



3 – 11 October 2020

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For Immediate Release

Melbourne International Games Week 2020 celebrates the power of digital connection, creativity and the strength of our local game- makers amid the pandemic

3-11 October 2020

Australia's premier digital games festival will look a little different this year, going entirely online with signature events such as GCAP, High Score and the Australian Game Developer Awards celebrating a thriving local industry to a global audience

In 2020, Melbourne International Games Week (MIGW) - 3-11 October - will embrace the digital world more than ever. The fully virtual program offers game enthusiasts, game developers, industry and educators, a showcase of new products and innovations, games experiences, industry insights and business connections. It will highlight what makes this creative industry unique and its resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now in its 6th year, MIGW is a fixture on the global games calendar. While the regular 80,000+ participants from around the world won't be able to descend on Melbourne, this global audience will join the home crowd digitally from the comfort of their own homes. The jam-packed 9-day program features international guests, panel discussions, conferences and dynamic events and activities for gamers, industry, educators and families.

Globally and locally, digital games have not only survived but thrived over the past year. COVID-19 has seen a surge in demand for digital games as people seek new sources of entertainment and connection while in lockdown. Digital games have experienced an increase in popularity during the pandemic, with more than 1.2 million Australians turning to games for entertainment and social connection.

Digital games continue to be the largest entertainment market globally, worth \$250 billion, more than the movie and music industries combined. Australia's games industry appears to be faring well despite the economic impact of the pandemic. 2019/20 was a significant year for the Victorian digital games industry with the global success of Victorian-made Untitled Goose Game, and recently released local games Moving Out and Necrobarista both making waves in Australia and internationally.

Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley said:

"Melbourne is a thriving global games development hub. Our local industry is recognised around the world for its skill, creativity and for producing much-loved, innovative and globally successful games.

"Our games industry has shown great resilience in the face of the pandemic and has an important role to play in the post-COVID recovery of our creative economy.

"Melbourne International Games Weeks puts the spotlight this Victorian success story and connects our local talent with the global industry."



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Melbourne International Games Week kicks-off with High Score: Composition and Sound Art for Gaming on Saturday 3 October, a series of panel discussions focused on music and tech, featuring an opening address by award-winning US-based composer Lena Raine on 'Minecraft' and closing keynote by Dan Golding, creator of the Melbourne-made global sensation 'Untitled Goose Game'.

Girl Geek Academy, a global movement encouraging young girls to learn tech and games, will be run free online workshops for girls 6+ titled *Making a side scrolling game in Scratch* and *Making GameBoy games*. However, if it's hanging out and talking tech and games the girls are after, the two Girl Geek Academy Forums, could be just the (free) ticket!

From Monday 5 October, Game Connect Asia Pacific (GCAP) – Australia's premier professional development and networking event for the games industry – will bring the local industry together with international business leaders, publishers, partners for two days of education, knowledge sharing and connection.

This will be followed on Wednesday 7 October by GCAP Loading and the new GCAP Invest stream, an opportunity for Australian talent to pitch their games to international publishers and investors.

ACMI's monthly Women and Non-Binary Gamers Club will run an MIGW edition on the evening of Wednesday 7 October, providing a fun opportunity to get together for livestream gameplay and chat.

Education Summit (Thursday 8 October) an opportunity for educators to hear from local and international industry leaders about research, opportunities and ideas relating to the use of games to achieve learning outcomes.

Restart the World by Troy Innocent hosted by Playable City Melbourne (Friday 9 October) will explore, via livestream, what it means to restart and reimagine Melbourne post-pandemic. How do neighbourhoods and communities come together to create hyperlocal urban play? Can play help us reconnect with the world after lockdown? Do we still need cities at all?

Other program highlights include:

The Australian Game Developer Awards (Wednesday 7 October), presented by Interactive Games and Entertainment Association (IGEA)

Parallels: The Freeplay 2020 Showcase (Thursday 8 October) Celebrating 16 years, *Parallels* is a public, one-night-only showcase of some of the most experimental, personal, and culturally significant work being made in Australia's independent games communities today.

Nordic Game Discovery Contest (Friday 9 October) This is the first time Australia has been part of the Nordic Game Discovery Contest, a contest which, instead of pitching a game the traditional way, contestants compete live onstage in an entertaining round-based battle for points.

And, stay tuned for the inaugural **Big Games Night In** announcement!

Melbourne International Games Week is an initiative of the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria in partnership with Film Victoria, ACMI and IGEA. Events will be held online 3-11 October 2020.

For the full program visit www.gamesweek.melbourne

For more information or interviews with leading Australian game developers and industry representatives, please contact Dina Kluska at Pitch Projects on 0409 011 092 or dina@pitchprojects.com