

Building a skilled workforce for our industry and Australia

Video game workers are highly trained technology-based creatives with incredibly transferable skills: exactly the kind of workers that not only our industry needs, but a 21st century Australia needs. We support policies that promote STEM in schools and enable higher education institutions with games course to provide the best possible training. We support migration policies that enable our industry to fill skills gaps and, most importantly, bring in the experienced managers and specialists we need to train up our next generation.

What kind of workers are created through making video games?

Games workers are highly skilled, creative, and versatile digital workers who are transferrable across many other sectors. Video games sits at the junction of the arts and high-tech sectors, and our workforce's unique skills reflect this. The talent involved in developing and designing games include software engineers and computer programmers, digital artists and animators, producers and project managers, story and dialogue writers, graphics and audio engineers, data and AI scientists, and quality analysts. Games also create work for the broader arts sector, like actors and musicians. The people who publish, sell, and maintain games are just as skilled, such as product managers, marketing specialists, community managers, strategists, and network engineers.

How does building a game development workforce support the broader economy?

Workers trained in game development are among the most in-demand talent in the economy. While game programmers and engineers can easily find work across the ICT sector, workers trained in game development are especially sought-after. They are creating animation and VFX for film and TV, revolutionising the advertising sector by making content without need for filming, creating AR/VR/MR simulations used in sectors from logistics to defence, using physics engines to design ships and planes, and creating digital programs, platforms and apps for businesses and governments. Finally, there is evidence that the prospect of a career in video games is a key driver of young people choosing to study STEM, so our sector is also playing a unique role in that regard.

What are the best ways for governments to help us create this workforce?

Building a strong game development sector, for which government support is critically needed, will bring a strong workforce with it. We also need migration policies that make it easier for studios to attract overseas talent where it is not available here, with the biggest gap being experienced managers and specialists. We keep hearing that the visa pathways for this talent are often inaccessible, unsuitable, or are simply not attractive enough in a globally competitive environment as they do not lead to permanent residency, or take too long to process. We further support policies that encourage studios to bring on staff, such as hiring incentives and payroll tax exemptions. To build the next generation of talent, governments must also focus on actively encouraging Australians into STEM, including by ensuring STEM receives priority focus in schools, and by continuing to broadly invest in our tertiary and vocational education sectors.

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