Avalon Preservation Association

Avalon Preservation Association Annual General Meeting 2026

Date: **Thursday 12 November** 2026 from 7.00pm sharp

Venue: Bangalley Room, Avalon Beach Surf Life Saving Club

Speaker: Professor Peter Davies, Macquarie University

Where have all the trees gone? The cumulative impact of suburban redevelopment

The “boiling frog” metaphor captures the trajectory of suburban Sydney: a gradual, largely unremarked shift toward a greyer, less resilient urban form. Research led by Professor Peter Davies and colleagues has systematically examined the impacts of lot-level redevelopment driven by knockdown–rebuild housing. The findings are clear. Larger building footprints and expanded driveways are displacing canopy trees and gardens, eroding the private green space that once underpinned Sydney’s “garden city” ideal.

These changes are not merely aesthetic. Reduced canopy and green space contribute to urban heat intensification, increased stormwater runoff, and declining urban biodiversity. When seen as part of the whole housing jigsaw, lot-by-lot redevelopment is reshaping suburban environments in ways that undermine liveability and environmental performance. Without a recalibration of policy settings and community priorities, Sydney’s suburban future risks becoming, incrementally but decisively, greyer.

Professor Peter Davies

Peter Davies is a Professor of sustainability at Macquarie University. He began his academic career in 2012, following 20 years of working in state and local government and in consultancy. This industry-related experience spanned senior leadership roles across the water, environmental protection, and energy sectors and in local government with responsibilities for environmental planning and policy, sustainability, and corporate planning and reporting, His research is focused on the urban environment.