2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Sumatran Sun Bear Team



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Letter From Our Founder

As another year comes to a close, I am reminded that conservation is rarely a straightforward journey. It takes patience, determination, collaboration and, above all, a genuine commitment to making a difference. Our work is about more than simply providing a home for rescued sun bears. Wherever possible, we want to give them a second chance at life in the forest. This year, we were delighted to achieve another successful release, as Bresman returned to the wild in October. Rescued the previous year after becoming caught in a snare, Bresman made a good recovery and demonstrated that rehabilitation can offer a real second chance, even after serious human-caused injuries. Following Hercules' release in 2024, Bresman's return to the forest is another important achievement and reinforces why this remains our ultimate goal.

Sadly, the need for rescue work continues. In June, we welcomed Honey, a female sun bear rescued from a snare in a palm oil plantation in Aceh. Following surgery and careful consideration of her welfare and prospects of survival in the wild, it was decided that our rescue centre would be her permanent home. She joins Cantik and Romeo in our Quarantine and Holding Facility, where we continue to provide the care and environment they need. Behind the scenes, we have also been working towards the next stage of our development. During my visit to Sumatra with Philip, we worked alongside our partners at SRA on enclosure improvements, enrichment and plans for our next, much larger bear enclosure. A new access bridge will be essential to making this possible, and we are continuing to explore opportunities to raise the funds needed to turn these plans into reality.

Education and awareness remain equally important. It was wonderful to see our resident bears featured in the *Spirit of Sumatra* digital exhibition in Hong Kong, which reached approximately 80,000 visitors. Every opportunity to introduce people to sun bears and the challenges they face is valuable.

I would like to thank our Indonesian partners, OIC and SRA, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, our dedicated team, volunteers, donors and everyone who continues to support SSBT. Your generosity and belief in our work make these achievements possible.

There is still much to accomplish, but our vision remains clear: to rescue, rehabilitate and, wherever possible, return sun bears to the forests where they belong. With your continued support, I look forward to what we can achieve together. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Lesley Small
Founder & Director
Sumatran Sun Bear Team

Our mission

After a trip to Sumatra in 2013, Sumatran Sun Bear Team's founder, Lesley Small was shocked how their beautiful sun bears were being treated.

Classified as a vulnerable species, sun bears are threatened by commercial poaching, habitat loss, and killing to prevent crop damage and for believed medical benefits. The Indonesian government does what it can to help sun bears, but their resources are limited and they have no specialised facility to take in rescued sun bears, rehabilitate them, and return them to the wild if possible.

Because of this, Sumatran Sun Bear Team is dedicated to building a purpose-built facility to help sun bears in every way we can. Where possible we'd love to return rescued sun bears to the wild but, where this isn't possible, house them in our purpose-built facility where they can be comfortable, safe, and enjoy its life.

We are a registered Australian charity. We also have DGR; Deductible Gift Recipient status, which means that any donation over $2 is tax deductible.

Our History

SSBT had spent approximately four years looking for suitable land that was privately owned for our rescue and conservation centre. We also needed to get to know the people and other NGO's working to save wildlife in Sumatra.

We needed a place where the land would be perfect to allow the rescued sun bears to be able to behave like bears in the forest; to be able to climb, forage and rest. We also needed to partner with like-minded people who are based in Sumatra and have the wildlife skills to work in collaboration with us and our goals.

We partnered with Orangutan Information Centre (OIC) and Sumatran Rescue Alliance (SRA) to allow for the rescue, care and rehabilitation of sun bears on the land allocated for SSBT.

The building of our first enclosure in 2021 was a huge milestone after SSBT worked on the design to house three sun bears. Our first three sun bears were Rossa, Uca & Jessy, all females bears were taken illegally from the wild. Without any survival skills in the wild, they are now permanent residents in our facility.

In 2024 we finished building our second structure, a Quarantine & Holding Facility. Two bears, Cantik and Romeo, were brought from Banda Aceh and are currently housed here while plans are made for a larger enclosure. 2024 also saw the rehabilitation and release of a rescued wild male sun bear, Hercules.



Uca



Rossa

2025
Animal Care, Rescue & Release

Animal Care

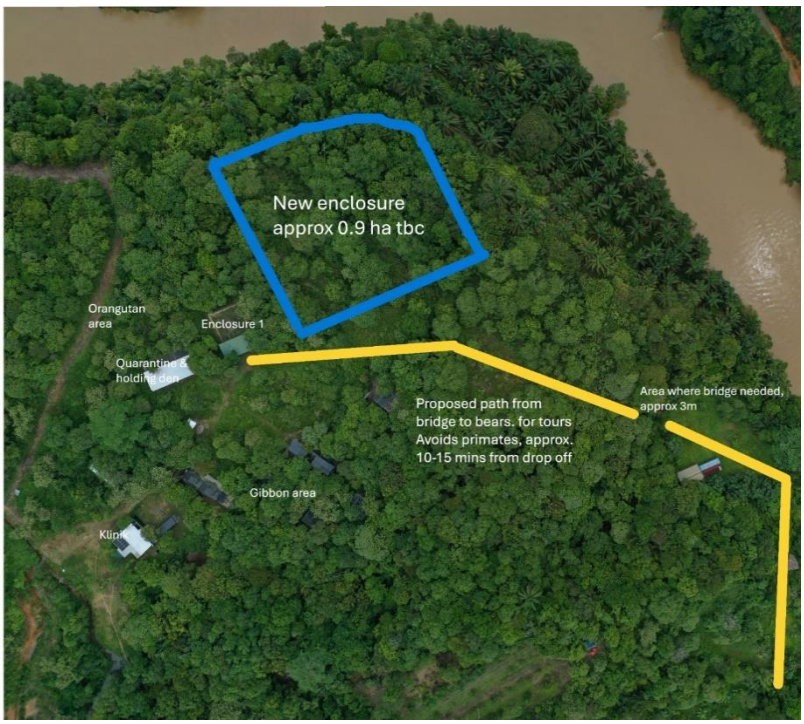
There are now six bears at the SSBT rescue centre – Uca, Jessy, Rossa, Cantik, Romeo & Honey, and two dedicated Indonesian sun bear keepers, Ikram and Sunar. Daily tasks include cleaning dens, feeding three times a day, general maintenance, daily enrichment and ongoing projects e.g. updates to enclosure furniture.

Due to the amount of rain fall Sumatra has and the recent flooding, we are doing some minor repairs on our enclosures. The bears can also be quite unforgiving to their environment, using their claws to dig and climb. We are constantly trying to improve the environment the bears are in, maintaining their climbing structures and creating enrichment to keep the bears thinking and moving. We have been unable to do a lot of our normal upkeep due to the presence of the wild bears we were rehabilitating.

In May 2025, two of our board members, Lesley and Philip travelled to site. They worked with staff to build some new bed boards for the bears and work on enrichment ideas. They also started mapping out the area for the next bear enclosure we plan to build.



SSBT & OIC together



New Enclosure & Bridge proposal

To enable construction of this new enclosure, a bridge is required to transport materials over a small creek that runs through the location, and to also facilitate future day trips. SSBT team members also met with the manager of the Hotel Deli River in Medan to discuss organise future day trips for visitors to come and learn all about sun bears.

Bresman

In October 2024, we rescued another wild male sun bear dubbed Bresman. Like Hercules, Bresman was caught in a snare but luckily for him, the injury to his right paw healed well and he was soon ready for release back into the wild.

The Indonesian government surveyed a suitable site for release and the logistics of transporting him were discussed at length. Finally in early October 2025, Bresman was taken to the chosen release site and he made his way back to the wild. We wish him all the best and we are grateful to all those involved from the Indonesian Government to the staff on the ground.



Bresman



Honey

In June 2025, our partners sadly found a beautiful female sun bear who subsequently was named Honey. Honey arrived at the SSBT rescue centre after being rescued from a snare trap in a palm oil plantation in Aceh, North Sumatra. Surgery was undertaken and, unfortunately, Honey lost the claws on her left paw. Amid concerns about her origins and ability to survive in the wild, and after careful consideration and discussions, it was deemed best for her welfare that she stays at our rescue centre. She is currently housed in the Quarantine & Holding Facility alongside Cantik and Romeo.



Honey

Education & Outreach

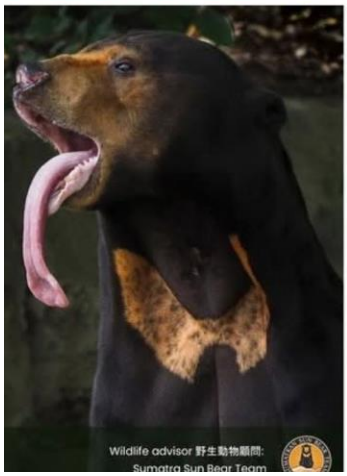
Spirit of Sumatra Digital Art Experience

In 2025 after being approached by a non-profit charity platform; ALAN – Artists who Love Animals & Nature, requesting for us to be wildlife advisors and provide photos of our resident sun bears for a digital exhibition in Hong Kong. The exhibition “The Spirit of Sumatra” is a clever, exciting and interactive display that highlights Sumatra. It demonstrates beautifully the iconic species and flora of Sumatra and their environment and the protected National Parks. showcasing the issues of ‘conflict animals’ and the delicate balance between humans and ecological preservation. 80,000 visitors experienced the exhibit, spreading news of sun bear conservation and our resident SSBT bears became celebrities.

LINK:
[“Spirit of Sumatra” Digital Art Mixed Reality Experience]











Communications & Fundraising

Website & Social Media

Our website provides the general public with information on current and past activities of SSBT, sun bears, as well as how people can get involved. SSBT has a Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn account. Social media posts include photos, videos, and other interactive content whenever possible. Posts are targeted towards increasing awareness of sun bears, threats, and conservation. SSBT also uses social media to solicit donations in support of its work and to encourage followers to spread the word on sun bears and rainforest conservation issues.

Raffles

Throughout the year we have held raffles, during key dates like Mothers and Fathers Day.

Bunnings BBQ

We have also been running local Bunnings BBQ's to fund our charity. A **Bunnings sausage sizzle** is an iconic Australian weekend tradition where a local community group, school, or charity runs a small outdoor barbecue outside a Bunnings Warehouse hardware store to raise money for local causes. These events help raise thousands of dollars for sun bear care.



Sydney Zoo Fundraiser

SSBT organised a fundraising event at Sydney Zoo, Australia, where members talked about SSBT work and sun bears in general.



Spoil a Bear program

Launched in 2023 the Spoil-A-Bear is an engaging program for people to choose a sun bear to spoil. In choosing to spoil a sun bear you have contributed to their medical, dietary and enrichment needs for 12 months, and can renew annually. Sun bears Romeo and Cantik were added to this program this year and already have spoilers.

STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

Sumatran Sun Bear Team is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

OUR PEOPLE

Name	Position
Lesley Small	Board Director/Treasurer
Kimberly Vinette Herrin	Board Director/ Veterinary
Sue Tonga	Board Director
Lauren Spence	Secretary
Philip Stubley	Team Member

OUR SUPPORTERS

Allowed to Grow Old

We thank Allowed to Grow Old (AtGO) for their continued donations and support!

Allowed to Grow Old (AtGO) is a registered charitable foundation that supports selected animal welfare activities across Australia and beyond. Their name encapsulates our fundamental belief: that every animal deserves to live out their days with the best quality of life possible. The right to grow old with dignity, and to be treated with respect and care.

The SunBears

Thank you to The SunBears band. We are very grateful to have these guys helping us to spread the word that these magnificent animals are worth saving.

Palm Oil Free Certification Accreditation Programme

The Palm Oil Free Certification Accreditation Programme are a great general supporter of forests in Indonesia. We thank them.

Calabash Kennels & Cattery

Calabash Kennels, premium pet accommodation not only love your pets while you're away, but they are also major supporters of the SSBT. We are very grateful for their support

Animal Assist

Assisting the unsung heroes of the natural world. We gratefully accept your help and support to protect and conserve Sun Bears in Sumatra.

Wildlife HQ

Wildlife HQ are supporters of Sumatran Sun Bear conservation and we can't thank them enough for their support.

Sea Life Sydney

Thank you Sea Life for your ongoing help and support towards the Sumatran Sun Bear Team.

Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation

The Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation award grants to organisations in need. We were fortunate enough to have been awarded one of their grants.

Black and Blanco

Black and Blanco Law Offices gave us the necessary support and guidance to register as an Australian charity and help us to continue to operate.

Vivienne Court Trading Pty Ltd

We received a grant from Vivienne Court Trading to help us continue to support and save Sun Bears. We thank them for their help and support.

Indy Publishing

Indy Publishing has helped us support Sumatran Sun Bears through their children's book "A Bear In Trouble." It tells the story of one of our bears name Uca.

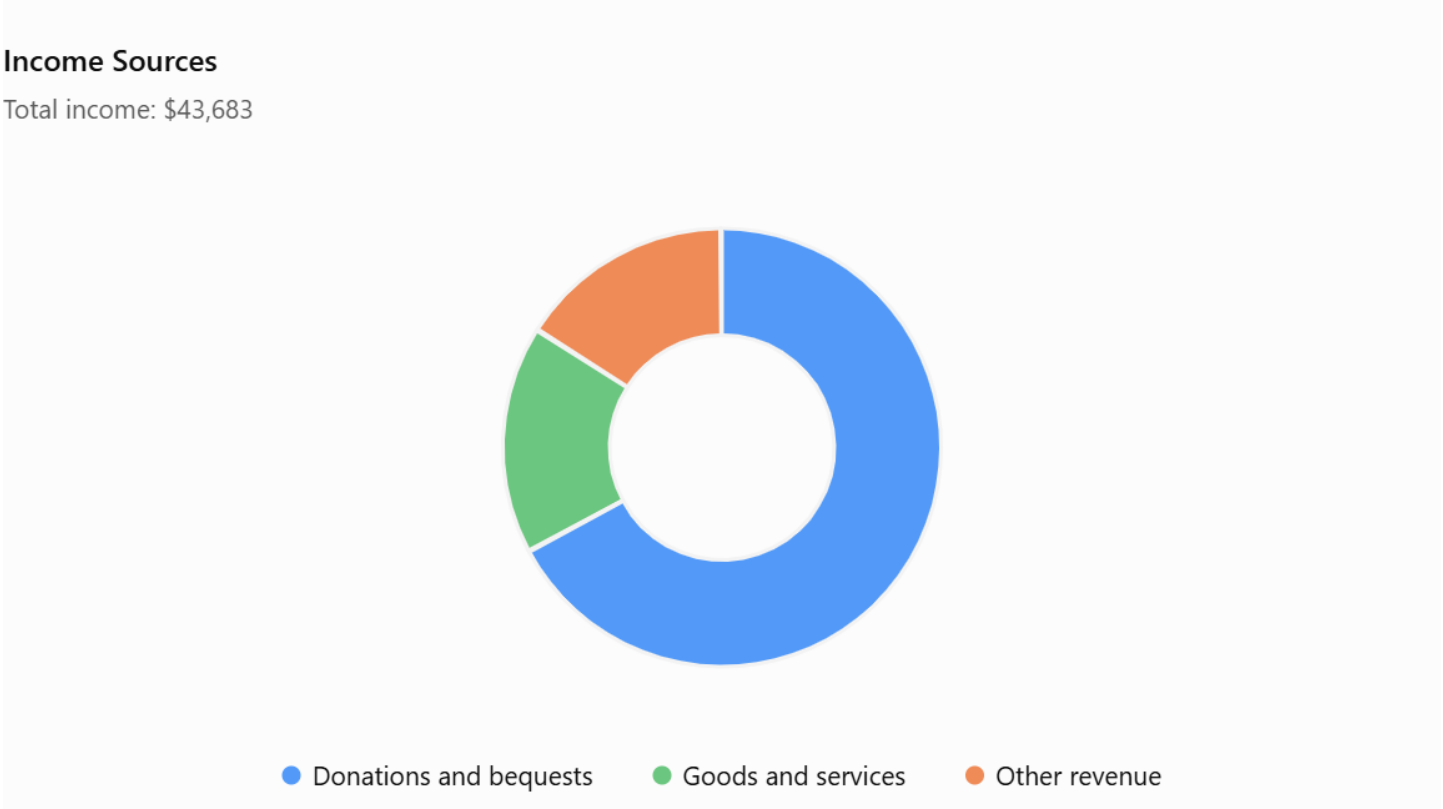
Winton Foundation

The Winton Foundation have been supporting bears all around the world since 2010. We thank them for the fund to design and build a transport box for the Sun Bears.

2025 Income and Expenditure Report (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025)
Further Details Here
[Sumatran Sun Bear Team Limited Annual Information Statement 2025 | ACNC]

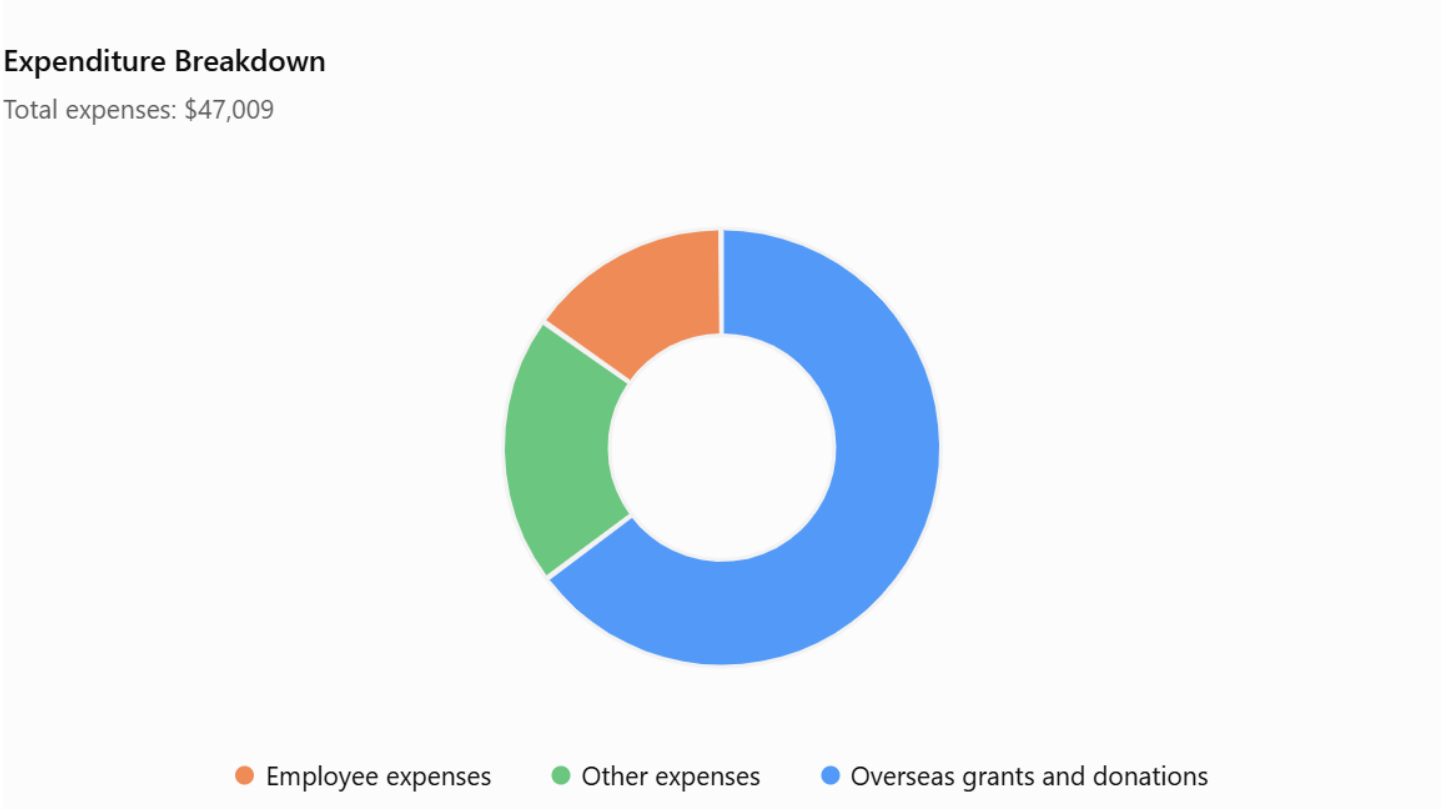
Our Sun Bear Enclosure and Quarantine Facility, including tools are estimated valued at $127,000. The balance of our bank accounts is $60,204

1. Income breakdown



Income source	Amount	% of income
Donations and bequests	$29,435	67.4%
Goods and services	$7,330	16.8%
Other revenue	$6,918	15.8%
Total income	$43,683	100%

2. Expenses breakdown



Expense category	Amount	% of expenses
Overseas grants and donations	$30,548	65.0%
Other expenses	$9,374	19.9%
Employee expenses	$7,087	15.1%
Total expenses	$47,009	100%

Sumatran Sun Bear Team – Funding Sources

Standard Donations
Standard donations are unrestricted gifts from private individuals and other supporters. Donations may be made online, by bank transfer, or through other approved payment methods. Legacy bequests are also included in this category.

Institutional Support
Institutional support includes funding from foundations, grant-making organisations, trusts and other institutional supporters. Funding may be awarded towards specific programmes or general operating costs.

Appeals
Appeals are formal fundraising requests distributed to supporters via email and other communication channels, as well as promoted through SSBT's website and social media platforms. Appeals may focus on specific needs, projects or urgent fundraising requirements.

Campaigns
Campaigns are fundraising initiatives centred on specific conservation programmes or activities. Supporters can choose to contribute towards particular campaigns and the work they aim to support.

Indirect Donations
Indirect donations include gifts of shares, employee matching contributions, vehicle donations and funds raised through third-party fundraising activities.

Spoil-A-Bear Program
S can make a donation towards an individual sun bear and receive photographs and updates on their spolier bear's progress. The program provides an opportunity to engage supporters in the lives of individual bears while raising funds for sun bear conservation.

Events
Events include fundraising activities such as donor gatherings, educational talks, lectures, community events, cultural fairs and other events in which SSBT participates.

Projects
Project donations are contributions towards specific activities or requirements that are not associated with existing appeals or campaigns. These may include enclosure improvements, veterinary care, enrichment, rescue and rehabilitation work, and other conservation initiatives.

In-Kind Donations

In-kind donations are non-monetary contributions of goods or services that support SSBT's operations. These may include veterinary supplies, medical equipment, food, enclosure materials, office supplies and professional services.

Merchandise

Merchandise sales provide an additional source of fundraising income. Items featuring SSBT branding or sun bear conservation themes also help raise awareness of the organisation and its work.

2025

EVENTS, TALKS & MEDIA

CAM WHITNALL YOUTUBE VIDEO

Cam Whitnall, animal conservationist and presenter, released a video 1 January 2025 on his YouTube Channel highlighting SSBT work.

Video Description:
“This was a hard one to witness. In this video, we’re involved in the rescue of caged sun bears, animals that have suffered through confinement and conditions no wild animal should ever experience. This film shows what we found, the process of rescuing them, and why work like this by The Sumatran Sun Bear Team is so important for animal welfare and conservation. These are not easy stories to tell, but they matter. Watch till the end… these moments are why rescue work exists.”

LINK

[THEY WERE KEPT LIKE THIS… 🐻💔 | RESCUED]



THEY WERE KEPT LIKE THIS… 🐻💔 | RESCUED
1.6k • 1 yr ago
Cam Whitnall
This was a hard one to witness. In this video, we're involved in the rescue of caged sun bears, animals that have suffered through ...
4K

THE BEAR DEN PODCAST

SSBT member Philip Stuley hosts a bear related podcast, "The Bear Den," which includes several sun bear focused episodes, including an interview with SSBT founder Lesley Small. This podcast was launched for the American Bear Association and has a global audience from the USA, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Episode link:

[The Bear Den #25 – Relentless Snares: A chat with Sumatran Sun Bear Team (SSBT) Founder & Zookeeper Lesley Small]



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Whilst building facilities to house bears that unfortunately cannot be released, we have been fortunate enough to rehabilitate and release two male wild sun bears. This is our vision and ideal goal of SSBT.

Our main fundraising goals:
- A reinforced concrete bridge approx. 6m x 2.5m, to enable site access for transport, materials and facilitate tours/volunteers
- New 0.8 ha enclosure with up to eight dens and four outdoor areas, and upstairs platform for observation and education (attach overall design plan?)
- Snare Dog Program to set up a K9 dog detection unit in North Sumatra

CONTACT DETAILS

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ONLINE
SSBT website
Facebook
Instagram

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Langkat Regency, Sumatra, Indonesia

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