

## Case Study 7



# Athletics Australia Women in High Performance Coaching

Athletics Australia (AA) was awarded a grant through the AIS High Performance Coach Development Program (2022-2023) which supports Australia's high performance sport system to identify, develop, attract, and retain world-class coaches. In line with AA's High Performance Strategy of providing opportunities for under-represented groups in coaching, this program aims to support and accelerate the transition of women coaches with the potential and aspirations to coach in the high performance domain.

### Selection process

Women were selected through an EOI which targeted women coaches currently (or recently) coaching a NASS funded or world junior qualified athlete. There was also capacity to invite other women to specific activities/sessions where applicable. Thirteen coaches were selected in the new program bringing the number of women coaches being supported by AA High Performance Coach Development Programs to 22. This grant enabled us to implement a 2 year program providing bespoke opportunities and support designed to facilitate individual coach progression within the high performance pathway.

Some of the opportunities included:

- Joining the formal 12 month Coach Mentoring Program
- Individual Coach Development Plan – identify and target specific development needs and opportunities.
- Attendance at several 3 day workshops (including covering costs of children/infants and carers so coaches with young families could attend)
- Workshops covering targeted aspects of high performance coaching, led by both internal and external experts on coach development.
- Nomination and acceptance into AIS Coach and Athlete Accelerate Programs and WA WISH programs.
- Coach accreditation and other educational courses (eg, online seminars and short courses)
- International team coach roles

Importantly this program has supplemented and complemented AA's existing High Performance Coach Development initiatives within the current High Performance Coach Strategy:

- Athlete to Coach (A2C).
- Identified Coach Support Program (ICSP).
- High Performance Coach Mentoring Program.

## Status and impact to date

- Two workshops conducted (Nov 2022, May 2023) with a third scheduled Oct 2023. This will be held in conjunction with the AA HP Coach Workshop with some joint sessions as well as session specifically targeted to the Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) Group.
- 19 coaches selected as National team coaches (U20/23 European Tours, Commonwealth Youth Games, Pacific Games, World Cross Country, World University, World Para Championships and World Athletics Championships).
- Two coaches selected for AIS Elevate Coach Programs.
- One coach Selected in the World Athletics WISH Program.
- AA WiHPC WhatsApp group has been integral part of connecting the women, sharing stories, successes, and resources, and has created a very strong bond (sisterhood).
- Being part of the HP Coach Mentoring Program has helped expand their knowledge, perspective, technical and non-technical skill base as well as overall confidence and competency needed to pursue and achieve career goals and longevity in High Performance Coaching.
- Role Models – the impact of our women coach mentors (Sharon Hannan, Penny Gillies and Lyn Forman) at the workshops has been instrumental in the growth and development of all coaches in the program. It's hard to describe in a few sentences just how important they have been in this program.

## Recommendations

- Both financial and 'right fit' human resources are critical to the success of both this and future programs.
- Most importantly providing an open, safe, and supportive environment for women in all levels of coaching is a key to gaining the trust, promoting confidence and the appropriate opportunities at the right time.
- We are making real progress and inroads but must continue with the energy, passion, and determination to ensure WiHPC is not just a one-off project.



### Links

- [Expression of Interest form](#)
- <https://www.athletics.com.au/news/chloe-stevens-womens-high-performance-coaching-program/>
- <https://www.athletics.com.au/news/coaching-tip-of-the-stolberg-family-first-for-high-jump-duo-/>
- <https://www.athletics.com.au/news/launch-high-performance-coach-mentoring-program/>
- <https://www.athletics.com.au/news/fagan-fostering-the-future/>
- <https://www.athletics.com.au/news/troode-guided-by-greats-coach-appreciation-month-/>

