



Women Leaders in Sport Initiatives

Evolution - Women's Talent Coach Program

Women in High Performance Coaching



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Funded by Women Leaders in Sport Grant
NIL cost for participants



12-month women only coach program



Supported by experts in the Leadership Circle Profile



16-20 Women in Senior Leadership within National HP sports and Institutes

Aims and Objectives

- Remove barriers to development and support women who want to progress or are newly appointed into coaching leadership roles.
- Retain talented women coaches who challenge the status quo and increase diversity across Australian sport.

The coaching stream supports women in senior high-performance roles who are ready to grow their decision-making, strategy and leadership influence.

Description

Since 2017, the Talent Programs for Women in High Performance have supported 300+ participants across four streams: Coaches, Executives, Athletes and STEM.

The program involves two or three residential over a 12-month period, online discussions, executive coaching and additional support mechanisms. It is facilitated through the AIS staff in collaboration with experts.



Program Format

Selection:

- 16 to 20 women
- Every second year (coaching)
- EOI by targeted application

Format:

- Two residentials (3 days)
- Monthly online discussions
- Guest coaches / leaders
- Leadership Circle Executive Coaching sessions (x3)

Facilitators:

- AIS HP Coach Development Team Leaders
- Leadership Circle Profile expert

Evaluation:

- Annual evaluation
- 10-year report just completed

Outcomes and Impact

A ten-year review found the 17 Talent Programs strengthen leadership pipelines, retention and organisational capability. Participants reported lasting growth in confidence, leadership capability and networks that continue to create value after the program. Participants also reported greater confidence to pursue opportunities, change sectors, start businesses, study further and influence their organisations.

More than 60% of participants reported career progression, including moves into leadership and executive roles.





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Recommendations

- Regularly review learning outcomes and program design.
- Keep selection criteria and target cohorts clear.
- Engage skilled facilitators and subject-matter experts.
- Use blended, inclusive and flexible delivery.
- Provide follow-on support to sustain momentum and retention.
- Track participant progress as part of ongoing evaluation.
- There is narrative around the need and future of women only programs.

Application for others

Women-only talent programs strengthen leadership pipelines, improve retention and build organisational capability. For participants, they develop self-awareness, confidence, strategic thinking and the ability to navigate complex environments.

For greatest impact, connect programs to the broader learning ecosystem and continue support through mentoring, alumni networks, executive coaching, senior sponsorship and professional development. Invest in organisational culture so the wider system can support diverse leaders.

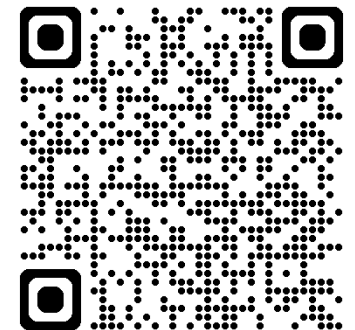
Evidence suggests that women only programs are poorly understood. They are seen as the solution for poor representation of women in STEMM, Coaching and leadership roles. However, when delivered for women at critical points in their career, with the right leadership and content then have a significant impact on development and retention of underrepresented groups.



Women's Talent Programs

2026 Women in Coaching Talent Program Cohort Connects in Brisbane

Professional Skills Programs





“No matter what sport you come from or what stage of your career you’re in, we all share experiences, behaviours and values and we’re going through similar things in a fast-paced sport environment. Finding that connection is so important. We’re all so successful in our own right, but you still sometimes question or downplay your ability. I walk away from these sessions thinking, ‘I can do this.’”

- Participant Coach