

Kona-konaba

# Munibung

## Musings

Magazine of the Munibung Hill Conservation Society

Promoting Urban Ecology for a Nature Positive future



*Summer Solstice Issue*

**WalkWithMe  
Talk2mebro**

**Munibung Hill  
is our teacher**

**CLOSE UPS WITH  
RAY WOODS**

**BE A BUG DETECTIVE**

**MUNIBUNG HILL  
INSPIRED MUSIC**

**Tik tok is engaging  
a new generation**

**Green the city**

*From Czechoslovakia  
to Munibung Hill*

*Hole in the bucket dear  
Liza, and a hole in lighting  
standards*

# A genuine attempt to make a difference

## Not an empty slogan



[YHA SYDNEY CENTRAL](#) is the first example we've come across of an accommodation place where circular economy principles are encouraged in a practical way.

Bins were labeled:  
 > Recycling for cans, bottles, cartons, cardboard, paper, etc  
 > Organics for food peelings, and meal left-overs, etc  
 > Landfill for other items such as plastic wraps, etc.

It is a core part of doing business - not an after-thought - a means of educating guests in doing the right thing, even when away from home.

Other establishments could follow suit - it's not rocket science.

**SEPTMBER 2025 ISSUE**

# Nightscape

- Capture the Dark photo contest winners
- Our 2024 Impact Report and financials
- 6 new International Dark Sky Places
- + more

Nightscape magazine: [DOWNLOAD TO READ ISSUE 121 HERE](#)

- see Australian winner of the Capture the Dark photo contest - read the credit in *Urban Night Sky Conservation* section

# Contents: Summer 25-26

## ON THE COVER

Munibung Hill inspired music  
Walk With Me Talk2mebro  
Be a bug detective  
Close-ups with Ray Woods  
Tik-tok is engaging a new generation  
Greening the city  
From Czechoslovakia to Munibung Hill  
Hole in lighting standards  
Munibung Hill is our teacher

## FEATURES

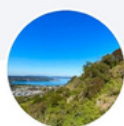
Genuine attempt to make a difference  
Nightscape  
Nature is good for you  
Master of Macro  
Let's go E & E Walking  
Attentive Walking  
Rogaining training?  
Treasures of Munibung Hill  
Break the monotony of footpaths  
Not your ordinary creek catchment  
Hollowing out houses for native species  
It's worth remembering  
Installing a cat flat  
1 percent for nature  
Blending with nature  
Cute little creatures  
Munibung Hill is a deep time landscape  
Ancient Greeks knew about climate impacts  
A message to tree killers  
URBAN NIGHT SKY CONSERVATION

## REGULARS

Comment  
Briefings  
Retrospective  
Observology & Citizen Science  
Visitors & Walkers  
Caring for Country  
On the Verge  
Read, Listen, Noteworthy  
Bigger history



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Facebook at .



Munibung Hill Trails  
275 likes • 305 followers

On the cover:  
Pacific Baza (*Aviceda subcristata*) - also known as the Crested Hawk - see story at Through the lens with Eddie, page 10 *Photo credit: Eddie Bernard / Munibung Hill song cover sheet Credit: Maureen O'Brien*

Munibung Hill Conservation Society advocates for the protection of Munibung Hill as a place of great significance for first peoples. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We work to achieve recognition for this land as being occupied by Aboriginal people of the Awabakal nation that was never ceded.



BROWN BACKED MARSH HAWK



## Munibung Hill Conservation Society

Munibung Hill Conservation Society is a not-for-profit organisation. The Society has no paid staff. The generous contribution of people volunteering their time and expertise is how the Society is able to deliver on its Vision for Munibung Hill.

Projects that align with the Society's goals and contribute to building a Nature Positive future are supported on a case-by-case basis. Some of these are conducted in a partnership manner with other groups. Advocacy is the primary means by which the Vision and projects are delivered.

Financial contributions are appreciated. Offers of help are welcome.

The name Munibung Hill was gazetted at the NSW Geographical Names Board on December 23, 1977. There is no record of why this name was chosen. It was not the given name by the Awabakal people, on whose Country she is located. Kona-konaba was the original name, meaning place of ochre.

Kona-konaba is situated within an area administered by the [Biraban](#) Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), one of five LALCs within Awabakal Country. More background information [About Munibung Hill](#) on the MHCS website.

Munibung Musings (MM) is published as a digital magazine by Munibung Hill Conservation Society (MHCS). Produced as a bi-monthly MM, along with the MHCS website it is one of the means by which the Society advocates for the conservation and protection of Munibung Hill / Konna-konaba, as a significant geological and ecological landscape with immense cultural heritage values.

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In addition to our Vision for Munibung Hill the Society aims to advance a community of well-informed people who are committed to and passionate about finding science based solutions to the many threats confronting the natural world for which we have accepted responsibility and - in recognition that we are all intertwined - the wider world beyond, including night sky conservation.

## Forgetting does us no favoures

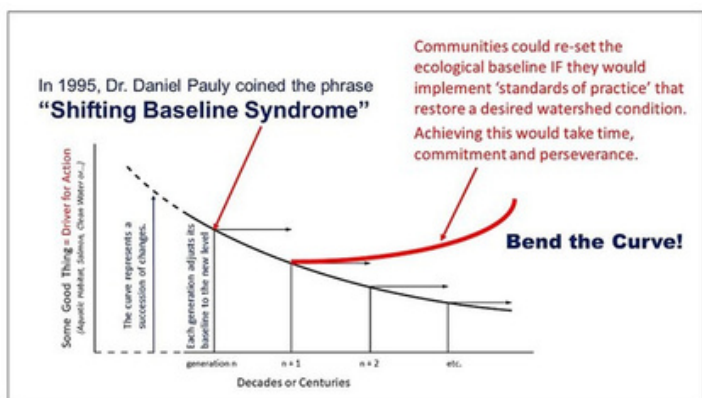
WE'VE MANAGED to get ourselves into a bit of a pickle, not necessarily conscious of it and not with the intention of doing harm. But doing harm it is.

It's known as the Shifting Baseline Phenomena (SBP), a personal and collective forgetting or amnesia, that acts as a blindfold to what has happened over time.

For example, the seemingly small, supposedly inconsequential rise in temperatures, as if such small incremental changes make little or no difference, all the while ignoring that when our body temperature changes by ever so minute amounts we are diagnosed as having a fever, with potentially life threatening results - seeking medical help to control the symptoms and hopefully get to the bottom of what underlying issues there might be and a long term remedy.

We alluded to SB in the Briefings section of Issue 52, but we think it's worth covering in more depth here with illustrations and a transcript and this reference from EcoHustler.

The good news is that we can Bend the Curve. We can recalibrate the Shifting Baseline from a downward to an upward trajectory, as shown ..



<https://ecohustler.com/nature/shifting-baseline-syndrome>

Shifting baseline Phenomena has been referred to as 'environmental generational amnesia' and defined as 'a gradual change in the accepted norms for the condition of the natural environment due to a lack of experience, memory and/or knowledge of its past condition'.

*It is a psychological and sociological phenomenon where this generational or personal forgetting results in people's perceptions of biodiversity loss or environmental degradation being out of kilter with actual loss.*

It is reflected by a tendency of people to think about the state of the environment based on their experience of it as children, rather than the longer term time scales environmental change has been occurring.

This means subsequent generations are likely to accept an ever more diminished environment as the new normal, with people's accepted thresholds for environmental conditions being lowered over time without them realizing it. In this way, shifting baseline syndrome builds on itself, with its outcomes exacerbating it still further. More references >>

## SKI

*IT'S COMMONLY referred to as Spending the Kids Inheritance (SKI).*

Inheritance meaning to spend whatever financial savings might have been accumulated during a person's or families' working life, that won't end being part of what the kids get when we die.

SKI seems to be an action of pride for many - as if it's an honour to run down the balance of the accounts that would usually be passed on to one's children.

But this is a very narrow and jaundiced view of what inheritance ought to mean if we were caring responsible parents with a custodial philosophy guiding our decision-making - of a wholistic nature.

*Surely inheritance ought to include all those aspects of life that we enjoy in terms of water quality, air quality, soil health, forests, a civil society, equality, citizen science, education, public facilities like libraries and parks and gardens, good governance, wildlife habitat, and all the other amenities we've come to expect.*

None of these just came about by chance or good luck. In many instances they have been the result of careful planning and an acceptance that they underpin what it is to live in an advanced society.

They won't last without care and attention. They should not be taken for granted.

We have been witnessing the undermining of these over many years and to think that we should continue this downward spiral by Spending the Kids Inheritance, not only in a money sense but also ecologically and civilly should be more than a wake-up call.

A call to action would be a better descriptor. To put a stop to the rot - be it pollution of land, water and sky or be it the spreading of fake news, or be it the decline in public participation and engagement with elected representatives.

These are all issues that need attention far more than following glitz and glamour of 'influencers' as portrayed on social and free to air media.

*At the end of the day, SKI will be either leaving a legacy of values or a litany of litter and loss.*

We can't give our children what we don't have, however we might interpret the word 'have'.

There's an old adage, save it, you have it, spend it, it's gone. Careful how we interpret spend, since every dollar spent comes with an ecological price tag attached.

There's no avoiding this truth. Money is a human construct that has little value in and of itself.

Only when it is spent do we materialise and find out what a dollar is 'worth'. MM

### Hidden crisis no one sees coming

[https://www.sciencenewstoday.org/the-hidden-crisis-no-one-sees-is-earth-slowly-falling-apart#google\\_vignette](https://www.sciencenewstoday.org/the-hidden-crisis-no-one-sees-is-earth-slowly-falling-apart#google_vignette)

**Earth at risk: An urgent call to end the age of destruction and forge a just and sustainable future ... Read [HERE](#)**

[Watch video at LINK next page ..](#)

## How to overturn generation- al amnesia to revitalise our ecological heritage

*What the Shifting Baseline  
Phenomenon is - transcript of 65  
second video that sums up SBP*

Watch the [VIDEO AT THIS LINK](#) - follow the transcript reproduced here ...

IMAGINE YOUR great grandparents who lived by a river that was so clean and clear you could drink from it.

A wild river home to many species  
As the years pass pollution changes the river, but your parents' generation still happily swim in it, not remembering a time when you could put your head under.

Now it's you who live by the river – you like the quiet though there's not much to see and the water will give you a rash.

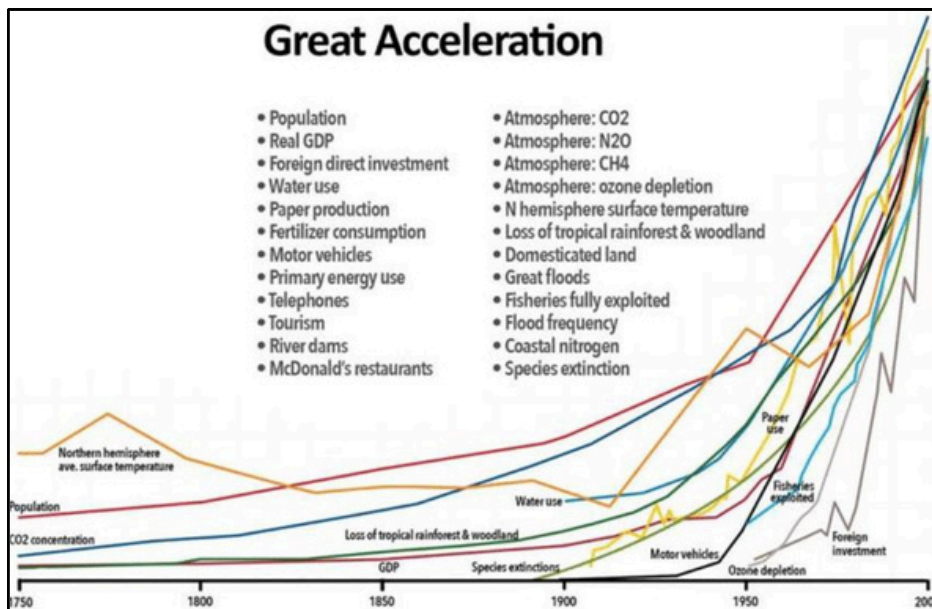
Shifting baseline syndrome is a generational forgetting, that leaves us expecting less of the natural world. It's so dangerous because it's invisible.

Each new generation doesn't know what it's lost, and so accepts a diminished world.

But baselines can go both ways, through education and community engagement, environmental protection and restoration, we can head towards a world that is brimming with life.

By understanding what is lost, we can make way for its return.

The "Great Acceleration" of consumption that is stressing the earth's natural systems. Source of image: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/275775177167542214/>



## Raising Eco-Aware Children

WE NEED TO TEACH our kids different ways in which they can contribute to saving the environment. Kids observe adults and learn from us. Therefore, we equally must practice what we preach.

Nature is like our home. We keep our homes clean and beautiful so we can live healthfully, happily and creatively.

The same with nature, we must respect nature and protect her with the same care that we give to our homes and personal hygiene.

*Some key points to note ...*

- Nature is threatened today due to overconsumption, population explosion, and pollution.
- As responsible citizens, we need to take steps to protect and preserve our nature and our environment.
- Similarly, we must teach our kids right from a young age to protect our environment.
- Help children to understand the importance of trees and water resources.
- Educate them about the threats our environment faces.
- Help a child save energy by giving them simple tasks and challenges.
- Inspire your children to reuse or recycle their old belongings.
- Encourage them to spread awareness about protecting nature among their friends and in their neighborhood.

Let us pledge to educate and encourage children to protect and save nature.



## Can we evolve to be other than invasive?

**Who's the real invasive species: us or them? Ecologists are rethinking urban biodiversity**, by Carlyn Zwarenstein, [Yahoo News](#) June 15, 2025

THE ANIMALS who cohabit with humans, whether we appreciate their presence or not, are changing. There's been an increase in invasive species — that can bring dramatic and often destructive changes, including driving other species to extinction.

But here's the thing: Invasive species don't stop evolving themselves - adapting behaviorally, physically and genetically to life in cities as well.

While invasive species pose major public health implications and can certainly affect humans' quality of life, their adaptive abilities can rival those of human migrants and pose a puzzling question: Who's the real invader here?

Brian Verrelli, a professor in the Center of Biological Data Science at Virginia Commonwealth University, sees many of these questions as philosophical.

"What does it mean to invade something?" he asked in a video interview.

"What does it mean for humans to invade one area or another? Are there areas that we invade, or are humans welcome freely to move around the planet? We know that's the case in some places, and not the case in others.

"It's a bit of an interesting, hypocritical conversation," Verrelli added, given that "we are facilitating the movement of these organisms around the planet."

*"For a long time, most ecologists didn't treat urban areas as 'natural' environments, because humans lived in them. If we don't believe humans are part of the natural world, we're in trouble."*

## Human society is out of wack with nature

**Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries monitors a world out of balance,** Andrew Fanning & Kate Raworth

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY the predominant conception of progress came to focus on raising standards of living through the pursuit of economic growth, measured as an increase in the GDP of nations<sup>6,7</sup>.

An emerging twenty-first century conception of progress is focused on far more holistic ambitions, such as well-being<sup>8</sup>, sustainable development<sup>9</sup>, prosperity<sup>10</sup> and planetary health<sup>11</sup>.

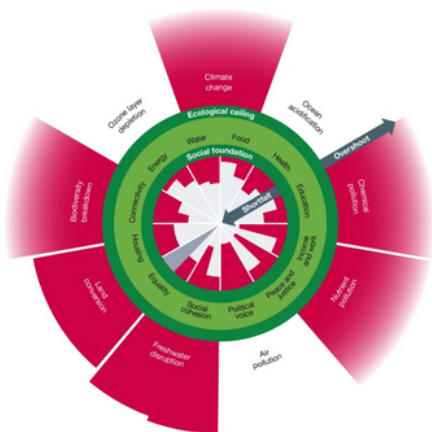
These emergent Western-based conceptions reflect notions of socio-ecological balance that have long been central to many Indigenous worldviews<sup>12</sup>.

Integral to all of them is a commitment to meeting the essential needs of all people while protecting the stability of Earth's life-supporting systems, on which all life depends.

The doughnut-shaped framework of social and planetary boundaries (commonly known as the Doughnut) provides a concise visual illustration and quantification of progress towards achieving these dual objective.

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

Fig. 1: Current global status of shortfall and overshoot in the Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries.



**Jane Goodall adopted a plant-based diet back in the 1960s: It was key to her activism and a long, healthy life,** Renée Onque, CNBC, Oct 4 2025

Goodall's dedication to her work and the health of the planet even trickled down to her diet. "I stopped eating meat some 50 years ago when I looked at the pork chop on my plate and thought: this represents fear, pain, death," she wrote in an essay in 2017.

"That did it, and I went plant-based instantly."

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Nature in cities improves livability

**Kylie Soanes is an urban ecologist on a mission to prove nature belongs in our cities,** by Rhiannon Stevens, ABC News, 29 September ..



"We have to move past this 'houses or species' dichotomy; it's ridiculous and damaging," Soanes (pictured above) says in a social media video post.

Soanes, who is a research fellow at The University of Melbourne, wants to save the plants and animals that cling to life in our cities and towns.

"Part of the reason I started doing social media was to gauge how true it is when a politician or a layman tells me that conservation isn't important to the average person," Soanes tells the ABC.

Everyone, she believes, should have access to nature where they live.

"It should be like a public service."

"There's something really wholesome and self-healing in caring for living things that aren't yourself as well," Soanes says.

"People should be able to walk to the bus stop and see a fairy wren or have a chuckle with a galah that's doing flips on the power line. It has a huge impact on livability and mental health." [FULL STORY HERE](#)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's bond to this country is long, strong and continuous.

**From ABC News DEEP TIME**

Songlines pass on stories of megafauna that roamed thousands of years ago. [Story HERE](#)

World's largest collection of rock art at Murujuga depicts continuing culture over tens of thousands of years. [Story HERE](#)

## When art meets nature

**Artist Cleverly Blends Humans and Nature in Commentary About Harmony in the Environment,** by [Jessica Stewart](#), [My Modern Met](#), June 16, 2025.



## A strange kind of intelligence

Munibung Hill and all her species - funga, flora, fauna - have been evolving in the cosmic design process for millenia.

For centuries Aboriginal people cohabited with Munibung Hill.

But this was considered primitive by a group of new comers claiming higher intelligence who have over-ridden this living culture in both a literal and practical sense. In the last 100 years or so, they have been stuffing things up on a grand scale.

Here we are now wondering and dithering about how we might clean up the mess. MM

## Pets

CATS AND DOGS hunt, it is a natural instinct for them.

Unfortunately, this means they often hunt native birds, lizards and mammals.

Most wildlife killed by roaming pet cats is caught close to their homes.

Often a captured bird or possum will appear undamaged but, almost certainly, it will die within 36 hours from shock or infection. Cats can also carry Toxoplasmosis, a disease which can devastate wildlife populations.

(extract from *Backyard Habitat for Wildlife*, page 8, a Lake Mac Council publication)

YouTube Video: Munibung Hill - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6yMye8G-Cc>

# Munibung Hill inspired music



*Maureen O'Brien is an accomplished songwriter, singer and performer who has been writing and performing for over 30 years. Maureen's reasons for penning this song ..*

I wrote this piece of music to support the efforts of the Munibung Hill Conservation Society. Munibung Hill, like so many of the beautiful places in our land has long been in the sight of developers ... geologically she is 251million years old, is a haven for native wildlife and native flora, including threatened species, and is a spiritual ground for the Awabakal people. More information can be found at

[www.munibunghill.com](http://www.munibunghill.com) ...

If you're ever in the Lake Macquarie or Newcastle region, take the opportunity to visit.

LISTEN AT THESE LINKS ..

Bandcamp: Munibung Hill - <https://maureenobrien.bandcamp.com/>

Click on the Rise 'n Reprise Album to scroll to the track;

YouTube Video: Munibung Hill - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6yMye8G-Cc>

MORE ABOUT MAUREEN ..

Website: [www.maureen.com.au](http://www.maureen.com.au)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mymaureenobrien](https://www.facebook.com/mymaureenobrien)

Bandcamp: <https://maureenobrien.bandcamp.com/>

YOUTUBE links: ...

Music: [www.youtube.com/@mozluminous](https://www.youtube.com/@mozluminous)

Comedy: [www.youtube.com/@sidestepcomedy](https://www.youtube.com/@sidestepcomedy)

Stories <https://www.youtube.com/@MeetingArts2300>

## MUNIBUNG HILL

Composed and recorded by Maureen O'Brien

### LYRICS

On the northern shores of Lake Macquarie, where Munibung Hill stands tall

Protecting her own, her creatures, her caves, her creeks  
Where the Long Neck Tortoise plays hide & seek,  
with the shy Echidna that sneaks out for a peek  
When the Eastern Whipbird calls.

Growing up as kids on Munibung Hill, we could spend hours being explorers just like Burke + Wills  
Flaneuring on the Hill was where we got our fill, of adventure 'n nature, 'n days of play  
As Mum's would say, that'd chase the Blues away,  
get yourself up on Munibung Hill

If you take a walk up on Munibung Hill  
You can see Pulbah Island from Munibung Hill  
Once there were paperbark trees so high,  
you could climb up on branches and near touch the sky  
Now they're all gone and we're still asking WHY we could let them desecrate Munibung Hill.

### BRIDGE

Generations have been raised in the shade of the Hill,  
the spiritual home of the Awabakal  
Who needs Wordsworth's crowds of daffodils,  
when we've got the views on Munibung Hill?

You can sing your heart out on Munibung Hill,  
the wind will echo it back I can hear it still  
It's calling to me....it's calling to you...  
the Hill is asking what we're gonna do  
To preserve this place for generations too.....  
this haven called Munibung hill

A sanctuary, that's Munibung Hill, connected with community ...  
integrated with community....belonging to community  
WE'RE IN UNITY ....WITH MUNIBUNG HILL.



### Credits:

From Rise~Reprise: A Single Collection, released Sept. 29, 2024  
Words 'n music Maureen O'Brien  
Mandolin & Dobro Robbie Long  
Guitar Maureen O'Brien  
Recorded at Funky Lizard Studio,  
Recording by Robbie Long  
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# From Czechoslovakia to Munibung Hill as back neighbour. This family is in contact with nature every day

*It was a damp spring afternoon when we met up with Ivan Young at his home overlooking the Hawkins Creek catchment on the south-western side of Munibung Hill - the cliff face providing an imposing outlook.*

IVAN TELLS us that, over the years Munibung Hill has been a source of fascinating changes that take place within a geological, botanical and zoological context.

“We moved into this Speers Point area near Munibung Hill in 1977,” recalls Ivan. “The move from Hamilton was made easy because we liked the idea of living on a block that was right next door to a nature reserve.”

When Ivan moved to the area in the 70s, there was a lot less tree cover, than there is today.

“We could see the flat part of the quarry quite clearly from our house veranda.”

“At the time, we had two boys, so Munibung Hill became the place where we often used to take them walking and exploring.”

“Back then at Munibung Hill we used to walk up to the quarry that in those days was called Brown Quarry, because as the story goes from local people at the time, there was a tragic incident that took place there - but that was long before our time.”

“The quarry wasn’t operating when we first moved here, but Council reopened it to get gravel for widening of The Esplanade around the lake at Speers Point.”

“For anyone walking along the track at the bottom of the cliff face, if you look up, you can see a series of terraces, towards the top,” said Ivan.

“Those terraces were created by bulldozers that pushed the conglomerate at the top, over the cliff face. From there it would be loaded onto trucks for the road base. Once this was over, the quarry was closed again.”

“Back in those days – the mid-1980s - the cliff was bare and during heavy rain there were four waterfalls.”

“After the quarry closed for the last time, Council undertook a large rehabilitation program of the area, planting trees and shrubs on the terraces about half way down the cliff face. All that forested bushland area you can see today is the result of what Council did – and most people wouldn’t know any of this - it’s important that we give them credit for doing it,” Ivan says.

“We don’t have many photos from this time, but there is one showing Hawkins Hereford cattle on the flats next to the creek, and there’s a small tree - it’s still there today, but it’s much bigger now.”

“Mr Hawkins every so often came down in his Range Rover to check the cattle. According to him this area was his property, but as shown on maps it is actually a Council reserve.”

“There were some children in the neighbourhood that were the same age as our boys - born in 1975.”

“I had an old 1942 army jeep back then. I used to take the boys up through the gravel quarries at the end of Hopkins Street. We’d go to the highest point at the northern end of Munibung Hill to where the towers are now, but not then,” recalls Ivan.



A series of terraces part way up the cliff face. And the bare area and waterfalls after heavy rain.  
Credit: Ivan Young





The bare cliff face with terraces on the left, and Hawkins' Hereford cattle in the paddock next to the creek.  
*Photo credits: Ivan Young*



Hawkins Creek appears dry which it is on the surface but like most streams, out of sight but running nevertheless, there is water underground.



"Of course the track is closed to anyone wanting to drive there now, but you can still easily walk there."

"This block where we are now used to be part of a larger property that was a stone fruit orchard, we think peaches. It was owned by a Mr Atkin, thus the name of the street and the next street over is Elva Street, which was Mr Atkin's wife's name."

When Ivan looks back to the time of buying the block, the developer had previously levelled the land on both sides of Hawkins Creek.

"It means that a lot of plants would've been cleared, and the animals would've lost their habitat."

So what we might think of today as being natural, is not in fact what it must have been like at the turn of century or before European settlement.

"There were lots of bandicoots when we arrived here. We had a little vegetable garden in which we had cabbages and the hearts were being eaten. Since there were rabbits in the area I assumed they were doing the damage. So I set a rabbit trap. But one day when we went to check the trap, there was a bandicoot caught in the trap. But we don't see any bandicoots now. There are still rabbits and we see some foxes."

"Every so often some swamp wallabies come down to graze on the grass."

"Of course there are the usual birds such as Kookaburras – a family nested in the cliff face for a long time\*. Magpies, Sea Eagles, and Red tailed Black Cockatoos come down here as well." [\*Editor: See story by Margaret Martin in an earlier issue of Munibung Musings.]

"There used to be a flock of tiny birds around here for a long time – we think they were wrens or finches – but places for them to nest and get protection is a real problem. We don't see them anymore."

"There are heaps of Eastern Water Dragons. Some have become very friendly visitors to our house. And it's good to have some blue tongued lizards, but we've never seen a tortoise or echidna for example."

"I think Munibung Hill is a very important area that should be protected," said Ivan.

"When you think about the number of people who've come to visit over all these years, people obviously consider it to be a great community area. It's nice to know there is a Management Plan for Munibung Hill, but unless something comes of it, then the community can't benefit from it."

"I think that Council really needs to upgrade some of the tracks – to make the area more family friendly."

"Margaret and Ernie Martin are neighbours to us. Many years ago they took a group of people to explore a section of Hawkins Creek. Margaret informed us it contained a Permian Gully Rainforest community. To think that we have plant species dating back millions of years, right here in Speers Point is incredible," Ivan says.

NOTE:

Ivan Young was born in Czechoslovakia in March 1947. He landed in Australia with \$1 US to his name. "I had a spare pair of undies, spare socks and wearing a shirt and suit with a leather jacket. That was it." The Czechoslovakia of his birth has since been divided into two republics – Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. Ivan migrated to Australia in 1969. When he left his homeland, he was taken to a camp in Vienna with a plan to migrate to Canada, but the quota was full, so to cut a long story short, Ivan chose Sydney as his destination. A decision he has never regretted.

People who pay particular attention to what's going on in relation to a particular aspect of nature, a fungi, a plant, an animal, or ecosystem. "A person who is a 'looker-er' would be: Tiwalinga." - Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre, Boolaroo.

## Through the lens with Eddie ...



**Editor:** Our series of observations from Eddie Bernard continues ...

**EDDIE BERNARD:** (Top) Got these shots of a Pacific Baza (*Aviceda subcristata*) - also known as the Crested Hawk - yesterday (5 October). Lucky shooting. I have seen this Hawk since 1998 on about 5 occasions. Not sure if it's normally here or just visits from time to time. Length between 35cm and 48cm, wing span about 1 metre. It's a matter of being in the right place at the right time. When it happens, it makes the waiting worthwhile. Spotted a second P Baza. I believe they are a pair as they were dancing in the sky together grabbing each other by their talons and rotating in mid air. Then they'd separate and call to each other. I hope they nest nearby so I can keep an eye on them.

(Left) On a walk this morning (13 October) and came across an old friend this Eastern Bearded Dragon (*Pogona barbata*) nice size about 50 cm in length. The harsh, spiky appearance of these lizards belie their normally placid temperament. They might look scary but they're fine.



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# Close-ups with Ray Woods



Rosy maple moths have fluffy antennae.  
chelsealynne/iNaturalist, CC BY-NC

**What's the difference between moths and butterflies? Look at their antennae,** Caitlyn Forster, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Sydney, The Conversation, October 8, 2025

As the weather warms up you might notice the pleasant flutter of butterflies in your garden during the day. If you've left a porch light on during the night, you might see a flurry of moths have gathered around it.

To an untrained eye, these fluttering insects can seem similar. And indeed, both are from the order of insects called Lepidoptera, which roughly translates to "scaly wings".

The wings of butterflies and moths are covered in microscopic scales - important for providing these insects with their beautiful colours, and they're the cause of the "dust" that often comes off moths when handled or found in the back of a pantry.

What makes a moth a moth and a butterfly a butterfly? It's a lot to do with the antennae. Learn [HERE](#)

### How can we help moths and butterflies?

Our fluttering insects face many threats, including pesticide use, climate change and habitat loss. Planting a range of flowers in your garden can help provide food and habitat for moths and butterflies.

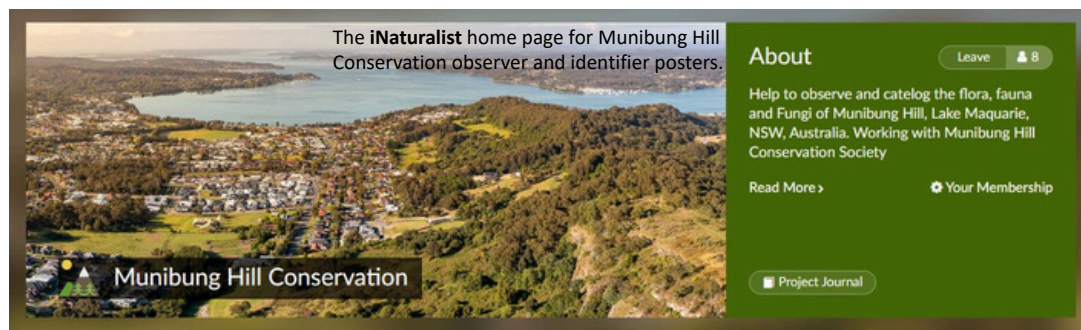
Upload sightings you see onto apps like iNaturalist.



AUSTRALIAN GARDEN ORB WEAVING SPIDER



BROWN BACKED MARSH HAWK



# How TikTok is engaging a new generation

*Darryl Jones is not your ordinary bird nerd, he's one of the most down to earth, likeable blokes you could ever meet.*

He is a person who can engage with anyone at any level and he's a master at bridging divides within society. Writing in: **The remarkable rise of eBird – the world's biggest citizen science project**, *The Conversation*, October 8, 2025, Darryl reports:

"You know what I find astonishing about this data?" says Chris Wood, who is the [eBird](#) program manager, the flagship program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, located in Ithaca, New York State. "It's that the so-called experts, the professional researchers and consultants and full-time birders, people like us, provided a trivial proportion of all this data."

*"What is genuinely exciting is that almost all of it was submitted by ordinary birders dedicating their time to recording birds wherever they are and submitting them. People like this."*

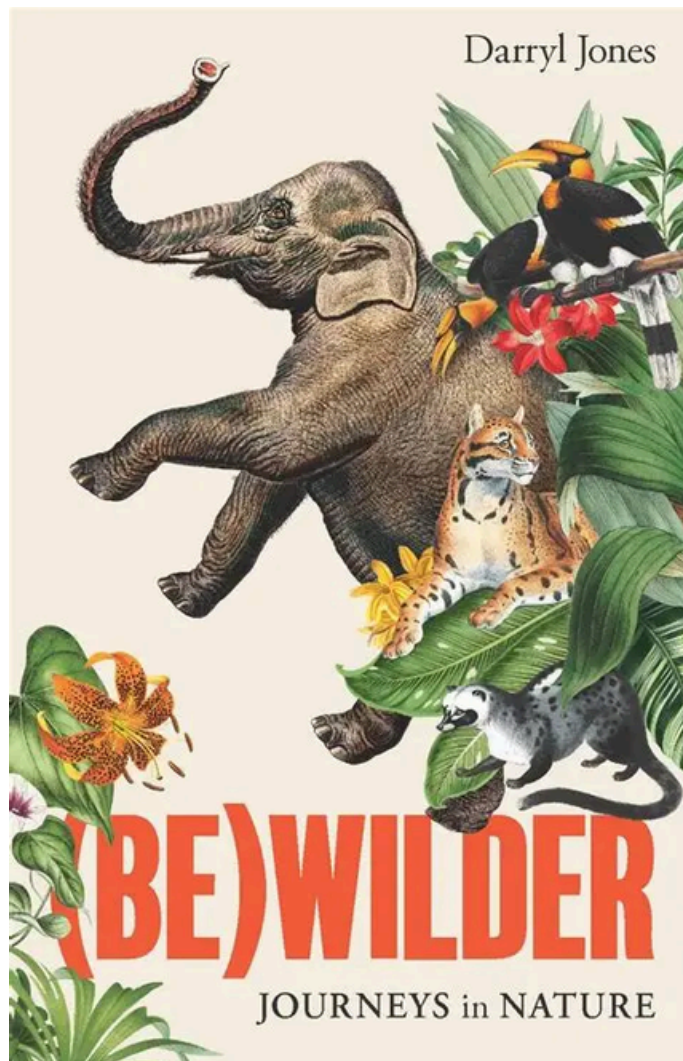
The map vanishes and a video starts. It's a TikTok "story", so we are told. Many of us would not know TikTok from Instagram. But the people on the screen certainly do!

A rapidly changing gallery of young people appears. Moving to the beat of the soundtrack, they talk enthusiastically about bird identification.

With staccato editing and pulsating music, kids as young as ten rave about the Merlin app, how to use it and what makes it so cool. (Merlin allows anyone to identify any bird around the world on their phone by using guide-book-type identifying features as well as the species calls.)

These are kids! Rapping about bird ID! And giving advice on how to get your ID right! It is a stark example of how much the image of birding has changed. Read the full story [HERE](#)

*eBird is now by far the biggest citizen science project ever undertaken.*



*But it's important to remember all this is only possible because untrained, ordinary folks from literally every country in the world have been willing to sign up and send in their sightings.*



Measure sky quality with a smart phone. Here are the apps for Android and iPhone devices ..

Loss of the Night, sky quality meter for Android  
[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cosalux.welovestars&hl=en\\_AU](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cosalux.welovestars&hl=en_AU)

Night Sky Quality app for iPhone  
<https://darksky.org/resources/software/>

# If we ever have doubts about what nature is good for, this poster should allay those doubts

## And the story by Belinda Turner reminds us that 'nature is our teacher'

**Good For Bodies**

Children who spend more time outside...

- are more physically active.
- have ↓er BMIs.
- are less likely to develop myopia.
- have improved motor abilities.

Sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical health.  
*(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008)*

**Good For Minds**

**NATURE ACTIVITIES...**

- Boost cognitive functioning!**   
"More recess time & greener playgrounds might also enable children to learn more effectively, and improve a child's ability to concentrate in the classroom!"  
- Dr. Martha Erickson
- Reduces stress!**  
 One study found that the presence of nearby nature bolsters a child's resilience against stress and adversity.
- Soothe ADHD!**  
In a study, green outdoor activities reduced ADHD symptoms significantly more than activities in other settings - even when the activities were the same!

**Good For Families**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FAMILIES "UNPLUG"?

"...because the natural world is filled with sights, sounds, and smells that ignite a young child's curiosity and invite active exploration, being outdoors also can make it easy for a parent to follow the child's lead, to respond to the child's cues and expressed interest, to share the child's delight in new discoveries & experiences - the very ingredients shown to lead to a secure attachment."  
- Dr. Martha Erickson

"In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught."  
- Baba Dioum, Senegalese conservationist

**Good For Schools**

**78%** children who spend regular time in unstructured outdoor play are better able to concentrate and perform better in the classroom!

students who spend regular time outdoors tend to be more creative and better able to problem solve in the classroom! **75%**

A 2005 study of middle schools that linked the environment with the syllabus saw...

- 22%** ↓ in absenteeism
- 56%** ↓ in discipline referrals

**Good For The Planet**

Children who make connections with nature become adults who value the environment.

**Nature is good for you!**

# More than an excursion destination, Munibung Hill is our teacher

*Slowing down and careful observation is helping build a deep sense of connection, awareness and appreciation for Munibung Hill. Belinda Turner\* wraps up the year with an inspiring story ...*

Over our recent visits to Munibung Hill, the children of **Woodrising Natural Learning Centre** have continued their journey as nature observers, citizen scientists, and caretakers of Country.

Each trip has built upon the last, growing the children's knowledge, deepening their sensory awareness, and strengthening their relationship with the hill they now know so well.

Over our last few visits, we have intentionally focused on slowing down and noticing the details that are easy to miss.

'Sit spots' have been a powerful part of this learning. We extended on this by asking children to select a tree to get to know intimately, engaging all their senses as they observed.

What does the bark feel like?

Does the tree smell sweet, earthy, or smoky?

Can we hear the leaves rubbing, or the trunk creaking in the wind?

Children recorded their impressions by drawing, writing, and discussing with their educators and volunteers what they discovered.

*This deliberate sensory work is helping them stop and notice things they wouldn't have otherwise seen as well as building a deeper understanding and connection to the space.*

As we've wandered the tracks, we've sampled bush tuckers that were in season. Geebung fruits that were finally ready for consumption, and sticky black wattle sap that we call 'nature's chewing gum'.

These experiences and the conversations that surround them, help children understand how First Nations peoples have engaged with and cared for this land for thousands of years.

Our ongoing work in a Landcare site remains a priority. On recent visits, the children were thrilled to see evidence that our bug homes and bird shelters are being used.

Spider webs layer the bug hotels, and bird droppings are scattered around the shelters.

These signs of use reinforce to the children that their work matters. Their creations have become part of the habitat.



Photo credits: Belinda Turner





The Lomandra we planted last year are thriving with fresh new growth, showing the children how patient care leads to long-term change.

This month, we extended our restoration work by learning how to make native seed bombs.

Using grass tree seeds, crimson bottlebrush, geebung, gymea lily, and native hibiscus, the children created hand-rolled seed bundles to disperse on a local Landcare site.

Each plant was chosen in consultation with volunteers and with intention, knowing they are food and shelter sources for local wildlife.

*The children are beginning to understand that every plant has a purpose within the wider network of species at Munibung Hill.*

Perched high on a large rock, we stopped to listen to bird calls. Using field guides, the children worked together to identify each species and talk about the behaviour they were observing.

Their confidence in using guides has grown enormously, as has their ability to discuss what they notice.

We also stopped to collect red ochre and smooth river rocks. Grinding the ochre into pigment sparked conversations about how natural materials have been used for thousands of years for art and ceremony.

Venturing along a new high track led us into what felt like a different ecosystem, new plants, different colours, textures and scents.

The spotted gums on this side of the hill had recently shed their bark, leaving white trunks glowing against the bush. We were captivated by how different one part of Munibung Hill can feel from another.

*Across our visits, a common thread is emerging. The children are learning how to observe, question, interpret and care.*

They are noticing more and are developing a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of plants, animals, people and place.

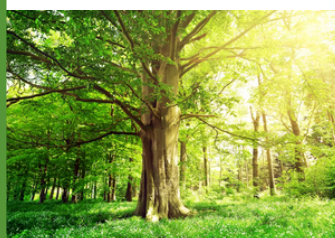
Munibung Hill is more than an excursion destination, she is our teacher.

\*Belinda Turner is Co-Director of Woodrising Natural Learning Centre.

## SEASONS GREETING

This is the Summer Solstice time of year that butts up against a widely celebrated cultural tradition.

To our many members, subscribers and friends whatever your practice may be, we wish you and your family a very happy and restful festive season.



### Could trees know when the summer solstice is?

[Andrew Hacket-Pain](#), School of Environmental Sciences, University of Liverpool. *The Conversation*, June 19, 2025, thns the answer is yes. [FULL ARTICLE](#)

PEOPLE HAVE been celebrating [the summer solstice](#) with elaborate rituals since prehistoric times. But humans aren't the only species to take mark the date as a special time. Research is showing the summer solstice is an important cue for plants too.

Recent studies, have proposed that trees may use the longest day of the year as a key marker for their growth and reproductive cycles. The solstice seems to act like a calendar reminder for trees.

# To be a bug detective, one little bugger at a time

*For too long we've taken for granted what role invertebrates play in keeping us alive and well.*



Cicada, katydid or mantis? This year's ABC [Australian Insect of the Year](#) campaign had a diverse collection of finalists. (Supplied: Deb Taylor; Julian Finn; Keith Martin-Smith)



The graphic flutterer dragonfly is the 2025 ABC [Australian Insect of the Year](#). (iNaturalist: Graham Winterflood/CC BY-SA)

## Step into the hidden world just beyond your doorstep!

WITH ONLY your phone and a curious eye, you can join thousands of Australians uncovering the extraordinary invertebrates that live in our gardens, parks and schoolyards.

Each photo you upload to Bug Hunt Australia on iNaturalist adds to vital knowledge – helping protect lesser-known but critical species and detect invasive species before they spread.

By taking part, you become part of a national movement of everyday people contributing to real science and wildlife protection.

Bug Hunt is a national citizen-science initiative led by the Invasive Species Council and Invertebrates Australia. No special expertise is needed – just a phone and some curiosity!



Bug Hunt can be something we do at anytime, not only during Bug Hunt week in November. Taking part is easy– and fun!

Spend a few minutes or make it your daily mission – each snap you share on iNaturalist helps protect Australia's wildlife.

### Look:

Head into your backyard, local park or schoolyard and look closely.

### Snap:

Take photos of any invertebrates you spot on your adventures, from butterflies and bees, to spiders, worms and snails.

### Discover:

Submit your photos to Bug Hunt Australia on iNaturalist and learn more about your discovery!



In this hectic paced world where there doesn't seem to be time to appreciate the ordinary and with so much emphasis on human creations, art, buildings lit up at night, fireworks displays, the list goes on, let's bring back a word that's not in the regular lexicon, 'marvel'. To marvel. In this case, to marvel at those things we can easily overlook, take for granted. Our interest to revisit MARVEL was piqued by this story: **Will you look at that! Why we are delighted by random, beautiful marvels**, Patti Miller. The Guardian, April 6, 2025. Patti's story is [HERE](#)

# MASTER OF MACRO



## Sugar ant portrait

This is a close-up of the head of a Sugar ant (left), likely a (*Camponotus consobrinus*) species, which are common in Australia. These ants are also commonly known as sugar ants due to their attraction to sweet foods. They are not known to sting but can bite.

Sugar ants vary in size and colour, ranging from 5 to 15mm in length.

More at Wikipedia .. [HERE](#)

Photo credit: Copyright .. Bill Chambers, 2025

Below ..

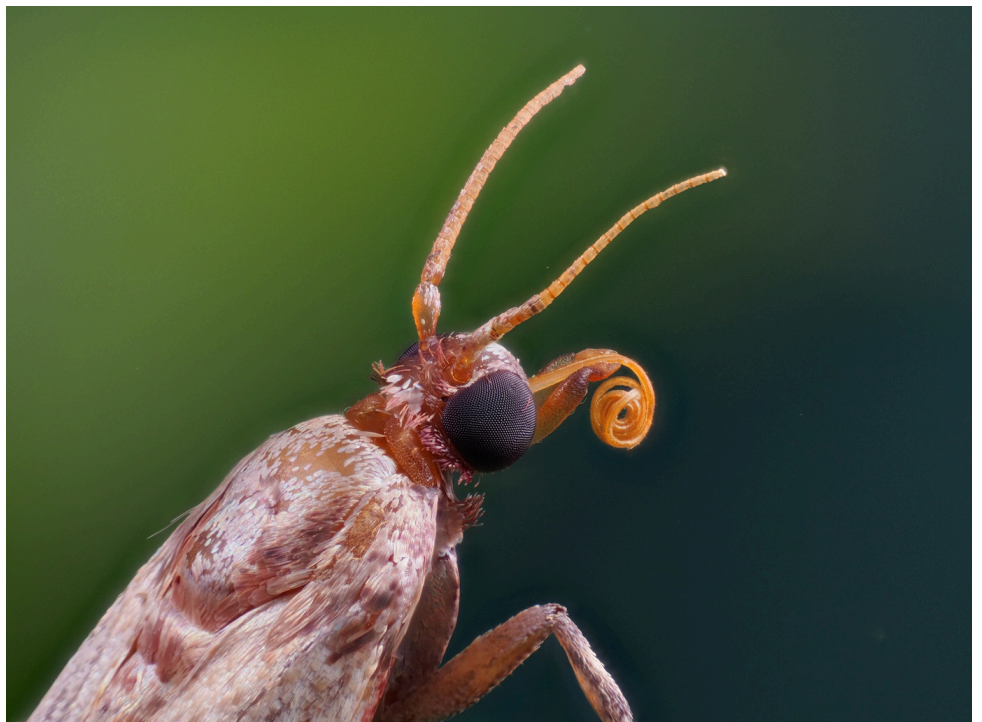
Tiny moth

## What attracts Bill Chambers to Macro?

*Macro photography showcases subjects in a way that most people never see them - 'larger than life'.*

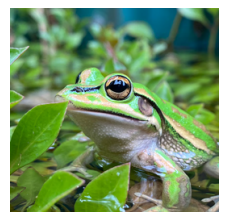
"Focusing on extreme close-ups of tiny subjects allows the photographer to reveal intricate details and colours. The goal is to capture the texture and beauty of this miniature world, turning the ordinary into the extraordinary," says Bill.

My equipment on the day was an Olympus EM-5ii with 14-150mm f2.8 lens on larger subjects, and a 60mm f2.8 Macro lens for the tiny ones.



## Recording frog calls for science

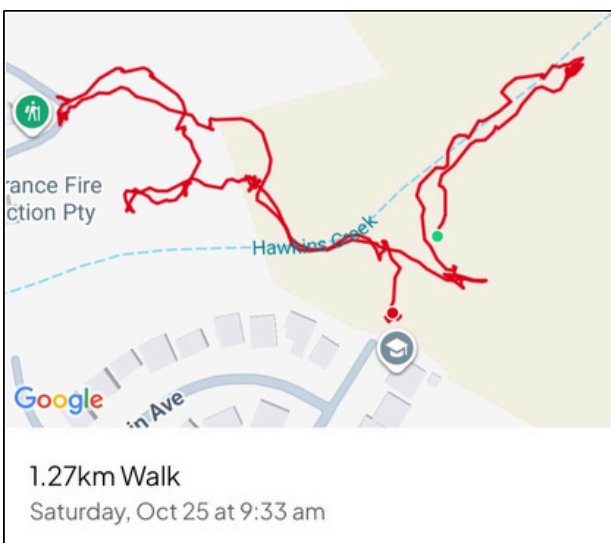
The Australian Museum's Frog ID week was held in November to help create the world's largest croak count. But don't be put off that November has come and gone. We can be part of recording frog calls at any time so scientists can monitor frog health and distribution. [Listen HERE](#)



# 'Treasures of Munibung Hill'



Gavin Ord leads as the Super Saturday Session walkers get a closer appreciation of the 'treasures of Munibung Hill' Photo: Belinda Turner



Walk map with stats, Distance 1.27km, Walking time 1 hour 51 minutes. Credit Belinda Turner.





Background information included: Munibung Hill Explainer No.1: An overview of Indigenous and European History; Explainer No.2: Creeks and Catchments; MHCS Five-fold Vision - Urban Ecology for a Nature Positive Future; Vegetation of Hawkins and Farm Creek catchments including Permian Gully Rainforest vegetation communities, Quarry Road to Farm Streets and beyond; Night Sky Conservation information; and Munibung Hill - An overview of plans.



*Fully booked, the Landcare Super Saturday Session (25 October 2025) was an outdoor event held at the base of Munibung Hill, Speers Point. Winsome Lambkin reports ..*

Stuart Carter, secretary of Munibung Hill Conservation Society (MHCS), spoke passionately about the relationship we should have with our natural environment (left).

MHCS has a five-fold vision which includes a Geological and Cultural Heritage Park, Rest and Recreation areas, Visitor Economy, a Conservation Area / Native Reserve and an Observation and Forest Field Studies Centre.

The Society works alongside other community groups.

One such group is led by Belinda Turner who attended our SSS, and who, once a month, guides children from Woodrising Natural Learning Centre in their outdoor early education program at Munibung Hill.

Gavin Ord, Co-Team Leader of Friends of Munibung Hill Landcare, led us along a narrow track above Hawkins Creek, passing various native species including numerous Turpentine trees.

These trees are quite easy to identify with their deep vertical furrows in the thick brown bark. I'm intrigued by their fruit which is likened to a cartoon-style space ship!

We next visited his current work site, noting the regeneration of Native Hibiscus.

We continued our exploratory walk to the end of Quarry Road, passing at a respectable distance from the imposing cliffs (left), and noting the erosion control in the catchment wash-aways!

That control is a conglomeration of branches and debris which slow the considerable flooding which comes off the cliffs.

We were in awe of the work carried out by landcarers over many, many years in various patches of Munibung Hill.

We noted that most tracks had retaining edges and sturdy steps along gradual gradients as the tracks traversed this very steep site.

We returned to Farm Street for drinks, snacks and 'socialising'. Yet another Super Saturday Session!

*Lake Mac Landcare Facebook post [HERE](#)*

## Treasures of Munibung Hill

by Winsome Lambkin

We, carers of the land, gathered in the shade of the Hill

In awe of its height, what a sight!

We learned of its history, its plight,

Its mystery, its might.

Of those who cared for thousands of years .. tears!

Quiet praises were sung, in the shadows of Munibung!



# Break the monotony of footpaths



*WalkWithMe is a month-long challenge to get moving, raise funds, and make sure our mates, our family, and our colleagues, don't have to walk through life's challenges alone. A program of **Talk2mebro**, Marcus De reports on a local event held on 25 October.*

We have all set our own targets, and group activities for walks which were mostly along pavements, says Marcus.

I chose to set my group activity at Munibung Hill to break the monotony of footpaths and to be surrounded by nature with a lot more interesting things to look at, and rewarding views for our efforts.

It's 8.00am. Our contingent to walk the hill met at the crest of Lawson Road, Macquarie Hills.

We set off to do the 'Southern Loop' as pictured on the map and ended up doing a few bonus km's to showcase the wonderful lookout over Speers Point/Lake Macquarie.

Along the way, there was a lot of curiosity about the Munibung eco system of flora and fauna, and history of the area.

Many a conversation was had about life, work, kids, sports, and many a laugh was shared.

Most of the contingent that came along for the walk had never been up Munibung Hill before, or only to the "main" lookout at the top of Lucilla Ridge entry.

At the end of our nearly 8km hike around the hill, successful completion was complimented with comments about the views, and not knowing how much more there is to the hill until you explore.





**Why do it?**

In August my good mate Craig Welton completed a 150+km walk from Singleton to Newcastle (link to [Craig Welton, 150kms walk](#)).

The walk took him to all 10 Northern League 1 clubs competing in the men's first grade football (soccer) competition, which we all took turns at supporting him to get the walk completed.

On the second day of the walk (over 30hrs in) we were dealing with heavy thunderstorms and sore feet from soggy shoes which was really taking its toll.

Craig was starting to have thoughts of ending the walk. But one line resonated in his head. "Mental health doesn't take a break." ... so why should we. He raised over \$12,000 for Talk2MeBro.

That was obviously a huge feat, and inspired by that, this month our friends have all taken on the WalkWithMe 2025 group challenge set by Talk2MeBro. (link to: [walkwithme](#))

It is a month-long challenge to get moving, raise funds, and make sure our mates, our family, and our colleagues, don't have to walk through life's challenges alone. [Talk2mebro](#) link

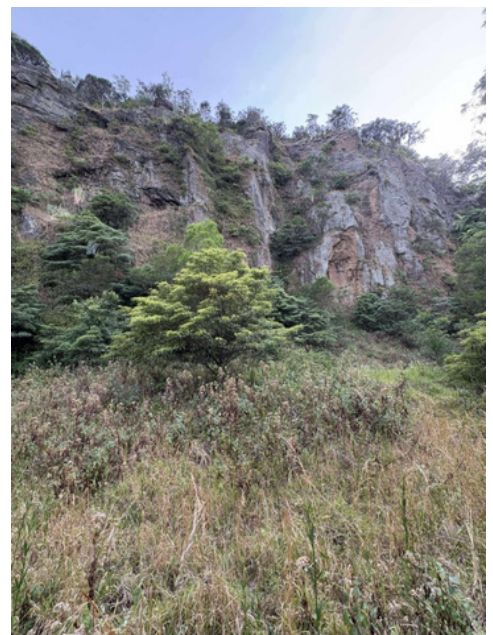
**T2MB mission:**

*Connection:*

Walking side by side is a reminder that we're stronger together, and every kilometre walked builds the connection that carries us beyond the challenge.

*Conversation:*

Each walk is an opportunity for real conversations, moments to talk, listen, and keep showing up for each other long after the steps are done.



There are many ways to approach a walk at Munibung Hill, with the decision about which way to go, whether or not to make it linear or a loop, often determined by the time of day and amount of time available.

## Let's go E'n'E Walking

ALWAYS ON the look out for a new twist on an old way, let's put out there this old tried and true exercise regime of walking.

With a view to some other old adages such as keep and eye out, or an ear peeled for, how about the E'n'E Walking Method (Eye'n'Ear) where we keep an 'eye-out-for' and an 'ear-out-for' the sights and sounds of the bush.

Not magic. Not rocket science. Just another take, another acronym to grab the attention of a people living in a society always on the look out for a new twist.

For what can be better than to do what happens nearly all the time in this world, but reinvent what already exists, by coining up with a new name and working up a story to go with it.

So invite friends and rels to come take an E&E Walk at Munibung Hill.

When done, send us some photos with some captions to share. Easy peasy. MM



## Attentive walking

IT'S ONE of the more popular walking ways these days. Run for 5, walk for 5, or any number of variations on this theme.

Well here's another one. When in a group, walk **and** talk for 5 minutes (or whatever time agreed on), followed by walk **without\*** talk for 5 minutes. (\*this includes without scrolling on or talking on or listening to podcasts on a mobile device)

We learnt this many moons ago when walking with Greg Newling, a bird observer friend, and member of Hunter Bird Observers Club, who distanced himself from us group of chatter bugs and after a 20 minute walk was able to identify 30 birds whereas the rest of us struggled to name 5 or 6.

He was in touch with nature, with our bush bird-buddies, we were oblivious most of the time - too self-absorbed in our own little human world - taking the place for granted. MM

## Rogaining training?

ROGAINING IS a long-distance cross-country navigation sport for teams of two to five people who score points by visiting checkpoints within a set time limit.

It's a strategic race against the clock. Teams use a map and compass to navigate, and events often involve both day and night navigation, with durations typically ranging from 6 to 24 hours.

Munibung Hill might not qualify as an ideal location but it might be good for rogaining training.

### Rogaining NSW

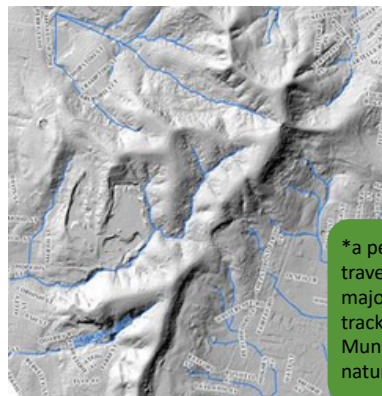
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nswrogaining/posts/10162667688094089/>

The annual [Lake Macquarie Rogaine](#) was held on 9 August.

It was a traditional bush rogaine in the vicinity of Mount Sugarloaf featuring open eucalypt woodlands and magnificent views. Located within sight of Newcastle at the northern end of the Watagans.



## Munibungist



\*Munroist – a person who over time has scaled all the peaks within the Munro mountain range in Scotland.

A way of describing these kinds of people within a Munibung Hill context would be - A Munibungist\*.

Who do we know that might qualify to be a Munibungist?

Send nominations, with a few words explaining why you think we might include them on the Munibungist Register.

## Pedestrianism history explained

**The Popularity and Politics of Pedestrianism**, Betsy Golden Kellem, [JStor Daily](#), March 26, 2025

The sport of competitive walking touched on social concerns such as debt and poverty, fitness and fame, but it also found support in the temperance movement.

One of the most popular spectator sports of the late nineteenth century was "pedestrianism," that is to say, sport walking. Not just a decent walk, though, but competitive walking events that covered ultra-marathon distances. Spectators loved the mix of the athletic and the ridiculous, and they were more than willing to pay admission to watch athletes walk in circles.

Drama scholar Kirstin Smith explains that, at its mid-nineteenth-century height, pedestrianism gave everything but horse racing a literal run for its money. The public events came in all flavors. As she writes,

'A great range of walking and running performances by men and women included: races against the clock, one-on-one matches, individual journeys across vast distances, saloon performances in which pedestrians "walked the plank" for 30 hours straight, and—an 1870s innovation—six-day track races.

# NOT YOUR ORDINARY

# CREEK CATCHMENT



Gavin Ord and Andrew Slee at the Quarry Road entrance to Munibung Hill where the sign, in front of the fence covered in the invasive *Ipomoea indica* Morning Glory, reads:

### Hawkins Creek Catchment

Home to a Permian Gully Rainforest vegetation community

*Caring for creeks helps protect Lake Macquarie.*

*We've asked the question of a lot of people who live around Munibung Hill: How many creeks might there be that have their headwaters there? Most people have no idea, suggesting instead that there are lots of drains, but hardly any creeks. While that might be one worldview, it shows up our lack of understanding that we all live within a waterway catchment. The life blood of the land.*

Ever since the creek at this location on Munibung Hill was registered with the NSW Geographical Names Board, the name has never been displayed or made known to the public.

It is labeled on maps, but not sign-posted at its location on the south-west side at Speers Point or where it enters the lake.

Now it has a 'name-tag' to let visitors know its identity. It's Hawkins Creek. No ordinary creek, for within it's catchment there is a threatened Permian Gully Rainforest vegetation community.

Hawkins Creek is an Order One creek in that it has no tributaries - flowing directly to Lake Macquarie.

Up stream it is open to the air, able to support life like the Permian Gully Rainforest, but downstream local residents, considering it to be a drain have 'captured' it in pipes. Considered more a nuisance than a living entity that could be landscaped into their residential block as a couple of households have done.

By the time Hawkins Creek spills into Lake Macquarie it is completely out-of-sight with no sign to indicate it is entering into the Lake.

It's a kind of 'who cares' approach to one of nature's wonders. Ephemeral for much of its up stream life, Hawkins Creek is trickling further down stream - never running dry according to the locals who have some interest in her welfare.

Who would know that Hawkins Creek contains a Permian Gully Rainforest vegetation community?

Who cares, even if they knew?

What does this say about our ecological literacy, our understanding of how we are connected to a community of plants dating back millions of years?

Driving along The Esplanade at the edge of the Lake, there is a great love for the body of water that is a baby by comparison with the age of Hawkins Creek. Modified as it has been since European colonisation, it is home to life that existed eons before we humans came on the scene, with our heavy hands and big boots and know-it-all attitude.

Indigenous people knew the creek long before the Lake came into being. Not as Hawkins Creek, but as a source of life and well-being, to be handed down across the generations, such that it could nurture them and their children.



**Bug Hunt** - an invitation to discover, photograph, and record insects and other invertebrates in their local environments.

Each photo uploaded to the Bug Hunt Australia project on iNaturalist adds to vital knowledge – helping protect lesser-known but critical species and detect invasive species before they spread.



**The Eco Angel Program** is designed to help schools, community groups, businesses and individuals come together and keep Lake Macquarie clean all year round. We will help by:

- Promoting your event and encouraging others to volunteer,
- Providing a free clean-up kit including litter bags, gloves, merchandise and appropriate paperwork,
- Collecting and disposing of waste from the clean up.

Expanding our gaze to include Sky Country as it was known by indigenous people



## Hollowing out houses for native species that rely on tree hollows

**Boring project gives critters a hole lot of spring living options,** Lake Mac Landcare, 2 September 2025

AN INNOVATIVE environmental initiative is providing crucial nesting sites and shelter for native fauna in Lake Macquarie.

The Hollow Augmentation Program accelerates the natural process of hollows forming in trees by boring cavities into eucalypts or other native species.

Lake Macquarie Landcare Coordinator Simon Lubinski said the process replicated the natural formation of hollows in many trees, including healthy, dying or dead specimens.

“Tree hollows can take more than 100 years to form,” Mr Lubinski said.

“We don’t always have trees that age in and around suburbia, so this is an opportunity to replicate that process in a matter of minutes.”

Australia is home to an estimated 300-plus native species that rely on tree hollows for shelter, nesting and socialisation.

A specialised tool called a HollowHog is used to create the hollows. It drills a small opening on the host tree’s trunk, then bore a much larger cavity up to 60cm deep and wide inside its heartwood.

“It’s a bit like keyhole surgery – it’s a relatively narrow opening, which a lot of our native fauna prefers, but it opens up into an area large enough for birds or mammals to nest and for young to grow,” Mr Lubinski said.

“We’re planning to make this a core part of our Landcare program,” Mr Lubinski said. “Putting in hollows at different Landcare sites right across Lake Mac.”

**Council speeds up 100-year process to solve quiet crisis in Aussie suburbs, Sophie Coghill, News Reporter, Yahoo News, 5 Sept 2025**

Wildlife continues to be pushed out of urbanised Australian cities but one council is innovating to ensure our native animals also have somewhere to live.

## Wetlands are not wastelands, they are wonderlands

Take a look back. Not so long ago, a patch of wet land or swamp was seen as a wasteland - a prime opportunity to turn it into a housing estate or playing field or other urban development.

Thankfully wetlands and swamps in many cases are now viewed through a different lens with wetlands even being created.

This is the case with Biddabah Creek Wetland, site of the Biddabah Creek Landcare group. It is a haven for bird life and the example of the Buff Banded Rail visiting the area is a credit to the work of the Landcare group.

## Slow Down: Ducks Crossing



What to do about speeding drivers who couldn’t give two hoots that there are waterbirds at the Biddabah Creek Wetland that have been known to attempt to cross Windross Drive, a busy connecting road between Warners Bay and Lakelands. Well Vina Chubb cares a great deal about the welfare of these birds and so we’ve installed a sign: **Slow Down, Ducks Crossing.**

## Expect respect

Be respectful of native wildlife and their places of residence, just as we would expect respect of people visiting our patch. Think ducks and wetlands.

*"Above all, I want you to think about the fact that we are part, when we are on Planet Earth, we are part of Mother Nature," she said.*

*"We depend on Mother Nature for clean air, for water, for food, for clothing, for everything.*

*"You have it in your power to make a difference. Don't give up. There is a future for you. Do your best while you are still on this beautiful Planet Earth."*

Jane Goodall's 'Famous Last Words' further cement her critical legacy: 'We have to do everything in our power to make the world a better place'

Susan Elizabeth Turek, [Yahoo News](#), October 14, 2025

[FULL STORY AND VIDEO OF JANE](#)

## The art of persuasion as practised by Jane Goodall

**How Jane Goodall's Explanation for Persuading People Who Disagree With You Is Backed by Science, Inc.** October 15, 2025  
*Beyond her many scientific contributions, she was also a model for how to communicate across differences.*

When legendary primatologist Jane Goodall died at 91, [many memorials](#) focused on her outsize contributions to science and conservation.

They noted how her work studying chimps [upended our ideas](#) about humans' place in the animal kingdom, and they hailed her [relentless advocacy](#) for the natural world.

Such celebrations of an extraordinary life were certainly well-earned. But as I read about Goodall's work, it struck me she wasn't just an incredible conservationist. She was also an incredible communicator.

People's enthusiasm for [environmentalism](#) varies, to put it mildly. But despite her spending decades deep in the trenches of often polarizing issues, it's hard to find many people with a harsh word for Goodall. The more I learned about her, the more it became clear why.



Jane Goodall. Photo: Getty Images

Psychologists have investigated in depth what it takes to engage with and actually [persuade those who disagree with you](#). Goodall's work is the perfect model of what they've discovered.

[FULL STORY WITH A MOVING EXAMPLE OF HOW SHE CAN CHANGE MINDS](#)



With spectacular views and unique cultural values, Munibung Hill is one of Lake Macquarie’s most precious landscapes.

Refresh your memory: *The Munibung Hill Management Plan sets out how we will manage access and use of Munibung Hill over the next decade, to protect important natural and cultural values, and provide safe access for passive recreation.* Check it out [HERE](#)



Green Point Reserve could be the Hunter’s best-kept secret, hiding in plain sight\* according to Mayor Adam Schultz.

See the article on the next page for how Green Point came to be a nature reserve and ask:  
*What’s the hold up for Munibung Hill?*

\*see [Opinion](#) piece in the *Newcastle Herald*, 18 July 2025

## Greening the city - A story so pertinent to our times



The greater the richness of species we’re among, the more healthy microbes make their way to our bodies. Photo: Ruben Earth/Getty Images

**The nature extinction crisis is mirrored by one in our own bodies. Both have huge implications for health,** Phoebe Weston, *The Guardian*, 31 October, 2025. [Full story HERE.](#) *Modern life is waging a war against ecosystems around us and inside us. Keeping our own microbes healthy is another reason to demand action to preserve the natural world.*

HUMAN BODIES are like cities, teeming with microcitizens – vast communities of viruses, fungi and bacteria that live all over our skin and inside us. Unsung public servants help us digest food, regulate our immune system, defend against pathogens, and keep hormones in check. Together, they make up what we call the human microbiome.

Most people have probably heard of the gut microbiome, but different microbes thrive all over our bodies – in our nostrils, on our feet, in our eyes. They are slightly different, like boroughs are composed of different communities of people. Ninety per cent of cells in our body are microbes, and “clouds” of bacteria come off someone’s body as they enter a room. We are all walking ecosystems, picking up and shedding material as we move through life.

Modern life is waging a war against ecosystems inside us and surrounding us, however. When people think about the nature crisis they probably think about vanishing rainforests or species going extinct, but there is another, hidden extinction happening at a microscopic level.

At the same time we are losing species from our planet, we are also losing them from within our own bodies – with huge implications for human health. “What’s happening inside our own bodies is kind of mirroring what’s happening at a global ecosystem level,” says Anastasia Theodosiou from the School of Infection and Immunity at the University of Glasgow. “We are increasingly thinking about it as an ecological narrative.”

Sometimes researchers refer to this as the outer and inner layers of biodiversity. The greater the richness of species surrounding us, the more healthy microbes make their way to our bodies.

“The key take-home points are that if you take action for biodiversity in cities (through tree planting, or enhancing habitat in parks, or creating greenways), these actions will also likely yield benefits to human health,” says Erica Spotswood, director of science at Second Nature Ecology and Design and lead author of the paper published in the journal [People and Nature](#).

“The potential for biodiversity and human health to benefit from taking action to green cities is huge,” says Spotswood.

Research on the microbiome is proof of how intertwined our bodies are with the natural world. Every mouthful of food, the air we breathe and things we touch connects these two worlds. The desire to keep our own microcitizens healthy is another reason for people to demand we live more nature-rich lives, and take urgent action to preserve a thriving natural world.

## The case for outdoor classrooms



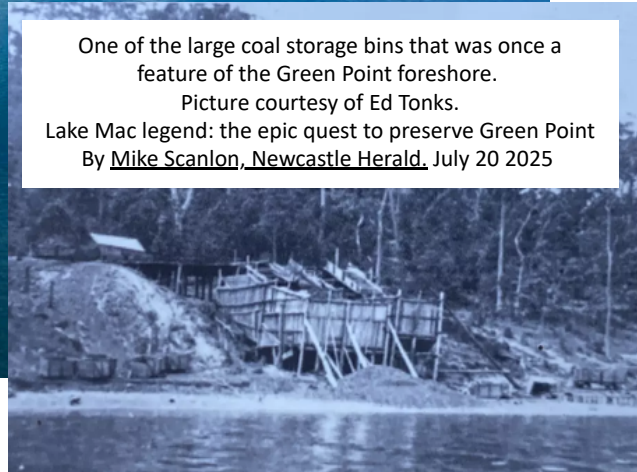
**How a radical experiment to bring a forest into a preschool transformed children’s health,** Phoebe Watson, *The Guardian*, 25 October 2025

In Finland, kindergartens are exposing children to more mud, wild plants and moss - and finding changes to their health that show how crucial biodiversity is to wellbeing. [Full story HERE](#)

# It's worth remembering



Looking good: Green Point Reserve is now protected for future generations to enjoy. Picture: Lake Macquarie City Council



One of the large coal storage bins that was once a feature of the Green Point foreshore.  
Picture courtesy of Ed Tonks.  
Lake Mac legend: the epic quest to preserve Green Point  
By [Mike Scanlon, Newcastle Herald](#), July 20 2025

## After all these years it's now Munibung Hill's turn.

This article is a timely reminder of what Council can achieve when it sets its minds to protecting the green lungs of the city.

The "epic quest" to preserve Green Point Reserve involved a long struggle between land developers and conservationists, culminating in Lake Macquarie City Council officially reclassifying 118 hectares of the land to protect it from future development permanently.

This was a significant victory for conservationists, who had been fighting for the reserve's protection for decades against previous plans for residential development.

The new classification makes it "mission impossible" for future development attempts, thanks to a complex legal process.

**Long-standing battle:** The reserve has a long history of conflict between developers and environmentalists, including a 1991 "green ban" and a proposed housing development in the 1990s.

**Community involvement:** Local groups, like Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare, have been actively involved in restoring the bushland, protecting threatened species like *Tetratheca juncea*, and building community awareness for the reserve's value.

**Council's role:** In July 2025, Lake Macquarie City Council passed a recommendation to reclassify 118 hectares of land, adding to the existing protected area. This moves the land from a vulnerable "operational" classification to a permanent "community" classification.

[Council protects gem in the heart of Belmont](#)  
Published on 14 July 2025

[Lake Mac locks in an unspoilt future for its green gem](#)  
By Adam Shultz, Newcastle Herald, July 18 2025

**Legal protection:** The reclassification was important because changing the land back to an "operational" status for development is an extremely difficult legal process. It would require multiple council resolutions, public hearings, and a final decision by the NSW Minister for Planning, ensuring the land is protected for future generations.

[Lake Mac legend: the epic quest to preserve Green Point](#)  
By Mike Scanlon, Newcastle Herald, July 20 2025

**What this means for residents:** The decision guarantees that the natural beauty and serenity of Green Point Reserve will be preserved for future generations to enjoy.



Time spent in green spaces boots working memory and attention  
 Luke Hayes/Millennium Images, UK

**Mind-blowing effects of nature on our brains revealed in new book**, Kate Douglas, New Scientist, 13 August 2025  
 Kate discovers plans for a "nature revolution" in Marc Berman's fascinating and ambitious new book *Nature and the Mind*.

Marc Berman is out to start a revolution. I am already a convert to his cause – and you may be too, having read in New Scientist about the extraordinary benefits of a nature walk, the healing power of plants and the magic of urban green spaces.

If so, perhaps you will think there is nothing to be gained from a book about Berman's research. You would be wrong. *Nature and the Mind* is for everyone from the adept to the uninitiated – it isn't simply written to educate and entertain, it is a call to action.

Source: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg26735562-100-mind-blowing-effects-of-nature-on-our-brains-revealed-in-new-book/>



Competitors sort the rubbish they have collected in the final leg of the Manly contest. Photograph: Jessica Hromas/The Guardian

**Caitlin Cassidy competes in Australia's World Cup spogomi qualifier, a fun event that's really about raising environmental awareness.** Caitlin Cassidy, The Guardian, 31 Aug 2025

It's Saturday morning at Manly beach and you could cut the tension with a knife.

Nearly 100 people are crouched over piles of litter, frantically sorting them into coloured tote bags. A man wearing an umpire bib looms over a group beside us and blows his whistle.

"Two minutes!" he calls. "Two minutes!" The team is trying to figure out if a discarded tennis racket counts as "non-burnable waste" or "bulky waste". If it's bulky, the team will lose 100 points – and the stakes are high.

This is Australia's World Cup qualifier for spogomi, a game invented in Japan in 2008 by Kenichi Mamitsuka under the slogan "Trash pickup is a sport!" to make rubbish collection more engaging and to raise awareness about waste.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2025/aug/31/its-only-going-to-get-bigger-australia-embraces-the-japanese-game-that-turns-rubbish-into-sport>

[Spogomi Australia](#) | [Facebook](#)

## Munibung Hill Conservation Society

### Membership options

We value everyone who has signed up to be a member or subscriber.

With the re-launch of **Munibung Musing** magazine we have introduced a new membership structure to better reflect the changing circumstances and to more closely identify with standard membership practices.

We therefore invite existing members to revisit their existing membership status with a view to helping MHCS remain financially viable over the long term.

There is no obligation to make any changes.

Four levels of membership came into effect from June 1, 2025. To make any changes, visit the website ...

<https://www.munibunghill.com/membership-affiliate-application/>

Perhaps you would prefer to remain an Ordinary member, but make an annual one off donation. That's fine and would be greatly appreciated.

- Ordinary member - Free, as is currently the case, all current memberships rolling over.
- Standard member - \$4.00 per month (or equivalent\*)  
 i.e. \$0.92c a week
- Supporting member - \$8.00 per month (or equivalent\*)  
 i.e. \$1.84 a week
- Sustaining member - \$25.00 per month (or equivalent\*)  
 i.e. \$6.25 a week (cup a coffee)

All membership types can be paid as a lump sum i.e. as an annual total amount. Monthly rate x 12.

\* In-kind contribution in lieu, such as an active member of a Munibung Hill focused Landcare Group.

All members receive the Society magazine *Munibung Musings*.

There are no additional special benefits from being a paid up financial member. The reward is, the sheer knowledge and satisfaction of knowing you have contributed to the organisation remaining viable and able to carry out its mission over the long term.

The join, change membership type or to donate, please visit: <https://www.munibunghill.com/membership-affiliate-application/>

## Plainly pretty plants



A verge garden in Mary Street, Cardiff, opposite the car park entry to Cardiff Railway Station. Photo: Stuart Carter

### Nothing fancy with this verge garden in a suburban street. But what a delightful difference.

It shows how the **Transform Your Lawn** idea, promoted by Gayle Russell from Valentine Sustainable Neighbourhood Group, can bring diversity in place of the monoculture that is a single species manicured lawn.

## Not a fan of fossil-fuel fake and for good reason



Artificial grass was dumped by the roadside in Victoria last month. Source: Facebook/Kellie J.

*“Ghastly” and hideous” is the latest description for artificial turf that was once hailed as the big saviour for anyone wanting to cut down on mowing and maintenance of a real turf lawn or playing field. But no longer thank goodness and here’s why. Lydia Kellner reports ...*

**Artificial turf ban: Council's shock findings spark nationwide debate,** [Lydia Kellner](#), Real Estate, 17 Oct 2025.

Australia’s property market is facing a green revolution, but not the kind you might expect.

A growing backlash against synthetic grass is set to reshape our suburbs, and it could have a significant impact on your home’s appeal.

What was once touted as a low-maintenance landscaping solution is now being labelled a potential environmental hazard and a major turn-off for savvy buyers.

The Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) in New South Wales is at the forefront of this shift, proposing a ban on artificial turf in new builds and on nature strips.

It argues that the impact of artificial grass is both harmful to people and the environment, and is seeking community consultation ahead of the move.

Fake grass, according to the council, disintegrates into microplastics, which subsequently make their way into waterways – and can even potentially end up being inhaled by people.

But it is what happens years down the track once the fake grass is ripped up and replaced that is attracting the ire of everyday Aussies, including Kellie Jackson who is [calling for a ban](#) after finding a whole pile of artificial turf dumped in a Victorian nature reserve.

“These pictures highlight the other side of fake grass and weedy plants,” she said in a post on Facebook.

“Once it’s time for a change they get illegally dumped in a nature reserve. Bring on bans.”

Other Aussies agreed, commenting on the post about how artificial turf is “ghastly” and hideous”. Get [MORE](#)

# Earth's kidneys deserve 'rights of nature' laws

*A growing number of scientists are backing laws recognising that nature has inherent rights and intrinsic value. A group of wetlands scientists wants the critical ecosystems they study to be next.*

Katie Surma in: **The Scientists Making the Case for Nature's Rights**, (Inside Climate News, October 5, 2025) reports that:

Despite governments' vows to protect them, one-fifth of Earth's wetlands have been destroyed. Of what remains, a quarter are in ecological distress. Few people know either of those facts or why they matter.

Vilified in the past as wastelands, the watery ecosystems are in fact a linchpin of planetary stability, with their moist soils sequestering more carbon dioxide per unit than forests.

With unmatched efficiency, they act as Earth's kidneys, filtering pollution and recharging drinking water sources while preventing storm damage and flooding.

*For scores of communities, wetlands are a cradle of culture, a source of sustenance and a home.*

Unlike forests, wetlands are widely misunderstood and overlooked, even among the environmentally conscious.

Senior ecologist, Gillian Davies, says wetlands must be given credit for their role in keeping us healthy. She says we are not doing this well enough, and therefore 'rights of nature' laws are needed to correct the current imbalance.

Full story with pictures [HERE](#)

## Wetlands

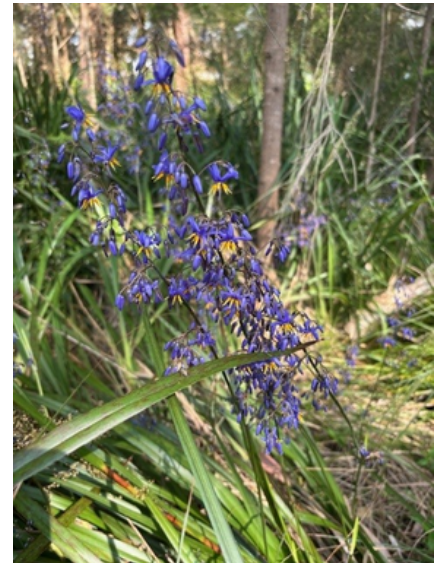
Combat climate change, improve water quality, are biodiversity habitats, reduce drought & floods, Recharge groundwater and are disappearing rapidly...

Let's Protect **Nature's Kidneys**



**Every creek needs a wetland, a billabong, a swamp, a place where water can slow down, inviting / welcoming aquatic life to flourish within the natural creek ecosystem.**

**Biddabah Creek Wetland - a local kidney example - might be small but it plays a vital role for wetland birdlife on Biddabah Creek**



(Right) Flax Lily on show. *Vina Chubb*

*Vina Chubb of Biddabah Creek Landcare, is passionate about ensuring this comparatively small wetland site adjacent to the Biddabah Creek Swamp is protected. Here's an update:*

"After clearing Paspalum and other weeds from the front of our site six months ago, our team regenerated the area using tube stock plants from the Landcare Nursery.

During the Winter and Autumn rains these plants have bloomed. At the moment, the Dianellas are in flower not only here, but all around our site near the waterway.

Dianella (Flax Lily) is native to Australia and consists of many species. The beautiful blue flowers attract pollinators such as bees, and the berries support bird life.

They are clump-forming with strappy green foliage, and some species spread by underground rhizomes that send out new shoots. They are hardy plants that perform well in all weather - heat, frost, drought and humidity.

Source credit: Lake Macquarie Landcare [e-newsletter October 2025](#) Vol. 2

## Write, photograph, draw, paint for Munibung Musings magazine

Everyone has a story to tell. And most people would love to hear what that story is. Especially if that story relates to the themes we carry in MM magazine.

There is an endless range of subjects to write a short story or poem about. If writing's not your thing then perhaps:

- sketch or draw or paint a landscape scene or a tree or shrubs, or bird, or group walking ... or ...
- photographs while on a walk alone or with friends.

Email to: [munibunghcs@gmail.com](mailto:munibunghcs@gmail.com)



Josh plants out his newly built cat run, an enclosed space where his beloved pets can enjoy the outdoors and stay away from local wildlife.

## Install a cat flat

*How do you provide your feline with access to the outdoors while ensuring they don't harm local wildlife? Josh demonstrates how easy it is to be a responsible cat person ..*

For cat owner and ABC TV Gardening Australia presenter JOSH BYRNE, the answer lies in a thoughtfully designed cat run.

Writes Josh, in: **Purrfect Solution**, *Gardening Australia*, September 2025: We've always been a cat family.

My wife and I are both environmental scientists who are deeply committed to supporting urban biodiversity, so we've always kept our cats indoors, and for good reason.

In the course of protecting wildlife, many local councils have imposed overnight and 24-hour curfews to keep cats indoors, leading to a growing interest in cat enclosures or 'cat runs'.

Gardening Australia, the TV program, ran a story on the making of the cat run on September 5, 2025.

While the cat run is only small (4 sq.m), it includes cat furniture and plants, as you'd expect from Josh.

He writes: Our plant palette includes a small form of crepe myrtle, clumping grasses, including lomandra and dianella, to give them something to roam through, and a correa that will provide a hiding place once it fills out.

I've also planted cat grass in hanging baskets for Honey and Clover (the cats' names), to chew on, as it's meant to aid digestion.

Read the full story - with pictures - in [GARDENING AUSTRALIA](#) magazine available at local libraries.



Grafton resident Tim Bestwick built an elaborate system of tunnels and ramps for his cats. He says cats are healthier and happier when they are "contained" and not allowed to roam.

Story & video at this [LINK](#)



## RSPCA says: Safer at home, don't let me roam

<https://safeandhappycats.com.au/>



LAKE MACQUARIE CITY LGA is included in an expanded program operated by the NSW government.

This Keeping Cats Safe at Home project aims to reduce the environmental impacts of roaming cats through behaviour change initiatives.

Extracts from a [Ministerial media release](#)

A PROGRAM funded by the Environmental Trust, will help another 19 councils to curb the devastating impact cats have on our native wildlife, as well as help pet cats live longer, taking the total to 30 councils.

The program focuses on increasing rates of desexing, microchipping and lifetime registration while encouraging the uptake of voluntary containment of pet cats.

Domestic cats are estimated to kill many of our native animals each year, including an estimated 53 million reptiles, 61 million birds, and 67 million mammals.

We also know that two-in-three cat owners have lost a pet to a roaming-related accident, with a third of accidents involving cars.

The Keeping Cats Safe at Home program has successfully demonstrated that bringing together councils, veterinarians, wildlife groups, and the community results in more households using responsible cat-care practices.

## Urban Ecology - explained

**Urban Ecology: Theory, Policy And Practice In NSW, Australia** - The National Green Infrastructure Network.

*The case for change*

Australia is one of the most urbanised countries in the world, with more than 75% of the population living in one of 20 major cities. There has been a trend toward living in cities in Australia for more than a century, and it is predicted to continue.

Urban ecosystems and the ecosystem services provided by nature contribute to community health and wellbeing and the economic sustainability of cities, but urbanisation can also cause ecological decline and change.

Terrestrial and aquatic systems are affected by land clearing, the construction of housing and infrastructure, and the way in which cities are managed and maintained.

Urbanisation has resulted in the local extinction of many species and ecological communities, but it has also favoured some adaptive species, which thrive in urban habitats.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/grants/urban-ecology-theory-policy-practice-nsw-desktop-review.pdf>

**Urban ecology strategic action plan**, City of Sydney.

30 December 2014

Ecology is the study of relationships between living things – plants, animals, other organisms, and people – and their environment. Urban ecology is specifically focused on cities and the relationship between living organisms in an urban environment.

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/urban-ecology-strategic-action-plan>

What Is Urban Ecology? |

FuseSchool Global Education <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=4Hc-pVwSjcy>

Urban Ecology

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/urban-ecology>

# 1 percent for nature, conservation at home

Biodiversity Council member, Professor Sarah Bekessy from RMIT University is hopeful a shift might be underway that will result in us getting more biodiversity into our local patch - wherever that might happen to be.

She is among a large cohort of environment advocates that is asking the federal government to contribute one percent of its budget towards nature.

“It shouldn’t be an ideological topic, nature and having healthy environments,” she says. “It’s actually making sure that we are healthy, because our health is so intrinsically linked to having doses of nature and experiencing nature and having a clean environment.”

Our choices matter, according to Sarah. Spending and consumption habits are not separate from the ecosystems we live in.

“Your choice of housing is one of the most significant things that you can do for biodiversity,” she says. The construction industry has a big impact on nature.

As Biodiversity Council Australia’s report notes, people want to see native environments restored - 86% of respondents were concerned about the loss of native plants and animals.

So **Gardening for Wildlife**, albeit on a small scale can make a big difference. It has the backing of 22 council areas in Victoria.

Locally Lake Mac has **Habitat for Wildlife**. Join at [THIS LINK](#)

Source: **Becoming a conservationist in your own backyard**, Oliver Lees, *ReNew* magazine, Issue 172. June-September 2025



# Easy ways to help nature have a better standard of living

*There’s a lot of talk about how we need to improve our standard of living, as if it’s not good enough. There’s never any mention about improving the standard of living for the other-than-human species. So let’s take a look ...*

## There are many things that every person can do to help nature in Australia, and lots of them are very easy and also provide benefits to us

Acting for nature is often a win-win for biodiversity and people. For instance, planting more trees and shrubs around your home provides habitat for native animals and also keeps your home cooler in hot weather, or eating less red meat reduces land clearing and habitat degradation while also reducing your risk of cancer.

Explore our list and discover the small changes you can make that add up to a big difference for biodiversity. How many will you try?

- Make your home and garden wildlife friendly
- Help save local invertebrates
- Be a responsible pet owner
- Cut your light pollution
- Purchase biodiversity-friendly food products
- Choose biodiversity-friendly investments
- Advocate for nature
- Support organisations working to protect nature

<https://biodiversitycouncil.org.au/take-action/easy-ways-to-help-nature-in-australia> 17 September 2025

## Cut our light pollution

Man-made lights at night have harmful impacts on a wide variety of species, including gliders, bats, wallabies, birds, sea turtles, fish, moths and spiders. It can influence feeding and breeding, predator-prey dynamics and the ability of wildlife to move through and use habitats. Artificial light has also been linked to a wide range of human health issues.

Follow these steps to help reduce your light pollution at home:

1. Turn off lights you don’t need to have on, especially outdoor lights. Timers and sensors can help minimise your impact.
2. Stop indoor lights from shining outdoors at dusk by closing your curtains.
3. Use low intensity lights and dimmers outdoors. Amber and red lights have less impact on wildlife than white lights, which contain blue wavelengths that also impact human health.
4. Choose lights with shields that are directed downward to prevent light shining toward the sky or into nearby vegetation.
5. Plant corridors of trees and shrubs to provide more dark habitat for animals that also helps them hide from predators.
6. At Christmas, choose day-time decorations or window light displays instead of covering the house and yard in bright lights.
7. Support calls for greater regulation to reduce light pollution in your local area.

Jaana Dielenberg talks about the impacts of light pollution on wildlife, particularly as we introduce more light outdoors during the festive season. Interview on ABC News Weekend Breakfast.



# Blending with nature

Inviting wildlife into our backyards helps complement local bushland areas such as Munibung Hill



Leave natural materials such as twigs in your backyard for bird nests.  
Jon Sailer/unsplash

*Co-habiting  
with wildlife  
can help us feel  
more at home.*

Native animals can make excellent neighbours. Blue banded bees pollinate our vegetable gardens. Microbats eat up to 1,200 mosquitoes a night and powerful owls keep rodents at bay. But could we go one step further, and change our homes to invite native animals in as housemates?

In: **From frog saunas to butterfly puddles: 8 ways to turn your homes into a wildlife refuge**, Bethany Kiss, Mark Jacques and Sarah Bekessy, all from RMIT University, (The Conversation, October 1, 2025) write that:

Cities are biodiversity hotspots and have an important role in tackling the extinction crises for animals, plants and insects.

As cities continue to sprawl, our buildings have become increasingly important habitat for wildlife.

Animals are not the only ones to benefit. Evidence shows noticing wildlife at home can lead to better mental health. Co-habiting with wildlife can also help you feel more at home.

But how can we intentionally design our homes to co-inhabit with wildlife? That's the question explored by **When Wildlife Moves In**, a new work at the National Gallery of Victoria.

The work, created by the authors of this article, uses data from Wildlife Victoria to explore how homes can become shared ecological resources.

Here are eight easy ways to invite wildlife into your home and backyard.

1. Give butterflies a drink from your air con
2. Provide city birds with scarce nesting material
3. Move indoor plants away from windows
4. Remove the concrete from your backyard
5. Leave the cavities in your houses unsealed
6. Plant the 'missing' layer birds need
7. Keep your cats inside
8. Build a frog sauna

Learn more with an [EXPANDED LIST AND SOLUTIONS](#).

# Fascinating, cute little creatures



Native Australian microbats can fit in the palm of your hand. Credit: ABC News

**It's not only dogs that have pups, microbats have pups too.**

*Out of sight and therefore out of mind, the threatened microbats of Munibung Hill deserve a profile - a bit of publicity to bring them into the limelight.*

Even though they are creatures of the night and considered spooky and scary by some, the truth is, they are anything but.

There are the three microbat species we know of: Eastern Bentwing-bat, Eastern Freetail-bat, and Little Bentwing-bat. But we need to know more. *Get in touch if you can help or you know of someone who can.*

**Petra Stock in: Bats in the 'burbs: how to give nature's nighttime acrobats a helping hand**, The Guardian, 1 Nov 2025, reports that:

SPRING MARKS the start of bat baby season. Even if you can't see them, small changes can make a big difference for our nocturnal neighbours.

They're around our buildings and in our back yards, some as small as walnuts: as the weather warms up, bats become more active.

Australia is home to more than 90 bat species, and spring marks the start of bat baby season – when mothers need more food to support themselves and their pups.

Most people associate bats in the city with flying foxes, also known as fruit bats, which often roost in large camps in urban environments, says Dr Shannon Currie, an ecophysiologicalist at the University of Melbourne.

"But there is also a whole slew of different tiny little bats, which Australians call microbats," she says. They eat insects and roost under tree bark, in hollows, caves and even some buildings.

"They're in your back yard, they're around your workplace. You just can't see them because they're tiny."

Some, like the little forest bat, can be as small as a walnut.

For our nocturnal neighbours, small changes can make a big difference – here's how you can help.

#### **Turn off and tone down outdoor lights**

If you live in any large city in Australia, you're coexisting with microbats – "fascinating, cool little animals that not many people know exist," says urban wildlife ecologist, Dr Kaori Yokochi of Deakin University.

#### **Native gardens support biodiversity, including bats**

"One of the things is to have diverse native gardens," Currie says. Planting a variety of native species, especially those local to the area, will help insects as well as bats, birds and other wildlife.

#### **Where can I learn more?**

The Australasian Bat Society organises events and bat nights across the country. [Full story HERE](#)

An understanding of our past is an essential prerequisite to learning what kind of a legacy we might be leaving; what kind of an inheritance we are creating to pass on to our deeper future-time grandchildren.

# Munibung Hill is a deep time landscape

A place to experience first hand, the diversity that has existed for millions of years



At 253 million years old, Munibung Hill is a Deep Time landscape that can help us figure out where we've come from and our sense of place in the larger scheme of life.

HOME TO a Permian Gully Rainforest vegetation community, we can get to know something of the ancestry from which we have evolved.

Plants and animals that have millions of years of life experience passed down from generation to generation. The knowledge held within this place is incomprehensible within a modern perspective.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's bond to this country is long, strong and continuous. Their stories about life, law and spirituality have been passed down for thousands of generations.

The first Australians were scientists, astronomers and inventors who developed a deep understanding of the land, the sea and the sky.

They walked these lands with giant beasts, now long extinct, and survived dramatic change — even an ice age. These stories are a part of the treasury of our nation's story.

Aboriginal people became a part of this deep time history. Their lives were intertwined with the land and its rich diversity.

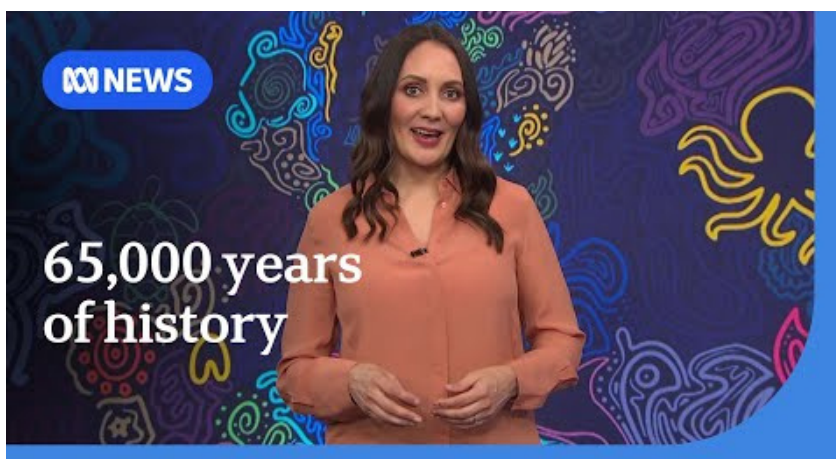
Today, we walk where once they walked. Today we can get some idea of their story as told within this Deep Time series of programs.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/deeptime/time/>

The story of Australia and its peoples is vast and deep.

It's one you should know, but possibly one you've never been told. Well, not like this anyway.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/deeptime/tell-me-a-story/>



A map of Deep Time stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures - ABC News - Deep Time Australia

Land mass 25,000 years ago.

Lowest sea level since human occupation.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/deeptime/place/>

YouTube presentation

Search for 65,000 years of history



Talk2mebro, group walk at Munibung Hill. Photo: Marcus De

### How Nature Restores Our Minds, Burcin Ikiz Ph.D.

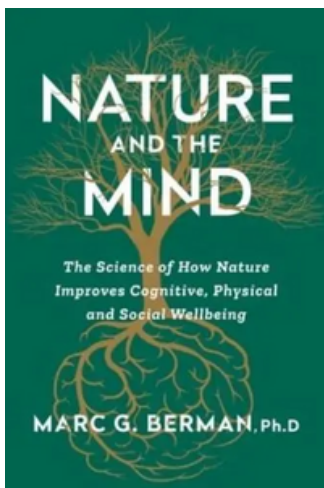
[Psychology Today](#), November 6, 2025

The science behind nature's power to sharpen focus and support mental health.

At a time when more than half the world's population lives in cities and people spend about 90 percent of their lives indoors, our relationship with the natural world has never been more distant or more essential to restore. Mounting evidence shows that even brief moments in nature can sharpen focus, lift mood, and protect the brain.

Few scientists have done more to uncover why than [Marc Berman](#), Chair of Psychology and director of the Environmental [Neuroscience](#) Lab at the University of Chicago.

In his new book, [Nature and the Mind](#), Berman draws on years of experimental research to explain how green spaces nurture [attention](#), [creativity](#), and mental health and why access to them is a matter of equity and necessity, not luxury.



During human composting, the body is placed in a specialized polycarbonate vessel that's eight feet long, three and a half feet wide, and three and a half feet tall. Image: Return Home

### How human composting turns bodies into soil, by Jennifer Byrne, [PopSci](#), Oct 10, 2025

A growing number of Americans are choosing to return to earth after death—literally.

Green burials, and specifically human composting, is an environmentally conscious, life-sustaining option that's now legal in 14 states (USA), most recently New Jersey.

But how does a human composting vessel work? And what exactly happens to Grandpa's hip replacement once he's been "recycled?"

"Essentially, we've optimized what would happen in nature," says funeral director Brienna Smith, chief operating officer of Return Home Green Funeral Home in Seattle.

"It takes about 60 to 90 days for the human body to transform from what it is originally—flesh and bone, like us—into compost."

Smith describes the process of Natural Organic Reduction—also called "terramation"—as "gentle, noninvasive, and slow-moving."

*A steady-state economy (SSE) is an economy with constant stocks of people and products, maintained with low levels of materials and energy throughput that are ecologically sustainable.*

Herman Daly, 1977  
[Steady State Economics](#).



The MycoToilet is set up in the UBC Botanical Garden, Joseph Dahmen

### Mushrooms make the difference in first-of-its-kind super-composting toilet, By Ben Coxworth, New Atlas, September 26, 2025

Composting toilets are a great idea, but no one likes to think of the waste just sitting there and slowly ... fermenting.

A new eco-friendly toilet gets around that problem by using mushrooms to facilitate the composting process, plus it requires no water or electricity to do the job.

Known as the MycoToilet, the proof-of-concept outhouse was designed and built by a team of scientists at Canada's University of British Columbia (UBC), in the university's Botanical Garden. [Get MORE](#)



### Bats in Backyards

INSECT EATING bats play a critical role in our ecosystem by eating and helping to control insects like cockroaches, mosquitoes and agricultural pests.

However, insect-eating bats in New South Wales are in decline. They are under threat from habitat loss, human activities and climate change. Of the 34 species in New South Wales, 18 are listed as threatened or are thought to be extinct.

Bats in Backyards is a citizen science project contributing valuable data to help save some of NSW's rarest insect-eating bats from extinction.

[Reference source HERE](#)

A poor farmer grows weeds  
A fair farmer grows crops  
A great farmer grows soil!



### URBAN NIGHT SKY PLACE\*

Artificial-light at-night (ALAN) is polluting the night sky on such a vast scale that we can't see what's there - what's really there.

There is an urgent need to turn it down.

With responsible-outdoor-light-at-night (ROLAN) we can turn the tide on what has become an insidious waste of electricity and still be safe and healthy.

\*project of the Munibung Hill Conservation Society in partnership with Warners Bay Area - Sustainable Neighbourhood Group, Newcastle Astronomical Society and assistance from the Illuminating Engineering Society.



Credit: Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney

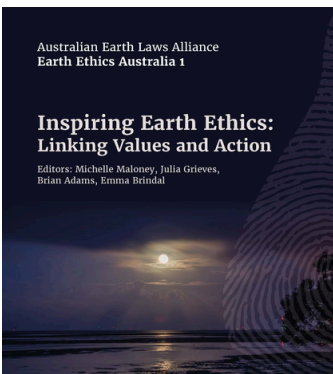
### Sinister truth behind 'stunning' trees lining suburban Aussie streets

*Beautiful as they are, Australians are being reminded these trees come with some serious downsides.* Joe Attanasio, [Yahoo News](#), 25 October 2025

Jacarandas - it's important to remember they are an introduced species. Originally from South America, jacarandas were introduced in the 1800s as an ornamental decoration.

Despite their obvious attractiveness, there are native Australian alternatives that are much better options to plant.

"While Jacarandas paint a pretty picture, they don't provide food or habitat for our Aussie fauna."



[Earth Ethics journal](#) is an Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA) publication.

Our ethical values are very important; the way we think about ourselves and understand our world informs the governance systems that guide our societies.

Earth ethics orient people towards recognising the interconnected systems of life that we are part of, and in turn help us reflect, make decisions and act in a way that nurtures rather than destroys the living world.



Credit: Supplied / Facebook

### Startling find outside man's home highlights \$18 billion Australian issue

Joe Attanasio, [Yahoo News](#), 27 October 2025.

The [deadly toll cats have taken on Australia's native wildlife](#) has been laid bare yet again.

The resident, from the Hunter region, explained how for years he had observed generations of rosellas living in a fence post hollow.

For almost 30 years, the fence post was used by the rainbow-coloured family.

But, this year, when he went to check the progress of what he assumed to be the next generation, he came across something upsetting — a deceased cat wedged in the post.

"It definitely got stuck after it killed the parent tending the eggs," the man told Yahoo News. He removed the cat, "which wasn't pleasant at all, to say the least", noticing the eggs beneath. "Hopefully, another pair will use it next year," he added.

The post attracted hundreds of responses and prompted people to weigh in.

"I think it's important to post stuff like this to highlight the destruction that cats are responsible for," one person said.

"I am a cat lover, and that's why my cats are inside," said another. "So sad. Feel sorry for the birds having to resort to nesting in a fence post as we continue to destroy their habitat," a third commented.



### Man removes 18km of barbed wire fencing from Victorian property to save wildlife, [Coco Veldkamp](#), ABCNews, 31 October, 2025

When conservation photographer Doug Gimesy moved to his property in the Otways in south-west Victoria last year, he saw something distressing — an eastern grey kangaroo tangled in a stretch of barbed wire fencing.

For months afterwards, Mr Gimesy woke at 5:30am each day, spending hours cutting down and rolling up barbed wire by hand.

So far, he has removed more than 18 kilometres of barbed wire and 4km of electric fencing from around his Wongarra property.

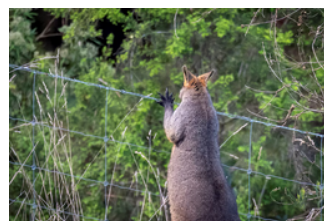
#### Common sight, serious threat

Barbed wire is a common sight across regional Australia, used to contain livestock and mark property boundaries.

But it poses a serious threat to wildlife.

Wildlife Victoria regularly receives reports of animals becoming entangled in barbed wire fences, including kangaroos, wallabies, birds, grey-headed flying foxes and sugar gliders.

According to Entangled Wildlife Australia, 80 per cent of barbed wire entanglements occur on the top strand. (Supplied: Doug Gimesy)



ABC News: Elloise Farrow-Smith

### Owner of seven cats modifies home to keep them away from wildlife, by Elloise Farrow-Smith, ABC North Coast, 6 November 2025 [Full STORY](#)

Grafton resident Tim Bestwick built an elaborate system of tunnels and ramps for his cats.

He says cats are healthier and happier when they are "contained" and not allowed to roam.

"It's well overdue, the poor dog owner has to put up with rules and fines if they do the wrong thing and I think cats are on par if not worse because of the devastation they can do to the environment," he said.



Credit: Kasia & Takashi Someya

### They Removed 131 Cats From an Island—What Happened to the Ecosystem Next Defied All Scientific Logic, by Arezki Amiri, Daily Galaxy. 2 November 2025.

A critically endangered species - the Japanese Wood Pigeon - staged a comeback no one thought possible, revealing a genetic twist that's rewriting the rules of extinction.

How removing feral cats from a habitat can see a species bounce back. [Full STORY](#)

# A new economic order is long overdue

*Any human devised system that doesn't place the Earth front and centre, that doesn't serve the whole gamut of life, not just humans, is lacking in justice. For to only consider justice in human terms without being inclusive of other species is a flawed system that urgently requires revision. This report points the finger in the direction of an economic system that is short sighted and outdated, no longer fit-for-purpose.*

**Old-fashioned economic thinking is driving biodiversity loss—study calls for shift in how we value nature**, by Aberystwyth University, edited by Stephanie Baum, reviewed by Robert Egan. Phys.org., THE GIST, September 22, 2025

OLD-FASHIONED economic thinking is driving biodiversity loss, according to a new international study, which calls for a fundamental shift in how nature is valued.

Published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the new research proposes a transformative approach to economics—one that recognises nature not merely as a resource, but as a living system deeply intertwined with human identity, culture, and well-being.

The findings build on the United Nations' Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Values Assessment, which advocates for a more inclusive understanding of nature's worth.

The new paper highlights the importance of relational values—such as heritage, stewardship, and spiritual connection—in shaping how people interact with and care for the natural world.

Lead author Professor Jasper Kenter, a Research Fellow in Deliberative Ecological Economics at Aberystwyth Business School, said, "We relate to nature in countless ways. It's not just about ecosystems or resources—biodiversity shapes our communities, our mental and physical health, our sense of place and belonging, our spirituality.

"Traditional economic thinking has been too narrow and technocratic to capture these diverse values, often leading to conflict over land use and conservation priorities. To make better decisions that reflect people's lived experiences, we need a paradigm shift."

Expanded story at this link: <https://phys.org/news/2025-09-fashioned-economic-biodiversity-loss-shift.html>



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

*But this is about more than economics—it's about reimagining our relationship with the natural world.*

*By recognising that people and economies are embedded within nature, we can build more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable futures."*



## Koalas need our help. NOW.

They are under threat from habitat loss and disease.

Every sighting matters.

There are gaps in our knowledge.

Enter information about Koalas you spot at the

[I Spy Koala app](#) - location, condition, photos ...

*Ancient Greeks and Romans knew harming the environment could change the climate.*

*Ancient authors [saw] protection of the environment as a serious concern. Their view was, making the environment unhealthy would make people unhealthy, too.*

Konstantine Panegyres Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History, The University of Western Australia.  
The Conversation, November 5, 2025

## **They knew a thing or two about how humans impact the climate**

**Ancient Greeks and Romans knew harming the environment could change the climate,** Konstantine Panegyres Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History, The University of Western Australia. [The Conversation, November 5, 2025](#)

Humans have known about, thought about and worried about climate change for millennia.

Since at least the fourth century BC, the ancient Greeks and Romans recognised that the climate changes over time and that human activity can cause it.

They worried deeply about the impact it would have on us as individuals, and on broader society. The earliest mention of climate change, came from Greek writer Theophrastus of Eresus (who lived roughly from 372 BCE to 282 BCE) was a student of Aristotle. He is sometimes credited with the earliest reference to climate change.

### **Ancient responses to climate change**

Greek and Roman writers sometimes complained about the destruction being done to the environment. Roman writer Pliny the Elder said that:

*We taint the rivers and the elements of nature, and the air itself, which is the main support of life, we turn into a medium for the destruction of life.*

However, most ancient authors tended not to link environmental damage or pollution with climate change as much as we do today. The exception is when they talk about the draining of lakes or diversions of rivers, which worried many.

Some ancient leaders, such as Roman Emperor, Nerva, took action to clean up the environment.

Ancient authors did, however, see protection of the environment as a serious concern. Their view was making the environment unhealthy would make people unhealthy, too.

For example, the physician Galen (129-216 CE) said that in his time the Tiber River in Rome was so polluted that it was not safe to eat fish caught there. Nonetheless, many people ate the fish, got sick, and died. The main pollution sources were sewage and rubbish.

*Some ancient leaders took action to clean up the environment.*

*For instance, the Roman emperor Nerva (who ruled 96-98 CE) undertook construction works that caused the appearance of the city to be “clean and altered” and made the air “purer”, according to the Roman writer Frontinus.*

### **What the modern world can learn**

Ancient Greek and Roman writings reveal ancient concerns about our negative impact on the environment.

They show that places once rich and fertile later became desolate and barren.

Although the Greeks and Romans linked environmental harm with climate change to a more limited extent than we do today, they nevertheless knew harming the environment could change the climate.

This, they understood, can ultimately bring harm to ourselves personally and to our societies as a whole.

# A message to tree killers



## Sending a message to tree killers

Stolen views, shipping containers and 'shame signs': do Australia's tree wars need a new solution? by Penry Buckley, The Guardian, 6 Oct 2025

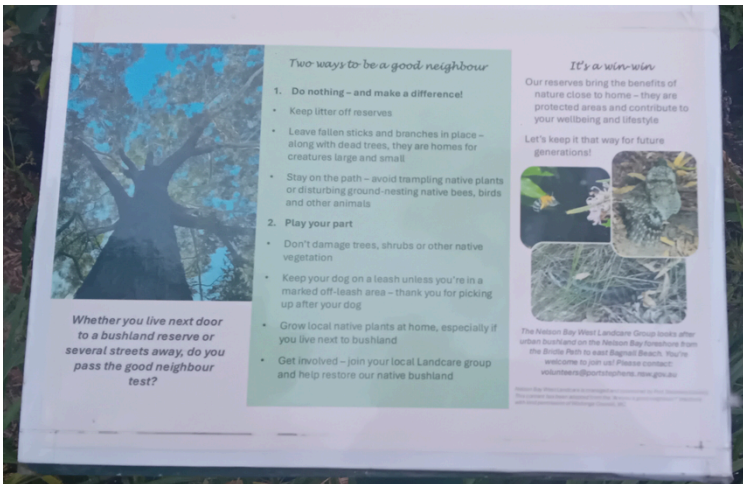


Port Stephens Council erected this sign after local residents cut down trees presumably because they obscured their view

Conservationists and councils have called for bigger fines, a national database about illegal tree removals and even jail time to deter tree killers.

After trees along Sydney's Brighton-Le-Sands beach were hacked down and poisoned by unknown hands in January to open up the view, the local government responded in kind.

Bayside Council, home to the industrial precinct around Port Botany, dropped a battered metal shipping container in front of the newly created view, and commissioned a local artist to decorate it with a mural of fairy wrens and native flora. It will remain there until replacement trees have grown, says the mayor, Edward McDougall. [Learn MORE](#)



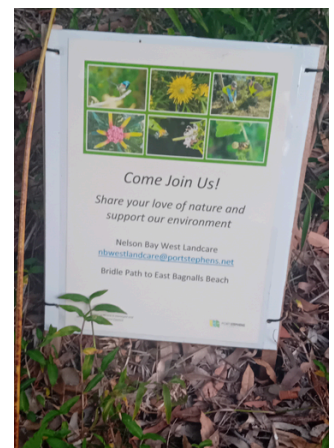
## A visit to Port Stephens provides ideas that could be adopted around Munibung Hill

Two ways to be a good neighbour notice (left)

Butterfly attracting native plants notice (right)



Indigenous information hub at Tilligery Habitat Nature Reserve



# There's a hole in the bucket dear Liza, dear Liza, and there's a 'hole' in the lighting standards

*Rachel Mundy explores the pitfalls of residential lighting through both a personal and professional lens.*

Rachel explores a gap in residential lighting standards. But first an introduction ...

IT IS fascinating to me, writes Rachel, that we have Australian Standards guiding and limiting the obtrusive lighting of public lighting areas into private single dwelling residences, but not limitations on those single dwellings into their neighbouring dwellings.

Or from single dwellings into the night sky or the night-time environment.

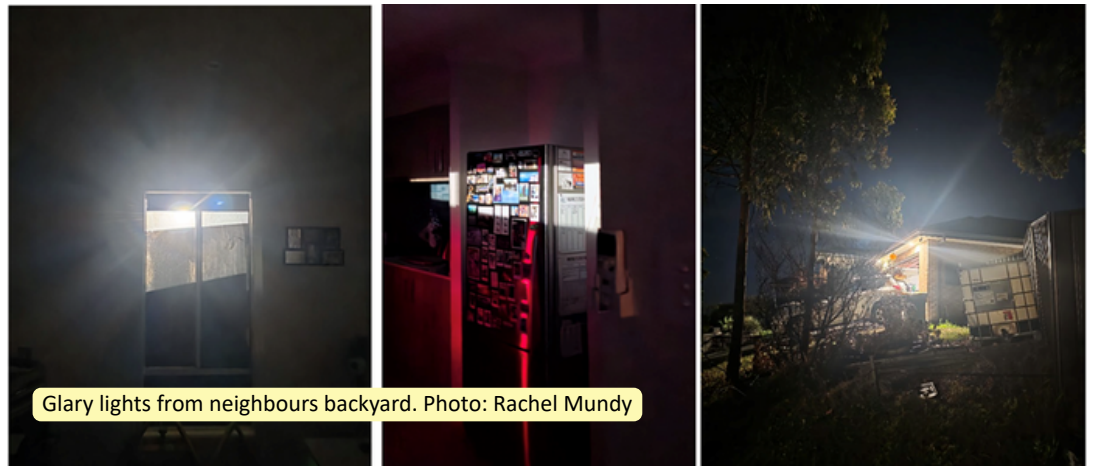
There are no limitations to the type of light fixtures a homeowner can purchase or install at their property, no matter where they are located - unless it is already a designated dark sky place.

But further to this, are dark sky friendly light fixtures easily attainable for your regular homeowner?

In my image below of the local street light and local suburb of Lake Macquarie, yes, you can see the street lighting is the highest contributor to light spill and light pollution, but you can also see the glare of light and light pollution from the single dwellings.

What do you think — is it time we lifted the standards for household lighting to better protect our night skies?

November 10, 2025



## The Gap in Residential Lighting Standards

*With the emergence of more and more dedicated dark sky destinations named within NSW and wider Australia, greater attention is moving towards dark sky friendly lighting, and an awareness of what we can do to better preserve our dark skies - Rachel Mundy reports ..*

AS A domino effect with the approval of Palm Beach Headland as an Urban Night Sky Place, the Munibung Hill Conservation Society (MHCS) was inspired to investigate the possibility of having Munibung Hill as Lake Macquarie / Newcastle's very own Urban Night Sky Place (UNSP).

I gladly find myself on the working group striving to make this goal a reality.

As a Senior Lighting Designer with 10 years' experience and Vice-President of the Illuminating Engineering Society in NSW, I bring a specific and trained perspective on what is required of public and private lighting to achieve dark sky accreditation, however, as the remainder of my working group colleagues come from astronomy and conservation backgrounds, it became quite apparent that a lot of my knowledge or access to dark sky friendly luminaires was not as attainable for your regular resident of Lake Macquarie LGA.

Stuart Carter from the Munibung Hill Conservation society set out on a mission to find obtainable dark sky friendly luminaires, visiting a variety of well-known lighting stores who unfortunately were not aware of what a dark sky friendly luminaire was, even unaware they do have options which could potentially comply.

With this interesting perspective in mind, it drew my attention to what luminaires are being obtained and installed in residential properties contributing highly to light pollution, and therein lies what I believe is a residential lighting crisis not only in Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, but all over Australia.

Driving through the streets close to home at nighttime I see glary floodlights, lighting that is left on all night, and bright white colour temperatures where they are not suited.

Recently when I purchased my home, I immediately changed all the internal

## URBAN NIGHT SKY CONSERVATION

*A night sky conservation project that aims to raise awareness about the impact of artificial light at night (ALAN)*



(Left) This image of the local street light and local suburb of Lake Macquarie. Yes, you can see the street lighting is the highest contributor to light spill and light pollution, but you can also see the glare of light and light pollution from the single dwellings. Photos: Rachel Mundy

downlights to a warm white colour temperature and found it amusing the installing electrician thought that was weird and kept explaining I could switch between colour temperatures as the warm white must not be pleasant.

I couldn't admit to him I was a lighting designer and knew exactly what I was doing.

These images are taken from my own home, where you can see a bright glary floodlight beaming in from our neighbour's property at nighttime, and the public streetlight at the front of the house.

Neither of these light sources are compliant with our national obtrusive lighting standards. Interestingly, there are really no lighting standards governing what should and shouldn't be installed within residential properties, which I believe has led to this crisis.

Residential lighting is typically installed and designed by builder's and electricians, or purchased by homeowners themselves, only rarely are lighting designers involved.

As well as public street lighting and spill light from commercial properties, private residential lighting is also a big contributor to light pollution.

What is being done to improve and reduce residential light pollution? This is a space in my role as a Lighting Designer and as a member of the Munibung Hill Urban Night Sky Place Working Group to try and improve as we fight for darker skies. At the core of this challenge and part of the solution is community.

We must find a way for dark sky friendly lighting to be affordable and attainable for our local communities to implement and continue to raise awareness through incredible organisations such as the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance and the IES ANZ.

There are great case studies of communities banding together to switch off their lighting at particular times of the night to support the migration of Shearwater fledglings and for dark sky places around Australia, and I would love to see this happen throughout Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

Rachel Mundy IESANZ - The Lighting Society IESANZ-NSW  
City of Newcastle, Australia

Australasian Dark Sky Alliance (ADSA)  
November 10, 2025

### Focus on light

One of the most important skills in photography is to get the focus right - to make sure the image is clean and crisp, not blurry or fuzzy.

In the case of outdoor lighting, focus is also important - to make sure the light is directed to where it's needed and not flooding the night sky, but rather lighting the path, or lighting a sporting field. Getting the focus right means shining the light down to the ground, not being wasted flooding the night sky.



## CAN YOU HELP?

These are examples of street lights within a couple of blocks around Macquarie Hills. They appear to be typical of the fixtures in many streets. We need examples of:  
**Street lights that are poorly shielded**, allowing light to spill up into the night sky;  
**Street lights that are fully shielded**, directing light down, protecting the night sky.  
Send examples to: [munibunghcs@gmail.com](mailto:munibunghcs@gmail.com) with details of where and when.

# Legislation to reduce light pollution

We recently emailed this letter to Pat Conroy requesting support for this legislation

The Hon. Pat Conroy  
Minister for Defence Industry, Minister for Pacific Island Affairs  
Federal Member for Shortland

On 24 November, the Member for Makin, Mr Tony Zappia, will present to Federal Parliament a motion to investigate legislation to reduce light pollution and protect Australia's starry skies. This follows a petition led by the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance (ADSA), which received over 12,000 signatures.

On behalf of the Urban Night Sky Place (UNSP) project group, a working committee of the Munibung Hill Conservation Society, we ask for your support of this motion.

As noted here, light pollution harms human health, wildlife, and the environment, while also wasting energy.

Light pollution is one of the most easily reversible environmental issues we face. By using light more thoughtfully — only where, when, and how it's needed — we can save energy, cut carbon emissions, and reduce public spending on wasted light.

Just as importantly, we can restore the natural darkness that so many species, and we ourselves, depend on for healthy functioning.

Countries like France and Germany have already demonstrated what's possible.

France's national lighting regulations have reduced municipal energy use by up to 41%, while Germany's curfews and shielding requirements have cut both electricity costs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions without compromising safety.

Restoring nocturnal habitats and achieving measurable decreases in urban skyglow and significant energy savings make the need for this legislation so important.

Australia now has the opportunity to follow these examples, creating a national framework to support councils, businesses, and households in reducing light pollution.

We urge you to support this motion — a practical, low-cost, and impactful step to preserve our night skies and deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits.

We would appreciate hearing from you on this matter.

Stuart Carter, Secretary  
Munibung Hill Conservation Society (MHCS) 17 November 2025



## Globe at Night

Each month near the New Moon we can be a citizen scientist by adding to the global data base.

Help chart how light pollution changes over the years. Your / our input is vital to collect as many readings as possible over a large area.

If we can't do it on a regular monthly basis, perhaps every February we can make a contribution to our local data base (or other times of the year if we are able to).

<https://globeatnight.org/>

A night sky conservation project that aims to raise awareness about the impact of artificial light at night (ALAN)

### New streetlights in Pittsburgh

THE CITY of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has begun replacing more than 35,000 of its streetlights with energy-efficient, 2700 K LEDs designed with dark sky principles. By focusing on public safety, energy efficiency, and the reduction of light pollution, Pittsburgh is proving that well-designed lighting benefits both people and the planet. Source: Nightscape, DSI, #121, September 2025

### Light at night impacts plant growth length

CRITICAL NEW research published in Nature has shown that artificial light at night (ALAN) significantly impacts plant growth length in urban areas, often with a larger effect than temperature. It reveals that ALAN-driven earlier leaf-out and later leaf deterioration increase the risk of frost damage, disrupting vital plant-pollinator interactions, and can lead to earlier pollen allergy symptoms. Read the paper: [bit.ly/40SUkxa](http://bit.ly/40SUkxa)

### Why comply when Earth law principles provide superior results

*TO COMPLY is to be as bad as the law allows. I won't comply. We will go beyond compliance, motivated by the principles of Earth law* - Ray Anderson. Current compliance permits lighting fixtures that spill light into the night sky, causing glow, glare and trespass.

### Light pollution causes urban birds to stay awake longer each day, study finds

Researchers 'shocked' to discover some species settling down for sleep 50 minutes later than rural counterparts, [Hannah Devlin](#) Science correspondent, The Guardian, 22 Aug 2025

The study, showed that light pollution caused birds to sing for an average of 50 minutes longer each day, with some species waking up an hour earlier and settling down for the evening an hour later.

Light pollution now affects 23% of Earth's surface and is rapidly growing in extent and intensity, data suggests. There is already evidence for detrimental effects on human health and concerns that many species are affected, with negative consequences including die-offs of insects and the disruption of migration patterns in bats and sea turtles.

### The URBAN NIGHT SKY PROJECT

aims to draw attention to the urgent need to turn down artificial-light at-night (ALAN) that is polluting the night sky on such a vast scale that we can't see what's there - what's really there.

With responsible-outdoor-light-at-night (ROLAN) we can turn the tide on what has become an insidious waste of electricity and still be safe and healthy.

### ADSA\* Approved Lighting

Lanndon Bannister explains how to get **Best Practice Lighting.**

[Click this LINK](#)

\*Australasian Dark Sky Alliance



The Urban Night Sky Project poster displayed at the Living Smart Festival in September.



### On the cover - Nightscape magazine "The Watchers" by JJ Rao, Derby, Australia

Rare red sprites dancing over the tidal flats of Western Australia. A large sprite like this exists for 10 milliseconds, up to 40x faster than an eye blink. This makes photographing them challenging and requires very dark skies. The central sprite is unusual. It's known as a 'jellyfish' sprite, the largest and fastest of all sprites.

TECHNICAL DETAILS: Stacked | Sony a7IV | Lens: Sigma 35mm f1.4 Art | Aperture: f/1.4 | Shutter speed: 3.2s | ISO: 4000

CATEGORY: Capture the Dark — Images showcasing the splendor of dark skies and pristine nights, from outdoor adventures to breathtaking nightscapes and vistas, and striking photographs of the Milky Way.

### Leadership matters

*Unless somebody leads nobody will - why not us* - Ray Anderson, Interface Inc.

Where there's a vacuum, a void, there's an opportunity to fill it.

It would seem for most people the night sky is a void, a nothing space where nothing lives.

An empty space that can be flooded with bright light, known as ALAN – artificial light at night.

An aim of the Urban Night Sky Project (UNSP), in association with Dark Sky International (DSI), is to nudge the current narrative written into policies and practices, such that they embrace ROLAN – responsible outdoor light at night – as set out in Best Practice Lighting guidelines produced by DSI.



## Australian Plant Society - Hunter

APS Hunter members are committed to growing, propagating, conserving, appreciating and sharing Australian native plants.

Meetings held at:

Shortland Wetlands Centre, Shortland

More information:

<https://austplants.com.au/Hunter-Valley>

Contact: Michael Belcher, President – 4930 1458

[huntervdg@austplants.com.au](mailto:huntervdg@austplants.com.au)



## Lake Macquarie Camera Club



Monthly Club nights, second Wednesday of each month, 7pm.  
Valentine Bowling Club.

More information:

[LMCC website](#)

Email:

[lakemacquariecameraclub@gmail.com](mailto:lakemacquariecameraclub@gmail.com)



To create a free meeting place where people come together to repair and give a new lease of life to their stuff.

We want to help people connect with their local community, reduce waste, share skills and build friendships.

[repaircafelakemac@gmail.com](mailto:repaircafelakemac@gmail.com)  
[sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/repair-it-lake-mac.html](https://sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/repair-it-lake-mac.html)

Check the Facebook website for details of where and when.



## Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

[www.hboc.org.au](http://www.hboc.org.au)

## Hunter Bird Observers Club

Meet 7.00pm second Wednesday of each month (except January)

[Hunter Wetlands Centre](#)

1 Wetlands Place, Shortland

Email: [info2@hboc.org.au](mailto:info2@hboc.org.au)



Groundswell  
COLLECTIVE

The **Groundswell Collective**, changemakers with a vision to create a thriving, connected and sustainable community. We work with partners to deliver impactful projects that help to:

- accelerate the transition to renewable energy and net zero
- support the sustainable use of resources and adoption of circular economy principles and practices,
- increase tree cover and promote the planting of indigenous Australian plants.

Contact at:

0498 999 021

[info@thegroundswell.org.au](mailto:info@thegroundswell.org.au)



Lake Macquarie Landcare is a partnership between the Lake Macquarie Landcare Volunteer Network Inc, Lake Macquarie City Council and almost

200 Landcare groups, supported through the Landcare and Sustainable Living Centre, umali barai-ku.

80 Toronto Road, Booragul

(02) 4921 0392

[lro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au)



## Lucilla Ridge Landcare

Meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday

9.00am for an hour

Contact: Heather Carter

0438 288 617 or

Heidi Keft - 0422 046 094



## Biddabah Creek Landcare

Meet every Monday

8.00am - 10.00am

Windross Drive, Warners Bay

Wetlands site

Contact:

Vina Chubb 0437 492 387or

Julie Butel 0430 456 212



## Friends of Munibung Hill Landcare

Meet every Saturday

8.00am - 11.00am

cul-de-sac Parkstone Close

Speers Point

Contact:

Gavin: 0410 426 433

# COMMUNITY

Munibung Hill Conservation Society partners with or shares common goals with many other organisations.



Monthly meetings, first Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm  
Valentine Bowling Club,  
17A Valentine Crescent, Valentine.  
Contact: WarnersBaySNG@gmail.com  
Follow on Facebook at: [https://www.facebook.com/WBSNG/?locale=sk\\_SK](https://www.facebook.com/WBSNG/?locale=sk_SK)



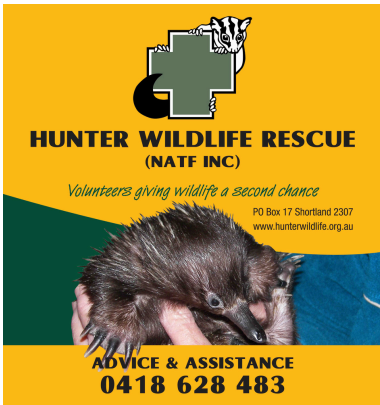
80 Hayden Brook Rd  
Woodrising NSW 2284

info@woodrisingchildcare.com.au  
Phone: 4950 4212



Monthly Meetings, last Thursday of each month: 6pm to 8pm  
Cardiff North Public School, Library, 59 Wansbeck Valley Rd.

Contact us to find out more.  
casng2015@gmail.com



For general information or enquiries contact:  
The Secretary  
[secretary@hunterwildlife.org.au](mailto:secretary@hunterwildlife.org.au)  
SHORTLAND



Invertebrate animals make up around 55% of known Australian biodiversity and >95% of known Australian animal diversity. They are fascinating and absolutely crucial to the functioning of our ecosystems. However, they are largely ignored in conservation planning despite hundreds of species listed as threatened.

<https://invertebratesaustralia.org/>



**The Lighting Society Newcastle** is a branch of the NSW Illuminating Engineering Society chapter. IES promotes the art and science of lighting with a mission to improve life through quality of light. Three technical or educational events are held each year for the community and industry, with the aim to promote, inform and celebrate the lighting design discipline. Monthly meetings are held with the wider NSW chapter.



**Newcastle Astronomical Society**

University of Newcastle,  
Room CT202, Ring Road, Newcastle  
Contact: 0425 796 685  
E: [president@thenas.com.au](mailto:president@thenas.com.au)



**AUSTRALASIAN DARK SKY ALLIANCE**

Local councils, tourism representatives, health practitioners, ecologists, astronomers and the lighting industry. Australasian Dark Sky Alliance brings together groups actively working to create artificial light at night awareness.

Visit:  
[Australasian Dark Sky Alliance](http://AustralasianDarkSkyAlliance.com)



DarkSky International restores the nighttime environment and protects communities from the harmful effects of light pollution through outreach, advocacy, and conservation.

Visit:  
<https://darksky.org/>



## EcoAdvocate

is a Lake Mac Council publication providing regular updates on eco-related news and events happening around the Lake Mac LGA.

Email address  
[ecoadvocate@lakemac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ecoadvocate@lakemac.nsw.gov.au)



Discover the beauty of the Australian bush with Newcastle Ramblers. Whether you're a family or an individual, there's something for everyone. From scenic day walks to backpacking, cycling, kayaking, or travel adventures - activities cater to all. Curious about upcoming adventures? Check out the Seasonal Program and attend a meeting.

Walking program on website  
<https://www.newcastleramblers.org.au/>



Shed Shop,  
99 Beaumont Street, Hamilton  
also workshops at  
143A Kings Road, New Lambton -  
down the Lane off Kings Road.  
(near Adamstown railway station)

Open 9.00am - 1.00pm Mon -  
Thurs & 9.00am - 12.00pm Friday



Supported by  
Lake Mac Council  
**Sustainable**

**Neighbourhood News**  
is a monthly roundup of what's  
going on in the  
sustainable neighbourhood  
space

Subscribe at:  
[admin@sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au](mailto:admin@sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au)



**Watagan Wanderers Bushwalking Club**  
runs day walks every week on Wednesday  
and Saturday in an area including:  
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, Port  
Stephens, the lower Hunter Valley, the  
Central Coast and Sydney.  
Also other activities, including abseiling/  
canyoning, cycling, kayaking/paddling,  
multi-day pack walks, car-camps, and  
snow-shoe walks.

Meet on third Thursday of each month,  
7:30pm, Landcare and Sustainability  
Centre, Teralba

To get in touch, send a message:  
[https://wwwbc.memberjungle.com/  
contact-us](https://wwwbc.memberjungle.com/contact-us)

## A message from the night sky community...

Would you please do  
all you can to get rid  
of light pollution  
caused by artificial  
light at night.

Our nocturnal  
residents would  
really appreciate it.



**THE SOCIETY THANKS JEZWEB**  
for assistance with management of  
the Society's:

- Website,
- Munibung Musings Magazine
- Other internet services.

Jezweb specialises in  
Website Design, Search Engine  
Optimisation, Website Hosting

1300 024 766  
E: [help@jezweb.au](mailto:help@jezweb.au)  
[www.jezweb.com.au](http://www.jezweb.com.au)

Thanks to  
Jeremy Dawes and Daniel Leary.



Meet at Pavement Society Cafe,  
Main Road, Boolaroo,  
Sundays 6.00am  
rain, hail or shine.

Move at 06:15  
Start cnr Fourth/Main Rd,  
Boolaroo  
All Welcome

Follow on Instagram:  
[https://www.instagram.com/  
bungersrunclub/](https://www.instagram.com/bungersrunclub/)

### To do:

- Check out organizations like the International Dark Sky Association for more tips
- Turn off lights when you are not using them
- Close blinds at night
- Use warm, dim lights instead of white or blue lights
- Switch to using auto-off security lights
- Push for directional streetlights in your community

[https://kids.frontiersin.org/  
articles/10.3389/frym.2023.1137068](https://kids.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frym.2023.1137068)

**Contemplation,  
comprehension, conservation -  
a match made at Munibung Hill.**



**The right to roam  
belongs to wildlife**

*Keep cats contained 24/7*



These boots are made for walkin'  
These boots they can't stand still,  
One of these days, these boots  
are gonna walk up Munibung Hill.

There boots are made for walkin'  
These boots are looking for a thrill  
That's why these boots  
have taken to walkin' at Munibung  
Hill.



These boots are made for climbing  
these boots, they know the drill.  
Given two strong legs, and ya know what  
these boots'll be out there,  
walkin' at Munibung Hill.

Says left boot to right boot  
if we pair up we'll have the skill  
to combine our efforts and  
Have what it takes to go  
sight seeing at Munibung Hill.

Munibung Hill Conservation Society  
is an advocate for nature, for living on land that has been  
occupied for millions of years by species of the fungal, plant  
and animal kind, great and small, seen and unseen.