

► Contemplative Residency



Expanding upon the celebrated creative artist residency run at our sister site, Jacky Winter Gardens, this program is dedicated to the exploration and deepening of individual contemplative practice.

Each month, from March to November, we have set aside five days (Monday afternoon through Friday morning) in which we dedicate Jacky Winter Waters to our contemplative-in-residence program.

We provide exclusive use of the entire property to accommodate an individual to immerse themselves in deep silence while they develop their contemplative practice or self-directed retreat. We offer nine residencies every year to individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Applications are free and taken twice a year.



The Jacky Winter Group is driven by a constant commitment to the careful balance of curiosity, commerce, and compassion. While our artist-in-residence program at Jacky Winter Gardens focuses on commercial art, The Jacky Winter Waters contemplative-in-residence program exists to nurture the heart and pay respect to our broader interest and support for the crucial aspect that contemplative practices play in our world, especially for creative practitioners.

Designed to support all individuals from lay practitioners and householders to seasoned academics and monastics, The Jacky Winter Waters contemplative residency will provide space and support for anyone working in Contemplative Arts and/or Sciences to embark on a five day personal retreat. The residency is open to application for anyone actively engaged in contemplative practice.

This is an entirely self-directed residency, with the only acquittal requirement being a short statement upon the completion of the residency — so we can hear your reflections of the time spent and share it with those who might wish to follow in your footsteps. We also ask you to acknowledge Jacky Winter Waters as a part of any completed professional projects worked on during your time here, if relevant.

Residents are responsible for their own food and transportation costs during their stay, but no additional fees are associated with the residency.

See below for the full details, regarding dates and conditions. We strongly recommend [signing up to the mailing list](#) if you'd like to be notified when the application periods open and close.

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Rasa Kabaila

August 2025

Rasa is a published Author and Poet and Nurse Practitioner specialising in mental health.

She runs her own practice in rural NSW and is a paid writer for Ausmed. Rasa's first book 'Put some Concrete in your Breakfast: Tales from Contemporary Nursing' was published by the international publisher, 'Springer Nature' in 2023 and has been read by over 16000 readers worldwide.

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It's a rare opportunity to be given significant space to take 'time out' to contemplate in a beautiful home that has been provided to you. And my goodness, what a beautiful place this artist residency is based in — Walkerville North, Victoria.

Living in regional NSW (by the beach) and growing up by the bush in Canberra, Walkerville quickly felt like home to me. The moment I arrived, I was greeted by a wombat. I surfed every morning and got to know the friendly locals, such as Jack, a builder and sculptor who refurbished and ran the general store, which is next to a coffee shop and not much else. I hiked at Wilson's Prom and, by chance, found out that Alison Lester, the author and illustrator of The Magic Beach, has her shop in her hometown of Fish Creek, just around the corner from where I was staying. When I found out that The Magic Beach is based on the beach in Walkerville, I cried. I was brought back to memories of driving 700 km to take my beautiful niece Elsie to watch The Magic Beach play in Canberra when she was two years old.

When I was accepted into this residency, I wondered what I would 'plan' to create. However, I've learned in life that many opportunities and decisions we make seem to happen without planning. I've also learned that creative thoughts and problem-

solving will arise when you have a chance to stop, reflect and slow down a bit. And it's with the above points that my creative project for my Jacky Winters Residency arose.

Leading up to the residency, I had a counselling session with a client of mine called Levi. Levi is in his 80s and stated that he was an Auschwitz (Holocaust) survivor. Levi is the spitting image of my Lithuanian grandfather, who migrated to Australia as a refugee. Both my grandfather and, according to what Levi has shared with me about his life, Levi survived war atrocities — where many members of their families did not — as a result of someone from 'the enemy side' risking their own life to save them.

Levi was connected to see me for counselling through Victims of Crime, and he has said to me that he feels he can connect with me because our family histories overlap. In one of our sessions leading up to the artist residency, Levi talked about some recurring nightmares he has had from his childhood while being in the concentration/extermination camp. I asked Levi if he would like to unpack more about these dreams and his childhood experiences as a form of narrative therapy to support emotional processing, and he said he would like to do that.

I also asked him if he would like to have a part of his story, and what we have spoken about together in our working relationship, published somewhere as a testament to his story, his resilience and a part of history. Levi said he was open to this. So, during the artist residency, Levi and I made time to unpack some chapters of his life over a number of hours...

I won't talk about it here, but you can imagine the incredible things I have learned about Levi from this interview alone, on top of the two years of conversations we have already had together in our working relationship.

While at the residency, I did some research as to where some of Levi's story could potentially be published. I found out that Melbourne has a Holocaust museum. Fast forward to now, I've since had the privilege of meeting Dr Dan Haumschild, one of the head curators at the museum, who has been really kind and also encouraging of my project with Levi. We are now looking at ways to be able to celebrate Levi in collaboration with the museum. Watch this space.

Thank you, Jacky Winter Waters and all your team for giving me this wonderful opportunity.

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