Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Future of Australia's video game development industry

To the Committee Secretary,

Thank you the opportunity make a submission in relation to the Future of Australia's video game development industry.

I am writing to make two points relevant to all the points outlined in the Terms of Reference. For Australia's video game development industry to reach its full potential, I know of two changes to the current environment that would be helpful. Firstly, fewer games should be refused classification. Secondly, Australia should invest in adequate internet infrastructure to allow us to interact with global markets and competitive events.

With regard to classification, it's great that an R18+ classification has been introduced for video games. However, it's clear that the approach is still insufficient to respect the autonomy of adult gamers and the creative license of game developers. It is proving to be inconsistent between video games, as well as inconsistent between different media. Possible ideas for improvement would be a system that treats video games the same as other media are treated, or a system more consistent with the world which, I understand, has been trialled in Australia (see http://www.smh.com.au/digital-life/games/australian-game-classification-gets-muchneeded-streamlining-with-international-rating-tool-20150319-1m2q4w.html). A more consistent and adult classification system would give developers the space to exercise their creativity, incentivizing their participation in Australia's industry.

But let's face it. It's not much use being able to purchase *Saints Row: IV*, if your internet is too slow to enjoy playing it. Australia's lackluster internet speeds place us at a competitive disadvantage with regard to e-sports (see http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-01/e-sports-to-flourish-in-australia-despite-low-internet-speeds/6739022), which may be hypothesized to reduce interest in the local development industry. But more importantly, bad internet in Australia just makes everything harder. I'm fairly confident if I were a video game developer, a NBN utilizing Fibre-to-the-Premises would make a whole lot of difference to my successful work.

So there are two idea for you to play with. Hopefully the classification one just needs a bit of a nudge to get sorted out. The NBN one may be a bit trickier – I understand it has become somewhat politicized. But best wishes with it.

Regards,

Joel Dignam