



Athlete Accelerate 2021-2026+

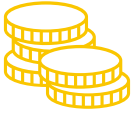
Transitioning from Athlete to Coach

Women in High Performance Coaching



Athlete Accelerate 2021-2026+

Transitioning from Athlete to Coach



Funded by Women Leaders in Sport (WLIS) Additional Immersion Grants provided



6-month learning program



Supported by AIS Careers team, Athlete Transitions and Experts



**Targets retired women athletes pursuing career options in sport
96 Athletes, 6 Cohorts**



Aim and Objectives

The AIS Accelerate program provides a unique experience for retired women athletes who are pursuing career options in the sport sector.

The key objectives of the Athlete Accelerate Program are to:

- Understand ways to navigate career pathways in sport.
- Equip participants with knowledge, skills and tools to navigate diverse roles in sport.
- Provide opportunities to leverage the talent and experience of high performance women athletes in the wider sports sector.

Description

Focus:

Athlete Accelerate has a career and personal development focus and provides opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and tools to navigate a professional career in sport.

The program will cover areas such as:

- debriefing the athletic experience
- personal values, purpose and strengths
- understanding the 2026 sport landscape and opportunities
- career transitions and expert career support
- developing a career action plan
- fast tracking career advice
- building professional networks.

Program Format

Selection:

- EOI application

Format:

- Blended learning design
- Two 4-day residential programs
- 6 online sessions
- Needs analysis and strengths profiling

Facilitators:

- AIS Careers team
- Career Practitioners
- Subject Matter Experts

Evaluation:

- Individual consultations
- Cohort survey

Coach Outcomes and Impact

- Full-time employment at ASC.
- Support during application process for head coach position of U18s National Women's Coach (successful applicant).
- Funding support for Certificate 4 in Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement (completed 2026).
- Funding support for 3 weeks leave for international tour and head coach commitment (otherwise unpaid and lost earning time).
- 6 current and ongoing coach WhatsApp groups and connection to coach development support at SASI.



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Recommendations from Kelly

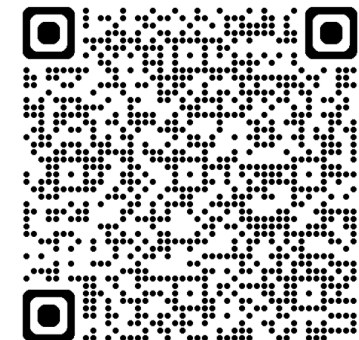
- Asking for help and support is part of the journey.
- Pushing yourself to be curious and to be willing to learn.
- Building a network has been a critical part of my journey and building belief in myself.
- Every program I have been part of so far I have instigated follow up catch ups and opportunities to build friendships (this has been the best part!).
- I am now at the point of being able to pick and chose what's important enough to me and my family to keep in the career pipeline and what isn't.
- Owning my IP has become part of my journey as the system itself within my sport doesn't have the funding or deep support required, I'd encourage others to explore doing the same.
- I have confidence in my understanding of the sporting system in Australia so I feel confident in the knowledge of what might be needed or where I can get more development.

Application for others

- Build a trusted peer and mentor network.
- Translate athlete strengths into career-ready skills.
- Seek practical experience, qualifications and funding support.
- Create a flexible career plan aligned with personal and family priorities,



The AIS Accelerate Program supports the professional development of women athletes to increase career pathway options in sport beyond their athletic careers.





Kelly's Journey



**Recently retired
Athlete**

End of 2022

2022

2023

Athlete Accelerate

Consultant at Wolfram Research

Women in High Performance Coaching Case Study

**Assistant Coach for U18s
Consultant ASC**

Transition into coaching from consultancy

2024

**Head Coach U18s
Assistant Coach Adelaide Storm
Lead Pathways Coach VSA**

Full-time coaching + additional coaching roles

2025

MUMMY!

**Head Coach U18s
Assistant Coach Adelaide Storm
Head Coach U18 Men's South Australian
Team**

Also commencing own athlete/parent
mentoring consultancy

2026





"I needed to build a new community and a new approach to thinking through career options and facing opportunities. The women in my group each gave so much of their stories and their vulnerability that it took a very short amount of time to feel like I had people I could turn to for guidance."

- Kelly Lean, Youth Women's National Squad Head Coach