



Submission to the public consultation for a new National Cultural Policy

24 May 2026

Submission to:

The Office of the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications,
Sport and the Arts

To the Office of the Arts,

I write on behalf of the Digital Games Research Association of Australia (DiGRAA) to provide feedback on the next iteration of the National Cultural Policy. We thank you for this opportunity.

DiGRAA is a registered not-for-profit formed in 2014, and is Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand's premier games research association. DiGRAA currently has close to 200 members across Australia and New Zealand. Our membership represents university educators, researchers, PhD candidates, undergraduate students, and increasingly, active gamemakers and games industry members. Our members include globally leading experts on local and international games industry practices, cultures and contexts. DiGRAA therefore comments from an evidence-based perspective, in order to advocate for Australian games to be considered seriously in the next iteration of the National Cultural Policy.

At the outset of our submission, we wish to note our objection to the department's outlined process for handling submissions with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. There is significant evidence that use of AI tools for summarisation purposes frequently results in inaccurate, misleading, and even hallucinatory responses. We believe that to use such tools for such public inquiries runs the risk of failing to address the actual issues these submissions raise, and also fails to respect the time and expertise of all who have made a submission. We strongly suggest the department ensure that all submissions are read and considered by a person, without the use of AI.

Rationale

Games are one of Australia's most significant contemporary creative industries and cultural practices, and one of the primary ways Australians participate in culture, storytelling and creative communities. 82% of all Australians play games, and spend an average of ~\$4 billion on games annually. The games sector employs thousands of creative workers nationally. Australian games such as *Hollow Knight: Silksong*, *Untitled Goose Game*, *Unpacking*, *Cult of the Lamb*, and *Florence* have reached global audiences, and Australian studios generated \$608 million in revenue in 2025.

Despite this scale, games continue to be under-recognised in and structurally disadvantaged by national cultural policy. While *Revive* acknowledged the importance of games through measures such as the Digital Games Tax Offset, games continue to fall in an awkward gap between arts, screen, and technology policy frameworks. Critically, games are not only digital products—they also take the form of tabletop games, live-action roleplaying games, hybrid screen works, and other emerging forms of interactive art. The next National Cultural Policy is an opportunity to address this longstanding gap, and to ensure that games are treated as a serious cultural form alongside film, television, music, literature, and the performing arts.

Accordingly, DiGRAA recommends:

1. Ensure that games are represented in leadership and decision making positions, alongside other cultural industries:

Among the major national cultural institutions with a responsibility for games, there is almost no games representation at board or executive level. The absence of gamemakers in leadership positions means that policy and funding decisions are often shaped by assumptions that have been inherited from film or other arts, regardless of the different economic and practical differences that may bear on games.

We recommend that all governing boards and advisory bodies responsible for promoting, funding or policymaking for games include members with demonstrated games industry or research expertise. When this is not the case, we recommend such bodies engage in appropriately compensated consultation processes with people with demonstrated games industry and/or research expertise. We further recommend that peer assessment panels for games funding programs be primarily composed of working gamemakers.

2. Increase federal investment in games

Current levels of games funding do not reflect the sector's cultural or economic significance.

We recommend that the Government increase direct investment in games to at least 10% of total national film and television production support, equating to approximately \$20–30 million annually. This funding should provide dedicated support for:

- games at all scales and stages of development
- First Nations games and studios, with dedicated input by First Nations gamemakers
- regional and emerging developers
- audience engagement and development
- archival work and preservation
- festivals, exhibitions, and collaborations with media or research
- experimental and interdisciplinary work
- non-digital games
- community, education, and professional development

3. Establish a dedicated national games agency

The success of Music Australia demonstrates the value of dedicated sector-focused institutions.

We recommend that a dedicated national games agency be established, led by people with gamemaking experience. This agency should:

- administer national games funding programs
- build long-term sector capacity and capabilities
- coordinate with state and territory agencies
- facilitate international promotion of Australian games
- advocate for games and interactive arts within government
- provide stable support for sector organisations and cultural infrastructure

We further recommend the creation of a dedicated “interactive arts” category within Creative Australia, to ensure that non-digital games have access to funding and support pathways that are currently unavailable through screen agencies. The policy must explicitly acknowledge that games culture extends beyond digital games. Tabletop games, live action roleplaying games, and other play-based practices are culturally significant and should not be excluded from policy frameworks due to outdated distinctions between “screen” and “arts” practice.

4. Support ethical and sustainable futures for games and play

The next National Cultural Policy should also recognise the challenges posed by AI and other emerging technologies that widely affect the arts sector.

We recommend that publicly funded projects be required to adopt ethical approaches to artificial intelligence and labour practices. Funding frameworks should discourage exploitative or anti-worker uses of generative AI technologies, particularly where they undermine creative labour or artistic integrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this review. If you have any questions about our submission, or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Lawrence May
President

On behalf of the members of the Digital Games Research Association of Australia