



June 30th, 2020

Tim Heathcote
Events & Competition Coordinator
Volleyball Victoria

CC: Geoff Ritschell
General Manager
Volleyball Victoria

RE: Phantoms 2020 VVL Team Entries

Dear Tim,

It is with great regret that I inform you on behalf of the Phantoms Volleyball Club of our intention to withdraw all team entries for the 2020 VVL season.

As you are aware, our Committee have several concerns regarding participation in a modified competition given the current circumstances. There are a number of uncertainties that, through no fault of Volleyball Victoria, cannot yet be resolved and impact on the ability of our members to make an informed decision to participate.

The cost of competing, the impact of COVID-19 on members and families, stadium availability, additional travel restrictions or implications, match times and lengths etc make it extremely challenging to understand the value proposition of a modified season for our players. While this is not unique to Phantoms, compounding it is the recent spike in COVID-19 transmissions that has resulted in new lockdowns and travel restrictions put in place in suburban Melbourne that is not affecting our regional communities.

Currently, there is a clear delineation between increasing cases in metropolitan areas and little or no active cases in our regional catchment cities and towns. This has created both real and perceived risks for our Club that were not as apparent, even as recently as the end of last week. It is our belief that at this point in time, all of our players and their home communities, are COVID-19 free. If Phantoms were to provide a platform of participation that led to any of our members contracting COVID-19 from interactions with Melbourne based players, we feel there would be significant ramifications for all involved, particularly as we have the capacity to transmit the virus into multiple regional communities in the course of one day.

There is also concern that we could be facilitating the transmission of the virus into the Bendigo community should we host games where Melbourne based players are coming to Bendigo and interacting outside of the match time protocols put in place. While the likelihood of these scenarios is minimal, we have seen how innocent actions have resulted in the spread of infection in all sorts of uncontrolled and controlled environments. In essence, we simply do not feel that the real and perceived risks to the health and reputation of our members, club and communities justify our involvement in 2020.

This has been a difficult decision to arrive at, as we know how enthusiastic our members are, and how much they appreciate the opportunity to compete at the VVL level. Their

dedication and commitment is second to none and while the Club and Committee exist to serve the players and facilitate their participation, we are also elected to lead and make decisions in the best interests of all those involved.

Phantoms would like to thank Volleyball Victoria for the ongoing support of the club and the wider volleyball community through this unprecedented challenge. To all the staff who continue to work hard to create safe opportunities for people to return to the sport, we wish you all the best for the 2020 season and look forward to returning in even greater numbers and strength in 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Byrne,
President
Phantoms Volleyball Club