

Interview invitation: RAPAD region primary producers and business owners

February 2019

Project title

Small Australian firm business structures.

Invitation

My name is Thea Voogt and I am a staff member of the University of Queensland's TC Beirne School of Law. I am currently studying the business structures of small businesses in Australia, together with Professor Ross Grantham of the TC Beirne School of Law and Professor Martie-Louise Verreyne of the UQ Business School. The four business structures we are studying are: sole trader, partnership, company and trust.

As part of this study we will focus on small businesses, primary producers and small family businesses in the RAPAD region of Central West Queensland that include the local government areas of Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Boulia, Diamantina, Longreach and Winton.

We are conducting interviews with participants in these small businesses and small family businesses, as well as with primary producers in the RAPAD region and would like to invite you to participate in this project as you are a small business owner, key participant involved in a small business, or a primary producer.

Please note that participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study investigates how business decisions and cash flow relate to the business structure of small firms in Australia, and to develop best practice and policy for small firms in Australia. Currently there is no institution undertaking integrated research into these issues, and therefore little information is available to politicians and other decision makers that can enable them to shape policy to benefit small businesses and small family businesses. Please note that as researchers, we cannot provide personal, family, emotional and social support and advice.

What are the requirements of participating in the project?

You will be asked to participate in three interviews at a time and place of your convenience. The first interview will take approximately 90 minutes, and second and third interview will take approximately 40 minutes each. Any additional queries or follow-up questions would generally be discussed by phone, where applicable.

Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed so that you have the opportunity to review and verify the transcript prior to any analysis. Once each interview has been conducted, an interview transcript will be provided to you for review and confirmation that the transcription is an accurate account of the interview. The analysis of this data will not start before you have approved each transcript. During the interviews, we will record our general observations in research notes.

During the interviews, we will ask you to share the content of documents related to your business with us as researchers. You may choose to share these during the interviews, or may choose to transmit electronic copies to us in a password protected format, to one email address on a secure email server of the University of Queensland that only the research team has access to. Documents that you transmit to us will be stored in a secure, restricted access database called the 'University of Queensland Research Data Manager'. You may also decline to share the content of documents related to the business, but will still be able to participate by being interviewed. Any additional queries or follow-up questions would generally be discussed by phone, where applicable.

What are the benefits?

Your participation will be a valuable contribution towards this study of small firm business structures. As a participant providing details of the practical aspects of small firm business structures, any findings with respect to the study will be discussed openly with you, and a copy of the final report will be made available to you.

Your participation will also be a valuable contribution to the RAPAD region of Central West Queensland. This study will develop policy solutions and cash flow optimisation strategies that meet the needs of primary producers and town businesses across the RAPAD region. This study will gather important evidence about the business structures of primary producers and small businesses in the RAPAD region.

How will your privacy and business confidentiality be protected?

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality about your business and about you. You will not be identified in any publication or findings report, unless you elect to be identified in the attached consent form. Your business will not be identified in any publication or findings report, unless you elect that the business be identified in the attached consent form. Any concerns regarding private or confidential information will be respected. Data will only be accessible to the researchers, and will be used solely for the purposes of this study. Findings arising from the study may be included in related research papers and journal articles.

How can you join the study?

You may join this study after reading and understanding the information detailed in this document, and signing the consent form to participate in the interviews.

What happens when you withdraw?

You may withdraw from the study at any time before each analysis starts, without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, an oral request to me is sufficient. I will confirm your oral request in an email within seven calendar days. If you withdraw, all relevant audio-recordings, transcripts, observation notes and documents, or parts thereof, will be destroyed and will be excluded from any analysis. The analysis of each transcript, observation note and the documents you shared during an interview starts on the day after you confirmed that the transcription is an accurate account of the interview. The analysis of documents transmitted to us starts on the day after you transmit the documents.

Participant Concerns

If you have any concerns regarding the nature of this project, you should notify me in the first instance. I am the Chief Investigator in this study and my contact details are:

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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. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with the project staff using the contact details above, if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Coordinators on +617 3365 3924 / +617 3443 1656 or email: humanethics@research.uq.edu.au