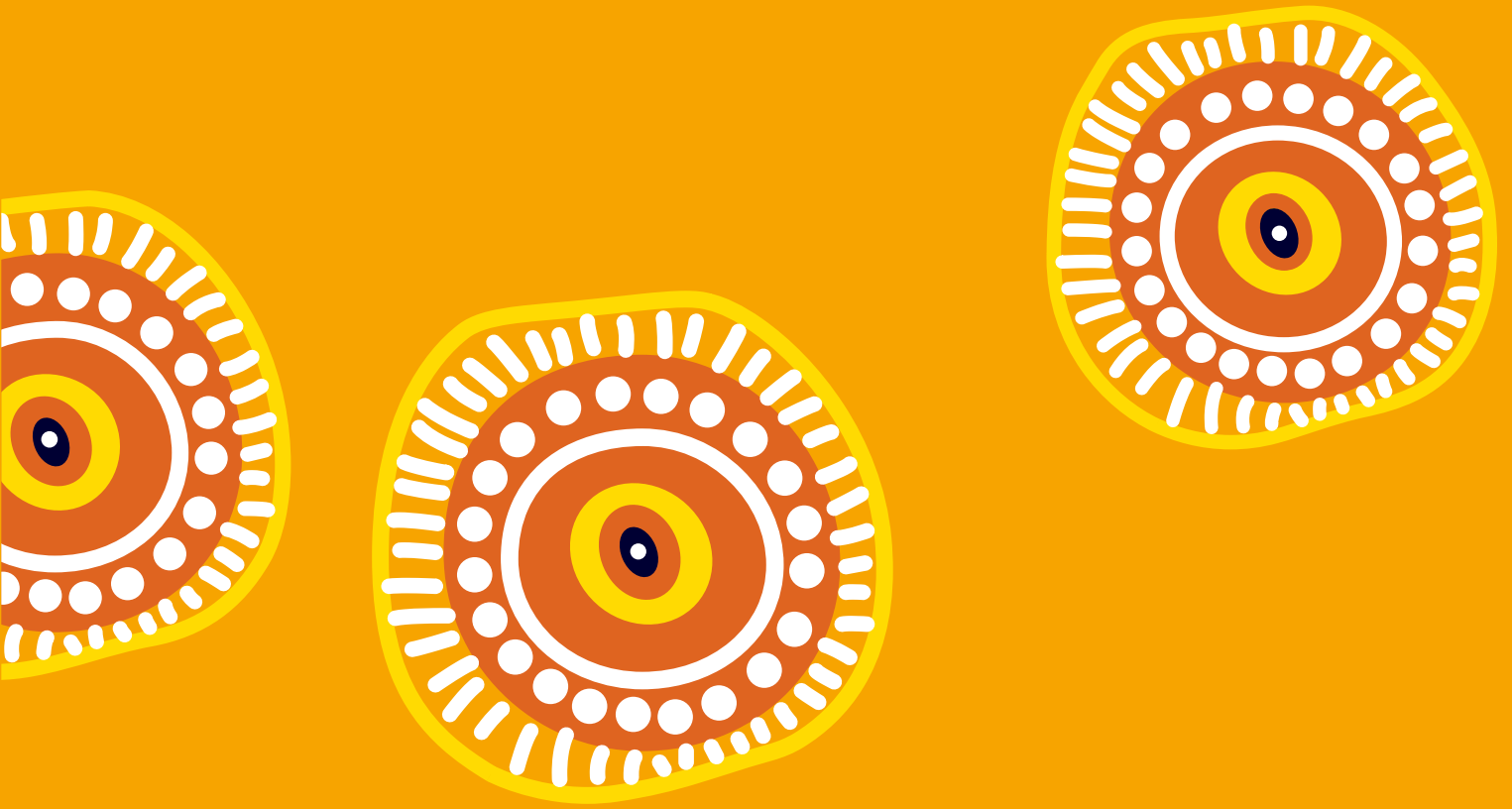




Parental Leave Toolkit

Women in High Performance Coaching





Australian Sports Commission Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where its offices are located, the Ngunnawal people and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the people of the Yugambeh Nation and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

The ASC extends this acknowledgment to all the Traditional Custodians of the lands and First Nations Peoples throughout Australia and would like to pay its respects to all Elders past, present and future.

The ASC recognises the outstanding contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to society and sport in Australia and celebrates the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.

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Parental Leave Toolkit

Successful Parental Leave

Through extensive collaboration with women coaches and stakeholders, a comprehensive framework for successful parental leave has been developed. This guide is intended to assist organisations and individuals in creating suitable policies and practices.

Additional insights from the Parental Leave 'working pod' provide in depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities and are provided as part of this toolkit.

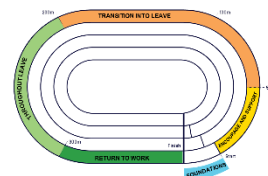
Example policies and case studies can be accessed at the back of this document and on the [WiHPC Website](#).

Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to assist organisations and individuals in creating collaborative and supportive policies and practices that enable and promote parental leave to support women coaches.

A proposed framework

The proposed framework involves **five phases**, beginning with the Foundation phase and ending with Return to Work.



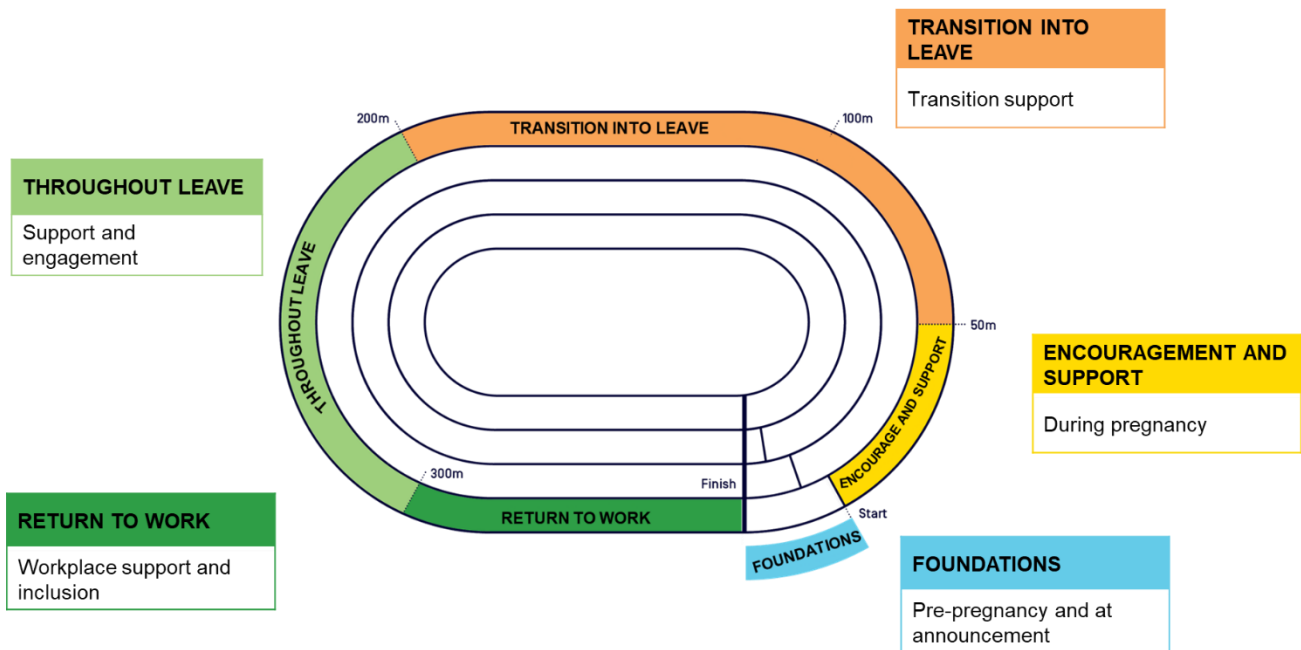
This framework is based upon the assumption that the coach wants to return to work and the reality of family life, particularly with a newborn is that there are many unknown factors.

A collaborative approach to explore future employment opportunities for coaches is fundamental to retention of talent within the High Performance Workforce.

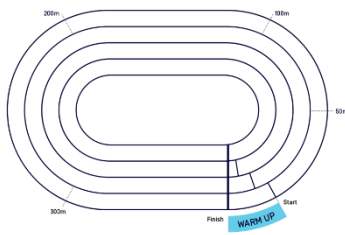
The WiHPC projects has developed other toolkits and resources to support other talent development and retention strategies.

Refer to the Toolkits on the [WiHPC Website](#).





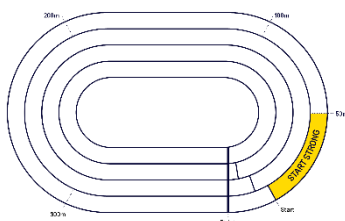
Phase 1 Foundations



Pre-pregnancy and at announcement

- Implement and promote a clear Parental Leave Policy.
- Ensure organisational culture aligns with the policy by promoting family-friendly practices.
- Provide detailed information about the maternity/parental leave policy, including duration, benefits, and required paperwork.
- Offer guidance on accessing maternity-related benefits, including healthcare, parental leave pay, childcare options, and available assistance programs.
- Respect individual differences: pregnancy announcements and timelines will look different for everyone.
- Encourage open communication; ask employees to promptly share any changes or medical updates, especially regarding work, physical, or mental health related to pregnancy.

Phase 2 Encourage and Support During Pregnancy

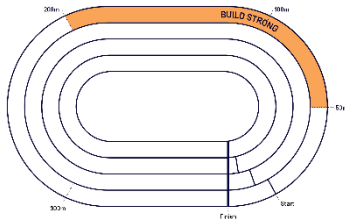


During pregnancy

- Offer genuine congratulations and express enthusiasm for the employee's news of becoming a parent.
- Respect their privacy and assure confidentiality of shared information.
- Discuss how they prefer to inform the team and the organisation about their pregnancy.
- Keep an open dialogue about potential modifications to daily activities or flexible work arrangements as the pregnancy progresses.
- Explore options like modified hours, remote work, or job-sharing to accommodate their needs.
- Establish clear guidelines and schedule regular check-ins (eg every 4 weeks) to understand evolving needs, address concerns, and offer support during the pregnancy.

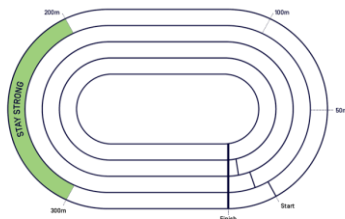
Phase 3 Transition into Parental Leave

Transition



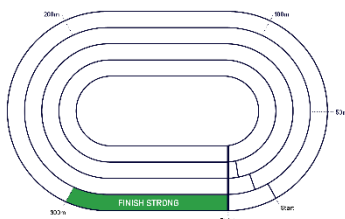
- Clearly outline procedures and requirements for requesting and implementing flexible work arrangements.
- Collaborate with the employee to create a plan for transitioning their responsibilities, ensuring a seamless handover.
- Discuss specific timelines for knowledge transfer, team training, and providing necessary resources to support workflow during the absence, ensuring the employee feels included in the process.
- Explore the engagement and recruitment process for the parental leave replacement. Determine if the employee wishes to be involved and identify key competencies needed in the replacement for the agreed-upon period.
- Define the skills, knowledge, and experiences required for the temporary replacement.

Phase 4 Throughout Parental Leave



- Establish the level of support the employee prefers during leave: whether they prefer no work-related discussions, periodic updates, or complete detachment from work matters. Determine the frequency and method of check-ins that make them comfortable.
- Encourage open discussion (if desired) about any implications, complications, or pregnancy loss that might arise.
- Offer flexibility and support tailored to the individual's needs during pregnancy loss, including sufficient leave, adaptable return-to-work options, and access to grief counseling.
- Provide information and resources on support groups or available services, enabling the employee to connect with others who have experienced similar situations.

Phase 5 Return to Work



- Acknowledge the unique needs of each child, understanding that parental responsibilities can vary significantly within the first 12 months.
- Schedule agreed-upon check-ins with the coach to assess the progress toward the planned return to work and make adjustments if required.
- If desired, explore opportunities to transition the coach into a more flexible or less demanding role within the organisation, utilising their transferable skills.
- Cultivate a supportive and inclusive workplace by encouraging open discussions about parental leave, pregnancy, and related topics.
- Provide a warm welcome to returning employees, ensuring they feel comfortable and supported in their work environment.
- Foster a family-friendly atmosphere that accommodates the diverse and flexible needs of working parents.

Parental leave working pod

Insights and proposals

A working pod was established to deepen our understanding and inform recommendations and initiatives of the Women in High Performance Coaching Project relating to mother/parent coaches and parental leave in HP. The ultimate objective is to have more women in HP coaching roles and for those women to have more positive experiences.

Key objectives:



Explore

Explore the real-life experiences of female high performance coaches.



Uncover concerns

Uncover the primary concerns of individuals and organisations concerning parental leave.



Needs

Determine the specific needs and desires of parent coaches.



Guidelines

Develop comprehensive guidelines for effective return-to-work frameworks and timelines to enhance discussions and policy formulation related to parental leave.

Parental leave: Findings summary

Positive actions, or "bright spots," are evident within the sector and most frequently associated with specific key factors:



Insights and proposals for actionable change



System

- Enforce uniform parental leave policies in all sports, offering ready-to-use templates.
- Develop a part-time talent pool for seamless succession planning.
- Define vital skills for candidate selection in succession planning.
- Fund childcare solutions for coach support.
- Mandate gender equity training and hold programs accountable for coach retention post-maternity leave.



Sport

- Maintained agreed communication during parental leave, ensuring flexibility in return arrangements.
- Offered family-friendly roles using transferable skills as needed.
- Promoted clear and well-publicised parental leave policies in line with organisational culture.
- Encouraged male employees to take parental leave for gender equality.
- Provided childcare/travel support, including on-site facilities, partner/nanny funding, nursing rooms, and out-of-hours childcare.



Individual

- Participate in pregnancy planning and support.
- Collaborate with replacement coaches during maternity leave.
- Create family-friendly environments at events and training.
- Promote acceptance of children among staff.
- Implement thoughtful gestures, like preferred parking.



What's Working

Parent coaches operate within the broader sports ecosystem. Talking to coaches and stakeholders, we found 6 key methods to enhance Women in High Performance Coaching participation and experience. They are outlined below.

Key factors for successful implementation of parental leave and their outcomes



Environment & culture

Supportive Culture: Create an inclusive atmosphere where women coaches feel valued and integrated.

Flexible Policies: Introduce work flexibility, enabling coaches to balance work and parenting effectively.



Capability framework

Facilitate Talent Transfer: Identify transferable skills for smooth job transitions, promoting job retention and a supportive workplace.

Clarify Jobshare Roles: Define roles clearly, align skills, and ensure transparent communication for seamless transitions, enhancing parental leave retention efforts.



Networking & mentoring

Strengthen Connections: Foster collaboration and support during parental leave.

Boost Flexible Work: Promote familiarity for seamless job sharing and part-time arrangements.

Nurture Supportive Culture: Encourage understanding, allyship, and real-life examples to reduce imposter syndrome and create a positive workplace.



Recognition and development opportunities

Professional Growth: Offer skill-enhancing opportunities during parental leave, affirming commitment to women coaches' development, fostering empowerment.



Flexible work, family friendly

Work Flexibility: Offer adaptable hours and remote options for family balance.

Parental Leave Security: Ensure stable finances and job security through clear policies.

Childcare Support: Provide on-site facilities or financial aid for childcare services.

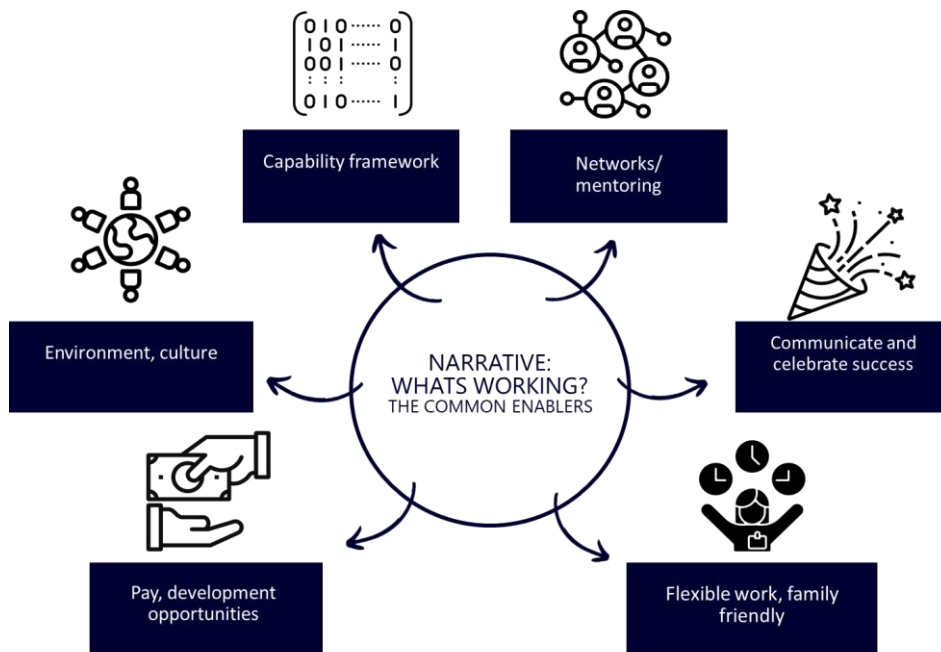


Communicate and celebrate success

Boost Confidence: Combat imposter syndrome, building belief in employees' abilities.

Diversity Promotion: Challenge gender biases, promoting inclusive roles.

Wider Talent Pool: Attract diverse applicants, strengthening organisational skills.



Some examples of Parental Leave are located below.



NETBALL AUSTRALIA

Parental Leave Policy
[Click here](#)



WATER POLO AUSTRALIA

Parental Leave Policy
[Click here](#)



WORK180

Parental Leave Policy Template
[Click here](#)

If you are interested in being involved or have examples to share, please contact us at hpcoachdevelopment@ausport.gov.au.





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