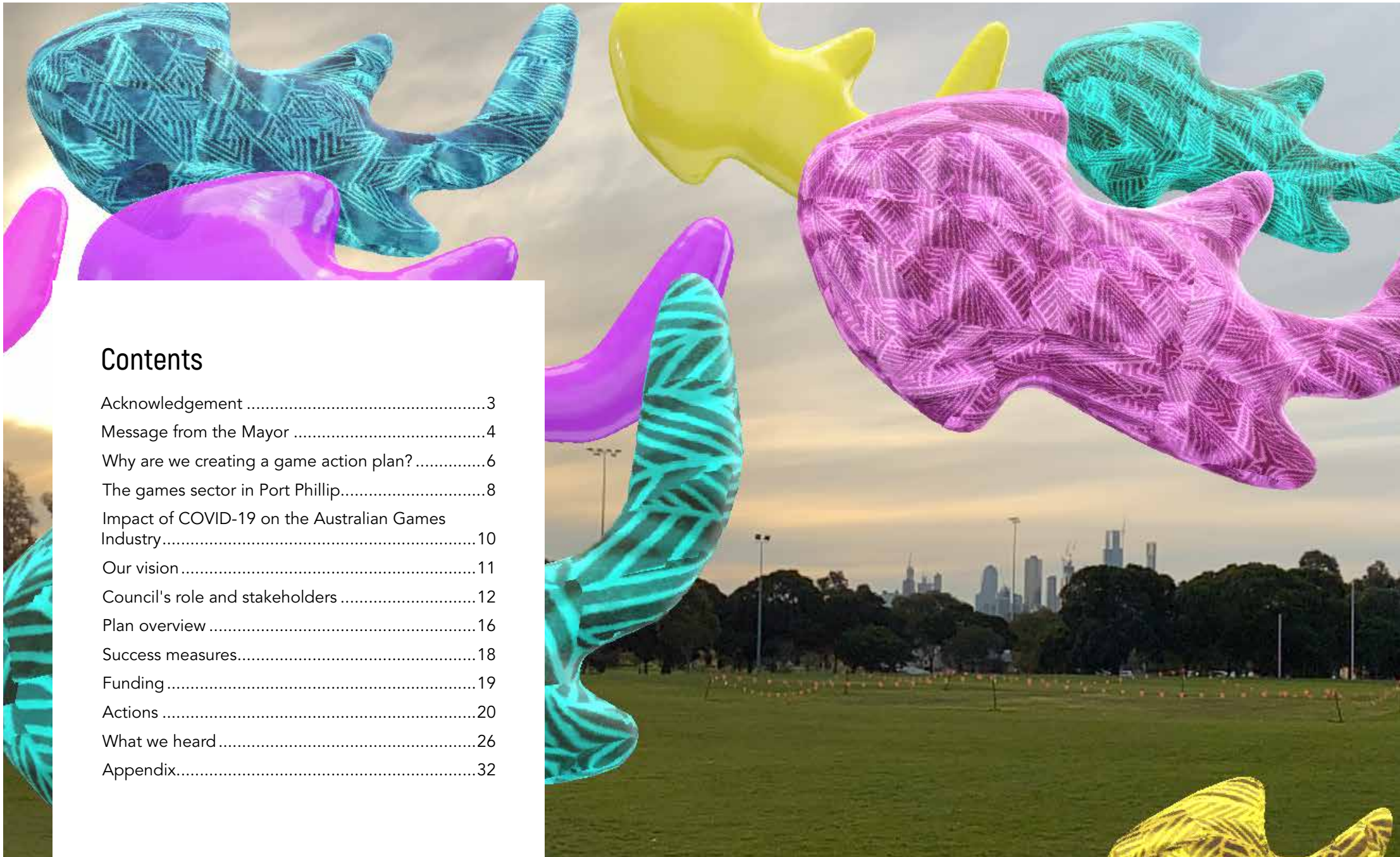


# Games Action Plan

2020-24





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Photo:  
Walert Murrup (Possum spirits),  
Jarra Karalinar Steel



## GAMES AND PLAY AMONG THE YALUK-UT WEELAM CLAN OF THE BOON WURRUNG

Council respectfully acknowledges the Yaluk-ut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respect to their elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

Many different types of games were played across the Kulin Nation. One game, called Brajerack (the wild man), was witnessed by colonial settlers in the latter part of the 1800s. It was a game of hide and seek that involved exploring space and playing in it. A player would hide in a wombat hole and then would need to be dug out of this hiding place.

Storytelling in games is a special way of sharing ideas, history, language and stories. Through storytelling we can discover the rich history, lore and cultural diversity of the First Nations and traditional owners. Whether through oral traditional lore of the land, spirits, animals, the bay, waterways and sky passed down by Elders or the contemporary stories and experiences of First Peoples connection to country.

Cover photo:  
Playable Melbourne Art Tram by Troy Innocent.  
Download and play with the tram: [onelink.to/em349t](https://onelink.to/em349t)  
Photograph by James HH Morgan.



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Art, creativity and innovation are deeply embedded in Port Phillip. With a strong cultural heritage that brings colour and meaning to our lives, our City has a clear legacy of the arts and creative industries, and the drive to engage with the creative ambitions of our residents to support opportunity, communities and businesses.

With innovative approaches to creative technology and community, the games sector represents clear opportunities to strengthen our creative ecosystem into the future and establish the City of Port Phillip as the games development capital of Victoria.

As a key initiative of our Art and Soul Creative and Prosperous City Strategy 2018 – 22, this Game Action Plan builds on our broader Arts and Creative Industries work, focusing on Outcome Two of that strategy – ‘A prosperous city that connects and grows business’. We also know, however, that the breadth of games activity within the city connects with other outcomes, including ‘arts, culture and creative expression are part of everyday life’, and ‘being a City of dynamic and distinctive places and precincts’.

I look forward to watching its implementation and success.



**Cr Bernadene Voss**  
Mayor  
City of Port Phillip



## MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY MAYOR

Melbourne is home to half of Australia’s digital games industry, and many of those game development studios, animation houses and industry service providers live and work out of Port Phillip. In creating this plan, we have worked with our local game industry to respond to global trends and opportunities and consolidate our City as a place where ambitious and multi-faceted gaming work will be developed.

In delivering on this action plan over the next four years, we will provide tangible support to businesses fostering their sustainability and creativity, work with communities on how they might engage with games and empower practitioners in how they can develop new ways of making and thinking through play and technology.

Those who know me know that I’m a regular attendee at Melbourne International Games Week and PAX Australia and I feel both pride and excitement at this holistic and ambitious vision for games in Port Phillip, embedding it within our broader Arts and Creative Industries strategy, and recognising the value that games play in the life of Port Phillip and its residents.

We want Port Phillip to be a leader in the games sector and the Games Action Plan will guide our work.



**Cr Tim Baxter**  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Port Phillip





Photo:  
2020 Global Game Jam – JMC and Global Game Jam  
by Sheridan Horne, JMC Academy.

## WHY ARE WE CREATING A GAME ACTION PLAN?

We have a skilled workforce, talented students coming out of education institutes, creative artists and producers, all living in vibrant precincts with culture and quality of life, and companies that produce blockbuster content. This plan will help them all grow and to thrive.

*Council's Art and Soul: Creative and Prosperous City Strategy 2018 – 2022* inspires us to think about how we can leverage the creativity and diversity in our City's DNA to build a more prosperous city through supporting the growth of creative industries.

The creation of a four-year Games Action Plan for the City is a key action under Goal 2 of Art and Soul: Build A Prosperous City that Connects and Grows Business. It recognises the opportunity for our growing games sector and related creative industries to continue as a significant part of the City's future economy. In addition to the economic benefit, this growth also presents a clear opportunity to enhance our City by supporting creative expression in our community and through celebrating games and culture in our public places and precinct.

As a first step, we consulted across the games sector with local and international stakeholders to understand how we can support and encourage game making and play across our City for the next four years and beyond.

We've listened to the challenges, concerns and needs of game makers from diverse groups, from emerging to professional, commercial to not-for profit, bespoke to mass appeal, local to expat makers all working within or with a connection to making games in Melbourne. We listened carefully to suggestions about what Council can do and the role of key partners, including peak bodies, state and federal government, our local academic institutions, curators, creators and artists in supporting them.

From this process, we have a broad view of games as a creative industry, encompassing the range of international games businesses resident in Port Phillip through to individual artists making playful work and how we can connect games to broad community activity and organisations. We're including makers of all types, engaged audiences, and broader communities who might not engage with games, but who might find them interesting if they encountered them in a surprising and playful setting.

This also means we're exploring activity at the intersections and edges of games and the associated skills, including creative artists creating work using game engines, virtual reality, e-sports, mental and physical wellbeing, training and education, and visual effects and visualisation.

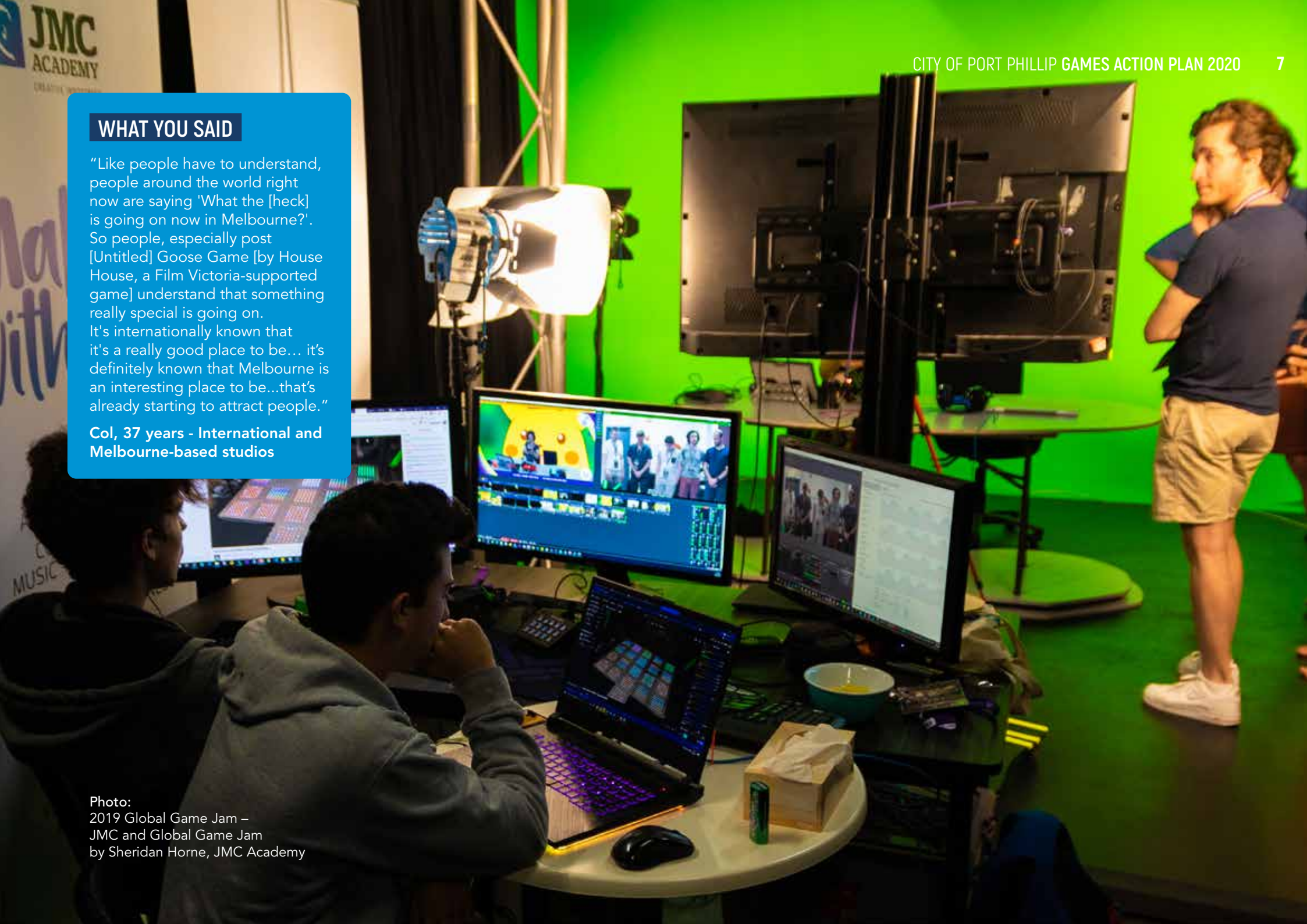
We know that Port Phillip is already home to world-class creative talent, and we believe that this plan can contribute to the games sector being a creative engine for Victoria. We have a skilled workforce, talented students coming out of educational institutions, creative artists and producers, all living in vibrant precincts with culture and quality of life, and companies that produce blockbuster content. This plan will help them all grow and to thrive.

## WHAT YOU SAID

"Like people have to understand, people around the world right now are saying 'What the [heck] is going on now in Melbourne?'. So people, especially post [Untitled] Goose Game [by House House, a Film Victoria-supported game] understand that something really special is going on. It's internationally known that it's a really good place to be... it's definitely known that Melbourne is an interesting place to be...that's already starting to attract people."

**Col, 37 years - International and Melbourne-based studios**

Photo:  
2019 Global Game Jam –  
JMC and Global Game Jam  
by Sheridan Horne, JMC Academy



## THE GAMES SECTOR IN PORT PHILLIP

As of January 2020, there are more than an estimated 75 active games studios, creators and game adjacent business across the municipality. They are operating at all sizes and scales, with world-class talent across the full spectrum of games technologies – from mobile, PC and console, to fast developing sectors such as VR / AR, eSports and Artificial Intelligence.

If we include associated businesses, including high-tech film production, PR and marketing, and creative technology companies, that number increases to over one hundred active businesses. We know from research that games have been resilient in the face of COVID-19, and are primed for continued economic growth, so we want to expand our support for these businesses to grow, generating jobs and commercial opportunities for new experiences and practitioners.

Port Phillip is also home to established and growing arts, creative and innovation industry clusters in South Melbourne and Port Melbourne. This includes The Arcade, a two-storey building in South Melbourne that is Australia's first not-for-profit collaborative games co-working space specifically for the digital games industry. IGEA (Interactive Games and Entertainment Association) manages The Arcade and is the peak industry association representing the voice of Australian and New Zealand companies in the computer and games industry.

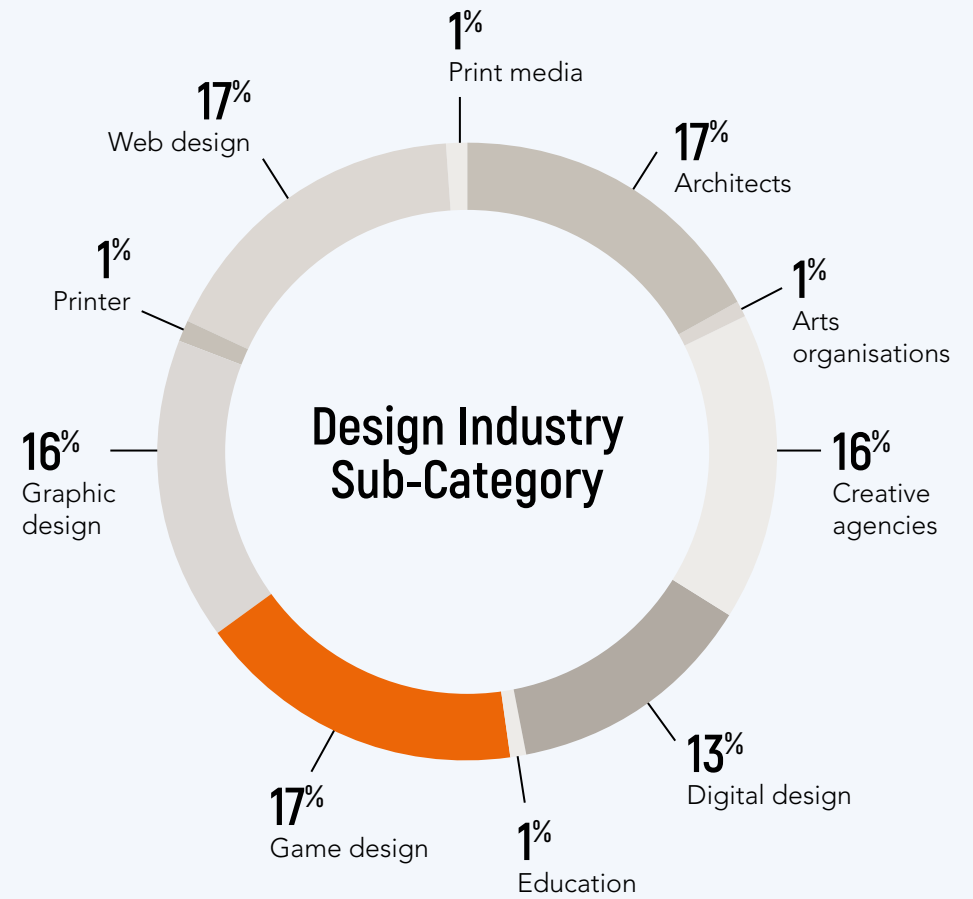
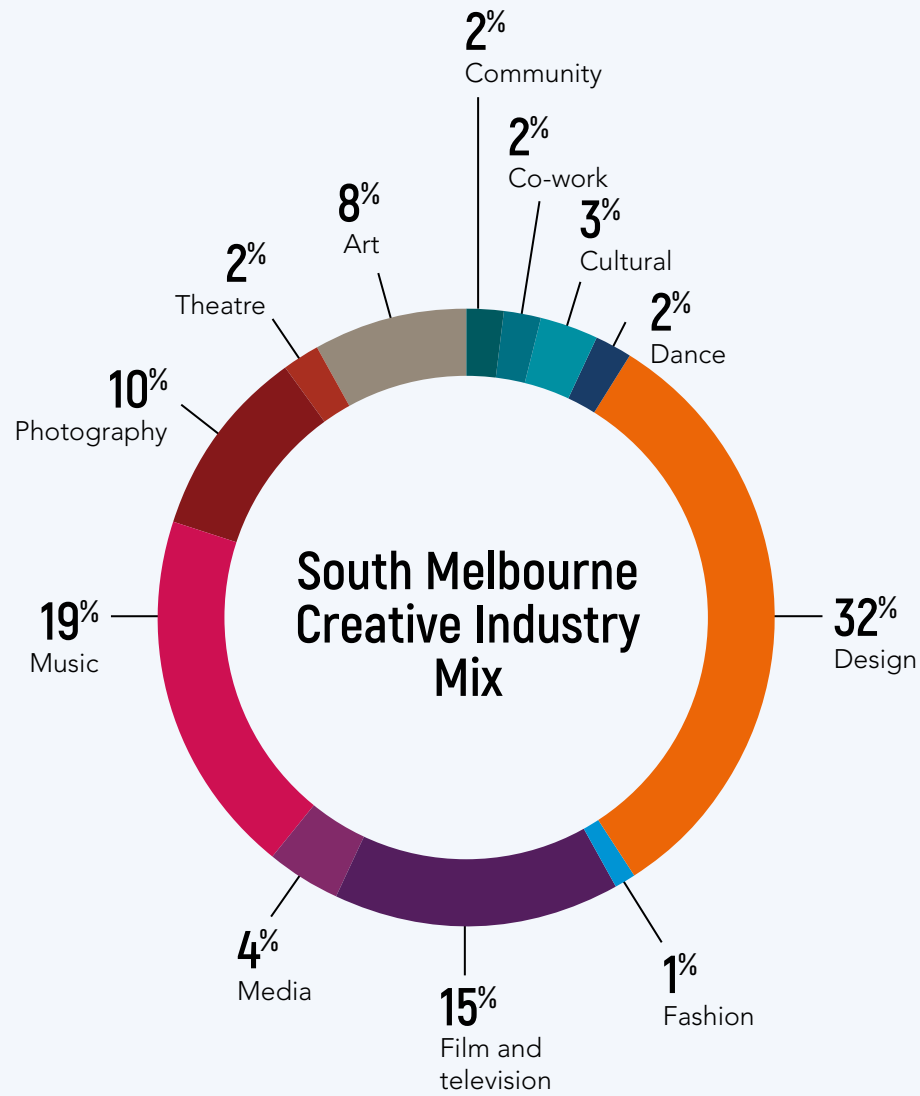
Our plan creates a foundation to build on the success of these initiatives and support their ability to develop capacity and networks both within game development communities, but also our wider creative and cultural communities. Looking to the future, the redevelopment of Fishermans Bend presents unique opportunities for the growth sector, including placemaking and activation programs for games and playful artists, the potential for affordable space through re-use of industrial and heritage buildings, and active collaborations between State Government, landowners, and games sector leaders to explore what a new games cluster might be.

Melbourne is internationally recognised as having a vibrant creative games development scene, delivering global events and initiatives such as Melbourne International Games Week, PAX Australia, Freeplay Independent Games Festival and the Playable Cities network. With its rich heritage of festivals and public engagement, Port Phillip is perfectly placed to add to this vibrancy, bringing new experiences to the City while developing the capacity and talent for innovative events that connect makers and audiences.

At a local level, we know that those audiences are more diverse than ever and that civic and cultural spaces can play key roles in presenting exciting work such as connecting musicians and storytellers with games, supporting community play parties or advocating for playable public art.

This plan encourages working with developers, artists, libraries, and our cultural spaces, galleries and festivals to look at how we can bring games and players together. In doing so, we will empower artists and communities to share in the experiences of thinking and making, finding tools to express themselves and tell new stories. We know that games are part of people's everyday lives, and that alongside the bold and global connections and opportunities, there also needs to be a space for the intimate and the personal.





## WHAT YOU SAID

"IGEA's latest survey findings are a reminder that while our industry may be more resilient than many, it has not been immune to COVID-19 and should not be ignored when implementing arts, creative and screen stimulus measures".

**Ron Curry, CEO of IGEA**

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AUSTRALIAN GAMES INDUSTRY

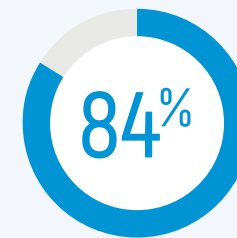
The IGEA (Interactive Games and Entertainment Association), published survey results on the impact of COVID-19 on the Australian Games Industry in May 2020.

The findings demonstrate the resilience of the industry in the face of the pandemic where 84 per cent of respondents reported that they are not planning to make any staff cutbacks or redundancies in the immediate term.

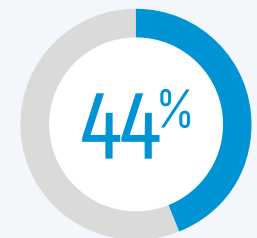
Additional indicators include 44 per cent of surveyed developers reporting stable or increased sales revenues along with 62 per cent reporting costs are remaining static.

Overall, 55 per cent of respondents are confident for the foreseeable future.

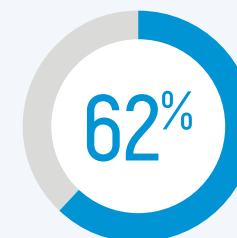
In line with the wider economy, smaller to medium sized studios and organisations, as well as education providers, face a level of uncertainty, while fearing financial hardship. Almost a third of surveyed developers reported reduced revenues due to the loss or delays to contracts.



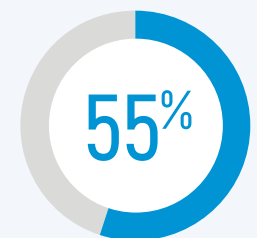
**Reported  
no redundancies  
in the immediate  
term**



**Reported  
stable or increased  
sales revenue**



**Reported  
static cost**



**Reported  
confidence for the  
foreseeable future**

## OUR VISION

Our Vision is for Port Phillip to be the Games Capital of Victoria. Delivering on this vision means a broad range of creative businesses, players, artists and creative producers find a home in Port Phillip and that Council's priorities, resources, and programs support their activities.

To achieve that, we will work towards two priority outcomes through the actions in this plan.

### OUTCOME 1

A thriving games sector that plays a significant part in the City's economy

### OUTCOME 2

The life of our City is enhanced through the growth of games, play and culture

Working together, these outcomes support and connect to each other to bring economic benefit, enhance our cultural life, provide opportunities for play and creative expression, and celebrate the diversity within our community.

**Melbourne is internationally recognised as having a vibrant creative games development scene, spanning global events from PAX Australia to the Freeplay Independent Games Festival and the Playable Cities network.**

**Photo:**  
From Ignition Immersive, South Melbourne; virtual reality production studio, augmented reality developers, mixed reality creators



## COUNCIL'S ROLE AND STAKEHOLDERS

The City of Port Phillip has been working closely across the games sector, and already offers a number of collaboration and partnership opportunities. Based on the feedback that has been collected for this plan, community members see City of Port Phillip as a collaborative leader. One that will build on existing services and guide this Action Plan in partnership with others including Creative Victoria, our local academic institutions, creators and industry organisations.

### Council's role:

#### CONNECT

Council can help drive collaboration across the sector with opportunities, networks and mentors. This includes linking business to business as well as inviting local creatives across disciplines to engage with the games sector through expanding council services.

#### ATTRACT

Through targeted support and activities, Council can develop programs to attract and retain a diversity of game makers, events and creative technology practitioners. We can achieve this through our ongoing work on creative hubs, clusters, affordability, talent development, and investment.

#### AMPLIFY

By connecting with state, national and global activity, Council can amplify the work of our local game developers, showing the value of our diverse creative community. At the same time, the City of Port Phillip has a diverse community with an estimated resident population of 108,000 people, creating the opportunity to showcase the value of including games in everyday life for community wellbeing and the City's livability.

#### EMPOWER

In planning for the future of games, Council can help empower developers and audiences of all types in taking ownership of how they make and play. We can create spaces for them to safely share and grow, and support our most innovative, adventurous, and ambitious game developers to reach their full potential as creative and cultural leaders.

#### FACILITATE

By bringing together diverse communities of makers and players, Council can support the development of skills, knowledge and mentorship, as well as provide the spark for new opportunities across the full range of making and playing.

#### PROGRAM

We will create and promote opportunities for games across our arts, heritage and cultural programs and events, including festivals, libraries and exhibition spaces. This will uncover new ways of engaging audiences and delivering exciting, experimental playful experiences throughout our City.

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### ADVOCATE

Taking an active role in the sector, Council can actively work to promote the community's interests across our networks, including at State and Federal level, encouraging the recognition and inclusion of the games sector across initiatives. Similarly, we can lead in the way in how we integrate games, playful arts and creative technologies into our own operations, advocating for their value across community engagement, cohesion and wellbeing.

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### PARTNER

Through partnering across industry and agencies, we can help to scale up opportunities for makers and audiences within our community. We can explore new ways to deliver broad benefits to our community such as promotion of local independently developed games to our community, urban play and business support.

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### FUND

Council has an existing structure of grants, funding and opportunities that can be extended to include the work of artist-gamemakers and creative producers. Similarly, we can directly support strategic programs and initiatives that benefit our communities, helping to ensure that the sector thrives and grows.

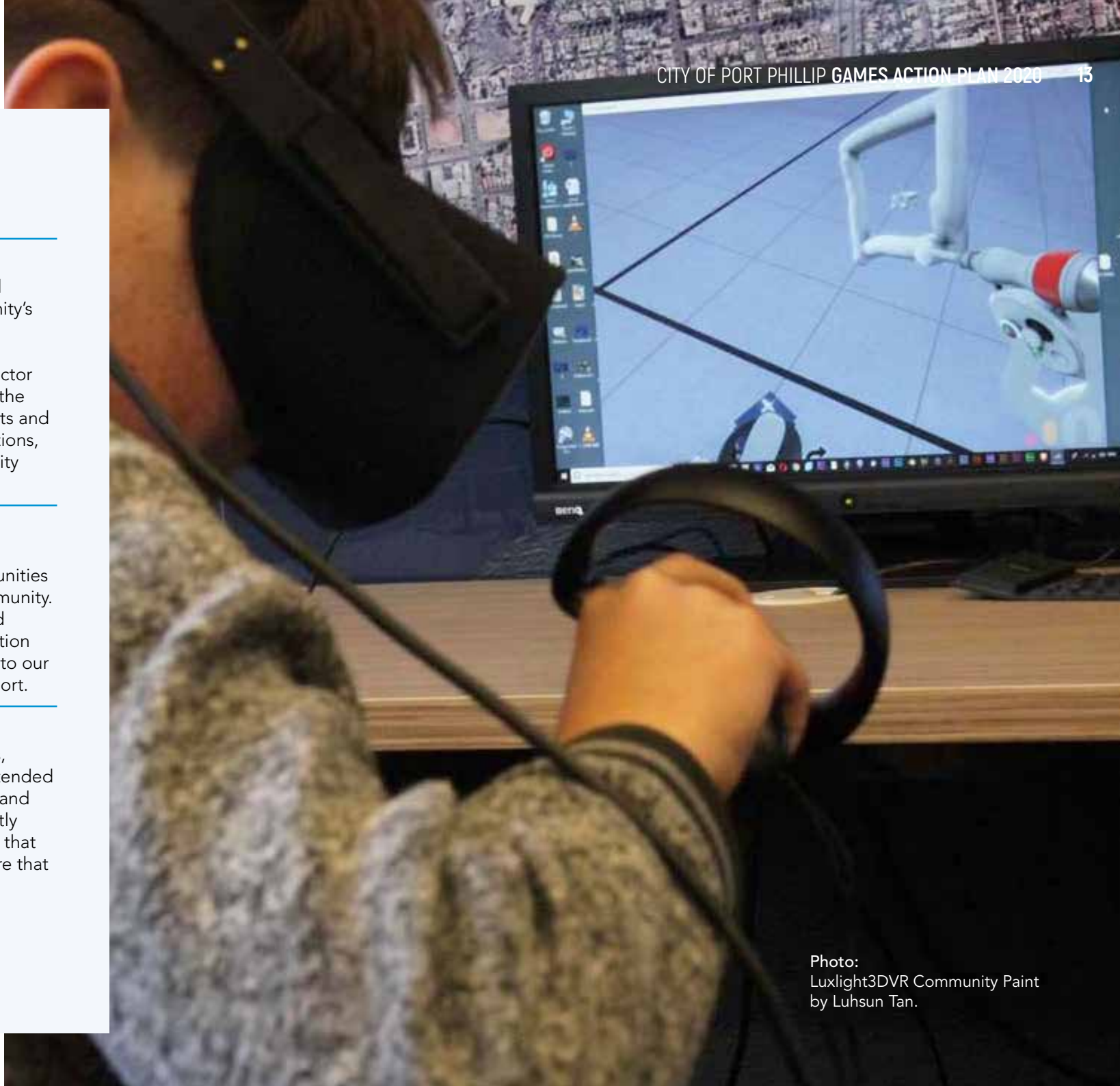


Photo:  
Luxlight3DVR Community Paint  
by Luhsun Tan.

## Who will we work with

With our partners, the City of Port Phillip can help shape and support a games community that is bold, inspirational and sustainable – where all types of businesses, creatives and people can thrive.

### GAMES BUSINESSES

- Collaborating to understand their needs, best practices and opportunities, and how Council resources can support their development
- Connecting with our local creative and cultural community.

### INDUSTRY BODIES

- Improving Council's understanding of the global and local context shared across all games businesses
- Connecting to State and Federal Government
- Sharing of information and opportunities
- Brokering with members and partners where appropriate.

### GAMES EDUCATORS

- Creating opportunities to connect students with games businesses
- Identifying opportunities to showcase student work
- Collaborating on unique engagement opportunities and skills development for communities, students and businesses.

### CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY BUSINESSES

- Identifying opportunities to embed businesses in games sector clusters
- Improving Council's understanding of the ways they are working with games and interactive technology
- Act as broker across Council activity to explore opportunities.

### GAMES EVENTS

- Working with us to understand their creative ambitions and opportunities
- Developing new and innovative programs that support all communities and audiences
- Amplifying the work of game developers in Port Phillip.

### ARTIST-GAME MAKERS

- Working with us to understand their ambitions and opportunities for their practice
- Connecting them with cross-artform creative collaborators
- Designing and delivering supportive and appropriate capacity development programs.

### GOVERNMENT

- Collaborating and sharing information on programs, resources, and opportunities
- Partnering on programs that deliver benefits to our local community.

### CREATIVE PRODUCERS

- Exploring ways of engaging our communities with exciting public programming
- Brokering connections and networks across Council, including festivals, events and public space.

### COMMUNITY GROUPS

- Identifying how games and play happen across their communities
- Collaborating to deliver games and playful arts projects and experiences
- Identifying how games can contribute to social cohesion and wellbeing.

### PUBLIC AUDIENCES

- Engaging them with new, innovative public programming that spans the full range of games and play
- Creating opportunities to learn more about game making and the sector through civic and cultural programming.



Photo:  
Girl Geek Academy, Star Health  
and City of Port Phillip Gender  
Equality Game Jam, 2019.



Photo:  
From Ignition Immersive,  
South Melbourne;  
virtual reality production  
studio, augmented  
reality developers,  
mixed reality creators.

## PLAN OVERVIEW

Our two key outcomes, are broken down into six goals, informed by current activity and future growth across the City.

### Outcome 1

#### A thriving games sector that plays a significant part in the City's economy

##### Goal 1: Supporting games businesses

- Capacity building
- Access to and affordability of space
- Start-up and scaleup support
- Creative careers
- Connecting businesses to opportunity.

##### Goal 2: Technology opportunities

- Support crossover and new market opportunities for local industries in interactive and creative technology use
- Develop City of Port Phillip pilot projects around creative technology and showcase technology to create new markets and support for local creative industries.

##### Goal 3: Advocacy and future strategy

- Working with government and peak organisations
- Embedding opportunity in major developments, including Fishermans Bend
- Advocating for games through the South Melbourne Inner Metro Partnership Creative Industries Project.



## Outcome 2

### The life of our City is enhanced through the growth of games, play and culture

#### Goal 4: Arts and creative practice

- Create showcasing and exhibition opportunities for artist-gamemakers
- Support cross-artform collaborations with games, playful art and digital technology.
- Develop grants strategies to support artist-game makers.

#### Goal 5: Community engagement and games culture

- Embed games and play in existing civic and cultural spaces and events, including libraries, galleries and festivals.
- Explore how games can improve social cohesion and inclusion across Council activities and programs.
- Explore how Council can use games and creative technologies for community engagement.

#### Goal 6: Everyday play

- Support artist-gamemakers and creative producers in developing playable public art in City of Port Phillip
- Develop new experiences and showcasing opportunities for a wide range of artist-gamemakers
- Explore attracting major e-sports and community games events to City of Port Phillip.

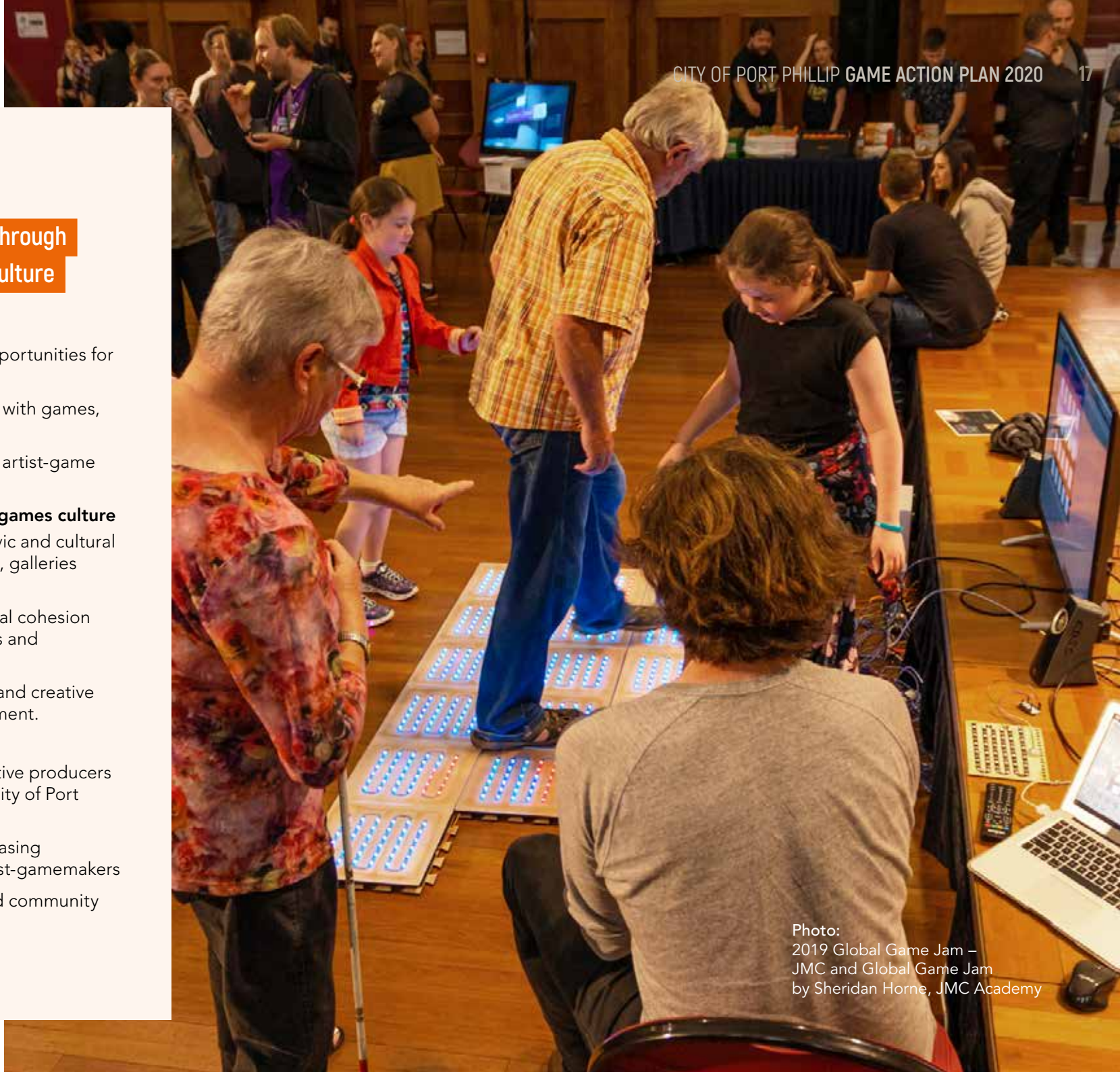


Photo:  
2019 Global Game Jam –  
JMC and Global Game Jam  
by Sheridan Horne, JMC Academy

## SUCCESS MEASURES

We know we will have succeeded when Port Phillip is recognised as the key destination in Melbourne for game makers of all kinds, players seeking new experiences, businesses looking to work at the intersection of creative technology and future economies, and artists connecting their practice to playful media and technology.

From our consultation so far, we know that capturing this success will be an iterative process, working to understand the needs of different communities, their ambitions, and how Council can support them. The actions of our plan recognise that, with a focus on consultation and baseline metrics, program design and ongoing evaluation throughout its lifecycle.

At a high level, we will measure success of our outcomes and goals against our Art and Soul Creative and Prosperous City Strategy, new metrics in response to feedback from the sector, as well as high level measures, including the following.

### Outcome 1

**A thriving games sector that plays a significant part in the City's economy**

#### Goal 1: Supporting games businesses

Increase in the number of games and related creative industry businesses in Port Phillip, contributing to the local economy.

#### Goal 2: Technology opportunities

City of Port Phillip leads on integrating games into broader Council activity, including planning, consultation and community engagement.

#### Goal 3: Advocacy and future strategy

Visible outcomes from advocacy at state and federal level for games businesses in Port Phillip, including increased access to data, funding and global opportunities – highlighting Port Phillip as the games capital of Victoria.

### Outcome 2

**The life of our City is enhanced through the growth of games, play and culture**

#### Goal 4: Arts and creative practice

Increase in the number of games and playful arts events across Port Phillip.

#### Goal 5: Community engagement and games cultures

Increase in the number of artist-gamemakers and creative producers working with Council and communities through funding, partnerships, showcasing and production opportunities.

#### Goal 6: Everyday play

Increase in the number of community-led and embedded projects that include games and playful arts practice, including from Council-funded key organisations.

## FUNDING

For Year 1 of this plan, \$40,000 is allocated from the City of Port Phillip Creative and Prosperous City Strategy. This will be allocated to the actions from

### **Goal 1: Supporting Games Businesses:**

- Develop baseline metrics for games businesses through consultation and advocacy
- Develop attraction and retention actions for games businesses, integrating them into ongoing iterations of this plan.

In Year 1, we will also work to connect our existing funding programs to actions from **Goal 2: Technology Opportunities, Goal 4: Arts and Creative Practice, and Goal 5: Community Engagement & Games Culture:**

- Connect creative technology businesses to existing hubs, opportunities and Council plans
- Connect artist-gamemakers to existing hubs, opportunities and Council plans, including existing funding and support programs
- Connect community groups with games and arts practitioners, including civic and cultural spaces.

Actions from **Goal 3: Advocacy and Future Strategy, and Goal 6: Everyday Play** will come from Business As Usual allocations, as well as funding applications and partnership for special projects.

Funding and budget allocations for future years will be responsive to our ongoing consultation, feedback and iteration.



Photo:  
2019 Global Game Jam –  
JMC and Global Game Jam  
by Sheridan Horne, JMC Academy

## ACTIONS

Games as a sector moves quickly, and our plan of action needs to be iterative and adaptive in response. Our actions are staged and stacked throughout the delivery of the plan between 2020-24, to help us balance resources, explore opportunities, respond to feedback, and be agile as new opportunities emerge.

### Outcome 1: A thriving games sector that plays a significant part in the City's economy

These actions focus on games as a high capital creative industry that crosses over into other areas including the knowledge economy, training, creative technology, startups, innovation sector, and draws together practitioners from programming, music, visual arts, writing, and performance. Through our actions, we will attract and retain games studios, support creative careers, and connect new and existing businesses with opportunity to help them thrive.

Goals	Council role	Partners and stakeholders	Year 1	Year 2 and 3	Year 4	Measures of success
<b>Goal 1: Supporting games businesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building</li> <li>Access to and affordability of space</li> <li>Start-up and scale-up support</li> <li>Creative careers</li> <li>Connecting businesses to opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect</li> <li>Attract</li> <li>Facilitate</li> <li>Amplify</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Games businesses</li> <li>Industry bodies</li> <li>Games education</li> <li>Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop baseline metrics for games businesses through consultation and advocacy</li> <li>Develop attraction and retention actions for games businesses, integrating them into ongoing iterations of this plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working with attracting new games businesses to start up in Port Phillip</li> <li>Continue working with existing games businesses to retain them in Port Phillip and support their sustainable growth</li> <li>Continue tracking and reporting on metrics</li> </ul>	Revisit community consultations for feedback and progress mapping	Increase in the number of games and related creative industry businesses in Port Phillip, contributing to the local economy

## Outcome 1: A thriving games sector that plays a significant part in the City's economy

Goals	Council role	Partners and stakeholders	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Measures of success
<p><b>Goal 2: Creative Technology Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support crossover and new market opportunities for local industries in interactive and creative technology use</li> <li>Develop City of Port Phillip pilot projects around creative technology and showcase technology to create new markets and support for local creative industries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract</li> <li>Facilitate</li> <li>Partner</li> <li>Advocate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative technology businesses</li> <li>Industry bodies</li> </ul>	<p>Connect creative technology businesses to existing hubs, opportunities, and Council plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader technology sector consultation, focusing on those using games plus interactive technology</li> <li>Develop baseline metrics for creative and interactive technology companies</li> <li>Develop attraction and retention actions for creative technology businesses, integrating them into ongoing iterations of this plan</li> <li>Continue connecting creative technology businesses to existing hubs, opportunities and council plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working to attract new creative technology businesses to start up in Port Phillip</li> <li>Continue working with existing creative technology businesses to retain them in Port Phillip support their sustainable growth</li> <li>Continue tracking and reporting on metrics</li> <li>Continue connecting creative technology businesses to existing hubs, opportunities and council plans</li> </ul>	<p>Revisit community consultations for feedback and progress mapping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the number of games and related creative industry businesses in Port Phillip, contributing to the local economy</li> <li>City of Port Phillip leads on integrating games into broader Council activity, including planning, consultation, and community engagement</li> </ul>

## Outcome 1: A thriving games sector that plays a significant part in the City's economy

Goals	Council role	Partners and stakeholders	Year 1, 2, 3 and 4	Measures of success
<p><b>Goal 3: Advocacy and future strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with government and peak organisations</li> <li>Embedding opportunity in major developments, including Fishermans Bend</li> <li>Advocating for games through the South Melbourne IMP Creative Industries Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate</li> <li>Advocate</li> <li>Partner</li> <li>Connect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Games businesses</li> <li>Industry bodies</li> <li>Creative technology companies</li> <li>Games education</li> <li>Government</li> <li>Artist-gamemakers</li> <li>Community/audiences/players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with state and federal government agencies to understand their needs and advocate for game development in Port Phillip</li> <li>Embed opportunity in major developments, including Fishermans Bend</li> <li>Advocate for games through the South Melbourne Inner Metropolitan Partnership Creative Industries Project</li> <li>Connect the actions from this plan to other Council plans, including the Library Action Plan, Live Music Action Plan, and future sector strategies around creative industries, screen and creative technology</li> </ul>	<p>Visible outcomes from advocacy at state and federal level for games businesses in Port Phillip, including increased access to data, funding, and global opportunities – highlighting Port Phillip as the games capital of Victoria</p>

## Outcome 2: The life of our City is enhanced through the growth of games, play and culture

Games audiences are wide and varied, and the spaces and communities we play in are just as diverse. Whether that's e-sports in libraries, board game events in pubs, or playable art that takes you across the city, how and where we play in our community creates new opportunities for engagement, participation and storytelling. These actions focus on supporting that diversity of making and play.

Goals	Council role	Partners and stakeholders	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Measures of success
<p><b>Goal 4: Arts and creative practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create showcasing and exhibition opportunities for artist-gamemakers</li> <li>• Support cross-artform collaborations with games, playful art, and digital technology</li> <li>• Develop grants strategies to support artist-game makers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect</li> <li>• Attract</li> <li>• Amplify</li> <li>• Empower</li> <li>• Facilitate</li> <li>• Program</li> <li>• Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative producers</li> <li>• Artist-gamemakers</li> </ul>	<p>Connect artist-gamemakers to existing hubs, opportunities, and Council plans, including existing funding and support programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue connecting artist-gamemakers to opportunities and support</li> <li>• Community consultation, focusing on artist-gamemakers and community engagement</li> <li>• Develop baseline metrics for artist-gamemakers in the community</li> <li>• Develop advocacy and support strategies that empower and support artist-gamemakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue connecting artist-gamemakers to opportunities and support</li> <li>• Continue advocacy and support strategies that empower and support artist-gamemakers</li> </ul>	<p>Revisit community consultations for feedback and progress mapping</p>	<p>Increase in the number of artist-gamemakers and creative producers working with Council and communities through funding, partnerships, showcasing, and production opportunities</p>

## Outcome 2: The life of our City is enhanced through the growth of games, play and culture

Goals	Council role	Partners and stakeholders	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Measures of success
<p><b>Goal 5: Community engagement and games culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed games and play in existing civic and cultural spaces and events, including libraries, galleries and festivals</li> <li>• Explore how games can improve social cohesion and inclusion across City of Port Phillip activities and programs</li> <li>• Explore how City of Port Phillip can use games and creative technologies for community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect</li> <li>• Amplify</li> <li>• Program</li> <li>• Facilitate</li> <li>• Advocate</li> <li>• Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artist-gamemakers</li> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Public audiences</li> </ul>	<p>Connect community groups with games and arts practitioners, including civic and cultural spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community consultation focusing on community-facing games activity</li> <li>• Develop community-games activities, connecting across Council and integrating into future iterations of this plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue delivery of the community-games activities</li> <li>• Continue supporting games and arts practitioners through the use of civic and cultural spaces</li> </ul>	<p>Revisit community consultations for feedback and progress mapping</p>	<p>Increase in the number of community-led and embedded projects that include games and playful arts practice, including from Council-funded key organisations</p>



## Outcome 2: The life of our City is enhanced through the growth of games, play and culture

Goals	Council role	Partners and stakeholders	Year 1, 2, 3 and 4	Measures of success
<p><b>Goal 6: Everyday play</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support artist-gamemakers and creative producers in developing playable public art in City of Port Phillip</li> <li>Develop new experiences and showcasing opportunities for a wide range of artist-gamemakers</li> <li>Explore attracting major e-sports and community games events to City of Port Phillip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect</li> <li>Advocate</li> <li>Program</li> <li>Faciliate</li> <li>Partner</li> <li>Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artist-gamemakers</li> <li>Creative producers</li> <li>Public audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support existing playful arts and events projects, and collaborate to develop new showcasing opportunities for makers and players</li> <li>Work with artist-gamemakers and creative producers in developing playable public art in City of Port Phillip</li> <li>Explore working with new and existing major games events, including festivals, forums, e-sports</li> </ul>	<p>Increase in the number of games and playful arts events across Port Phillip</p>

## WHAT WE HEARD

This action plan responds to the findings of research and extensive consultation conducted by the City of Port Phillip and Dr Emma Witkowski, RMIT. We've listened to the challenges, concerns, and basic needs of game makers from a cross section of profile groups, including emerging to professional, commercial to not-for-profit, bespoke to mass appeal, local to expat makers working within or with a connection to making games in Melbourne.

According to this research, we heard about key themes where more action is needed to support:

- Diverse resources and making environments for sustainable game making practices
- Opportunities to make, share and showcase through planned events involving creative and cultural input as consistent features on maker calendars.
- Improve structural, long-term support for game makers.
- Expand the impact of play into digital placemaking and playable public art

Photo:  
Girl Geek Academy,  
Star Health and  
City of Port Phillip  
Gender Equality Game  
Jam, 2019.

### WHAT YOU SAID

"What is clearly missing is knowing that these (funding) opportunities exist."

**Stan, 29 years,  
Melbourne-based studio**

"I would work in Port Phillip in a heartbeat if there was [community] space or low rent and access to hardware and just commute."

**Dru, 30 years, regional  
Victoria, emerging studio,  
regularly commutes to  
City of Port Phillip for  
maker events**

## Connections to opportunity

Game makers want easy to access and 'on hand' information that is important to them – grant calendars for games funding, local events, contract templates and FAQs. They require scaffolding to help them be creative so they can focus on their core endeavor.

Multiple sites and sources exist for game makers; however, embedding oneself in these disparate online communities takes time. This may be information on funding, residency or travel opportunities, or showcasing events for their projects.

Studio affordability is an ongoing challenge for game makers from emerging to established. Game makers with previous attachments to the City of Port Phillip clarified that their new studio rent outside the municipality is significantly more affordable, more personal, less hierarchical and easier to access than maker spaces in Port Phillip.

Expert networks are vital for game makers. For new makers, the local and national game maker scene can be a daunting prospect.

Opportunities exist to include support of less formal making spaces (emerging maker/game spaces) and work-in-progress events. Additionally, a 'neutral' information hub could offer other kinds of services, connection points, and visibility to local game makers to offset social network building and 'cultural cache', which is not within reach of all makers.

## Community and cultural infrastructure

Game makers call for continuing events that bring together local and international experts to support game makers' visibility and connection outside of the 'crunch season' of major conventions (Game Developers Conference and Melbourne International Games Week).

Festivals have been a cornerstone of Council's commitment to arts and culture. Opportunities exist to continue to leverage our assets, festivals and events to create a calendar of opportunities across the municipality to include game making and play.

Libraries are an existing space that could achieve a games profile within their public offerings, from after-hours opportunities to residencies for game makers. Maker spaces are highly desired by independent game makers in particular, for access to industry standard hardware and software, which is otherwise unobtainable as a hobbyist or contract maker.

## WHAT YOU SAID

"When I first started freelancing, [South Melbourne] The Arcade was a great resource. Not only could I hot-desk there, but their free talks ... By attending I got to meet industry members and learn how they got to where they are. It has helped me refine my craft."

**Pat, 29 years, Melbourne-based independent maker and games contract worker**

Photo:  
2020 Global Game Jam Play Party -  
JMC & Global Game Jam.

## WHAT YOU SAID

"[We] could always use more budget and expertise in marketing [and] seed money and grant money is so important for my particular biz model, (as an emerging studio with a focus on diversity and Indigenous inclusion in games.) We are creating games in a new space, and we undertake cultural consultation, so we need extra funding for these ethical processes."

**Lyn, 27 years, Indigenous identifying, emerging City of Port Phillip-based studio**

Photo:  
2020 Global Game Jam –JMC and  
Global Game Jam by Sheridan Horne,  
JMC Academy.

## Support and networks

Game makers want a local community that invests in them and values them as cultural producers. Makers made clear their main challenge in making games was access to funding.

This was evident for both emerging and established independent/small studio makers. As emerging makers who are developing their career profile (which can impact established makers moving into a new domain), many say they are unable to break out of the 'bootstrap and breadcrumbs' funding cycle (underfunded to get to events or not waged fully for grant-based development work which are key stepping stones for emerging makers).

Emerging makers (independent/small studio) can be stuck in this cycle for up to 10 years. The funding they require to make an impact on this cycle includes low time-intensive funding applications for development resources, and/or funding with a quick turn-around from submission to response.

## Connections to creative neighbourhoods

Opportunities for game makers to have impact across a diverse range of creative industries exist through intersection with public art, digital placemaking, town planning and community engagement. Increasingly, urban play is seen as a methodology for co-creation of community and cultural infrastructure.

Game makers are uniquely placed to play a leading role in the broader social and cultural impact of urban play in digital placemaking, public art to reach audiences, address themes and transform spaces in new ways that recognise play as part of everyday life – both inside the home and on the street, in parks, on beaches and along walking trails.

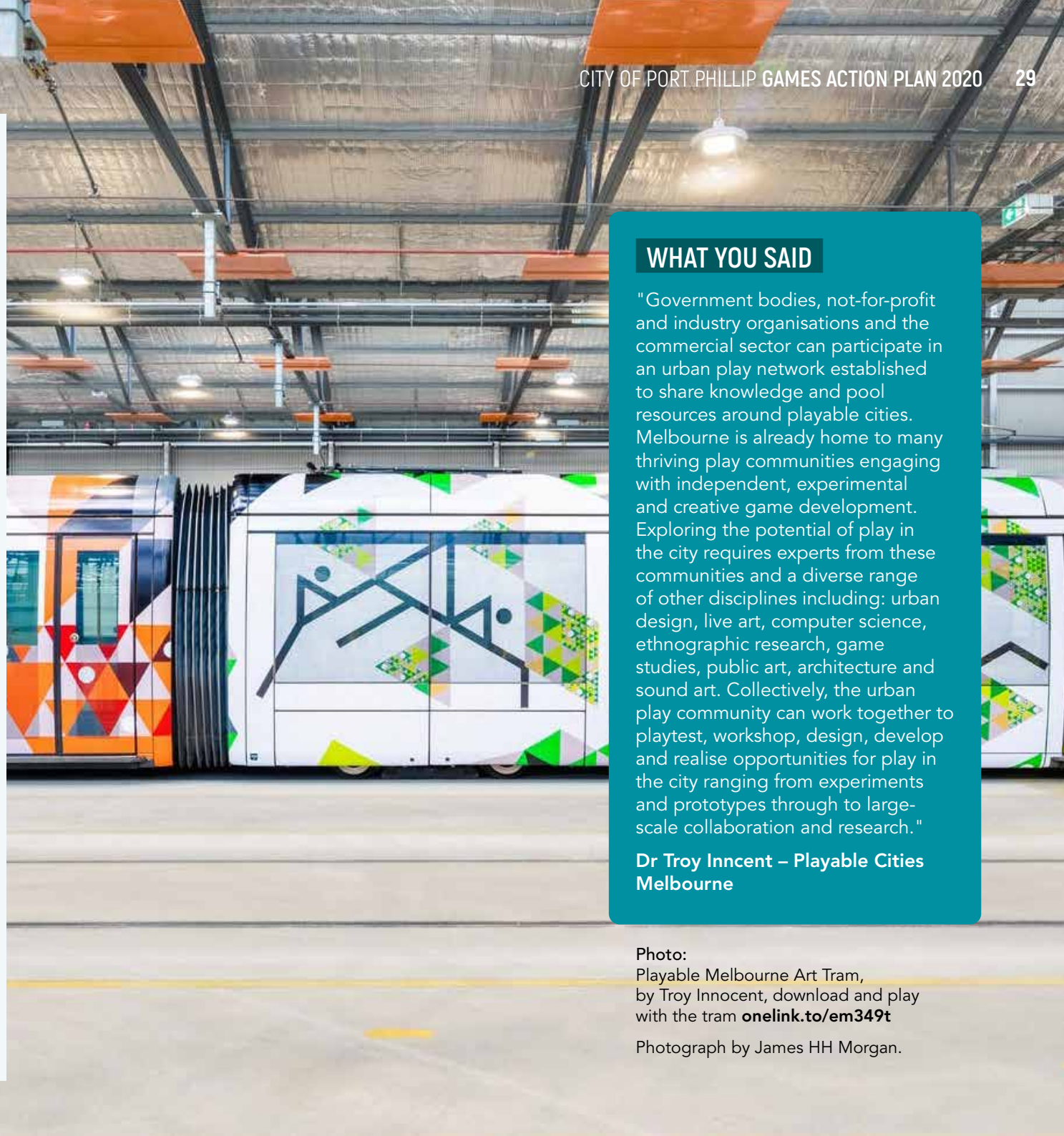
## WHAT YOU SAID

"Government bodies, not-for-profit and industry organisations and the commercial sector can participate in an urban play network established to share knowledge and pool resources around playable cities. Melbourne is already home to many thriving play communities engaging with independent, experimental and creative game development. Exploring the potential of play in the city requires experts from these communities and a diverse range of other disciplines including: urban design, live art, computer science, ethnographic research, game studies, public art, architecture and sound art. Collectively, the urban play community can work together to playtest, workshop, design, develop and realise opportunities for play in the city ranging from experiments and prototypes through to large-scale collaboration and research."

**Dr Troy Inncent – Playable Cities Melbourne**

**Photo:**  
Playable Melbourne Art Tram,  
by Troy Innocent, download and play  
with the tram [onelink.to/em349t](https://onelink.to/em349t)

Photograph by James HH Morgan.



## Diversity of practice

**Mentorship matters.** Mentorship needs are not exclusive to emerging makers, experienced game makers and studios also require mentorship opportunities. This is evident in inexperienced maker conversations around developing into new distribution systems and creating innovative intellectual property and breaking ground into new, untested markets.



### WHAT YOU SAID

"Look to develop collaborative, supportive spaces, not extraction zones. [Some workshops I've been to] it just felt like people trying to hustle, trying to get something out of you."

**Stan, 29 years, Melbourne-based studio**

"I feel like I'd love an incubator specifically for new or emerging studio directors"

**Pat, 27 years old, Melbourne based studio.**

"I would love to see more women leading in this [e-sports] industry. Sometimes in meetings you get that feeling that they're looking at you like 'She's a girl, she doesn't know what she's talking about', so maybe more women-led events"

**Lit, 30 years old, regional studio.**

Photo:  
Girl Geek Academy, Star Health and City of Port Phillip  
Gender Equality Game Jam, 2019.

### More to consider

Game makers discussed a range of **health and wellbeing issues** affecting them as makers in Australia. Their financial insecurity drove many of their concerns (crunch/project culture, uncertainty of sustainable career), alongside of a steady social burden to evidence new and exciting work locally. Many makers stated they were or had been 'burnt out' at one time or another while making games for the public.

**Regional game makers** who use City of Port Phillip as a hub for networks, shows, and knowledge sharing discuss their distance from the 'Melbourne scene', and difficulty in being a part of it. Their own regional councils are supportive of digital games, however local facilities are lagging behind city spaces. Regional makers use City of Port Phillip, and want to be a part of the growing scene of game makers in Victoria.

Women who were interviewed spoke about the **ongoing impact of working in a gendered industry**. Studio diversity was impacted by standard hiring processes, game events and safety issues and subtle everyday issues around belonging were raised.

**Esports** are intimately involved in the local game making industry, from game makers designing competitive esports titles, to events which house independent games alongside of new IP – hardware and software – for esports play.

Esports are under-supported in Australia, through innovation in hardware and through development of software. Key grant schemes for games have told esports makers that they are not suited to their calls. Esports teams and tournaments bring regional and international "esports tourists" to the city.

Esports teams employ games adjacent makers across their organisations and as digital entertainment organisations they offer alternative skills that bridge digital games and sports sectors.



Photo:  
Girl Geek Academy, Star Health  
and City of Port Phillip Gender  
Equality Game Jam, 2019.

## APPENDIX

### References

**Melbourne International Games Week (MIGW)**

[gamesweek.melbourne](http://gamesweek.melbourne)

**PAX**

[online.paxsite.com](http://online.paxsite.com)

**The Arcade**

[thearcade.melbourne](http://thearcade.melbourne)

**Interactive Games and Entertainment Section (IGEA)**

[igea.net](http://igea.net)

**Freeplay Festival**

[freeplay.net.au](http://freeplay.net.au)

**Playable Cities – Creative technologies and social frameworks that connect people and place. Troy Innocent, PHD, PGDip (AIM), Dip.Art**

[melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/knowledge-fellowship-report-2017-troy-innocent.pdf](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/knowledge-fellowship-report-2017-troy-innocent.pdf)

### Acknowledgement

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We would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Emma Witkowski, RMIT, who conducted long form interviews and helped shape this plan.

### Photo references

Photos in this plan came from game related activities that have taken place or have a connection to the City of Port Phillip.



Photo:  
Girl Geek Academy, Star Health and City of Port Phillip  
Gender Equality Game Jam, 2019.





For more information, please contact

📞 ASSIST 03 9209 6777

✉️ [artandsoul@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:artandsoul@portphillip.vic.gov.au)

🌐 [portphillip.vic.gov.au](http://portphillip.vic.gov.au)

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