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Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
ACT Government
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Via email: budgetconsultation@act.gov.au

ACT 2025-26 Budget Consultation

The Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (IGEA) is pleased to provide input into the ACT 2025-26 Budget Consultation.

IGEA is the industry association representing and advocating for the video games industry in Australia, including the developers, publishers and distributors of video games, as well as the makers of the most popular gaming platforms, consoles and devices. We have over a hundred members, from emerging independent studios to some of the largest video game companies in the world.

Among our various activities, IGEA also organises the annual Games Connect Asia Pacific (GCAP) conference for Australian game developers and the Australian Game Developer Awards (AGDAs), which celebrate the best Australian-made games each year.

About the ACT game development industry

According to IGEA's consumer sales data, video games are worth around \$4.4 billion annually in Australia¹. In 2024, the Australian game development industry employed 2,465 full-time workers and generated \$339 million in revenue in the 2024 financial year (FY2024).² As a global-facing industry, 93% of revenue was generated overseas, making video games one of Australia's most successful cultural and economic exports. For context, the global video game industry is more than twice the size of the global film and music industries combined. Hence, the potential scope for local industry growth is significant.

Canberra was previously considered one of the most significant hubs for game development in Australia. Until its closure in 2015, Canberra was the home to Australia's only 'AAA' studio, 2K Canberra, which co-developed the Bioshock games series, one of the bestselling game franchises of all time. While the size of the local industry has been impacted by various operational challenges, the ACT's video game development industry continues to make its mark.

Today, the ACT has 3% of Australia's game development workforce, despite being approximately 1.7% of the country's total population. IGEA strongly supports the emerging

¹ IGEA, "[2023 Australian Video Game Consumer Sales](#)" (Report, June 2024)

² IGEA, "[2024 Australia Game Developer Survey \(AGDS\) Snapshot](#)" (Report, December 2024)

video game development community in Canberra, including award-winning studio Uppercut Games, Games Plus (a games co-working space), and the Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE), one of Australia's largest educators for game development with a major campus in Canberra. As a latest testament to the ACT's ongoing impact, last year we saw an ACT video game developer, Blue Manchu win our 2024 Australian Game Developer Award for Excellence in Gameplay for the game *'Wild Bastards'*.³

Towards a future-facing workforce

The video game development industry can be a key driver of the ACT's future, digitally enabled economy. Our industry intersects the creative and tech industries, attracting a highly skilled workforce comprised of programmers, engineers, digital designers, multimedia artists, and AI and data specialists, among other creative, technology and business roles. Outside of our industry, these are jobs that are in high demand across the private and public sectors.

Video game workers' significant contribution to Australia's creative and digital economy is well-recognised by the federal government. The Australia Bureau of Statistics has officially introduced a landmark Digital Game Developer (273131) code in its latest release of the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA)⁴ in recognition of the growth and potential of the Australian video game development industry.

Further, serious games and gamified technologies are finding diverse uses in education, defence, social services, and the business and community sectors. The ACT is well suited as a location for the development of serious games, with the potential to become a development hub.

The ACT 2025-26 Budget presents to the ACT Government a crucial opportunity to introduce policy incentives to support the growth of the local industry and generate future-facing job opportunities, which is well aligned with the objectives of the ACT 2025-26 Budget.

The state of games funding in the ACT

Currently, funding for game development remains largely inaccessible to the ACT video game development industry, resulting in a lack of support for indie studios (small businesses) but also larger studios looking to establish their presence in the ACT.

Video game projects remain excluded from Screen Canberra's two major funding programs: the CBR Screen Investment Fund and the 10% CBR Screen Attraction Fund. ArtsACT's Arts Activity Fund is the only funding program open to video game projects, falling short of adequately supporting our industry as game projects must compete with every other art form for the possibility of a funding opportunity.

³IGEA, "[IGEA announces the 2024 Australian Game Developer Awards Winners](#)" (Media release, October 2024)

⁴ABS, "[273131 Digital Game Developer - OSCA](#)" (Database, December 2024)

IGEA is concerned by the large gap between game funding in the ACT and almost every state in Australia, where the latter are doubling down their investment in video games through their state screen agencies. This includes dedicated digital game rebates in South Australia (10% for eligible expenditure), Queensland (15%) and New South Wales (10%), while the 10% Victorian Screen Incentive is available to games.

These new initiatives, when combined with the federal Digital Games Tax Offset (DGTO), are leading to a surge of industry growth in other states. In other words, if the ACT Government does not actively support the growth of the local game development industry, the ACT further increases its risk of losing its local game development industry to other states.

Our recommendations

We reiterate IGEA's recommendations presented in our previous submission to the 2024-25 Budget Consultation:

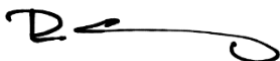
1. We recommend that the 10% Screen Attraction Fund also be opened up to video game projects in order to attract larger studios and more ambitious projects to the territory.
2. We recommend that the Screen Investment Fund be opened up to video games. It will ensure that it becomes a true 'screen' fund and can support the region's emerging studios.

We believe that taking action on these two recommendations will boost the ACT's growing video game industry and re-establish Canberra as a serious place to make games.

We also acknowledge that allocating a larger funding package for games may be limited by the ACT's smaller population compared to other states. However, given the small size of the ACT's video game development industry, our policy recommendations will not place significant financial strain on funding within the foreseeable future.

Should you wish to further discuss our recommendations, please contact us at policy@igea.net.

Warmest regards,



Ron Curry
CEO