

22 August 2022

The Hon.
Tony Burke, MP
Minister for the Arts

Re: Submission of Electronic Arts Inc. Concerning a New National Cultural Policy

Dear Minister Burke:

Electronic Arts Inc. (EA) extends its thanks to the Ministry for initiating the development of a new National Cultural Policy for the decade ahead and inviting comments from the arts, entertainment, and cultural community. This is a timely endeavour. The cultural landscape has evolved significantly over the last decade, particularly with respect to online, digital, and interactive media. The video game industry is at the vanguard of this evolution, and as a leading company in the sector, EA is pleased to contribute this submission. EA also fully supports the submission of the Interactive Games and Entertainment Association (IGEA).

EA is a leading global interactive entertainment software company. We deliver games, content and online services for internet-connected consoles, personal computers, mobile phones, and tablets. EA is recognized for critically acclaimed, blockbuster franchises such as *The Sims*, *Need for Speed*, *EA SPORTS FIFA*, *Real Racing*, *EA SPORTS Madden NFL*, *Battlefield*, and *Plants vs. Zombies*. EA also has a well-established presence in and commitment to the Australian video game industry. EA's wholly owned subsidiary, the Firemonkeys studio in Melbourne, has been in mobile game development for well over a decade. Firemonkeys is a leader in bringing high quality and engaging mobile entertainment experiences, such as *Real Racing 3*, *Need For Speed: No Limits* and *The Sims FreePlay*, to hundreds of millions of players around the world.

As a leading voice in Australia's video game industry, EA supports the initiative to modernize Australia's National Cultural Policy, and we hope the revised policy will acknowledge the fundamental role that video games and interactive digital entertainment play in Australia's national culture. We further hope that the Ministry will support efforts to accelerate expansion of the video game industry in Australia, not only as a core aspect of national cultural policy, but also as an integral component of the Government's vision for Australia to be a top 10 digital economy and society by 2030.

The economic and cultural reach of the global video game industry is undeniable. Video game developers and publishers are the innovators, creators, and business leaders that are reimagining entertainment and transforming how we learn and play. Today, one in three people on the planet play video games, a figure that highlights the appeal, reach, and vast potential of this vibrant, modern, and global industry. As IGEA highlighted in its recent *Backing the Game* federal election policy platform,¹ the numbers in Australia are compelling: nearly two-thirds of all Australians play video games, with 92% of Australian households having at least one device on which games are played. Similar statistics in the U.S. (66 percent of Americans—more than 215 million people of all ages and backgrounds—play

¹ Available at [BACKING THE GAME: IGEA'S 2022 Federal Election Policy Platform - IGEA](#)

video games regularly)² and Europe (50% of the EU's population aged 6-64 years old plays video games, equating to approximately 250 million players in the EU)³ demonstrate the universal cultural impact of video games.

The evidence is simply overwhelming that video games are one of the most popular means for delivery and consumption of contemporary audio-visual content, and have become “so widespread and pervasive that they are now considered a part of the mass media, a common method of storytelling and representation.”⁴ Indeed, global revenues from video games now comfortably exceed revenues from the movie and music industries combined.⁵ It thus should be no surprise that video games are now a common topic of study by sociologists and other academics as “increasingly central to our cultural lives.”⁶ The import of video games as a storytelling medium is evidenced by the sheer number of articles and books devoted to the topic of storytelling design in video games.

Moreover, video games are a unique medium because they incorporate such a wide variety of different forms of audio-visual content, from live-motion capture, to animation, to graphic design, to narrative architecture design, to digital sound effects. Correspondingly, the video game sector employs a vast array of artists, including animators, sound designers, character artists, concept artists, cinematic designers, narrative directors, and many more. The work of musicians and composers in video games, in particular, is often overlooked, but perhaps no greater evidence of the cultural significance of music in video games is that the BBC recently included a concert devoted to video game music as part of the BBC Proms concert series.⁷ Precisely because video games play such a significant role in society, “not only as a cultural-economic sector, but also as a noteworthy part of people’s daily life,” the EU recently launched a project to understand “the value of a European Games Society,” with an aspiration to “deepen understanding of the video game sector in order to identify future policy options,” and “to create and nurture a network of actors and experts in the field of EU video game industry, in order to facilitate future exchanges and support its growth.”⁸ The next iteration of the National Cultural Policy should reflect similar aspirations and ambitions for Australia.

Finally, it is important to recognize that beyond their cultural impact, video games, and video game development, are one of the flywheels driving modern, digital economies. The video game sector is unique in that it sits at the intersection of entertainment, the arts, and technology. Thus, in addition to artists, video game companies hire software engineers, developers and programmers, technical

² Entertainment Software Association, *2022 Essential Facts about the Video Game Industry*, available at [2022 Essential Facts About the Video Game Industry - Entertainment Software Association \(theesa.com\)](https://www.theesa.com/2022-essential-facts-about-the-video-game-industry/).

³ ISFE, *2021 Key Facts about the European Video Games Sector*, available at [2021 key facts about the european video games sector - ISFE](https://www.isfe.europa.eu/2021-key-facts-about-the-european-video-games-sector/)

⁴ Shliakhovchuk, Elena and Muñoz García, Adolfo, Abstract, *Intercultural Perspective on Impact of Video Games on Players: Insights from a Systematic Review of Recent Literature* (20 Jan. 2020), available at [EJ1241464.pdf \(ed.gov\)](https://www.ed.gov/eoisa/2017/0124/2020-01241464.pdf).

⁵ See, for example, Richter, Felix, *Gaming: The Most Lucrative Entertainment Industry by Far* (22 Sept. 2020), available at [Chart: Gaming: The Most Lucrative Entertainment Industry By Far | Statista](https://www.statista.com/chart/11111/gaming-the-most-lucrative-entertainment-industry-by-far/).

⁶ Daniel Muriel, description of Muriel and Crawford, *Video Games As Culture: Considering the Role and Importance of Video Games in Contemporary Society* (2018), [Video Games as Culture – Daniel Muriel](https://www.danielmuriel.com/video-games-as-culture/).

⁷ [Video games music at the BBC Proms: "It was only a matter of time" | GamesIndustry.biz](https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/video-games-music-at-the-bbc-proms-it-was-only-a-matter-of-time) Nearly a decade ago, the Smithsonian American Art Museum in the U.S. held an *Art of Video Games* exhibit. [The Art of Video Games - Wikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_of_Video_Games)

⁸ [Understanding the Value of a European Games Society | Shaping Europe’s digital future \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu/en/understanding-the-value-of-a-european-games-society)

designers, user interface designers, systems engineers, program managers and numerous other technical roles. In short, video games are not only a critical and growing part of Australian culture, but also a wellspring of high-quality, sustainable careers, and an engine for growth in the Australian national economy.

For these reasons EA encourages the Ministry to acknowledge the importance of the video game and interactive media sector in its new National Cultural Policy and include in that policy specific policy recommendations to further advance video game development in Australia.

Respectfully submitted



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