

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm a queer writer who has worked in games for over twenty years, primarily as a freelancer. I was able to release my own title for the first time last year because of grant support from VicScreen here in Victoria; most of the federal grants are largely out of reach for individual developers and smaller teams, particularly those of us from marginalised backgrounds, and while Screen Australia has made improvements with things like the Emerging Gamemakers Fund this is still hugely restrictive to anyone who is from an underrepresented background but falls out of the narrow criteria they define \,emerging\, as. Larger financial support is out of reach to people who have not gone through burdensome time and expense to incorporate a company and most other incentives remain out of reach to anyone but the biggest breakout successes. As someone who makes more experimental games that have much less of a commercial incentive but are nevertheless important contributions to Australian art on the whole, I cannot rely on the support of publishers who need to see a notable return on their investments to provide funding. At the same time, VicScreen and Victoria alone cannot and should not be the only means through which games get funded in Australia; other states have started stepping up with programs in their states but there are ultimately very few resources available to those of us who need it most. Given that some of the biggest releases of the last several decades have come from Australian individuals and studios, it's mind-boggling that the federal government still treats this billion-dollar industry as a passing afterthought. Funding programs should be expanded and well-resourced, with programs being judged by those in and from the industry here (and worldwide) who have direct knowledge about games themselves. The games industry should be treated with every bit of the same respect and resourcing that the film industry here is given, particularly given the creative overlap between industries anyway — plenty of people who have worked on special effects/VFX and compositing with Marvel Studios also work on games or game from a games background, to name just one example. That Australian projects have been so successful on a global stage even despite a broad lack of support federally for quite a long time only serves to show the sort of projects and accomplishments that can be achieved if we're truly supported and resourced the way other creative industries are. Given the extremely challenging environment that a lot of smaller marginalised developers have to contend with, we need the support of a funding resource that is able to make things happen without the explicit overhead of commercialisation deciding whether or not art's existence is justified.