INTERACTIVE GAMES FUND CONSULTATION: NOTES FROM MELBOURNE FORUM
11 December 2012

Here's a snapshot of some of the thoughts, suggestions and opinions raised during the Melbourne public forum. The notes are pretty raw, and care should be taken in reading them out of context, but we hope they're useful – at least as a reminder for those who attended. If you feel that any important comments made during the forum have been misrepresented or would like to respond to any of these points, you can make your voice heard via the online discussion board, or an email submission to gamesfund@screenaustralia.gov.au.

Dates and details of remaining public forums and webinar are available here: www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gamesconsult

PRE-PRODUCTION

How valuable are prototypes?

- Prototype will not enable developers to retain IP when approaching publishers
- Prototypes are important but proposed fund isn't suitable
- Suggestion – money for many prototypes, not just one
- Need flexibility to let games evolve during development
- Valve, Project Greenlight – model could be applied to the games fund
- Double Fine example – public picks prototypes
- Useful for taking a chance on a small game or experimenting
- Prototype funding plus offset gives a good chance of retaining equity
- Screenwest crowdfunding 3:1 model – funding to create/take a prototype to a crowdfunding platform, Screen Australia matches successful crowdfunding 3:1
- Prototypes can be an end in themselves
- Pull people in from related industries eg film, tv to work on a prototype to build skills
- Video trailers are useful, less expensive than a prototype, sales/marketing tools
- Should a vertical slice/prototype be a requirement to get production funding from Screen Australia?

What games would benefit most from prototype?

- Games that involve new technology, new platforms, innovation
- Funding to investigate new technologies

PRODUCTION

What should be excluded?

- Online gambling
- Products not for public consumption
- Advergaming – judge case by case, different business to business relationships, partnerships
- Need to consider the benefit to the consumer
- Shouldn't exclude products that contribute to industry sustainability
- Cultural merit test – does it contribute to cultural life?
- Ethics test, is this an exploitation of the fund?
- Work for hire should be a low priority
- Need to look at marketplace attachment requirement
- The above are moral tests

Marketplace attachment

- Publishers are obsolete
- Higher budget games for console platforms need publisher relationships/attachments
- Need a distribution mechanism that can give you a minimum guarantee if self-publishing (higher end games)

Diversity of slate

- PC games are a growing market, ios games can't sustain an industry
- PC offer a more expansive gaming experience
- Higher bar to entry for larger scale games, lower for smaller games
- Lower bar to entry for smaller games enables developers to gain experience
- 'Indie fund' model effective

ENTERPRISE

- Benefit of the scheme is to mitigate risk and build studios
- Need more successful businesses, businesses that can withstand failure
- Enable companies to develop multiple games at a time
- Dubious about idea of a slate applied to games
- If you have a hit, all your energy goes into exploitation of that IP
- Fund should help companies further exploit IP that is working
- Investment in people, not slates
- Enables companies to plan new IP
- Focus on business plan

Eligibility requirements

- Need a high bar to entry
- Will community and cultural organisations be eligible for enterprise funding?
- Smallish teams should concentrate on one game at a time

OTHER

- Festivals, events, young emerging practitioners need funding for marketing/ professional development/ export development
- Funding other aspects of the industry eg. Middleware, these parts of the industry make a real contribution to the overall sustainability of the industry
- Is the fund only to support creative content?
- Balance of industry stimulus / culture
- Domestic marketplace for business to business relationships is limited – need to encourage
- Game City (UK)
- Need to define 'culture' because we are spending public money
- Definition of culture – 'labour of people working in a area for which they have been trained and which they are prepared'
- Limited engagement from universities in Australia
- Need to create hits with the fund to excite Government and the public, justify tax breaks
- AIE incubator program – funds to support incubators, building blocks to support industry, teach graduates how to create a company
- Support games/prototypes that use locally developed middleware
- Funding for communal work areas/ office space
- Support: People, Projects and Culture
- LA games space, residencies, scholarships

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