

# Telling Australian stories for new audiences at home and abroad

**Video gaming is arguably the largest, and certainly the fastest-growing, cultural medium in the world. Games are not only popular, but they are beautiful, complex, and narrative-driven, and many are deservedly celebrated as pieces of art. Video games are also giving a voice to a new generation of Australian story-tellers, and Australian-made games are irresistibly filled with our tones, values, voices, and humour. More so than perhaps any other Australian creative medium, Australian-made games have been quickly embraced by the world, and many are already among Australia's most impactful cultural exports ever.**

## Do video games really tell Australian stories?

They can and do. Video games are no longer the simple electronic toys that they were perceived to be in decades past, but are instead artistic and compelling platforms for interactive story-telling. Many locally-made games are set in Australia, from the iconic *Storm Boy* to the uniquely Australian *Burnout Masters*, as well as countless Australian sporting titles like *AO Tennis 2* and *AFL Evolution 2*. While some Australian-made games have more neutral settings, they often still deeply reflect their Australian origins. Even many games not made in Australia portray Australian characters and environments, from *Crash Bandicoot*, one of the world's great games franchises, to *Forza Horizon 3*, which created an entire Australian open world for millions to experience.

## Why should we care about Australian-made games?

Australian communities and governments have always cared deeply about the availability of Australian stories, especially for our younger generations. As content preferences change, video games are becoming an increasingly vital medium for Australian story-telling, and that is why we advocate for support at federal and state and territory level to ensure more games are made. Also, just as we celebrate the Australian movies and shows that find global success, locally-made games promote Australia abroad and help to shape how the world sees us, with diverse impacts that can affect tourism, trade, and even international relations. The role that video games can play was even specifically recognised in the Australian Government's last Foreign Policy White Paper.

## Can video games help to boost local and international tourism?

Video games are not only popular, but their players are extraordinarily passionate about them. For example, the gaming festival PAX Australia, which is typically held each year as a part of the Victorian Government-supported Melbourne International Games Week (MIGW), attracts close to 100,000 people, including many from inter-state, and has become potentially Australia's most popular annual cultural event. Further, cultural institutions that feature video games, such as the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) and its exhibition Game Masters which has toured Australia and overseas, together with high-profile esports events, have proven to be incredible drawcards for local economies. This is why we support continued federal, state and territory, and local investment into institutions and events that leverage and celebrate video games.

Ben Au, Director of Policy & Government Affairs, [ben@igea.net](mailto:ben@igea.net)