

NZGDA

NEW ZEALAND
GAME DEVELOPERS
ASSOCIATION



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2026

FOREWORD

The NZGDA Strategy Document sets a bold, long-term vision for a thriving, globally competitive games industry in Aotearoa. We are laying the groundwork for a thriving, sustainable, and globally competitive industry that will continue to grow and evolve for years to come.

This plan is about progress. Every initiative is purpose-driven, with clear, measurable goals to ensure real progress for our members and the sector.

Transparency is at the heart of everything we do, so we're rolling out new ways to connect, foster open conversations, and strengthen our community.

We have a small but passionate team of 2 FTEs, which enables us to take meaningful action each year. With such a large number of initiatives and limited resources, it may be a challenge to deliver on everything we set out to, but the community is always supporting, through contributing ideas, offering resource, and supporting us financially on certain projects. Every effort helps us build a stronger and more dynamic industry. If you're inspired by the NZGDA Initiatives Wheel, reach out to Joy, we'd love to collaborate.

Carl & Joy



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Vision Statements:

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

NZGDA envisions a thriving, inclusive & sustainable game development community in New Zealand, where members are empowered with opportunities for growth, collaboration & industry success. By expanding our reach, enhancing engagement & fostering strong industry connections, we aim to position game development as a key driver of NZ's creative and digital economy.

RECOGNITION STRATEGY

NZGDA is dedicated to celebrating & showcasing the successes of our members. By highlighting industry achievements, we aim to foster a stronger community, elevate our members' visibility & reinforce game development as a vital force in the creative & digital economy.

EDUCATION STRATEGY

NZGDA will start to build a robust, diverse talent pipeline that fuels the growth of New Zealand's game development industry. To achieve this, NZGDA is committed to a long-term, structured approach that ensures meaningful progress over time.

EVENTS STRATEGY

NZGDA will develop a structured and sustainable approach to NZGDA's event offerings, ensuring they support the growth of the New Zealand game development industry by providing practical business knowledge, networking opportunities, and international engagement.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

NZGDA will establish ourselves as the trusted, authoritative voice of the game development industry in New Zealand, ensuring that our members and stakeholders are well-informed, engaged, and supported. Through strategic communication, we will showcase industry achievements, advocate for growth, and strengthen New Zealand's global reputation in game development.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STRATEGY

NZGDA is committed to fostering a thriving, globally competitive game development industry in NZ. We aim to engage effectively with government stakeholders to ensure sustainable growth, secure key policy support, and strengthen our international market position while nurturing local talent and innovation.

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

NZGDA TE RŌPŪ
WAIHANGA KĒMU
O AOTEAROA



Strategy Statement

NZGDA's membership strategy is designed to **strengthen industry connections, enhance member engagement, and expand the reach** of our organisation to support a thriving game development sector. By fostering a diverse and inclusive community, improving access to professional development and industry insights, and leveraging strategic partnerships, we aim to **ensure that game development continues to be a key contributor** to New Zealand's creative and digital economy.

Objectives

Expand membership reach

Grow membership to include recruiters, professional services, & tertiary institutions.

Establish a "preferred partner" program to build strategic alliances

Encourage university memberships to create stronger pathways for students

Enhance member engagement & value

Improve communication of current benefits & initiatives to enhance membership value

Facilitate inter-studio knowledge sharing through schedule & structured discussions

Support & strengthen international networking opportunities

Leverage data & insights for industry growth

Scope the requirements to implement the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA)

Start an industry salary survey to provide benchmarking data for businesses & professionals

Use member feedback & insights to continuously improve strategic initiatives

Strengthen industry support & community

Foster an inclusive & diverse game dev ecosystem that supports all members

Evaluate & refine diversity event approaches to best serve the needs of the community

Increase awareness & accessibility of initiatives that promote industry-wide collaboration and support.

Conclusion

Through these objectives, NZGDA will build a stronger, more connected industry, ensuring that game development in New Zealand continues to flourish both locally and internationally.

RECOGNITION STRATEGY



Strategy Statement

NZGDA's recognition strategy is designed to **celebrate and promote** the achievements of New Zealand's game development community, ensuring that our members **gain the visibility and recognition they deserve** both locally and internationally. By highlighting industry success stories, **fostering a culture of recognition**, and **strengthening the identity of the sector**, we aim to position game development as a key pillar of New Zealand's creative and digital economy.

Objectives

Celebrate member success

Highlight the achievements of studios, individuals, and projects across various platforms.

Showcase industry milestones, awards, and innovations within the NZ game development ecosystem.

Encourage a culture of recognition & support

Foster an environment where success is shared and celebrated among peers.

Develop awards, spotlights, and recognition programs that encourage continued excellence.

Strengthen industry identity & reputation

Position game development as a high-growth, innovative, and globally competitive sector.

Advocate for the impact of the industry on the economy, employment, and digital skills development.

Promote success locally & internationally

Amplify member successes through NZGDA channels, media partnerships, and industry networks.

Support international recognition of NZ game developers through global awards, trade missions, and media outreach.

Recognition Initiatives



Industry Spotlights:

Regular features on studios, developers, and projects through NZGDA's website, newsletters, and social media.



Awards & Honours:

Initiatives like the 'Pioneers of Play' award to recognise long-standing contributions to the industry.



Media & Publicity:

Promoting member achievements in mainstream and industry media to increase visibility.



International Showcasing:

Supporting NZ developers in gaining global recognition through awards, expos, and partnerships.



Community engagement:

Encouraging members to share their successes through NZGDA channels and industry events.

Measuring Success



Increased media coverage and recognition of NZ game developers.



Growth in participation for industry awards and recognition programs.



Greater presence of NZ game developers at global industry events.



Member feedback and engagement with NZGDA recognition initiatives.

Conclusion

This strategy ensures that NZGDA remains a champion of the industry, celebrating the talent, innovation, and success of our members while promoting the strength and impact of New Zealand's game development sector.

EDUCATION STRATEGY

NZGDA TE RŌPŪ
WAIHANGA KĒMU
O AOTEAROA



Strategy Statement

NZGDA's education strategy is designed to **cultivate a strong, diverse, and highly skilled talent pipeline** that will drive the long-term success of New Zealand's game development industry. By establishing **structured pathways from education to employment, strengthening industry-education collaboration, and advocating for greater government support**, we aim to create a sustainable ecosystem that empowers the next generation of game developers.

Objectives

Long-term focus

Develop a 3–5 year strategic plan to ensure continuity and avoid the inefficiencies of restarting efforts annually.

Parental engagement

Actively educate parents on the wide range of stable, high-paying careers in game development, dispelling misconceptions and fostering industry support.

Comprehensive pathway

Map out the full education and career journey—from primary school to industry—to identify and address gaps, creating seamless progression for future game developers.

Industry-Education collaboration

Facilitate stronger partnerships between studios and educational institutions, exploring incentive programs for industry professionals to contribute directly to teaching and training.

Education Initiatives



Targeted Skilling:

Work closely with studios to identify critical skill gaps & ensure curricula and training programs align with industry needs.



Measurement & Iteration:

Establish clear metrics to track progress, recognising that impact takes time. Regular reviews to allow for refinement & improvement.



Government Advocacy:

Engage with government stakeholders to secure support and funding for industry-led education initiatives.

Conclusion

By executing this strategy, NZGDA will ensure that New Zealand's game development sector has a steady supply of skilled professionals, supporting both industry growth and the country's position in the global game development economy.

EVENTS STRATEGY

NZGDA TE RŌPŪ
WAIHANGA KĒMU
O AOTEAROA



Strategy Statement

NZGDA's events will focus on **supporting the business and operational success of game development studios**. By delivering practical workshops, fostering industry connections, and leveraging hybrid and digital formats, NZGDA will create valuable **opportunities for developers to scale their businesses, navigate industry challenges, and engage with both local and international networks**.

Objectives

Business-focused events

NZGDA will prioritise events that provide developers with the essential skills needed to build sustainable studios.

Virtual game dev day

As a digital extension of Wellington Games Week, Virtual Game Dev Day will be explored as a platform to reach a wider audience.

Industry collaboration & hybrid events

NZGDA will expand its reach and impact by collaborating with relevant industry organisations and adopting hybrid event formats.

NZGDC

NZGDC provides a platform for education, networking & business growth.

NZGDC fosters connections between developers, industry leaders & international partners to strengthen the local ecosystem.

Event Initiatives



Targeted business events:

Finance & Operations (accounting, payroll, financial planning)
Scaling & Growth (hiring, team expansion, studio management)
Industry Compliance (Game Development Sector Rebate prep)
HR & Workplace Culture (conflict resolution, employment law, team leadership)



Industry co-lab & hybrid events:

Partnerships with key industry bodies (AI Forum, Engineering NZ, Writers Guild)
Hybrid events (integrate in-person networking with international online speakers)
Networking-focused initiatives (speed networking & industry-student interview sessions)



Virtual Game Dev Day:

Additional speaker opportunities (beyond physical events)
Increase international engagement and accessibility
A high-quality, interactive digital experience (that complements existing events)

NZGDC Specific Strategy

The 2025 theme “He Tangata, He Tangata, He Tangata - The People at the Heart of Games” highlights the importance of people in all aspects of game development - from studio teams and industry networks to the players and communities who engage with games. This theme will be reflected in content, networking opportunities, and industry discussions, ensuring an inclusive and people-centred event.



Enhancing business-focused content to help studios scale and sustain growth



Expanding international engagement through guest speakers and global partnerships



Facilitating industry connections through structured networking & mentoring opportunities



Supporting diversity and inclusion within the industry and conference experience

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY



Strategy Statement

NZGDA's communications strategy is designed to **enhance engagement, strengthen industry advocacy, and position the game development sector as a key player in New Zealand's creative and digital economy.** By delivering **clear, consistent, and impactful** messaging, we aim to **inform, connect, and inspire** our members, stakeholders, and the wider public while **fostering collaboration** across the industry.

Objectives

Promote

Promote NZGDA initiatives, events, and advocacy efforts effectively.

Strengthen

Strengthen engagement with existing members and attract new members.

Position

Position NZGDA as the authoritative voice of the NZ game development industry through consistent messaging and branding.

Collaborate

Foster collaboration within the industry and with external stakeholders, acting as the glue that connects the game development ecosystem.

Content Type



Member Spotlights

Featuring different studios & professionals to build community.



Advocacy

Opinion pieces, letters to officials & calls to action on key industry issues.



Industry Updates

Surveys, annual reports, policy changes & funding news.



Educational Content

Articles, workshops & guides on game development & business growth.



Success Stories

Showcasing NZ-based game developers and their achievements.

Measuring Success



Membership growth and retention rates



Rise in engagement metrics (social media, website analytics)



Attendance and participation in events and webinars



Media coverage and sentiment analysis



Feedback from members through surveys and direct communication

Conclusion

By implementing this strategy, NZGDA will strengthen its role as the voice of New Zealand's game development industry, ensuring clear, impactful, and strategic communication that drives industry growth, recognition, and collaboration.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STRATEGY



Strategy Statement

NZGDA's government relations strategy is designed to support the growth of New Zealand's game development industry. Our focus on **tailored immigration policies, educational alignment** with industry needs, and **continued advocacy** for the Game Development Sector Rebate will facilitate sustainable growth. Through unified messaging and proactive media engagement, we will **elevate the profile of our industry** while pursuing international market opportunities to establish New Zealand as a leading player on the global stage.

Objectives

Strengthen government relations

Build & maintain strong ties with key government figures (Minister Reti).

Engage with key policymakers, inc Finance Minister Willis & Economic Development Minister Bishop.

Leverage Nicola Willis' support to enhance communication & advocacy efforts.

Advocate for industry growth without overstating success

Highlight industry achievements while ensuring continued government support.

Reinforce that NZ's game development industry, despite its growth, still needs strategic policy support to reach global competitiveness.

Use industry success stories strategically, such as Path of Exile 2's tax contribution, to illustrate economic impact.

Policy, advocacy and support

Prioritise non-monetary policy changes that can drive long-term industry benefits

Education: Work with Minister Stanford to align curriculum with industry requirements & talent pipeline development.

Advocate for the maintenance and optimisation of the Game Development Sector Rebate (GDSR) & Code program.

Explore opportunities to reallocate the \$10M/year underspend from GDSR to other industry-supporting initiatives.

Objectives

Policy, advocacy and support

Immigration: Expand skilled migrant categories beyond programmers to support industry needs.

Support international market expansion

Advocate for improved China market access, working with Minister McClay to enhance export opportunities.

Ensure continued Gamescom presence, despite funding & timing constraints, to maintain NZ's global visibility.

Strengthen industry messaging & media engagement

Develop a concise, unified messaging framework for NZGDA & member studios.

Create a one-pager for quick government interactions summarising industry priorities.

Establish a media engagement strategy to highlight industry contributions & upcoming annual industry report findings.

Leverage photo opportunities with ministers & key government figures to increase visibility.

Conclusion

The strategy aims to strengthen the New Zealand game development industry's relationship with key government figures while advocating for essential policy changes that foster growth and global competitiveness. By engaging with influential policymakers and promoting realistic narratives around industry achievements, we can secure the necessary government support.

NZGDA Initiatives Strategy Wheel

A list of key initiatives to be completed under this strategic plan throughout 2025-2026



CONTACT US



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