

A silhouette of a volleyball player in mid-air, jumping to hit a ball over a net. The player is on the right side of the frame, with their right arm extended upwards holding a volleyball. The net is in the center, stretching from the left towards the right. The background is a solid blue color.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024



**VOLLEYBALLBC**



## Foreword

Volleyball is at an exciting point in British Columbia. Over the past decade, we have experienced tremendous growth in popularity, programming, and playing. Our Volleyball BC membership has grown in an upward trajectory and our events and programs have been in high demand. Although COVID-19 has presented us with a unique challenge over the past year, every indication is that we can expect demand to resume when restrictions are lifted.

But with this growth comes challenges. Some of our volleyball infrastructure has developed more fully than others. There are not opportunities to play or participate in some areas of the province. We have more work to do to ensure that our sport is accessible and inclusive, welcoming to everyone. It is against this backdrop that we are proud to introduce our new Strategic Plan for Volleyball BC.

It was very important to us that this plan was based on consultation and feedback from members and stakeholders. Over the past 12 months, we have undertaken a lengthy process to research, survey, and engage with many individuals who make up our volleyball community. We heard many powerful stories about the impact and potential for volleyball in BC. This Strategic Plan is a response to these voices that we are excited to put into action over the next few years.

On behalf of the Board and staff of Volleyball BC, we offer this plan to you as a roadmap for the next few years and as a promise of what we will work to achieve. We welcome your contributions and look forward to working with you to “ignite lifelong passion for volleyball”.

Doramy Ehling  
President, Volleyball BC  
February 2021

## Our Principles of Strategic Planning

From 2019-2020, Volleyball BC embarked on the process of developing a new strategic plan to run from 2021-2024. Led by the Board and overseen by a Strategic Plan Working Group, we wanted to develop a realistic strategic plan that provides clear direction for the organization over the next few years.

We saw the process as just as important as the end result. The process offers us the opportunity to learn about where we are and what our members need. Recognising this, key principles for our strategic planning were:



- **Robust consultation:** we will use the process to learn more about our partners, stakeholders and members, and the role that they would like us to play in supporting their needs. We will create opportunities for non-members – participants and interested parties – to provide input.
- **Best practice & external Information:** we will review our current strategic plan, other best practices, and information from our sport partners to influence the direction and development of the plan.
- **Open mind:** we will use the existing strategic plan as a starting point but will be open to new ideas and feedback that identifies different priorities and ways forward.
- **Engagement & relationship-building:** we will use the process of consultation, communication and feedback to connect and strengthen our relationships with our partners, stakeholders and members.

*"I like that you guys are doing an overview and some planning for looking ahead... it's not going to be easy. I think you need to build programs that allow our most elite athletes to succeed at the highest levels, but at the same time, offer as many kids and adults the opportunity to play as possible."*

*"I value what VBC has to offer, I am passionate for it to strive to greater heights as it could be providing a better situation for our athletes, coaches and refs."*

# Our Strategic Planning Process



**FALL 2019**

Started process & developed principles.

Research & review of existing plan.



**JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2020**

Adult and youth surveys with emphasis on engaging youth through social media, posters, and club events. 541 responses with 41% youth and 59% adults.



**FEBRUARY 2020**

One-to-one interviews with over 30 stakeholders.



**DECEMBER 2020**

Approval of Strategic Plan by Board.



**FALL 2020**

Review, discussion and development of plan.



**MARCH 2020**

Board and staff workshop to review consultation & develop framework.



**FEBRUARY 2021**

Launch and implementation of Strategic Plan.

## A special note about COVID-19

When we started our strategic planning process, no one would have anticipated that 2020 would bring COVID-19, a global pandemic that would impact every area of our lives. Public health restrictions, lack of facility access, and comprehensive return to play requirements have had multiple effects on community sport – and volleyball is no exception. We are still in the middle of the pandemic and will not know for a while what longstanding impacts it will have.

This Strategic Plan provides a roadmap and vision for where we want to be in 2024 but we acknowledge that there are many uncertainties ahead. We anticipate that the Plan will be in two phases – a Pandemic Phase and a Post-Pandemic Phase. The key initiatives and activities that we outline in this document are for the Pandemic Phase. Our Plan will be monitored regularly to make sure that it remains relevant and achievable.

## Why do we enjoy playing volleyball?

1. Having fun
2. Being part of a team
3. Developing skills & being physically active
4. The volleyball culture & community

## Who are we?

- 4844 youth players
- 3609 adult players
- 755 coaches
- 395 referees
- 73 clubs across BC
- Approximately 3432 girls and 1891 boys play high school volleyball.
- Coaches are 56% male and 44% female.
- Referees are 60% male and 40% female.

*Numbers from 2019 participation*

## What did we learn?

In January and February 2020, we surveyed, interviewed, and researched our membership to find out what you thought was important for the pathway ahead. This is what you said....

### *What are your top program or service priorities for VBC?*

#### ADULTS

1. Adult recreational programming
2. Tournaments and events
3. Beach volleyball events & Van Open and Beach Tour
4. Mental, emotional and social wellbeing of players

#### YOUTH

1. Club tournaments and Provincial Championships
2. High Performance Programs
3. Mental, emotional and social wellbeing of players
4. Information and guidance about pathways & options

### *What do you think is the main issue facing adult/youth volleyball?*

#### ADULTS

1. Lack of options to play outside of the Lower Mainland
2. Lack of facilities
3. Too few programs or events

### *What are your top priorities for developing the sport?*

#### ADULTS

1. Coach education and development
2. Improving access to facilities
3. Referee education and development
4. Ensuring safety standards

#### YOUTH

1. Coach education and development
2. Ensuring safety standards
3. Referee education and development
4. Increasing female coaches, referees and leaders

#### YOUTH

1. Not enough club teams
2. Availability and quality of coaches
3. Affordability and high cost of programs

*"Not enough kids can play. The tryout process is a nightmare & highly stressful for kids as there are so few spots and so much competition."*

*"Coaches sometimes take this game way too seriously and end up driving you to want to quit."*

*"Everything is in the Lower Mainland making it expensive for those from other areas."*

*"Mental wellbeing of athletes, coaches and officials should be a greater focus."*

*"Provide ways to play the sport after 18U."*



**Organisation and Coordination** – The top strength cited by all respondents and interviewees was our ability to organise and run events, tournaments and programs. We are seen as strong and experienced organisers that deliver well-run events and activities. Closely linked to this is the wide variety of programs that we deliver: our programs are generally affordable, well-run and available for all levels.

**Member Communication** – Both Youth and Adults listed member communication as a key strength for VBC. We provide regular communication to keep members up to date. Our newsletters and social media are appreciated.

**People and Leadership** – We have staff and Board who are passionate about volleyball, motivated and professional. We have a cohesive and supportive team. Our response times and customer service delivery were generally rated as good.

**Engagement and Partnerships** – VBC is good at building partnerships within and outside of the sport. We are a good partner for corporate sponsors and deliver on our promises. We work well with stakeholders and we work actively to build relationships.

## What are Volleyball BC's strengths?

**Communication** – We need to improve and increase communication with our members. Communication also needs to be more timely and proactive. Our communication methods need to be more creative and engaging.

**Openness to Feedback** – We need to provide more opportunities for our members to provide feedback and input into our decision-making and governance. Consultation needs to take place regularly. We also need to improve transparency in terms of better communication around decision-making and strategies.

**Organisation** – We need to improve our implementation and roll-out of new systems, rules and processes. We are sometimes perceived as being inefficient and late in delivery of services and communication which is frustrating for parents, players and clubs.

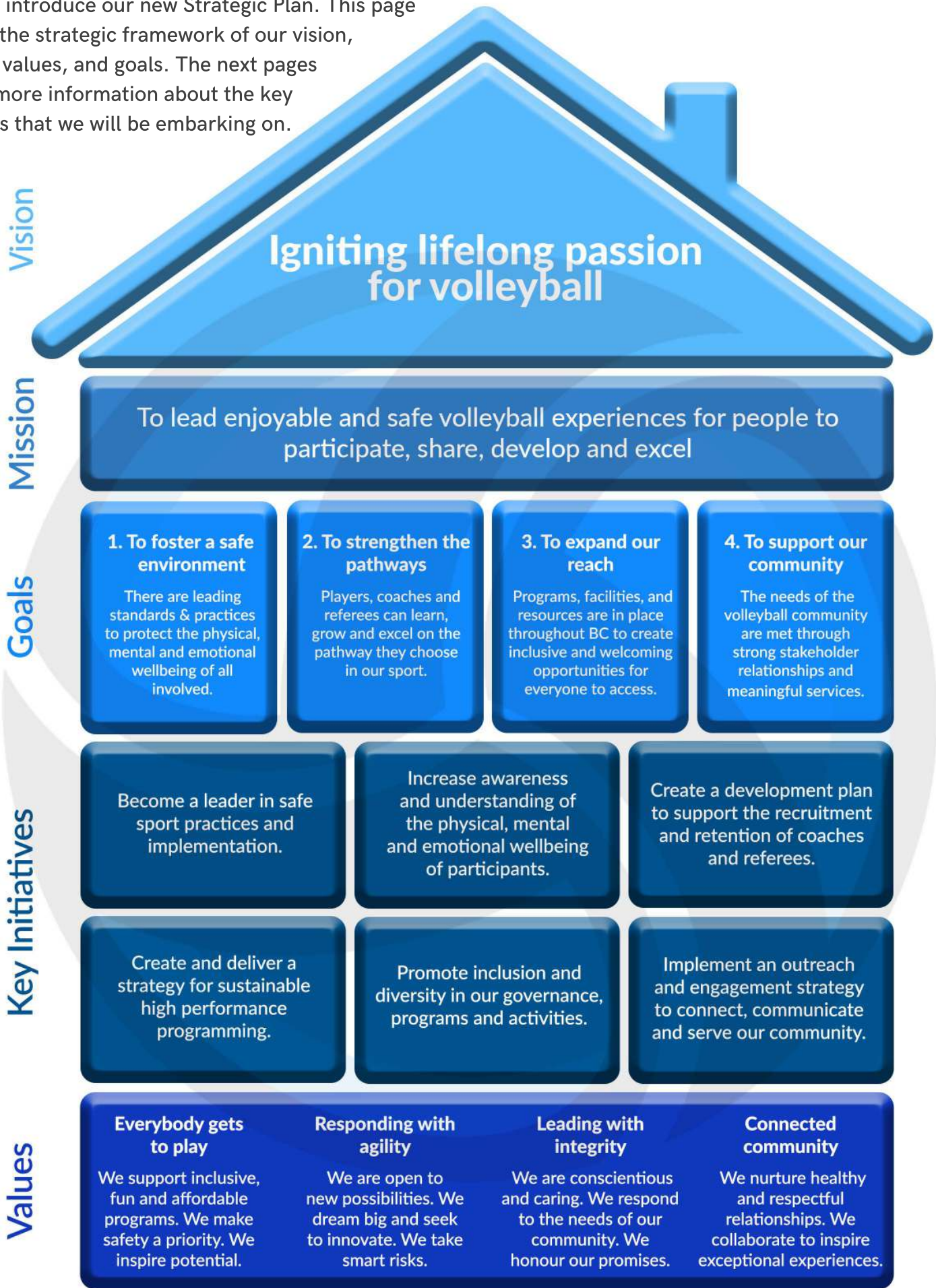
## What are the areas of improvement for Volleyball BC?

## What words do you associate with Volleyball BC?



# Introducing our Strategic Plan

Informed by consultation, research, and review, we are proud to introduce our new Strategic Plan. This page outlines the strategic framework of our vision, mission, values, and goals. The next pages include more information about the key initiatives that we will be embarking on.





## Key Initiative A

### To become a leader in safe sport practices and implementation

#### OUR MEMBERS SAID

*"There is definitely room for improvement on athlete safety and promoting a culture of safety for both athletes and coaches."*

*"I think that it would be nice to have a more supportive environment.. I think making it a more welcoming environment at the front doors when people come in or out, would be good to encourage the players".*

*"I am a referee and I believe that it is an important aspect of the community that I interact with to have background checks done on myself and other referees. The community of club volleyball is a special one, however, it is one that involves a lot of minors and for the protection of them and the integrity of volleyball background checks are important."*

*"Quality screening process that is not just focused on skill/experience in volleyball but more importantly on the ability to teach and mentor youth in a positive way."*

#### Activities (Pandemic Phase)

1. Proactively engage nationally and provincially to inform and shape policy and practices.
2. Establish a Safe Sport Working Group.
3. Conduct a review of best practices and a baseline audit of volleyball in BC to identify risks and opportunities around safety.
4. Review and refine Volleyball BC's policies and procedures to ensure responsive issue resolution.
5. Develop and adopt a Safe Sport Action Plan.

#### Outcomes

- ✓ Improved understanding of safety risks and areas to improve.
- ✓ More efficient resolution of complaints and issues.
- ✓ Consistency and standardisation of safety practices across VBC programs and activities.
- ✓ Action Plan is completed and communicated to members.







## Key Initiative B

To increase the awareness and understanding of physical, mental and emotional well-being of participants in volleyball

### OUR MEMBERS SAID

*"Keep it fun, as lots of youth sports nowadays are way too results focused"*

*"I think it would be really cool if some kind of a mental health awareness event was hosted and offered to youth both current and former players. As mental health is often overlooked in the short span of time that club season takes place."*

*"The mental/ emotional /social side of developing an athlete is incredibly important for the athlete who has the raw talent and ability. They need to know how to keep that healthy on all levels including nutrition, sleep, stress management, visualization, etc."*

*"Coaches sometimes take this game way too seriously and end up driving you to want to quit. Also having to deal with practices and tournaments while getting my school work done and while I play softball as well."*

### Activities (Pandemic Phase)

1. Create a definition of positive physical, mental, and emotional well-being in volleyball.
2. Conduct a Wellness Survey of members to identify gaps, potential support, and opportunities.
3. Develop an Action Plan to integrate physical, mental, and emotional well-being of participants into volleyball.
4. Identify training and resources for staff and program delivery.

### Outcomes

- ✓ Improved awareness and understanding by players.
- ✓ Improved awareness and understanding by coaches and referees.
- ✓ Annual Wellness Survey established.
- ✓ Action Plan is completed and communicated to members.
- ✓ Additional outcomes are identified in Action Plan.





## Key Initiative C

To create a development plan to support the recruitment and retention of coaches and referees

### OUR MEMBERS SAID

*"Coaching development is important as they are the ones working with the youth and impacting the growth of the game. Ensuring they have resources to learn is vital."*

*"It's important to know the coach knows what they're doing. When you have a good coach, it is easier for myself as a player and my teammates to be reassured we're getting the best possible coaching."*

*"Turnover rate of referees is extremely high. More and more younger officials are leaving the sport, and there is a need for more officials to cover all of the games across the province."*

*"Make refereeing more attractive to young players/ parents and coaches. Make them feel welcome and an important part of the game of volleyball."*

### Activities (Pandemic Phase)

1. Conduct a full analysis of the coach and referee experience to identify gaps, opportunities, and priorities for improvement.
2. Use technology for innovative delivery and improved access to coach and referee education.
3. Create communication and educational tools to clearly demonstrate pathways and opportunities.
4. Develop and launch a Coach and Referee Development Plan.
5. Establish an Annual Survey of coaches and referees to provide feedback and assess experience.

### Outcomes

- ✓ The coaching and referee needs of our sport are met.
- ✓ Increased retention of coaches at all levels of the system.
- ✓ Retention and maintenance of the number of referees at all levels of the system.
- ✓ Increased awareness and understanding of pathways, how to access information, and where to go for help.





## OUR MEMBERS SAID

*"I never felt that it was clear how players progressed through the sport... any governing body has a role to play in helping athletes understand how to excel at the sport - every athlete should at least know what is required to get there, and be given an opportunity to perform at the highest level they are capable of achieving."*

*"How many HP athletes are we producing? More meaningful Team BC activities throughout the year."*

*"Improve quality and opportunity of provincial teams"*

## Key Initiative D

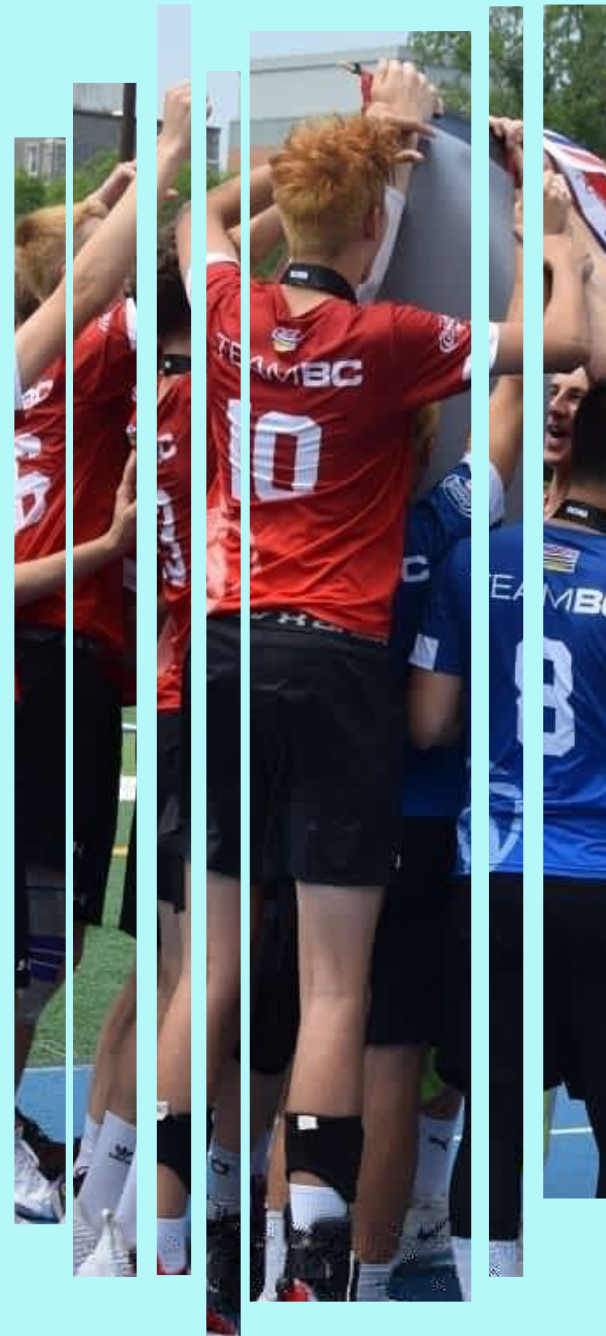
To create and deliver a strategy for sustainable high performance programming that prepares BC athletes, coaches and referees to perform and contribute at a national and international level

### Activities (Pandemic Phase)

1. Establish a High Performance Advisory Group.
2. Research best practices, leading organisations and standards for high performance.
3. Review funding models for high performance programming.
4. Pilot a new Team BC Development pathway ("Ignite Programs") as an entry point into high performance.
5. Develop and adopt a High Performance Plan.

### Outcomes

- ✓ Increased understanding of Volleyball BC's role and objectives for high performance.
- ✓ Shift to a more sustainable model of high performance.
- ✓ Establishment of a High Performance Advisory Group.
- ✓ High Performance Plan is adopted and communicated to members.





## Key Initiative E

To promote inclusion and diversity in our governance, programs and activities.

### Activities (Pandemic Phase)

1. Analysis and research into our participation profile, community demographics, potential partners, role models and best practices.
2. Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.
3. Pilot an Introduction to Volleyball Program for Newcomers to Canada.
4. Develop and adopt a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

### Outcomes

- ✓ Increased awareness and understanding of issues and practices promoting diversity and inclusion.
- ✓ Establishment of Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.
- ✓ Adoption of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
- ✓ Improved participation of underrepresented groups in volleyball.
- ✓ Increased representation of targeted groups in governance and management of volleyball.

### OUR MEMBERS SAID

*"If Volleyball BC doesn't deliver some of these points then I don't think anyone will."*

*"Inclusivity prioritized. Our membership needs to be educated surrounding cultural and sexual inclusivity."*

*"The cost to play at the elite level is very expensive making it inaccessible to all."*

*"More respect given to female coaches. Often their concerns are overlooked and ignored by the refs and officials."*





## OUR MEMBERS SAID

*"Celebrate at ALL levels. not just the winners/ highest performers. Share articles about overcoming adversity, persistence. A lot of top dogs haven't always been tops. Celebrate/share about the efforts not just the results."*

*"I feel the promotion and profile raising of volleyball as a sport is important if we are to engage more boys to play at earlier ages "*

*"More input from members and better governance on committees."*

*"The fact that a survey has been generated demonstrates that Volleyball BC wants feedback from members and participants which is great."*

*"Make the volleyball community more aware of your involvement and services"*

## Key Initiative F

To implement an outreach and engagement strategy to connect, communicate, and serve our community.

### Activities (Pandemic Phase)

1. Solicit feedback from our clubs and member organisations to identify opportunities for services and support.
2. Introduce an annual Membership Survey.
3. Launch a new website as a hub for members.
4. Review our governance and operations for new member engagement and feedback opportunities.
5. Develop an outreach and engagement strategy including member relations and communications.

### Outcomes

- ✓ Maintained or increased satisfaction and "referrability" scores among members.
- ✓ Increased engagement in communication and social media channels.
- ✓ Increased opportunities to actively connect or get involved with Volleyball BC.
- ✓ Outreach and Engagement Strategy is developed and adopted.



## Looking forward

This Strategic Plan sets our vision, mission, values, goals and key initiatives from 2021-2024. It will be used to guide our direction, planning, and resources. It will be a touchstone for us to return to when we have to make decisions and to remind us that our members are at the centre of everything we do.

From here on, we are accountable for doing what we say we will.

- We will develop milestones and key indicators that will monitor and measure our success.
- We will review and update our activities as we transition from Pandemic to Post-Pandemic phases.
- The Board will receive regular progress reports from staff to ensure that we are on track.
- We will share our progress with our members and the wider volleyball community.



## Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the VBC Board and staff for being open and welcoming of the consultation process and for embracing the opportunity to look forward boldly to the future.