

Category:	Excellence in Art		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of Art through taking the medium to a new and interesting style, unique creations, and/or through breath-taking visuals.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Immersive Visuals	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Does the style match the theme?	Is the art polished? Does it feel complete?	Are there any innovative techniques employed in the artistic direction?
	Do all the elements of the visual component of the game fit together?	Do all the moving parts fit together and work properly? (I.E. consistency in rigging, animation)	Is the style fresh and unique?
	Does the environment suit the game?	Is there impressive 'juice' to the style? Does the art go above and beyond?	Is there a new medium being used for the art style?
	Did you experience any Immersive moments brought on by the visuals? Was there a 'wow!' moment?	Did the UI match the quality of the rest of the art? Did it convey information well?	If the art didn't have consistency in style, was there an innovative/art reason for this? Did it work?
	Did you find yourself 'sightseeing' in game to take in the visuals?		Is the art interactive? Can you make changes to it as you play? (e.g. changing colours of your environment, edit appearances?)
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Does the game avoid relying on colour alone to communicate/differentiate anything, by default or through options?		Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities)
	Are important visual elements large and high contrast, by default or through options?		Is the diversity highlighted through the art respectfully?
	Do the visuals avoid any kind of flickering or flashing?		Does the art have respectful cultural significance?
	If dealing with heavy/gory art themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		

Category:	Excellence in Gameplay		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of Gameplay through high quality design, engaging and innovated gameplay.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Intuitive Mechanics	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Does the game clearly explain its mechanics?	Can you move through the level smoothly? (Was there any screen tearing or bugs?)	Are any innovative techniques used in the gameplay?
	Are the controls intuitive/comfortable?	Does physics work as expected/consistently?	Is there any new technology present in the gameplay?
	Are the controls suitable for the type of gameplay?	Do you get adequate feedback when you complete an action in game?	Did the game take you by surprise?
	How intuitive is the user interface?	How long did it capture your attention?	If the mechanics were not intuitive, was there an innovative/design reason for this? Did it work?
		Did you want to come back and replay it?	
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Do you have the ability to edit the player characters, body and face shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		Does the game include the use of gender-neutral or neo pronouns as well as he/him she/her? Are there options to change the player characters pronouns mid-game? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	If dealing with heavy themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		



Category:	Excellence in Narrative		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of Narrative design, innovation, and creative intrigue with the game narrative.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Ludo Narrative Consistency	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Is there a consistent story arc?	Does the story unfold in a coherent way?	Is the story new and engaging?
	Does the game environment and design suit the story being told?	Do the characters have distinct personalities/functions?	Is the story delivered in a unique way?
	Is there consistency between the story and the gameplay?	Is the dialogue believable/relevant?	If the story didn't have ludo narrative consistency, was there an innovative/design reason for this? Did it work?
	Does the story feel believable within the in-game world?	Does the dialogue adequately drive the story?	Is the story doing something unique for the genre it's in?
	Did you find yourself immersed in the narrative?	Does it have adequate content warnings for heavy storylines? Does it provide care afterwards?	Was the story memorable for you? Did it surprise you?
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Is the story translated into multiple languages?		Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities)
	Are replays or summaries of the narrative available?		Is the diversity highlighted through the story respectfully?
	Is text-based narrative presented in clear, easy to read font and formatting (contrast, sentence case, spacing etc)?		Do characters with these attributes feature fully in the game?
	Is audio-based narrative also presented through clear, easy to read subtitles, with configurable presentation?		Does the story have respectful cultural significance?
	Are their options to check the current objectives/ win conditions?		Does this game respectfully feature and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and stories?
	If dealing with heavy themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		Does the game contain elements of advocacy for or exploration of issues faced by underrepresented groups?

Category:	Excellence in Audio		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of sound design, audio engineering, music and voice acting.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Holistic Consistency	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Is the audio thematically tied to the game?	Are sounds consistent across the game (I.E. Clicking a button in the UI is the same across the whole game)	Is the audio made out of something new and interesting (improvised instruments, strange remixes)?
	Is the audio directly tied to gameplay (I.E. Rhythm games, games where music is a part of the core gameplay loop)?	Does the audio flow effectively with other elements of the game?	Are there any innovative techniques employed in the Audio?
	Are the sounds consistent across languages? Can they be understood without language?	Do sound cues provide adequate player feedback?	Is the audio varying and engaging?
	Did you find yourself immersed in the audio?	Do the sounds relate directly to and help drive gameplay?	Is the music emotionally evocative?
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Can players adjust the audio balance to their needs, through multiple volume sliders?		Does the game respectfully use culturally significant music/audio?
	Are important audio cues shown through other means too (e.g. visual cues, captions)		Is there diversity within the VA cast? (If applicable)
	Are there appropriate warnings for triggering sounds/music (e.g. Loud, distressing, violent, scary). Are these skippable?		
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, volume sliders can be adjusted before any simultaneous sounds/music)		



Category:	Excellence in AR/VR		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of AR, VR and XR for engaging, innovative and immersive use of the technology and genre.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Seamless Immersion	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Are the AR/VR gameplay tools easy to understand and use?	Are the AR/VR Gameplay elements critical to the core gameplay loop? Could this game function without AR/VR?	Is the uniqueness of a 360 degree environment utilised to immerse the player in the game's world?
	Are spatial audio techniques used to match the 360 Degree environment?	Does it make good use of the platform's unique features?	Are any innovative techniques used in the gameplay?
	Are the controls suitable for the type of technology?	Can you move through the level smoothly? (Was there any screen tearing or bugs?)	Is there any new technology present in the gameplay?
	How intuitive is the user interface?	Does physics work as expected/consistently?	Did the game take you by surprise?
			If the mechanics were not intuitive, was there an innovative/design reason for this? Did it work?
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Are there considerations or options for comfort/simulation sickness? (e.g. motion-free locomotion, high framerate, no blur/shake/bob effects)		Do you have the ability to edit the player characters, body and face shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? (if applicable)
	Does the game cater to a range of body types and configurations? (e.g. seated, stationary, varying heights, one handed)		Do you have the ability to edit the player characters, body and face shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? (if applicable)
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		Does the game include the use of gender-neutral or neo pronouns as well as he/him she/her? Are there options to change the player characters pronouns mid-game? (if applicable)
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities)
	Does the game offer a choice between input methods? (e.g. motion controllers, regular controllers, head movement/gaze)		Does the story have respectful cultural significance?
	Do the visuals avoid any kind of flickering or flashing?		

Category:	Excellence in Accessibility		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of Accessibility, in impact, inclusion and a reminder that gaming is for all.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Impact	Inclusivity	Innovation
	How generally underserved are the audiences that have been considered?	How broad is the range of accessibility considerations and range of audiences considered?	Is the process ground-breaking?
	How generally underserved is the genre?	What efforts were made to include feedback from disabled gamers in the design process?	Is there a particular feature / consideration that is ground-breaking?
	How much has been achieved relative to the game's scope?	Is the game accessible to the audience it's for/representing? (e.g. a game about blindness being fully playable by blind gamers)	Is the game engaging and interesting?
	Did the game take you by surprise? Was there a 'wow!' moment? Was it inspiring?	Is disability represented in the game, represented appropriately, and respectfully depicted?	How well does the game handle accessibility fundamentals? (remapping, colour blindness, subtitling, effect/camera intensity, text size)
	Is information about accessibility available? (e.g. in-game, in feature listings on the game's website, presskit or storefront page)	Are accessibility aids in game appropriately and respectfully depicted (e.g. using the correct wheelchair) Are these editable if customisation is available?	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)

Category:	Excellence in Serious Games		
Mission Statement:	For Outstanding Achievement in the creation of games that are designed to educate and promote behaviour and/or attitude change.		
Core Considerations:	Holistic Consistency	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Does the game represent the serious matter appropriately and respectfully?	Does the game effectively educate its audience and/or change an attitude or behaviour?	Does the game approach serious discussion or education in a unique way?
	Does the gameplay match the tone of the matter?	Does the design show the care regarding the subject matter?	Is the game approaching a new topic/area?
	Is the game looking to teach something? Does this match the tone of the gameplay and story?	Is there a program in place to measure behaviour change? (I.E. Is there a way to measure the results of player retention or change in behaviour?)	Does the game use new technologies or innovative tech to inform its audience and/or change an attitude or behaviour?
	Did you find yourself immersed in the theme or subject matter the game centres around?	For serious or upsetting matters, are there player check-ins, aftercare, and consent checks? If there are serious matters, are there adequate content warnings? Are there options to bypass material if needed?	If the mechanics were not intuitive, was there an innovative/design reason for this? Did it work?
		Did the game manage to keep you consistently engaged?	Does the story seek to educate about underserved minorities – I.E. minorities you haven't seen in games before.
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	If the game is for/representing a disabled audience, is it accessible to that audience? (e.g. is a game about blindness fully playable by blind gamers)		Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities)
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Is the diversity highlighted through the story respectfully?
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		Does the story have respectful cultural significance?
	Is the game accessible to a range of ages? Does it signify this?		

Category:	Excellence in Mobile Games		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of Mobile gaming for engaging, innovative and immersive use of the technology and genre.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Intuitive Mechanics	High Quality Design	Creative Innovation
	Is there an option to play landscape and portrait mode?	How long is the core gameplay loop? Is it satisfying?	Does the game push the boundaries of a traditional mobile game experience?
	Are there gesture controls? Do they feel satisfying and intuitive?	Are the mobile elements critical to the core gameplay loop? Could this game function without being a mobile game?	Are there interesting ways around technical limitations? (I.E. Keeping the players contained to a small area, simple artstyle, etc)
	Are there multiple control options (I.E. ability to change long presses to a single touch press, turn off motion controls)	How is the art style portrayed? How does it function on smaller screens?	Are any innovative techniques used in the gameplay?
	Does the game's control scheme fit well within the UI? (do they conflict or fit well together)	Does it make good use of the platform's unique features?	Did the game take you by surprise?
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Do you have the ability to edit the player characters, body and face shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	How simple are the controls? (simple = taps; moderate = one finger gestures, inc swiping; demanding = multi-touch gestures or gyro)		Does the game include the use of gender-neutral or neo pronouns as well as he/him she/her? Are there options to change the player characters pronouns mid-game? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	Are visual elements (especially text) easy to distinguish on small screens and in direct sunlight?		
	Are interactive elements and virtual controls large and well spaced?		
	Can the game be played with one hand?		
	If dealing with heavy themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		

Category:	Excellence in Emerging Games		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement from emerging teams new to the industry who have created a game outstanding in concept, expectations, and achievements.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Holistic Consistency	Clarity of Concept	Exceeded Expectations
	Is there consistency between the story and the narrative conveyed through game play?	Is it clear what this game is about, even if not fully fleshed out? (i.e. with its story, gameplay, art, audio or representation?)	Does the game go above and beyond expectations for an emerging game?
	Is there consistency between the art style and the game play?	Does the game convey its goals well? Are you aware what you're meant to be doing?	Is there significant 'polish' to the game?
	Does the concept of this game match the audience and genre?	Are there clear win conditions? Does the game have a core gameplay loop? Is there an endpoint?	Are any innovative techniques used in this game?
	Is the audio thematically tied to the game?	Is the game trying to subvert its genre?	Did the game take you by surprise?
	If there was dissonance in any of these categories, was there an innovative/design reason for this? Did it work?	Is the concept innovative and exciting?	
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Do you have the ability to edit the player characters, body and face shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		Does the game include the use of gender-neutral or neo pronouns as well as he/him she/her? Are there options to change the player characters pronouns mid-game? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	If dealing with heavy themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities)
			Does the story have respectful cultural significance?

Category:	Excellence in Ongoing Games		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in the field of Games as a Service, recognising the importance of maintaining high quality design whilst working with your community and welcoming new players onboard to a living product.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Onboarding Process	Community Engagement	Quality Control
	Is the onboarding and tutorial process smooth and intuitive?	Are there ongoing community events?	Are DLCs accessible to new players and/or is the base game still relevant?
	Is the learning curve fair?	Is the community engaged with the content?	Are there any current bugs or unbalanced additions to the game?
	Is it friendly to low level players or new players?	Is there a significant community? Are there other players you can play with?	Are any innovative techniques used in the gameplay? Have the latest patches/DLC's build upon this?
	Is there areas where new players can get comfortable with the game after the tutorial levels?	Is it easy to invite friends to join (through social media/account add ins or otherwise)	If the onboarding process was not smooth/fair, was there an innovative/design reason for this? Did it work?
	Was the onboarding process engaging and immersive?	Is there a clear Code of Conduct, and reporting system when the Code is broken?	Did you want to come back and replay it?
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		Do you have the ability to edit the player characters, body and face shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Does the game include the use of gender-neutral or neo pronouns as well as he/him she/her? Are there options to change the player characters pronouns mid-game? <i>(If customisation is applicable)</i>
	Have ongoing updates shown a commitment to improving accessibility?		Have ongoing updates shown a commitment to improving diversity and inclusion?
	If dealing with heavy themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		
	Have ongoing efforts been made to gather and/or implement feedback from disabled gamers?		



Category:	Game of the Year		
Mission Statement:	<i>For Outstanding Achievement in a game that revolutionises the genre, shows exceeding excellence across categories and stands as a testament to what incredible games the Australian Games Industry can produce.</i>		
Core Considerations:	Overall Excellence	Impact	Innovation
	Does the game show excellence in >3 categories listed above?	Has the game made a significant impact on the Australian Games industry and/or the broader international market?	Is the game a “first of its kind”?
	Were you amazed by the game’s overall quality?	Will this game be remembered and played for years to come?	Does the game use new game technologies or design methodologies in a new and interesting way?
	Did you find the game so engaging you continued to play it past the judging process?	Does it raise the profile of the Australian Games industry?	Will the methods and technologies used in this game be used in future games? i.e. is it “trailblazing”?
	Did the game take you by surprise? Was there a ‘wow!’ moment?	Does this game add/invite new audiences into the Australian Games community?	Did the game subvert expectations, either in genre, technology, art, audio, story, accessibility, or representation?
Extra Considerations:	Accessibility		Representation
	Is it playable by people across a wide spectrum of ability, either by default or through options? (e.g. difficulty settings, assists)		Does this game respectfully feature and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and stories?
	How well does the game handle accessibility fundamentals? (remapping, colour blindness, subtitling, effect/camera intensity, text size)		Does the game have credits honouring its team?
	If dealing with heavy themes, are there appropriate content warnings? Are there options to skip?		Is there an Acknowledgement of Country?
	Can accessibility features be enabled before they are needed? (e.g. subtitles on or able to be turned on before opening cinematic, buttons can be remapped before any gameplay)		Does the game contain elements of advocacy for or exploration of issues faced by underrepresented groups?
			Does this game have a uniquely Australian story or Australian way of telling a story?

