

20 May 2025

V.E.T. REFORM

Vocational Education and Training

Public consultation submission
presented by:

NZGDA

NEW ZEALAND
GAME DEVELOPERS
ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The New Zealand Game Developers Association (NZGDA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the [proposed changes to the Vocational Education and Training \(VET\) and work-based learning systems](#). Feedback was submitted via an online survey, and this document shares NZGDA's full responses to each question.

New Zealand's game development industry is growing rapidly, generating over \$548 million in revenue as of March 2024 and contributing significantly to the digital economy.

Key points include:

- The need for digital and creative technology qualifications to be clearly supported in the new system;
- Concerns that excluding Digital Technologies from Industry Skills Bodies risks the future talent pipeline and government investment;
- Support for stronger collaboration between industry and education, especially for work-based learning that suits small-to-medium studios;
- Recommendations for more flexible qualification pathways and better recognition of emerging industry needs.

NZGDA urges the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure the game development sector is represented in future vocational frameworks, to avoid gaps in training and qualification pathways essential to the industry's continued growth.



Rival Stars Horse Racing, PikPok

SUBMISSION SURVEY RESPONSES

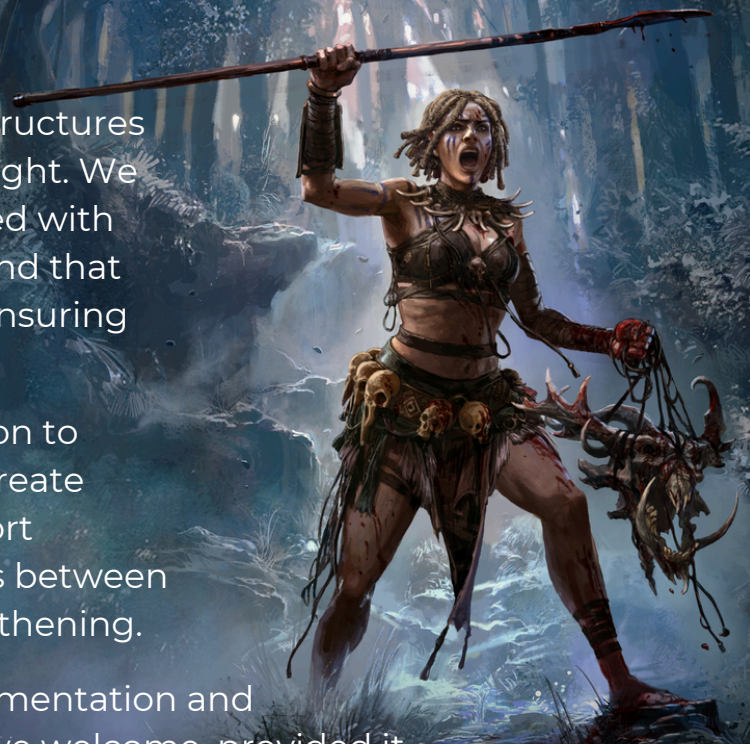


Question 1: What aspects of the proposal do you support, and why?

NZGDA supports the government's intention to improve the vocational education system through clearer structures and more industry-responsive oversight. We agree that education must be aligned with the skills learners need to succeed and that industries should play a key role in ensuring qualifications are fit for purpose.

We also support the broader ambition to streamline vocational training and create more coherent pathways that support learners, especially where transitions between study and employment need strengthening.

The proposal's goal of reducing fragmentation and improving outcomes is something we welcome, provided it is implemented inclusively and equitably across all sectors.



Path of Exile 2, Grinding Gear Games

Question 2: What aspects of the proposal do you have concerns about, and why?

Our primary concern is the exclusion of the creative technologies sector, including game development, from the seven proposed Industry Skills Boards (ISBs). The current proposal would shift our sector's oversight to NZQA, removing structured industry involvement from the development and review of qualifications.

SUBMISSION SURVEY RESPONSES



Response to Question 2 continued

This change threatens the relevance and quality of vocational training in one of New Zealand's fastest-growing and highest-productivity sectors.

Game development is a high-skill, innovation-driven industry that has benefited significantly from co-designed, industry-informed qualifications under the former WDC framework. To lose that voice risks creating qualifications that do not meet the needs of employers or learners, undermining workforce readiness and limiting the sector's ability to grow.

We are also concerned that this exclusion contradicts recent government investment in the sector (such as CODE and the Game Development Sector Rebate), which is aimed at stimulating industry growth. That growth depends on a strong education-to-employment pipeline.



Abiotic Factor, Deep Field Games

SUBMISSION SURVEY RESPONSES



Question 3: You indicated that your sector is proposed to be shifted to NZQA. How much do you support this proposal?

The NZGDA does not support the proposal to shift our sector to NZQA.

While we respect NZQA's role in quality assurance, we believe that qualification development must be co-designed with industry to remain relevant and future-focused. The pace of change in the game development and creative tech sectors is rapid, and training needs to reflect the current tools, practices, and pathways used in the field. NZQA is not structured to engage with industry in this way.

We are advocating for either the inclusion of our sectors within a relevant ISB, or the establishment of a new, fit-for-purpose structure that includes digital, creative, and screen sectors and retains formal industry input in all qualification development.



Sleight of Hand, Riff Raff Games

SUBMISSION SURVEY RESPONSES



Question 4: Do you have any other feedback about the proposal?

The creative tech and game development sectors represent a major opportunity for New Zealand's digital economy. In 2024 alone, the NZ game development industry generated \$548 million in exports, with 26% year-on-year growth, and industry productivity exceeding \$500,000 per FTE. This is a future-focused, low-emissions, high-wage sector that young New Zealanders aspire to work in.

However, we currently lack clear and consistent education pathways into the sector. The VET system should be addressing this challenge, not removing the limited progress we have made.



Cosmorons, Blind Squirrel Games

We urge the government to reconsider the structure so that creative technologies, including game development, are supported by a dedicated, industry-engaged mechanism. Whether that is a revised ISB structure, a standalone council, or an alternative model, what matters most is that industry retains a seat at the table.

SUBMISSION SURVEY RESPONSES



Response to Question 4 continued

In parallel with this submission, the NZ Game Developers Association has launched an open letter calling on the government to ensure continued industry involvement in the development of vocational qualifications for the game development and creative tech sectors. The letter expresses widespread concern over the proposed shift to NZQA oversight and the exclusion of our sector from the new Industry Skills Body structure. It has gained strong support from across the industry, including studios, educators, and individual professionals.



Tales of the Shire, Wētā Workshop

We intend to formally deliver this open letter to the relevant Ministers and Ministries by the end of this month as a collective statement from our sector, urging reconsideration of the current proposal and advocating for a more inclusive and future-focused model.

We welcome further engagement on this issue and are happy to work collaboratively on a more inclusive and future-ready solution.