

*Some key services:*

**Relationship-Building Initiatives (RBIs) – *strengthening workplace relations***

*What is a Relationship-Building Initiative?* An RBI is a carefully structured and independently facilitated process designed to help employers, employees and their representatives review their relationship, identify strengths and weaknesses and set common goals for a more productive future.

*When would this process be used?* An RBI might be conducted to rebuild a relationship damaged by past conflict, or to change a could-do-better relationship into a more productive one. The assistance of professional and impartial facilitators often helps the parties work up together a sharper picture of the state of their relationships, their working environment and of current challenges and opportunities. They can then use this shared analysis to develop a new way forward.

In practice, an RBI is often used to get relations on a sound or new footing before commencing bargaining for the next collective or enterprise agreement.

*How is the process initiated, and then run?* Stakeholder consent to the process is the starting point. The facilitators then meet with the parties, usually separately, to scope the issues and agree the optimum process.

The form of process will vary from case to case, but the idea is promote joint insights into the state of play through some searching analysis combined with a problem-solving approach. A standard initiative would be built around a structured event, with key union/employee and management representatives meeting under independent facilitation over several days at an appropriate venue. There they would engage one another in accordance with a prepared program. The typical outcome would be new understandings and commitments, and an action plan on the way forward, coupled with monitoring and review steps.

In some cases, however, the intervention would not take the shape of a concentrated event but rather a series of structured engagements. The end product would be similar, though: consensus on an action plan for managing change and improving relations.

