

Issue 56

September - November 2026

Kona-konaba

Munibung

Musings

Magazine of the Munibung Hill Conservation Society

Promoting Urban Ecology for a Nature Positive future



Spring Equinox Issue

What's ranked #3 by the ASC?

See feature articles inside

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Day and night 12 hours each: September 21

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Every kid needs a tree filled landscape - see story inside.
Citizen Science is not rocket science ... we can all be part of this appreciation for nature by keeping an eye out for what's going on around us and contributing to the bigger picture.



Find us on
Facebook at ...



Munibung Hill Trails
275 likes • 305 followers

On the cover:

Tree huggers at Biddabah Creek Landcare. Photo: Emily Hemsall, Lake Mac Landcare.

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, Dark Sky International ... [2026](#)

Bats are some of the night's most important (and misunderstood) protectors. 🦇

The newest issue of Nightscape is dedicated to these incredible nocturnal creatures, exploring their vital role in ecosystems and the growing impacts of artificial light at night.

From pollination to pest control, bats help keep natural systems in balance.

This issue features conversations with experts from the Bat Conservation Trust, Bat Conservation International, and Bats Without Borders, alongside stories about protecting the night for wildlife around the world.

Nightscape is DarkSky's quarterly magazine, available to DarkSky members who support at \$35/year or more.

Become a member and receive four issues a year while helping protect the night: <https://bit.ly/4feNCHC>

Cover photo: Alfredo Maiquez /iStock NTCO

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A multitasking bushwalker



With so many years experience walking the tracks of Munibung Hill, Jenny Mason is now very familiar with this special place. But she never tires of her next adventure onto the Hill that she has come to love. Jenny relates some of those many visits here, but this brief report only slightly scratches the surface. NOTE: This story could equally be told in the visitors / walkers section.

WE MOVED TO Lawson Road, near the base of Munibung Hill IN 2005, 21 years ago.

After our legs and lungs got used to the steep ascents, we regularly walked to the top of the hill and enjoyed almost 360-degree views.

On clear days, we could see up the coast to the north, with Newcastle buildings visible, count the coal ships off Redhead beach and south, right down the lake.

Over the years, with the closure of Pasminco, as the vegetation has recovered and regenerated, the view has changed and often been lost, but we are happy for that improvement.

The tracks up the hill, especially on the north east end, are very eroded and made worse in the early days by 4WDers trying to get their vehicles to the top. Along with trail bike riders it has resulted in seriously ripping up the ground.

After lobbying council there is now a gate at the end of Lucilla Ridge, so only walkers, bikes, motorbikes can pass - but motorbikes are not permitted. This creates ruts that heavy rains further erode, making the surface very rough for bushwalkers.

It is a bit precarious descending and we have often slipped on loose gravel. We choose our footwear carefully.

Over the years, when time allowed, I have explored many of the trails and paths in many directions, walking for hours.

Some have become so overgrown with lantana that they are now impenetrable.

In earlier days, horses would ride the trails on the lower side above Lakelands and Warners Bay but these trails have grown over in recent years.

Young people would sometimes camp at the top or have parties on New Years Eve.

Often in the early days, we would take a plastic bag to collect rubbish and bring it back down to our bins. Recently, there is very little rubbish left and we just bring it down in a pocket or by hand.

The fence bordering Pasminco's land and the Telecommunication towers is no deterrent to motorbike riders, who regularly use those roads from Boolaroo to access the hill. Again, in contravention of the signs.

In fact, it is possible to walk all the way to Boolaroo's new housing estates from our side. Editor: A case of physical travel deccribed as active transport by government and health authorities.

One joy was discovering the trails some residents near Farm Road on the Speers Point side have created all over the hill on that side. I would often meet a man walking his dog and over time we got chatting and he showed me the entrance to these trails.

I much prefer walking on them than the eroded fire trails. They are delightful, narrow, weaving between the trees, using the contours of the slopes, leading to rainforest gullies, rocky outcrops and stunning views.

In some locations, they have built benches for a rest at lookout points.

If I don't have time to walk there from Lawson Road - along the uppermost ridge - or have my grandchildren with me, I drive and park at the end of Farm Street and walk the trails in that area.

Cool and shady even on hot summer days.

When walking, I usually wear my long-sleeved gardening gloves and weed as I walk.

I sometimes stop and pullout lantana, but mostly just snap off Formosa Lilly flower heads, break lantana invading the paths, pull out Crofton weed, Farmers Friends or fireweed.

Since retiring 5 years ago, I have joined two Landcare groups, one at Warners Bay and the other at the base of Munibung at Lucilla Ridge. From these I have learned to identify many weeds and enjoy removing these and letting the native plants thrive.

I look forward to Lake Macquarie Council's plans to develop the trails up Munibung so more people can safely enjoy this spectacular area so close to many suburbs.

But wonder if I'll still be alive before it is completed.

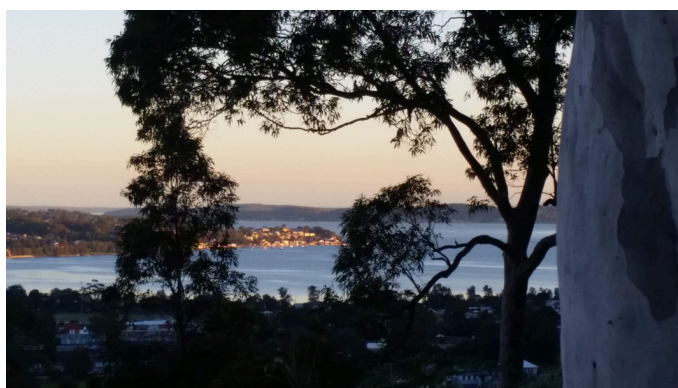
As well as my gloves, I always take my phone and enjoy finding and photographing the many native flowers, grasses and trees often in close ups.

I find long walks on Munibung, not only very good exercise but always improves my mood and makes me so grateful to live close to such a beautiful part of God's creation.

Many people use the hill for exercise, to walk their dogs and enjoy the natural environment.

The recent development at the old quarry site and the hundreds of houses at Boolaroo, mean that many more people are living right beside this wonderful location.

I believe, Munibung means Meeting Place in the Awabakal language and it is indeed a wonderful meeting place.



Photos credit: Jenny Mason





LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL RECOGNISES MUNIBUNG HILL as an outstanding natural and cultural landmark rising right in the middle of the city.

Council has a Management Plan to protect these values. Lake Macquarie City Council put together a 10-year strategy. The plan focuses on:

- Making walking tracks safer and more stable.
- Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage and local plants and animals.
- Limiting vehicle access to emergency and essential services only.
- Encouraging safe public recreation.

The Plan acknowledges the stunning views, indigenous history, the natural and other features that make **MUNIBUNG HILL ONE OF LAKE MAC'S MOST SPECTACULAR LOCATIONS**. (see above).

While we wait

WHILE WE WAIT for Council to implement the Munibung Hill Management Plan, we will publish a number of articles outlining why Munibung Hill deserves to be protected and conserved.

These will include: for ecological reasons, and for geological and cultural reasons, also for green infrastructure reasons and for health and well being reasons. And for a reason that has been overlooked and brushed aside for far too long - the fact that bushwalking is one of the most popular 'sports' in Australia, coming in at #3 as stated by the ASC*.

*Accepting that bushwalking is the number 3 'sport' in Australia, those who participate in it deserve funding of their 'sporting field' just as much as those who play organised sports. Be that on a mown field, or on a paved court or in a built sports centre or in a swimming pool or from a boat launch jetty - all of which deserve funding but **not** at the expense of the bushland field for bushwalkers.*

*ASC: Australian Sports Commission

PICTURE STORIES

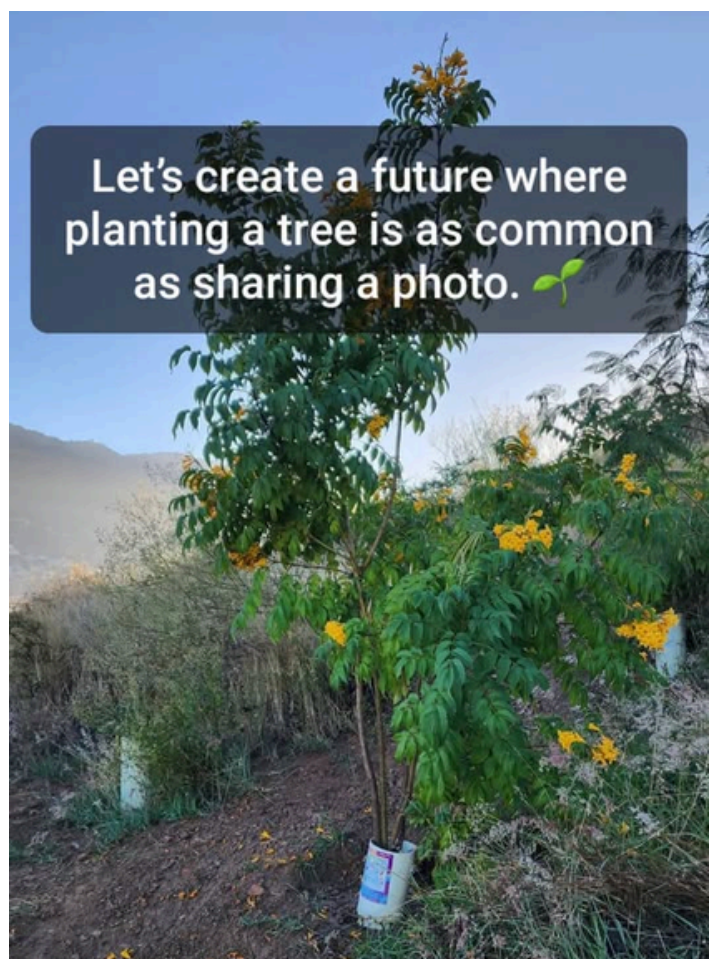
A picture is worth a thousand words ...

VISUALLY, our brains process imagery an astonishingly 60,000 times faster than text.

This timeless adage originally stems from an advertising campaign in the early 1900s, though it traces its modern roots back to these concepts:

Instant Impact: A single still frame conveys complex emotions and context instantly.

Universal Language: It transcends the barriers of written or spoken vocabulary.



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 conversations with Eddie Bernard continue 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 animals and birds bring to the neighbourhood, for anyone who cares to pay attention and offer a safe place for them to visit.

EDDIE BERNARD: It was interesting to see the Rainbow Lorikeet getting a feed from the Sasanqua Camellia. There must be enough nectar in the flowers (Photo at right)
The Tawny Frogmouth doesn't normally roost in a Red Cedar tree (planted) but seemed to blend in with the branches well. I normally see them in amongst the Turpentine Trees. (Photo centre left)
The Swamp Wallabies visit quite often. They come down to eat the young grass - not sure where they come from on Munibung Hill. It would be interesting to know if other yards are being visited. (Photo bottom right)

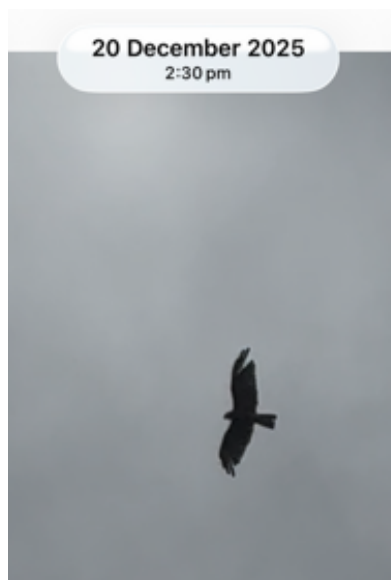


MARCUS MARIANI ON THE north western side of Munibung Hill keeps an eye on the sky, for what has become an infrequent but much loved sighting of the eagle kite.

Once again he reports on one of these chance encounters.

"I attach a photo from a video but I've seen it since on two other occasions," says Marcus.

Email June 1, 2026



Got a sighting you can share with us?
Got some photos you've taken along the tracks you've walked?

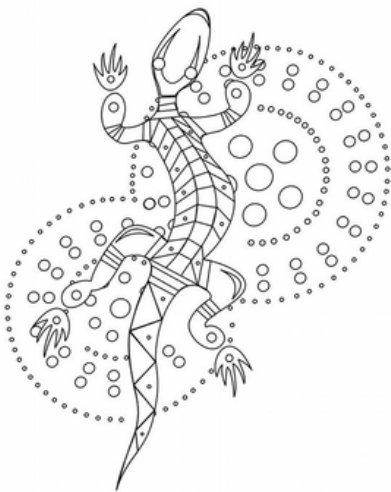
We'd love to know what you've come across. Send them to:
munibunghcs@gmail.com
with a few words of explanation and a contact number (not for publication) so we can be in touch for acknowledgement purposes.

Close ups with Ray Woods



Invertebrates of Munibung Hill

Top: Centipede
Centre: Bush Cricket
Bottom: Red Triangle Slug



Spring Equinox colouring in drawings ..
copy onto an A4 page and colour in



Bushwalking ranks #3 in the ASC list of sporting activities

When it comes to which sporting codes deserve funding we need to keep in mind that bushwalking ranks higher than all the sporting codes we normally associate with getting and keeping fit. This is not something we've made up, it's from the official figures released by the Australian Sports Commission, the ASC.

So why doesn't the sporting field for bushwalkers - bushland and forested areas - get the same or even a higher priority?

It's a good question. And one that needs addressing, to correct the imbalance currently evident in the funding allocations of governments - including Lake Mac Council.

Munibung Hill is a case in point and it's our intention to keep reminding those who control the purse strings, that there is an urgent need to reprioritise budget allocations, so that Munibung Hill is not left high and dry, deprived of funds - as has been the case for the last 40 years.

Recreation (sport) and the visitor economy

'Sport' is the overarching word used by many people to describe exercise or fitness training. It has become synonymous with organised activities like rugby league, soccer, netball, tennis, swimming, sailing, etc and other team activities held on a sporting field or a court or in a sports centre.

These codes have been given disproportionate priority over other forms of physical recreation of which bushwalking, in the case of Munibung Hill, is one. While bushwalking ranks in the top 3, without the exposure afforded televised sport, it hardly ranks at all in funding.

This discrimination - inequity - needs to be corrected so that bushwalking is duly recognised as a highly desirable way of engaging in a 'sport'. After all, walking is an Olympic event.

Running is called athletics when held on a track and organised by Little Athletics for example.

There are reasons enough in each of the MHCS Five-fold Visions, for Munibung Hill to be protected ...

- A prime visitor attraction within Lake Mac – in fact it could become the most visited of all
- The panoramic views
- The millions-of-years-old Permian Gully Rainforest ecosystem
- The geological and cultural heritage
- The recreational value that ranks within the top 3 of the Australian Sports Commission ways to keep fit and stay well.

The Retrospective sections in the Munibung Hill Conservation Society, Munibung Musings magazine, carry many accounts of the significance of Munibung Hill for the lives of so many people and by extension the community, over the last 60+ years.

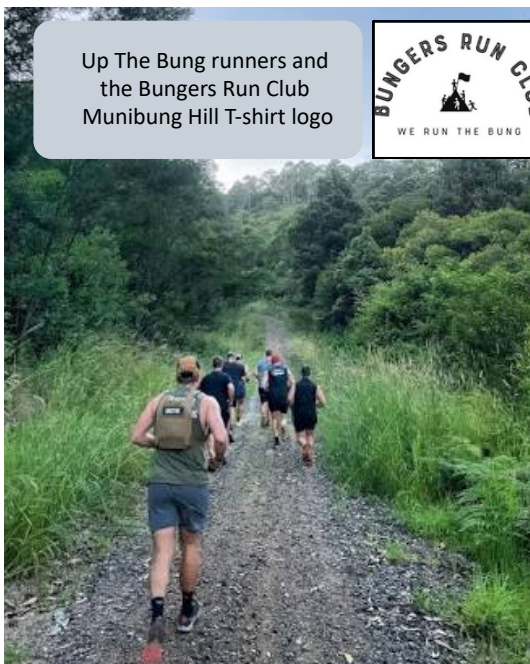
We encourage you to become familiar with these to fully appreciate why we are advocating for the protection and conservation of Munibung Hill as a green infrastructure asset for Lake Mac City and generations to come.

In other words, a legacy project of the present for the future.

With the appropriate track upgrades and lookout installations, Munibung Hill will bring substantial visitors to the Lake Mac area. The variations of topography, with its ecological diversity, within the Munibung Hill site, ranges across areas lending themselves to recreational (sport) and health and wellness activities. Not to mention education and research opportunities, heritage and culture, regeneration and Landcare, all in addition to the panoramic views that elicit the 'Wow' factor.

The 'jewel in the crown' is lying idle, waiting for Council to get on with the job of implementing the Management Plan. The 'sporting field' that is Munibung Hill comes with add-ons, at no extra charge.

Up The Bung runners and the Bungers Run Club Munibung Hill T-shirt logo



**Fly over of
Munibung Hill
courtesy of
Up the Bungers Run Club**

Click the link:

https://www.instagram.com/bungersrunclub/reel/DLbGPVUT_nX/

Bushwalking is not some fringe activity

Let's not kid ourselves; let's set the record straight

Bushwalking is one of Australia's most popular physical activities. While the non-competitive nature of bushwalking historically excluded it from traditional sports funding, the **Australian Sports Commission (ASC)** tracks its immense national participation through the AusPlay survey to inform health and recreation policy.

AusPlay Participation Data

The ASC's national AusPlay data consistently ranks bushwalking (or hiking) as one of the top physical activities in the country.

Popularity: It regularly ranks among the top three most popular physical activities for adults, just behind recreational walking and fitness/gym.

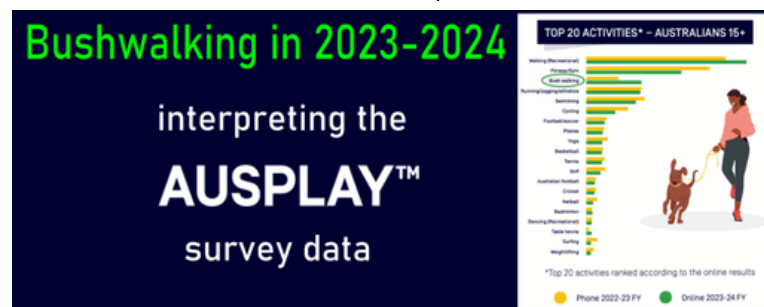
Growth: Post-pandemic participation surged, with millions of Australian adults hitting the trails annually, driven by the strong demand for accessible, flexible, and health-focused outdoor recreation.

Funding and Recognition

Non-Competitive Focus: Because bushwalking is non-competitive, it sits outside the traditional definition of a competitive sport. Consequently, bushwalking does not receive the same direct tier-one funding from the ASC that competitive sporting bodies do.

Broader Recreation Focus: Instead, support and infrastructure for the activity are typically driven at the state and territory level through government environment departments (like NSW National Parks) and outdoor recreation grant programs - and local councils.

Physical Activity | Clearinghouse - Australian Sports Commission
20 Feb 2026 — * Walking - 4,640,000. * Fitness/Gym - 1,805,000.
* Bush Walking - 1,044,000. * Swimming - 954,000. * Cycling - 632,000. * Golf - ... Source: Australian Sports Commission



We need equity in funding for bushwalker community

The call for proportional funding for bushwalkers is gaining major traction as nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation surge across Australia.

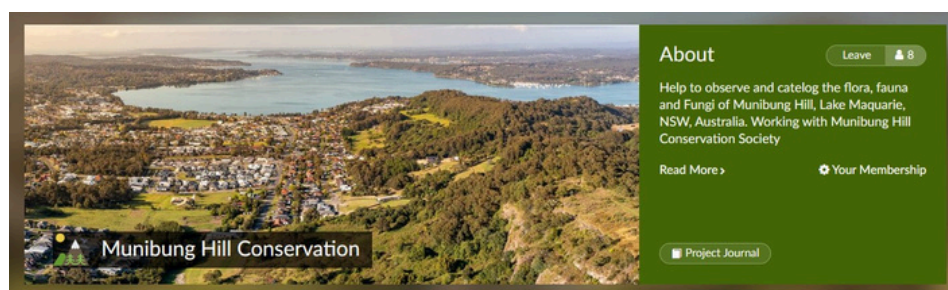
Peak advocacy groups like Bushwalking Australia argue that government funding for national parks, conservation areas, and trails remains vastly disproportionate to the economic, health, and social value that bushwalkers provide.

The Disparity: Participation vs. Funding

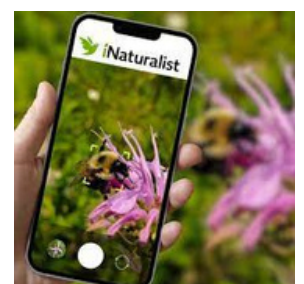
Massive Participant Growth: Bushwalking is Australia's third most popular physical activity, with over 3.7 million active participants. National hiking participation surged from 4% to 17% over a nine-year period.

Economic Windfall: Nature-based tourism and visits to parks generate billions annually.

The Funding Gap: Despite driving significant regional economies, nature conservation historically receives a tiny fraction (roughly 0.1%) of the federal budget.



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



IS YOUR CITY DESIGNED FOR CARS OR PEOPLE? THE TRUTH ABOUT WALKABILITY

FOR TOO LONG we've treated walkable neighborhoods as a luxury item. The reality? Walkability is an economic and ecological imperative.

It's time to shift our focus from moving machines to moving people.

As this infographic illustrates, designing "human-scale" cities isn't just about aesthetics; it's about hard metrics in economics, health, and safety.

Here is the breakdown of the Walkable City paradigm:

 **The Economic Dividend** Walkability is a powerful economic engine. Foot traffic equals wallet traffic. Walkable neighborhoods command higher real estate values and significantly boost local business spending.

 **The Traffic Paradox (Induced Demand)** Trying to cure congestion by adding more lanes futile. It just attracts more cars—a phenomenon known as "induced demand." The real solutions are robust public transit and safe cycling networks. Remember: every transit trip starts and ends with a walk.

 **Public Health & Human Capital** Our environment shapes our health. There is a direct link between walkable urban design and lower rates of chronic disease. It's not just physical; walkable cities reduce stress and improve mental health.

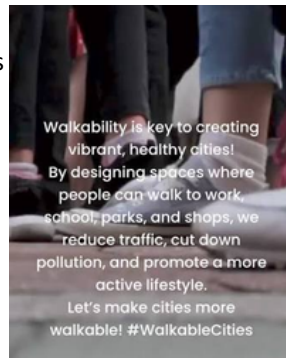
 **Safety Through "Eyes on the Street"** As Jane Jacobs famously argued, genuine safety comes from human presence. Mixed-use neighbourhoods create "eyes on the street," fostering informal surveillance and lowering crime rates naturally.

The Path Forward: We need practical steps: planting trees as buffers, narrowing traffic lanes to calm speeds, and activating building frontages

Let's redesign our urban spaces so the car is an optional tool for freedom, not a mandatory means of survival.

 **What is the most walkable feature of your city, and what is missing? For more check the links below ..**

#UrbanPlanning #Walkability #WalkableCity #FutureOfCities
#UrbanDesign #Sustainability #PublicTransport #ActiveTravel
#InducedDemand #CityPlanning



Take a walk

"We should take wandering outdoor walks, so that the mind might be "nourished and refresed by the open air and deep breathing."

• Seneca, *On Tranquility of Mind*, 17.8

In a notoriously loud city like Rome, it was impossible to get much peace and quiet. The noises of wagons, the shouting of vendors, the hammering of blacksmiths - all filled the streets with piercing violence (to say nothing of the putrid smells of a city with poor sewage and sanitation). So philosophers went on a lot of walks - to get where needed to go, to clear their heads, to get fresh air.

Throughout the ages, philosophers, wrtirers, poets, and thinkers have found walking offers an additional benefit - time and space for better work. As Nietzsche would later say: "It is only ideas gained from waling that have any worth."

Today, make sure you take a walk. And in the future, when you get stressed or overwhelmed, take a walk. When you have a tough problem to solve or a decisioiin to make, take a walk. When you want to be creative, take a walk. When you need to get some air, take a walk. When you need some exercise, take a long walk. When you have a meeting or a friend over, take a walk.

Nourish yourself and your mind and solve your problems along the way.

Source: *The Daily Stoic*, Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman, 2016.

Walking for inspiration

Spending time in nature can be a wornderful source of inspiration.

The natural world has an energy to it that can put us in touch with the deepest parts of ourselves.

David Henry Thoreau spent two years alone in the woods so he could commune with nature and access the wisdom inside him. It was there that he wrote some of his most inspiring work - much of which contains timeless wisdom that is every bit as valid and true a century later.

He discovered that all his answers lay inside him, just as ours he says lie inside us.

Swim in the ocean, climb a tree, walk in the mountains, or simply take a long walk in the bush - bushland like that to be experienced at Munibung Hill.

No-one is suggesting we spend 'two years alone in the woods', but some time spent getting in touch with nature can do us the world of good.

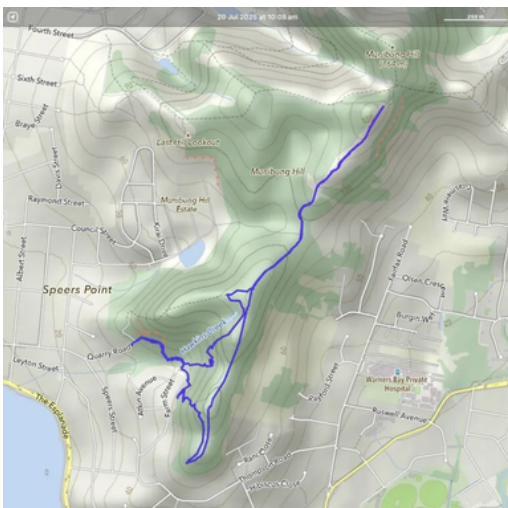
We need to do whatever calls us to be in tune with the rhythm of nature and to draw on her natural instincts.

Munibung Hill - walking a significant Awabakal site

by Karen Nicoll, Walks Leader, National Parks Association, July 2025

Munibung Hill - near Speers Point and Wsarners Bay - is a significant and sacred Awabakal site where Boras and Ceremonies were once held. Stone arrangements signifying ceremonial grounds have been found in the area.

Port Stephens
Walking Group



The Awabakal people know Munibung Hill as Kona-konaba. One translation is a place of stone - stone from this area was used for tools and ochre was found here. Read the full story at the link ...

<https://www.econetworkps.org/munibung-hill-walking-a-significant-awabakal-site/>

The artist and Munibung Hill

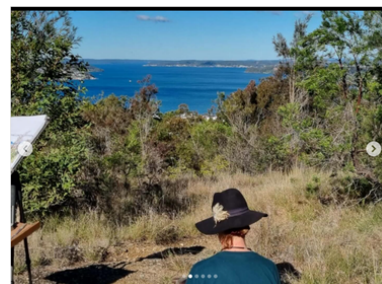


[myyearasafairytale](#)

Helen Hopcroft

Spent a few hours painting on top of Munibung Hill this morning. It was what Dickens memorably describes as a 'wild bright day', with all the colours seeming more vivid than usual, clear light, clouds scudding past and a crisp wind building 🌸

Thanks to @lakemacarts for the Lake House artist residency, which has given me the time and space to work on some creative projects, and to @malcolmsandsart for hiking up Munibung Hill with me 🙌 #lakemacquare



DIY hacks for dark sky-friendly lighting

Simple, affordable ways to make outdoor lighting more dark sky friendly, from shielding and bulb swaps.

To make your outdoor lighting dark sky friendly using DIY methods, focus on simple adjustments: tilt existing fixtures straight down, swap bright cool bulbs for warm amber LEDs (under 3000K), attach homemade glare shields, and install plug-in motion sensors or timers.

Practical DIY Adjustments

Redirect and Tilt: Adjust the mounting brackets on floodlights or lamps to angle them completely downward rather than outward or upward.

Add Custom Shields: Tape or clamp

DIY metal hoods, flashing, or half-cylinders around fixtures to block light from escaping sideways or upward into the night sky.

Change the Bulbs: Replace blue-white or cool-toned bulbs with warm LED or amber bulbs rated at 2700K or 3000K (and under 500 lumens) to reduce glare and sky glow.

Automate Control: Plug outdoor string lights or lamps into automated timers or attach snap-on motion detectors so they don't stay on all night.

Reduce Quantity: Unplug or remove non-essential fixtures and space out remaining pathway lights to limit overall brightness.

Clear out the weeds and what do we find?

On the Lucilla Ridge Hill Landcare site in an area recently cleared of Crofton Weed, the group has identified several interesting vines.



Pseuderanthemum variable
Pastel Flower



Sarcopetalum harveyanum
Pearl Vine



Stephania japonica
Tape Vine



And a dumped chair



This striking photo was sent in to the Lake Macquarie Landcare newsletter by Heather from Lucilla Ridge Landcare. It shows violet coral fungi, but the species is yet to be identified through iNaturalist. Fungi species are notoriously difficult to identify, sometimes requiring close observation of spores or even DNA testing! Pam O'Sullivan and Skye Moore's publication 'A guide to common fungi of the Hunter-Central Rivers region' notes that less than 50 per cent of fungi in NSW have been named!



LUCILLA RIDGE LANDCARE group recently planted 35 shrubs and trees on the Lucilla Ridge Hill site in Macquarie Hills. Very soon it became apparent that something was enjoying them a little too much. (see left)
The group placed tree guards around the most vulnerable trees but that wasn't enough. Scats were found and identified as Swamp Wallaby. (left)



What to do? (bottom right)

The site is 'blessed' with an abundance of Crofton Weed so a sprig of the weed was placed inside each tree guard to try to disguise it. The sprigs died off very quickly, so because the site is also 'blessed' with an abundance of bracken, it was decided to disguise the newly planted and nibbled plants with a piece of bracken. The results of our experiment next time ...



Photos and story supplied by Heather Carter

It's always a hive of activity at the wetlands



Vina Chubb reports on events and progress at the Biddabah Creek Wetland Landcare site.

Landcare Tuesday Tour,
see Vina

The waterway is currently in excellent condition following winter rains. The pond surface remains clear, with no significant plant growth observed at this time.

The site continues to host a diverse array of birdlife, much to the delight of local families who visit regularly.

- Permanent Residents: The population of Wood Ducks, Pacific Black Ducks, a resident Mallard, Rails, and Purple Swamphens has noticeably increased.
- Regular Visitors: The site is also frequently visited by Crested Pigeons, Mudlarks,
- Black Cockatoos, and Ravens.
- Coastal Water Birds: Various species, including Ibis, Egrets, and Cormorants, are also regular visitors.

One of the resident Wood Ducks is managing well despite having part of its webbed foot missing; it remains active and capable of swimming and moving around the site.

The Group continues to make significant improvements to the area:

- Weed Management: Ongoing efforts are focused on clearing the surrounding bushland of Morning Glory.
- Green Team Collaboration: Two weeks ago, the Green Team assisted in clearing new Privet growth that had emerged from seeds around a previously poisoned, large dead Privet tree.
- Upcoming Restoration: In one month, the Landcare team will begin planting sedges along the creek, specifically in sections where Crofton Weed has been successfully removed.



June 17
Muibung Hill
Trails
facebook post

The Purple Swamphen family have been permanent residents of **Biddabah Creek Wetland** for many years. They can sometimes be a little outnumbered Pacific Black Ducks and Wood Ducks, but they all seem to accommodate one another.

With their red legs, eyes and bill, massive feet and distinctive forehead shield, they are easy to identify.

While they are not keen swimmers and rather feeble fliers, they are fast runners and prefer to wade through the creek. They also use their legs to construct nests, trampling down reeds and dragging them into mounds for nesting and roosting.

Purple Swamphens make a high-pitched "hukk hukk" noise. They are friendly, cheeky birds.

Source Vina Chubb, Lake Mac Landcare newsletter, May 2026 Vol 2





The annual Lake Mac Landcare Week Bus Tour of sites included Biddabah Creek Landcare

Tree huggers are people who are deeply passionate about environmental conservation, ecology, and preserving natural habitats.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Bishnoi and Chipko Movements:

The concept traces its roots back to 1730 in India, where 363 members of the Bishnoi community sacrificed their lives by clinging to sacred trees to protect them from being cut down.

This inspired the 1970s Chipko movement in India, where villagers literally hugged trees to prevent deforestation, popularising the imagery globally.



VINA CHJBB (centre, in the yellow hi-vis top) one of the Team Leaders, took the assembled group around Biddabah Creek Landcare, located in Windross Drive, Warners Bay. The group was shown areas regenerating with native groundcovers following weed removal and how the site is providing habitat for local birdlife that she has been observing and advocating for the protection of, for a decade or more. *Photo credit: Emily Hempsall, Lake Macquarie Landcare.*



and Gabby Clappison, Biddabah Creek Landcare and Warners Bay Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group.



Sometimes weeds come in handy

The Friends of Munibung Hill Landcare group is based on the Speers Point side of the hill. Gavin Ord reports that there's been plenty happening at the Parkstone site!



The Friends of Munibung Landcare site has seen a hive of activity over the past few weeks (writing in early August), with plenty of encouraging signs that our rehabilitation work is making a difference.

We have continued to work along the Hawkins Creek bank and are delighted to see many new native peach seedlings emerging.

Our volunteers have been busy carefully clearing weeds from around the young seedlings, giving them the room they need to establish and grow.

One of the more interesting features of our site is the large number of wild tobacco trees. While they are a weed, we have found that they can play a useful role during the early stages of rehabilitation by providing shade and helping suppress other weeds.

They are proving to be excellent nursery plants for native guava and sandpaper figs, which are establishing underneath them.

Following some great advice from Amy at Landcare, we have been selectively thinning the wild tobacco trees. The aim is to gradually let more sunlight reach the native plants without opening the canopy too much and giving the weeds an opportunity to take over again.

It has been great to see how this approach is helping our native plants get established.

And wildlife is returning.

We've been finding plenty of evidence that swamp wallabies are using the site. They have been regular visitors for some time, but we are now seeing an increase in scat and footprints. This is a very welcome sign to know that the rehabilitated area is providing increasingly suitable habitat for local wildlife.

Another positive development has been the increase in fungi species observed around the site. Andy, one of our volunteers, has noticed a greater variety of fungi appearing.

Fungi play an important role in healthy soils and nutrient cycling, so their presence is another encouraging sign that the site's biodiversity is continuing to develop.

It is rewarding to see the changes taking place through the combined efforts of our volunteers and the natural regeneration of the area.

With spring just around the corner, we are looking forward to seeing what emerges next and watching our little patch of Munibung continue to grow and change.





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](#)



Wild places are not empty land waiting to be used.

They are living systems with deep history and meaning. Once we trade them for short term gain, there is no getting them back. Support our public lands!

Get the job done - 'go the whole hog'

When we go the whole hog, we don't just do things superficially, or hahazardly or by half measures, we go the whole hog - getting the job done.

And that's what we need Council to do - go the whole hog with the Munibung Hill Management Plan. Not just vote for and unanimously require a plan be prepared and then unanimously adopt the plan, and subsequently produce more detailed plans for tracks and associated works. But now go the whole hog and finish the job by allocating the funds within an operational context to completing in practice, what's been agreed upon in theory - fulfilling their community obligations to go ahead with what they said they'd do - **go the whole hog!**

Back in earlier times a hog was a swine, a pig. Then it became applied to sheep and shearing and taking off all the wool - to go the whole hog - shearing the sheep closely and all over.

It was this practice by economical herdsmen - changing a hog into a sheep - that eventually was applied, in everyday speech to anything we do thoroughly, without compromise or reservation, going all the way, seeing a thing through to the very end. 1)

1) How Did It Begin? by R. Brasch. A&R.



Cor blimey Bushwalking offers next level of fitness

YES, BUSHWALKING is a great next step for fitness because it can challenge your body with steep slopes and uneven ground.

Moving from flat footpaths to unsealed tracks changes how your body works. Here is why bushwalking takes your fitness to the next level.

More Muscle Strength

- **Legs and Glutes:** Walking uphill makes your thighs and bottom work much harder than walking on a flat street.
- **Core Stability:** There can some tracks where there rocks, roots, and loose dirt which force your stomach and back muscles to keep you balanced with every step.
- **Full Body:** Going downhill makes your leg muscles contract tightly to control your speed and protect your joints.

Higher Calorie Burn

- **Extra Weight:** Carrying a small backpack adds weight that makes your heart beat faster.
- **Rough Terrain:** Pushing through up and down tracks burns more energy than smooth pavement.
- **Endurance:** Bushwalking usually lasts longer than a quick neighbourhood walk, building better stamina.

Better Balance and Agility

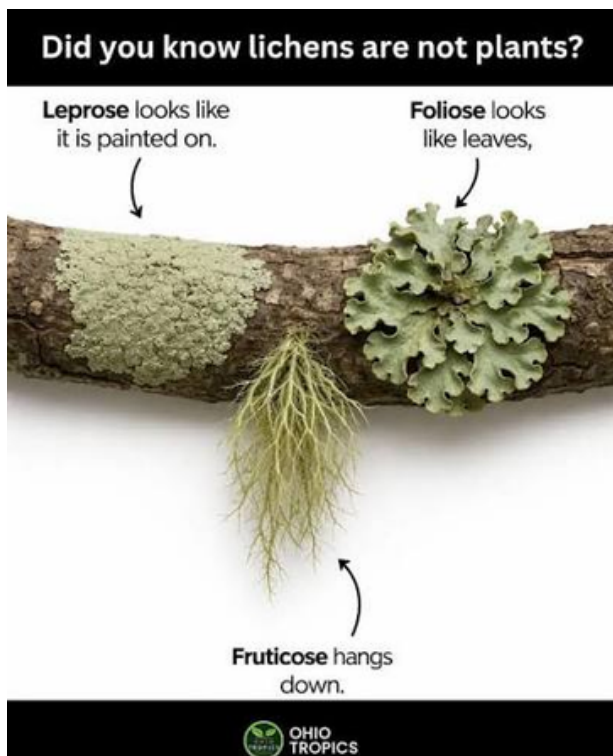
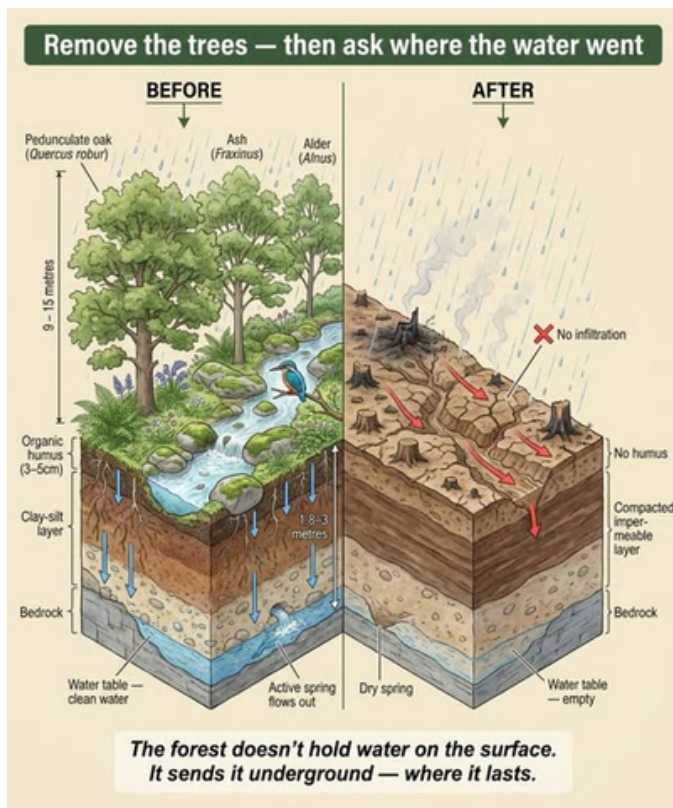
- **Foot Placement:** You must look ahead and choose where to place your feet carefully.
- **Reflexes:** Your brain and ankles learn to react quickly when you step on an uneven rock.

Mental Health Benefits

- **Nature Exposure:** Being among trees and fresh air lowers stress and clears your mind.
- **Quiet Spaces:** Escaping city noise helps you relax while you exercise.

Every kid needs a tree filled landscape

Keep what trees there are and plant more to replace those taken out



Sovereign land

Sovereign places are special places generally referring to locations that hold deep cultural, personal, or environmental meaning.

In an Australian context, this can range from historic tourism sites to sacred Indigenous lands.

We consider Munibung Hill to be a sovereign place since it holds within its landscape significant species of plants and animals that are not found in the suburbs where there is little more than rows of houses, monoculture lawns and very little diversity able to support anything like what can be experienced at Munibung Hill by comparison.

Species at Munbung Hill date back millions of years. They deserve protection and conservation. They are the heritage bequeathed to us by indigenous peoples, in this case the Awabakal Nation.

And if we are to respect elders past, present and emerging we will respect that their children are entitled to be able to make similar connections with the land - the plants and animals - the stories that they hold and the cultural connections that they embody.



<https://soe.dcccew.gov.au/indigenous/introduction/>

Ever wondered what awe really meant?

Those little items that deserve some space but don't necessarily fit in anywhere else, get some light of day here.

Curiosity, an invitation to wonder

We tend to use 'awe' and 'wonder' interchangeably, says Lucy Rogers, in Up: A scientist's guide to the magic above us. But German psychologists Ulrich Weger and Johannes Wagemann explain the difference: 'Wonder inspires the wish to understand; awe inspires the wish to let shine, to acknowledge and to unite.'

And from this we get 'awe'-some or 'wonder'-ful. Some of us experience more awe, less wonder, some the other way around. Whatever it might be, we all agree, either way, that awe and wonder bring us delight and enjoyment.

At Munibung Hill, there are opportunities at every turn to experience awe and wonder. Whether it be wondering what's around the next bend in the track, to wondering what's down in the creek at the bottom of the ridge or being awe struck at the plants living in the Permian Gully Rainforest in Hawkins Creek; awe and wonder are everywhere to behold.

Ecosystem service workers

Are you an 'Oooh, bat!' or an 'Ugh, bat!' type of person? They can be a creature that brings out the curiosity in us, or trigger fear and loathing, depending most probably on some previous experience. Either way, we tend not to be neutral in our feelings about bats. Chances are we don't even realise they exist, so tiny are they by comparison with the fruit bats we might be familiar with. Our micro-bat loving friends would like us to be open to changing our minds if we're of the 'Ugh, bat!' type. Especially so for the threatened species of micro-bats at Munibung Hill. They do such important work for us, in particular keeping the numbers of mosquitoes in check - being known to eat thousands of them on the wing in a single night's feeding trip. So consider the little micro-bats of this world and see it we can at least learn to tolerate them such that we ensure they have the habitat required to live peacefully at Munibung Hill.

Speaking of fungi

Healthy soils depend on diverse communities of bacteria, fungi and other microbes.

Many of Australia's unique ground-dwelling mammals - including bandicoots and echidnas - rely in part on fungi as food. Their digging is equally important. As they forage, they turn over soil and organic matter, burying organic debris, stimulating decomposition, improving water infiltration and reducing flammability.

Many of the fungi eaten by these mammals are truffle-like species whose spores are spread through the animals' dropping.

It's a real mutual symbiotic relationship that we should ignore as we advocate to the protection of Munibung Hill.

Ref: Fungi for Land, Sapphire McMullan-Fisher and Roz Hart.

Fungi for Land



Birding terminology

What's the difference between a Birdwatcher, a Birder, a Twitcher, Chaser, Lifelist, Hides.

Birdwatcher is the most common way to describe someone who enjoys identifying birds. Sometimes used to describe someone identifying birds by sight only. A well known, inclusive term especially when talking to non bird-watchers. And since we're all about getting people excited enough to start noticing birds, we love how universal it is.

And what do the other terms mean? Find out at this link:

<https://www.sydneypbirdclub.com/blog/2017/7/30/twitching-lifelist-what-do-these-things-mean>

How to make a picnic table from scrap



Double click to watch Beau Miles, special guest at the Lake Mac Living Smart Festival, chat about how to 'make good out of someones badness.' It's the adults, the parents, that are the problem, he says.



LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL LSF IN SEPTEMBER

THE LIVING SMART FESTIVAL, one of Australia's largest community sustainability events is back for 2026!

YouTube sensation Beau Miles is this year's festival headliner, presenting a 45-minute session and a workshop alongside other guests celebrating sustainable living.

Miles will also judge the popular School Garden Bed Competition, so don't forget to register!

More about Beau and details on the Living Smart Festival, head to: <https://lm.city/4xMClqZ>



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Verge garden initiative takes off



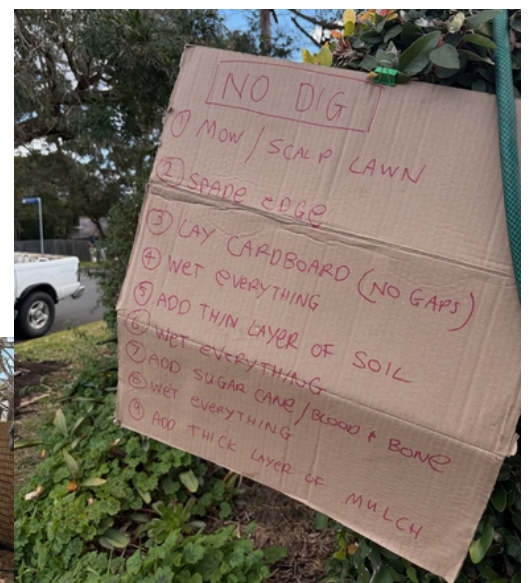
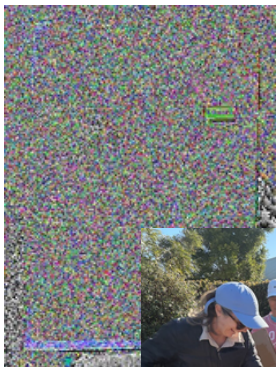
It's early days with essential preparation readying the various sites for planting. See photos below showing how this is starting with cardboard and mulching. In one case concrete is being turned into garden.

Photo credit: Anna Noon, Groundswell Collective



Anna Noon from the Groundswell Collective reports on the uptake of verge gardens since the Collective launched the initiative ...

- We've had almost 50 Expressions of Interest since we started the program.
- We've prepared 8 gardens (267m2 of lawn converted) planted 3 out so far – with 152 native plants.
- Held 3 workshops (58 attendees) and 1 community planting activity.
- We've had several workshop attendees go on to create their own verge – including Tess – who invited her friends and neighbours to come along and help with no-dig preparations. Turns out the one of her neighbours (a young couple) also attended the hands-on workshop in Teralba and have submitted their request for approval with Council – so a lovely ripple effect and reciprocity happening.
- From piloting the program with an initial funding grant, we've been able to secure another \$10,000 grant from Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group to focus on Mayfield specific project – we have a dozen sites there ready to go in late September
- A few verge "hot spots" are forming in the Newcastle area - where multiple residence are getting involved - Janet St, North Lambton, Thomas St, Mayfield - which is encouraging. They say verge gardening is contagious and that's what we're going for.
- There will be lots more to come yet including longer format 'how to' YouTube videos and more gardens and plants!





It's not only the Lake Mac and surrounds where the tiny forest phenomenon is taking off

In: [Tiny forests popping up across Sydney as part of effort to restore urban tree canopy.](#) Declan Bowring, 702 ABC Sydney. 4 July 2026, reports that ...

TINY FORESTS ARE starting to spring up in small land plots in Sydney's suburbs as locals look to replace the city's disappearing tree canopy and stave off urban heat.

Taking advantage of underutilised green spaces in council reserves and school grounds, the trees are planted in enriched soil to quickly grow forests in 200-square-metre plots.

One project in West Pymble in Sydney's north has created a patch of endangered Sydney turpentine ironbark forest shading a previously flat grass reserve near a petrol station.



Native plants for your verge garden

Lake Macquarie residents can now apply for Council approval to plant a verge garden outside their property.

Apply through Council's website or call Customer Service on 4921 0333 for more information. Learn more or submit your application [here.](#)

Once approved, you'll be eligible to collect 10 free native plants from the nursery at the Landcare and Sustainable Living Centre (see above)





Microbats

Article by Winsome Lambkin, Super Saturday Session Coordinator. Photos by Vanessa Whelan and Marion Lugg.

The June Super Saturday Session was booked out!

Who would have thought there'd be around 90 bat species in Australia and over 1,500 worldwide! Fernanda's presentation focused on microbats - warm blooded, hairy mammals.

Their wings are modified arms with elongated fingers which support the wing membrane. Unlike fruit bats that can see, microbats use echolocation to find their prey, which is mostly flying insects.

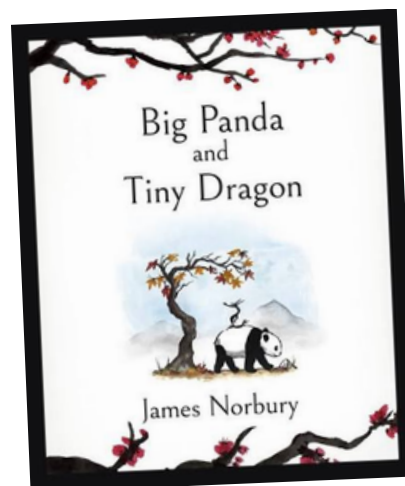
They have a critical role in ecosystems as insectivores and controlling insect numbers, as pollinators and as producers of guano (bat poo), used as fertiliser.

Researchers locate microbats through ultrasonic acoustic detectors, thermal imaging and radio tracking, and detected 4 threatened bat species from survey data in the Toronto area.

You can find more information and resources on bats from the Australasian Bat Society and Bat Conservation International.

Thank you, Fernanda, for your Microbat presentation based on your in-depth research.

18 June Facebook post, Munibung Hill Trails



Spring

*Isn't nature incredible!
But we are just as much a part of nature
as the tree or the spider ...*

A new day and a new beginning,'
said Tiny Dragon.
'What shall we do with it?'

'Which is more important,' asked Big Panda,
'the journey or the destination?'
'The company,' said Tiny Dragon.

'I'm too busy to see the flowers right now,' said Tiny Dragon.
'All the more reason to look at them,' said Big Panda.
'And they might not be here tomorrow.'

'Isn't nature incredible!' said Tiny Dragon.
'It is,' agreed Big Panda.
'But we are just as much a part of nature
as the tree or the spider, and just as amazing.'

Source - Short extract from:

Big Panda and Tiny Dragon

by James Norbury.

Penguin Random House, 2021

Writer and artist James Norbury illustrates the adventures of **Big Panda and Tiny Dragon**, inspired by Buddhist philosophy and spirituality to share the idea that have helped him through his most difficult times. He hopes they can help you too.

Putting colourful diversity back into the suburbs

Councils are starting to embrace meadows over lawns



There's a quiet shift in thinking taking place across Australia. Slow to start, it's gaining momentum as the value of the idea grabs the attention of forward thinking urban planners and Council horticultural staff see how shifting from mowing grass to growing colourful diversity benefits us all, including Council budgets.

While most parks and public spaces around Australia may sport turf, or a handful of small, drought-tolerant species, this garden in Dandenong (see photos above) is now part of thousands of square metres of public land boasting a colourful array of native flowers.

It's what's known as a woody meadow — a planting method using tightly-packed native plants that mimics colourful Australian shrublands.

Councils around the country are slowly starting to embrace woody meadows, which are designed to be low maintenance, but still include many different flowering species providing increased biodiversity and more colour.

"It's really a creative way of diversifying the range of native plants," Mr Calazy says.

Two of the 10 plants which feature in the ABC's National Science Week [poll to find Australia's most amazing native flower](#) — flannel flowers (*Actinotus* sp.) and star flowers (*Calytrix* sp.) — may have already popped up as part of a woody meadow near you.

What's a woody meadow?

These are low-maintenance and drought-tolerant gardens, while providing more colour and beauty than many monoculture plantings favoured by councils.

Vote for Australia's most amazing wildflower

These 10 flowers are not just pretty faces, they have superpowers. Which one will get your vote?

For those of us living in the vicinity of Munibung Hill we could get a plant list clue from the Flora Gallery on the Munibung Hill Conservation Society website. And for those of us further afield, checking with a local Landcare group would be a great idea.

Professor Bekessy, from Melbourne University, also notes that increasing the amount of native flowers and plants can help protect native species.

"Cities are, weirdly, hot spots for threatened species."

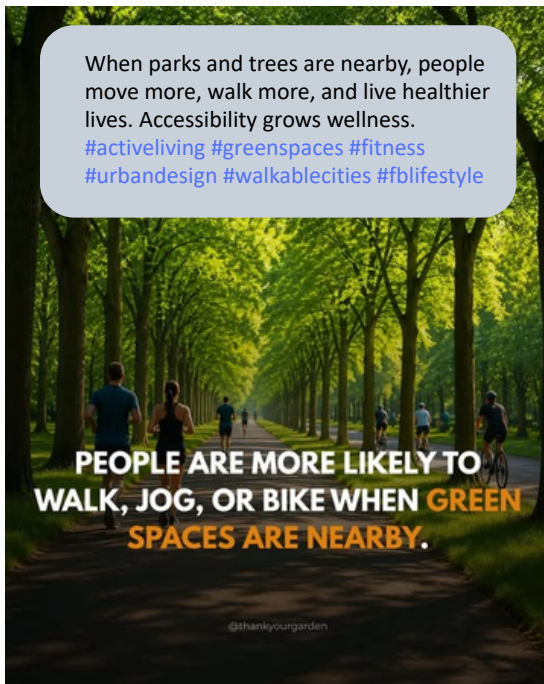
"What that means is we've got a responsibility to take care of biodiversity in cities and help it to regenerate."

The University of Melbourne team has released [videos](#), [guidelines](#) and other resources for councils or the general public who might be interested in planting their own meadow.

"We've made the guidelines free and available to be adapted and used however people would like to do them," she says.

"My hope — and the hope of the whole project team — is that woody meadows just take on a life of their own."

Source: [Australia's 'woody meadows' raise biodiversity in cities](#)
Science reporter [Jacinta Bowler](#)



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.

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 quarterly as a digital magazine only.

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Other sources: As referenced throughout.

Content ideas are welcome. Send with full contact details including mobile contact number to:

The Compiling 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/>

Quality lighting starts at our front door



Light pollution is often associated with cities, but individual homes play an important role in shaping the nighttime environment.

Imagine the difference it would make if every home on your block followed the Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting.

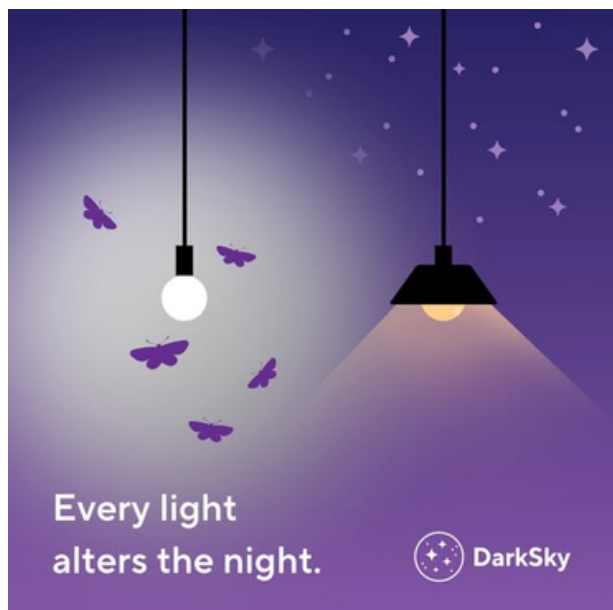
Small changes at home can ripple outward and improve the night for an entire neighbourhood.

You've probably heard the saying, 'Be the change you want to see.'

DarkSky's Home Outdoor Lighting Assessment provides a practical guide for evaluating the lights around your home and making simple improvements. And this isn't about plunging your property into darkness. DarkSky understands that people need light at night. The goal is to choose quality lighting that improves safety and visibility while protecting the nighttime environment.

Remember, protecting the night can start right at your own front door. Making a meaningful change at home can be the first step in helping to protect the night sky from ever more light pollution.

Source: Dark Sky International



Source: Dark Sky International posts



DarkSky International

Protecting the night starts with community. Many people don't realize how outdoor lighting can affect their neighbors, local wildlife, and the night sky. A friendly conversation can help raise awareness and inspire simple changes that benefit everyone.

Small actions can make a big difference.

Visit DarkSky to learn how to talk with your neighbor about outdoor lighting:

<https://bit.ly/3CdZlpF>

A light is like a tool, a service with a purpose

Like a spanner is to a bolt, a light fitting should be to lighting the way.

Think of a light fitting as a physical product, which of course it is. It's a manufactured item that is designed to be fixed in position, with the purpose of shining light on an object or into an area to light the way, as in the case of a footpath or a playing field or ahead along the road, in the case of a headlight on a car, etc.

The effectiveness of this will depend of the design of the encasement and the selection of the luminaire (bulb) and or technical make-up.

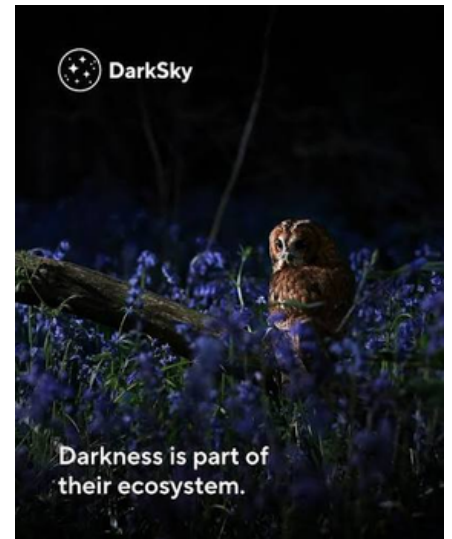
These things when put together produce the light and provide the user with the means to see where they weren't able to without it.

It's not rocket science, but it does take a little thoughtfulness to do the right things by the night and the nocturnal wildlife that depend on darkness for their way of life.



Do you think about the effect of lighting on our wildlife? Lighting the night is having an impact on almost every animal on earth, including us! And, as always, gardeners can help. Find out about 'darkness corridors', how embracing the darkness might be a good idea sometimes, and other ways gardeners can practice responsible lighting in our June issue, out now.

 Millie Ross, feature segment on Gardening Australia television program, with a write up in ABC Gardening Australia magazine
[#lightingdesign](#) [#naturelovers](#) [#gardening](#) [#conservation](#) [#gardeningaustraliamag](#)



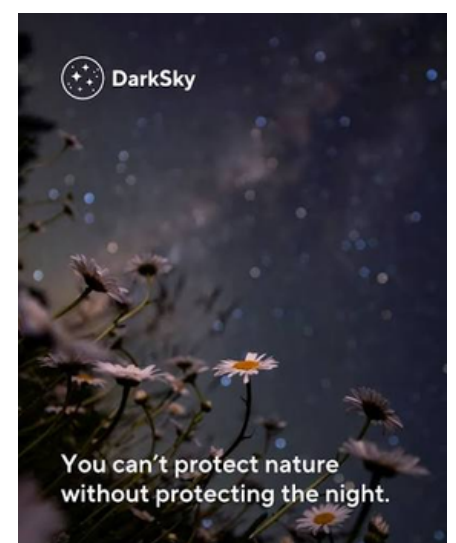
Dark sky-friendly lighting doesn't have to be complicated or expensive.

In this practical session, DarkSky staff share DIY hacks, simple swaps, smart controls, and creative workarounds that can help reduce light pollution at home and in your community.

You'll also discover solutions for renters and tricky spaces, and hear creative ideas shared by fellow dark sky advocates.

Whether you're looking for an easy lighting fix or inspiration for your next community project, there's something here for you.

Watch the full Advocate Action Meeting on our YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/4xTG2ui>



It just goes to show what's possible when we put our minds to it in the interests of the night sky, nocturnal species and the capacity for seeing the night sky in all its glory.

What to take when paying a visit to Munibung Hill

- a sense of curiosity
- a camera to capture some feature worth sharing from the flora, fauna and funga communities
- safety shoes or boots
- drink bottle
- bag to carry out what you took in plus some rubbish that others may have left behind
- an appreciation for nature
- a sense of oneness for we are a part of not apart from nature i.e. our human nature is an extension of the existing natural world ... to become as one with Munibung Hill, a part of the ancestral lineage that has existed for 251 million years.
- a way of thinking acknowledging that Munibung Hill behaves as a natural landscape, in a circular manner/ framework (or circular economy in modern terms).



THIS DESIRE PATH CONNECTS the end of Lucilla Ridge, Macquarie Hills with the track leading up to Munibung Hill, from Lakelands. It is maintained by local residents and is a great example of how local citizens make a positive contribution to active transport. Children use the path for getting to and from Warners Bay High School and sports training and lots of adults like the short cut between the suburbs. It's a shame that Lake Mac Council doesn't see fit to improve it and keep it in good nick.

Expanding the definition of what it means to live in a society

WHEN WE SPEAK of society we are usually referring to a human society, but what if we expanded this to be inclusive of a wallaby society, a frill necked lizard society, a bandicoot society, and many others - you get the drift.

By being exclusive of the other societies it sets us apart from the rest of nature, but our real nature is to be PART OF not APART FROM - if we are to honour and respect indigenous culture.

After all, the air we breathe, the water we drink and cook with, bathe in, wash our clothes in and surf in are all a part of nature; and we are comprised of the natural world and we are comprised of 75 per cent water. There's no getting away from that fact. We are more liquid than solid. Take out the water and we are little more than shrivelled up skin and bone.

Munibung Hill is not a landscape in isolation, separate from the whole. Munibung Hill with her many catchments / watersheds is an integral part of the lake with each creek feeding into the waterbody that is connected to the ocean beyond Swansea.

To take an isolationist view is to cut Munibung Hill off, which is previously what we did, by not retaining any corridors with the wider landscape. That is why the creeks like Biddabah Creek with its open-to-air waterway has some semblance of a corridor. And some of the north-western creeks also have a high vegetation coverage stretching beyond the Hill proper, to the landscapes beyond.

Isolationism does not serve us well. It cuts us off with pockets that are fragmented from the whole. While we try to defy the circular nature of our being, the rest of the natural world practices the circle method every day, week, year and has done for millennia. We would be well advised to get in step, to follow suit, to mimic it as closely as possible. Will the circle be unbroken?

Isolationism creates artificial boundaries that don't exist in nature. Think migratory birds, think migratory whales, think migratory bogong moths, and so on. While some species have a defined territory, others need corridors to move along. We need to recognise this and ensure that they are retained.

After all what is a road or streets or highway, if not a corridor to connect with the suburbs, towns and cities beyond. And that's only on the land. We have corridors for air travel, corridors for sea lanes. To not ensure that the species we share this Earth with have corridors that connect is an act of arrogance on our part. Affording us some kind of superiority that again does not serve us well.

We cut across their corridors on a daily basis with gay abandon creating isolated pockets of bushland that create islands trapping them inside like prisoners.

Mention the word island and we immediately think of land surrounded by water. Ground dwelling animals are trapped with no escape routes. Isolated as they are, the area needs to be large enough so that there is sufficient space within it to escape from predators, at least to the point of making a viable population to prevent inbreeding.



Cat threat to wildlife; Understanding the impact - Hunter Wildlife Rescue. <https://www.hunterwildlife.org.au/threats/cats/>

Advocates argue the initiative falls short

Cats still on the roam in vast numbers doing unconscionable harm

‘Have you heard anything worse than the Keeping Cats Safe at Home program?’ asks one of our members. ‘Let’s hope they do better than this with the roaming cat nuisance - any “roaming” cat is feral, in my opinion’, she says.

Here’s the current state of play ...

The Keeping Cats Safe at Home program has faced criticism for relying too heavily on voluntary containment and voluntary behavioral shifts rather than stricter, enforceable laws. This approach has failed to curb the state’s growing stray cat crisis, leaving local pounds and shelters overwhelmed by the massive number of roaming and unmanaged felines. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

Advocates argue the initiative falls short for several key reasons:

- **Voluntary Containment Limits:** The program heavily emphasizes education and voluntary containment. Without legally mandated curfews or fines for allowing cats to roam, many pet owners choose not to keep their cats indoors. [1, 2, 3]
- **No Solution for Stray Populations:** The initiative primarily targets owned cats. It lacks aggressive trap-neuter-return (TNR) or management policies for the estimated 700,000 unowned urban stray cats. [1, 2, 3]

To address these shortcomings, animal welfare advocates and environmental groups in NSW are pushing for:

- Revisions to the Companion Animals Act to make 24/7 cat containment mandatory across the state.
- Mandatory desexing of all cats prior to sale or adoption to prevent unplanned litters.
- Stronger local council legislation that treats roaming cats the same way roaming dogs are treated. [1, 2]



Every other land dwelling animal does it, so why the resistance to embrace the most natural process?

ALL THE ANIMALS at Munibung Hill when they die, end up being composted back to the earth, back to the soil, just as they have done for millions of years. Munibung Hill is one big nursery of birth and life and one big cemetery of recycled bodies. Perhaps it sounds odd to write it down and read it, but it is what it is.

This brief article is asking that humans *be given the option* to behave no differently when it comes to the end, as this story by Miriah Davis reports ...

[Sydney MP pushes to bring human composting to Australia as burial costs rise.](#) (ABC News, 25 June 2026)

The aim is to pave the way for human composting in New South Wales.

Also known as "terramation", the two-month process breaks down the body into nutrient-rich soil.

Legal in the US and Germany, it has been touted as a greener and cheaper option compared to burials and cremations.

When it is Teresa Russell's time to go, she wants to be turned into human compost.

Ms Russell has spent the past two years advocating for "terramation", a process where a body is placed into a vessel with organic matter and broken down into soil.

The practice is currently only legal in Germany and 14 US states, which is why Ms Russell established the non-profit Earthly Legacy to bring the method to Australia.

"One of the things that we have to do is we have to break down the taboo that exists in our society about dying," she said.

"Rather than finding the idea confronting and frightening people go, 'Oh that's actually really interesting, that sounds sensible'." -

Tui Davidson

Ms Davidson said she did not believe that cultural acceptance would be a huge barrier to establishing human composting as a common practice.



Breaking it down: how to limit the environmental impact of your body after death - From cardboard coffins and natural burials to water-based cremation, Australians are increasingly open to alternative farewells – but the key is to plan. [Full story](#)



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:

Michael Belcher, President – 4930 1458
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



Lake Mac Repair It

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 Wednesday
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



For general information or enquiries contact:
The Secretary
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.



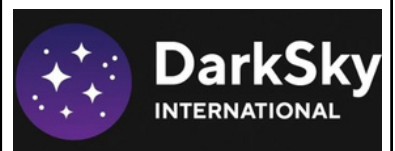
Newcastle Astronomical Society

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



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](https://AustralasianDarkSkyAlliance.org)



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://www.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.

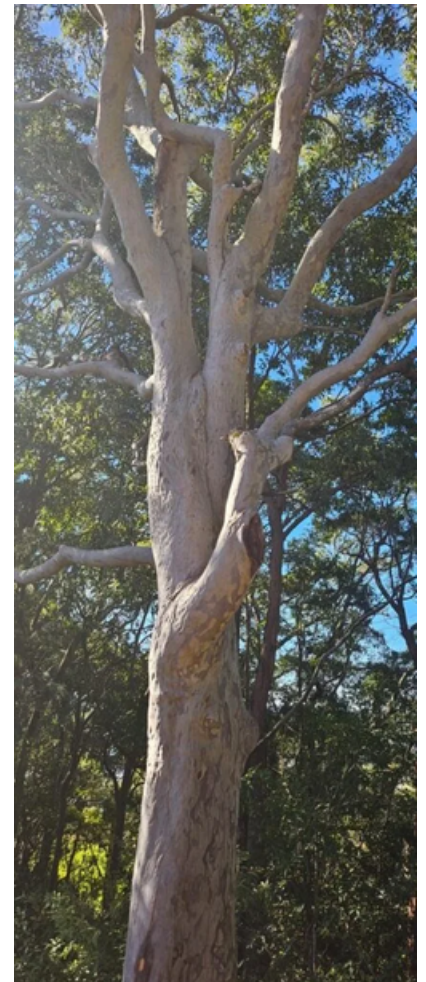
Move at 06:15
 Start cnr Fourth/Main Rd,
 Boolaroo
 All Welcome

Follow on Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/bungersrunclub/>

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>



A selection of photos taken while on a walk at Munibung Hill - see story ..
 Munibung Hill - walking a significant Awabakal site by Karen Nicoll, Walks Leader, National Parks Association, July 2025

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.