

SPEAR road name origins

Process guide for recording road name origins in SPEAR

Process guide and implementation support for councils, surveyors and developers

Summary

From 3 August 2026, Responsible Naming Authority users will need to enter road name origin information in SPEAR for each new road name. The technical change is scheduled after close of business on Friday 31 July 2026. The aim is to make it easier to record why names were chosen, how they link to place, and whether commemorative names support gender equality.

Who this guide is for

- Responsible Naming Authority users who add street addresses or new road information in SPEAR.
- Council naming officers, planners, GIS, property and subdivision teams.
- Land surveyors and developers who propose new road names.
- Anyone building a local workflow for subdivision road naming.

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Process overview

Step	Who	When	Outcome
1. Select proposed road names	Developer, surveyor, council	Before plans are finalised	Proposed names and rationale
2. Assess names	Council / naming officer	Before acceptance	Names comply with Naming Rules
3. Collect origin information	Developer, surveyor, council	Before addressing	Completed road name origin information
4. Review information	Council	Before addressing	Complete and accurate information
5. Add street addressing in SPEAR	Council	During addressing process	New roads identified in SPEAR
6. Enter road origin information	Council	After addressing	Theme, commemorative status, gender and history recorded
7. Update information if required	Council and/or GNV	When details change	Records corrected in SPEAR or VICNAMES

Detailed process

Step 1: Select proposed road names early

Who is involved?

- Developers
- Land surveyors
- Local councils

When should this happen?

Before subdivision plans are finalised.

What to do

When creating proposed road names:

1. Develop a list of proposed road names.
2. Identify whether any names commemorate:
 - a person
 - a group of people
 - an event
 - an organisation.
3. Identify the likely naming theme for each road.
4. Gather any historical information, stories or local connections that explain why the name was chosen.
5. Consider opportunities for commemorative naming, particularly for women and other underrepresented groups.



Expected outcome

A list of proposed road names with supporting information about their origin and local significance.

Good practice

Every road name should have a clear connection to place, local history, people, events, flora, fauna or another relevant theme.

Step 2: Assess proposed names against naming requirements

Who is involved?

- Local council
- Naming officer or responsible naming authority

When should this happen?

Before council accepts or endorses the names.

What to do

Review each proposed road name and:

1. Check it complies with the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria.
2. Confirm any commemorative names meet eligibility requirements.
3. Verify spelling, formatting and suitability.
4. Confirm the appropriate road name theme.
5. Identify whether the road is named after a person.

Expected outcome

Approved road names ready for subdivision and addressing processes.

Step 3: Collect road name origin information

Who is involved?

- Developer or surveyor
- Local council

When should this happen?

Before street addressing is added in SPEAR.

What to do

Collect and document the information that will later be entered into SPEAR.

For each road:

1. Record the road name.
 2. Select the most appropriate road name theme.
 3. Confirm whether the road commemorates a person.
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4. If the road commemorates a person, identify the gender category:
 - Woman
 - Man
 - Self-described
 - Multi-gender.
5. Prepare a short history or origin statement that explains:
 - the meaning of the name
 - its connection to the local area
 - any historical significance.

Expected outcome

A completed road name origin record ready for entry into SPEAR.

Step 4: Review information for completeness and accuracy

Who is involved?

- Local council
- Responsible Naming Authority user

When should this happen?

Before street addressing is entered into SPEAR.

What to do

Review the collected information to ensure:

- a theme has been identified
- commemorative status has been confirmed
- gender information has been recorded where required
- the history statement is complete and meaningful
- all required information is available before data entry begins.

Expected outcome

Complete and accurate information ready for entry into SPEAR.

Step 5: Add street addressing information in SPEAR

Who is involved?

- Responsible Naming Authority user

When should this happen?

When the council is ready to create New Street Address Allocations in SPEAR.

What to do

1. Open the subdivision application in SPEAR.



2. Create the New Street Address Allocations.
3. Identify any newly created roads within the subdivision.
4. Proceed to the road origin information section.

Expected outcome

New roads have been identified in SPEAR and are ready for road origin information to be recorded.

Note for existing roads

If you encounter issues while allocating addresses to an existing road:

1. Continue creating the address allocation.
2. Enter '**Pre-existing road**' in the road origin or history field where required.

Step 6: Enter road origin information in SPEAR

Who is involved?

- Responsible Naming Authority user

When should this happen?

Immediately after New Street Address Allocations have been added.

What to do

For each new road:

1. Select: **New road information to be entered into SPEAR.**
2. Select the appropriate road name theme.
3. Indicate whether the road is named after a person.
4. If applicable, select the gender category.
5. Enter a concise history or origin statement.
6. Submit the information.

Expected outcome

The following information is recorded:

- road name theme
- commemorative status
- gender information (where applicable)
- road name history or origin.

Why this information matters

This information is transferred to VICNAMES and helps improve statewide place naming records, preserve local history and monitor commemorative naming trends.

Step 7: Update information if required

Who is involved?

- Local council
- Geographic Names Victoria (GNV)

When should this happen?

Whenever an error is found or new information becomes available.

What to do

1. Identify the incorrect or incomplete information.
2. Determine whether the SPEAR application can still be edited.

If the SPEAR application is still active

1. Update the information directly in SPEAR.
2. Save the changes.

If the SPEAR application can no longer be edited

1. Email the corrected information to Geographic Names Victoria at geo.names@transport.vic.gov.au.
2. Request that the VICNAMES record be updated.

Additional historical information

If further history or origin information becomes available after a road name has been registered, it can be provided to GNV for inclusion in the VICNAMES record.

What to enter in the history field

The 500-character test

A good statement can usually be read out loud in 20 to 30 seconds. Include enough information for a person searching VICNAMES in future to understand why the name was used.

Ideal examples

Theme	Road name	Ideal history/origin statement	Use this when
Commemorative / Anzac	Nancie Road	Named in memory of Nancie Kinsella, who served as a military nurse in World War II and later worked as a matron at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Her service in healthcare and wartime nursing is commemorated through this road name.	Names the person, explains why they are significant and gives enough context for future users.
Flora	Banksia Street	Named after banksia plants, which are commonly found in the local area and form part of the subdivision's native flora naming theme.	Links the plant to the local area and explains the theme.
Commemorative	Realperson Road	Named after Mary Realperson, a pioneering woman who ran the local hotel from 1880 to 1906. The subdivision is beside the former hotel site.	Shows who, why, dates and a clear link to place in under 500 characters.

Theme	Road name	Ideal history/origin statement	Use this when
Other / theme	Birdie Lane	The subdivision is on a former golf course. A golf-related naming theme has been established, and a birdie is a recognised golf score.	Explains the theme and why it belongs in this location.
Other / conservation theme	Breelong Road	The southern part of the site will be retained as a conservation reserve. Streets are named after Australian national parks and conservation reserves. Breelong is a national park in New South Wales.	Explains the broader theme and how it relates to the site.
Aboriginal language	Example only	The name was provided by the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party for use in this local area. The history should include the meaning of the word, language group and local connection, where this information can be shared.	Shows the extra information needed to make Aboriginal language naming clear and culturally safe.

Incomplete examples and how to fix them

Incomplete entry	Issue	Compliant approach
Previous landowner who contributed to the area.	No person named and no local contribution explained.	Name the person, explain their contribution, add location or dates, and note consent where relevant.
Irish River.	No explanation of what or where this refers to.	Explain whether the name refers to a local waterway, historic name, theme or known feature.
Theme: Restaurant in St Germain area of Paris.	Commercial / estate theme with no local relationship.	Use names with a genuine local connection or explain a place-based theme that is not commercial.
This name was provided by an Aboriginal Elder.	Important, but meaning and language information are missing where they can be shared.	Include language group, meaning, local connection and confirmation that cultural advice or approval has been obtained, where appropriate.
Other.	No usable information.	Select the most accurate theme and write a short history explaining the origin and local link.

Implementation checklist for councils

- Consider entering addressing as an initial step of every subdivision project so changes required by GNV audits are less disruptive.
- Add the template to application or pre-lodgement instructions.
- Decide which internal role reviews road name origins before SPEAR entry.
- Set up a SPEAR referral or internal alert so naming officers know when action is needed.
- Ask developers and surveyors for origin information before street addressing is added.
- Keep a local record of reserved names and reassess them before use.
- Use the examples library in training and applicant guidance.
- Send longer biographies or corrected information to GNV if SPEAR can no longer be edited.

Contacts

- SPEAR technical support: spear.info@transport.vic.gov.au or (03) 9194 0612.
- Naming advice and VICNAMES updates: geo.names@transport.vic.gov.au or (03) 8572 7991.