

May 22, 2026

Re: Australian National Cultural Policy Review – Digital Games Sector

Digital interactive videogames are the most vital contemporary form of creative and cultural expression in the world. They also represent an ever-increasing economic and commercial opportunity. As such, the Australian Government must dedicate adequate expert attention and resources to ensure that Australia's next generation of artists and storytellers are able to contribute meaningfully and compete with their peers around the world.

Specifically, a federal funding model should include a specific and dedicated group of experts in the interactive games field. Although videogames are played on "screens" they are not equivalent to linear "screen arts" such as film or television. The technical, artistic and cultural contexts are different, as are the working conditions, training, and lived experiences of the game makers themselves. That said, videogames are indeed artistic creations (not merely commercial, technical software products) and so attention should be paid to the grassroots, entry-level seed funding analogous to artistic grants. A game developer's first game is often experimental, expensive, and not a commercial success, but the positive impact that a completed release has on the trajectory of a new developer is immense.

Digital games represent a cultural industry which can and does provide economic return on investment. For instance, Melbourne studio House House sold over a million copies of *Untitled Goose Game* (2019) within three months of release. The *Hollow Knight* series, including the recent sequel *Hollow Knight: Silksong* (2025) was also developed in Melbourne and has recorded over 7 million copies sold globally within its first quarter of release. Victoria is well-known in the Australian industry as providing the best, most enduring support for game development, so it is no surprise that these successes have been produced there. If the federal government were to provide consistent foundational support, then more game developers in more parts of Australia would have the opportunities to create new games.

Finally, as part of the cultural infrastructure, videogames and interactive arts in general should be supported across the board: through the funding of globally recognised events such as the Freeplay Festival and Melbourne International Games Week, and the Pixel Expo in Perth, and through collaborations with the tertiary education sector. The next generation of artists and makers are incubated in our colleges and universities, and they break out onto the global scene through festivals and conventions. These too should be supported through a dedicated branch of Creative Australia commensurate with their artistic, cultural, and economic potential.

I appreciate this opportunity to contribute to the inquiry. I would be delighted to discuss the issue further should the interest or need arise. This submission does not represent the perspective of Curtin University or its departments, but my scholarly expertise and experience in higher education in this field does inform my conclusions above.

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