

What About Kuching 2019 Calendar Reveal

Speech by: YB Datuk Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah

The Visit Sarawak Campaign 2019 has been a year filled with back-to-back events in every genre. From the colourful New Year celebrations to the highly successful Rainforest World Music Festival 2019, **Kuching is indeed well on the way to achieve its billing as a regional hub for festivals.**

As the year end approaches, it is wonderful that we can now look forward to What About Kuching (WAK), the month long festival which has gained its place as Sarawak's major platform for the celebration of arts, culture and lifestyles.

This unique festival driven BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY is **a true partnership between the public and private sectors and exemplifies our cohesiveness as Sarawakians** and patriots of Sarawak. Passionate creative talents coming together to stage exciting events to a growing local and visiting audience, setting Kuching City alight with great excitement. The **Sarawak Government via my Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth & Sports will continue to work with the organisers towards making WAK an iconic global arts, culture and lifestyles festival akin to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe** in the years to come.

In its third edition, WAK is moving from strength to strength; a testimony to the wonderful community behind this movement. I have been informed that the 3rd edition of **WAK 2019 is now the largest** with:

- **56 creative groups** coming together
- staging **99 different events**
- making up a whopping total of **315 daily events** from the 28 Sept. to the 27 Oct.

WAK is certainly on its way to become the iconic festival that the founding team envisaged it to be. Together we will certainly get there!

Not only are there **a great variety of events to choose from, the WAK 2019 Programme is filled with fabulous acts seldom seen in our city.** I applaud all involved for bringing these refreshingly new genres to our local creative scene. It is also great to see that some well-known stars from across the seas have caught onto the WAK excitement and have joined forces with our local creatives to stage events that will surely elevate our local standards in the future.

It is indeed a gargantuan effort to put together such an intense programme with so many groups involved. **I congratulate the organisers and all the collaborators for coming together and showcasing not only our creative talents but also our exemplary Sarawakian spirit of togetherness.**

I would also like to take this opportunity to **call on the private corporate sector organisations to come forward to support this community endeavour.** For the WAK partners, sponsors and supporters that have been continuously supporting this event, I extend my deepest appreciations on behalf of the community. It is with such all round support that this event can grow to be a regional player in Asia and I hope that you can pledge your continued support in the coming years.

Released with a 2 months lead time, this wonderful Calendar Programme has something for everyone so **I urge you all to plan and book your flights, bus, boat tickets and come to Kuching to immerse yourselves in a month filled with fabulous arts, culture and lifestyles.** See you in October!!!

YB Datuk Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah

Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth & Sports Sarawak