

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling in front of a building. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a light blue shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a white top with a blue pattern. The building behind them has a red sign that says 'POST' and a sign above that says 'CHERRY NEAR HOTEL'.

# OVER- WORKED LIFE BALANCE

Discovering  
opportunity  
out of the  
ashes

Originally from Melbourne, we moved to Buchan after falling in love with the idyllic tree-change lifestyle. We thought it would be a perfect community to retire, so 5 years ago we took the opportunity and purchased the General Store.

This quickly went from the hope of work life balance to working more hours than we had ever done before... and with no reprieve.

We were already exhausted even before the fires devastated our community. Losing some stock and equipment from power outage, we were able to donate what we could, however, being the essential supplier and town's Post Office, we became busier than ever looking after the community and workers helping rebuild.

Working these long hours every day was taking a toll. Financially the business was viable, but not enough to employ a manager as well as support us both. We love this town and business, but for our personal wellbeing, we needed to free up time for ourselves, and therefore became conflicted about selling the business.

When we visited the local bushfire recovery agency, they recommended we contact RFCS Gippsland to discuss financial options. Their Support Officer, while helping us with a Bushfire Concessional Loan to replace damaged equipment, mentioned it might be worth looking into employing a trainee, which would also create an opportunity for a local to begin their career.

We immediately researched, not knowing businesses were eligible to receive support for apprentices and trainees. We employed a local school leaver offering a business management qualification and experience with Aus. Post operations.

She is absolutely wonderful. This was the best thing we could have done. Not only has she bought life back into the business, we now have our own lives back.

We remain proud owners of the store and now have the time to work on building the business while also enjoying the town and people we love... experiencing true work-life balance we dreamed.