

Road name origins in SPEAR

Fact sheet for local councils, land 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.

What is changing?

SPEAR now records more information about each unique new road name created via a plan of subdivision.

A new action called Add New Road Information appears once street addresses have been added.

Information required	What to include
Road name theme	Use the SPEAR dropdown. Themes include Aboriginal, Aboriginal flora, Aboriginal fauna, Anzac, commemorative, flora, fauna and other.
Commemorative status	Answer whether the road is named after a person. If yes, record the relevant gender option.
History or origin	Add a short statement explaining who or what the name recognises and how it connects to the local area.
Compliance check	Check the current naming rules, including duplication, road type, link to place and commemorative naming requirements.

Project milestone dates

30 January 2026: Users were encouraged to begin entering road name origin information

Close of business on Friday, 31 July 2026: Technical go-live for the mandatory requirement

Monday, 3 August 2026: The requirement formally applies to users

Why it matters

- Preserves local history and makes future records easier to understand.
- Helps councils demonstrate that road names have a clear link to place.
- Improves VICNAMES data and supports more consistent statewide records.
- Supports gender equality reporting for commemorative new road names.
- Helps Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) target guidance, training and audit support where it is most needed.

More information

- **SPEAR technical support:**
spear.info@transport.vic.gov.au or (03) 9194 0612.
- **Geographic place naming requirements:**
geo.names@transport.vic.gov.au or (03) 8572 7991.
- **Current naming rules:**
<https://www.land.vic.gov.au/place-naming/naming-rules-and-frameworks/the-naming-rules>

Who does what?

Role	Main job	Practical action
Developer / applicant	Proposes road names and usually holds the naming rationale.	Use the template before submitting names to council or uploading documents in SPEAR.
Land surveyor	Often helps prepare the plan and may help collect road name origin information.	Ask the developer early for the meaning, theme and link to place.
Responsible Naming Authority / council	Checks names against the naming rules and enters information into SPEAR.	Build the template into local subdivision workflows before street addressing is added.
Geographic Names Victoria (GNV)	Audits a sample of plans and maintains statewide naming records.	Provides templates, advice and support. Contact GNV for naming-rule questions.

What good history looks like

Use this formula

Name + meaning or person + significance + local connection + source or context.

Keep it short, specific and useful. Do not write an essay, but do not leave future users guessing.

Theme	Road name	Ideal history/origin statement	Why this works
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.
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.

Common mistakes to avoid

Avoid writing	Why this is not enough
Previous landowner who contributed to the area.	Does not name the person, explain the contribution or show the link to place.
Irish River.	Too short. It does not say what the name refers to or why the name belongs in that location.
Theme: Restaurant in St Germain area of Paris.	An estate marketing theme is not enough. The history must explain a genuine link to place, not only a commercial or lifestyle theme.
Other.	This gives no usable history and cannot support audit, reporting or public understanding.
Mushrooms/fungi.	This may be flora, not other, and needs to explain local relevance.