



## RESEARCHER PROFILE

# Dr Cecily Maller

2010–15

“The VicHealth research fellowship represents a unique opportunity to track planned, emergent and accidental health outcomes from the first stages of community development to the time of community establishment.”

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**Dr Cecily Maller from the Centre for Design, RMIT University, is investigating whether adopting best-practice planning and design in new residential communities can create sustainable places and healthy people.**

Cecily is a VicHealth Research Practice Fellow in Community Development and Residential Planning, based at the Centre for Design at RMIT University, Melbourne. The Centre is concerned with the interplay of policy, regulation, industry, technology, design, economy, demography, culture and social practices in the transition towards sustainable communities and consumption patterns.

To explore how best-practice planning on a neighbourhood scale can lead to better health and wellbeing outcomes for residents, Cecily's research evaluates the planned, emerging and accidental health outcomes of 'Selandra Rise', a demonstration residential housing development in Melbourne's south-east growth corridor.

Master planning for Selandra Rise drew on a unique partnership between Stockland (the land developer), the Planning Institute of Australia, the Growth Areas Authority, and the City of Casey. The development focused on achieving three core objectives:

1) an engaged community 2); provision of local employment, and 3) diversity and affordability of housing. Key features of the design include open space, a sustainable living hub, and opportunities for local employment, education and aged care.

Housing is recognised as a key social determinant of health and wellbeing. More broadly, the impact of place on health is widely acknowledged; unhealthy places can have long-term implications for current residents and future generations. In the context of increasing demand for housing, housing affordability issues and climate change, Cecily's research will shed light on how health and wellbeing can be optimised and sustained for communities in new housing developments.

Cecily's approach to the research is informed by sociology, public health and housing studies. She is particularly interested in interactions between people and natural, built and social environments, and she focuses on the daily routines of households.

The outcomes of the research will contribute to a growing evidence base for policy makers.