



# FINANCIAL FUTURE SAVED BY RFCS

Calculation error  
nearly ruined  
generational  
farmers

I have been a proud generational farmer for over 50 years on a 130 year old family farm in central Gippsland. Recent years have been really difficult since the dairy crisis and extreme weather changes. We had been surviving on credit so decided to apply for the Farm Household Allowance (FHA).

My application was rejected. My wife didn't hear back about her's and didn't have the mental energy to follow it up with Centrelink. After years of trying to operate and survive on no income, I couldn't understand why? I was upset and visited my local MP who recommended RFCS Gippsland - saving us from ruin.

Immediately their Rural Financial Counsellor (RFC) assessed that we were eligible for support. They reviewed my FHA application finding I had made a simple calculation error doubling income, reporting profit rather than losses.

I was gutted. The stress building over the years was affecting us personally. I couldn't sleep. I had never felt this way in all my years of farming. Their RFC was concerned about our wellbeing, putting us in touch with support services and a GP. Visiting my Doc has actually helped me feel a little better.

They contacted Centrelink requesting a review of my FHA application, writing a support letter to back me up, and followed up my wife's lost application. She had copies, so the RFC helped her reapply online with a supporting letter and trained her to use the myGov system.

Both our applications were approved with payment back-dated...what a relief! Unfortunately, we couldn't get other drought support being located on the outer fringe of eligible regions, so the time had come to reassess our retirement.

Carrying on with the family farm was always going to be our future, but we also wanted to have freedom to travel and visit family. If we continued farming in these current conditions, we were never going to have the time - or the finances.

After analysing all our options with the RFC, the difficult decision to sell was made clear as we wouldn't be eligible for the pension due to the property value. During this time the RFC continued to help us manage finances.

By retaining the original homestead with some surrounding land and the rest selling very quickly, we achieved financial freedom and kept our family history.