



PLAY

UMPOWERED COACHING CONFERENCE

NATIONAL 2026



WELCOME TO THE **UMPOWERED** COACHING CONFERENCE



Background

In 2024, the inaugural UMPowered Coaching Conference was launched, bringing together self-nominated Women and Girls Umpires and Umpire Coaches from every state and territory for a landmark national event. Twenty five passionate participants were selected to attend a two-day conference at AFL House, where they engaged in immersive sessions designed to enhance their coaching skills and expand their professional toolkit.

This initiative aligns with the Women and Girls Game Development Action Plan, which places a strong emphasis on creating supportive umpiring environments and fostering long-term involvement for women and girls in the game. Central to this vision is the presence of empowered women in umpire coaching roles—leaders who inspire, mentor, and cultivate inclusive, welcoming spaces for all.

Since its inception, the UMPowered program has proudly welcomed 49 alumni, a testament to its growing influence and impact. We are now excited to announce that applications are open for the third National UMPowered Conference, offering another opportunity to be part of this transformative movement in umpiring.

The Program

| PURPOSE |
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| <p>The UMPowered Coaching Conference is designed to identify and build the leadership skills of women & non-binary umpire coaches to start or continue their coaching journey.</p> <p>Its core mission is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase visibility and representation of women and girls in umpire coaching roles• Create a strong network of umpire coaches across Australia to serve as a point of connection and support.• Develop the coaching philosophies of participants and confidence in practicing strength-based leadership.• Upskill participants with technical umpire coaching strategies and tools.• Provide experiences that inspire and encourage participants to continue their umpire coaching careers. |
| AUDIENCE |
| <p>The conference is designed for women and non-binary umpire coaches and / or high potential umpires to take up coaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants must be over the age of 18• Be endorsed and supported by their umpiring group to engage in the conference• Be currently coaching or aspire to coach in the future |

Program Overview

The program will begin with a two-day Conference in Melbourne on the 28th and 29th March 2026, facilitated by Carol Fox and a number of AFL Umpiring experts. The workshop will cover key themes including:

- Confident Communication Tools
- Skill Acquisition
- Developing Umpires
- Reflection & Personal Development as a Coach
- Match Day Experience
- Behind the scenes

And so much more!

Participants are required to be available for both days of the Conference and for one smaller group session that will be held throughout the year online.

Conference details

Date: 28-29 March 2026





Time: Full days (exact times TBC)

Location: Melbourne

Accommodation and flights will be provided for interstate and applicable VIC participants.

Conference Inclusions

| ACTIVITY | COST COVERED | DETAILS |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Flights to and from Melbourne | ✓ | For interstate participants, the AFL will organise and cover the costs of 1 x return flight from your nearest major airport to Melbourne and back. Flights to the Conference will leave Friday evening or Saturday morning based on your availability. Flights back home will leave Sunday evening. |
| Accommodation in Melbourne | ✓ | Accommodation will be provided for interstate and eligible regional Victoria participants from the Friday (27th) and Saturday (28th) night with checkout Sunday (29th) morning. The Accommodation is within walking distance of AFL House which is where the Conference is being held |
| Meals during the conference | ✓ | The following meals will be provided: Saturday - Lunch, Afternoon Tea & Dinner Sunday - Breakfast, Morning Tea, Lunch & Afternoon Tea. All meals outside of this are your responsibility to cover. |
| Conference Experiences | ✓ | All experiences that are part of the Conference will be covered. This includes tickets to the AFL Match, Umpire Coach Box Access, the ARC Tour, and conference facilitators. |

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| Meals outside of the conference |  | Meals or reimbursement for meals outside of those listed in the inclusions will not be provided |
| Travel from your home to nearest major airport |  | The AFL will not cover the costs of transport from your home to the location of your departing flight |
| Travel between Melbourne Airport and the hotel |  | The AFL will not cover the cost of transport between Melbourne Airport and the Hotel. Detail on how to best travel between the Airport and the hotel will be shared with itinerary details. |
| Recreational expenses incurred while in Melbourne |  | The AFL will not cover any recreational costs incurred during your trip. Any additional items purchased that are not provided as part of Conference experiences are at the cost of the attendee. |

Submission Criteria

It is a requirement that the participant:

1. Be over the age of 18
2. Identifies as a woman or non-binary person
3. Is currently coaching or has a desire to coach
4. Is supported by the umpire group manager to engage in the program
5. Is available to attend both days of the conference

How to apply

1. Current Women & Girls Umpires and Coaches will be sent the link directly to apply.
2. Umpire groups may tap girls on the shoulder and encourage them to apply
3. Complete the form by the 30th January 2026

If you have any questions relating to the conference please reach out to National Women & Girls Experience Lead – Ashleigh Brennan via email: ashleigh.brennan@afl.com.au

Application submission process:

1. Review submission criteria
2. Complete application link: [2026 UMPowered Coaching Conference](#)
3. Await decision, announced mid-February

FAQs

CAN I APPLY IF I HAVE ENGAGED IN THE CONFERENCE IN PREVIOUS YEARS?

Thanks for your interest in continuing your coaching journey! This particular conference is reserved for new participants only. We encourage you to opt in for updates on future events and upskilling opportunities that may be offered through your State or Territory body.

I HAVE APPLIED BUT HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN THE PAST. SHOULD I APPLY FOR 2026?

Yes, you should definitely apply again for 2026! We truly value your enthusiasm and commitment to coaching. While the program is highly competitive with only 25 spots available, we encourage you to stay engaged and persistent. Be sure to keep an eye on updates through eDMs and your State or Territory programs for future opportunities and events.

I CURRENTLY COACH AFL PLAYERS, CAN I APPLY FOR THIS CONFERENCE?

That's fantastic to hear you're coaching AFL players! While many skills are transferable, this particular conference is specifically tailored to umpiring experiences and coaching philosophies. However, the National Coaching Team is planning a similar event designed for AFL coaches. Be sure to opt in for updates so you don't miss the chance to apply for upcoming programs and events.



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