

## Frequently Asked Questions - General

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### Contents

What is SPEAR?.....	1
Who can use SPEAR?.....	1
How can I register to use SPEAR?.....	1
How much does it cost?.....	2
What type of planning permit application can be lodged through SPEAR?.....	2
Who will be able to view objections?.....	2
What are the benefits of using SPEAR?.....	2
Is SPEAR mandatory?.....	2
Do I need a Digital Certificate to use SPEAR?.....	2
What format will SPEAR documents be in?.....	3
Can I integrate my current system with SPEAR?.....	3
Does SPEAR or the Responsible Authority store data and application documents?.....	3
Who will be able to view applications once they have been lodged?.....	3
Can application fees be paid online?.....	3
Can a copy of title be purchased from within SPEAR?.....	3
Where can I get further information?.....	3

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### What is SPEAR?

Surveying and Planning through Electronic Applications and Referrals (SPEAR) is an Australian-first system, which provides a common interface for all stakeholders involved in the planning and subdivision processes to create, lodge, manage, refer, approve and track planning permit and subdivision applications online, anytime in Victoria. It is offered free of charge by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

### Who can use SPEAR?

SPEAR is available to applicants, Responsible Authorities (councils), referral authorities, lodging parties, Land Use Victoria and the public.

- **Applicants:** Create, submit and manage applications including the planning permit to subdivide, subdivision certification and Statement of Compliance, survey-based applications under the Transfer of Land Act, boundary plans and applications to the Office of Surveyor-General Victoria. Applicants that are not licensed surveyors can create, submit and manage planning permits to subdivide only.
- **Responsible Authorities:** Receive, manage, refer and approve applications and make key decisions including issuing planning permits, certifications and Statements of Compliance.
- **Referral Authorities:** Receive referrals, request further information and consent to referrals.
- **Lodging Party:** Create and electronically lodge Subdivision Act applications with Land Use Victoria.
- **The public:** View basic information about an application and lodge objections to applications which have been advertised in SPEAR.

### How can I register to use SPEAR?

The SPEAR system is being used by all Victorian councils. Applicants and referral authorities wishing to use SPEAR should go to the 'Register' section of the SPEAR website and follow the relevant instructions for the organisation type. Lodging parties wishing to use SPEAR should go to the 'Lodging Parties' section of the SPEAR website and select 'How

do I get started?'. No registration is required by members of the public wishing to view applications, however those wishing to lodge an online objection must register.

For more information about the registration process, go to: [www.spear.land.vic.gov.au>About>About the Application>Register](http://www.spear.land.vic.gov.au>About>About the Application>Register)

### **How much does it cost?**

There is no charge to use the SPEAR system, however licensed surveyors and some council and lodging party users will be required to purchase digital certificates in order to digitally sign electronic documents and key decisions.

For digital certificate pricing, go to: <https://symantec-gatekeeper.com.au/price>

### **What type of planning permit application can be lodged through SPEAR?**

Only the subdivision planning permit can be submitted in SPEAR, provided the Responsible Authority is accepting planning permit applications.

For a complete list of Responsible Authorities and their current application preferences, go to: [www.spear.land.vic.gov.au>About>Who is using SPEAR>Listing of Registered Users](http://www.spear.land.vic.gov.au>About>Who is using SPEAR>Listing of Registered Users)

### **Who will be able to view objections?**

Objections made through SPEAR will be viewable by the Responsible Authority and other parties involved in a particular application.

### **What are the benefits of using SPEAR?**

There are many benefits to SPEAR, notably, an increased transparency in the application approval process, improved access to all application documents, and a standardised approach to submissions across different councils.

For a more detailed list of benefits go to: [www.spear.land.vic.gov.au>About>What is SPEAR>The Benefits](http://www.spear.land.vic.gov.au>About>What is SPEAR>The Benefits)

### **Is SPEAR mandatory?**

No. The use of SPEAR is entirely voluntary. Some organisations may still choose to process applications in paper, however they will not experience the many benefits SPEAR offers including transparency, time savings and application tracking.

### **Do I need a digital certificate to use SPEAR?**

Licensed surveyors and some council and lodging party users will be required to purchase digital certificates in order to digitally sign some documents and key decisions.

Licensed surveyors are required to digitally sign/certify the following:

- Plan of subdivision (or other plan type)
- Abstract of Field Records
- Supplementary Abstract of Field Records
- Surveyors Report
- Advice by Licensed Surveyor (Form 13)

Responsible Authority (delegated users) are required to digitally sign/certify the following:

- Planning permit decision - grant, refuse, notice of decision
- Certification/re-certification of a plan of subdivision
- Statement of Compliance

Lodging Party users are required to digitally sign/certify the following:

- Land Use Victoria application form
- Owners Corporation OC1, OC2 & OC5 documents (if applicable)

### **What format will SPEAR documents be in?**

PDF is the primary file type accepted in the system for all application documents, including the plan. Some actions in SPEAR may allow the user to enter free text on screen (this information will be converted to PDF and made available from the Details screen for others to view).

SPEAR also accepts digital subdivision plans in ePlan (xml) format from ePlan enabled surveying firms or CAD (dwg, dxf, dgn) format from surveying firms not enabled for ePlan. This improves the collection of data available to Vicmap.

SPEAR also accepts spreadsheets in Excel (xlsx) format for certain document types such as new street addressing and Owners Corporation schedules.

### **Can I integrate my current system with SPEAR?**

SPEAR offers an A2A option (Application to Application) which allows web services to interact directly with an organisation's core system. If utilised, a user's system can retrieve and populate data from SPEAR applications and, in some cases, provide referral responses to applications. There is no cost to use this SPEAR service, but the developer of the core system may levy a charge on an organisation for making the necessary changes to the system.

### **Does SPEAR or the Responsible Authority store data and application documents?**

SPEAR holds copies of data for efficiency reasons. Ownership and responsibility for the application still rests with the Responsible Authority and relevant stakeholders. They are each required to maintain their own records for an application as they currently do.

### **Who will be able to view applications once they have been lodged?**

All parties to a SPEAR application, including the Responsible Authority and referral authorities, will be able to view the entire application.

The public are able to view basic information about the application at any time, including the submission date, property address, Responsible Authority, application type, SPEAR reference number and application status. Additional documents may be made available by the Responsible Authority during the advertised period.

To access the public search, go to: [www.spear.land.vic.gov.au](http://www.spear.land.vic.gov.au)>Search current SPEAR applications

In addition to this, applicants can also invite a third party (such as a client) as a guest to view one or more SPEAR applications.

For more information about guest access go to: [www.spear.land.vic.gov.au](http://www.spear.land.vic.gov.au)>Public and Other Users>Guests

### **Can application fees be paid online?**

Yes. SPEAR provides a secure payment gateway which allows applicants (and their guests) to make payments directly to Responsible Authorities electing to accept payments through SPEAR. Multiple payments per application can be received including statutory fees, advertising fees, inspection fees and other fees (e.g. public open space contributions).

For Responsible Authorities not accepting payments in SPEAR, application fees need to be paid outside of SPEAR using current payment methods. Regardless of the payment method chosen, invoices and payments can be recorded within SPEAR.

### **Can a copy of title be purchased from within SPEAR?**

No. The copy of title needs to be purchased via current means (i.e. relevant broker) then saved locally, before being uploaded into SPEAR to support a new application.

### **Where can I get further information?**

For further information about the SPEAR System, please visit the SPEAR website at [www.spear.land.vic.gov.au](http://www.spear.land.vic.gov.au) or contact the SPEAR Service Desk on (03) 8636 3049 or email [spear.info@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:spear.info@delwp.vic.gov.au)