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SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL 2025 CELEBRATES RECORD BREAKING YEAR!

The 2025 Sydney Writers' Festival (SWF) concluded with record-breaking success, achieving the highest sales in the Festival's 28-year history. More than **100,000** book lovers reveled in the week-long celebration of storytelling, ideas and culture, solidifying SWF's standing as one of the world's leading literary festivals.

From **19–27 May**, SWF captured the spirit of Sydney's vibrant book loving community, welcoming **101,038 attendees** who engaged with over **200 events** and more than **300 authors** under the Festival theme *In This Together*.

CEO, Brooke Webb said, "This year was truly exceptional for the Festival. Not only did we surpass our attendance goals — marking the highest numbers in our 28-year history — but we also delivered powerful, joyful, and profoundly meaningful experiences for both our audiences and the authors. The atmosphere was electric. Authors described the audiences as being "the biggest and most responsive they've ever experienced" — the energy and connection from the audiences was undeniable."

"With over **50 free events** and our most ambitious **Live & Local** program to date — spanning **142 venues** nationwide — the Festival became a truly national celebration, reaching communities in major cities as well as regional and rural Australia."

"We were proud to present a Festival that embraced the richness and diversity of our community — featuring events in languages such as Spanish and Japanese, First Nations, a strong focus on engaging young people, and expanded programming that resonated with growing audiences from Western Sydney, queer communities, and other historically underrepresented groups who reported finding a meaningful sense of belonging at the Festival. The Festival wasn't just attended — it was felt.", said Webb.

"Reaching new readers and writers is crucial for the Festival, and through SWF's education programming, we've engaged over **10,000 students** to take part in Primary School Days, Secondary School Days, and Student Sessions throughout the Festival."

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Artistic Director, Ann Mossop said, “It’s been such a wonderful festival. As it comes to a close, we’re so proud of the conversations that have unfolded, the ideas that challenged us and the stories that brought us together.”

“Beginning with a heartfelt and impassioned Opening Night with **Thomas Mayo, Lemn Sissay, Nardi Simpson** and **Jeanette Winterson**, and welcoming global icons like **Colm Tóibín, Samantha Harvey, Marian Keyes** and **Asako Yuzuki**, the program delivered on its promise of breadth and depth. Speakers like **Peter Beinart** shared big ideas and the next generation of thinkers and storytellers were out in force with **Kaliane Bradley** and **Yael van der Wouden** joined by Australians **Hasib Hourani** and **Dylin Hardcastle**. We’ve seen our audiences embrace curiosity, connection and courage—and that’s exactly what this Festival is all about.”

Attendance at SWF 2025 saw a significant increase from the previous year, rising from 91,680 attendances in 2024. This remarkable year-on-year growth highlights both the Festival’s expanding reach and NSW’s true love for storytelling.

SWF’s education programming continued to thrive in 2025, with **10,782 students** taking part—up from 10,415 in 2024 and 9,567 in 2023. Average School Days event attendance rose significantly, with a **20.68% increase** in primary school participation and **32.63% rise** in secondary school audiences. Student Sessions saw a **27% growth** in attendance, underscoring the program’s increasing resonance with young people and educators alike.

Manager of Children’s & YA Programs, Nathan Luff said, “There’s nothing quite like the spark you see when a young person hears a story that truly speaks to them. This year, we proudly provided free access for our education program to **3,352 students and teachers** from underrepresented communities, ensuring that these transformative moments were available to those who might not otherwise have had the opportunity. Every laugh, gasp, and raised hand tells us we’re building something meaningful.”

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*****Festival Week Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)**

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL

From Monday 19 to Tuesday 27 May 2025, the 28th Sydney Writers' Festival brought together some of the world's most exciting literary voices for a week of insightful discussions, thought-provoking ideas, and unforgettable storytelling. The Festival featured a dynamic program of in-person and livestreamed events, including author talks, panel discussions, workshops, and special events across Sydney.

To stay up to date with the Festival, visit swf.org.au.

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