interactive games & entertainment association

National Innovation Centre
Gadigal Country
4 Cornwallis Street
Eveleigh NSW 2015

9 May 2024

Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation
Government of Western Australia

Via email: jtsi@jtsi.wa.gov.au

Dear Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation,

Digital Industries Acceleration Strategy

The Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (IGEA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to Western Australia's (WA's) Digital Industries Acceleration Strategy consultation, led by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (Department).

IGEA is the industry association representing and advocating for the video games industry in Australia, including the developers, publishers, and distributors of video games, as well as the makers of the most popular gaming platforms, consoles and devices. We have over a hundred members, from emerging independent studios to some of the largest technology companies in the world. Amongst our various activities, IGEA also organises the annual Games Connect Asia Pacific (GCAP) conference for Australian game developers and the Australian Game Developer Awards (AGDAs) that celebrate the best Australian-made games each year.

We welcome the reference to video gaming in the consultation paper, as the video game industry is a major contributor to the Australian digital economy. According to our data, video games are worth around $4.21 billion annually in Australia[1], while Australian-made games brought in $345.5 million in largely export revenue in 2023. Although the Western Australia game developer scene is known for its creativity and innovation, our data shows that only 11 per cent of Australian game studios are based in Western Australia, ranking fourth behind Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland[2]. Even further, only 3 per cent of Australian full-time video game employees are based in Western Australia, ranking fifth behind most of the other States.

The Priority Action Areas identified in the consultation paper are especially relevant to the video games industry. In particular, we welcome acknowledging current initiatives targeted at the video games industry, including WA Creative Industries Innovation Hub and Digital Games Pre and Post-Production Fund under Priority Action Area 1: Advocacy and Education, and Priority Action Area 3: Financial Support. In addition, we welcome the Western Australian Government's recent announcement that an additional $2 million will be invested to extend the pilot of the Digital Games and Interactive Fund delivered by Screenwest.[3] We would welcome further initiatives to maximise support for the growth and

[1] IGEA, 'Australians subscribe to video game growth' (Media release, June 2023)
[2] IGEA, AGDS 2023 Report
[3] Department, 'State Government investing in WA's job-creating screen industry' (Media Release, April 2024).

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sustainability of the video game industry, as part of new initiatives that we anticipate will be developed through this consultation process.

In this regard, our recommendations made in previous submissions to the WA Government are relevant and in alignment with the Digital Industry Acceleration Strategy Consultation. In our submission to the Inquiry into Innovation in Western Australia (January 2024), we made the following recommendations:

- The WA Government's support for the video games industry should form part of the broader innovation strategy for Western Australia.
- Government programs and initiatives must be informed, designed, or conducted in collaboration with relevant industry experts to ensure the full value and benefits of funding are realised.
- The Government should review the extent of support for the video games industry in Western Australia compared to leading Australian and overseas jurisdictions.
- Screenwest's funding allocation should be increased (and, therefore, the allocation for digital games) to ensure more projects can receive the appropriate support across Western Australia and encourage investment into the State.
- We call for increased government support for the newly created WA Games Week.

In our submission to the Western Australia 10 Year Science and Technology Plan (March 2024), we made the following recommendations:

- We recommend considering video games as a unique sector to include in the 10 Year Science and Technology Plan. This can encourage innovation in interactive technology and contribute to economic growth.
- We recommend considering video games as part of the 10 Year Science and Technology Strategy, to encourage the uptake of STEM.

In addition to the above, we recommend that the WA Government consider supporting the development and use of serious games. Serious games and gamified technologies are finding diverse uses in education, social services, and the business and community sectors. Some of the best uses of serious games by government in the world are found in Australia. For example, one of the earliest government adopters of serious games was Melbourne Metro Trains, which included games in its viral *Dumb Ways to Die* public safety campaign[4].

In conclusion, the WA Digital Industries Acceleration Strategy is a crucial mechanism for the state to harness the opportunities the video games industry brings. To ensure WA realises its full potential in the digital games industry, we ask that you consider the

[4] IGEA Policy Brief, 'Creating opportunities for serious games in government'

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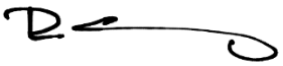
recommendations we have discussed in previous submissions. Should you wish to discuss our recommendations further, please contact us at policy@igea.net.

Warmest regards,



Ron Curry
CEO