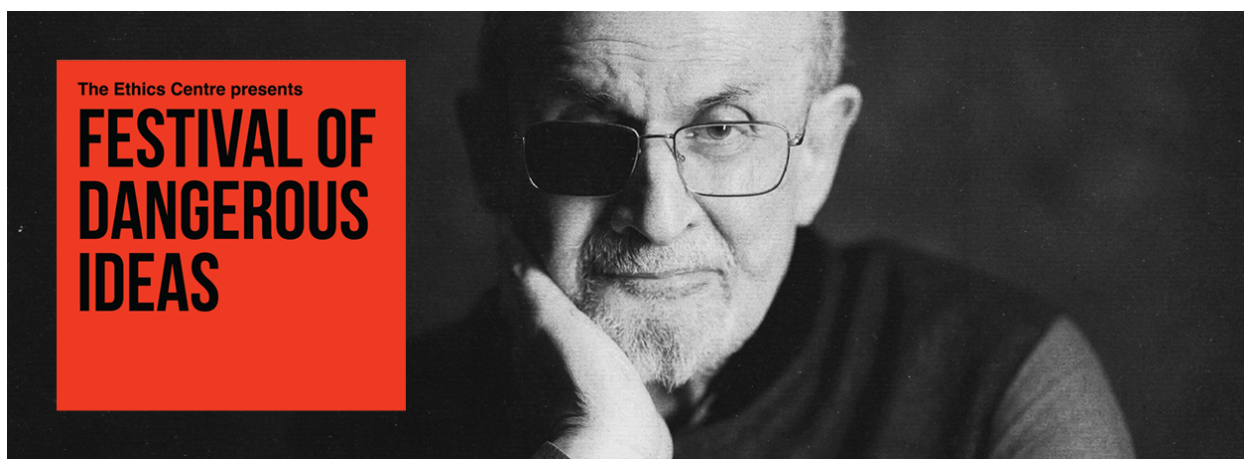




MEDIA RELEASE // TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2025

Salman Rushdie returns to Festival of Dangerous Ideas

One of the world's most celebrated authors and a fearless defender of free expression, Sir Salman Rushdie returns to Festival of Dangerous Ideas (FODI) in 2026 to deliver the Opening Night John Caldon Provocation, *The Price of Ideas*.

Appearing live at **Sydney Town Hall** on **Friday 21 August 2026**, Rushdie will reflect on the personal and political costs of speaking out in an age where every idea can be dangerous. In his only Sydney appearance, he will explore how culture, religion and identity collide to disrupt societies and ignite fierce debates over censorship and freedom.

As he prepares to return to Australia, **Rushdie** reflected on his last visit and the conversations that continue to resonate:

"The last time I came to Sydney, I spoke at FODI about the freedom to write – a freedom that is key to every open society. This time, I return to speak about the price we pay for ideas. Because today, the simple act of expressing a thought – in a book, on a stage, online – is no longer just a matter of liberty. It is, too often, an act of courage. And in that courage, we find both the danger and the necessity of continuing to speak."

Danielle Harvey, Festival Director, FODI, added: "Salman Rushdie's return to our stage is both a privilege and a reminder of why this festival exists: to create a space where difficult conversations can happen openly, and where ideas – even dangerous ones – are given the chance to be heard. Rushdie's presence at FODI 2026 will set the tone for a weekend that reveals the complexities we face, together."

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In 2014, Salman Rushdie headlined Festival of Dangerous Ideas. Now, after more than 12 years away, he returns to Australia to open FODI 2026. With much to say about *The Price of Ideas*, including reflections on the 2022 attack that nearly took his life and stories from his forthcoming collection, *The Eleventh Hour* (November 2025).

One of *Time*'s 100 most influential people in the world, Salman Rushdie has never backed down from defending free expression. The author of 22 books, including *Midnight's Children*, *The Satanic Verses*, *Quichotte*, and *Shame*, Rushdie has long embodied literature's capacity to provoke, challenge and inspire, even in the face of extraordinary personal risk.

Launched in 2009, **Festival of Dangerous Ideas (FODI)** is Australia's original disruptor and leading festival of ideas – bold, audacious and unafraid to tackle the issues that define our times. Presented by **The Ethics Centre**, FODI brings together world-class thinkers, artists and provocateurs to illuminate the possibilities and challenges society is facing.

The **John Caldon Provocation** honours the legacy of businessman and philanthropist **John Caldon**, whose deep curiosity and generosity embody the Festival's ongoing mission.

Presented exclusively in Sydney, Rushdie's event at **Sydney Town Hall** marks the opening of the **2026 Festival of Dangerous Ideas**, which continues across the weekend of **22–23 August** at **Carriageworks**, with additional events held at key venues throughout the city.

Early release tickets for *The Price of Ideas* go on sale on **Tuesday 21 October 2025** via festivalofdangerousideas.com for a limited time.

The full FODI 2026 program will be announced in mid-2026.

Salman Rushdie presents the 2026 John Caldon Provocation at Festival of Dangerous Ideas. He is presented in Australia with The Wheeler Centre.

– ENDS –

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Media centre: Images available [here](#)

Top image: Photo by Rachel Eliza Griffiths

FODI 2026 Opening Night

Salman Rushdie: The Price of Ideas

The John Caldon Provocation

Friday 21 August 2026, 6:30pm

Sydney Town Hall

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Salman Rushdie is the best-selling author of twenty-two books, including *Midnight's Children*, which won both the Booker Prize and the Best of the Booker; *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, and *Quichotte*, all of which were shortlisted for the Booker Prize; *East West* a collection of stories; *Joseph Anton* a memoir; *The Jaguar Smile* a work of reportage; and three collections of essays, including *Languages of Truth*. His most recent book, *Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder*, was a finalist for the 2024 National Book Award for nonfiction. Rushdie is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and he is a Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University. He is a former president of PEN America and the recipient of the PEN Centenary Courage Award. His books have been translated into over forty languages. In 2023, he was named one of *Time's* 100 Most Influential People of the Year, and has received a Queen's knighthood for his 'services to literature'.

About The Ethics Centre

FODI is the flagship event presented by The Ethics Centre. It sits alongside an annual program of events, courses and content with membership and advice services for individuals and businesses. Ethics is at the centre of being human. The Ethics Centre is a not-for-profit organisation developing and delivering innovative programs, services, and experiences, designed to bring ethics to the centre of personal and professional life. Across all they do is a goal to bring people together and to create space for open and honest conversations. The Ethics Centre is committed to injecting a pause into the centre of public life and allowing people to stop, connect with others and explore the ethical dimensions of our everyday lives.

For more information about FODI please visit: festivalofdangerousideas.com

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