



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



ASPIRE Coach Program Guidelines

Opening date and time: 8:00am AEST on 6 July 2026

Closing date and time: 9:00pm AEST on 2 August 2026

Enquiries: If you have any questions, contact aspire.coach@vis.org.au



WOMEN IN HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHING

AIS VIS ASPIRE COACH PROGRAM



Victorian Institute of Sport Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Institute of Sport sits on the lands of the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and play sport. The Bunurong/Boon Wurrung traditional land extends from the Werribee in the east across to Leongatha in the west and includes the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island. Bunurong/Boon Wurrung People are part of a language group or nation known as Kulin. Their cultural, ceremonial and spiritual life was shaped by the seasons through the availability of their natural resources. Through thousands of years of observation, Bunurong People were able to predict the availability of their season's resources by certain change in plant growth and animal behaviour. Bunurong People played an active and important role in the protection and preservation of the land and environment surrounding the Victorian Institute of Sport which we enjoy today. We acknowledge and pay our respects to ancestors of this country, Elders, knowledge holders and leaders – past, present and emerging.

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1. About the program

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the 2026 Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), Victorian Institute of Sport ASPIRE Coach Program (the Program).

Applicants should read these guidelines thoroughly before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the Program
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how applications are considered and selected
- how applicants are notified
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

The Program and process will be administered by the VIS Coach Development Team, in conjunction with the AIS High Performance (HP) Coach Development team, with specialist advice and oversight provided by the AIS Research Team.

1.2 Background

The AIS HP Coach Development Program exists to enhance the capabilities of Australia's HP coaches, sports, and system in a uniquely Australian way for the purposes of enhancing athlete experience and performance. The AIS HP Coach Development Strategy, entitled *ENHANCING to LOS ANGELES 2028*, governs the design and delivery of programs, initiatives, and experiences and can be found on the AIS website [Australia's High Performance Coach Development Strategy](#).

The AIS recognise the unique challenges and issues each organisation faces and is committed to supporting sports who are seeking to create opportunities for their developing cohort of next generation coaches, particularly women coaches.

1.3 Purpose

The ASPIRE Coach Program is a 3-day initiative designed to support the development of women coaches who aspire to enter and thrive in the HP coaching landscape.

This initiative aims to support and enhance the skills of early-career aspiring women coaches by providing opportunities to develop:

- Self-awareness
- Understanding of the HP environment
- Communication and career navigation skills

Insights from the Women in High Performance Coaching (WiHPC) Project reveal significant entry barriers for women coaches, including:

- Limited access to HP coaching pathways
 - Unclear role expectations and commitments
 - Inadequate remuneration
 - Restricted opportunities for professional development
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These challenges often lead to early exits from the HP system, preventing long-term career progression.

1.4 Program overview

The ASPIRE Coach Program will focus on developing the knowledge and competencies of Australia's early-career women coaches specific to:

- Awareness and understanding of self
- Understanding the HP landscape regarding role clarity, expectations, available development resources and networks
- Development of communication and navigational skills to support entry into the HP environment

The program has been co-designed by women coaches and will be delivered by a leadership team of women coaches.

The program will include:

- Co-facilitated delivery with a women coach leadership team
- 1 x Virtual meeting prior to the workshop
- 2 x Preparation Tasks (Self Assessment Tool and AIS HP Coach Self Evaluation Tool)
- 1 x 3-day face-to-face learning experience
- Access to people and experiences who will share their lived experiences and journeys to meet program needs
- 3 Virtual sessions in small groups in the following 6 to 12 months

Program Dates:

- Friday 2 October 2026
- Saturday 3 October 2026
- Sunday 4 October 2026

Venue:

- Victorian Institute of Sport, Albert Park, Melbourne

Inclusions:

- Individual Profile Tool
- AIS HP Coach Self Evaluation Tool
- Meals and accommodation for 3 days
- 3-day learning experience
- Follow up network activities for 6 to 12 months.

There is an opportunity for 30 women coaches to be selected into this program.

Note:

- Travel costs to the Victorian Institute of Sport, Melbourne are at the expense of the participant and **not included**.

2. Application process



Applications open: 8:00am (AEST) Monday 6 July 2026

The Program information and guidelines will be distributed via direct email to the HP NSO/Ds with recommendations to share at the SSO/D level and with individual coaches. We will also share directly via the Women in High Performance Coaching Network and ASC Social Media Channels.



Check eligibility

To be considered for the Program, it is important coaches check the eligibility criteria before applying – refer to Section 3.1.



Submit application by 9:00pm (AEST) Sunday 2 August 2026

Each individual coach must complete the application form and address all eligibility and assessment criteria and provide relevant supporting documentation.



Eligibility check

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not progress to further assessment. You will be notified if not eligible.



Assessment

Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria by the select panel and shortlisted for approval.



Approval

The Executive General Manager of AIS Performance will approve the recommended applications.



Notification of outcome – 20 August 2026

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via direct email.



Pre-Program Work – September 2026

All selected participants will be required to complete two pre-program tasks. Details will be provided within your confirmation letter.



Program reporting

All eligible, but unsuccessful applicants will be offered an opportunity to join the WiHPC Talent Pool and participate in 3 virtual learning sessions in the next 12 months. All eligible and successful applicants will be required to complete the program survey and will be offered the opportunity to attend some post program network activities.

3. Eligibility criteria

3.1 Who is eligible to apply?

Applications must be submitted by the individual coaches. It is recommended that NSO/Ds and SSO/Ds support coaches with this application process.

To be eligible to apply for the Program, the following criteria must be met by the coach:

- Identify as a female aged 18 years and over
- Is an Australian citizen or has been granted permanent residence status
- Currently is a resident of and coaches in Victoria
- Has coached at the State or National level within an Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games Sport.
- Aspires to coach within the HP landscape.
- Is willing to engage in all facets of the ASPIRE Program, including the Individual profile, Self Evaluation Tool and all learning activities
- Can demonstrate and articulate the following capabilities through the application process:
 - Continuous learning
 - Self-awareness and emotional intelligence
 - Mission, Vision and Values (Passion)
 - Psychological Safety
 - Understanding the Individual
 - Communication
- Has a demonstrated commitment to ongoing training and development (i.e. continuous learner)
- Is available to attend the ASPIRE Coach Program **on 2–4 October 2026** in Melbourne.

4. Assessment criteria

All applications will initially be assessed by the ASC against the eligibility criteria.

Eligible applications will then proceed to assessment against the following criteria:

- Has coached at the State or National level within a funded HP Sport, with evidence of success at this level.
- Can demonstrate and articulate key capabilities within the application process.

There are 30 participant places available for the ASPIRE Coach Program.

4.1 Supporting documentation

Applicants will be required to submit the following documentation with their application:

- Application letter (no more than 700 words)
 - Video submission (no more than 2 minutes)
 - 1-page character reference.
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5. How to apply

Before applying, applicants must read and understand these guidelines and the application form.

Applications for the ASPIRE Coach Program are to be completed by the individual coach.

NSO/Ds and SSO/Ds are encouraged to support individual coaches to submit their applications.

Applications are to be completed online by the individual coach via the [VIS – platform](#) by the closing date (2 August 2026).

It is a requirement that the following be provided with your application:

- Video submission (no more than 2 minutes) Refer to 5.4
- Application letter (no more than 700 words)
- 1-page character reference

Please ensure the application is complete and information accurate, prior to submitting.

Applicants should keep a copy of the submitted application and any supporting documents.

You should request a copy of your application at the end of submission. If you do not receive an email, or experience technical issues please contact the VIS Coach Development Team via aspire.coach@vis.org.au

5.1 Timing of ASPIRE Coach Program processes

Applications must be submitted between the published opening and closing dates.

Activity	Key Dates
Applications open	8:00am AEST Monday 6 July 2026
Applications close	9:00pm AEST Sunday 2 August 2026
Assessment of applications	August 2026
Notification of outcome	By 20 August 2026

Late applications may be accepted at the discretion of Director High Performance – VIS Performance.

5.2 Questions and support during the application process

If you require any support or guidance with the application process, are unable to apply online, or identify an error in your application after submitting, please contact us at aspire.coach@vis.org.au

Open information sessions will be conducted to support applicants through this process. It is highly recommended to attend one of these sessions:

- Thursday 23 July 2026 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm AEST – [JOIN HERE](#)
OR
- Tuesday 28 July 2026 11:00 am – 12:00 pm AEST – [JOIN HERE](#)

5.3 Support materials for the application process

The [Australian HP Coach Development Framework](#) underpins the work designed and delivered for our current and future HP Coaches.

Selection will be based upon the AIS HP Coach Capability Framework. You can access this Framework here: <https://static.ausport.gov.au/hpccf/>

It is highly recommended that you take some time to understand the definitions of the capabilities and how these capabilities are defined according to Foundational, Developing, Proficient, Advanced or Expert. See the example below.

SELF

Cultivation of self awareness and continuous improvement to lead and role model ethically and with integrity.

Select each item to expand.

+ SELF AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

+ MISSION, VISION, VALUES

— CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Commits to continuous development, actively seeking opportunities for giving and receiving feedback to reflect, review, cultivate curiosity, foster creativity and expand knowledge and skills.

Foundational	Plans and engages in basic coaching training and development activities, seeks and analyses feedback and transfers knowledge through curiosity and willingness to learn.
Developing	Actively seeks out and designs learning opportunities for coaching and personal development, gives, receives and applies feedback from athletes and peers and demonstrates curiosity and creativity in coaching methods.
Proficient	Engages in and reflects on continuous learning and professional development, feedback and experiences to improve coaching performance and expand knowledge, skills, techniques and strategies.
Advanced	Seeks, shares and integrates learning and innovative coaching practices from inside and outside the sport and encourages and facilitates learning and creative problem solving for athletes and coaching staff.
Expert	Leads a culture of curiosity and continuous improvement, through HP learning and development initiatives and proactively allocates time for self and others to acquire, apply and share meaningful professional development and innovative coaching solutions.

5.4 Video submission

You are required to create a **2-minute video** (maximum) of yourself and upload a link via the portal. You are asked to explain the following:

1. Why do you coach?
2. What is your coaching philosophy?
3. Picture yourself in 5 years' time. What do you hope to be doing?

Note: We are not looking for professional editorial videos. Capture yourself speaking in one unedited shot. We want to hear from you!

Evidence we are seeking:

Clear communication, articulate and concise, 2-minutes (no longer – stick to time), realistic coaching aspiration at the HP level, targeted capabilities: Mission, Vision and Values and Communication

5.5 Application letter (700 words maximum)

Use the [HP Coach Capability Framework](#) to assist you in your application letter to the selection committee. You are asked to explain the following:

- Why would participating in this program be important for your development as a coach?
- Articulate in your letter how you demonstrate (1) **Continuous learning** and (2) **Self-awareness and emotional intelligence** plus **one additional capability** from the list below.
- You must provide evidence of this through examples of your behaviour, impact or experiences.
 - **Continuous learning**
 - **Self-awareness and emotional intelligence**
 - Mission, Vision and Values (Passion)
 - Psychological Safety
 - Understanding the Individual
 - Communication

Evidence we are seeking:

- Demonstration of at least three of the capabilities with evidence of this through:
 - Examples
 - Activities
 - Behaviours
 - Other
- You may provide more than 3 but must have evidence to back up the example.
- Priorities are **continuous learning** and **self-awareness and emotional intelligence**.

5.6 Character reference

You are requested to provide **a maximum 1 page character reference** from a manager / peer / parent of athlete / another person who has worked alongside you as a coach. They must have known you for at least 1 year in a coaching capacity. We are seeking to understand a little about you as a person, your character, values and beliefs.

Note: These capabilities might help them frame up the reference:

- Continuous learning
- Self-awareness and emotional intelligence
- Mission, Vision and Values (Passion)
- Psychological Safety
- Understanding the Individual
- Communication

Refer to the [HP Coach Capability Framework](#).

Evidence we are seeking:

- We are seeking evidence of your capabilities in three of the areas above.

6. The selection process

6.1 Assessment of applications

Applications will first be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

If eligible, the ASC will assess applications against the assessment criteria and against other applications. Each application is considered on merit, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- we have 30 participant places for the program.

6.2 Who will assess and approve the applications?

An assessment panel comprised of **four VIS and ASC staff** will convene and assess all eligible applications against the criteria.

The assessment panel will be responsible for the final decision including approval of the program participants.

Their decision is final in all matters and there will be no review or appeals process after the final decision.



7. Notification of application outcomes

The VIS will notify all applicants of the outcome of their application via email, including whether they have been successful or unsuccessful in receiving a position in the ASPIRE Coach Program.

7.1 Application feedback

Unsuccessful applicants may ask for feedback within two weeks of being advised of the outcome by contacting aspire.coach@vis.org.au.

The VIS will provide feedback within one week of the request.

7.2 Successful applications

If successful, notification will include:

- Acceptance into the ASPIRE Coach Program
- Personal Self Profile tool details
- AIS HP Coach Self Evaluation Tool
- Additional preparation details for the ASPIRE Coach Program on 2–4 October 2026.

8. Announcement of the Program participants

If successful, the applicants will be listed on the VIS website.

9. Probity

The VIS will ensure that the selection process is fair, is conducted according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud and corruption, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

9.1 Conflict of Interest

Actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest can affect the performance of the ASPIRE Coach program. There may be a conflict of interest, if VIS staff, any member of the Assessment Panel, or other personnel involved:

- have a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process, such as an employee of the VIS or member of the Assessment Panel;
- have a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

Conflicts of interest for VIS staff will be handled in accordance with the VIS's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Prior to commencing assessment, all involved personnel will be required to declare any conflict of interest.



9.2 Privacy

The VIS treats personal information according to the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles. This includes advising what personal information is collected, why it is collected and who it is shared with.

Personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

9.3 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Government entities, including those about this ASPIRE Coach Program opportunity, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to aspire.coach@vis.org.au

10. Complaints and feedback

The VIS welcomes your feedback.

All complaints about this process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about selection decisions for this ASPIRE Coach program should be submitted to hr@vis.org.au



