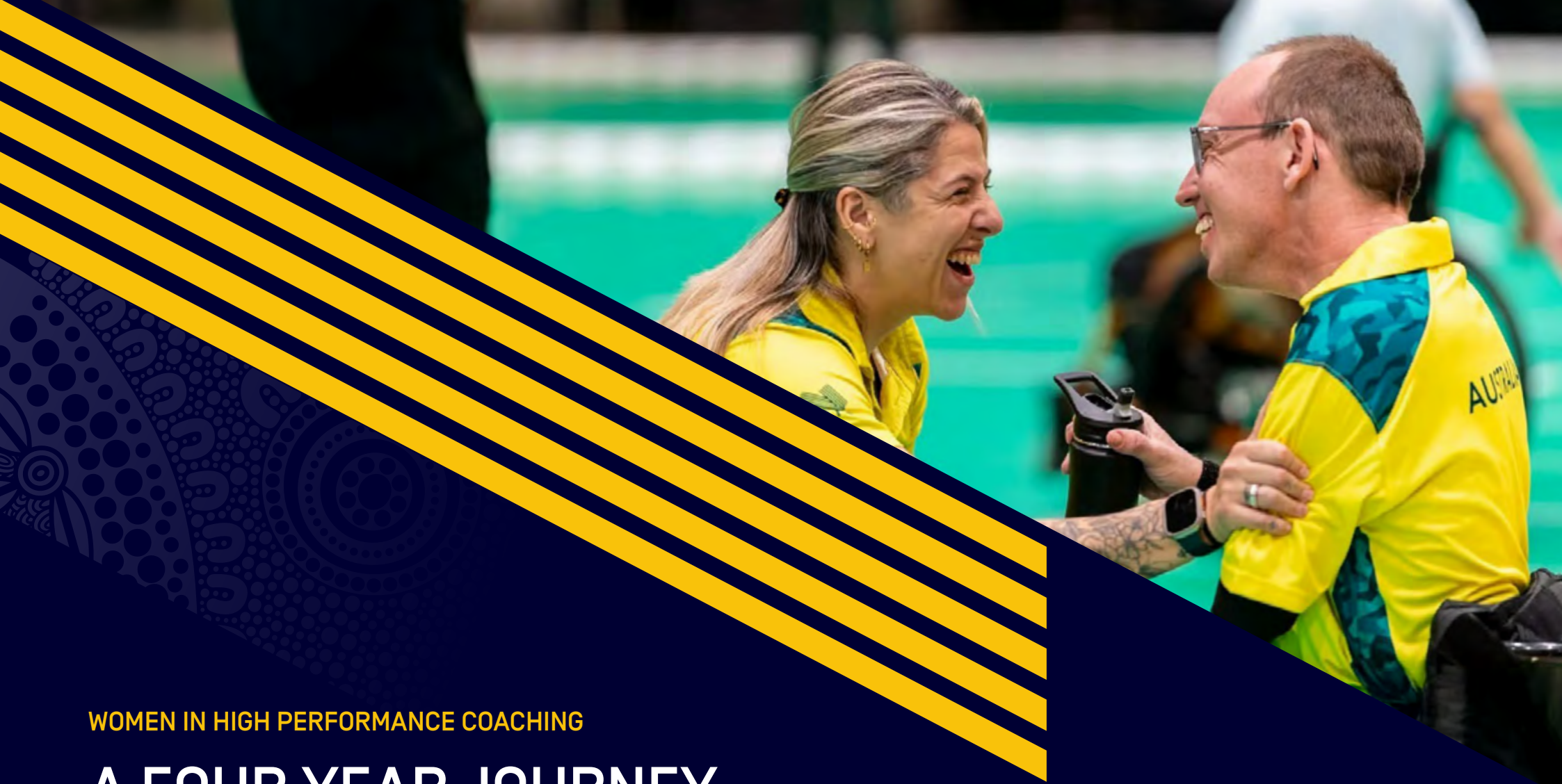




WOMEN IN HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHING

A FOUR YEAR JOURNEY AND NEXT STEPS 2021-2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Over the past four years, the Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) Project has driven systemic change to increase representation, retention, and visibility of women in high performance coaching. This initiative aligns with the HP 2032+ Sport Strategy, which prioritises sustainable coaching environments and diverse talent development. The WiHPC project addresses complex challenges through a long-term, adaptive approach, focusing on progress rather than quick fixes.

OUR MISSION

The Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) Project is a key initiative that seeks to increase representation, retention and visibility of women in high performance coaching by driving system change through the Leaky Pipeline Action Plan.



HP 2032+ STRATEGY

Coaching is a foundational enabler of Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy (HP 2032+ Strategy), underpinned by the National High Performance (HP) Coach Development Strategy. One of three strategic focus areas is to support the development of sustainable coaching environments that attract and retain diverse coaching talent and maximise performance potential of our coaches and athletes.



OUR OBJECTIVES

The WiHPC Project has three objectives.



INCREASE REPRESENTATION

The initiative seeks to enhance the number and visibility of women in high performance coaching roles, aiming for a more balanced and inclusive coaching ecosystem by 2032.



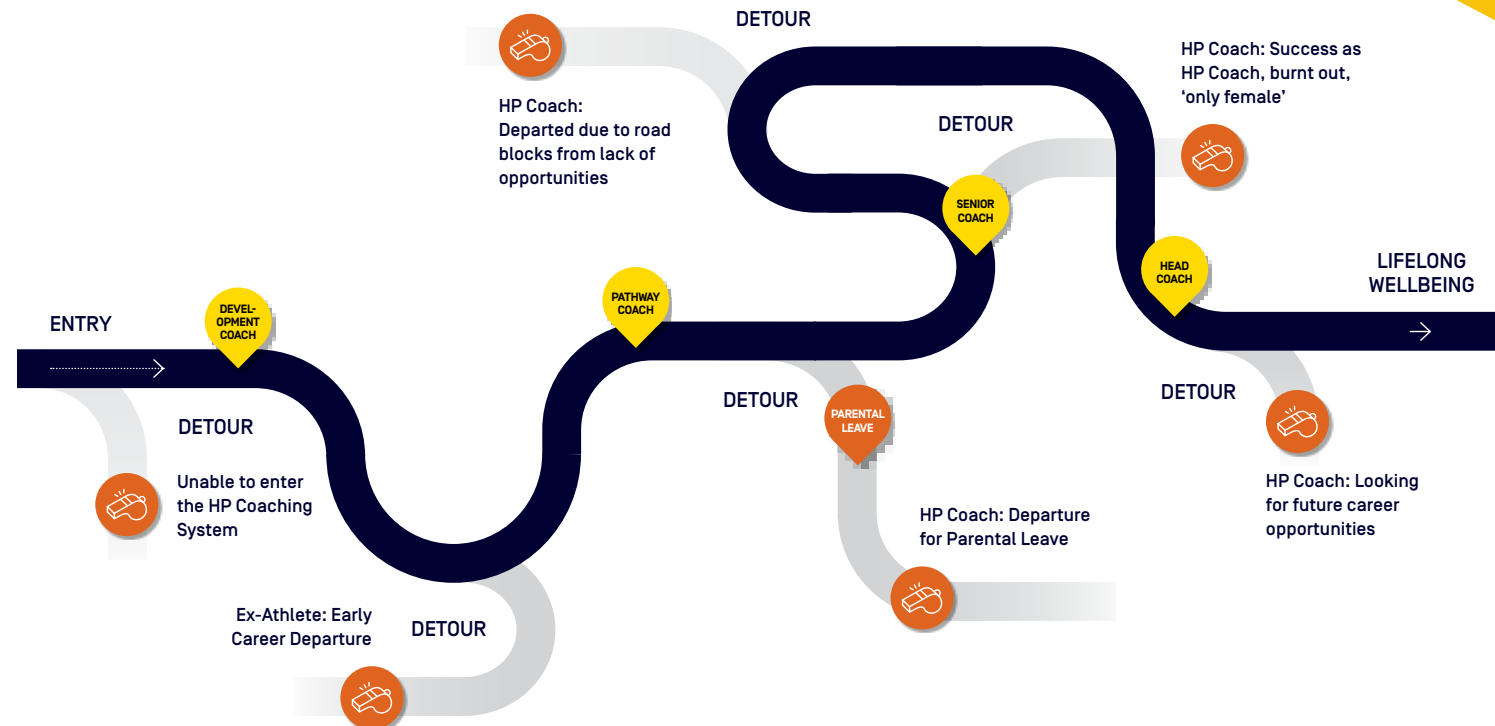
ADDRESS SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

WiHPC focuses on identifying and dismantling cultural and systemic structural barriers that hinder women's development and progression in coaching careers.



DEVELOP SUPPORTIVE PATHWAYS

The project emphasises creating sustainable pathways for women coaches, including mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, and targeted leadership development.



USING A COMPLEXITY-BASED APPROACH

The Women in HP Coaching (WiHPC) project is guided by a complexity-based approach. Challenges like increasing the number of women in HP coaching are not simple — they're complex.

Complex challenges differ because there's no clear solution. If there were, we'd have solved it already. Analysis alone won't make the problem disappear. These challenges involve multiple stakeholders with entrenched views, interacting systems, and hidden factors. Interventions trigger system responses — problems shift, resurface, or create new issues.

In a complex system, there is no final solution—only progress. Progress requires courage, persistence, and a long-term view to steer the system toward fairness and improvement.

WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE?

- ✓ We have accurately documented the issues faced by women coaches.
- ✓ We have identified four strategic levers for change.
- ✓ We have delivered tools and solutions for each of the levers for change.
- ✓ We have mapped The Leaky Pipeline which shows the pain points in a typical coaching journey.
- ✓ We have delivered tools and solutions for all points of the coaching journey.
- ✓ We have made strong progress against a reporting scorecard.
- ✓ Some progress has been made on the recommendations from the Action Plan.
- ✓ We have engaged extensively with the HP ecosystem.
- ✓ A Road Map is in place to support sporting organisations to drive change.
- ✓ We have made a significant contribution to a substantial increase in the representation of women in HP coaching.

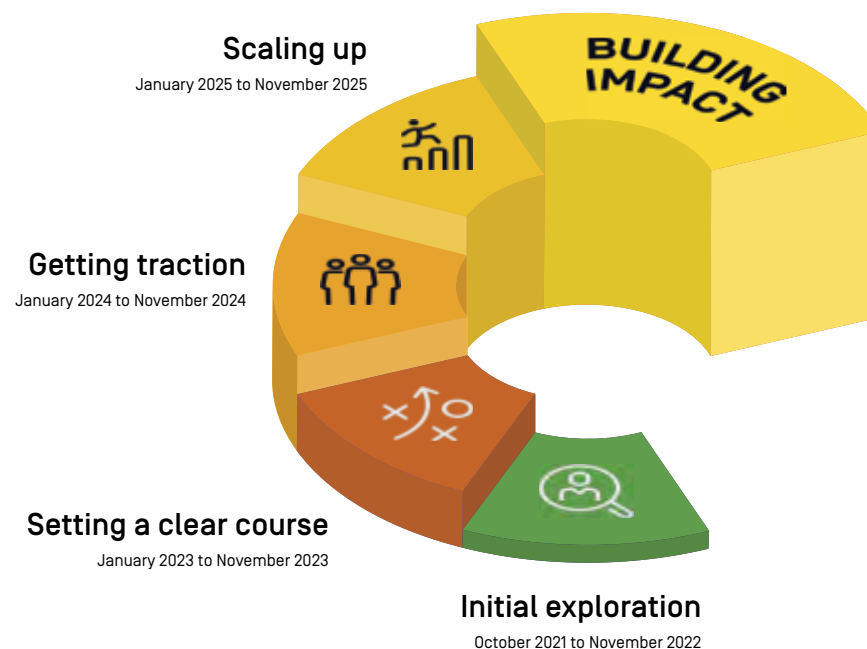


WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

The design of the WiHPC project has been shaped by this complexity-based approach and informed by the Ecological Systems Model¹. There have been four phases to the work so far:

- **Initial exploration** (October 2021 to November 2022),
- **Setting a clear course** (January 2023 to November 2023),
- **Getting traction** (January 2024 to November 2024),
- **Scaling up** (January 2025 to November 2025).

A detailed report has been prepared which outlines the steps, insights and iterative process throughout the past four years.



¹ LaVoi NM, Dutove JK. Barriers and supports for female coaches: An ecological model. Sports Coaching Review. 2012; 1(1):17-37.

THE STATE OF PLAY

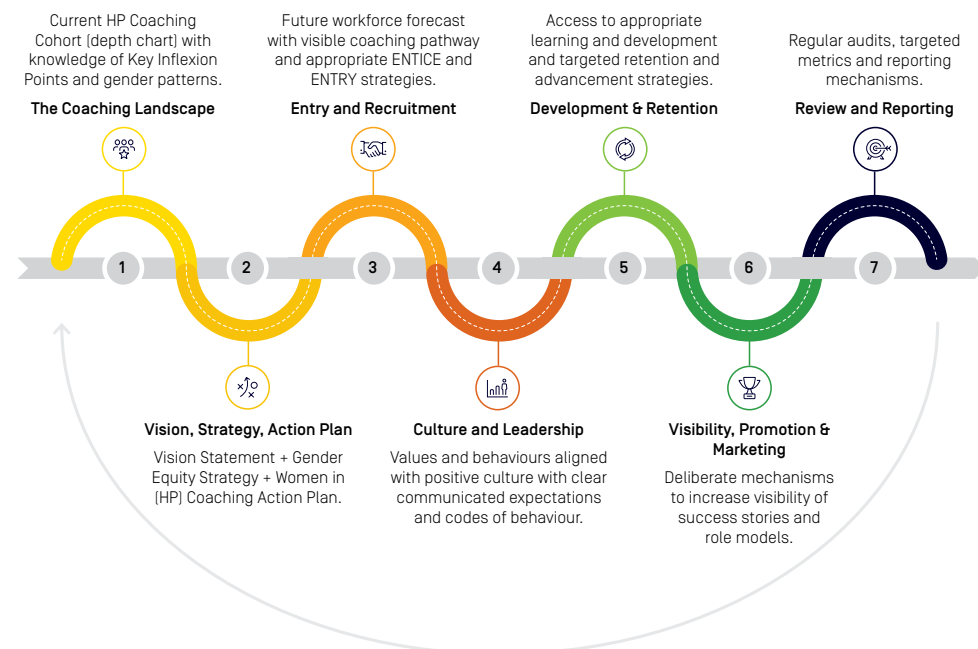
Gender Equity for Women in HP Coaching 2025

- **Forces:** We have a detailed understanding of forces that drive the low participation of women in HP coaching
- **Strategic Levers:** We have identified four strategies of change: Behaviours, culture and environment; Systems supporting diversity and belonging; Strategies for development; Visibility and storytelling.
- **Resources:** Toolkits, initiatives and programs are in place to address each of these levers. Ongoing engagement and development are required.
- **Leadership Accountability** is critical for driving change and underpins all of these levers. There is considerable variation in the level of leadership support across the system.
- **Coach Development:** Significant progress has been made with the Coach Development Facilitator processes, Mentorship, Networks and a National Talent Development Framework for Women Coaches has been created.
- **The Leaky Pipeline** has been adopted as a way of understanding the coaching journey. Key pain points have been identified, and Personas have been developed to help coaches and organisations understand the issues at each of these points.
- The **Career Support Program** has been linked with critical points in the Leaky Pipeline, and a pilot is underway.
- The **Road Map to Action** is in pilot. This is a critical piece for catalysing action within sporting organisations and creating accountability for change. Organisations can evaluate themselves against benchmarks and design strategies for improvement
- **Visibility:** Progress has been made with visibility. The “Stories from the Field” initiative has started to address this and work continues.
- **Data:** Significant progress has been made on data. Although the current data collection process is labour intensive, some data structures and sources are now in place to support more regular reporting.
- **Approach:** Most importantly, the WiHPC project has demonstrated that a complexity driven approach can have impact. The September 2025 numbers show that the representation of women in HP funded sports has more than doubled.

THE FOUR STRATEGIC LEVERS OF CHANGE



ROAD MAP TO ACTION



RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The ten recommendations for driving the next stage of the project have been updated to reflect the progress that has been made in the project so far and other initiatives that are underway in the HP system.



Leaders of sporting organisations

- 1 Gender Equity Audits** — Utilise the ASC / AIS resources to undertake regular gender equity audits, adopt gender equity targets and strategies, and publicly report on progress.
- 2 Road Map to Action** — Utilise the ASC and AIS resources to actively engage with the Women in HP Coaching Road Map to Action, resources and Toolkits.

The Australian Institute of Sport and the Australian Sports Commission

- 3 Contribute to development of a consistent HP coaching data picture** — Collaborate with relevant AIS and ASC teams to align gender-mapping approaches and maintain visibility of progress and reporting.
- 4 Align ongoing work with Win Well/system priorities** — Maintain connection between the WiHPC activities and HP 2032+ Horizon 2 outcomes, sharing progress and insights with key stakeholders.
- 5 Provide evidence to support future investment and policy** — Gather data, insights and key indicators to inform funding, recognition and workforce policy decisions to support the ASC and AIS leadership and NSOD Stakeholders.

HP Coach Development

- 6 Finalise and drive engagement with the Toolkits** — Release the full toolkit suite, promote application across NSOs through the Road Map to Action and integrate learnings into AIS coach education resources.
- 7 Optimise Coach Development** — Enhance the network of facilitators through mentorship and capability- building programs to deliver inclusive learning across both gender-specific and mixed programs.
- 8 Lead and deliver sustainable programs and initiatives for Women Coaches** — Continue to lead and deliver coordinated and impactful programs and initiatives align with the National Talent Development Framework.
- 9 Visibility and Storytelling** — Extend the 'Stories from the Field' campaign and highlight examples of inclusive practice and success to inspire women and reinforce belonging.

Leaders of the Australian HP sport system

- 10 National Gender Equity in Sports Governance Policy** — Organisations will be required to report annually through the Sports Governance Standards self-assessment on their status against Gender Equity Targets and their systems that ensure gender equity.



PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS FOR THE WIHPC PROJECT TO DECEMBER 2026

The following priority focus areas have been identified to progress the WiHPC project:

- Amplify the narratives around the WiHPC objectives and strategic directions for the project in the next 2 years.
- Finalise the Road Map to Action and build engagement with HP sports.
- Drive adoption and engagement with the WiHPC toolkits (networks, gendered learning, recruitment) through engagement with the Road Map.
- Proactively engage sports who have not been active in the work of the project so far; build deeper engagement in all HP sports.
- Review and align Women only Coach Programs across the sector and develop a sustainable funding model to propose to Ministerial and other Government stakeholders (4-8 year plan).
- Prioritise exploration of allyship for women in the broader HP landscape.
- Continue work on the data strategy, including improving data collection processes; collecting data at a more granular level; and identifying lead indicators and the processes for collecting this data.
- Update and socialise the National Talent Development Framework for Women Coaches.
- Finalise the gendered learning toolkit and package an integrated pipeline narrative for stakeholders.
- Continue to drive and support Networks, Allyship and Mentorship across the HP landscape.

THE WIHPC SCORECARD

The Annual WiHPC Scorecard has been updated from the 2023 Scorecard based upon the past 2 years of progress and additional insights. The WiHPC Project Team will report on project progress annually in November.

Annual SCORECARD — WiHPC Project

Support HP funded sports to complete and actively engage with the Women in HP Coaching Road Map to Action and relevant Toolkits.	○ ○ ○
Lead, deliver, iterate and align Women HP Coach Programs across the HP sector which address key pain points in the Leaky Pipeline.	○ ○ ○
Support NSODs to align programs, initiatives and funding with the National Talent Development Framework for Women Coaches and deepen understanding of impact.	○ ○ ○
Maintain and update the WiHPC Platform with resources and materials to support organisations and individuals driving change for WiHPC.	○ ○ ○
Lead initiatives to elevate visibility of women coaches through storytelling and impact.	○ ○ ○
Iterate and deliver the Career Support Program as recommended (from the Pilot) to address departures and exits from the Pipeline.	○ ○ ○
Enhance the network of facilitators through mentorship and capability — building programs to deliver inclusive learning across both gender-specific and mixed programs.	○ ○ ○
Continue to develop, refine and evaluate the utilisation and impact of toolkits, resources and other WiHPC initiatives by NSOs	○ ○ ○
Lead the collation and publication of representation data and lead indicators that demonstrate progress and impact of the WiHPC project.	○ ○ ○
Annually report on % of Women Coaches at Olympic and Paralympic Games (Summer and Winter) and Commonwealth Games.	○ ○ ○
Annually report on % of Women Head Coaches leading National Teams and increase depth of data reporting.	○ ○ ○
Maintain alignment with the National Gender Equity in Sports Governance Policy and the HP2032+ Win Well Gender Equity Framework.	○ ○ ○



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



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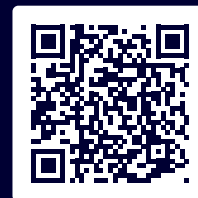


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For more information visit
[AIS.gov.au/coach-development/wihpc](https://ais.gov.au/coach-development/wihpc)