



The Official Launch What About Kuching 2019 & the 6th Borneo International Beads Conference

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 3, 2019

Third WAK 2019, sixth BIBCo launches today

KUCHING: The third edition of What About Kuching (WAK) 2019 is launched today, together with the sixth Borneo International Beads Conference (BIBCo) 2019, as Kuching welcomes a month brimming with exciting events.

WAK 2019, which started on Sept 28, packs 56 collaborators and 99 events into one month of non-stop activities for locals and visitors alike as they celebrate arts, culture and lifestyle.

Driven **BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY**, WAK is a true partnership between the public and private sectors, exemplifying our cohesiveness as Sarawakians and patriots of Sarawak.

There to officiate was Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture **Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah**, who saw this festival grow from strength to strength since its humble beginnings in 2017.

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ABOUT KUCHING

About Kuching Sdn Bhd (Company No. 1243790-T)
First Floor No. 96 Main Bazaar Kuching 93000 Sarawak Malaysian Borneo
Phone: +6 012 8890880 (Donald & Marina Tan)
Website: aboutkuching.com
Email: info@aboutkuching.com
SecMed: [@aboutkuching](https://www.instagram.com/aboutkuching)



“This year WAK 2019 is jam-packed with a programme comprising **56 collaborating groups; 99 different events and over 315 daily events over 30 days!** No longer can anyone say that there’s nothing to do in Kuching,” he said in his speech.

WAK’s OPEN ACCESS model has drawn a variety of genres and a wider overall repertoire even as it built greater momentum for coming years in its aim of becoming the top regional platform for arts, culture and lifestyles, similar to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

“The Sarawak Government through my ministry is pleased to be the MAIN SPONSOR of WAK 2019 and will continue, to our best ability, to contribute towards the growth of this impressive effort,” said Abdul Karim.

Meanwhile, Borneo International Beads Conference (BIBCo) 2019 is back with their sixth instalment, this time with the theme “Beads of our Time.”

Held at The Waterfront Hotel from October 4 to 6, participants can expect a fruitful time, sharing knowledge and expertise in the conference, and get some hands-on time at the various workshops available.

Abdul Karim pointed out that economically, beads are worth money.

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“In the old days, beads were used as a currency. Even today, collectors pay high prices for rare antique beads. But it is not only the old and ancient beads that fetch high prices; high value baubles like the beautifully created Murano Glass Beads are much sought after the world over.”

BIBCo is one of the top beads conferences in the world since its inception in 2010. Now in its 6th edition, BIBCO 2019 once again brings together some of the most prominent and esteemed personalities from around the world to share, discuss and learn the fascinating culture, meaning, history, beauty and the technical intricacies of beads.

“It is this potential to develop a lucrative artisanal beads industry that the Sarawak Government has been a strong supporter of BIBCO all these years. Refining bead making, bead working and beading skills as well as the combining of traditional skills with beads, result in very sought-after handicrafts with global appeal,” said Abdul Karim.

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In Attendance

Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture (MTAC)

- Minister Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah
- Assistant Minister Datuk Sebastian Ting
- Assistant Minister of Youth and Sports Datuk Snowdan Lawan
- Permanent secretary Hii Chang Kee

Sarawak Tourism Board (STB)

- Chief Executive Officer Sharzede Salleh Askor

What About Kuching (WAK)

- Festival Director 1: Donald Tan
- Festival Director 2: Marina Foo-Tan
- WAK Director: Jee Foong

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Fact Sheet

History

In 2017, a team led by the founding festival directors Donald & Marina Tan instigated the numerous communities in Kuching City to come together to stage their respective contents under a common festival umbrella coined as 'What About Kuching – Celebrate Arts, Culture & Lifestyle now better known as WAK.

WAK is an 'OPEN ACCESS' festival simply meaning that anyone and everyone can participate and all it takes is for those interested to fill in a PROPOSAL FORM during the CALL FOR PROPOSAL period from March to May each year.

Mission

To celebrate the arts, culture and lifestyle to a global audience thereby creating greater appreciation and support of these amongst the local community.

Objectives

1. Enhance greater tourism arrivals to benefit the local economy
2. Provide platforms for personalities to showcase their different pursuits
3. Create awareness, educate and garner greater appreciation of these pursuits
4. Foster regional and international collaborations to elevate local standards

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Main Sponsor

- Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

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- CatsFM
- Hitz.fm
- BFM 89.9
- MStudios

Partners

- Echo Sound & Lights
- Old Court House
- Sadau The Rooftop Bar
- Sri Bunga Rampai Banquet Hall
- Location X
- Le Café Rouge
- Plaza Merdeka
- Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA)
- Pullman Hotel
- Sarawak Tourism Board
- Cha Bo

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