

2026
CHILDREN'S WRITERS
AND ILLUSTRATORS
RESIDENCY

APPLICATION

29 Sep - 10 Oct



NAN TIEN TEMPLE



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About the Residency

Nan Tien Temple is delighted to invite applications for our **Australia Children's Writers and Illustrators Residency**, supporting the development of new literary and illustrative works.

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We are offering up to fifteen residencies in 2026 for professional, emerging and early-career children's storybook creators living in Australia.

Our first Residency at Nan Tien Temple, held in 2024 in collaboration with South Coast Writers Centre, was a successful 7-14 day writers in residence program.

Building on the 2025 commissioning of award-winning author Karen Hendriks (NSW) and illustrator Emma Stuart (VIC) to create our very first children's book, *Seeking Treasure with Bodhi*, our residency program now focuses on children's authors and illustrators. This new direction continues our mission to offer support to talented creators to find new inspiration in the tranquil surrounds of a Buddhist Temple.



2025 Resident Writer in the Courtyard

This targeted approach provides a unique offering to a specific group of Australian creatives. It is also a rare opportunity for you to step away from daily distractions and immerse yourself in a peaceful, culturally rich environment.

Whether you're a well published author or illustrator, or an emerging talent, this residency is designed to nurture creativity and provide inspiration that will feed into your early stage or upcoming project.



About

Nan Tien Temple (Wollongong, NSW)

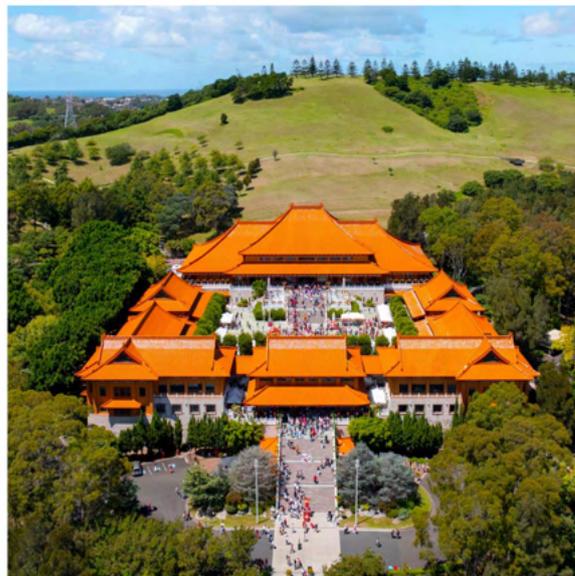
Nan Tien Temple is the largest Buddhist Temple in the Southern Hemisphere and the youngest building on the NSW State Heritage Register.



Since opening in 1995, Nan Tien has served as a place of learning, peace, and cultural exchange.

Set within tranquil gardens and overlooking the Illawarra escarpment, it offers a truly unique environment that has inspired thousands of visitors from around the world. Through this residency, we invite children's writers and illustrators to bring the spirit of this place into their emerging stories and images, encouraging young readers to explore themes of stillness, presence, connection, and mindfulness.

[Apply Now >](#)



Applications Now Open:
[**APPLY HERE**](#)

Applications Close:
30 April 2026

Applicants notified:
by 12 May 2026

**Welcome Introduction
(online):**
TBC

Residency Dates:
29 Sep - 10 Oct 2026
Minimum 7 days



What the Residency Includes

The residency start date is Tuesday 29 September and residents can stay between 7-12 days. An Introduction tour and orientation is planned for Tuesday afternoon.

Each selected resident will receive:

- ✔ A **private ensuite room** at the [Pilgrim Lodge](#)
- ✔ All **meals** provided.
- ✔ Uninterrupted **time** to focus on creative work.
- ✔ **Q and A session** with a resident monastic.
- ✔ Access to a **communal lounge** to connect with fellow residents.
- ✔ **Check in:**
Tuesday 29 September after 9am
Intro + Guided Tour 2pm
Check out: Between 6 -10 October before 10am.



Pilgrim Lodge Accommodation

- ✔ **Meditation Retreat:** Saturday 3 October 10 am - 4 pm optional.
- ✔ **Marketing** and promotion of you as a Creative during the stay: photos, interviews, one off school visit.
- ✔ **Optional** participation in Temple activities, including:
 - 6.15am chanting with monastics.
 - Tai Chi classes, art gallery and museum visits, retreat, and guided tours.



Who Can Apply?

Nan Tien welcomes applications from Australian citizens and residents of all cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and religions.

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We welcome applications from

- ✔ Writers and illustrators aged 18+ who are Australian citizens or permanent residents
- ✔ Those currently working on a project in early or mid-development
- ✔ Members of a professional writers' centre or association in Australia
- ✔ First Nations creatives, People with a disability, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) applicants

[Apply Now >](#)



2025 Resident Illustrator at the Gratitude Bell



2025 Residents at the Nan Tien Hill



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Eligibility Criteria



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Professional

To be considered a professional Writer or Illustrator, applicants must meet all the following:

- Be the author or illustrator of three or more published children's books, defined as a book published with an ISBN and barcode.
- Eligible publications include traditional print, e-books, self-published works, or digital-first books distributed nationally.
- Picture books, junior fiction, middle-grade or graphic narratives for children are all eligible genres.
- Publications must demonstrate literary or illustrative excellence and must not include advertising, instruction manuals, promotional blogs, or media content created solely for commercial or entertainment platforms.



2025 Resident Illustrator at the Nan Tien Hill

Emerging

Applicants must meet one of the following:

- Authored or illustrated one or more published children's books, defined as a book published with an ISBN and barcode.
- Creator of a body of shorter work for children (e.g., magazine stories, online literary journal content, comic panels or zines for children) and demonstrable progress on a first major work.



2025 Resident Author at Tai Chi



2025 Residents at the Nan Tien Bridge

Under 35

To class yourself in this category, you must fulfil all the following:

- Writers under 35 years old at the time of application.
- Have been or are currently involved in the writing sector.
- Have published literary material in print, visual or broadcast media.
- And are working towards achieving their first publication defined as a book published with an ISBN and barcode.

This category is designed to support emerging writers under the age of 35. However, if you are slightly over the age limit and feel your circumstances align with the intent of this category, you are welcome to reach out — we are open to discussion.



What Do We Ask From Residents?

1. Creative Response – Theme: *Rhythms*

This residency is offered free of charge (valued up to \$2250 for 11 nights). In exchange, residents are to submit a short creative response inspired by their time at the Temple under the theme, *Rhythms*.

- **Writers:** A creative piece up to 500 words.
- **Illustrators:** A single A4 colour illustration on quality paper.

This polished piece is to be submitted within 2 weeks of finishing the residency and will be considered for publication in a residency anthology with full credit to you and used for educational purposes such as school excursion workshops and is not released for sale. View our [2024 Anthology](#) to see the quality of the work and publication details.

Unlike other residencies that may require public talks or workshops, we keep our expectations in light so you can focus on your work.

2. Acknowledgements

Like other residencies, the recipient is required to acknowledge the 2026 Nan Tien Temple Australian Children's Writers and Illustrators Residency in any published work associated with the time spent at Nan Tien Temple.

A suggested sample:

"I would like to express my gratitude to the monastics for their generous support through the 2026 Nan Tien Temple Children's Writers and Illustrators Residency program. This work was nurtured in the spirit of mindfulness and compassion that flows naturally at Nan Tien Temple, and I am most grateful."



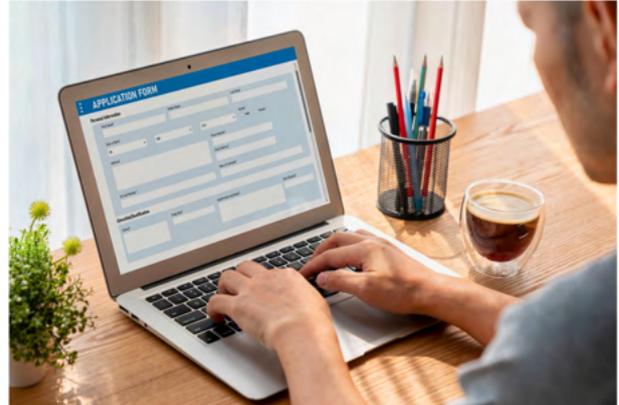
How To Apply?

Nan Tien Temple accepts applications online. Simply complete the application form available on our website and submit it by the closing date. For any questions or assistance, please contact our team.



Please provide the following;

- ✔ Contact **details** and link to your website or portfolio.
- ✔ A short **bio** and **CV** (max 200 words) including publications, awards, or relevant experience.
- ✔ **A brief statement of benefit:** How would this residency support your creative work? (max 200 words).
- ✔ **A summary of your proposed project:** What stage is it at? How does it connect to your sample material?
- ✔ **List any projects you plan to work on:** Provide details of the writing or illustrations from your project in development and expected release time.



Further Information

A small \$10.00 application fee helps us cover administration costs.

Please ensure your application is complete before submitting it. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applicants will be notified of the outcome within four weeks of the application's closing date.

[Apply Now >](#)



Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed by a panel made up of representatives from Nan Tien Temple, a professional Australian writer or illustrator and book publishing industry.

We are looking for:

- ✔ Strong, original creative work samples.
- ✔ Projects with clear development potential.
- ✔ A demonstrated commitment to your craft.
- ✔ A clear explanation of how the residency will support your project.
- ✔ A resonance with Buddhist values, such as peace, mindfulness, compassion, and loving-kindness, either thematically in your past or proposed work, or as a personal value set.
- ✔ An openness to cultural and spiritual reflection, and an interest in creating works that inspire empathy, inner stillness, and connection for young readers.



2025 Residents at Meditation

Please Note:

The Selection Panel will not be able to provide individual feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Terms & Conditions

Please read the responsibilities of the residents and the Temple [details here](#).



Getting To The Temple

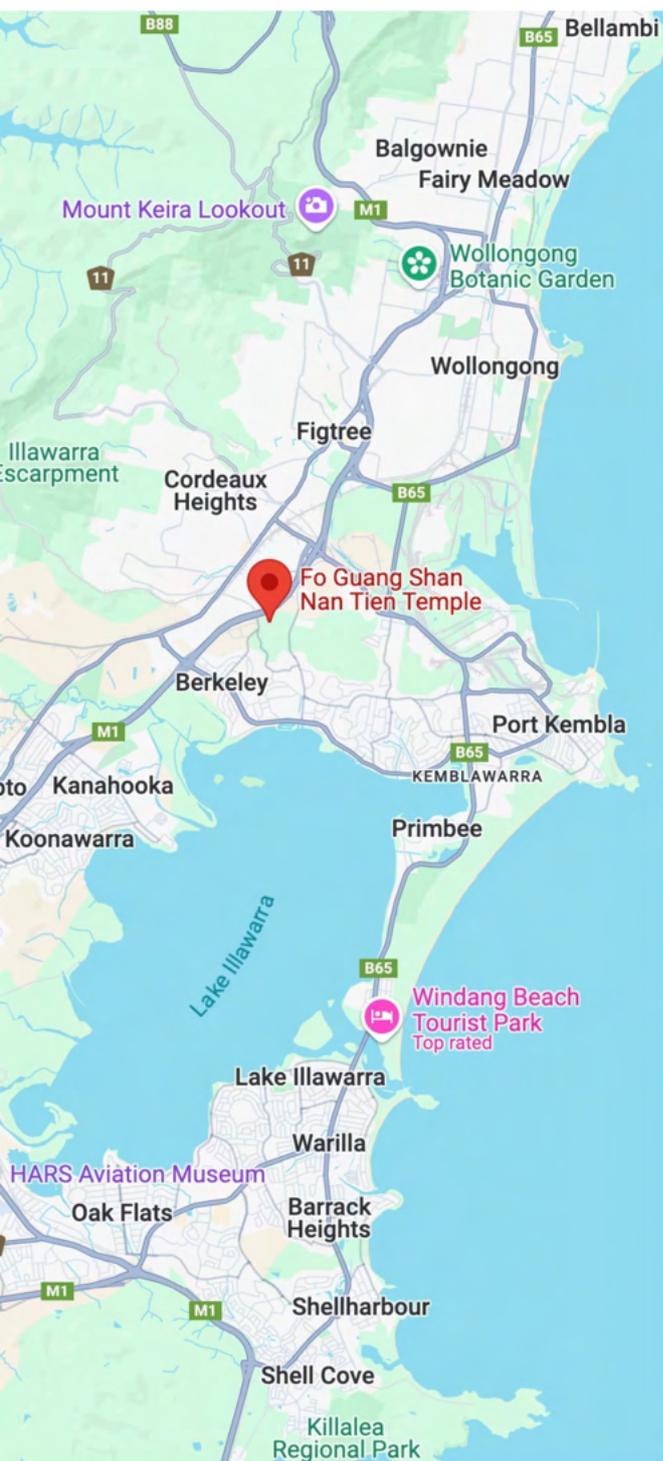
Nan Tien Temple
180 Berkeley Road,
Berkeley, NSW 2506





Nan Tien Temple

180 Berkeley Road, Berkeley, NSW 2506 Australia



Plane

Shellharbour/Albion Park Regional Airport

Located 15 minute drive from the Temple. Contact us and we can arrange airport transfers.



Car

Free visitor carpark

Entry via Nolan Street Unanderra. This is the entrance to the Pilgrim Lodge.



Train

Train to Unanderra station (South Coast Line)

Catch a Taxi to the Temple from the train station or walk 15-20 minutes



Bus

Bus 34 - Wollongong to Warrawong

Catch Bus (Route 34) at Unanderra Shops (right-hand side of the station near Caltex petrol station) and alight at the Temple's back entrance on Nolan Street.



FAQ's

Who is eligible to apply for the residency?

The residency is open to published and emerging writers and illustrators of children's literature based in Australia and over 18 years. We particularly welcome applicants with a new or early-stage project seeking creative inspiration.

Is there a cost to participate in the residency?

No, it's completely free. The residency is fully funded by the Temple, including accommodation and meals. Residents will need to cover their own travel costs to and from the Temple. We ask in return for a small, polished piece of new work of acceptable standard based on your residency, using the theme *Rhythms*, and complete a survey form.

What kind of accommodation is provided?

Residents stay in private rooms at Pilgrim Lodge, located within the tranquil grounds of Nan Tien Temple. Rooms are simple, clean, and peaceful, designed to support reflection and creative focus. Before 9am and after 5pm you will experience the temple as a private resident and free to explore.

Do I need to follow religious or spiritual practices to attend?

Not at all. The residency is a cultural and creative offering open to people of all backgrounds. While participants are welcome to join meditation sessions or temple activities, it is entirely optional.



What is expected of me during my residency?

We ask that you spend your time immersed in your project(s) and the environment. We also invite each resident to **create a short piece (500 words or A4 polished drawing of acceptable standard) inspired by their experience**, and to share a reflection of our community at the conclusion. We also ask that the community life at a Buddhist temple is respected through the dress and no meat or alcohol to brought onsite. During the meals in the Dining Hall, we observe 'Noble Silence'.



How will my submitted work be used? (A4 artwork or the 500 written piece)

Throughout the year, the Temple has a steady stream of primary school excursions, and we're excited to expand the way we support both visiting teachers and our own staff in delivering engaging, creative learning experiences. As an Australian children's author or illustrator your contribution will be featured in a beautifully printed A4 booklet. You will receive a copy of this. This publication will be used as a resource for teachers and our staff at the temple, showcasing how your storytelling or illustration can draw inspiration from the unique atmosphere of the Temple. This is a great way to further promote you while we both work to inspire young people to enjoy books.

What does the Temple gain from the Residency?

The Temple is enthusiastic about exploring future commissions for children's storybooks. This residency offers a meaningful way for the Monastics to connect with Australian creatives, building affinities, discovering your work, and potentially paving the way for future collaborations. As an education and cultural centre with two libraries and a range of study programs, supporting children's literature is a natural and valued extension of our mission. We're excited by the opportunities this creates to deepen our role in the community and explore new, creative ways to share wisdom and learning together.

Can I work on an existing project?

Yes, especially if you are in the early stages or open to letting the residency shape its direction. We're particularly interested in works that can absorb and reflect the themes of peace, mindfulness, intercultural connection, and/or the visual and cultural richness of the Temple.

Can I bring my family or collaborators?

Some residents may use this time for solo reflection and focused creative development. If residents wish to have their family join them, families can book rooms with the Pilgrim Lodge where meals and accommodation will be at their own expense.

What if I wish to head out after dinner?

This is fine however, the reception desk closes at 8pm as our members are early risers. We kindly ask you to consider this. Please let the Lodge know before 2PM if you are not attending dinner so we can inform the kitchen of correct meal numbers.

Are there structured activities or is it self-directed?

The residency is largely self-directed, with the option to join temple tours, retreat day, meditation sessions, or quiet tea gatherings. These offerings are meant to support your creative rhythm, not interrupt it.

How do I apply?

Applications are submitted online via [HERE](#). You'll need to provide a short project description, a sample of your work, and a short statement about why this residency is meaningful to you.

[Apply Now >](#)



Thank You

"Thank you for your interest in the 2026 Children's Writers and Illustrators Residency. We warmly encourage you to apply and share your creative vision. Best of luck from all of us at Nan Tien Temple!"

— Nan Tien Temple





NAN TIEN TEMPLE



For Further Information

Please contact **Gabrielle Quigley**, Community Engagement Coordinator
on community@nantien.org.au or **+61 (2) 4272 0600**



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