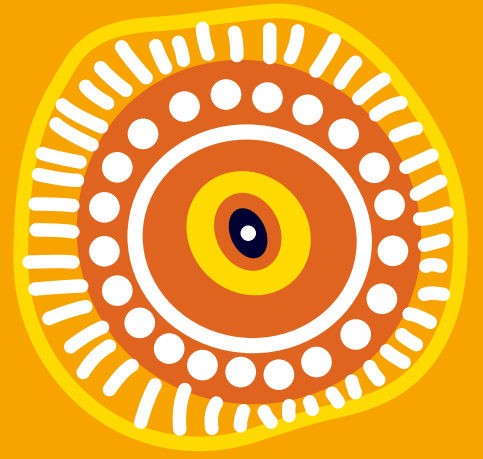
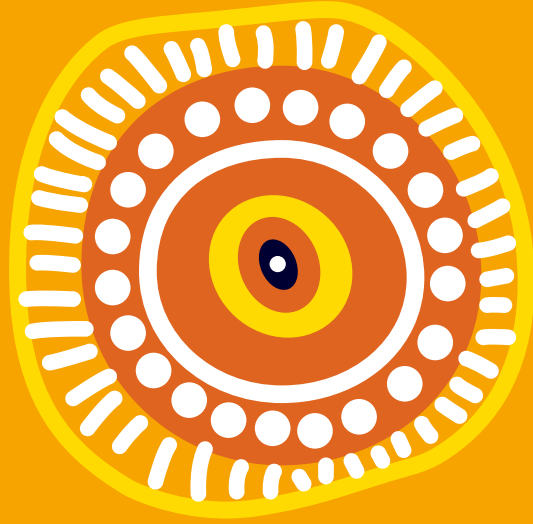




AIS

**Visibility and success**

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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# Visibility and Success

## Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) Recommendation 6:

**Outcome:** Increase the visibility of women coaches with a focus on success stories and highlighting what's working.

### The deliverables under this initiative are:

- Lead and develop a campaign to promote Women in High Performance (WiHPC) Coaching.
- Build and maintain a dedicated website that promotes the WiHPC Project.
- Proactively engage with, and amplify the work of organisations, groups and individuals that actively support the WiHPC Project initiatives and toolkits.
- Lead the National Showcase for WiHPC every second year.
- Actively lead and promote Alumni Coaching activities for Women HP Coaches

This initiative seeks to raise the profile of women coaches by showcasing success stories and effective practices. It involves actively creating opportunities and building connections both nationally and internationally, within and beyond the sports sector, to promote and amplify these stories.

A dedicated website has been developed to share resources such as toolkits, templates, and initiatives. This website will be regularly maintained and updated. Additionally, funding will be allocated for regular events, including a National Showcase for Women in Coaching and alumni activities.





## Key strategies to elevate visibility and amplify success

Actions Anyone Can Take	What WiHPC is Doing	Anticipated Outcomes
<b>Strategy: Challenge Myths and Narratives</b>		
<b>Objective: Shift perceptions by debunking myths about women in high-performance coaching.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share stories of women coaches.</li> <li>- Challenge stereotypes in coaching conversations.</li> <li>- Promote success stories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identified key myths from 150+ stories.</li> <li>- Developed campaigns to <a href="#">debunk myths</a>.</li> <li>- Sharing lived experiences through multiple platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates an inclusive coaching culture.</li> <li>- Strengthens the case for diverse leadership.</li> <li>- Inspires systemic change.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy: Elevate Visibility</b>		
<b>Objective: Increase the visibility of women coaches to inspire future generations.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feature women coaches in media, events, and industry discussions.</li> <li>- Advocate for gender equity reporting.</li> <li>- Share and support other organisations visibility-focused initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spotlighting role models.</li> <li>- Showcasing <a href="#">successful initiatives</a>.</li> <li>- Partnering with advocacy groups.</li> <li>- Providing gender equity data updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourages more women to pursue coaching.</li> <li>- Strengthens networks.</li> <li>- Highlights women’s contributions across sport.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy: Storytelling</b>		
<b>Objective: Use lived experiences to drive change, foster belonging, and inspire action.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share real experiences of women in coaching.</li> <li>- Create deliberate spaces for storytelling.</li> <li>- Use storytelling to build empathy and awareness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collecting and sharing impactful <a href="#">stories</a>.</li> <li>- Creating storytelling platforms.</li> <li>- Engaging stakeholders to <a href="#">amplify stories</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Builds empathy and understanding.</li> <li>- Strengthens community and support networks.</li> <li>- Inspires cultural change.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy: Build Connection and Momentum</b>		
<b>Objective: Strengthen networks and mentoring opportunities for women in coaching.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide mentorship and networking opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expanding mentoring programs.</li> <li>- Promoting access to networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates a supportive coaching community.</li> <li>- Enhances career development.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highlight sector “bright spots.”</li> <li>- Encourage collaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Showcasing success stories.</li> <li>- <a href="#">Communities and Networks Toolkit</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drives sector-wide commitment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy: Elevate visibility of the talent pathway</b>  <b>Objective: Promote structured pathways and career progression for women coaches.</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highlight learning and development opportunities.</li> <li>- Support structured coaching pathways.</li> <li>- Advocate for transparent gender equity reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Showcasing organisations that provide integrated pathways.</li> <li>- Spotlighting women progressing through the ‘Leaky Pipeline.’</li> <li>- Reporting on gender equity in coaching roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarifies career pathways for women.</li> <li>- Supports structured development.</li> <li>- Promotes accountability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy: Target opportunities with advocates and allies</b>  <b>Objective: Strengthen advocacy and leadership support for women in coaching</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote organisations improving leadership diversity.</li> <li>- Encourage male champions and allies.</li> <li>- Showcase the impact of mixed-gender learning programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing allies and champions.</li> <li>- Highlighting organisations driving diversity.</li> <li>- Promoting stories of <a href="#">male allies and mentors</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fosters an inclusive coaching culture.</li> <li>- Encourages collaboration across genders.</li> <li>- Highlights the impact of allyship.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy: Building belonging within the HP Coaching workforce</b>  <b>Objective: Create an inclusive coaching environment that supports career sustainability.</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support and implement flexible coaching roles.</li> <li>- Offer parental leave and work-life balance initiatives.</li> <li>- Challenge outdated beliefs about coaching structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aligning messaging with <a href="#">HP2032+ Win Well</a> strategy.</li> <li>- Promoting <a href="#">flexible employment</a> policies.</li> <li>- Highlighting organisations investing in women’s sports pathways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports long-term career sustainability.</li> <li>- Enhances work-life balance.</li> <li>- Promotes equitable recruitment and retention.</li> </ul>

## Building platforms and creating ripples

### Showcasing Women in High Performance Coaching

The inaugural showcase was held with the intention to showcase the 'bright spots', generate discussions, and gain insights of what initiatives organisations believed would be beneficial to support women coaches.



#### Showcase #1: November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Theme: *Connecting bold people and inspiring initiatives!***

- 90 people, 38 organisations attended,
- 14 organisations shared stories of their initiatives.
- 1/3 of the participants were men, 1/3 were HP administrators and managers.
- Highlighted 10 key themes and ignited 4 working groups to undertake a deeper dive.

**Video:** [Click here](#)    **Posters:** [Click here](#)



#### Showcase #2: November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Theme: *Amplifying, Belonging, Performing***

- 120 people, 60 organisations attended, 38 stories of impact.
- Participants included ASC and NSO Board Chairs, CEOs, HP Leaders and Decision makers.
- An interactive Leaky Pipeline was created with 10 women personas created.
- Creation of the Virtual Leaky Pipeline. [Click here](#)
- 6 guest speakers and a 12 month [SCORECARD](#) report.
- Pledge from the Minister of Sport. [Click here](#)

**Call for Action:** [Click here](#)



## Creating ripples in the National Institute Network

As a result of the inaugural showcase, several organisations initiated their own programs, demonstrating the power of communities and networks sharing ideas can amplify change and build momentum. Some of these initiatives are highlighted within our [Case Studies](#).



### Victorian Women in Coaching Showcase - VIS

- 75 attendees: State and National sporting organisations, Universities, State Government and education sectors, Victorian Regional Sports Academies
- 10 'Bright Spot' Showcases from State and National Sporting organisations and other sectors.
- Three key themes were identified for future exploration.

VIS Story: [Click here](#)



### Women in High Performance Coaching Showcase - QAS

- 82 attendees
- Led in collaboration with the Queensland Government, Sport and Recreation Department.
- Roll out of the Women in HP Coaching Community of Practice Group.



### SASI – Archetype Workshop

- Delivered by the WiHPC team with SASI staff.
- 24 participants across diverse roles within sports.
- Key outcomes identified and shared with the SASI Leadership to progress in the future.

## WiHPC Myth busting campaign

These priorities have been identified through the collective stories of our Women in High Performance Coaching within Australia.

### PRIORITY #1: The number and skills of Women in HP Coaching

**MYTH:** Women coach numbers are low, and they don't have the skills.

There are not enough women coaches!

They don't apply, they choose not to; they need to be upskilled before we can offer them Head Coach roles.

**COUNTER:**

There are women coaches available!

We need to promote and support them whilst creating an environment for everyone to thrive and belong

Narrative	Counter Narrative	Action
Women don't apply for Coaching Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women do apply.</li> <li>They want a positive workplace with a viable opportunity and legitimate career pathway.</li> <li>Higher level roles require networking and support (e.g. sponsorship and allyship).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek, find, support, encourage, promote, and actively recruit.</li> <li>Transparent recruitment: Do not accept a homogenous candidate pool.</li> <li>Coaching environment: Make sure that you have the policies and codes of conduct in place to ensure that the coaching environment is free from discrimination/ harassment etc.</li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support stories on <i>"Rising Female Talent"</i>.</li> <li>Promote stories of women coaches returning to coaching / transitioning into other roles in sport.</li> </ul>	
There aren't enough women coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The growth of women's sport is only increasing.</li> <li>Seek to understand why women do not enter / where they exit the Leaky Pipeline i.e., <i>At what point are they NOT entering / exiting the pipeline?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate visibility of a pathway / pipeline for women coaches.</li> <li>Curb the flow at the exits to the pipeline (i.e., plug the leaks).</li> <li>Transparent recruitment.</li> <li>Talent ID for Women Coaches: Identifying, supporting and encouraging female coaching talent is vital.</li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Women Coaches through storytelling from athletes – both male and female.</li> <li>Promote stories of Women Coaches who return to coaching after exits.</li> </ul>	

Women choose NOT to coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choices are shaped by the environment, culture, and opportunity.</li> <li>• Environment, Behaviours and Culture are the # 1 factors that influence Women Coaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess and address the environment, behaviours and culture.</li> <li>• Increase opportunities and access.</li> <li>• Support women to create environments that enable them to operate as high performance coaches.</li> <li>• Focus on the optimal high performing learning environment for everyone by:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create psychological safety for athletes and coaches alike and,</li> <li>2. Fulfill the basic psychological needs of Belonging, Competency and Autonomy.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain case studies and evidence to promote women creating high performance environments with athletes providing feedback.</li> <li>• Promote environments where allies and sponsors support women coaches.</li> </ul>	
More Men = Men are more interested in coaching / Women are less interested in coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women need opportunity to feel valued and supported.</li> <li>• Interest is driven by opportunity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the motivations and barriers for those women who do coach and / return to coaching.</li> <li>• Understand the key factors in your sport where women leave coaching / don't start.</li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote stories of allyship and sponsorship especially males supporting female coaches</li> </ul>	

## PRIORITY #2: Gender stereotypes and the Coach of the future

**MYTH:** Women can coach – but can't be Head Coaches!

They don't have the leadership skills, the Men do; Women need to juggle family commitments, and they are not demanding enough for High performance Coaching. Gender stereotypes are deep rooted and erode women's confidence, aspirations, commitment, and opportunities and this perpetuates the status quo.

**COUNTER:**

Future focused holistic HP coaching will achieve the best performance outcomes and optimal wellbeing. The coaches' role is to create and environment, build relationships, empower athletes, manage themselves and others to support athletes to perform.

Narrative	Counter Narrative	Action
Female coaches are perceived as too soft or too tough but never just right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When they act inconsistent with stereotypes they are seen as unfeminine.</li> <li>When they act consistent with stereotypes they are seen as less competent (e.g., soft, caring, kind, nurturing, empathic, less tough and emotionally balanced)</li> <li>There are perceptions that women are better equipped to "mother" and nurture than their male counterparts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage all HP coaches to understand self, be authentic and develop communication skills.</li> <li>Build understanding of the athletes' needs regarding holistic coaching.</li> <li>Enhance communication and confidence skills.</li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the skills that support optimal athlete outcomes: athlete/coach relationships, empowerment, individuality.</li> <li>Promotion of holistic coaching – the "future" coach.</li> <li>Use the athletes to tell the story.</li> </ul>	
Female Coaches DON'T WIN CHAMPIONSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistically – the odds are against women.</li> <li>Men have higher paying jobs, greater resources for facilities and recruitment to support them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The women need access to the same resources and remuneration as men.</li> <li>Ensure transparent recruitment practices based upon capabilities of the candidate.</li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amplify successes of women coaches who achieve success.</li> <li>Promote capability based recruitment and use evidence to back up your facts.</li> </ul>	
Think Coach Leadership – Think Male Men are better leaders than Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Male Coaches Lead (take charge) by being...Robust, Tough, Decisive, Determined, Assertive, Confident, Protector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be explicit: Coaches of athletes should be representative of the composition of the cohort.</li> <li>Female athletes translate into strong leaders.</li> </ul>

- When women take charge and display the above-mentioned behaviours, they are viewed as competent coaches – but disliked.

Communication / Marketing Action

- Promote Women Role Models in Leadership
- Debunk stories around males being better leaders and use evidence (from research) to support this.

Female coaches are seen as competent or likeable but rarely both.

- Female Coaches relate (take care) by being...Nurturing, Encouraging, Emotional, Communicative, Supportive, Empathic, 'Mothering'.
- When women take care and display the above-mentioned behaviours, they are liked – but viewed as less competent coaches.
- Women should be mothers – not coaches – parents and grandparents influence this narrative
- Use Athlete advocacy to promote “*Future Coach*” as nurturing, supportive, empathetic, communicative for performance outcomes.
- Promote holistic coach development for the next generation of coaches
- Ensure learning and development programs promote understanding of self.

Communication / Marketing Action

- Promotion of a diverse and inclusive coaching culture is fair, well-adjusted and balanced.

Women Can't (or don't want to) have a Family and Coach

- Dual roles can enrich lives of both women and athletes alike.
- There is evidence of the benefits of Job share arrangements.
- Parental support programs are
- Build strategies for organisations to better value and support mother-coaches – and ALL Coaches who have family.
- Create interventions so organisations value and support HP parent-coaches.
- Mentoring and advice on “lifestyle” management may also assist more women meet the challenges they will face along their journey.

Communication / Marketing Action

- Promote organisations who are leading and supporting **Parent Coaches (including all genders)**
- Promote the **Parental Toolkit**, building **Hidden Talent Pools** and **Job Share** arrangements.
- Promote stories of mentorship and support for coaches in action.
- Promote stories of organisations that support inclusive travel arrangements.



Female coaches must prove that they can lead, influence, coach, make a positive and significant difference, over and over and over again within their sport

- Female coaches face higher competency standards and lower rewards than male coaches.
- Women second guess their actions and feel like they are held to a higher standard than men.
- Women feel like they are not given second chances if they fail, but men are.
- All coaches, regardless of gender are valued at work for what they bring.
- Provide targeted support and environmental conditions for women coaches who provided advancement opportunities.
- Continue to build capability and communication skills to enhance confidence in women coaches. (Individual Development Programs are highly valued).
- Reinforce capability based recruitment.

Communication / Marketing Action

- Promote Women Coaches as role models.
- Elevate visibility and impact of mentorship, allyship and sponsorship for women coaches.
- Create communication strategies and templates to support transparent recruitment and advancement for women coaches.

### PRIORITY #3: Gender stereotypes and the Coach of the future

**MYTH:**

Athletes prefer Male Coaches because they are the best. Related to the themes above.

**COUNTER:**

Athletes want the best coach available so we need to ensure that they are promoted, provided opportunities, and are supported and environment they feel like they belong and can support athletes to perform.

Narrative	Counter Narrative	Action
Athletes Prefer Male Coaches to Female Coaches as they just want 'the best coach'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Athletes want '<i>the best coach</i>' but when the majority of the best coaches are seen as men this supports this narrative.</li> <li>Many male and female athletes have NEVER had a female coach, so they have not been exposed to one.</li> <li>Male and female athletes have been taught to devalue athletic abilities of females and may also believe the same for women coaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of holistic coaching – the "<i>future coach</i>".</li> <li>Promote successes of Women Coaches</li> <li><a href="https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/coaching-do-female-athletes-prefer-male-coaches-the-foundation-position.pdf">https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/coaching-do-female-athletes-prefer-male-coaches-the-foundation-position.pdf</a></li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote successful Women role models.</li> <li>Increase visibility of the women coaches, particularly those in leadership and rising talent.</li> <li>Utilise athletes to tell the story of their success, especially Male athletes.</li> </ul>	
Women can ONLY coach Women's sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are barriers preventing women from coaching in high performance and these are amplified with men's sports.</li> <li>Embedded cultural beliefs validate this myth.</li> <li>There is little evidence of women coaches working with male teams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide targeted support and environmental conditions for women coaches who provided advancement opportunities.</li> <li>Continue to build capability and communication skills to enhance confidence in women coaches. (Individual Development Programs are highly valued).</li> <li>Reinforce capability based recruitment.</li> </ul>
Communication / Marketing Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate stories of women coaches who are working with male sports (e.g., NFL, ABL, AFL etc.)</li> <li>Elevate visibility and impact of mentorship, allyship and sponsorship for women coaches.</li> <li>Create communication strategies and templates to support transparent recruitment and advancement for women coaches.</li> </ul>	

## Template 1: Marketing Plan & Strategy for Advancing Women in High Performance Coaching

Step	Organisation's Plan	Examples for Guidance
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	Define specific, measurable goals for promoting women in high-performance coaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase the number of women in high-performance coaching roles by 25% over three years.</li> <li>- Secure partnerships with at least five organisations supporting gender equity in coaching.</li> <li>- Raise awareness through a national campaign reaching 500,000 people.</li> </ul>
<b>Target Audiences and Stakeholders</b>	Identify primary audiences (those directly impacted) and key stakeholders (those who can support the initiative).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary Audience: Women coaches at all career stages, aspiring female coaches.</li> <li>- Key Stakeholders: National and state sporting organisations, high-performance directors, club administrators, male allies, athletes, media, sponsors, and advocacy groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Messaging and Brand Positioning</b>	Outline the core messages and key narratives that will drive the campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breaking Barriers: "More women in coaching means stronger teams and better athlete outcomes."</li> <li>- Performance-Driven: "Diverse coaching teams enhance innovation and success in high-performance sport."</li> <li>- Role Models Matter: "We need to see them to be them—elevating women in coaching benefits all athletes."</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing Channels</b>	List the communication platforms and channels you will use to reach your audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media: LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok for coach spotlights and awareness campaigns.</li> <li>- Website &amp; Blog: Dedicated landing page with coaching pathways, role models, and success stories.</li> <li>- Media &amp; PR: Partnering with journalists, podcasts, and industry news outlets.</li> <li>- Events &amp; Networking: Hosting coaching showcases, leadership panels, and mentorship workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing Tactics and Campaign Ideas</b>	Describe planned marketing activities and initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Myth-Busting Series: Social media posts debunking myths about women in coaching.</li> <li>- Spotlight Series: Weekly profiles featuring women coaches and their achievements.</li> <li>- Coach for the Future Webinar: Live Q&amp;A with successful women coaches and male allies.</li> <li>- Data-Driven Advocacy: Publish an annual gender equity report tracking coaching representation.</li> </ul>

<b>Partnerships and Sponsorships</b>	Identify potential partners and how they can contribute (funding, promotion, resources, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporate Sponsors: Nike, Adidas, and sports brands supporting women in leadership.</li> <li>- Media Partnerships: ESPN, The Athletic, or ABC Sport featuring women coaches.</li> <li>- Educational Institutions: Universities and coaching academies promoting female coaching pathways.</li> <li>- Athlete Ambassadors: High-profile athletes advocating for more women in coaching.</li> </ul>
<b>Metrics for Success and Reporting</b>	Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact of the campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement: 50,000+ social media interactions on campaign content.</li> <li>- Visibility: 10+ media articles featuring women coaches.</li> <li>- Recruitment: 30% increase in women applying for high-performance coaching roles.</li> <li>- Event Attendance: 500+ participants in coaching workshops and webinars.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability and Long-Term Strategy</b>	Outline how the initiative will be maintained beyond the campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Scorecard: Publish yearly progress on gender equity in coaching.</li> <li>- Alumni Network: Establish a long-term community for women coaches.</li> <li>- Funding Model: Secure multi-year sponsorships to sustain marketing efforts.</li> <li>- Policy Change Advocacy: Work with governing bodies to implement transparent recruitment practices.</li> </ul>



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission



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