

2026 POLICY PLATFORMER



JUNE 2026

PRESENTED BY

NZGDA
NEW ZEALAND
GAME DEVELOPERS
ASSOCIATION

IGEA
interactive games & entertainment association

FOREWORD

Video games are a **cornerstone of New Zealand's digital economy**. Recently announced preliminary revenue figures show New Zealand game developers now generate over **\$1 billion dollars of revenue a year**, which equates to roughly **\$706,000 in revenue per full-time equivalent, more than double the national productivity average** of NZ workers. Behind the screens, our game development industry has evolved into a global powerhouse.

To unlock our sector's full potential, we need sustained, coordinated support. This 2026 Policy Platformer presents a unified vision from the **Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (IGEA)** and the **New Zealand Game Developers Association (NZGDA)** for a modernised partnership with the Government.

Our path forward requires stability. Maintaining the **Game Development Sector Rebate (GDSR)**, formally recognising our industry, and backing international trade will help us **retain world-class talent and export homegrown IP**. Crucially, we must also invest in **Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education** to build a robust local talent pipeline.

Growth must be paired with smart regulation. We support the modernisation of the classification system, through leveraging the **International Age Rating Coalition (IARC)** labelling framework. We also fiercely advocate for the **robust protection of creators' intellectual property**. We also reaffirm our commitment to **online safety**, working alongside government agencies and online safety organisations to encourage healthy gameplay.

New Zealand has the ability, skill, and tenacity to be a **world leader in game development**. With clear policy settings and genuine collaboration, we can build a **resilient sector that benefits both our economy and our communities**.



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NZ'S GAME DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY OVERVIEW:

A GLOBAL ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE

The New Zealand game development sector is experiencing explosive, export-led growth, cementing its status as a critical pillar of the national digital economy. According to the 2025 NZGDA Industry Survey, the sector generated a record **\$758.9 million in pre-tax income in the financial year ended 31 March 2025**. This **38.4% year-on-year increase** significantly outpaces global industry trends. This expansion is truly remarkable when viewed over the long term; as recently as 2018, industry revenue sat at just \$143 million. Today, an astounding **95% of this revenue is driven by international exports**, primarily to the USA and Europe.

This financial success is matched by world-class productivity, which now reaches **\$535,204 per full-time equivalent (FTE)**. As a result, the industry is a powerful engine for high-value job creation. Over the past year, the workforce grew by **29.2% to 1,418 FTEs**, sustaining highly skilled roles across art, programming, and management.

2025 has been a landmark year for Kiwi releases. Smash hit titles such as ***Grow a Garden***, ***99 Nights in the Forest***, and ***Path of Exile 2*** all launched to massive critical and commercial success worldwide. ***Grow a Garden* is still the most played Roblox game in the world**, *Path of Exile 2* held the number 1 played game in the world for two weeks after its release, and *99 Nights in the Forest* is now being turned into a movie. These triumphs follow a proud **30-year history** of world-class games coming out of New Zealand, sending a clear signal that the best is yet to come.

Crucially, this rapid expansion highlights the undeniable success of the **Game Development Sector Rebate (GDSR)**. The rebate directly enabled **46% of recipients to retain staff** and **32% to hire new talent**. Furthermore, the sector delivers exceptional fiscal value. By generating over \$115 million in PAYE and income tax, the industry provides a **direct return of \$4.74 for every single dollar the government invested through the GDSR**.

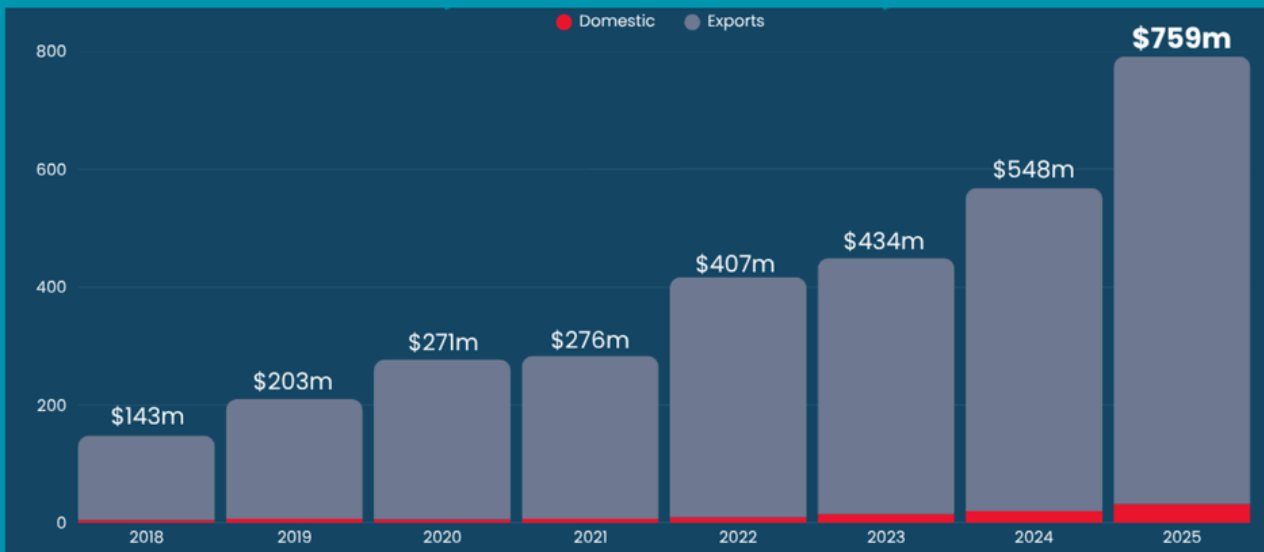
Looking ahead, confidence remains remarkably high. **Over 80% of studios** forecast they will maintain or grow their revenue, built on healthy diversification across PC, mobile, console, and immersive platforms. As the industry powers ahead, maintaining **stable policy settings** will ensure New Zealand remains a highly competitive global leader.

2025 INDUSTRY SURVEY RESULTS

↑ **\$759M**
Total Earnings

↑ **\$709M**
Export Earnings

↑ **38%**
Revenue growth YoY



↑ **1418** FTE's
29% Employee growth

↑ **\$535,204**
Revenue per employee

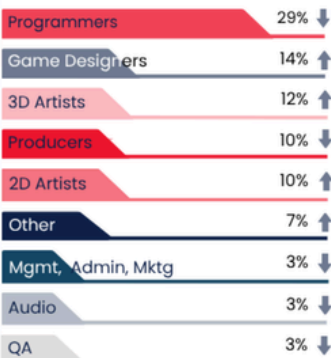
↑ **83%** Studios
Are NZ Owned

29% Female workers ↑

15% Neurodiverse Workers ↑

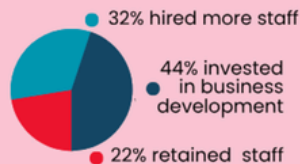
23% LGBTQ+ Workers ↑

Skills in Demand



Impact of the GDSR

100% of GDSR recipients who responded invested their rebate in their business and their staff.



For every dollar invested via the GDSR, the government has a fiscal impact of

\$4.74

Which represents a direct return of

474.31%

Total GDSR Funds paid to Studios in 2024

\$22.4M

Total amount returned to government via taxes

\$115M*

*Incomplete data

Industry Confidence



87% of studios feel they will maintain or grow their income in the next financial year

SMASH HIT NZ GAMES



TITLE: SEEKERS NOTES
STUDIO: MYTONA
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2015
DOWNLOADS: 48 MILLION



TITLE: COOKING DIARY
STUDIO: MYTONA
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2018
DOWNLOADS: 63 MILLION



TITLE: CHEF AND FRIENDS
STUDIO: MYTONA
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2023
DOWNLOADS: 3.5 MILLION



TITLE: ABIOTIC FACTOR
STUDIO: DEEP FIELD GAMES
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2024
DOWNLOADS: 1.8 MILLION



TITLE: DREDGE
STUDIO: BLACK SALT GAMES
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2023
DOWNLOADS: X MILLION



TITLE: INTO THE DEAD 1
STUDIO: PIKPOK
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2012
DOWNLOADS: 107 MILLION



TITLE: INTO THE DEAD 2
STUDIO: PIKPOK
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2017
DOWNLOADS: 76 MILLION



TITLE: TURBO RACING LEAGUE
STUDIO: PIKPOK
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2013
DOWNLOADS: 100 MILLION



TITLE: CLUSTER DUCK
STUDIO: PIKPOK
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2020
DOWNLOADS: 26 MILLION



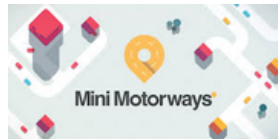
TITLE: RIVAL STARS HORSE RACING
STUDIO: PIKPOK
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2019
DOWNLOADS: 46 MILLION



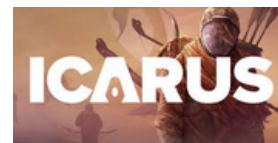
TITLE: BLOONS
STUDIO: NINJA KIWI
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2007
DOWNLOADS: X MILLION



TITLE: MINI METRO
STUDIO: DINOSAUR POLO CLUB
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2015
DOWNLOADS: 11 MILLION



TITLE: MINI MOTORWAYS
STUDIO: DINOSAUR POLO CLUB
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2019
DOWNLOADS: 8 MILLION



TITLE: ICARUS
STUDIO: ROCKETWERKZ
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2021
DOWNLOADS: 3.5 MILLION



TITLE: THE BLOCKHEADS
STUDIO: MAJIC JUNGLE
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2012
DOWNLOADS: 50 MILLION

WORLD LEADERS

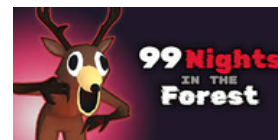


TITLE: FLESH AND BLOOD
STUDIO: LEGEND STORY STUDIOS
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2017

Flesh and Blood is a Tabletop Trading Card Game and currently the 4th best-selling TCG in the world behind Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh! and Magic the Gathering.



TITLE: GROW A GARDEN
STUDIO: SPLITTING POINT STUDIOS
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2025
TOTAL PLAYS: 32 BILLION



TITLE: 99 NIGHTS IN THE FOREST
STUDIO: GRANDMA'S FAVOURITE GAMES
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2025
TOTAL PLAYS: 26 BILLION

99 Nights in the Forest and *Grow a Garden* are both developed for the Roblox platform. *Grow a Garden* is considered the biggest game of all time (regardless of platform) by peak concurrent users (CCU). The free-to-play, farming simulator broke world records by reaching a peak of over 22.3 million players online simultaneously on August 23, 2025, surpassing Fortnite's 14 million players.

FIGURES AS OF APRIL 2026

Download figures do not include hardware sales, ie discs, cartridges etc or some sales via specific platforms. These figures are sourced from studios themselves or trusted internet sources.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP THE INDUSTRY REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL



GROWING NEW ZEALAND'S GAME DEVELOPMENT WORKFORCE AND CAPABILITY

Game development is a highly skilled, technical, creative, and export-focused sector

New Zealand's game development industry is built on a highly skilled and experienced workforce that combines strong technical capability, creative excellence and commercial acumen, enabling studios to operate successfully in highly competitive global market. The sector draws strength from innovation across technology, screen and creative industries, with specialised expertise in game engineering, real time graphics, virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

Game development operates as an export focused sector, relying on international markets and partnerships, and requiring the ability to adapt rapidly to evolving technologies and global trends.

Therefore, continued and coordinated government support is critical to supporting our high performing industry. This support is key to maintaining growth, increasing capability, lifting productivity, and ensuring New Zealand remains competitive as a destination for game development and investment.



HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

Commit to long term policy stability and coordination

Provide clear, stable and coordinated policy settings across electoral cycles. Regular engagement with industry bodies will ensure initiatives remain effective, responsive and aligned with the needs of a highly productive, export focused sector.

Formally recognise game development as a distinct industry

Recognise game development as its own industry category across policy, data and funding frameworks. This would improve policy design, enable better data collection, strengthen cross-agency coordination and ensure initiatives such as the GDSR and CODE are implemented with a full understanding of the sector's unique characteristics.

Maintain and strengthen the Game Development Sector Rebate

Retain the baselined GDSR as a long-term policy setting and continue to refine it to support studio growth, workforce development and talent retention. The rebate should be considered not only as an investment attraction tool but also as a mechanism for building domestic capability.

TITLE: GUARDIAN MAIA

STUDIO: METIA INTERACTIVE, AUCKLAND



2

DRIVING INDUSTRY GROWTH THROUGH TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Importance of international market presence

Supporting international travel to major game development events is a critical driver of industry growth. Global conferences place New Zealand developers directly in front of publishers, investors and platform holders who make funding and distribution decisions.

Visibility and credibility in global markets

Events such as Gamescom, GDC and similar showcases signal New Zealand's commitment to its export industries and provide opportunities for studios to demonstrate the quality, creativity and commercial potential of New Zealand made games.

Value of face to face engagement

Physical presence enables developers to build trust, refine pitches, receive immediate feedback and form long term relationships with decision makers. These interactions cannot be replicated through online engagement and are often decisive in securing deals.

Levelling the playing field through government support

Government support for international travel helps New Zealand studios compete with larger markets that have deeper capital reserves. Coordinated delegations, shared branding and targeted assistance increase impact while reducing individual costs.

International engagement as an investment, not a cost

Games are a weightless export, and even a small number of successful international deals can generate significant economic value to the NZ economy, employment and long term growth.

Supporting international market access is therefore a strategic investment in New Zealand's export future.



3

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT

The need for supported employment pathways

Across New Zealand, tertiary institutions teach core skills including programming, digital art, 3D modelling, animation, production and audio. An increasing number of providers now offer specialist game development pathways, supporting a steady flow of junior talent into the industry.

However, graduates often find the transition from being a student to landing work in the industry particularly challenging. This gap can be bridged by targeted education to work programmes, including paid internships or partially subsidised salaries, would help graduates transition into industry roles while supporting studios to absorb the cost of training and onboarding new talent. Such programme could also serve working adults seeking career transitions from other sectors into game developments, as well as unemployed youth to access paid training opportunities with clear pathways into employment within the industry.

Long term talent retention and attraction

Another key challenge facing the industry's talent pipeline is the loss of experienced developers to overseas markets offering significantly higher remuneration. While the GDSR has played an important role in slowing the flow of talent offshore, additional measures are needed to ensure that talent trained in New Zealand remain here.

Hence, the government should review migration settings to enable experienced game development professionals to immigrate to New Zealand, strengthening leadership capability and providing critical mentorship for junior developers entering the workforce.



TITLE: FLINTLOCK; THE SIEGE OF DAWN
STUDIO: A44, LOWER HUTT



SUPPORTING GAME DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

STEAM education is the key to our industry's talent pipeline

Our industry's long term talent pipeline depends on continued prioritisation of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education. Strong STEAM foundations in schools, alongside sustained investment in tertiary and vocational education, are essential to building future game development talent.

Gaps in the current school curriculum

New Zealand's current school curriculum, although developed relatively recently, misses the mark in key areas of digital technology. Game development is often a student's first exposure to technology, but typically not until Year 4 or later, and foundational principles of computing are not taught at any level. There is limited focus on teaching how computers work, including binary concepts, algorithms and computational thinking. Introducing these foundations as early as Year 0 is both feasible and proven, with licence free programmes such as Computer Science Unplugged already used successfully in New Zealand and widely adopted internationally.

Broader benefits of early digital education

Early exposure to computer science strengthens not only digital literacy and innovation, but also supports the development of teamwork, mathematics, literacy and numeracy skills, delivering broader educational outcomes beyond technology alone.

Governance imbalance within Industry Skills Boards (ISBs)

Recent reforms to New Zealand's vocational education and training system were designed to strengthen industry collaboration and ensure qualifications remain fit for purpose. However, implementation through the Electrotechnology, Information Technology and Creative (ETITC) Industry Skills Board has not delivered on that intent. Despite approximately 83% of the qualifications under the ISB's remit relating directly to the technology sector, including creative technology, game development, and digital arts, the current makeup of the ISB consists of seven representatives from the electrical industry and three representatives from the creative and tech sectors. This structural imbalance means that decisions affecting the qualifications pipeline for our industry are being made largely without meaningful input from the people best placed to understand it.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

Support international market access and trade engagement

Continue to invest in international travel and trade missions for game developers, including coordinated delegations to major global events. These initiatives place New Zealand studios directly in front of publishers and investors and deliver strong export returns.

Address talent retention through immigration settings

Review immigration settings to attract experienced game development professionals who can provide leadership, mentorship and skills transfer, supporting the development of junior talent and strengthening local capability.

Enable career transitions and youth employment

Consider schemes that support adults transitioning into game development from other sectors and provide unemployed youth with access to paid training pathways that lead directly to employment opportunities in the industry.

Support workforce ready training and flexible skills pathways

Enable industry aligned training through micro credentials, short courses and flexible learning models that respond quickly to changing skills needs. Education providers should be supported to co-design curricula with industry to ensure graduates are job ready.

Improve education to work transition pathways

Introduce or expand programmes that support graduates entering the industry, such as paid internships or partially subsidised salaries. These initiatives would help studios absorb training costs while accelerating workforce entry for new graduates.

Strengthen STEAM education and early digital foundations

Continue to prioritise STEAM education and introduce computer science fundamentals earlier in the curriculum, including computational thinking, algorithms and how computers process information. Proven approaches such as Computer Science Unplugged should be supported and scaled.

Introduce "Game Design" as a Cross-Curricular Teaching Tool

Leverage game development as a student's first exposure to technology and support broader outcomes, the government should fund professional development for primary teachers to use game design as a cross-curricular tool. By teaching kids to design simple games, educators can simultaneously hit curriculum requirements for mathematics (logic, geometry), literacy (narrative design, storytelling), and digital technology, proving that tech education supports core competencies rather than competing with them.

5

FORMALLY RECOGNISE GAME DEVELOPMENT AS A DISTINCT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INDUSTRY

Despite now being a \$1 billion export industry, the New Zealand game development sector currently operates in a governmental gray area. Because our industry lacks a formal classification or a designated "home" within government systems, there is a persistent lack of institutional knowledge and cross-departmental coordination regarding our needs.

Game development seamlessly blends high-tech engineering with deep creative artistry. However, this multidisciplinary nature means we frequently slip through the cracks of both the technology and creative sectors, resulting in systemic miscategorisation across government departments:

- **Vocational and Tertiary Education:** Caught between traditional tech and creative pathways, our unique educational needs are often misunderstood, leaving gaps in our domestic talent pipeline.
- **Immigration New Zealand:** Existing visa frameworks fail to capture the highly specialised nuances of our workforce. Assessors frequently equate a game development programmer with a standard enterprise software developer, or a narrative designer with a film writer. Recently, a studio's application to hire an AI Data Scientist was declined simply because the role did not fit cleanly into standard, outdated technology job lists.
- **Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH):** Until recently, MCH viewed game development strictly as a technology sector, overlooking our cultural impact. While specific personnel have since updated their perception to recognise our creative value, relying on individual understanding is precarious. Without a formal classification, this institutional knowledge rarely survives staff attrition, leaving our industry vulnerable to a constant cycle of having to "re-educate" new officials from scratch.

The financial threat of "one-size-fits-all" policy

Without bespoke recognition, well-intentioned policies can inadvertently create friction for the sector. A recent example of this was seen in proposed Inland Revenue (IRD) changes, where game development was initially treated identically to standard software development, requiring assets to be depreciated over three to four years.

While a multi-year depreciation model works well for B2B or SaaS (Software as a Service) platforms that generate steady, growing revenue over time, it doesn't align with the economic realities of entertainment software. Because a typical video game generates approximately 80% of its total lifetime revenue during its initial launch spike, spreading the depreciation over several years creates a mismatch between cash flow and tax liabilities.

The NZGDA was able to work closely with the government to address this, and we now enjoy highly productive, positive engagement with IRD. However, this situation highlights a broader systemic opportunity. Because game development isn't formally identified as its own distinct category, the initial tax settings inadvertently conflicted with the goals of both the Game Development Sector Rebate (GDSR) and CODE funding. For emerging studios, this misalignment could have severely limited the intended impact of that vital government support.



TITLE: DREDGE

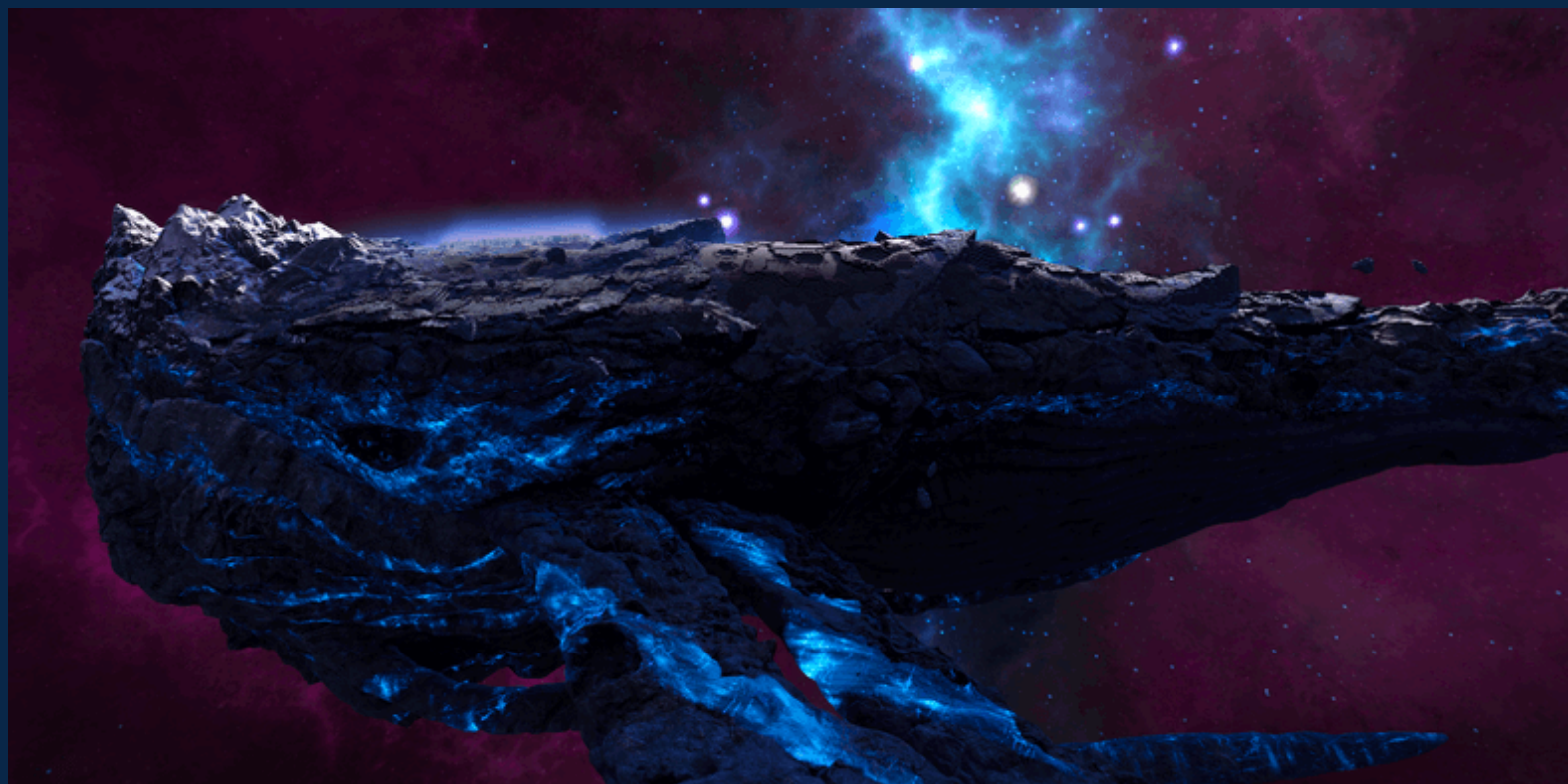
STUDIO: BLACK SALT GAMES, CHRISTCHURCH

HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

The path forward: Proactive co-design

The government should formally recognise game development as a distinct industry sub-sector within the broader technology and creative landscapes - much like farming is recognised as a specific, nuanced industry within the broader agriculture sector.

By establishing a formal classification and actively acknowledging how game development operates, policymakers can engage with the industry consciously and proactively. Early-stage consultation will ensure new regulations - from tax policy to immigration - are fit-for-purpose, allowing us to build a sustainable industry together and prevent unintended friction before new policies are finalised.



TITLE: BEYOND THESE STARS, **STUDIO:** BALANCING MONKEY GAMES, DUNEDIN



GOOD PUBLIC POLICY DESIGN DRAWING FROM INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Clear, proportionate, and practicable public policy

We support policies and regulations that are clearly defined, evidence-based, practicable, and compatible with the digital economy. New regulation should adhere to principles of good public policy design, including proportionality, accountability, and technology neutrality, drawing from international best practices. Critically, the government must consult meaningfully with industry on any reforms to ensure that policy solutions are proportionate to the risks they seek to address and genuinely workable.

Leverage existing frameworks to avoid regulatory duplication

As New Zealand considers options for online regulation, it is crucial that the government coordinate across the broader regulatory landscape to avoid duplicating frameworks that already regulate video games, such as the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993. Taking a considered approach that leverages existing frameworks wherever possible, before introducing new technology-specific regulations, will minimise regulatory duplication, reduce complexity and streamline compliance.

Avoid unnecessary technical barriers to trade

As a net importer of consumer electronics and video game hardware, New Zealand must ensure new regulatory frameworks align with international arrangements. Diverging from global practices risks unnecessary technical barriers to trade and associated costs that would be passed on to New Zealand consumers.



TITLE: SEEKERS NOTES STUDIO: MYTONA, AUCKLAND

HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

Implement best practice regulatory principles

Existing regulatory frameworks should be leveraged wherever possible before introducing new technology-specific regulations. Any new regulation should be clearly defined, proportionate, evidence-based, risk-based, and practicable. Consultation with industry is critical.

Avoid regulatory duplication

The government must ensure regulatory coordination to avoid duplication with existing regulatory frameworks for video games, thereby reducing complexity and streamlining compliance.

Ensure regulatory coherence with international jurisdictions

As New Zealand is a net importer of consumer electronic goods such as devices and video game consoles, new frameworks should be coherent with overseas regulations to prevent unnecessary trade barriers.





SUPPORT AND PROMOTE HEALTHY GAMEPLAY FOR ALL KIWIS

Video games are a beloved and meaningful activity

Video games provide significant mental and social benefits for game players. 81% of Kiwis play games, mainly for enjoyment, relaxation, and staying connected with friends and family. Studies have shown that video games support cognitive growth, improve focus, and foster qualities like grit, persistence, and self-determination. Importantly, playing video games can be a meaningful and accessible activity for people who face challenges participating in physical and community spaces. This is especially important for regional and underserved areas.

Our commitment to healthy and responsible video gaming

The video games industry has long been at the forefront of championing safe and healthy gameplay. As a pioneering industry for SafetyTech, the government should partner with our industry to promote the uptake of family safety controls to support Kiwi families in their gameplay. Online video gaming services and video game consoles typically feature extensive parental and player controls managing access, screen time, user communication, and spending. These services also enforce clear community standards through active content moderation capabilities. For more information, please visit the IGEA Trust and Safety Hub: igea.net/trust-safety

Support online safety education

Our industry works closely with civil society to raise community awareness on online safety, digital literacy, and responsible play. Netsafe continues to play a key role in supporting Kiwis in navigating digital spaces. This includes delivering critical digital literacy programmes in schools, and many other useful resources for parents, caregivers, and players.

Importance of video game classifications

The New Zealand classification system plays a vital role in providing age-appropriate guidance to empower parents and caregivers to assess suitability, themes and context of each video game for their children. This helps educate the public by delivering balanced, informed, and easily accessible content guidance. As video games are an artistic medium that often explore complex themes and creative expression, the New Zealand Classification Office remains essential, bringing the specialist expertise needed to assess this content appropriately for New Zealand audiences.

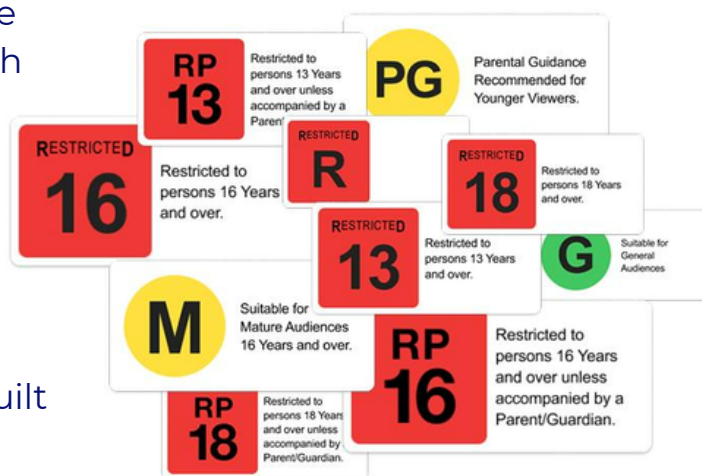


A MODERN CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR VIDEO GAMES

Industry compliance with the Classification Act

New Zealand's video games industry has a strong track record of working within the classification scheme (Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993).

Our members engage closely with the New Zealand Classification Office both before and after releases, demonstrating a consistent commitment to responsible compliance. The existing framework remains the most appropriate and effective mechanism for regulating video games, because it is purpose-built to assess video games as an artistic medium, taking into account context, themes, and player experience.



While the classification framework provides the right foundation, the current classification system was not built to manage the scale and speed of today's digitally distributed market, making targeted modernisation both necessary and overdue.

A modern digital labelling system for video games

We strongly recommend adopting digital labelling systems such as the International Age Rating Coalition (IARC) ratings, which Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and the United States have already implemented within their classification schemes. Major user-generated content game platforms have voluntarily integrated IARC into their content rating systems, ensuring that local classification labels are reflected accurately across international markets. For smaller New Zealand developers and publishers, IARC will meaningfully reduce the cost and administrative burden of manual classification submissions.

Modernising through IARC does not replace the classification framework, it extends its reach into the digital market. Grounding this modernisation in New Zealand's existing system ensures that regulation remains proportionate, targeted, and informed by the uniquely artistic and interactive nature of games.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

Recognise the benefits of games

Video games are a beloved activity, offering cognitive, social and mental-wellbeing benefits, and provide a meaningful and accessible activity for people who face barriers to participating in physical and community spaces.

Promote family safety controls

The video games industry has long been at the forefront of ensuring player safety, as a pioneering industry for SafetyTech. The government should partner with our industry to promote the uptake of family safety controls to support Kiwi families in their gameplay.

Support digital literacy and online safety awareness initiatives

Support civil society-led initiatives that promote online safety, digital literacy, and responsible play. Continued government support for Netsafe is essential to ensure the public has access to high quality educational resources that can help improve their digital lives.

Support the New Zealand Classification Office

Ensure the Office is sufficiently resourced to classify video games, providing clear age-specific guidance that empower parents and caregivers to assess suitability and support public education.

Recognise and modernise the classification framework

The video games industry, especially our members, have a strong record of complying with New Zealand's classification scheme, which remains the most appropriate framework for regulating games. While modernisation is necessary, any proposed online regulation should be grounded in this existing framework.

Adopt a digital labelling system

Given the limited coverage of digital games under the current system, adopting global age rating systems like IARC would streamline classification and reduce costs for smaller New Zealand developers and publishers.

Maintain existing labelling exemptions for user-generated games

Even with IARC adoption across platforms, user-generated games should remain exempt from labelling requirements, as manual review is unworkable and prohibitively costly given the volume and variability of content.

9

CONSULTATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

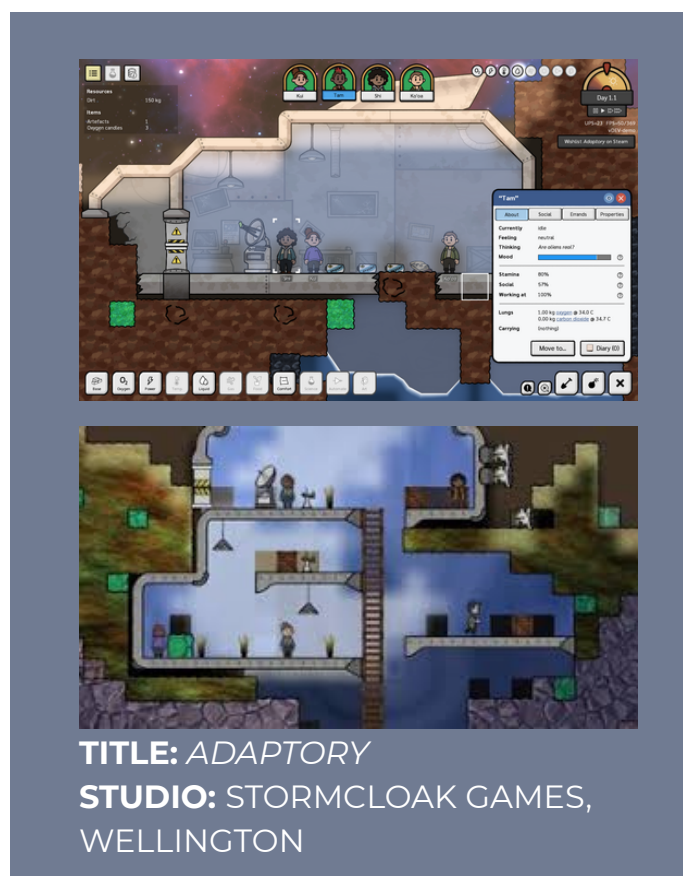
Strong IP and copyright protections are essential

Video games are among the world's most renowned, innovative, valuable, and complex forms of intellectual property. Locally developed games generate export revenue that can have a lasting economic impact. Yet, despite their value, games remain highly vulnerable to copyright infringement and IP theft. This underscores the importance of strong IP and copyright protections, which are essential for fostering creativity and innovation in game development and for encouraging ongoing investment in creating, launching, and sustaining games in New Zealand.

Regulation must not compromise industry efforts in safeguarding IP

Any new regulation must be carefully designed to not compromise our industry's right to safeguard IP, particularly the technological protection measures (TPMs) used in consoles. TPMs are vital for preventing piracy, protecting consumers' digital assets, enabling security updates, and underpinning online safety controls.

Hence, we strongly urge against restrictions that prohibit or limit the ability of video game console manufacturers to void voluntary warranties if unauthorised repairs or modifications are carried out, as this is necessary to protect the integrity and safety of consoles.



Copyright law that protects creators and encourages innovation

With rapid advances in technology posing complex copyright challenges, New Zealand's copyright law must continue to balance the protection of creators' rights with the encouragement of innovation, and the government must preserve this core principle.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN HELP

Maintain IP protection in device regulation

Any new regulation must not undermine our industry's ability to safeguard its IP, especially the TPMs used in consoles.

Preserve manufacturer warranty rights

We strongly oppose restrictions that prevent video game console manufacturers from voiding warranties after unauthorised repairs or modifications, which is necessary to protect the console integrity and safety.

Preserving copyright protections while promoting innovation

Copyright law must balance creators' rights with innovation, and we encourage government-industry collaboration to ensure protections are properly enforced.



TITLE: GAME NIGHT

STUDIO: FANTAIL GAMES, CHRISTCHURCH





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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