

I'm an independent game developer, a little over halfway done with my game. I'm certainly in a position where I could benefit from some funding. But with the way games funding is handled now, it's largely inaccessible to me, and honestly a little untrustworthy in my eyes.

It turns out that we don't have any actual game creators represented on our art committees. I've had experiences dealing with non-games artists above me, having done game related classes at a non-games uni, and have learnt firsthand how off course and out of touch things can go. These are the people game authors will have to pitch to, take money from, and potentially have ongoing relations with. The production process of game creation is *very* different from other mediums, especially film (games funding at the moment is under Screen Australia).

One hypothetical that concerns me is the potential for some accidental bias. If we have experts from film choosing the merits for which projects get funded, I worry this could lead to funding leaning towards and majorly rewarding projects that ape film language. Games certainly can be made in a 'slightly interactive film' sort of way, and certainly good things have come from that method, but they can be a lot more than that. Games are an inherently interactive medium, and I worry about innovative ideas being looked over in favor of more conventional projects that appeal more to non game authors.

In the main game fund, Screen Australia also requires participants to be a company. They don't allow for any other kind of business model to be funded. This, to me, feels very arbitrary and completely out of touch with how indie games are actually made. These projects are typically made in *very* small teams, and are artistically motivated. Whether intentional or not, the message being sent is that the fund seems more interested in revenue and growth rather than making good art and cultural impact, which is very counter to the culture of indie games. I don't think encouraging small game teams to form companies is in their benefit, nor benefits the creation of good games.

The good news is, in spite of our local industry practically dying over a decade ago (we barely have any game studios here), we still have great, globally recognised works homemade here. We have Silksong, Cult of the Lamb, Frog Detective, one of the lead guys behind Sonic Mania, the guy who wrote the engine that game runs on, he's an aussie! Our talented indie developers have picked up the slack where our local industry has largely failed. A lot of overseas game authors I talk to make jokes about half the good indie games coming from here, we've already got a small reputation building up.

We have a community of game creators here who are hungry to tell stories and leave an impact. I think there's a lot more we can do to help nurture our local scene, and I'm hoping those reading agree.