



Protecting Privacy in the Register of Land - Consultation

Submission by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV)

July 2026

About the Real Estate Institute of Victoria

The Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Department of Transport and Planning's consultation, *Protecting Your Privacy in the Register of Land*.

The REIV is Victoria's peak professional association for the real estate sector. Established in 1936, the Institute represents more than 7,000 real estate professionals and over 2,000 agencies across the state. The REIV advocates for policies that support a transparent, efficient and trusted property market while promoting professional standards that benefit Victorian consumers and communities.

The REIV recognises the critical role of the Victorian Register of Land in supporting property ownership, investment, financing and conveyancing activity. The Register provides certainty of title, enables efficient property transactions and contributes significantly to confidence in Victoria's property market.

At the same time, the REIV acknowledges growing community expectations regarding privacy and the need to consider appropriate safeguards for individuals whose personal information may give rise to legitimate privacy, safety or security concerns.



Executive Summary

Victoria's land titles system is widely regarded as a trusted and authoritative source of information regarding interests in land. Open access to title information underpins property transactions, lending decisions, estate administration, legal proceedings and a range of other legitimate activities.

The REIV considers that any reforms should preserve these fundamental purposes while recognising that some individuals may have genuine concerns about personal safety, family violence, stalking, harassment or other circumstances that warrant additional privacy protections.

The challenge is therefore not whether privacy protections should exist, but how they can be implemented without undermining the efficiency and certainty that users of the land titles system rely upon.

The REIV supports maintaining the integrity, reliability and accessibility of the Victorian Register of Land while introducing targeted privacy protections for individuals with legitimate privacy concerns.

The REIV:

- Supports the Department's view that there should be mechanisms available where disclosure of information would unreasonably prejudice an individual's privacy, safety, security or legitimate interests.
- Does not support the removal of the name search function from the Land Index, as this would significantly impact legitimate users and reduce efficiency across the property, legal and financial sectors.
- Supports Option 3, which provides for suppression of information upon application while preserving the overall integrity and functionality of the Register.
- Recommends ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the suppression framework to ensure it continues to balance privacy objectives with the public interest in a transparent and reliable land titles system.



Consultation Response

Option 1 – Do Nothing

REIV Position : The REIV does not support Option 1.

While unrestricted access to information maintains the current functionality of the Register, this approach does not adequately respond to evolving community expectations regarding privacy nor address the needs of individuals facing genuine safety or security risks.

The REIV recognises that there are circumstances where unrestricted access to personal information may expose individuals to unacceptable risks. These concerns should be addressed through proportionate and carefully designed safeguards.

The REIV agrees with the Department's view that protections should be available where disclosure would unreasonably prejudice the privacy, safety, security or legitimate interests of a vendor or purchaser.

Option 2 – Remove the Name Search Function

REIV Position: The REIV does not support Option 2.

The name search function serves many important and legitimate purposes across the property, legal and financial sectors. It is routinely used by:

- Real estate professionals;
- Conveyancers;
- Legal practitioners;
- Financial institutions;
- Executors and administrators of estates; and
- Other parties involved in property transactions and due diligence activities.

Removing the function would create significant inefficiencies and increase administrative costs for legitimate users without fully addressing privacy concerns.

Importantly, the removal of name searching would not eliminate access to ownership information where alternative property identifiers are available. Accordingly, the proposed measure would impose substantial operational impacts while delivering only limited additional privacy protection.

The REIV considers that Option 2 would reduce transparency and create unnecessary barriers to legitimate land and property transactions.



Option 3 – Suppression of Information on Application

REIV Position: The REIV supports Option 3.

The REIV considers Option 3 provides the most appropriate balance between protecting individual privacy and maintaining the integrity and functionality of the Register.

The proposal would allow individuals to suppress their details from name and street-address based searches while preserving access to title information through other established searching mechanisms. This ensures that the Register remains a trusted source of property information while providing an additional layer of protection for individuals who seek privacy safeguards.

The REIV supports the Department's proposed approach because it:

- Provides meaningful privacy protections for individuals;
- Preserves the integrity and reliability of the Register;
- Maintains access to title information where legitimate property identifiers are known;
- Minimises disruption to property transactions and professional users of the Register; and
- Avoids undermining confidence in Victoria's land titles system.

Additional Recommendations

While supporting Option 3, the REIV recommends that the Department monitor implementation outcomes and periodically review the operation of the suppression framework.

In particular, if there is a significant increase in suppression applications over time, a review should be undertaken to ensure the system continues to strike an appropriate balance between privacy protections and the broader public interest in an accessible and reliable Register.

The REIV further recommends that:

- Suppression be attached to the individual applicant rather than being limited by time;
- Suppression apply only to Land Index search functions and not to the Register itself;
- Reapplication only be necessary where a suppression has been removed following a lawful application by an authorised Electronic Lodgement Network (ELN) subscriber or other approved process, and
- Where suppression is lifted, the impacted individuals should be advised before this comes into effect.

These measures would support administrative efficiency while ensuring privacy protections remain effective and practical.



Conclusion

The REIV supports reforms that strengthen privacy protections for individuals while preserving the integrity, transparency and functionality of Victoria's land titles system.

The REIV does not support retaining the status quo without additional protections, nor does it support removing the name search function in its entirety. The Institute considers Option 3 to be the most balanced and proportionate response to the issues identified in the consultation paper.

The REIV welcomes ongoing engagement with the Department of Transport and Planning as these reforms are developed and implemented.

The REIV would be pleased to discuss this submission further.

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Submission prepared in response to the Victorian Government consultation: Protecting Privacy in the Register of Land.