

**National Cultural Policy Submission**

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Zander Hulme and I run Supertonic, an award-winning game audio studio in Brisbane. Through my work collaborating with local game development studios over the past decade I have had the pleasure of working with a decent number of Australian games practitioners, and I'd like to share my insights on the state of the field.

The Australian game development industry is a unique one, with a large and actively supportive community that fosters the work of local creatives producing interactive experiences that have meaningful impact on game players both at home and overseas.

Australian players are not going to see ourselves, our culture, or our issues represented in the work of international game studios. Our larger local studios (predominantly branches of multi-nationals) are incentivised to sanitise any trace of Australian-ness in order to better appeal to the American market and reduce risk. It is on our small and independent studios then that we rely for works which can tell these stories.

In recent years, publishers and investors have become more risk-averse, so it has become increasingly difficult for emerging practitioners to secure the funding they require. State and federal screen and arts grants have been a huge boon to such teams, some of which have gone on to garner the level of success to either self-fund future projects or become more appealing to private investors and publishers.

Unlike film, where a new production company is spun up for each project, the aim of an independent game studio is to maintain the steady employment of staff and build institutional knowledge from project to project, so funding that helps that process is an investment in the ongoing employment of local creatives and the creation of future works in the long term.

The community that is such an important part of this ecosystem also requires support. Technical skills can be learnt in isolation, but for meaningful discussion and the development of a cultural and creative practice, people need to come together and share their ideas. Funding for community events and institutions is an investment in maintaining this culture — it may not directly fund the industry, but it inspires meaningful work in the field.