

Enhancing opportunities in digital trade and exports

Video games are the perfect export for Australia: weightless, high-tech, green, and IP-based. We support export policies that strengthen the opportunities for Australian game developers to grow their existing export markets and to create new ones. We also advocate for international trade agreements and arrangements that encourage foreign investment, promote the open trade of digital goods and services, support the free flow of data, and take practical approaches to IP and privacy.

What makes video games different from other exports?

Video games are a born global industry. As a mostly digital industry, Australian game developers can export their games instantaneously to any person on Earth with internet access. Games can easily be localised for different export markets, and given that over a third of the world's population play them, our market is massive and diversified, with games among the most widely exported of any Australian-made product. Video games create IP, generate ongoing revenue that can last years, tell Australian stories, and have evergreen demand, even during economic downturns or global disruptions like COVID. Video games are not only exported as a good, but also a service, with many Australian game developers exporting their skills and expertise internationally, similar to how our VFX companies undertake work for Hollywood.

What export policies provide the best support to video game developers?

Our industry needs and benefits from the same policies as other export-orientated industries. We advocate for the continuation of Australia's Export Market Development Grants Scheme, which is actively helping Australian game developers to sell their games overseas and to find publishers, investors, and markets. We are working closely with, and lobby for, our industry's continued prioritisation by Austrade and its equivalent state and territory agencies. These trade and investment support agencies provide crucial assistance to ambitious Australian game developers by providing market insights, landing pads, and financial support for trade missions. They also work at attracting global games companies to invest in, or to build studios in Australia.

How can Australia's foreign trade agreements support the video games sector?

Free and open digital trade flows are vital to Australia's future economy. An Australian games industry that is closely integrated with the world strongly benefits Australia. Not only do Australian games studios benefit from accessing the massive global games market, but the inflow of games into Australia, which are played by two-thirds of the population, fuels our own near \$4 billion market and generates hundreds of millions of dollars in tax. Gamers and the local industry are further advantaged because Australia and New Zealand are regarded as ideal markets for testing new games and technologies. We advocate for trade agreements that minimise barriers to digital trade like tariffs and data localisation rules, reduced barriers to investment, and treat issues like copyright and privacy pragmatically and in ways that do not create a burden for businesses.

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