



## Farm Debt Mediation. Talk Can Be Cheaper.

**Under Victorian law, creditors must offer farmers mediation before they can initiate legal proceedings relating to a farm debt.**

Mediation is a quick, low cost way of settling a dispute and avoiding litigation through the Courts.

The Department of Environmental and Primary Industries (DEPI) provides information to farmers about the Farm Debt Mediation Scheme.

The Victorian Small Business Commissioner (VSBC) provides the independent mediation service when the farmer and the creditor agree to mediate. The VSBC provides dispute resolution services for all types of commercial disputes between businesses.



Victorian  
**Small Business  
Commissioner**

*Resolving business disputes*

## WHAT is the Victorian Small Business Commissioner?

The Victorian Small Business Commissioner (VSBC) is an independent statutory role established by the State Government.

A primary activity of the VSBC is to assist businesses resolve disputes with other businesses quickly, and at no or low cost, avoiding litigation.

The VSBC provides mediation services under *the Farm Debt Mediation Act 2011*.

## HOW does the VSBC resolve farm debt disputes?

The VSBC arranges for an independent, expert mediator to sit down with the farmer and the creditor to try to reach terms of settlement relating to the debt, avoiding litigation through the Courts.

Mediations can be held in locations to suit the parties, including regional Victoria.

## WHAT is the chance that mediation will reach a settlement?

- The VSBC mediates over 800 matters each year, covering all types of commercial disputes including farm debt matters.
- Around 80% of matters referred to VSBC mediation are settled. Farm debt mediations have a much higher settlement rate, over 90%.

## WHAT does it cost?

Mediation is low cost. Each party pays a subsidised fee to participate. Visit [www.vsbcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vsbcc.vic.gov.au) for the latest mediation fees.

## WHERE do I find more information?

For information on the Farm Debt Mediation Scheme, contact the DEPI on **136 186** or visit [depi.vic.gov.au/mediation](http://depi.vic.gov.au/mediation)

For information about the VSBC mediation service, or assistance with any type of commercial dispute, contact the VSBC:

**[vsbc.vic.gov.au](http://vsbc.vic.gov.au)**

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Victorian  
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