



interactive games & entertainment association

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September 18, 2018

Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield  
Minister for Communications and the Arts  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Fifield,

### **Australian and Children's Screen Content Review**

I write to you concerning your review into Australian and Children's Screen Content which you announced on 6 May 2017. This week will mark 12 months since public consultation closed on this review and we have not been provided any updates since then.

The content review is a vitally important part of the Government's agenda. It provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that Australia's policy and support settings are appropriately geared towards protecting and building Australia's creative industries and Australian screen content.

As you know, fundamental changes to the way Australians consume content have taken place in the media landscape, particularly defined by the explosive growth of digital content including video games. Culturally, Australian families are playing games more than ever, with 67 percent of Australians playing video games and 97 percent of Australian homes with children having video games.<sup>1</sup> Economically, the video games industry was worth \$2.63 billion in 2017<sup>2</sup> and in 2016 was worth \$124.9 billion globally – making it bigger than both the filmed entertainment industry and the music industry.<sup>3</sup>

In this rapidly changing environment, it is the role of the content review to ensure that Government policies are fit for purpose in the digital era. We have been eagerly awaiting the review's findings and recommendations for Australia's video games sector.

The discussion paper which set the direction of the review noted that modern and contemporary policy settings need to recognise that Australian culture extends beyond traditional forms of screen content and reaches into other

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<sup>1</sup> IGEA, Digital Australia 2018 DA18 Final (26 July 2017) <<http://www.igea.net/digital-australia-2018-da18-final-2>>

<sup>2</sup> PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Australian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2018-2022 (2018) <<http://pwcoutlook.com.au>>

<sup>3</sup> PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Australian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2017-2021 (2017) <<http://pwcoutlook.com.au>>

areas like video games. In terms of children's content, the paper noted that future policy settings need to more closely align with the changing consumption habits of children who have moved away from traditional platforms to online content including games and apps.

As outlined in our submission to the review, while other screen industries receive federal government support, from funding to tax and production incentives, the games development industry has inexplicably been neglected. This lack of support stands in stark contrast to the overwhelming popularity of games amongst Australians, especially children, and the massive economic and cultural opportunities for Australian games if they are supported.

Our submission called for the introduction of a funding scheme for games development, based on the Australian Interactive Games Fund which had been starting to attract a diverse range of innovative and successful game development companies before the fund was axed. Our submission also called for a refundable tax offset for Australian expenditure on developing games, similar to the offsets that have been available to film and television screen content for years. We also called for support towards co-working spaces for games development and encouraging the uptake of 'serious games' in health care, education and other sectors.

I would be grateful for an update from you on the progress of the Australian and Children's Screen Content Review and how you will support the Australian video games sector.

I would appreciate your response by 5 October 2018.

With regards,

**Ron Curry**  
CEO  
Interactive Games & Entertainment Association