



WOMEN IN HIGH  
PERFORMANCE COACHING

# ASPIRE COACH PROGRAM

*Aspiring to Inspire*



AIS.gov.au



# ASPIRE Coach Program

The ASPIRE Coach Program is a 3-day initiative designed to support the development of women coaches who aspire to enter and thrive in the High Performance (HP) coaching landscape.

This initiative aims to support and enhance the skills of early-career aspiring women coaches by providing opportunities to develop:

- Self-awareness
- Understanding of the HP environment
- Communication and career navigation skills.

## Why ASPIRE?

Insights from the Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) Project reveal significant entry barriers for women coaches, including:

- Limited access to HP coaching pathways
- Unclear role expectations and commitments
- Inadequate remuneration
- Restricted opportunities for professional development

These challenges often lead to early exits from the HP system, preventing long-term career progression.

We are aiming to develop the talent pool at the bottom of the Leaky Pipeline!

## Target group

Women coaches who:

- Have experience and success coaching competitive athletes at the national and state level, and
- Aspire to have a career as a HP coach, and
- Have key capabilities identified as important for an early-career HP coach. These are prioritised as:
  - Continuous learning
  - Self-awareness and emotional intelligence
  - Mission, Vision and Values (Passion)
  - Psychological Safety
  - Understanding the Individual
  - Communication

We will utilise the [AIS HP Coach Capability Framework](#) to support the selection of 30 aspirational women coaches.



*"Looking ahead, I am committed to dedicate more time to the development of my sport and my athletes, guiding them towards their fullest potential. I intend to continue my educational journey, which should never stop, drawing on diverse sources of knowledge to improve my coaching skills."*

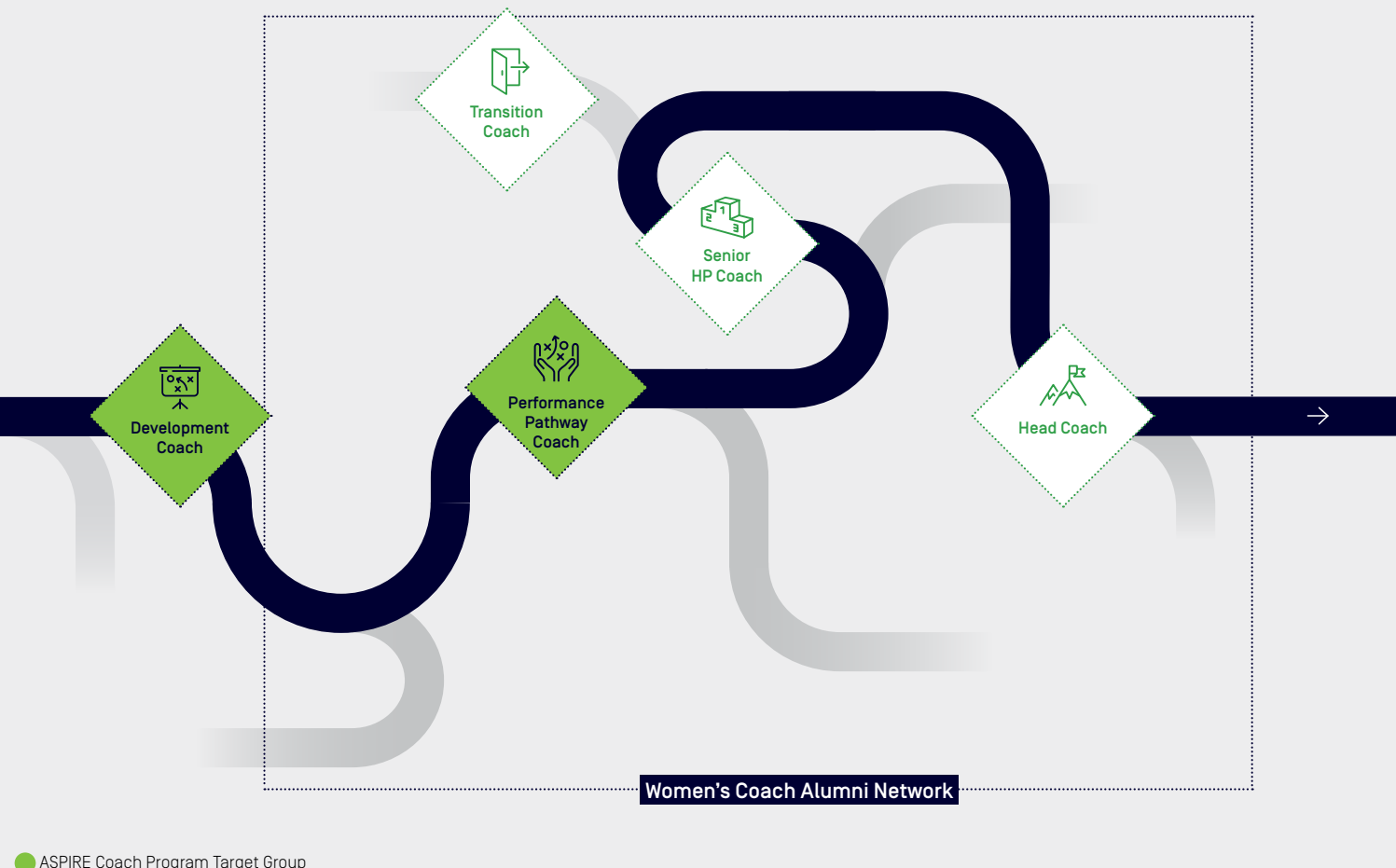
Experiential Learning Program Coach 2024

# The Coaching Pipeline

This program aims to address the systemic barriers that contribute to the “leaky pipeline”—a phenomenon where women coaches face challenges entering and remaining in HP coaching roles.

Take a look at the [WiHPC Leaky Pipeline](#) to understand if you are suitable for this program.

Creating a visible pathway to enable direction and progression is a critical element for every coach!



# Program Overview

The ASPIRE Coach Program will focus on developing the knowledge and competencies of Australia's early-career women coaches specific to:

- Awareness and understanding of self
- Understanding the HP landscape regarding role clarity, expectations, available development resources and networks
- Development of communication and navigational skills to support entry into the HP environment.

The program has been co-designed by women coaches and will be delivered by a leadership team of women coaches.

The program will include:

- **Co-facilitated delivery** with a women coach leadership team
- **1 x Virtual meeting** prior to the Workshop
- **2 x Preparation Tasks** (CoachDISC Profile and AIS HP Coach Self Evaluation Tool)
- **1 x 3-day face-to-face** learning experience
- **Access to people and experiences** who will share their lived experiences and journeys to meet program needs
- **3-4 Virtual sessions** in small groups in the following 6 to 12 months

## Delivery Principles



### Connection and belonging

Intentional learning design and delivery to optimise psychological safety and storytelling through values-based facilitation.



### Practical application

Learning is relevant, practical and applied to the early-career coach in HP.



### Community

Development of a sense of community, belonging and a network of support.



### Inclusive and diverse

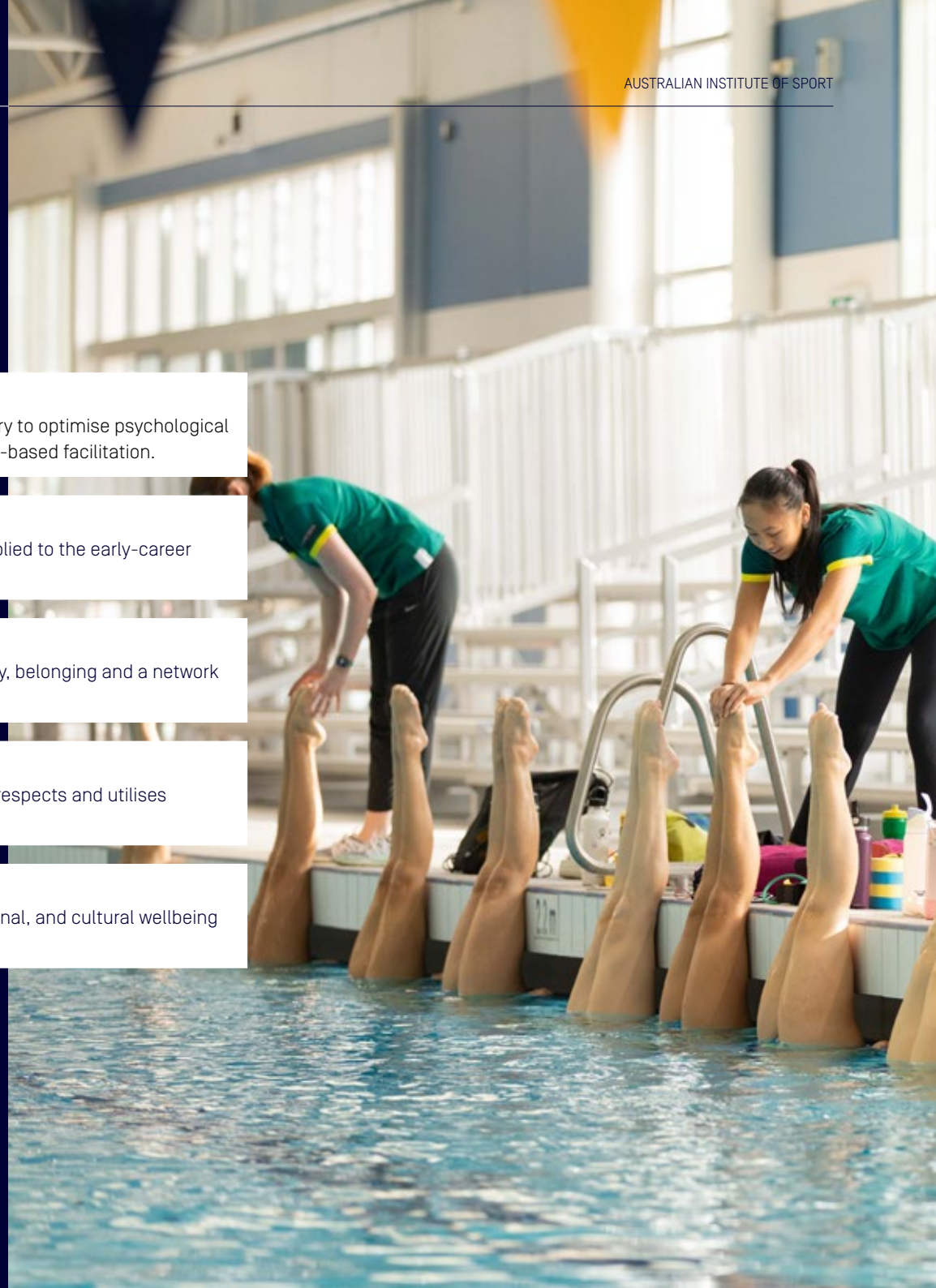
Foster an inclusive environment that respects and utilises diverse experiences and viewpoints.



### Self-care focused

Prioritise the physical, mental, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of coaches and athletes.

Participants in the ASPIRE Coach Program may be invited to join a research project following the workshop to explore additional learning and development support.







### Quick Program Facts



# 30

A COHORT OF UP TO  
30 WOMEN COACHES



# 3

**DAY PROGRAM**

Face-to-face, with preparation  
tasks and an online meeting



**13-15  
OCT  
2025**



#### INCLUSIONS

Individual CoachDISC Profile,  
AIS HP Coach Self Evaluation  
Tool, Accommodation, 3-day  
learning experience and follow  
up network activities.



# AIS

#### LOCATION

Australian Institute of Sport,  
Canberra



#### TRAVEL COSTS

Airfares and / or ground  
transport is at the expense of  
the participant



*"I'd like an opportunity to shadow and be exposed to international comps for confidence and experience."*

**Anonymous Coach**

# Selection Criteria

- Identify as a female aged 18 years and over.
- Is an Australian citizen or has been granted permanent residence status.
- Has coached at the State or National level within a funded HP Sport, with evidence of success at this level.
- Has aspirations to coach at the HP level.
- Is willing to engage in all facets of the ASPIRE Program, including the CoachDISC profile, Self Evaluation Tool and all learning activities.
- Can demonstrate and articulate the following capabilities through the application process:
  - Continuous learning
  - Self-awareness and emotional intelligence
  - Mission, Vision and Values (Passion)
  - Psychological Safety
  - Understanding the Individual
  - Communication
- Has a demonstrated commitment to ongoing training and development (i.e. continuous learner).
- Is available to attend the ASPIRE Coach Program on 13-15 October 2025 in Canberra.



*"Interacting with other coaches proved to be profoundly beneficial. Such exchanges offered me reassurance and a sense of community, highlighting the common challenges we face; it makes us stronger, boosts our confidence, and fuels our desire to make a meaningful difference."*

Experiential Learning Program Coach 2024

## Selection notes

**Applications open:** 23 June 2025

**Applications close:** 4 August 2025

**The coach will be required to submit their own application and NSO/Ds and SSO/Ds are recommended to support nominations from coaches.**

Open information sessions will be conducted to support applicants through this process. It is highly recommended to attend one of these sessions:

- Thursday 10 July 2025  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm AEST

**OR**

- Tuesday 15 July 2025  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm AEST

**OR**

- Thursday 24 July 2025  
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm AEST

The application process will involve a completing:

- Application letter
- Video submission
- Character reference

You are encouraged to reach out to the HP Coach Development Team with any questions you may have at [hpcachdevelopment@ausport.gov.au](mailto:hpcachdevelopment@ausport.gov.au)

**If you do not think you might be eligible, we encourage you to apply anyway.**





# What can you expect at the workshop?

- ✓ A welcoming, supportive environment
- ✓ A team of women coach facilitators and a network of HP coaches to enhance your learning
- ✓ Exposure to coach and management experts working within the HP industry
- ✓ A participant cohort of like-minded women coaches
- ✓ Development of a supportive network to enable your progress
- ✓ Deepen your understanding of self
- ✓ Awareness of skills and requirements to navigate entry into HP coaching



*"The first 2-3 years are critical – Initial experiences are so important, and getting adequate support, mentoring and demonstrating pathways for progression."*

**Anonymous Coach**

## What does the workshop look like?

### DAY 1

#### Building Connections

Understanding self through CoachDISC profile

Exploring the AIS and HP Landscape

### DAY 2

Navigating the HP coaching landscape

Communication for Empowerment

The learning and development landscape in HP

### DAY 3

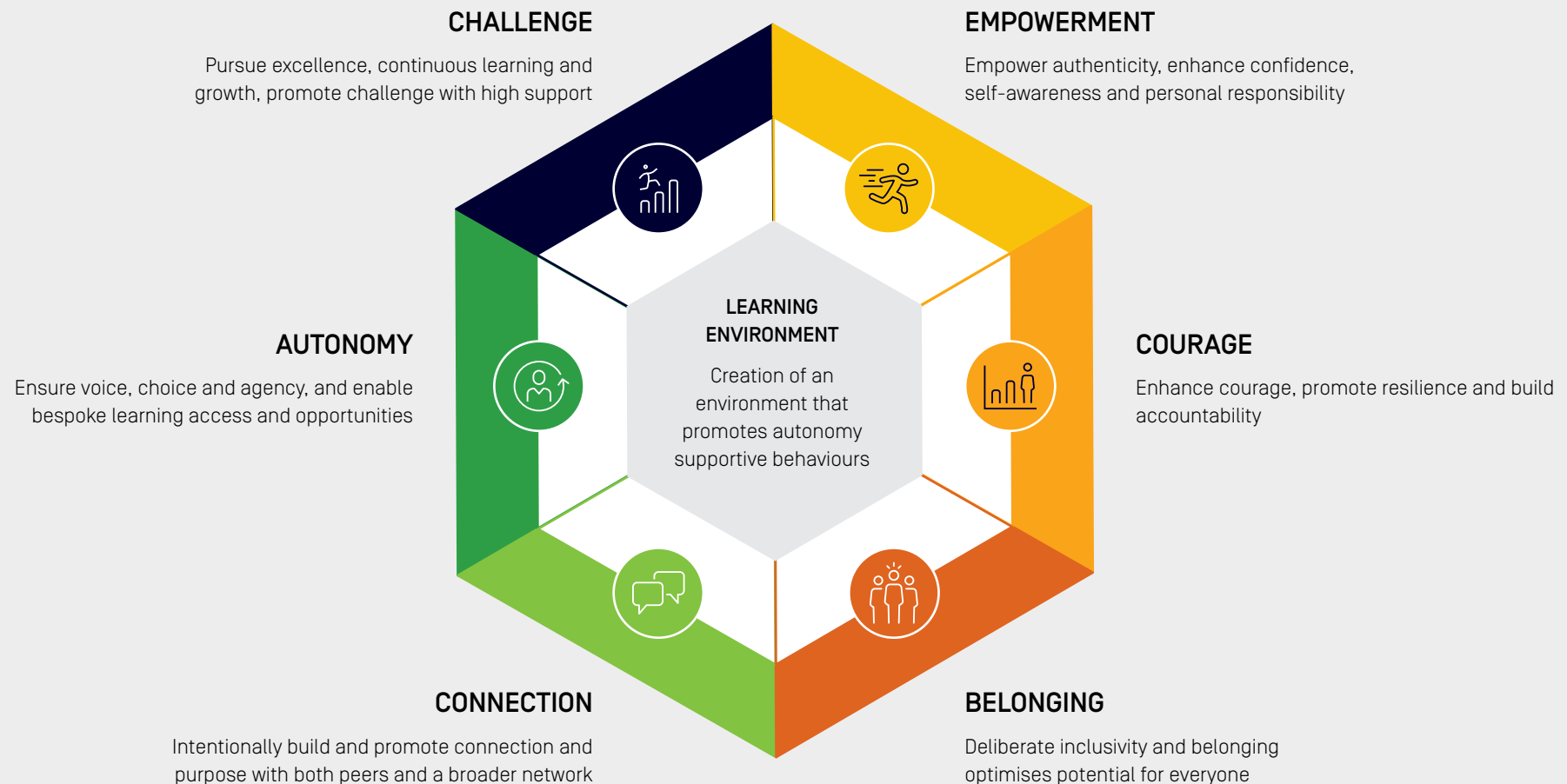
Performance Wellbeing

Building connections and networks

Stepping into challenges



# Our Principles to optimise the learning experience!





# FAQs

## How do I know if I am eligible?

First, check the eligibility requirements. Take some time to look at the [WiHPC Leaky Pipeline](#) to see the different coaches' stories that may assist you. If in doubt, apply!

## What will I need to pay?

You will need to organise your own travel to the AIS in Canberra, and this is at your own expense. You will NOT need to pay for the course itself. We suggest you seek potential grants / support from your Club, State or National Organisation for support.

## What about accommodation? What if I need to arrive the day before?

Accommodation for 2 nights is included in the program costs. If you need to arrive a day earlier for travel reasons, we can arrange an additional night's accommodation – subject to availability.

## How do I know if my coaching experience is sufficient / suitable to apply?

You need to be coaching or have coached at the State or National level. We will ask you to identify your top 3 results of your athletes over the past 18 months and show evidence of this. It does not matter about your years of coaching experience, what matters is your intention to coach in the HP landscape.

## I have just finished competing as an athlete and I am keen to explore coaching. Am I eligible to apply?

You need to be coaching or have coached at the State or National level. It does not matter how long you have been coaching, only that you have evidence of some results / success at this level.

## Who should complete my character reference? Do they need to be a coach?

You should select someone who knows you well, your values and what you stand for. Ideally, it would be good if they have worked alongside you (as a coach) and know how you interact with others to build relationships.

## What do I include in my application letter?

Read the application documents carefully and attend the information briefing session. We strongly advise you to articulate in your application letter how you demonstrate at least three of the key capabilities for ASPIRE and what evidence you have. Refer to the [AIS HP Coach Capability Framework](#) for more details.

## What is the CoachDISC Profile?

Athlete Assessments specialise in DISC behavioural profiling specifically created for athlete, coaches and sports professionals. You can read more at: [athleteassessments.com](http://athleteassessments.com)

## What is the AIS HP Coach Self Evaluation Tool?

The Individual Coach Development Plan (ICDP) Program is based upon the HP Coach Development Framework and HP Coach Capability Framework. It is a step by step process that helps identify a coach's strengths and highlights opportunities for development. You can read more at: [AIS.gov.au/coach-development/programs](http://AIS.gov.au/coach-development/programs)

**For additional information, refer to the [program information](#) including [guidelines and selection criteria](#) or contact [hpcoachdevelopment@ausport.gov.au](mailto:hpcoachdevelopment@ausport.gov.au)**



*"... I definitely believe confidence has been improved as I have realised from this trip that I am a good coach, and I do hold a lot of the skills necessary to be a High Performance senior national representative level coach..."*

Experiential Learning Program Coach 2024

# Meet the ASPIRE Coach Program Facilitator Team



Michelle De Highden

*AIS High Performance Coach Development Senior Lead,  
High Performance Coach and ICCE Coach Developer*

Michelle is leading a national project to shift the dial on the underrepresentation and experiences of women in high performance coaching. Michelle is an experienced high-performance coach and coach developer, passionate about facilitating coach development at the high-performance level.

Coaching at both the development and World Championships level has enabled Michelle to understand both the athlete and coach development pathway from grassroots to international success. With over 35 years' experience coaching, Michelle is a qualified teacher and coach developer. She has completed a Master of Sport Coaching (2021) and attended the ICCE and NSSU Coach Developer Academy in Japan (2019-2020).



Ali Tucker Munro

*First Nations Engagement Lead, former Diamonds squad member, Netball Australia*

Ali Tucker Munro is a proud Kamilaroi woman, and former high-performance netballer who played over 100 games in the national professional netball league between 1997-2005. She represented Australia as part of the National 21/under World Youth Cup gold medal winning team and was a former Australian Diamonds squad member.

Ali holds an elite coaching accreditation and is the former Head Coach of the Giants Netball Academy. She is the current head coach of UTS Randwick Sparks Opens Premier League team, and the inaugural head coach and panel selector of Netball Australia's national First Nations team, the Black Swans. Ali has coached at Netball Australia's underage 17s and 19s national squad training camps and in 2022, Ali became the first Indigenous person to coach in an official capacity at a Super Netball level, as interim assistant coach to Julie Fitzgerald at Giants Netball. She has acted as a panel assessor for national underage squad selections, and is the current General Manager, First Nations at Netball Australia.



Liz Masen

*CEO at Athlete Assessments*

Since 2007, Liz Masen has been the CEO of Athlete Assessments, an international consultancy in the sports industry and the assessment provider of the only DISC behavioural profiles specifically for sport globally. She brings 30 years of leadership experience in sport and business, with her early career in investment banking, specializing in mergers and acquisitions, and then in leadership development for women in predominantly male-dominated industries. Liz has presented and facilitated workshops at countless international sports conferences and academies, including being on faculty for WeCOACH NCAA Women Coaches Academies in the USA every year since 2010 and the Japanese Women Leaders and Coaches Academy for the last ten years. In addition, Liz is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of the Sunshine Coast, due to complete her thesis in late 2025, focusing her research on 'what coaches really want in their playmakers'.



**Janna Mizens** *PLY*

*Wheelchair Basketball High Performance Manager, Basketball NSW*

Janna Mizens is a two-time Paralympic gold medallist in wheelchair basketball for Team USA and a 2025 inductee into the USA Paralympic & Olympic Hall of Fame. With over 20 years of experience in elite sport, Janna currently serves as the Wheelchair Basketball High Performance Manager at Basketball NSW, leading the development of the State Performance Program. Janna also recently became a Biofield Tuning Practitioner, integrating energy healing with coaching to support holistic well-being and performance.



**Kylie Moulds**

*University lecturer, Canberra University. High Performance Coach and Coach Development Leader*

Dr Kylie Moulds is a university lecturer in Sport Psychology. A former professional tennis player and coach at the Australian Institute of Sport, Kylie has been involved with athlete and coach identification and development programs for several national sporting bodies. Kylie's research examines the motivational environment of sport, focusing on multiple psycho-social factors, particularly the coach and how the coach can impact sustained performance and participation. Kylie is a qualified High Performance Tennis Coach and consultant.



**Lauren Soderberg**

*AWE Manager, Squash Australia 2016 Olympic Coach Founder and CEO Progressive Coaches.*

Lauren Soderberg is a global sports consultant dedicated to driving positive change in high-performance coaching, athlete wellbeing, and ethical practices across the international sports landscape. Drawing on a diverse background as an Olympic Coach, Coach Developer, Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement Manager and International Sports Diplomacy Officer, Lauren brings a unique blend of expertise to her work. She is passionate about assisting women in coaching, strengthening their capabilities, and creating performance environments where both athletes and coaches can thrive. As the Founder of Progressive Coaches, a global non-profit organization, Lauren is dedicated to the utilization of sport for positive social change, building strategic partnerships, and delivering evidence-based solutions that promote gender equality and meaningful development in sport.



**Stacey Morlang**

*Aleda Facilitator International, State and Club Lacrosse Coach*

Stacey Morlang is a leadership facilitator at Aleda Collective, where she helps create a more collaborative world by connecting global leaders across diverse industries. A seasoned coach and mentor, Stacey brings deep experience from her time as an international, state, and club-level lacrosse coach. A former elite athlete herself, she proudly represented Australia in five Lacrosse World Cups, serving as captain in four of them.



## APPENDIX 1

# The Australian High Performance Coach Development Framework



## APPENDIX 2

## HP strategic alignment

The AIS has a strong track record of delivering transformative development opportunities for HP coaches and continues to prioritise coach development in its HP 2032+ Win Well Sport Strategy and the National HP Coach Development Strategy.

The ASPIRE Coach Program directly supports the development of aspiring women coaches. The program fosters capabilities that aim to ensure coaches are identified and equipped to navigate entry into HP environments that prioritise both excellence and wellbeing by embedding a culture of continuous learning, self care and connection. The ASPIRE Coach Program strengthens diversity in Australia's coaching workforce at the entry level into HP Coaching.

# WIN+ WELL

Read the HP Coach Development Strategy:

[AIS.gov.au/coach-development](https://ais.gov.au/coach-development)





Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission



[AIS.gov.au](https://ais.gov.au)



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