

Business structures and access to cash

RAPAD region policy solutions and business innovation for farmers and small businesses

Invitation to participate in a Pilot study

Frequently Asked Questions

The **TC Beirne School of Law** at The University of Queensland (**UQ**), **RAPAD** and **Rural Financial Counselling Services North Queensland – RFCSNQ** have joined forces to conduct a three-year pilot study.

This document helps clients of **RFCSNQ** to decide whether they would like to take part in this pilot study.

What is a pilot study?

A pilot study forms part of a large research project. It operates like a mini version of the large research project. It helps researchers to complete focused research in a particular environment to better understand practical situations. This pilot study is part of a large research project called: *Small Australian firm business structures*.

What is the purpose of the large research project?

To investigate how business decisions and cash flow relate to the business structure of small firms in Australia. The study will develop best practice and policy for small firms in Australia.

What is the purpose of the pilot study?

The three-year pilot study will provide much needed research about farm businesses and small businesses in the RAPAD-region. The researchers will use these valuable insights to develop practical cash flow strategies that will benefit farmers and small businesses in the RAPAD-region. Together, we will use the findings to develop regional economic policies that take into account the geographic location of the RAPAD-region that is dominated by agriculture and small businesses.

Why are you working together to conduct the pilot study in the RAPAD-region?

The partnership between **UQ**, **RAPAD** and **RFCSNQ** provides a comprehensive approach to understanding small business structures, small family firms, family farming, and the unique problems of businesses that experience financial hardship across Central West Queensland that considers our unique economy and the opportunities in our region.

What is in it for me and my business?

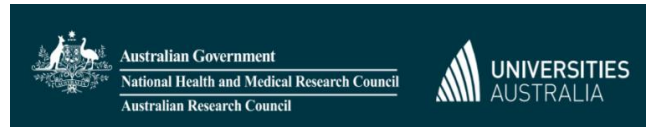
You will get a copy of the results findings. You will benefit from the practical cash flow strategies that the researchers will develop. These strategies meet the specific needs of farmers and small businesses in our region. **RFCSNQ counsellors** will use these strategies to help you and your business.

What is in it for the RAPAD-region?

The research findings will help us to develop integrated business and policy solutions that fit the unique features of the RAPAD-region. We can use the research evidence to state our case. We can add to the national debate about regional development, sustainable agriculture outcomes and small business and family business growth. This is very important as there is very little integrated research available into small firms and small family firms in Australia.

Has the study been independently approved?

Yes. This study was approved by an independent Ethics Committee. This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.



Is there an official ethics certificate for the project?

Yes. Institutional Human Research Ethics Approval Number 2019000030.

If I'm a client of RFCSNQ, does it mean that I'm automatically included in the research?

No. Participation in the pilot study is voluntary. If you want to participate, you must read the easy-to-understand participant information sheet. Then you have to complete and sign the consent form.

What will I have to do if I decide to take part?

Once you have lodged your completed and signed consent form, you will not be required to do anything. If you decide to take part, it means that you give your consent to allow the researchers to read your file with RFCSNQ.

What type of information will the researchers look for in my file?

- The type of business structure you use
- How the cash flow of your business works
- If there are any loans between you and the business
- The impact of the Farm Household Allowance on your circumstances

Will the researchers disclose my name or the name of my business?

Never. You and your business cannot be named unless you give a new written consent for that in advance.

What about my privacy and confidentiality?

The researchers cannot publish or disclose any information that would identify you or your business without your written consent. The researchers cannot discuss you or your business with anyone without your written consent. Just as we safeguard your privacy and ensure confidentiality as a client of RFCSNQ, the researchers are bound by the same laws and by the ethics approval certificate they have to conduct the research.

What can they publish?

The researchers are allowed to include aggregate data in their research output. Aggregate data means overall results and totals. The researchers can only publish their findings if they comply with strict ethics rules and the ethics approval certificate. They can't disclose private or sensitive information about any person or their business.

If they only publish overall results and totals, why go to all the trouble to read my file?

Studying your file during the document analysis helps the researchers to understand how businesses operate practically in our region. They can use these insights to work out what the impact of different business structures are on cash flow, and to develop helpful business strategies that we will share with you. It will also help the researchers to formulate meaningful research questions in the rest of the pilot study.

What should I know about the university conducting the research?

The **TC Beirne School of Law** (UQ) is ranked among the world's top 40 law schools. Its research addresses national and global issues, making a significant and lasting contribution to the understanding and development of law, and its interaction with other fields, and within communities. The UQ Business School and UQ – a research intensive university – are ranked among the world's top 40 business schools and top 50 universities, respectively.

Who are the UQ researchers?

- Dr Thea Voogt, a senior lecturer in law.
- Prof Martie-Louise Verreyne, the Deputy Dean of the UQ Business School.
- Prof Ross Grantham, a senior professor in law.

Will the researchers come to the RAPAD-region to read my file?

Yes. Dr Thea Voogt is already working with us in Longreach. She is committed to being present in our region to conduct the research. She is the person who will read your file, and she will do that at our Longreach office.

Where can I read more about the project?

A more comprehensive pilot study document is available on the RFCSNQ website and on the RAPAD website.

How can I contact the researchers if I have questions?

Dr Thea Voogt

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How can I join the study?

Read the **Document Analysis Participant Information sheet**, and complete and submit the **Consent form** available on the RFCSNQ website: www.rfcsnq.com.au