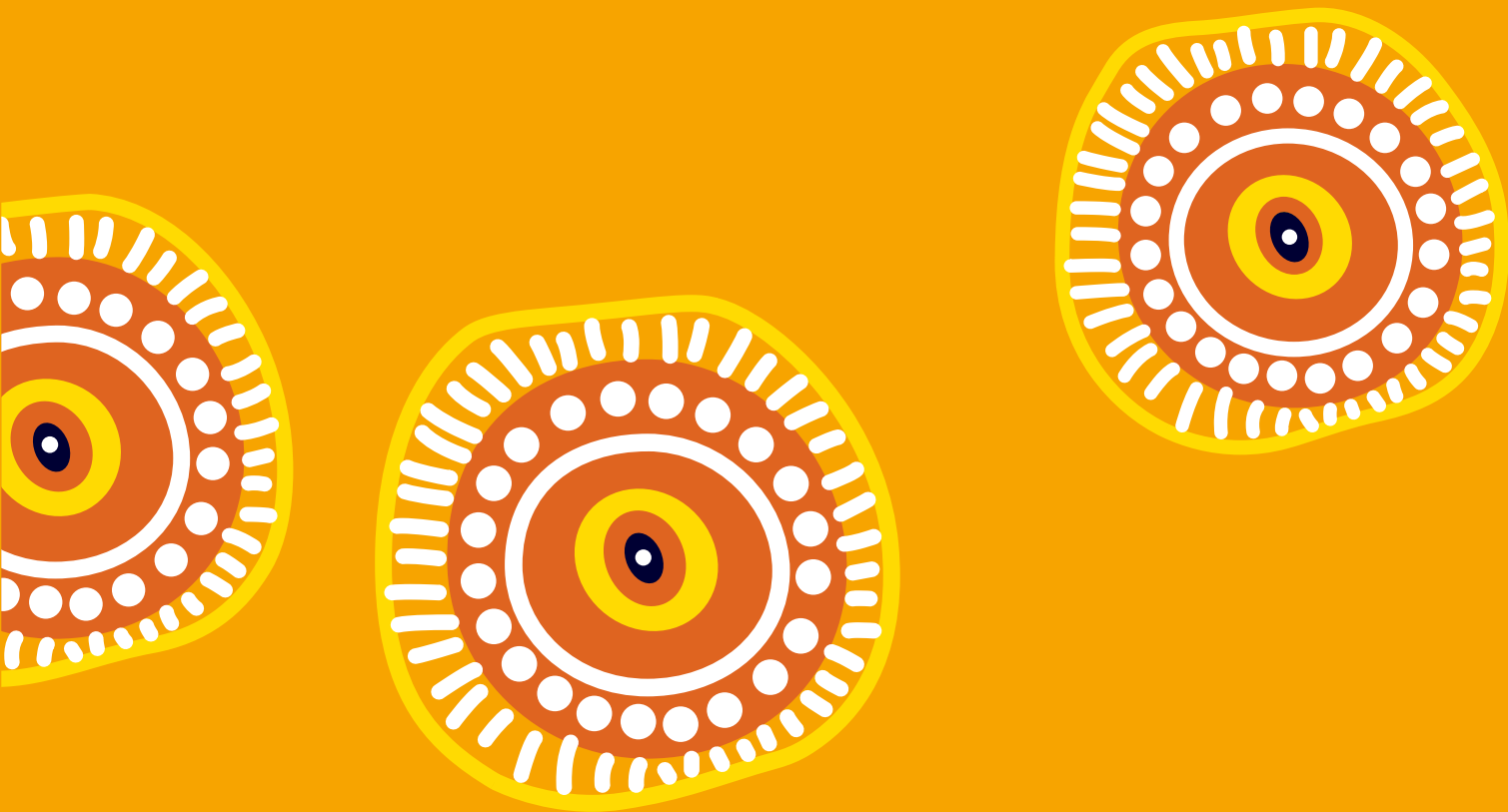




# Hidden Talent Pools

## 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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# Hidden Talent Pools

## Broadening Women's Coaching Talent

### Purpose

**This toolkit provides examples of how organisations can uncover their hidden talent pools and target individuals; proactively re-engage; and support part time opportunities.**

### Harnessing the hidden talent

**To harness these hidden talent pools effectively, we need to be proactive:**

- Look beyond current coaches and explore roles in sport that have transferrable skills. (e.g., cross sport from gymnastics to aerial skiing, intra-sport sport science to coaching.)
- Directly target individuals outside the coaching system who may lack awareness of how to engage (this includes current or former athletes).
- Shift the focus from solely nurturing the next generation of coaches to identifying those who have left coaching but might consider returning. This includes women with older children who are now more amenable to flexible schedules.
- Actively seek out alternative income sources for part-time or volunteer coaches to sustain their engagement.



**I would have worked for nothing, but no-one asked me!"**

### Anonymous WiHPC Coach

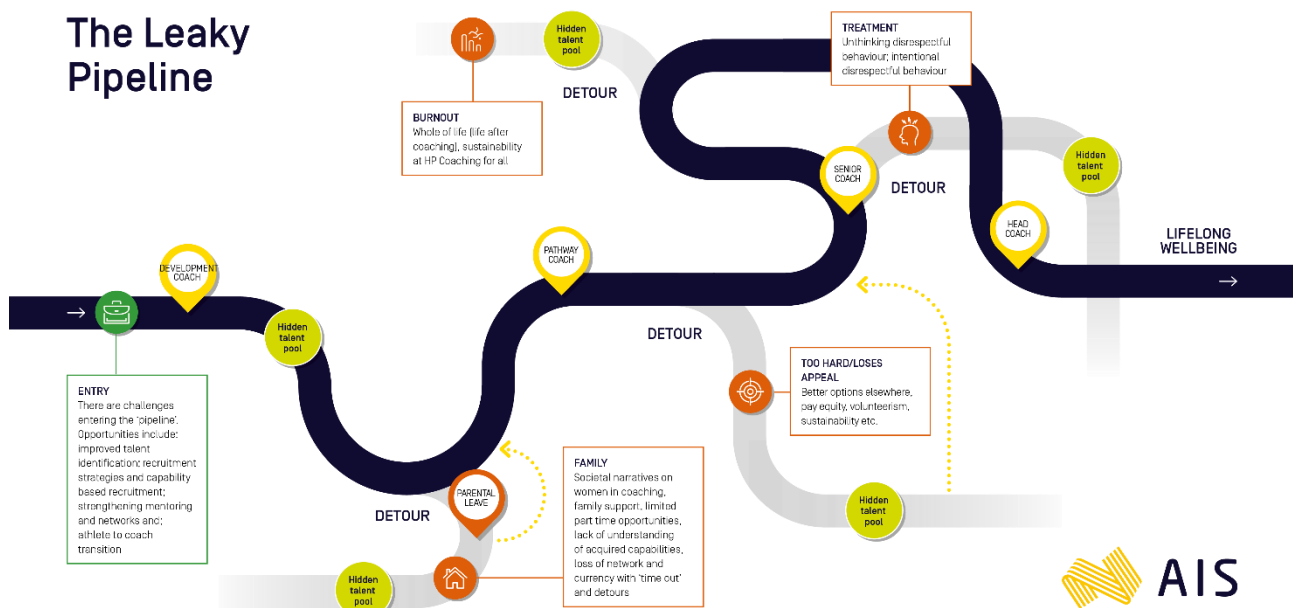


# The Leaky Pipeline

Throughout the Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) project, we heard many stories of why women coaches have left the coaching system.

The High Performance (HP) coaching workforce is 'leaking' talent throughout the pipeline. The reasons women leave is varied and consistent throughout the career pathway. Assisting key stakeholders to identify and understand why and when women are leaving presents an opportunity for us to create effective paths for re-entry through the application of appropriate strategies.

Identifying and re-engaging with coaches who have left the system uncovers hidden talent pools which represent a valuable and untapped resource for advancing gender equity in coaching.



WORK180 is a global company that strives to enable women to choose workplaces where they can thrive. It promotes organisational standards that raise the bar for women in the workplace.

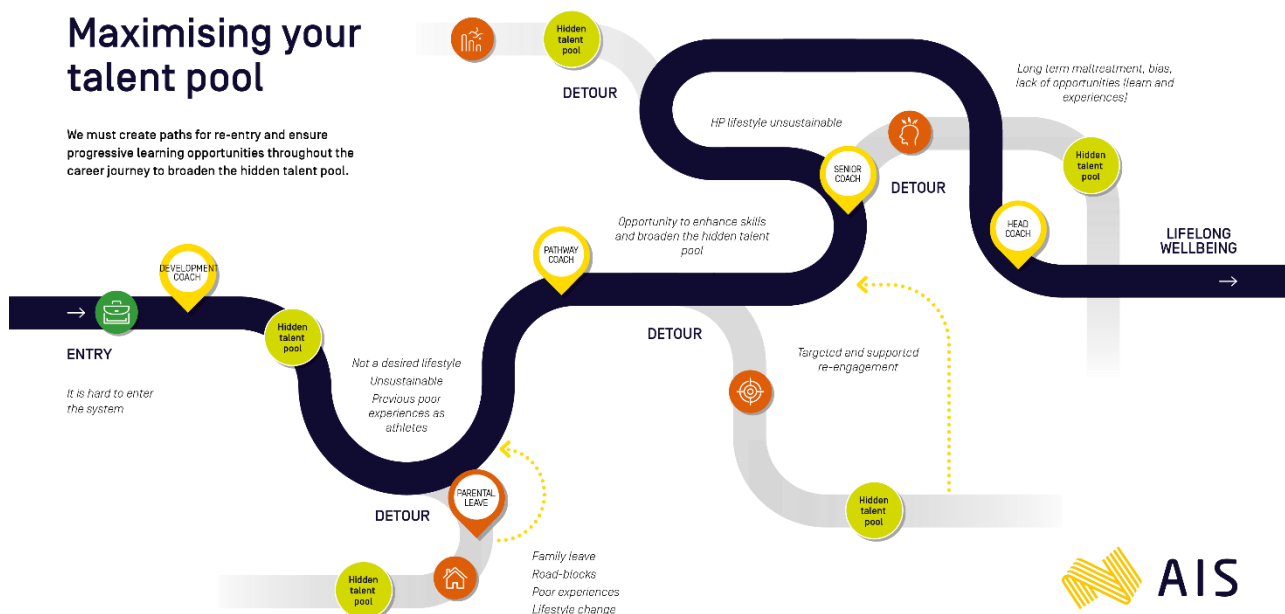
Refer below to the website and the following resource:

**Diversity Hiring Tactics That Trump the “Pipeline Problem” [Published September 2022]**

[Diversity Hiring Tactics That Trump the "Pipeline Problem" \(work180.com\)](https://work180.com)

# Maximising your coaching talent pool

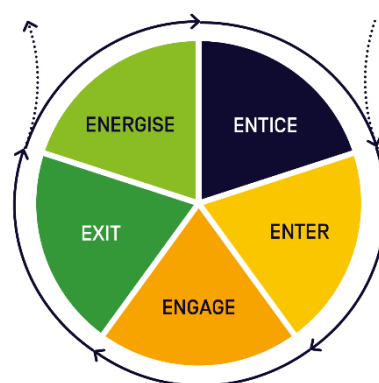
The departures from HP coaching present an enormous opportunity to uncover a hidden talent pools and subsequently maximise your talent pool. This applies not just to HP coaching but transitioning talent into other high performance roles. Through understanding the lived experiences of the women who enter, leave or are currently coaching in HP, organisations can not only uncover hidden talent and re-engage effectively, but they can also create retention and energising strategies that promote longevity, personal wellbeing and thriving.



## The Coaching Lifecycle

Strategically pinpointing resources and initiatives at appropriate stages in a coaches' career will impact more effectively. LaVoi & Boucher's (2021)<sup>11</sup> Lifespan Career Model outlines five strategies to be applied at each intervention point within a coach's lifespan.


- **Entice:** Encourage more women to enter High Performance coaching through various strategies.
- **Enter:** Support newcomers with role orientation and skill development.
- **Engage:** Foster mentorship, sponsorship, and inclusive environments while addressing life strategies like pregnancy and parental leave.
- **Exit:** Develop strategies to support coaches leaving their roles voluntarily or involuntarily.
- **Energise:** Implement purposeful strategies for renewal, resilience, and personal growth.



<sup>11</sup> LaVoi, N. M., & Boucher, C. (2021). Supporting and Developing Women in Sport Coaching. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 177-197). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003028642-14>

# Where is the hidden talent pool?

The table below highlights opportunities where organisations and individuals can uncover, identify, monitor, and re-engage their hidden talent. Coaches are shaped by previous experiences therefore it is important to understand that strategies applied at each point in the career journey need to be different.

	Why	Opportunity
 <b>Entry</b>	<p><b>This is a talent pool of young coaches who never enter the High Performance coaching system.</b></p> <p>Retiring athletes with knowledge of high performance sport and potential coaching talent do not enter the system. They understand performing at the elite level of sport. They may not know how to coach, but they have an inherent understanding of the high performance landscape.</p> <p>The lived experiences of women coaches inform us that it is difficult to enter the high performance coaching system.</p>	<p><b>There is an enormous opportunity to identify and actively support the transition of potential coaches into the system.</b></p> <p><b>ENTICE:</b> Developing deliberate strategies to support unknown potential coaching talent to enter HP coaching needs to be carefully considered. Identification of coaching talent can be enhanced by understanding the individual's competencies (what they can do), knowledge (what they know), experience (what they have done) and personal attributes (who they are). Refer to 'Active' preparation during athletic career vs 'passive' pathway (Blackett et al., 2018).<sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>ENTER   ENGAGE:</b> Developing strategies and opportunities to identify, nurture and develop early career talent can open windows of opportunity for more talent. A robust monitoring and evaluation program to support early talent is recommended. Additional mechanisms are (1) creating a data base of potential talent and maintaining contact with them regularly, (2) capability based recruitment strategies, and (3) sponsoring and mentorship. Current programs are: The AIS Athlete Accelerate program and the Career Practitioner Referral Program.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Blackett, A.D., Evans, A.B., & Piggott, D. (2018). 'Active' and 'passive' coach pathways: Elite athletes' entry routes into high-performance coaching roles. *International Sports Coaching Journal*, 5(2), 213-226. doi:10.1123/iscj.2017-0053



## Early Dev't Coaches

**There are many early Development Coaches who leave the HP coaching system.**

The harsh reality of high performance coaching means coaches leave the system early. Sustaining the HP coaching lifestyle has enormous challenges, there are often better employment options elsewhere and pay equity is problematic. Further, there are a large number of volunteer roles that require financial sustainability in other areas.



## Family Leave

**Societal narratives around women in coaching, lack of parental support and limited part time opportunities creates many unsurmountable challenges for women HP coaches.**

With little or no parental leave available in HP sport many women leave HP coaching and are not actively encouraged to remain coaching. In Many cases they are informed that they need to reapply for their job or must return to full time coaching.

There is a lack of understanding of acquired capabilities through experience and transparency with recruitment strategies. Whilst on a 'time out' or 'detour' from coaching women coaches not only lose

**Creating strong mechanisms for early Development Coaches can slow the talent drain. Building an understanding of the departures and maintaining a talent data base can uncover hidden talent.**

**ENTICE | ENTER:** Utilise strategies from above to identify the 'right' talent with potential to coach in the HP environment. A current program in operation is the National Generation 2032 Coach Program.

**ENGAGE:** Development mechanism such as mentorship, allyship, individual learning plans and networks of support can have a significant impact on developing and supporting talent within the early stages of career.

**EXIT:** Create deliberate strategies to support coaches leaving their roles voluntarily or involuntarily. This is an opportunity to maintain connection and engagement for support and potential future re-engagement.

**ENERGISE:** Purposeful strategies for to support resilience, personal growth and coach wellbeing are important. 'Early leavers' may not return to coaching but may have ambitions and talent to stay within the sport in a different capacity.

**Active promotion and support of parental leave, prior, during and following family leave will have a significant impact.**

The Parental Leave Toolkit provides a framework, templates and communications strategies that will enable smooth transitions for coaches and reduce legal and reputational risks for organisations.

**ENGAGE | EXIT | ENERGISE | ENTER:** Support during the exit into parental leave, during and returning from leave is instrumental for the coaches to feel they belong and can continue to contribute to the HP environment in a meaningful way.



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their network and connections but they lose currency with their knowledge and experience.

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## Extended Leave

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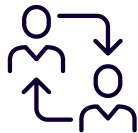
**The lifestyle coaching in HP coach as a parent is problematic; workload, afterhours commitments, extensive travel, and volatile job security create challenges for all coaches.**

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Many women coaches will depart coaching once they begin a family and they may remain out of the coaching workforce for an extended period. Part time coaching options in HP are limited, either by the organisation or appropriate talent to job share.

Lack of travel support and parental leave mechanisms create lifestyle and financial limitations for women coaches who have a family.

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## Re-Entry

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**There is little or no mechanisms to enable women coaches to re-enter with the High Performance sport community.**

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Environment and organisational culture have the biggest impact upon the experiences of women in HP coaching. During the career journey many instances of unthinking, disrespectful behaviour and or intentional disrespectful behaviour occur.

Regardless of whether the exit is voluntary or involuntary, coaches who exit HP coaching feel like they do not belong. The loss of network

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Monitoring the talent departure pool following a family leave 'detours' provides an opportunity to uncover the hidden talent pool of talent that has not returned to the HP landscape.

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**Part time coaching options, active talent transfer into alternative HP roles and maintaining engagement with departing talent can retain and build your talent pool.**

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**ENGAGE | ENERGISE:** Actively facilitating part time or job share arrangements, and identification of talent transfer opportunities can help retain your coaching talent.

Building employment flexibility, a part time talent pool to support job shares and being proactive with communication and support appropriately during the 'detour' (from full time work) creates a sense of belonging and value and builds retention.

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**Creating deliberate and proactive support and returnship strategies throughout the career pathway can reignite an interest in return to coaching.**

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**ENTICE | ENTER:** Deliberate returnship strategies need to be individualised at the appropriate inflexion point within the career lifestyle of a coach.<sup>3</sup> Further, consideration for individuals outside the coaching system (such as teachers) can also be targeted to entice into coaching. Capability based recruitment and talent transfer strategies can actively support talent re-entry.

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<sup>3</sup> LaVoi, N. M., & Boucher, C. (2021). Supporting and Developing Women in Sport Coaching. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 177-197). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003028642-14>



## Mature age Re-Entry

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and support contributes to their sense of loss with currency and experience.

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**Lack of currency and networks make it enormously challenging for mature age talent to re-engage with the HP sporting system.**

Women with older children may now be more amenable to flexible schedules, and it can often occur when their children participate in sport themselves.

The high performance system is highly dynamic and intensely competitive which results in currency lost quickly and past experience often forgotten or dismissed.

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**ENGAGE | ENERGISE:** Active engagement and upskilling opportunities should be offered with flexibility and open access to broaden the talent pool. Providing career support mechanisms and options for re-training promotes talent transfer.

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**Creating alumni networks, maintaining engagement, and building talent transfer opportunities contributes to proactive re-entry to HP coaching.**

**ENTICE | ENTER:** The lived experiences of women within the hidden talent pool in the mature age bracket provides an opportunity to create returnship and other re-engagement strategies. Understanding individual needs and early engagement of identified skills can be proactive to support the re-entry process.

**ENGAGE:** Ensure flexibility with coach education and development opportunities as women with families find it very difficult to access most education courses. Actively seeking alternative income sources for part-time or volunteer coaches can also build and sustain their engagement.

**ENERGISE:** Proactive networking and alumni programs can build a sense of belonging and value, and provide sponsorship, allyship and mentorship opportunities to build currency.

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# Strategies to act

Developing an action plan to understand your pipeline 'leak' and uncover hidden talent requires deliberate strategies. Leadership and management staff need to gain a deep understanding of the organisational culture and the environment within which women work, and what support is required for them to thrive. The career progression of women in coaching differs to that of men and deepening an understanding of key inflexion points enables them to understand the fuel and friction forces at play.



## Landscape

- Gain data and information regarding your coaching workforce talent and depth.



## Departure strategies

- Seek deep understanding of motivations and experiences of:
  - Your current workforce talent,
  - The departures,
  - The current and future workforce needs of athletes.
- Gain insight into what needs be undertaken to address the 'reasons' for departure and re-engage coaches, and at what level of the career journey.



## Identification and engagement

- Identify your hidden talent pool and consider those you do not know about.
- Create targeted opportunities with appropriate strategies, depending on career lifespan.



## Monitoring progress

- Establish monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress through the pipeline.
- Implement data management strategies monitor future talent departures.



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Sports Commission**



**ausport.gov.au**



Leverrier Street Bruce ACT 2617  
PO Box 176 Belconnen ACT 2616  
+61 2 6214 1111

