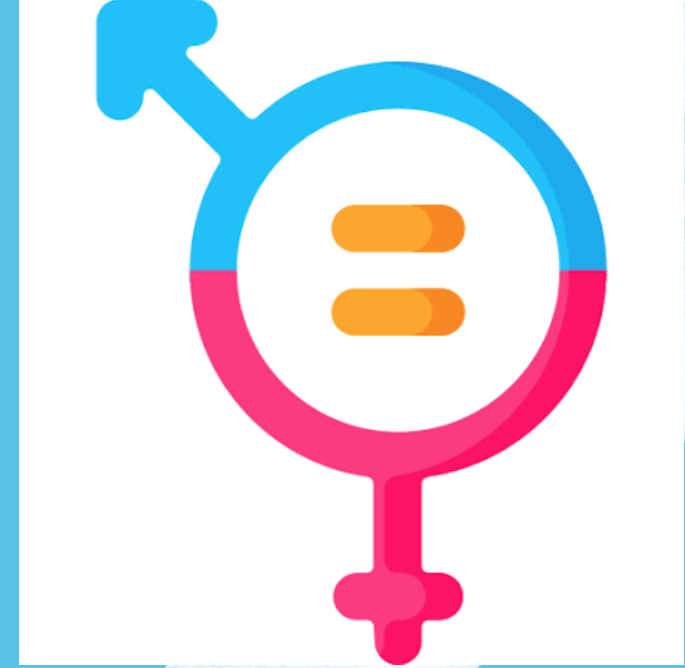


The Changing Landscape of Women in the Olympic Movement: Leadership, Gender Balance and Equality

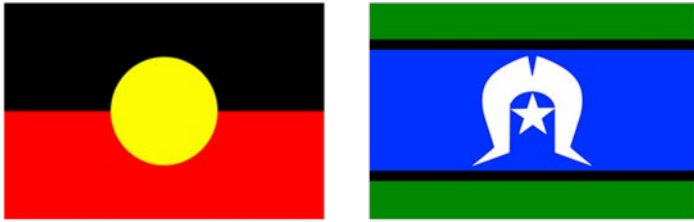
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Victoria University Olympic and Paralympic Research Centre (OPRC)

Supported by The Institute for Health and Sport



Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge, recognise and respect the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Traditional Owners of University land where our campuses are situated. In Victoria, the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin Nation; in Sydney, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation; and in Brisbane, the Turrbal and Yugara people.

As we share our own knowledge practices within the University, we acknowledge that the land on which we meet, learn and grow is a place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We honour the depth of wisdom held by Aboriginal communities and recognise their enduring connection to Country. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

Agenda

1. An overview of women in the Olympic movement
2. Women coaching at the Olympic level
3. Women in high performance coaching – Australia
4. Panel discussion
5. Q & A



What does the Sport landscape look like?

- ◆ A 2016 global study of NSOs found women comprised: directors (19.7%), chairs (10.8%), and CEOs (16.3%)
- ◆ In 2023, women were still only 25% of chairs, 23% of CEOs (Clearinghouse for Sport, 2023).
- ◆ In Norway (with quotas) women = 23.6% NF presidents, and 24.6% of Sec Gens in 2023 (Norges idrettsforbund, 2024).

The *Sports Political Power Index 2021-2023* - of 1736 elected positions in sports of 133 EFs and IFs 133 presidents there were only 9 women – 93.2% presidents were men. Of the 1736 positions, 24.8% elected positions are held by women - consistently increasing from 17% in 2017, 20% in 2019, and 23 % in 2021.

The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations assessment of Executive Boards

- ◆ 4 IFs had at least 40% women.
- ◆ 15 IFs - 25% and 40% women.
- ◆ 11 IFs - 15% and 25% women.
- ◆ 2 IFs 5% - 15% women, and
- ◆ None had less than 5% women on their executive boards (ASOIF, 2024)

IOC and Gender

- ◆ The [Olympic Charter](#) states the IOC is to “*encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view of implementing the principle of equality of men and women*” (Chapter 1, Rule 2, paragraph 8).
- ◆ Olympic Agenda 2020 - IOC recommendation 11 :
 - work with the IFs to achieve **50% female participation** in the Olympic Games and
 - encourage the inclusion of **mixed-gender team** events.
- ◆ The Olympic Games now the largest, gender equal sporting event in the world.
- ◆ Paris OG 2024 = the first in history to achieve full gender parity on the field of play.

Governance and Leadership

- “*Members of the Olympic Movement are advised to set a minimum target of **30% for women’s representation in their governing bodies by 2020**, and to adopt accompanying measures that will help them to reach this goal*” (IOC EB, 2016)
- Led to 25 recommendations to advance gender equality (IOC EB, 2018)
- In Olympic Agenda 2020+5, the IOC adopted [21 Gender Equality and Inclusion Objectives for 2021-2024](#) (2021)

International
Olympic
Committee

GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES 2021–2024



Current - IOC and gender

- ◆ IOC *Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commission* (2022) – advance gender equality and inclusion for women in all their diversity.
- ◆ Criteria were introduced for new sports to have at least one women's and one men's event in order to be included in the Olympic Games.
- ◆ The upcoming Summer Youth Olympic Games in Dakar in 2026 will go even further, with every sport, discipline and event being fully gender equal.

Gender Equality in the IOC leadership

- Kirsty Coventry (Zimbabwe) as the 10th President of the IOC, is the first women President in IOC history.
- As of September 2024, 42.4% of IOC commissions were chaired by women, up from 18% in 2013.
- As of March 2025:
 - 43% of active IOC Members (47 out of 109) were women – more than double the number in 2013, and ...
 - Women were 40% of the IOC EB's membership.
 - Women hold 50% IOC commission positions – a 150% increase from 2013.

Australia (as of 2025)

Women as Chairs/Presidents:

- ◆ Jane Flemming – Athletics Australia (2023-)
- ◆ Julie McDonald – Badminton Australia (2023-)
- ◆ Shevaun Bruland – Australian Sailing (2024-)
- ◆ Deserie Baynes – Shooting Australia (2025-)
- ◆ Tiffany Allen – Softball Australia (2025-)
- ◆ Maki Takk – Modern pentathlon (2025-)
- ◆ Dr Jean Kfoury – Taekwondo (2022-)

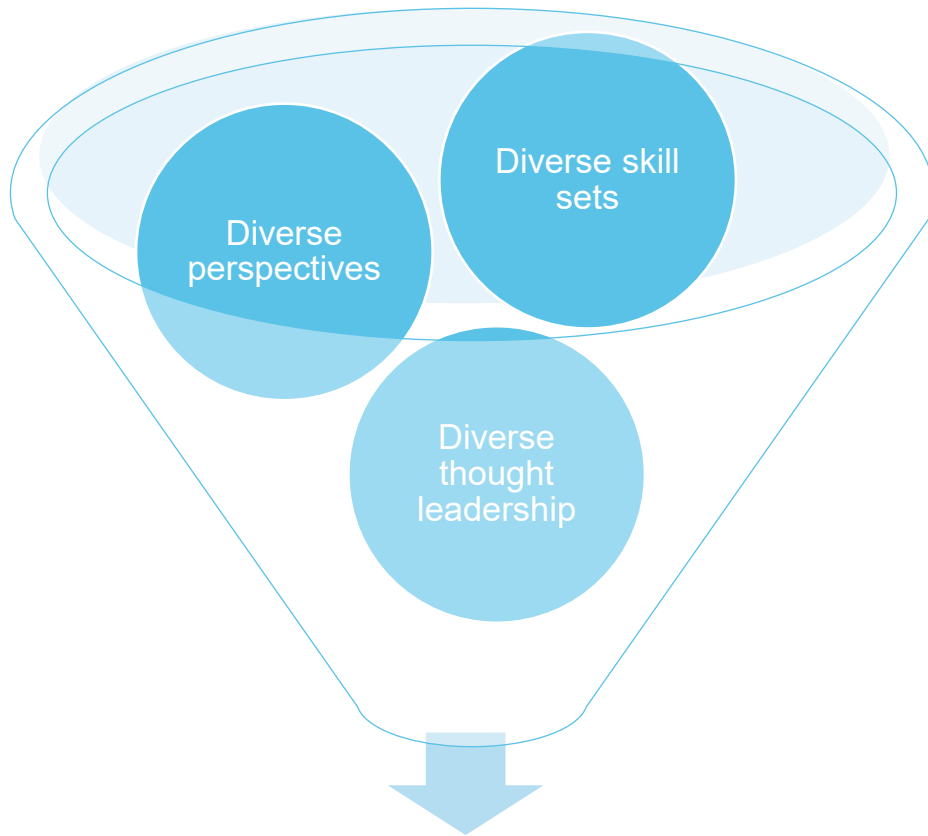
Out of 36 Olympic NSOs (AOC not incl)

- ◆ Women as Chair / President: 7 (19%)
- ◆ Women as CEO: 11 (30%)

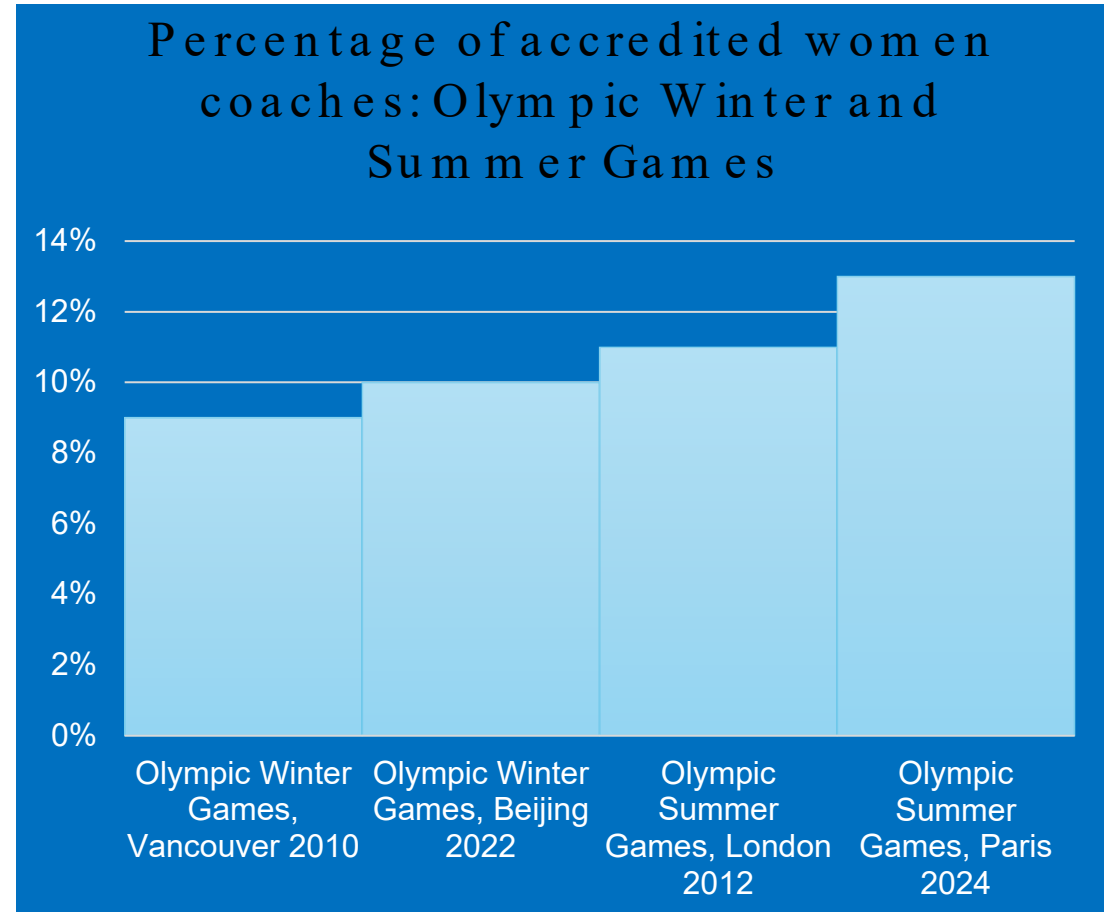
Women as CEOs:

- ◆ Dinah Glykidis – Boxing Australia(2021-)
- ◆ Marne Fechner – AusCycling (2021-)
- ◆ Alex Newton – Diving Australia (2022-)
- ◆ Kim Crane – Paddle Australia (2024-)
- ◆ Sarah Cook – Rowing Australia (2023-)
- ◆ Alex Anasson – Skate Australia (2025-)
- ◆ Sarah Loh – Softball Australia (2023-)
- ◆ Nicole Adamson – Table Tennis Australia (2023-)
- ◆ Rebecca Hamilton –Sport Climbing Australia (2025-)
- ◆ Emma Taylor - Judo Australia (2023-)
- ◆ Liz Van Rensburg – Modern Pentathlon (2025-)

◆ Why the focus on women as coaches at Olympic level?



Gender diversity increases innovation and performance for the benefit of the sport and society more broadly



GOOD PRACTICES TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN COACHES IN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS

OCTOBER 2025



1 FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

GOOD PRACTICE	ACTIONED
Recognise the unique qualities each woman brings as a coach, e.g. empathy, strong communication skills, a focus on holistic athlete development, and their role in safeguarding athletes and women coaches	☐
Identify individual athletes who demonstrate the skills to become a good coach and invite them to coach	☐
Target individuals, who may not be athletes, for key coaching roles	☐
Focus on coach retention at the start of coaching training, rather than immediately focusing on the athlete	☐
Build confidence and self-esteem to empower each woman	☐
Provide training to enable each woman to build their mental health, well-being and resilience to gender inequity	☐
Identify what each woman needs to make them feel happy, welcome and protected	☐
Create educational programmes tailored to individual needs	☐
Create clearly visible opportunities for women to coach	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Enable women to confidently share opinions and not feel judged	☐
Initiate a network with women coaching at international level, e.g. to exchange issues, identify where to find help and how to solve problems faced as female coaches, and know that support is there	☐
Expand this network to include a formal educational component	☐
Approach women individually, encouraging them to join women's coaching networks, both internal and external to the sport	☐
Educate male coaches and staff on how to support women coaches	☐
Increase the number of women coaching at youth level	☐
Provide women with supportive coaching experiences that enable them to learn how to address challenging situations	☐
Enable cross-over when it comes to coaching elite female and male athletes, e.g. a woman moves from coaching female athletes to male athletes, then returns with learnings to coach female athletes	☐
Embed coaching internships for women in every team	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Mentoring practices:

Establish a mentoring initiative pairing women with experienced coaches from the national men's league, enabling skill acquisition and learnings specific to coaching elite male athletes	☐
Activate an online mentorship programme focused on an individual needs approach, where each mentor provides advice to two mentees on how to respond in difficult situations	☐
Facilitate a coach mentorship programme that supports the development pathway of women, beginning as youth coaches	☐
Provide support to National Federations in developing coach mentorship programmes for women	☐
Enable women to coach and mentor male and female coaches	☐
Introduce a mentoring and shadowing programme, e.g. shadowing a mentor who coaches at international/Olympic level (preparation, scouting, motivation, etc.) before and after the Games	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Build inclusive environments before focusing on increasing the number of women coaches	☐
Recognise having more women coaches as a priority within the organisation's strategic plan	☐
Support member federations' cultural changes and build safe environments targeted to women coaches	☐
Celebrate gender equality in elite coaching	☐
Conduct female-specific coaching projects in each continent	☐
Gain Women's Coach Committee (or equivalent) feedback to make good choices and enhance practices	☐
Conduct an IF women coach development programme	☐
Introduce scholarship targets for women in leadership programmes or ensure scholarships are gender balanced	☐
Establish measurement targets, e.g. 50% gender representation or a 30% minimum of either gender on the coaching team	☐
Recommend women coaches overlooked in male-dominated member federation coach proposals	☐
Facilitate the sharing of opinions and experiences by small groups of female and male coaches	☐
Conduct female-only coaching courses alongside tailored/individualised programmes, e.g. mentoring	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Fast-track coaching courses for former elite women athletes, e.g. eight days instead of the set 11 days	☐
Regularly share information on training opportunities, networking events and career advancement paths	☐
Recognise that diversity among coaching staff is required in coach job descriptions	☐
Support member federations during coach selection, e.g. attend the selection process	☐
Invite women coaches to give presentations at training and network events	☐
Showcase women coaches on websites and in newsletters	☐
Select women to be involved in IF coaching programmes	☐
Showcase women coaches as role models, to inspire women athletes to become coaches	☐
Establish the rule that, when celebrating the athlete, the coach is also celebrated	☐
Build baseline data and longitudinal tracking to monitor progress and trends and identify shortfalls	☐
Gain feedback from women coaches to enhance IF coach development programmes	☐
Give priority on accommodation and travel expenses to women coaches and, if applicable, young family members, when attending camps	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Reduce the amount of travel by swapping coaches during international training and events

☐

Enable strong connections with continental coordinators to identify how the IF can support senior women coaches individually and/or in groups

☐

Address the investment gap and maintain support to ensure increased numbers of women are in the coaching pipeline

☐

Ensure a structured and transparent coaching pathway, with well-defined opportunities for progression at every level

☐

4

EMBRACE FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Increase the number of women in senior positions, e.g. Presidents, Vice-Presidents

☐

Ensure women coaches are represented in senior committees

☐

Review the Coaching Commission's composition to ensure strong representation of women coaches

☐

Provide fixed-term contracts aligned with major events

☐

Change traditional cultural norms, e.g. visibility of women coaches in men's teams

☐

Educate leaders using data that showcases the success of women coaches for their sport

☐

Provide accessible education such as e-learning to gain a coach licence

☐

Pause the coach licence expiry date during paternity leave

☐

Ensure a smooth return to high-performance coaching from maternity and paternity leave

☐

Provide an additional funding stream for women coaches to bring their family when travelling (also noted at the organisational level)

☐

Introduce a rewards system for member federations that activate sustainable programmes to encourage women coaches

☐

Listen to and address the needs of coaches from a global perspective

☐

◆ A resource to activate



GOOD PRACTICES TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN COACHES IN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS

OCTOBER 2025



◆ Women in High Performance Coaching

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.

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

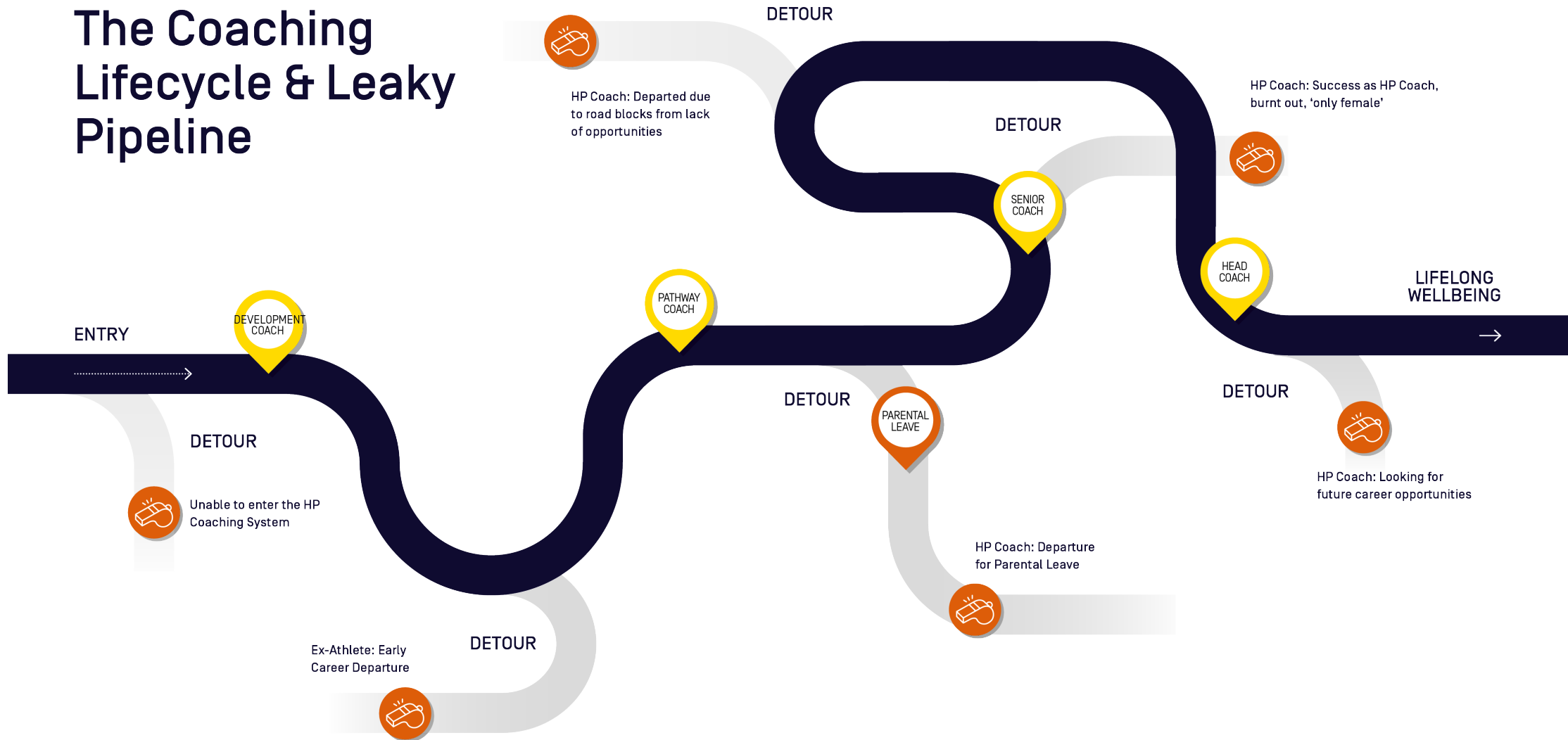
WiHPC focuses on identifying and dismantling cultural and systemic structural barriers that hinder women's development and progression in coaching careers.



DEVELOP SUPPORTIVE PATHWAYS

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

The Coaching Lifecycle & Leaky Pipeline



◆ Levers of Change

Systems supporting diversity and belonging

Specific strategies, initiatives, and actions to assist organisations establish both formal and informal workplace structures, policies and procedures that foster inclusivity. This includes promoting transparent recruitment processes, implementing flexible work arrangements, ensuring job security, fair compensation, and providing equal opportunities to support women in high performance coaching.

Strategies for development

A visible and robust plan or framework that supports the learning pathway for women in high performance coaching. Development of thoughtful and proactive development to build a skilled and sustainable talent pool across the high performance sport system.

Behaviours, culture and environment

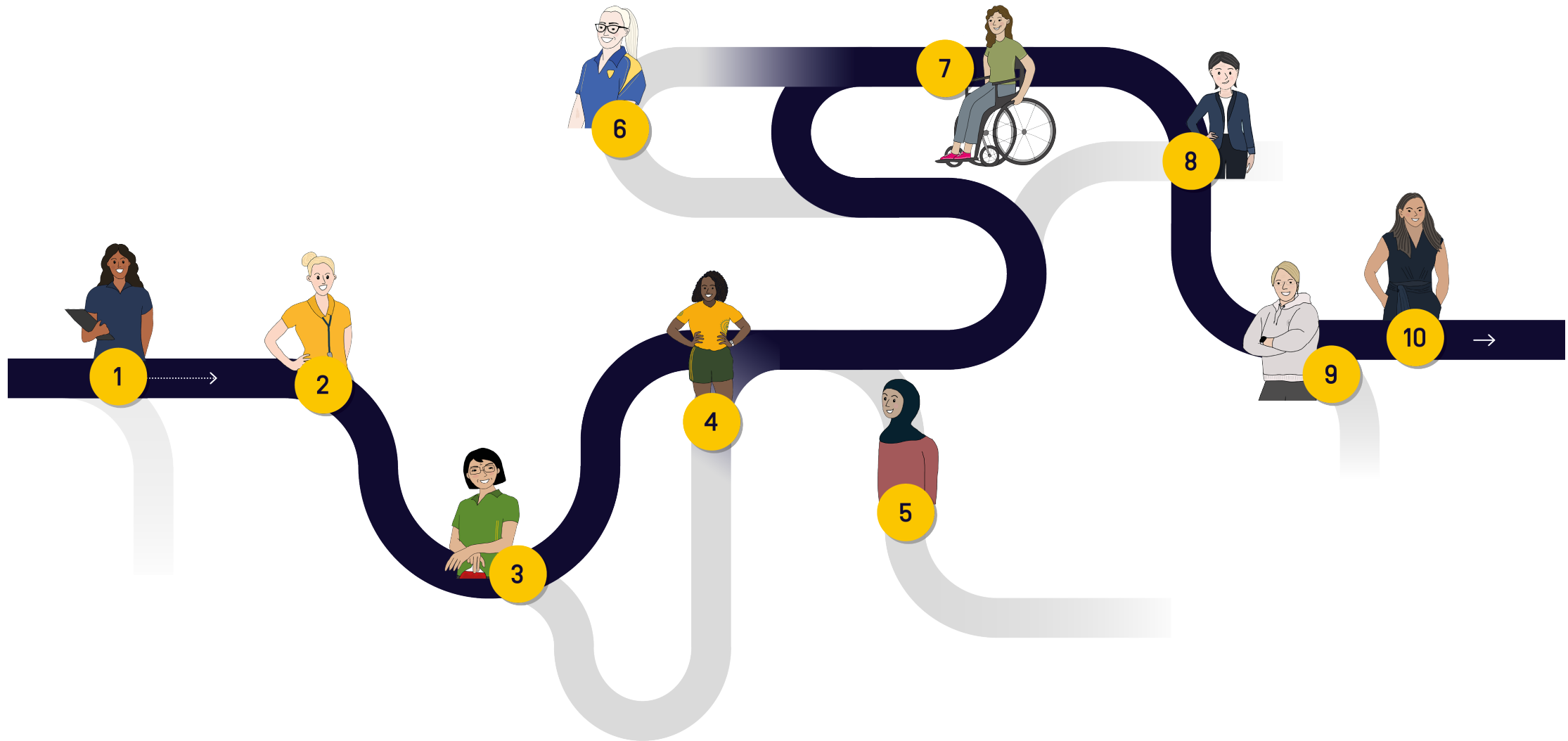
Targeted strategies, initiatives and actions to enable organisations to understand and influence respectful cultures, embed diverse leadership and foster behaviours that positively impact upon the experience for women in high performance coaching.

Visibility and storytelling

Create a platform to amplify the presence of coaches, allies and leaders spearheading change, share success stories – the 'bright spots' enhance networks and communities, and build accountability throughout the high performance system.



◆ The Coaching Journey



Panel Discussion and Q&A