

# Developing a vibrant and innovative esports scene

**Australia and New Zealand have developed burgeoning esports scenes that are rapidly growing and attracting significant investment from traditional sports. To support this growth sustainably and responsibly, we seek to ensure that esports is enjoyed fairly, safely, and positively. We encourage federal, state, and local government attention on esports as contemporary levers for boosting tourism activity and infrastructure investment, as well as harnessing new opportunities for youth engagement and community cohesion, such as through school-based and grassroots esports programs.**

## What is esports and how popular is it?

Esports is the competitive playing of video games among individuals or teams for ranking, prize money, or for fun. While esports is clearly a part of the video games industry, it also shares similarities with traditional sports – hence its name. Like sports, esports has broad grassroots popularity, features competitive and often team-based play, has passionate fans, and attracts audiences at live events as well as spectators on screens. Esports is incredibly popular and is growing rapidly. According to our research, over a third of Australian and New Zealand adult video game players also watch esports online or in person. Today there are many professional esports tournaments being held in Australia and New Zealand. Most of the traditional sporting codes have also now added official esports competitions, and many sporting teams also run esports teams. While esports is often streamed online, it is increasingly broadcast on TV too.

## What is the role of our industry in esports?

As the creators and owners of all the games that are played across esports, video game companies are at the centre of the sector and either run esports competitions themselves, or authorise third parties to run tournaments. Given the popularity of esports in the community and its likely continued growth and influence, the video games industry has a strong interest in supporting a strong, positive, and responsible esports sector. For example, IGEA and our counterparts across Europe and North America in 2019 released the [Universal Esports Principles for Fun & Fair Play](#), providing a set of key values applicable in all aspects of esports: safety and well-being, integrity and fair play, respect and diversity, and positive and enriching game play.

## Why should governments take an interest in esports?

Governments should invest in esports for the same reasons it invests in traditional sports. Government investment in capacity-building, such as the NSW Government's support for the Esports High Performance Centre at the Sydney Cricket Ground, will help strengthen the local sector's grassroots growth. Making new public venues and stadiums esports-enabled will futureproof them, while supporting esports tournaments, like the Victorian Government's sponsorship of the Melbourne eSports Open, can boost tourism. Esports programs have also been introduced into scores of high schools across Australia and New Zealand, which educators are saying are helping to develop valuable skills relevant for the classroom and the wider world.

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