



**SUBURBAN  
RAIL LOOP**

# **SRL East Business Support Guidelines**

March 2023

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## **Verification statement**

Nation Partners Pty Ltd, in its capacity as Independent Environmental Auditor (IEA) for Suburban Rail Loop East (SRL East) (the Project) pursuant to the Environmental Management Framework (EMF) endorsed by the Minister for Environment and Climate Action, verifies that the SRLA document, Business Support Guidelines (Document #: SRLA 1634336408-325461, Revision A.3, Dated 03 February 2023) complies with the conditions of the SRL approvals including the EMF, Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs), Urban Design Strategy (UDS) and Public Open Space Framework (POSF) (as applicable to the verified document).

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Project context

Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the future liveability, productivity and connectivity of Melbourne. The 90-kilometre rail line will link every major rail service from the Frankston Line to the Werribee Line, via Melbourne Airport, better connecting Victorians to jobs, retail, education, health services and each other.

SRL will be delivered progressively, with SRL East between Cheltenham and Box Hill, connecting growing health, education, retail and employment precincts in Melbourne's east and south east.

SRL East (the Project) will deliver 26-kilometre twin tunnels and six new underground stations at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill. A new stabling facility will be located in Heatherton near the start of the line to stable and maintain SRL's next generation energy efficient trains.

While SRL East will ultimately deliver many benefits for businesses, particularly in the vicinity of the new stations, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) recognises that the construction of the rail infrastructure has the potential for adverse impacts of a temporary nature on businesses close to construction activities.

Impacts may include:

- (1) Changes to amenity, such as noise, dust, vibration or lighting
- (2) Changes to functionality of business equipment, e.g. electromagnetic interference (EMI)
- (3) Street closures and changes to traffic conditions, car parking and property access
- (4) Loss of visibility due to site fencing/hoarding or construction vehicles
- (5) Loss of customers such as passing pedestrian traffic due to restricted access.

SRLA seeks to address these potential impacts by implementing the SRL East Environmental Management Framework (EMF) and related Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) that define environmental and social outcomes that must be achieved during the design, construction and operation phases of SRL East.

Compliance with EPRs as part of approvals for the Project will be monitored by the Independent Environmental Auditor (IEA) and enforced through contractual requirements for delivery and operation of SRL East.

## 1.2. Purpose

The purpose of the SRL East Business Support Guidelines (these Guidelines) is to provide a framework for SRLA and its contractors to address residual impacts on businesses so far as reasonably practicable and appropriate.

These Guidelines refer to on-site and off-site mitigation and management measures. For clarity, the term on-site relates to 'at the source' measures for construction equipment, vehicles and sites, whereas off-site measures are targeted 'at the receiver' and are available to specific businesses.

On-site mitigation measures will be explored and adopted where reasonably practicable, especially for outside of normal working hours, with reference to the EPA Publication 1834: *Civil construction, building and demolition guide* (November 2020).

Due to the scale, duration and variable nature of the construction works during the construction phase of SRL East, and the need for some construction work to be undertaken outside normal working hours (7am-6pm on Monday to Friday and 7am-1pm on Saturday), residual impacts on businesses may occur. Residual impacts will be addressed through engagement and the implementation of specific off-site support measures.

These Guidelines outline proactive measures and support services that SRLA and its contractors may deliver to support businesses that experience disruption during and only as a result of construction of SRL East.

These Guidelines do not:

- (1) Contemplate or provide for direct monetary support for individual businesses in the form of financial compensation
- (2) Create (nor should be interpreted as creating) expectation or entitlement for any particular type of support specified in these Guidelines to be provided to any individual business.

These Guidelines are intended to complement Construction Environmental Management Plans and Transport Management Plans developed by the appointed contractors outlining construction methods and transport changes required to facilitate the delivery of the Project.

### **1.3. Scope**

These Guidelines implement the requirements of the EMF and relevant EPRs for Business (B) support, in particular:

- EPR B3 – to prepare an overarching Business Disruption Mitigation Framework (BDMF) and implement Business Disruption Mitigation Plans and develop and implement localised Business Disruption Mitigation Plans (BDMPs) that comply with the BDMF and Business Support Guidelines.
- EPR B4 – to develop and implement tailored and proactive engagement with trader associations and businesses affected by construction, as part of the Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plans (CSEPs) developed for EPR Social and Community (SC) 2.

Figure 1 outlines relationship between the BDMF, these Guidelines and other relevant documents.

These Guidelines apply to commercial businesses (such as retail, industrial, corporation, LLC, or sole proprietorship) and non-commercial and non-residential entities (such as volunteer groups, not-for-profit organisations, schools, universities, hospitals and churches), whose properties are not required for the Project, but which may be adversely impacted due to SRL East construction works.

These Guidelines do not apply to:

- (1) Major events, festivals and community-based events, and
- (2) Residential properties which are covered in the SRL East Residential Support Guidelines.

These Guidelines do not:

- (3) Preclude the provision of additional tailored support to commercial businesses or non-commercial entities, of any kind, on a case-by-case basis.

These Guidelines will be in effect for the duration of SRL East construction, commencing with Initial Works and concluding with completion of the construction of SRL East rail infrastructure.

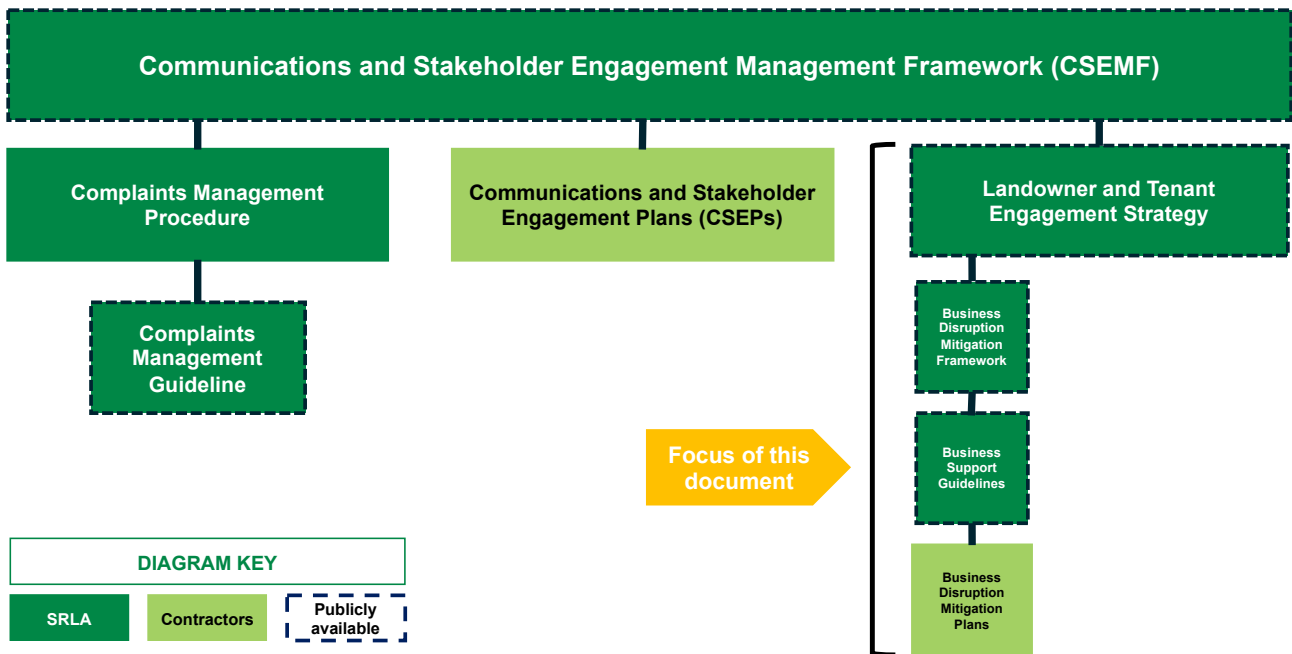


Figure 1: Related guidelines, plans and documents for SRL East

## 2. Engagement and support measures

### 2.1. Engagement measures

The SRL East Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Management Framework (CSEMF) outlines tools and techniques SRLA and its contractors will use to communicate and engage with communities and stakeholders, in line with best practice engagement outlined by the IAP2. Section 7 of the CSEMF outlines project-wide and precinct-based tools and techniques as well as tailored approaches for diverse groups.

Engagement measures outlined in this section of the Guidelines are based on the CSEMF and set out minimum requirements for SRL East contractors when engaging with businesses and offering support measures.

- (1) **Works notifications** – used to disseminate advance information about the works to businesses and to provide early warning of high impact activities (notifications could be provided electronically or in hard copy).
- (2) **SMS notifications** – as an adjunct to the works notifications.
- (3) **Individual meetings/briefings and doorknocks** – used to inform businesses directly about the anticipated impacts and the mitigation measures being implemented.
- (4) **Phone calls** – used to inform businesses directly about the anticipated impacts and the mitigation measures being implemented.
- (5) **Case management** – to provide an additional level of support for businesses that are significantly impacted over an extended period, including a single point of contact and regular, tailored engagement.
- (6) **Local government engagement** – regular engagement with relevant councils to help inform management of business impacts.

Support for business owners and operators from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds will be included in communication and engagement activities using interpreters for discussions carried via phone calls, meetings and doorknocks, and translation of works notifications and works update materials as required.

## 2.2. Support measures

The support measures relevant to each site to be applied by SRL East contractors under these Guidelines, are described in this section. SRLA may also choose to apply some or all of these measures in partnership with, or in addition to, its contractors.

- (1) **Promotion** – a range of marketing and promotional activities to encourage awareness and patronage of businesses located in proximity to construction sites. Examples include advertising, flyers, online and social media promotion (including digital marketing campaigns with a destination marketing and retail attraction focus), digital and physical wayfinding, discounts, special offers, incentives and competitions for local shoppers and consumers, and provision of alternative business car parking if access or use of property has been changed as a result of works.
- (2) **Activation** – activation of an area to create a unique experience that encourages patronage of businesses located in proximity to construction sites. Examples include mobile stores, pop-ups, window displays (promoting local products), street fairs and street art, creative use of construction infrastructure and hoarding, community celebrations, events and giveaways aligned to milestones (e.g. station precinct works) that utilise local businesses (free coffee voucher from participating cafes) and leveraging existing festivals or theme based/holiday events (e.g. lunar new celebration, Eid, Easter).
- (3) **Partnerships** – opportunities for SRLA and its appointed contractor/s to partner with local councils, trader groups and associations, events, festivals and tourism organisations to raise awareness of businesses and encourage patronage, seek opportunities for co-sponsorship or in-kind support or encourage businesses to apply for grants. SRLA may also look to partner with councils on street wide and precinct enhancement programs such as precinct seating, greening of public spaces (to encourage outdoor dining and gathering) and community tree planting.
- (4) **Upskilling** – opportunities for businesses to participate in educational and support programs run by organisations including Small Business Victoria and local councils. These programs support businesses through skills development (such as online and digital commerce), business mentoring, succession planning and marketing.
- (5) **Business plans** – opportunities for businesses to develop a Business Plan prior to construction activities commencing. This opportunity is provided to improve understanding of a business and to assist in ensuring that the appropriate level of business support measures are provided. Where appropriate, support in preparing a financial baseline may form part of the Business Plan development process. The process for developing business plans will be through a case management approach allowing it to be tailored to different types of businesses.
- (6) **Financial baselines** – offers to businesses to prepare a financial baseline prior to construction commencing to assist in assessing the impacts of construction on business activity.
- (7) **Targeted or bespoke support** may be offered to highly impacted and disrupted businesses, with this additional level of assistance to include practical measures such as access to financial planning services and/or assistance, individual business signage and canopy replacement, marketing (e.g. business cards, social media), window washing and footpath cleaning.

SRL East contractors will be required to monitor business activity (including via surveys) prior to construction commencing and undertake regular inspections of works and annual surveys of affected businesses. This will help assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures in place and proactively determine whether further mitigation or support measures are required for affected businesses.

SRLA will also undertake inspections to monitor compliance with these Guidelines, as relevant. Contractors will regularly report to SRLA on the delivery and uptake of mitigation and support measures.



## 3. Eligibility

### 3.1. Criteria

One or more business support measures described in Section 2.3 will be offered to businesses if they are identified by SRLA and its appointed contractor/s as being located in areas where construction is likely to result in disruption to business activity, based on the criteria described in this section.

SRL East has also been declared a major transport project under section 95 of the *Major Transport Projects Facilitation (MTPF) Act 2009* for the purposes of project delivery with gazetted maps published on the SRL website showing the designated Project Area.

- (1) **In the designated Project Area**
  - a. Directly impacted businesses **within the designated Project Area** in close proximity to construction sites where construction activity is likely to or does have an impact on visibility, amenity, access, on-site operations and equipment use, and customers.
  - b. **Other businesses located within the designated Project Area** but not in close proximity to construction activity, that nevertheless will be impacted by SRL East construction activities.
- (2) **In the Eligibility Zone.** An Eligibility Zone may be applied for businesses outside of the designated Project Area. The extent of this zone will be determined by the lead contractor, with input and agreement from SRLA, based on the contractor's analysis of the methodology, program and timing of proposed construction works. The Eligibility Zone may change through construction phases.
- (3) **Businesses that are outside the designated Project Area and the Eligibility Zone.** Businesses that request business support measures and are able to provide persuasive and probative evidence that SRL East construction activities have impacted the business.

## 4. Implementation

SRL East contractors are responsible for implementing support measures, with strong oversight and management from SRLA, in accordance with the criteria set out in these Guidelines and in line with the BDMF and EPRs B3 and B4.

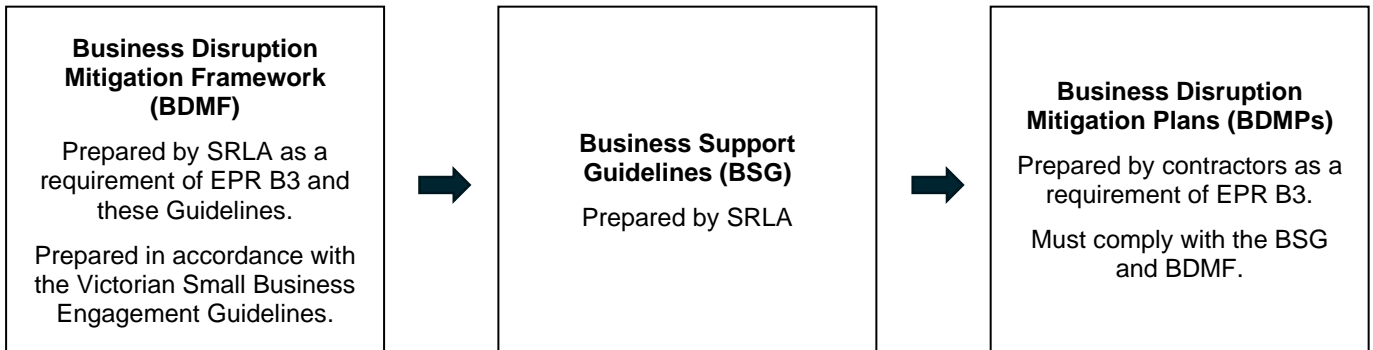
Contractors will be required to develop and implement BDMPs to manage impacts to businesses and proactively engage with businesses within the designated Project Area and Eligibility Zone throughout construction of the Project.

For other businesses, the steps described in Section 4.1 will only be applied to businesses which satisfy the criteria in Section 3.1 (3).

EPR B3 outlines specific requirements for the BDMPs to address with the inclusion of specific measures for supporting affected businesses in addition to the implementation of noise, vibration, EMI, air quality, urban design, traffic and social impact related EPRs.

The relationship of these Guidelines to the BDMF and BDMPs is set out in Figure 2.





**Figure 2: Relationship between Business Support Guidelines, Business Disruption Mitigation Framework and Business Disruption Mitigation Plans**

## 4.1. Tailored and proactive business engagement

EPR B4 outlines specific requirements for SRLA and its contractors to develop and implement a tailored and proactive approach to engaging with trader associations and businesses affected by construction, as part of the CSEPs developed for EPR SC2. Relevant measures and activities are outlined in this section.

### 4.1.1. Overall approach

In setting out SRLA and its contractors will be required to engage with businesses across the alignment throughout the planning and delivery of SRL East.

To facilitate this, SRLA will use the following channels to engage with businesses:

- (1) SRLA Project Information Line (1800 105 105) and Interpreter Line (03 9209 0147) and the enquiries email at [contact@srla.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@srla.vic.gov.au).
- (2) SRLA Landowner and Business Support team as a dedicated point of contact via the Project Information Line and Interpreter Line and via the contact email.
- (3) Dedicated business liaison managers for Clayton, Glen Waverley and Box Hill to enable businesses to overcome detrimental effects on business health.
- (4) Regular SRL East Project e-News and hard copy newsletters, including regular (digital or hard copy) Trader Updates.
- (5) Use of local council networks and established trader-focused channels to communicate project updates to business associations and groups.

In linking EPR B3.2 (b) which notes the need for targeted or ‘bespoke’ support for highly impacted and disrupted business’ contractors will be required to outline their overarching approach in BDMPs as well as develop location-based subplans which outline specific considerations for local businesses and traders and identify core and value-add support measures based on anticipated impacts.

Appointed contractors will be required to undertake the following in consultation with and under direction from SRLA:

- (1) Develop BDMPs.
- (2) Provide case management support to work with businesses likely to be significantly impacted by construction of SRL East.
- (3) Provide six-monthly look-ahead programs of works to businesses.

- (4) Provide advanced notice of upcoming works to businesses within set timeframes.
- (5) Provide on the ground personnel to engage with businesses on construction progress and likely impacts.
- (6) Establish relationships with local councils and other relevant organisations to deliver initiatives to support businesses during construction.
- (7) Leverage existing communications channels to effectively engage with businesses and their customers during construction.

### 4.1.2. Prior to construction

SRLA and/or its contractor/s will engage with businesses to better understand their individual circumstances, identify opportunities to reduce impacts and identify support measures that best suit their business needs.

SRL East contractors will engage with businesses in the vicinity of the proposed works, prior to commencing works, to outline the program of works and expected impacts and to offer support in accordance with these Guidelines. Businesses will also be notified about specific works and expected impacts in advance of works commencing in line with specified notification types and timeframes outlined in Table 1.

Contact details for SRL East contractors (including the Project Information Line) must be provided in the notification so that businesses can contact the contractor in advance of the works commencing, or at any time during the specified works period, to accept support measures on offer and make appropriate arrangements.

**Table 1: SRL East notification timeframes**

	Normal working hours	Out of hours works	Unplanned / emergency works
Notification period in advance of works	5 business days	10 business days	Prior to works commencing or as soon as reasonably practicable
Type of notification	Written notification	Written notification and doorknock	Written notification and doorknock or telephone call

### 4.1.3. During construction

During construction, SRL East contractors will continue to monitor construction impacts, offer support measures to businesses, and assess the effectiveness of those support measures. As outlined in section 6 of the BDMF, contractors will undertake regular inspections of works and annual surveys of affected businesses.

Businesses that have not received support measures prior to the relevant work commencing but that believe their business is adversely impacted by construction may contact the Project Information Line (1800 105 105) or email [contact@srla.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@srla.vic.gov.au).

Table 2 in Section 5 of these Guidelines outlines response timeframes for enquiries and complaints. If businesses are eligible, or can demonstrate other special circumstances, appropriate support measures will be offered.

## 4.2. Process for communicating Guidelines to businesses

A range of communication channels will be used to ensure these Guidelines and eligibility are communicated to businesses. These channels include:

- (1) Direct mail/targeted letterbox drops and face-to-face visits to businesses.
- (2) Email and phone calls to specific businesses.
- (3) Development and distribution of specific print and digital collateral outlining business support initiatives and contact information.
- (4) Business information sessions (face-to-face and online).
- (5) The SRL website ([suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au](http://suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au))
- (6) SRL newsletters (available in hard copy and via e-News and the SRL website).
- (7) Information on websites and through e-communications of key stakeholder organisations such as councils and business trader groups and associations.

## 5. Enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution

If a business operator is not satisfied with the level of support provided by SRLA or its contractors, businesses have options available to resolve the matter.

The primary means of seeking a resolution is to make a complaint to the appointed contractor. Each contractor will be required to have a comprehensive management process under which the contractor will implement service standards and management procedures consistent with the Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002-2014 *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations*.

SRL East contractors will be required to have an internal escalation process for complaints, with escalation to an appropriate senior representative of SRLA if not resolved to the enquirer's satisfaction. If an enquirer remains dissatisfied with the response from the contractor, a business can make a complaint to SRLA, or take the issue through a dispute resolution process. These options are outlined in this section.

### 5.1. Enquiries and complaints handling

SRLA recognises the importance of a fair, transparent and responsive enquiries and complaints management approach. SRLA's complaint management procedures are consistent with Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002: 2014 *Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations* and draw on the Victorian Ombudsman's *Complaints: Good Practice Guide for Public Sector Agencies*.

The following channels have been established for enquiries and complaints:

- (1) **Writing to** Suburban Rail Loop Authority PO Box 24214, Melbourne VIC 3001
- (2) **Contact us** on 1800 105 105 or via email to [contact@srla.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@srla.vic.gov.au)
- (3) **Direct messaging** our social media channels – [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

For stakeholders who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, enquiries and complaints can be made through the National Relay Service on 1800 555 630. Translation and interpreter services for stakeholders that speak a language other than English are available by contacting (03) 9209 0147.

All complaints are treated as high priority. An enquiry is considered ‘high priority’ if it meets certain criteria relating to public safety hazards, security concerns, risks of property damage and construction impacts. All enquiries that do not qualify as ‘high priority’ are to be registered as ‘low priority’.

Response timeframes for enquiries and complaints are outlined in Table 2.

Complaints or disputes referred to external agencies, including the Victorian Ombudsman or the Victorian Small Business Commissioner (VSBC), will be subject to the timeframes of these organisations independent of SRLA and its contractors.

**Table 2: Enquiries and complaints response timeframes**

	1800 #	Email / contact form	Direct / in person	Letter / by mail
<b>“High” priority enquiries and all complaints</b>				
Acknowledgement of all allocated enquiries and complaints received via the 1800 #.	Instant acknowledgment and referral for assessment	N/A	N/A	N/A
Initial response to be provided to stakeholder.	Within 30 minutes	Instant acknowledgment and referral for assessment	Instant acknowledgment and referral for assessment	N/A
Enquiry/complaint resolved. Response recorded in SRL’s online stakeholder management system and closed.	Within two business days	Within two business days	Within two business days	Within two business days*
<p><b>Note:</b> More complex enquiries/complaints may take longer to resolve than the timeframes provided above. In this case, the stakeholder will be provided with regular updates (at least every seven days) until the issue is resolved.</p> <p><i>*If only postal details are available, delivery timeframes will be subject to postal provider services</i></p>				
<b>“Low” priority enquiries</b>				
Enquiry resolved. Response recorded in SRL’s online stakeholder management system and closed.	Within three business days	Within three business days	Within three business days	Within three business days
<p><b>Note:</b> where the enquiry cannot be responded to within three business days, an interim acknowledgement response will be issued with an estimate of when a response will be provided.</p>				

## Victorian Small Business Commissioner dispute resolution

Under the *Small Business Commissioner Act 2003* (Vic), the VSBC provides effective and independent commercial dispute resolution service.

The main way the VSBC resolves commercial disputes is through its mediation service. Mediation is a process conducted by an independent third-party mediator appointed by the VSBC. Mediation provides a timely, convenient and confidential way for parties to resolve disputes. Mediation avoids the uncertainty and cost often associated with court and tribunal proceedings.

SRLA will engage the VSBC to provide an independent mediation service if a business is not satisfied with the level of support provided under the Guidelines by the appointed contractor or SRLA.

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The VSBC will, where appropriate, facilitate dispute resolution between the business and the appointed contractor and/or SRLA.

To assist businesses in this process, SRLA will work with the VSBC to cover the cost of a mediator, as required, and to ensure a senior officer of SRLA is assigned where appropriate to assist in the resolution of a dispute that may be referred on for mediation.