



RURAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

INCORPORATING RURAL FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE SA/NT

Assisting primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses with **free, independent** and **confidential** support and business analysis



Maybe you've heard of our Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS), but you want to know more about how we can help farming families. We've put together a few Q&As that address some of the common inquiries we receive.

Alternatively, you're welcome to give us a call on 1800 836 211.

What is RFCS and who is it for?

RFCS helps eligible farmers who are in financial difficulty to take action to develop and implement plans to improve their financial position.

This includes farmers, fishers, forest growers and harvesters and owners of small agriculture related rural businesses.

Rural Business Support (RBS) delivers the RFCS in SA and NT with funding from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR), Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and the Department of Primary Industries and Resources Northern Territory.

RBS is one of 12 services delivering the RFCS nationally – Queensland (2), NSW (3), Victoria (4), Tasmania (1) and WA (1).

Will it cost me anything to use RFCS?

Eligible RFCS clients can work with a rural financial counsellor (RFC) at no cost. The service is independent, confidential and professional.

How long can a RFC work with me?

The support is provided for up to three years but is reviewed at least yearly.

Our days are full with keeping on top of things on farm. I don't have time for a trip to town to see a RFC.

We understand that farm life stops for no-one. Our RFCs covered more than 328,000km last year travelling to meet with clients around their kitchen tables.

If you'd rather catch up with one of our team during a trip into town, we have offices across SA – in Ardrossan, Berri, Clare, Magill, Murray Bridge, Naracoorte and Wudinna.

Four out of five RFCS clients have taken action as a result of their counselling.

2017 RFCS client survey

I've had the same accountant for 20 years – I'm happy with the job they're doing. Why should I see a RFC?

A RFC can sit down with you, take a big picture look at your business and discuss some options to improve your financial sustainability that perhaps you haven't thought about before (because, let's face it, you've had your hands and days full with running the farm!).

I'm still unclear on how a RFC can help our business. What will we get out of seeing one?

Our friendly and professional RFCs can help you with:

- Business analysis including long term cash flow and viability
- Meeting with lenders and financial institutions
- Referrals to other service providers
- Preparing for succession planning
- Identifying government assistance eligibility

After your first appointment we'll be able to give you a clear idea of the possible ways we can help.

We've been down like this before and bounced back. "Others are so much worse off than us..."

We hear this so often. Everyone has access to an initial appointment with RFCS to discuss their eligibility for rural financial counselling. Please don't self-assess.

We've worked with hundreds of farming families over 30 years, many of whom have been exactly where you are now. Many have unknowingly ruled themselves out as being eligible for

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“The Rural Financial Counsellor was so willing to help and happy to fit in with our farming and family schedules.”



RFCS help and financial assistance.

RFCS also has information on programs and assistance that may be available to you such as Farm Household Allowance (FHA), drought recovery funds from the SA Country Women's Association and low interest loans through the Rural Investment Corporation (RIC).

Our job is to help you clearly see and understand your financial position, then work with you to develop and implement plans to improve it.

Our bank has told us we've run out of negotiation room – we're facing foreclosure. It's too late for RFCS to help me.

A RFC can help you to deal with lending institutions in relation to applications and contracts with them. We also can support you with processes relating to farm debt mediation.

The Farm Debt Mediation Bill 2018 requires mandatory farm debt mediation to support farmers and provide improved protection and financial security.

This provides a formal structure for producers who find themselves in a situation where debt on their farm – their livelihood and home – has become unmanageable and all other avenues of negotiation with creditors have been exhausted.

Talk to us to find out more.

I overheard a bloke talking about some new low interest loan for farmers. What's this all about?

Our RFCs have up-to-date information from the Federal Government's new central entity, the Regional Investment Corporation (RIC). The RIC provides low interest loans for farmers for farm investment, debt restructuring, operating expenses and drought recovery and preparedness activities.

86% of RFCS clients felt they would be worse off if not for the assistance of RFCS.

2017 RFCS client survey

My family doesn't feel right about receiving government handouts.

Rest assured you're not alone. But sometimes rural families need an extra hand during tough times.

If you've decided to look into Farm Household Allowance (FHA), a RFC can support you with getting your application together. It's important to not self assess and remember, you don't have to be in drought to apply.

FHA provides eligible farmers and their partners with assistance through planning and training for long-term financial improvements as well as

income support for up to four years. Like Newstart Allowance, it's paid fortnightly.

Find out more and claim FHA online at www.humanservices.gov.au/farmhouseholdallowance. Our RFCs can help you complete your application.

It sounds like seeing a RFC could sort out plenty of our problems. What can't they do?

While RFCS can help with farm business matters, there are some areas best left to other service providers such as lawyers, accountants, agronomists and the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

We can't represent you in legal processes, or act as a mediator in farm debt mediation processes.

If a need for emotional counselling is identified, we will refer you to mental health service providers.

We will continue to work with you alongside these other professionals.

How do I contact RFCS?

Please call 1800 836 211, visit ruralbusinesssupport.org.au or email admin@ruralbusinesssupport.org.au.

If you're asked to leave a message, be assured one of our team will be in contact within 48 hours. If you have previously worked with a RFC, you're welcome to call them direct.

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