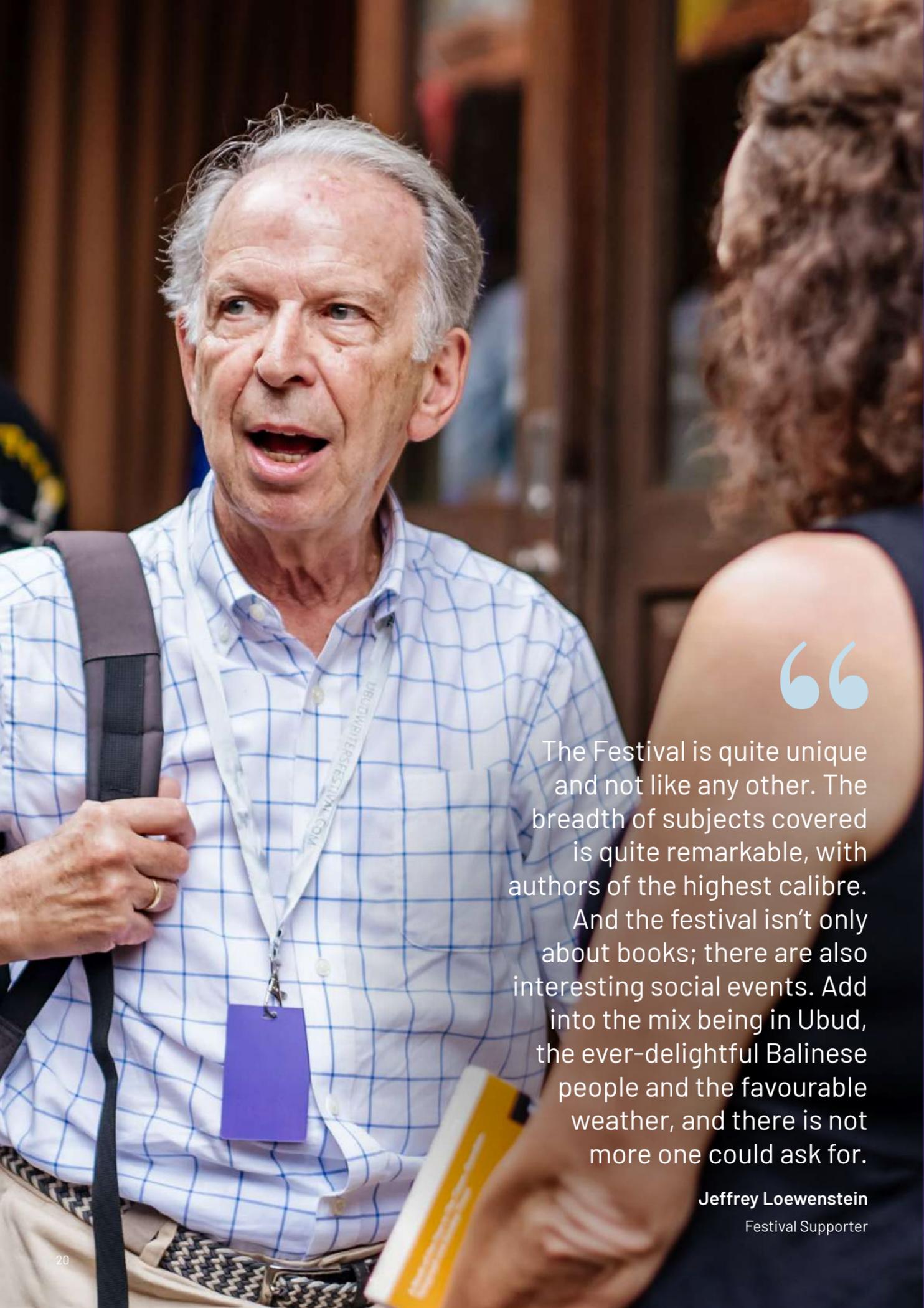
199.99 kg of food waste was processed into animal feed, helping to support a sustainable and low-cost food-chain system for livestock.



The Climate Day offered a sensitive, emotional, and deeply troubling look at the impact of climate change in Bali and across the region.

Pratibha Roy

2025 Climate Day Attendee



The Festival is quite unique and not like any other. The breadth of subjects covered is quite remarkable, with authors of the highest calibre. And the festival isn't only about books; there are also interesting social events. Add into the mix being in Ubud, the ever-delightful Balinese people and the favourable weather, and there is not more one could ask for.

Jeffrey Loewenstein
Festival Supporter

OUR SUPPORTERS

As a proudly Indonesian not-for-profit organisation, the Festival relies on the support of passionate people to bring the Festival to life each year, while also delivering our year-round community-building initiatives and cultural programmes.

This year, the Festival once again hosted an intimate dinner experience with literary stars and culinary legends on the lush grounds of Rumah Melati, graciously opened by Michelle Somerville Kannan and Raj Kannan. Friends of the Festival had the chance to pull up a chair next to William Dalrymple, Pico Iyer, Banu Mushtaq, Jenny Erpenbeck, David Van Reybrouk, Gina Chick, Okky Madasari, and others. The dinner directly supported the Festival's Emerging Writers Programme and the YLAI Library Project, which is dedicated to building five child-friendly libraries in the Gianyar region.

The support of the Emerging Writers Patrons also made it possible to actively nurture the next generation of writing talent by supporting ten selected finalists through a full-year mentorship programme, culminating in their work being featured and published in the bilingual Anthology *Stories from the Islands*, which was launched at the Festival.

In addition to supporting writers, our community of supporters has contributed to the Festival's brand-new mural in the heart of Ubud, celebrating this year's Festival artwork on the walls of the The Blanco Renaissance Museum. This lasting piece now shines for both the local community and visitors alike.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous donors listed below and to the wonderful community of donors at all levels who supported the Festival throughout 2025.

OUR SUPPORTERS

Emerging Writers' Patrons

Colin Singer
Felice DuBois
Rhoda Grauer

Festival Mural Supporters

Glenda MacNaughton in memory of Patrick Hughes
Mary Jane and Mark Edleson
Lynette Russel
Blanco Renaissance Museum

Fundraising Dinner Guests

Charlotte Cato
David Salmon
Jacinta Thompson
Jeffrey Loewenstein
Jed Frost
Karen Narelle Lewis
Linda Widyawati
Marina Mahathir
Michelle Somerville
Neharika Dembla
Raj Kannan
Theodore Fuller
Lotte Van Merwyk
Wren Lewis

THE FESTIVAL

Praised worldwide for its diverse and intimate programme, the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, held annually in Bali's cultural heartland, brings together the world's most exciting writers and thinkers for five days of electrifying conversation, thoughtful debate, and joyful celebration of literary culture. Alongside author conversations and panel discussions is a wide-ranging lineup of dance and performances, literary lunches, guided tours, late-night comedy, musical and spoken-word galas, as well as book launches, workshops, and events designed to enrich and inspire the imaginations of emerging writers and young people.

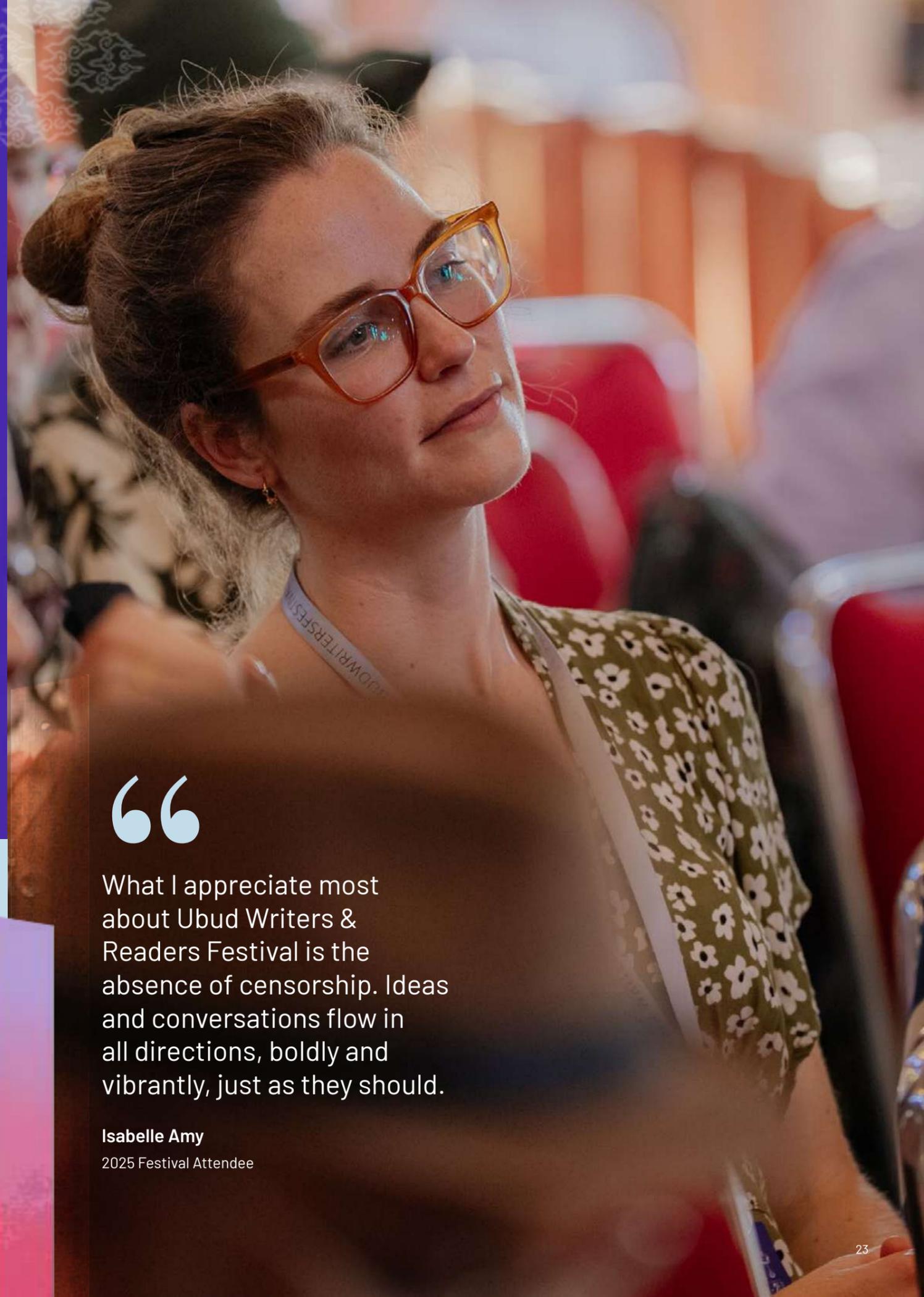
THE FOUNDATION

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival takes the spotlight as one of the flagship annual initiatives of the Mudra Swari Saraswati Foundation. Established in 2004, the Foundation is a dynamic, independent, and non-profit organisation, untethered from government influence. Its dedicated members are committed to enriching the lives and futures of Indonesians by weaving a tapestry of community-centred arts and cultural programmes.

LET'S TALK!

Become a Festival Partner and join the stage with acclaimed authors and poets from Indonesia and around the world for a literary long weekend.

Please get in touch with our team via email by scanning the following QR code:



“

What I appreciate most about Ubud Writers & Readers Festival is the absence of censorship. Ideas and conversations flow in all directions, boldly and vibrantly, just as they should.

Isabelle Amy
2025 Festival Attendee

FESTIVAL TEAM

Festival Team

Janet DeNeefe Founder & Festival Director
Dwi Ermayanthi Festival General Manager
Namal Siddiqui Head of International Programme
Hannah Curtis Head of International Programme (former)
Gustra Adnyana Head of Indonesian Programming
Dharmayeni Putri Programme Coordinator
Eni Puji Utami Programme Coordinator
Ditta Agastya Programme Coordinator
Jasmine Ansori Shelf Therapy Project Manager
Laksmi Mutiara Shelf Therapy Social Media Manager
Nicola Walpen Head of Marketing & Communications
Zunifah (Uniph) Media Relations Coordinator
Patricia Emanuelle Social Media & Digital Marketing
Putu Tasya Pratiwi Utami Graphic Designer
Missy Natalia Saputra Partnership Coordinator
Dwinanda Sidhi Stall Holder Partnership
Anik Kristina Dewi Partnership Coordinator
Arum Handayani Retreat Liaison
I Made Suka Merta Head of Operational and Production
Ida Bagus Ari Sunu Narendra Production Officer
Eka Septiarti General Admin Supervisor
Ni Wayan Widiatmini Senior Accounting
Inten Poniari Administrative Officer
Giska Sibannang Ticketing Officer
Ruth Onduko Volunteer Coordinator
Pande Wayan Sumadana Security
I Nyoman Budiarsana Security

Festival Ambassador

Laksmi DeNeefe Suardana Founder Shelf Therapy

Interns

Alex Eagles International Programme Team
Lauren Humphryson Marketing & Communications Team
Lucy Tomov International Programme Team
Riziq Muhaimin Marketing & Communications Team

Yayasan Mudra Swari Saraswati

Dr. Drs I Ketut Suardana, M.Fil. H Founder
I Wayan Arnaya SH Founder
Nyoman Suwitera Supervisor
A A Bagus Ari Brahmanta Supervisor
Dwi Ermayanthi Foundation Chairwoman
Gustra Adnyana Secretary
Made Suka Merta Secretary
Ni Wayan Widiatmini Treasurer
Eka Septiarti Treasurer

Thank You!

Emerging Writers' Programme

Curators

Ni Made Purnama Sari
Ratih Kumala
Shinta Febriny

Emerging Writers' Patrons

Colin Singer
Felice DuBois
Rhoda Grauer
Festival Mural Supporter
Glenda MacNaughton in memory of Patrick Hughes
Mary Jane and Mark Edleson
Lynette Russell

Government

Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia
Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah Republik Indonesia
Kementerian Pariwisata Republik Indonesia
Mabes Polri
Gubernur Bali
Polda Bali
Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Bali
Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali
Bupati Gianyar
Polres Gianyar
Kodim Gianyar
Dinas Kebudayaan Kabupaten Gianyar
Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Gianyar
Dinas Perindustrian dan Perdagangan Kabupaten Gianyar
Dinas Komunikasi dan Informatika Kabupaten Gianyar
Dinas Perhubungan Kabupaten Gianyar
Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Gianyar
Camat Ubud
Polsek Ubud
Danramil Ubud
Lurah Ubud
LPM Ubud
Desa Pakraman Ubud
Desa Pakraman Sayan
Desa Pakraman Penestanan
Desa Pakraman Lungsiakan
Pecalang Desa Ubud
Pecalang Desa Penestanan
Pecalang Desa Lungsiakan

Ubud Patrons

Puri Agung Ubud
Puri Kantor Ubud
Puri Kauhan Ubud
Drs. Tjokorda Gde Putra Sukawati
Prof. Dr. Ir. Tjokorda Oka Artha Ardana Sukawati, M.Si
Prof. Dr. Tjok Gde Raka Sukawati, SE., MM
Tjok. Gede Asmara Putra Sukawati
Tjokorda Raka Kerthyasa, S.Sos
Dr. A.A.G.N. Ari Dwipayana
A A Bagus Ari Brahmanta
Agung Odeck Ariawan
Tara Murff

Thankful for the Support

Aldilla Laras
Alex Florschutz
All of our private donors
All of our volunteers
Angga Dwi Putra
Anom Darsana
Arjuna DeNeefe Suardana
Bagus Irawan
Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa
Dewi DeNeefe Suardana
Dian Fatwa
Eka Tumewu
Elami and Co.
Fariq Alfaruqi
Hadiah Sastra Rasa
IDEAFEST
Janice Ripley, Bloomz Flowers Bali
JAZIRAH, Timur Labuhan Kata
Kerta Art
Ketut Yuliarsa
Khrisna DeNeefe Suardana
Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa
Made Gunarta
Museum Bali
Ni Luh Pebriani Dewi
Niskala Studio
Nyoman Suwitera
patjarmerah
Payakumbuh Poetry Festival
PT. Phoenix Communications
Putu Supadma Rudana
Rebecca Kezia
Staff of Casa Luna & Indus Restaurant
Staff of Honeymoon Guest House
Tony Wheeler
UHN | Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar
Wisma Habibie & Ainun
Yogi Pradana

UBUD
WRITERS
& READERS
FESTIVAL



YAYASAN
MUDRA
SWARI
SARASWATI

SAVE THE DATES

21—25
October 2026

Ubud Writers & Readers Festival
Head Office
Jalan Raya Sanggingan
Ubud, Bali
Indonesia 80571

ubudwritersfestival.com

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