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TASMANIA

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Institute for Medical Research

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## NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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# Media Release

## Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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### **Snakes, streetlights and swimming pools – do they influence healthy lifestyles in rural areas?**

Researchers are inviting adults from 12 rural areas across three Australian states to speak up about whether the design of their local area helps to get them moving.

“We want to know how the design of our local areas encourages or prevents us from being active, and whether people in rural areas have access to a sufficient range of safe, well-maintained places to be active,” said Dr Verity Cleland, from the Menzies Institute for Medical Research at the University of Tasmania.

Dr Cleland leads the study, which also includes researchers from the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition at Deakin University in Victoria and the University of South Australia.

“Academic research has shown that the local environment is related to physical activity levels in cities, but this sort of research has rarely been done in a rural setting in Australia,” Dr Cleland said.

“Identifying features of our local environment that impact most on physical activity is very important because we can then help councils, government, planners and developers create spaces and places that support healthy lifestyles for rural people.”

The survey will take place in Latrobe, George Town and Scottsdale in Tasmania, Camperdown, Maryborough and Wonthaggi in Victoria, and Kadina, Berri, Loxton, Renmark and Naracoorte in South Australia.

“Creating environments that make it easy to be active without even having to think about it has enormous potential as a way to improve population health,” Dr Cleland said.

Adults who live in the areas being surveyed can fill out the survey at <http://tiny.cc/ruralsurvey>

***Dr Cleland is available for interview.***

**[For more information:](#)**

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