

Kona-konaba

Munibung

Musings

Magazine of the Munibung Hill Conservation Society

Promoting Urban Ecology for a Nature Positive future



Late Autumn Equinox Issue

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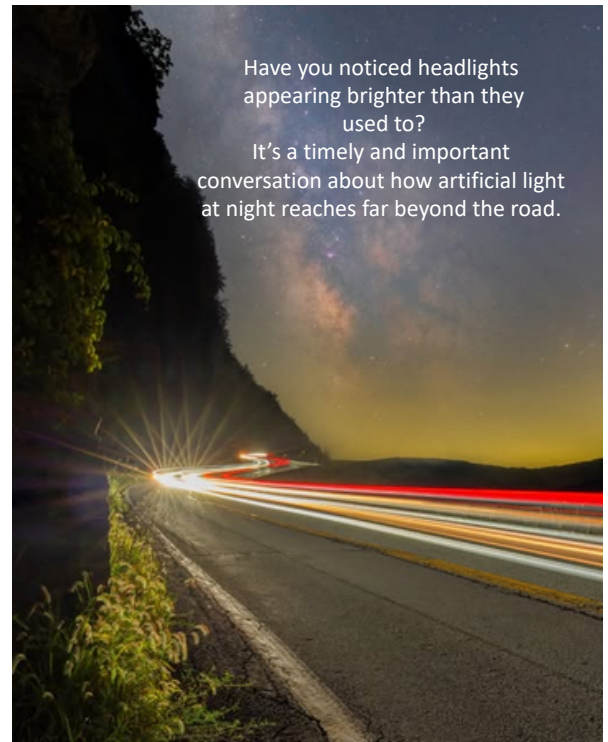
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Can you help turn down the lights?
We should, but we can't, and that's an injustice

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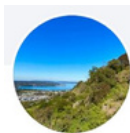
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Have you noticed headlights appearing brighter than they used to?
It's a timely and important conversation about how artificial light at night reaches far beyond the road.



Find us on
Facebook at ...



Munibung Hill Trails
275 likes • 305 followers

On the cover:
Lucilla Ridge Landcare site, Munibung Hill

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.

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

Sonder - to realise it or not, everyone has a story to tell.

A call for the protection of the green lungs in our cities

Max Blanch fully appreciates the importance of preserving native bushland within a suburban context.

A staunch advocate for the benefits of retaining green forested areas, long time supporter of Munibung Hill Conservation Society, Max Blanch includes Munibung Hill as one of these places.

We spent some time with Max in November 2025 when he spoke about those times when two of his passions were able to be fulfilled.

“It was when I joined the Hunter Bird Observers Club back in the mid 1970s”, says Max, “and more specifically how it was that Munibung Hill came into the picture, and I must say, has remained there, large as life, ever since.

A few of us in the Club started the Tuesday Mob. Once a month we went bird watching.”

“We were always on the lookout to find new spaces, and it must seem a bit strange these days, but back then our main source was looking in a print copy of the street directory – our search engine in modern day parlance - for green land areas. Where-ever we found a bit of a green patch, we’d put it on the list and take the Tuesday Mob there.

And so it was that we found this rather biggish patch of green – big by comparison with other areas we’d listed – and surprise, surprise it was Munibung Hill.”

“For our first visit, we chose to enter from the end of Quarry Road, Speers Point,” Max said. “Interestingly, when we went there we discovered a short section leading up from the end of Quarry Road – which we accessed through an opening in a cyclone wire fence* – which was sealed with a small parking areas at the top.” [*Editors note: Back in those days it wasn’t overgrown with Morning Glory as it is today.]

“But what I remember at this location immediately on entering Munibung Hill was rough grass and a stony rocky area that was not at all hospitable for birds and it wasn’t something that would entice us to go back again, but we changed tack that on subsequent occasions ended up being much more fruitful from a bird observers perspective.”

“We took the low road, so to speak, across the bottom of the cliff face, walking along a track that led across to a clearing, along the way crossing a creek, that I have now discovered to be Hawkins Creek. As it happened, this turned out to be a rather good ‘birding’ spot, and maybe twice a year for some years afterwards some of my bird observer friends would visit this area.”

“Of course there’s a lot more to Munibung Hill than birds, important as we ‘birders’ think they are. Birds need habitat and you can see how Munibung Hill would have been a wonderful place for birds to live and raise their young.”

“We know that things changed dramatically after European settlement and with the introduction of European values not only at Munibung Hill but everywhere.”



“Let’s check back to a little bit later, maybe the late 1970s, three or four streets further to the north, up from Hopkins Street, I’d sometimes drive into the gravel quarry around the quarry operations and then walk to the intersection of the north-south ridge,” recalls Max.

“I remember standing there and seeing maybe 20-30 acres of cleared bushland with virtually no sign of trees of any description. I now speculate as to whether or not some of this timber had been removed for infrastructure used when the small coal mining operations were there all those years ago.

“The section access up from the rocky incline up from Quarry Road, provided very good views of Lake Macquarie and the surrounding suburbs. I do remember a trig station at the very northern end of one of the walking trips I went on during one of these visits.”

“What were little more than bush tracks, you’d describe today as defined walking tracks.”

“I’m now astounded and delighted by the regrowth and regeneration over the last 30 or so years. Which is a testament to Landcarers, their dedication and determination.”

With the removal of cattle and the zoning of land as environmental conservation nature has been able to repair previously overgrazed and degraded land.

“At the same time, I appreciate that, it has allowed invasive species like Lantana to colonise what was previously natural forested areas.” Max said.

Having said this, we talk about and acknowledge that it can provide ‘habitat’ for the smaller native bird species that we would go to observe – wrens, red browed finches, double barred finches and so on.

“Of course there were certainly the larger birds like Kookaburra, Magpies. And I recall the Whistling Kite, Sea Eagle and an Osprey.”

“I was a member of the Hunter Bird Observers Club for two main reasons. One of course was bird observing, but being a ‘birder’ allows you to experience the ambience of the natural world – and that for me is very important. To be out in the bush, away from the maddening-crowds so to speak, is a real privilege,” concludes Max.



Beyond the Boundary: Verge Gardening for Community & Nature

Your garden doesn't have to stop at the fence.

This session looks beyond the backyard to explore how verge and nature strip gardens can support biodiversity, cool streets, improve soil health and build stronger communities.

This practical workshop will guide you through the key steps to planning, preparing, and planting a verge garden, including:

- Design basics
- Soil preparation
- Plant selection
- How to work within Council requirements so your verge garden is compliant, supported and set up for success

Whether you already garden your verge or are just curious, this session will inspire you to think differently about public spaces.

All participants will receive a **free, native** verge-appropriate **plant**.

Who this is for:

Residents, renters, educators, sustainability groups, and anyone interested in community-led environmental action.

Please bring:

A satellite image of your verge (printed or on a tablet/phone) so you can map out your design ideas during the workshop.

Date & Time:

Thursday 19 March, 6:30pm – 8:00pm
Multi-Arts Pavilion (MAP mima) Lake Macquarie
Speers Point NSW, Australia

Hosted by The Groundswell Collective ...

[Book here](#)

Book into this sessions to deepen your skills and confidence in creating habitat at home and in your community.



We planted two woody meadows a decade ago to see what would thrive. Now the concept is popular across Australia, [Claire Farrell](#) Associate Professor (Green Infrastructure), The University of Melbourne, [Rachael Bathgate](#), Green Infrastructure Research Fellow, The University of Melbourne, The Conversation. November 14, 2025

It sounds like a gardener's holy grail: beautiful and practical plantings that can turn cities into green spaces with benefits for people and biodiversity.

What is a woody meadow?

A uniquely Australian concept, woody meadows are diverse, naturalistic plantings of native groundcover, shrubs and small trees. They are designed for maximum visual and ecological function, and are robust to heat and drought. A beautiful corridor for nature, they can cool cities and reduce stormwater runoff into waterways.

Woody meadows mimic the structure of natural shrubland communities and include wattles, grevilleas, melaleucas, goodenias and correas for year-round flowering. They are planted densely into low-nutrient materials such as crushed scoria or sandstone (which exotic species don't like). This promotes rapid canopy coverage and requires less weeding, fewer chemicals and lower maintenance costs.

Australian cities are investing millions of dollars in urban green spaces. This has wide-ranging benefits for health and wellbeing, biodiversity, reducing pollution and tackling urban heating. But maintaining urban vegetation is expensive, leading to overly simple plantings that are dull and provide few benefits.

Installation costs for woody meadows are comparable to business-as-usual plantings of low-diversity, low-functioning monocultures such as massed plantings of strappy leaf plants such as Lomandra or Dianella species or shrubs. But they require 75% less maintenance over time. Their adaptable design has overcome barriers to planting in hostile urban sites and transport corridors.

Plant it yourself

If you are keen to plant a woody meadow of your own, we have condensed 15 years of research and testing into free [Woody Meadow Guidelines](#) outlining how to design, install and maintain them.

New woody meadow plantings can be registered on our [website](#) so we can continue to gather data on what works best.



Woody Meadows are a flexible design approach that can be adapted to a range of challenging urban sites. University of Melbourne, Author provided (no reuse)

Ditch the Easter Bunny



**Give
the
Easter
Bunny
the
flick**

Send a message of restoration of the land, not destruction, buy the Bilby instead.

Our local equivalent is the Bandicoot - the little eco-engineers that improve water penetration into the soil.



Eastern Barred Bandicoot



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 conversation with Eddie Bernard continues to reveal the variety of wildlife that lives at Munibung Hill and visits their yard over the course of the year, providing ecosystem services at no charge. That's apart from the sheer enjoyment and company these birds bring to the neighbourhood, for anyone who cares to pay attention and offer a safe place for visiting.

EDDIE BERNARD: Whip Bird (Below). Often heard but not often seen, this was a rare moment.
Two male King Parrots (Right) in our Red Cedar tree.
Kookaburra (Below right) nesting in a tree termite mound.



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The planet Jupiter with the moon Ganymede transiting the planet. The black spot is the shadow of the moon on the planets surface. Ganymede is the largest moon in the Solar System, larger than the planet Mercury.

Photo taken at Munibung Hill on 21 January 2026.

Photo credit: Eddie Bernard

Close ups with Ray Woods



Making a case for the 'F' word



funga

[/ˈfʌŋɡə/] noun

The fungi of a specific region, habitat, or geological period. This term is equivalent to the concepts of fauna and flora.

On car trips when we were kids we'd play an eye-spy game called Animal, Vegetable or Mineral. This takes on a whole meaning now. Especially when the added category isn't visible, but nonetheless critical to all life on Earth. To leave them is discrimination of the highest order.

It can all seem a bit confusing. But we have to face the music, it's time for an about face.

Little wonder we're in trouble when we've got the order of life so wrong.

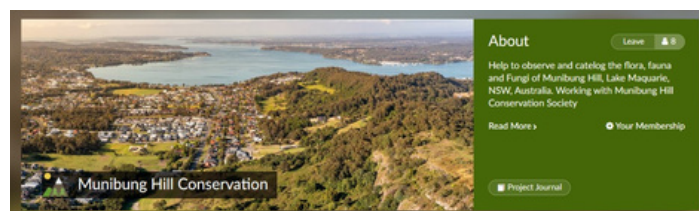
What we've relegated to the obscure, needs to be the foundation of the pyramid, with plants next and then animals - us included - dependent on the other two. How are going to get our heads around this one?

We are told the only constant is change. So here we go again, trying to keep up with the latest in the categorisation of 'vegetable' or is it 'animal' or is it a combination of both. This story is our contribution to raising awareness of the differences between, but the inter-relatedness of, Fauna, Flora and Funga.

We think the best way will be to include some links so we can read up for ourselves what's what. And do some searching of our own so as get a better understanding of the importance of raising the profile of funga - a lot. A very lot. Just key in fungi or funga and select from the many on offer.

Funga is all the fungi of a particular region, habitat, or geological period. In life sciences, "funga" is a recent term (2000s) for the kingdom Fungi similar to the longstanding fauna for animals and flora for plants. The term seeks to simplify projects oriented toward implementation of educational and conservation goals. It highlights parallel terminology referring to treatments of these macroorganisms in particular geographical areas. An official proposal for the term occurred in 2018, despite previous use.^{[1][2]}

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funga>



From the Guardian .. [Flora-fauna-and-funga](#)

The word "funga" should be used alongside flora and fauna when discussing conservation issues to reflect the importance of fungi to ecosystem health, campaigners have said.

"Through language, we can trigger change," the chief executive of the Fungi Foundation, Giuliana Furci, said. "It gives us an opportunity to look at nature as an interdependent set of ecosystems: If we concentrate on fungal conservation, we can protect whole habitats."

On the invention of the phrase "fauna, flora and funga", she said: "We wanted something catchy that could incorporate fungi into the conversation."

In a joint piece for Time, Furci and the biologist and author Merlin Sheldrake wrote: "Accounts of the living world that do not include fungi are accounts of a world that doesn't exist."

"Fungi have long sustained and enriched life on Earth. We are unthinkable without them, and yet we are only just beginning to understand the intricacies of fungal lives. It's time we give them the attention they deserve."

Embracing the third F word

<https://www.sporesight.co/spore-drops/embracing-the-third-f-word>

The iNaturalist home page for Munibung Hill Conservation observer and identifier posters.



Activity page for families, Mums, Dads, grandparents and children

Keep an eye out for these. See how many you can find as you walk around Munibung Hill ..

Leaf with jagged edges	Feather	Thorns
Berries	Litter (pick it up and dispose of thoughtfully, recycling if possible)	Flowering bush or tree
Flying insect	Rocky outcrop	Moss or Lichen
Fungi	Birds nest	White flower
Ant nest	Spiders web	Tree hollow
Swamp wallaby poo	Deep furrowed bark	Vine climbing up tree

Is it moss? or is it? because it isn't

We just need to take a closer look .. Here's how to become a citizen lichenologist

IT'S LIKE COMING across a person who we think we've seen before and we're sure we know who they are but can't put a name to the face. Welcome to lichen.

It's easy to be mistaken when it comes to identifying plants. There are so many variations. It often means we have to look twice to make sure that what we think we see is actually what it is. That we have the correct name.

This especially applies to a little known or at least little acknowledged organism, lichen.

In: **What's not to lichen?** by Alysha Huxley and Esme Mathis, Australian geographic, Nov-Dec 2025, write that:

Most of us might think moss when we first see them. But while mosses are plants, lichen are in a separate kingdom: fungi.

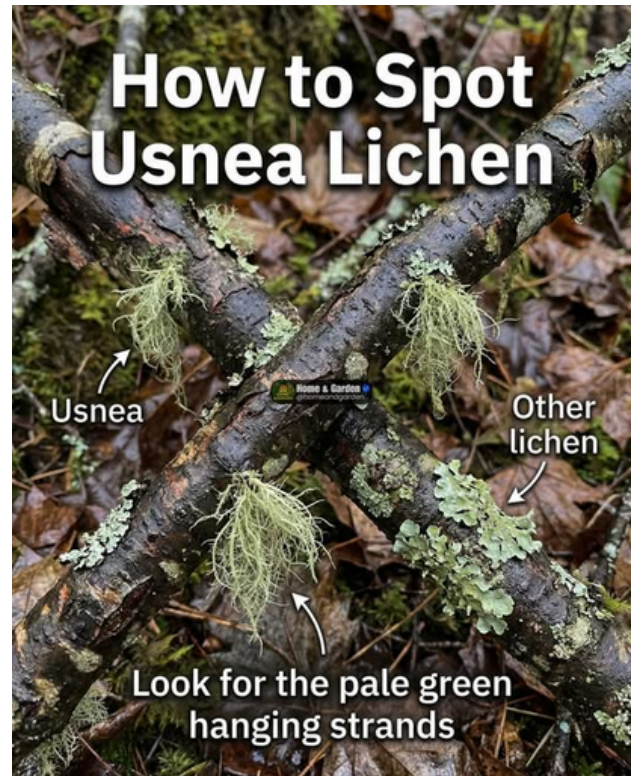
They are not a single organism, but rather a composite, formed through a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and an alga. So we have a classic partnership, where the algal partner delivers sugars and other carbohydrates and in return the fungus provides most of the lichens physical structure in the form of a vegetative structure.

Lichens play many ecological roles, from nutrient-cycling to sustaining small animals. "Lichens can provide food, camouflages and shelter for invertebrates," says Simone Louwhoff, a lichenologist from Australia's Institute of Innovation, Science and Sustainability at Federation University. "Some larger species, like the eastern yellow robin, also use lichen to help build and camouflage their nests."

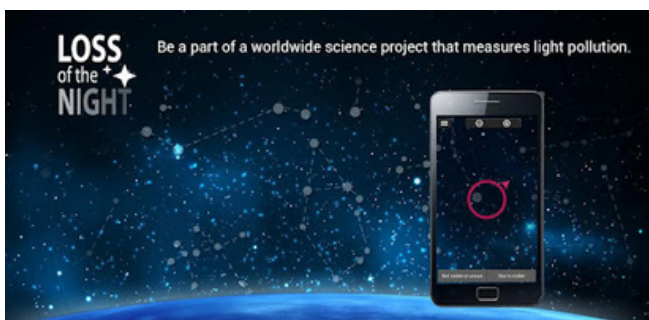
When it comes to lichen there's still much to learn. Everyday nature lovers can help uncover lichens secrets by reporting their sightings through apps such as iNaturalist. "We don't know that we need to protect something, or how to protect it, until we know they exist and can learn about their role in the ecology."

Lichens which buck the trend

Program: The Science Show, ABC Radio National, 6 Feb 2016 .. Listen [HERE](#)



Post by Gavin Ord on Munibung Hill Trails Facebook page (Above) Lichen on a rock on the south eastern end of Munibung Hill (Below)



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

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

*“Even if you never have the chance to see or touch the ocean, the ocean touches you with every drop of water you drink, every bite you consume. Everyone, everywhere, is inextricably connected to and utterly dependent upon the existence of the sea”**

* Excerpt from **The World is Blue: How Our Fate and the Ocean’s Are One**. Sylvia Earle, marine biologist and oceanographer

Munibung Hill and the lake are one

We separate out various aspects of nature to suit our worldview that one has priority over the other. We love the lake, we focus a great amount of attention on Lake Macquarie as if this body of water had been here forever and deserves not only our attention but resources to enable us to access and appreciate it.

But this is a jaundiced view. Without in any way disparaging the lake, it has only been in existence for a very short period of time (6,000 years in its current form) when measured in geological terms with Munibung Hill. Metrics matter. They ought to help inform our priorities. Every stream and creek with their beginnings at Munibung Hill end up in Lake Macquarie.

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.

In praise of pedestrianism

There are a few songs about walking- Baby Elephant Walk, Walk in the Black Forest, Walking to New Orleans, Walking My Baby Back Home, These Boots were made for Walking, are examples.

There's a lot to be said in favour of walking but ever since the introduction of the bicycle we seem to be besotted by speed. Add an engine to a bike morphed into the motor bike. And now an electric motor.

When Europeans arrived in Australia they didn't encounter any mechanised mode of transport. The indigenous people were walkers. On two legs was a given. It was how they got around. Pedestrian pathways were the order of the day.

The introduction of horses changed all that. The horse allowed for a lot more ground to be covered without exhausting the rider. Hitch a buggy or a cart or a coach to the horse(s), and the capacity to move vast numbers of people and produce across the country, increased ten fold.

All of a sudden, the pedestrian mode of movement looks primitive in a mindset focused on colonisation and dominion.

Over the course of the last 251 million years, Munibung Hill has witnessed enormous alterations to her landscape.

The plant life has seen dramatic changes with the clear felling of native trees and shrubs to be replaced with introduced grasses for cattle grazing and fruit trees for orchards.

With the land being taken from the local Awabakal people, fences were erected along boundary lines to separate one type of ownership from another.

Munibung Hill was now the property of other than Aboriginal people, who with good intentions went about the business of exploiting her assets as they deemed them to be - coal for a short time, gravel quarries for a longer period, horticultural enterprises, grazing, minerals processing plant, and so on.

As new people moved into the area, pressure for new housing came to the fore. Over time, this has led to more housing on the slopes and more restrictions on movement with no right to respectful roam provisions being written into land use.

This being said, there was one exception to this. The Hawkins family acquired a large portion of Munibung Hill where the family operated gravel quarries and ran cattle over the remainder, but by all accounts they rarely prohibited pedestrian access. In fact there was tacit approval of people walking across their land and especially in the case of children exploring the creeks.

Families enjoyed outings, children rode their bikes. There seemed to be a happy accommodation of community 'trespassing' on private land.

It is an example of what occurs in other countries - especially Scandinavian and some parts of the UK.

The entitlement is that everyone is permitted to enter another's property under well defined conditions known as the R + R.

For the most part it is limited to pedestrian traffic. While another means of transport might have been used to get to the desired place, it's then down to walking.

And so it is with Munibung Hill. We need to limit the mobility at Munibung Hill to pedestrian traffic - walking, jogging, and running. It is for good reason that we subscribe to this notion ... that: *'Today we walk where once they walked'*. That is, our Aboriginal cousins across 65 k years or 2,600 generations.

This is a mark of respect acknowledging that it was good enough for them, so let's see to it that it can be good enough for us.

It's a case of getting off our high horse - to coin a phrase - and walking in their footsteps. It's also a slowing down and taking the time to see life out of the saddle, at an eye level closer to the source of our being.

With our feet on the ground, instead of in a stirrup or on a pedal, we are better able to appreciate the aspects of Munibung Hill that make her what she is - a landscape of many parts that we can be oblivious to and take for granted when we skim over the surface using other mechanised means.

The Munibung Hill Explainer brochures have been produced with this in mind - Geology, Contours, Plants, Invasive Species, Threatened Species, etc.

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.

Land Carers are Land Repairers



New Visitors to Biddabah Creek

Written By Vina Chubb, Team Leader

After a very dry spell at the end of last year, some refreshing summer storms have brought new life to our site.

Patches of Kidney Weed and Native Violets are flourishing again at the front area.

Some weeding took place over the summer break, but our amazing team officially returned on 21 January, ready to tackle the bigger tasks.

They worked hard in the humid conditions to remove patches of Crofton Weed and Farmer's Friend.

We were delighted to welcome a new member, as well as the daughter of one of our team, who eagerly joined in to support our efforts.

Crofton Weed will remain a key focus this year, as it continues to be quite invasive. To give us a head start, Amy and Steph from the Landcare office recently sprayed a large patch.

Amy, our tree specialist, also removed a high, dangling branch from a tall, slender eucalypt, providing us with some logs that will make perfect homes for small creatures.

Our usual wildlife has been sighted, along with two new feathered visitors. One is a Mallard that appears to have joined our resident duck family.

Another striking bird, with pale blue wing feathers, has been visiting regularly - possibly an Australian Raven, though not yet confirmed.

Some of the young Purple Swamp Hens and Wood Ducks that survived the breeding season are now almost fully grown.

We look forward to another exciting year ahead! The encouragement and support from the local community, including two residents who kindly help with mowing and maintaining the roadway and pathway verges, continue to inspire us.

Hidden Treasures

Written by Heather Carter, Team Leader

The regrowth on our site is amazing. Original trees have come back after being mown down season after season and our new plantings are doing well.

We didn't have to look too hard to find these treasures.

We think the flower on the left might be Ticktrefoils (Genus *Desmodium*), to be confirmed by iNaturalist, and the one on the right is Pastel Flower (*Pseuderanthemum variabile*).

The one in the middle is the fruit of the Elderberry Panax

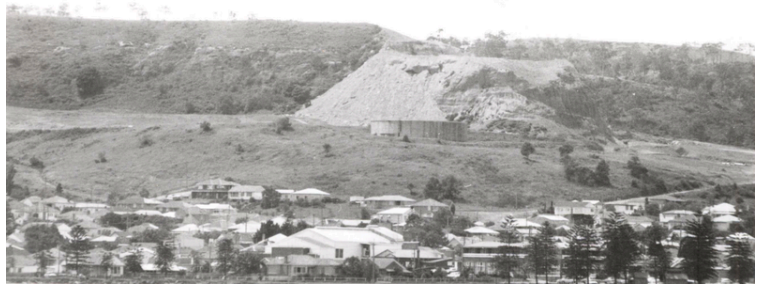
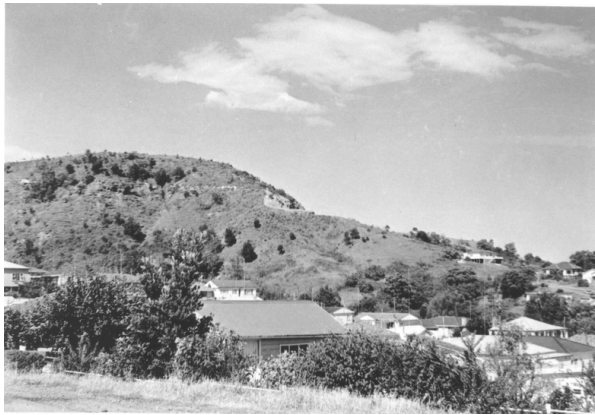




View of Munibung Hill from vicinity of 21 Council St, Speers Point (above and below)



From Corner of Farm Street and Elva, Speers Point (Above)
Gravel Quarry, Speers Point 1973 (Below)



Munibung Hill photos credit: Lake Mac Community History



Not only people, birds visit Munibung Hill as well

Let's make them welcome by providing and protecting habitat for when they fly in.



How You Can Help ☐

World Migratory Bird Day
Dim the Lights for Birds at Night



World Migratory Bird Day
Dim the Lights for Birds at Night



World Migratory Bird Day
Dim the Lights for Birds at Night



- Turn off outside lights
- Enclose lights
- Use red or yellow bulbs instead of white or blue
- Use blackout curtains

World Migratory Bird Day

occurs twice a years, first on second Saturday 9 May and second second Saturday 11 October, to mark the journeys of birds to both their nesting and wintering grounds. The 2026 theme is "Birds Connect Our World," focusing on how birds link different habitats and people.

Turn 'em down, better still turn 'em off

Turn down those outside lights to give the night back to wildlife and especially migratory birds. They deserve a break from our obsession with floodlighting the outdoors.



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 ...

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 advocacy Vision for Munibung Hill.

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 aboriginal 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 only.

Contributors: Eddie Bernard, Vina Chubb, Fergus Hancock, Gavin Ord, Andrew Slee, Rachel Thomson, Belinda Turner.
Proof reader: Heather Carter
Other sources: As referenced throughout.

Content ideas are welcome. Send with full contact details including mobile contact number to:
The Editor, Munibung Musings, MHCS
Contact: E: munibunghcs@gmail.com

Munibung Hill Conservation Society

Membership options

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

Munibung Hill Conservation Society (MHCS) does not have a joining fee or an annual membership fee. We rely entirely on the generosity of people to make a contribution as they are able. In 2025 we introduced a new membership structure to better reflect the changing circumstances and to more closely identify with standard membership practices.

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

There are four levels of membership. 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/>

Variations on a theme

Gayle Russell is on a mission to get as many plants in the ground as she can, without being put off by definitions about where the verge might start and finish. The point is to get diversity where once there was monoculture.

Gayle is a proactive, committed person who doesn't wait around to be asked. She takes the initiative, sharing her knowledge and leading by example.



Nerala Reserve ,Valentine

Gayle Russell planted this out this area with Andrew from Trees In Newcastle (TIN), maybe 2 years ago and it is amazing. This council reserve is between Berringar Rd & in Lurnea Cres., Valentine. We added to an existing area - maybe 25-30 metres in length.



Native copse - shrubs grasses Allambee Park Valentine outside toilet block - opposite valentine shops



Another part of Allambee park - close to Allambee Gardens Reserve. Gayle planted out Lomandra, Dianella and some other natives around this copse of trees.



With the intention of a future extension, this is not a verge garden as such, says Gayle. We planted a copse of natives around Dawn's existing Frangipani. So it was a front yard in Rushton Ave, rather than verge because this position was more suitable

Putting nature back into nature strips



See the painted signage on the curb

Residents in City of Moreton Bay can create their own verge gardens on the nature strip in front of their property. The verge, or nature strip, is the area between the road and your property's front boundary.

You can transform this space into a lush garden full of plants and shrubbery to create a beautiful street frontage that's the envy of your neighbourhood.

Biodiverse verge gardens

Take your verge garden to the next level and help put nature back into nature strips by planting biodiversity-friendly plants.

You can do this by choosing plants that are:

- native to your location
- a haven for bees, lizards, birds and other wildlife.

[For more information](#), refer to the biodiverse verge gardens information pack(PDF, 4MB).

You can source locally native plants at one of Council's community nurseries. Residents are also entitled to request one free native plant voucher each year for planting in their backyard.

Biodiverse verge garden demonstration sites
For inspiration, visit a biodiverse verge garden demonstration site.



Recycling rigged to hide corporate responsibility

How the plastics industry shifted responsibility for recycling onto you, the consumer, Jonathan Baker, University of Adelaide. [The Conversation](#), November 6, 2025



All into the compacter. The Give new life to unwanted items, signage on the side of truck seems to be a slogan. Nov. 2025

Australia's recycling system has been lurching from one crisis to another for decades. Soft-plastic schemes are collapsing, kerbside contamination is on the rise, and states are still struggling to coordinate a coherent national approach.

But the deeper problem isn't technical. It's historical — and moral. For 70 years, the packaging industry has led advertising and lobbying campaigns that trained us to see waste as an individual failing and a municipal responsibility, rather than a design flaw in the market system itself.

How the recycling myth began in the United States

In the early 1950s, Vermont briefly banned disposable bottles after dairy farmers complained broken glass was killing livestock.

Alarmed, beverage and packaging companies mobilised. They founded Keep America Beautiful, a seemingly civic-minded nonprofit organisation that soon became one of the most influential environmental groups of its era.



Designed to fail. The shaft and spring are made from carbon steel which is not stainless steel and bound to rust out, which is what has happened. So with no spare parts and hard plastic that's not recyclable this will go to landfill and take goodness knows how long to break down and when it does into micro plastics it will again become an ongoing problem. All because of bad design and no opportunity for repair. Nov. 2025

A penchant for the protection of nature reflects a deep appreciation and commitment to preserving the natural world.

This can manifest as a personal interest, a professional focus, or a broader movement aimed at conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources for current and future generations.

Environmentalists and conservationists share this ethos, but why limit a penchant for protection to these people.

But limiting a penchant for the protection of nature to those with a special interest lets the rest of us off the hook.

We all need this kind of ethos. It needs to be taught in the home and in schools and be a part of our very human nature - to care for our Eathly home as much as we care for our bricks and mortar homes. MM

In what feels like a topsy turvy world, where busyness eats into community participation like never before, and news is depressing, Munibung Hill can be a sanctuary – a place where we can heal and restore some sense of balance.

In times like these, we don't need minties, we need veteran landscape places close by.

Places that have been around for yonks. That remain solid and secure, examples of resilience in the face of human attacks on forests and waterways; and social upheaval; and the pressures and strains of families torn apart from chasing impossible material dreams – only to toss them out a few years later when they no longer match the mantra of a modern myopic social construct.

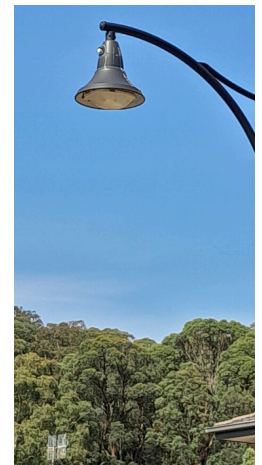
CAN YOU HELP?

We need examples of:

- > **Street lights that are poorly shielded and/or titled up**, allowing light to spill up into the night sky;
- > **Street lights that are fully shielded and directed down**, protecting the night sky.

Send examples to: munibunghcs@gmail.com with details of where and when.

Two more examples of street lights in Macquarie Hills, that are partly, but not sufficiently shielded, both showing
The recommended shielding is



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.



URBAN NIGHT SKY PLACE*

There is an 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.

*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.

**World Migratory Bird Day
Dim the Lights for Birds at Night**

**World Migratory Bird Day
Dim the Lights for Birds at Night**

**World Migratory Bird Day
Dim the Lights for Birds at Night**

Light Pollution Causes:

- Lack of Sleep
- Disorientation
- Building Collisions

We should, but we can't, and that's an injustice

Our children and grandchildren deserve better than the light pollution legacy we are leaving them

Preserving the stars: light pollution and what you can do about it, by Lilly Matson, UNSW, Meida, reports that: An astrophysicist from UNSW Sydney explains why it's so important that we can all look up and see the stars.

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/03/preserving-the-stars--light-pollution-and-what-you-can-do-about->

Astronomer Carl Sagan famously said that there were more stars in the universe than grains of sand on earth.

It has been estimated that there are over 100 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy. While there is a limit to how many stars we can see from earth with the naked eye, that number is dramatically reducing due to light pollution.

"We should be able to see around 2500 stars with the naked eye on any night, and we can see about 125 of them at best in Sydney," says astrophysicist, proud Wiradjuri woman and UNSW PhD candidate Ms Kirsten Banks.

In fact, in a recent study published in Science, data collected by citizen scientists around the world found light pollution is increasing at a rate that is equivalent to the brightness of the sky doubling every eight years.

This latest research continues to expose the extent to which we're losing the darkness of our night sky. Not being able to look up and see the stars will have significant cultural impacts, but there are steps we can all be taking to reduce the effect of light pollution.

What causes 'light glow'?

Artificial lighting that escapes and seeps into the sky causes what is known as "light glow" – a form of light pollution that stops humans from seeing the stars.

"Light glow is this extra light that is not actually useful for seeing when you're walking in the dark, for example. And it's this glow of light that spreads out and leaks into the sky in a way that washes out fainter lights that are usually stars," says Ms Banks.

A study involving over 51,000 citizen science observations of stellar visibility with the naked eye, revealed the change in global sky brightness over an 11-year period – from 2011 to 2022.

The data showed that the number of visible stars decreased by an amount that can be explained by an increase in sky brightness of seven to 10 per cent per year.

That's a big amount and when projected out into the future, it paints to a bleak picture.

Everyone is an astronomer

You don't need any fancy machinery or special equipment to observe the stars.

"I think it's important for everyone to be able to look up into the stars, because it's one of the most accessible sciences out there," says Ms Banks. "All you need to do is look up and you can see it, you are doing astronomy by looking up into the night sky. And when we take that away with light pollution, that takes a whole science away from people."

Many different cultures around the world have a rich history and connection to the stars and the night sky.

In Australia alone, there are over 250 Indigenous groups that have understood and used the stars for the last 65,000 years, and their knowledge is still exercised to this day, says Ms Banks.



Astrophysicist Ms Kirsten Banks explains what we can do to reverse the impact of "light glow". Photo: UNSW Sydney.

Ms Banks speaks about Gugurmin, the Celestial Emu – a constellation based on the dark space around the Milky Way – in her 2019 TEDx talk on the great history of Australian Aboriginal Astronomy.

"The night sky is really important to Aboriginal peoples.

"We're losing culture because of the stars we're losing sight of in these bright cities. All of these stars have cultural importance within stories and lessons. And some of them we just can't see anymore. So through that, and, of course, all of the other effects of colonisation, we're losing all those stories."

Reversing the impact of light glow

Unlike many other forms of pollution, light pollution is reversible and there are measures we can take to restore the deep darkness of the sky.

"There are lots of ways to reduce the amount of light pollution that we put out into the sky," says Ms Banks.

"One good example is by creating very directional streetlights. So, when you walk around, you may see some streetlights that are just these big lights that shine in all directions. But really, you only need light to shine down on the path that you're walking on, because that's where it's actually useful. So we can change the design of our lights to be more proactive about where we actually want the light to be."

As well as the direction and brightness of the lights we use, we can also change the colour to a more amber/orange hue which reduces light glow, explains Ms Banks.

While some of these measures have been adopted on a local scale, there is lots more that can be done. In recent years, awareness of light pollution has led some policymakers to introduce measures that attempt to control it.

"These measures have already been taken in places like Coonabarabran," says Ms Banks. "There are very strict guidelines for all sorts of lights and they have certain regulations so that they preserve the night sky for that area, because of the observatory nearby."

As Ms Banks explains, everyone can have a part to play. "One way that people can get involved is just turning off lights that are unnecessary, like really bright floodlights on your backyard or your patio.

"There are simple solutions to this that people can take every single day."



Australian Plant Society - Hunter

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

Meetings are held at:
Shortland Wetlands Centre, Shortland
More information: <https://austplants.com.au/Hunter-Valley>
Get in touch:



Lake Macquarie Camera Club



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

More information:

[LMCC website](#)

Email:

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
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

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



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



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



Lucilla Ridge Landcare

Meet every 2nd 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



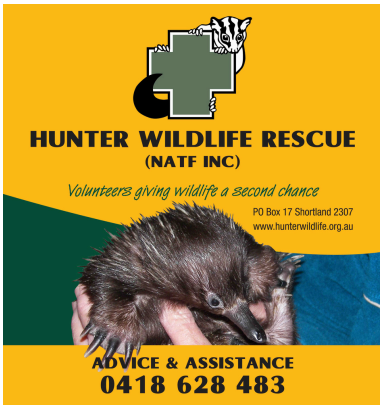
80 Hayden Brook Rd
Woodrising NSW 2284

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



HUNTER WILDLIFE RESCUE
(NATF INC)

Volunteers giving wildlife a second chance

PO Box 17 Shortland 2307
www.hunterwildlife.org.au

ADVICE & ASSISTANCE
0418 628 483

For general information or enquiries contact:

The Secretary
secretary@hunterwildlife.org.au
SHORTLAND



INVERTEBRATES AUSTRALIA

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



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



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



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
www.jezweb.com.au

Thanks to
Jeremy Dawes and Lachlan Carney.



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)



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.