

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Academy of Interactive Entertainment Ltd

Submitted: On behalf of a for-profit arts business

### First Nations

The Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) has developed a unique approach to collective filmmaking through its Film Plus coworking model and its provision of financial and technical support for independent filmmakers. AIE's model can help elevate First Nations culture by providing artists with a space, collaboration opportunities and filmmaking resources to tell stories that can reach a global audience. AIE's proposed \$200M+ campus ([www.community.aie.edu.au](http://www.community.aie.edu.au)) is scheduled for completion of Stage 1 in 2024/5. It will feature postproduction facilities, sound stages and student accommodation for students and visiting academics and filmmakers. It's a unique collaborative approach open to all that will help take Australian stories to a world market, especially First Nations filmmakers who have found it hard to find the resources, both financial and structural, to achieve global success.

### A Place for Every Story

The Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) is a leading not for profit educator focusing on the video games and film industry. As per the aims of the Creative Australia National Cultural Policy, we have developed a culture of giving, partnership, investment, mentorship and entrepreneurship. We believe that culture is created locally but consumed globally. We have worked tirelessly for over 25 years to develop the video games industry in Australia by creating the first video games college in the world, as well as establishing the Game Developers' Association of Australia (GDAA), and the Australia Game Developers Conference (AGDC). Through our efforts and the efforts of so many others including IGEA, we have collectively ensured that the video game tax offsets are in place to take the video games industry to a new level. IGEA noted in their 2021-22 pre budget submission to Treasury that computer games are capable of telling Australian Stories, and in-fact are already doing so through their strong emphasis on writing, sound, music, art and design (See Myth #4, page 2 of the Report). There is an opportunity to continue capitalising on this to ensure strong storytelling in Game Design.

Furthermore, we have now set our sights on creating a new model for the Australian independent film industry and we have been quietly building upon our model. As a first step we have done this through the development of Film Plus ([www.filmplus.com.au](http://www.filmplus.com.au)) a coworking space for filmmakers, and through our joint efforts we have produced two feature films The Furies and more recently Sissy which is currently scoring 98% on Rotten Tomatoes. We have done this to prove to ourselves that we have indeed created both a new way of developing and taking Australian stories to the world, but also creating pathways for financial sustainability for filmmakers through our rather unique film financing model. There is an opportunity to make this model open to all films and all Australian creatives to apply for through the AIE.

On completion of Stage 1 development, the new AIE Film Studio will be a potential place for every story, featuring a sophisticated "Led Volume" (similar to the one used in Disney's Mandalorian TV series) which enables us to recreate any film location imaginable (including First Nations settings and any other real or imaginary environments). To support this new way of filmmaking we launched the world's first film and virtual production Advanced Diploma courses at our Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra campuses ([www.aiefilmschool.edu.au](http://www.aiefilmschool.edu.au)) which is training a new generation of Australian filmmakers to tell their stories.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

A key goal of the Creative Australia policy is making exceptional artists central to any policy investment. Our financial model of providing equity financing to commercial film projects that provide opportunities for both outstanding filmmakers as well as AIE's students and graduates is unique in Australia, and possibly in the world. It has enabled several successful film productions to reach a global audience (<https://aiefilmschool.edu.au/studio-films/> ). We are looking forward to our new campus that will elevate our abilities to support many more projects each year and we have received strong ACT Government support through the priority investment program and the opportunity to acquire our present Canberra site in Watson at market value, where the new AIE campus and industry leading film facilities will be built.

### **Strong Institutions**

One of our primary goals for the creation of the new \$200M AIE campus ([www.community.aie.edu.au](http://www.community.aie.edu.au) ) is building a strong independent film and tv community, that nurtures filmmakers' passions while at the same time solves the financial burden of finding film financing to create their next project. Our business model has enabled several feature films made by Australian filmmakers. We are developing an ecosystem that creates a pathway for sustainability for independent tv and film projects to help Australian filmmakers develop their own intellectual property for global distribution. Our plan is to expand this ecosystem through the considerable investment required by the AIE and industry supporters. We also hope to obtain Federal Government infrastructure support if we are invited to submit an application.

### **Reaching the Audience**

Once Stage 1 development of AIE's new campus is fully implemented, the governance framework we have created that supports independent filmmakers through access to a shared filmmaking model, financial and technical support will provide consistent baseline data to measure the aggregated economic, social and regional impacts of the Government's infrastructure investment and the impact such investment has had to our national cultural agencies and institutions, including broader benefits to the Australian community.

### **Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?**

One of the challenges faced by Australian filmmakers is the lack of effective control over revenues from overseas film and video games distributors, regardless of audit clauses in distribution contracts, due to what is know as "Hollywood Accounting' practices. This could be solved if Australians were able to take a greater share of the marketing effort for their content.

Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure (QAPE) as defined in section 376-125(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act does not allow claims for overseas marketing efforts, and the Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) are made in three Tiers, and are somewhat limiting in the matched funding amounts and are not particularly suitable for promoting Australian content to a global market.