



AUSTRALASIAN
DARK SKY
ALLIANCE

EVERY STAR COUNTS, EVERY LIGHT MATTERS

Protecting Bushland Environments from Light Pollution

*A guide for councils, developers, residents and
land managers bordering natural areas*

Why Bushland Needs the Night

Bushland, forest edges, and nature reserves come alive after dark. From insect pollinators and frogs to gliders and microbats, more than 60% of Australia's wildlife is nocturnal or crepuscular, relying on natural darkness to forage, hunt, communicate and reproduce.

Artificial light at night (ALAN) in or near these areas can disrupt these behaviours, fragment habitat corridors, and lead to long-term biodiversity loss.

Light pollution doesn't just happen in cities—it creeps into conservation areas via roads, residential development, infrastructure and signage, often unintentionally.

Who's Affected?

GLIDERS AND POSSUMS

Bright lighting can cause increased predation and alter the way these species move through the canopy, impacting feeding and breeding.

FROGS

ALAN reduces calling activity, affects reproduction, and may deter frogs from key breeding sites.

BATS AND MICROBATS

Lights attract insects away from foraging areas, disturb roosting behaviour, and increase competition among nocturnal predators.

INSECTS

Moths and beetles are drawn to artificial lights instead of pollinating native plants. Many die from exhaustion or predation, disrupting food chains and pollination cycles.

BIRDS

Some woodland birds use starlight or the moon for migration and navigation. Light spill into forest corridors can alter routes and disrupt orientation.



Insects attracted to a light.

Key Light Pollution Impacts in Bushland Areas

- Increased predation due to visibility
- Disruption of natural foraging and migration patterns
- Reduced breeding success and altered sleep cycles
- Shrinking of viable dark habitat corridors
- Species displacement over time

What the National Guidelines Recommend

The Australian National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (2023) recommend that lighting near important ecological communities be:

- Minimised or removed where possible
- Shielded and directed away from bushland
- Warm in spectrum (2700K or lower)
- Used only when necessary, with timers or motion sensors
- The guidelines also encourage dark buffer zones in bird and turtle transition areas with no or minimal lighting between built environments and bushland.

Light-Free Zones Help Wildlife Thrive

Bushland doesn't need more infrastructure—it needs room to breathe. Creating and maintaining naturally dark spaces helps support biodiversity, connect wildlife corridors, and preserve the ecological rhythms that make Australian landscapes so unique.

Every star counts. Every light matters.

Be part of a global effort to restore the night.



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www.australasiandarkskyalliance.org/

What You Can Do

Whether you're managing a park, living near a reserve, or planning a new development, these actions can help protect bushland ecosystems:

FOR COUNCILS AND DEVELOPERS

- Require dark-sky-compliant lighting in and around green spaces
- Review lighting in car parks, shared paths, and recreational areas
- Avoid illuminating signage in or adjacent to reserves
- Implement motion-activated lighting only where safety requires it
- Include light impact assessments in planning approvals

FOR RESIDENTS AND LANDOWNERS

- Replace porch and security lights with shielded, low intensity warm LEDs
- Use motion sensors and timers to limit duration
- Block light spill onto bushland with barriers or shielding
- Talk to neighbours about the impacts of excess outdoor lighting
- Advocate for wildlife-sensitive lighting in your local area

