

## **Becoming a Member of the Pondok Saraswati Group**

Established in October 1991, the Pondok Saraswati Project was developed by a group of founder members that had funded the original 20-year lease and buildings of the Silungan property near Ubud as a 'bridge of friendship' with Bali, Nyoman Rusni the manager, her family and staff. This lease will conclude in October 2010 and a further 5 year lease agreement has been successfully negotiated and paid for, concluding in 2015. Currently [2007] there is the opportunity for new members to enroll into this well established project for a further 8 years. It is expected that at the conclusion of the 10 year lease the project would be handed over to the lessee and family who would then manage it in the future, enabling members to continue their association with the project.

Currently there are 32 memberships to the project involving 41 individuals, as most memberships involve couples. Memberships for single and couples are at the same rate.

Members become part of the Pondok Saraswati Group, like minded persons who support and fund this not for profit project in Silungan near Ubud in Bali. Through membership, and encouraging friends to use the project, funds are generated to pay for staff and maintain the buildings and services at Pondok Saraswati. Members are also encouraged to take groups to Pondok, as this is an effective and fun way to use the facilities and support the project financially. As well guests can book into Pondok at rates similar to other guest houses in the Ubud district. These guests are attracted to Pondok either through word of mouth, occasional advertising or through the website.

Members pay a once only joining fee and an annual fee for the use of Pondok annually until the end of the lease. This means that they do not pay any further accommodation costs but do pay for their breakfasts and tax when in residence [currently \$10 per person per day]. There are no other conditional fees; however, as a result of the 2002 Bali bombings when there were no guests, we did announce a levy in order to cover salary costs. Although this situation has not arisen with the October 2005 events, we have previously agreed that, should it be necessary, a mandatory [but hopefully lesser] fee would apply to all members in order to cover our obligations to our Balinese friends who look after us.

Members can book Pondok for any part of the year and membership means double accommodation [includes partner] Booking is on a first come first served basis and cannot be carried over to another year. Members are encouraged to invite their friend to share the project as their guests and may use their members 'time' at whatever rates they decides to charge their friends.

There is no legal contract attached to membership as Pondok is a not for profit, trust based group of friends with a mutual interest and love of the project and Bali. There is also no individual within the group deemed responsible for the governance of the project. Its administration is carried out voluntarily on behalf of the members and our obligations to our friends in Bali who look after us. It is therefore recommended that persons interested in membership are familiar with Bali, the purpose and culture of the project and have been to Pondok to stay. A 'Membership' certificate is available. In other words the Project runs on trust in the Balinese 'Family Way'. **Please note**, if you require a locked in, signed up, fully documented, legally accountable membership agreement, this is not the project for you.

Members have get togethers in Perth from time to time, affectionately known as Pondok Parties. These are usually well attended and, apart from the swapping of latest photos and stories about Pondok, information and ideas about improving the project are discussed. This nearly always revolves around increasing the guest and membership base and looking after staff and maintenance of the property.

The booking officer [currently Petrina Lawrence] usually reports to the group either though an email network or with a newsletter. Changes and ideas are welcomed from all members. Discussion of improvements may be supported with expertise within the group. Membership is varied across all age groups and professions, retirees etc. Because of the longevity of the project membership is now 'generational'. This applies to our staff also.

## **New membership structures September 2007 to October 2015**

\$1000 per week(s) required as a member, ie \$1000 for one weeks usage per year \$2000 for two weeks usage per year \$3000 for three weeks usage. This is a once off joining fee.

Current annual maintenance fee \$150 per membership.

*Please note that this fee can and most likely will increase in line with local price increases*

Most members choosethree weeks which enables them [as a couple] to spend say two weeks and on sell of give another week to a friend or family.

The cost of membership is relatively low as we know that members become committed to the project and encourage their network of friends to enjoy it also, thus increasing our overall guest base and income to support our staff in Bali.

Pondok Saraswati Membership offers a unique opportunity to inexpensively participate in a well established and successful partnership with the people and culture of Bali in a beautiful comfortable, safe and friendly rural setting. It also provides rich social link with likeminded members and an opportunity to share a little bit of Pondok with you friends.

Pros     Well established, works and has a long lease.  
           Great as a 'retreat' destination, has access to pool.  
           10 minutes from Ubud  
           Very well run, food, services, comfort and family atmosphere, great staff.  
           Founded on trust, no hassles  
           Great for groups, retirees and families.  
           Unique village atmosphere, safe, out of the way  
           Well away from tourist Bali

Cons     Not much fun for teenagers  
           Not near the beach  
           A little isolated, village and rural noises  
           Not a hotel  
           Founded on trust, mutual accountability  
           Bali gets bad press, bombs and travel warnings.

Members of the Pondok Saraswati Group would love to welcome you as a fellow member!

For further information about the project and membership please refer to our website

<http://pondok.iinet.net.au>

Or contact

Peter Efford [epj@iinet.net.au](mailto:epj@iinet.net.au)

Telephone 08 92932363.

Please note all of the above information is intended as an information guide only.