

Footy captain a star off field

VFLW's Staunton falls for her aged care clients

Olivia Conder

Most 20-year-olds aren't spending their time helping 95-year-olds with household chores – but Geelong VFLW captain Mel Staunton isn't most 20-year-olds.

Mel Staunton is balancing football training, longboarding competitions and part-time work as a home care assistant for Mercy Health.

Originally from a small town on the NSW south coast, Staunton moved to Victoria in 2024 chasing independence and sporting opportunities.

As she started to build her life in Geelong, Staunton found a role in home care.

"At the start I was just looking for a job to suit my lifestyle," Staunton said.

"The job asked for someone who could clean, cook, be friendly and communicate with older people ... and I thought, yeah, I can do that."

"Once I started meeting the clients, I just loved it."

"They love having someone young come into their homes, someone who brings the energy."

Motivated by her inability to support her own grandparents, Staunton now spends her days off the footy field helping older Australians live independently in their homes.

"My grandparents live in a really rural area and don't get much help," Staunton said.

"I struggle not being able to support them."

"So if I can help someone else's family, that means something."



One of Staunton's clients is June Meaney – a local woman who quickly became more than just a name on a roster.

"June's a good egg," Staunton said.

"From the first visit, we just clicked."

"I stayed back for an extra hour and a half chatting about her husband, who was a soldier. She's such a good storyteller."

Ms Meaney, 95, said she is Staunton's number one fan.

"We have so much in common," Ms Meaney said.

"She is the most motivated, hard working woman I have ever met."

"I want her up in the AFLW."

Like her work as the Geelong VFLW captain, Staunton is hoping to break the stereotypes of young people in the aged care industry.

"It's not a job you hear many 20-year-olds doing, but I love it," Staunton said.

"I don't even see it as work. I come home every day feeling like I've given back. I'd recommend it to anyone."

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Mel Staunton

Mel Staunton is balancing life as captain of the Geelong Cats VFLW and part-time in home care work for Mercy Health with clients like June Meaney. Picture: Alison Wynd