GCAP²⁰ **AGDA**²⁰

JUDGING CRITERIA FOR AWARDS

CATEGORY	ELEMENT	CLARIFICATION/THINGS TO CONSIDER
ART	Suitability of visual style Consistency in visual language Quality of game environment Originality/creativity Innovation in approach/technique Technical skill Quality of animation Accessibility Diversity	• Does the style match the theme? • Do all the elements of the visual component of the game fit together? • Does the environment suit the game? • Is the style fresh and unique? • Are there any innovative techniques employed in the artistic direction? • Is the art polished? Does it feel complete? • Do all the moving parts fit together and work properly? (I.E. consistency in rigging, animation) • Does the art style lend itself to the visually impaired? • Are there colour blind modes? • Are there options for high contrast modes for the visually impaired? • Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities) • Is the diversity highlighted through the art respectfully?
GAMEPLAY	Level design Control systems Innovation in approach/technique UI/UX Engagement factor Accessibility	• Does the game clearly explain its mechanics? • Can you move through the level smoothly? • Does physics work as expected/consistently? • Are the controls intuitive/comfortable? • Are the controls suitable for the type of gameplay? • Are any innovative techniques used in the gameplay? • Is there any new technology present in the gameplay? • How intuitive is the user interface? • Do you get adequate feedback when you complete an action in game? • How long did it capture your attention? • Did you want to come back and replay it? • Are there accessibility settings? • Are multiple controller inputs available for accessibility controls? • Are there game assist options (I.E. Aim assist, auto zoom)? • Are there options to see game controls again (Either in menu or in game)? • Are there bespoke difficulty settings available?

NARRATIVE	**Quality of story** **Coherence of story** **Theme** **Narrative design (how is the story delivered)** **Ludonarrative consistency** **Quality/consistency of dialogue** **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility** **Diversity**	- Is the story new and engaging? - Is there a consistent story arc? - Is the story delivered in a unique way? - Does the game environment and design suit the story being told? - Is there an obvious theme? Is that theme consistent? - Does the story unfold in a coherent way? - Is there consistency between the story and the narrative conveyed through game play? (Ludonarrative consistency) - Do the characters have distinct personalities/functions - Is the dialogue believable/relevant? - Does the dialogue adequately drive the story? - Is the story translated into multiple languages? - Does it have adequate content warnings for heavy storylines? - If dealing with heavy themes, does it provide care afterwards? - If dealing with heavy themes, is there an option to go around them? - Does the story have a diversity of cast? (I.E. POC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities) - Is the diversity highlighted through the story respectfully?
SOUND DESIGN	**Quality of mix-down** **Quality of sounds** **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	- Are the sounds appropriately balanced? (is VO audible over background sounds). - Are the sounds varying and engaging? - Are there any innovative techniques employed in the sound? - Do sound cues provide adequate player feedback? - Do the sounds relate directly to and help drive gameplay? - Are the sounds evocative emotionally? - Are sounds consistent across the game (I.E. Clicking a button in the UI is the same across the whole game) - Is the sound design sufficient to assist visually impaired people to play the game? - Are the sounds consistent across languages? Can they be understood without language? - Is the sound adequately shown through other means for hearing impaired? (I.E. sound effects are subtitled)
MUSIC	**Thematic consistency with the**	Is the music balanced? (is VO audible over music).

	story/overall design **Quality of music** **Variety/uniqueness** **Immersion in the game environment** *Music complements in-game events/plot* **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	● Is the music emotionally evocative? ● Does the music flow effectively with other elements of the game? ● Is it thematically tied to the game? ● Is music directly tied to gameplay (I.E. Rhythm games, games where music is a part of the core gameplay loop)? ● Is the music made out of something new and interesting (improvised instruments, strange remixes)? ● Are there options for hearing impaired players?
BEST AR/VR	**Narrative design** **Level design** **Sound design** **Art/visual style** **UX/UI** **Technical excellence** **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	● Consider the criteria in gameplay elements listed above. ● Does it make good use of the platform's unique features? ● Are the AR/VR Gameplay elements critical to the core gameplay loop? Could this game function without AR/VR? ● Are spatial audio techniques used to match the 360 Degree environment? ● Is the uniqueness of a 360 degree environment utilized to immerse the player in the game's world? ● Are the AR/VR gameplay tools easy to understand and use? ● Are there options for standard controllers and motion controllers? ● Is there an option to play one handed? ● Is there an option to sit for gameplay? ● Is there an option to turn off 'artificial motion' to reduce VR sickness?
BEST SERIOUS GAME	**Impact** **Narrative design (if applicable)** **Level design (if applicable)** **Sound design** **Art/visual style** **UX/UI**	● Consider the criteria in gameplay elements listed above. ● Does the game represent the serious matter appropriately and respectfully? ● Is the game approaching a new topic? ● Does the gameplay match the tone of the matter? ● For serious or upsetting matters, are there player check-ins, aftercare, and consent checks? ● If there are serious matters, are there adequate content warnings? Are there options to bypass material if needed? ● Does the game effectively educate it's audience on the

	Technical excellence **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	serious topic it's based on? ● Does the game approach serious discussion in a unique way? ● Does the game use new technologies or innovative tech to inform its audience? ● Is there a program in place to measure behaviour change? (I.E. Is there a way to measure the results of player retention or change in behaviour?) ● Does it meet the accessibility requirements for the audience it's for/representing (I.E. A game about blindness having screen readers, a game for deaf people having accessible captioning)
BEST ONGOING GAME	**Narrative design** **Level design** **Sound design** **Art/visual style** **UX/UI** **Technical excellence** **Lasting Excellence** **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	● Consider the criteria in gameplay elements listed above. ● Has this game continued a high standard of quality - such as regular patches, DLC's, ongoing customer support- from its launch to now? ● Are those DLC's or patches paid? ● Has there been an increase in sales in the past 12 months? ● Has there been an increase in player engagement in the past 12 months? ● Is the game still/more culturally relevant now as it was at launch? ● Does the game still function effectively? (I.E. No major bugs, game base can still be played without needing additional elements) ● Does the game have an effective learning curve for new players joining now? ● If there are DLC's, are they accessible to newer players? ● If there are DLC's, is the base game prior to expansions still relevant? ● Does the game continue to have an engaged community compared to its initial release?
BEST MOBILE GAME	**Narrative design** **Level design** **Sound design**	● Consider the criteria in gameplay elements listed above. ● Does it make good use of the platform's unique features? ● Are the mobile elements critical to the core gameplay loop? Could this game function without being a mobile

	Art/visual style **UX/UI** **Technical excellence** **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	game? ● Is there an option to play landscape and portrait mode? ● Are there accessibility options for text/sound? ● How long is the core gameplay loop? Is it satisfying? ● Can it be played with one hand or two? ● How is the art style portrayed? How does it function on smaller screens? ● Are there motions controls? Do they feel satisfying and intuitive? ● Does the game's control scheme fit well within the UI? ● Are there multiple control options (I.E. ability to change long presses to a single touch press, turn off motion controls) ● Are there interesting ways around technical limitations? (I.E. Keeping the players contained to a small area, simple artstyle, etc)
BEST EMERGING GAME *** student or early level career**	**Narrative design** **Level design** **Sound design** **Art/visual style** **UX/UI** **Technical excellence** **Innovation in approach/technique** **Accessibility**	● Consider the criteria in gameplay elements listed above. ● Is there significant 'polish' to the game? ● Does the game go above and beyond expectations for the student category? ● Would this game stand out in a Student portfolio?

Extra considerations while judging		
OVERALL	**Accessibility**	● Does the game have accessibility features? ● Are accessible features auto enabled? (I.E. Subtitles are turned on for the first cutscene) ● Does the game recognise accessibility through usability and gameplay?

		- Does the game approach accessibility in a new and innovative way? - Are there options for gamers with disabilities to play (consider: vision impairment, hearing impairment, mobility impairment, cognitive impairment)? - Does the game communicate accessibility features on the box, or feature a download page or other reference? - For a full list of accessibility features, consult the [Game Accessibility Guidelines](#).
	Representation	- How well does the game include people from underrepresented groups? (women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues) - Do characters with these attributes feature fully in the game? - Are characters with these attributes player characters? - Do you have the ability to edit the player characters pronouns, body shape, skin colour or accessibility aids? (If applicable) - Does the game include the use of gender neutral pronouns? - Does the game contain elements of advocacy for or exploration of issues faced by underrepresented groups? - Is there an Acknowledgement of Country? - Does the game have credits?
	Cultural Significance	Does the game have cultural significance? [Cultural significance can be defined as: aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.] [Cultural significance is embodied in a place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.]
	Technical	- Does the game run smoothly? - Is there any screen tearing/glitches? - Does the game maintain its quality across platforms (I.E. It works as well on a mac as it does on a PC) - Are there any game breaking bugs?

		• Do all features present work? (I.E. A brightness slider present but doesn't function)
	Multiplayer/Co-Op/Leaderboards (If Applicable)	• Does the game have a clear code of conduct for the consumer? • Is there an engaged community? • Does the game feature accessible text/chat boxes if playing online with other players? • Are the voice chat features accessible? • Are there options for low level players to mingle with high level? • Are there options to play with friends?
	Consumer Experience	• Is there a customer service feature? • Does the game have a way to report bugs? • Does the game have tech support available? • Is there an outside community for players to join? • Is there a way to report/block/ban abusive players?
	General Comments	• Did you want to come back and play it again? • What brought you back? • What was the standout moment of the game for you? • Was there anything you wanted to highlight about the game? • Did the game take you by surprise? • Would you recommend this game to others?

Personal / Studio Awards		
Studio of the Year	**Industry Growth** **Industry Impact**	• How has this studio provided opportunities for the Australian games industry? • How do they contribute to the industry? • What positive impact has this studio made? • What practices and projects are unique to this company? • What are the company's HR policies? • Has the company attracted investment or partnerships?

		- Would you consider their products, practices or projects "Industry Leading" - Are they supportive of others in their community (outside of the studio itself)?
Game of the Year	**Excellence** **Impact** **Uniqueness**	- Does the game show excellence in >3 categories listed above? - Has the game made a significant impact on the Australian Games industry and/or the broader international market? - Is the game a "first of its kind"?
Adam Lancman Award	**Lifetime Achievement**	- Has this individual been a long term influence across the australian game development scene? - Have they used their time in the industry to raise others up? - What has their contribution been to the industry? - Have they made a significant positive impact upon the industry?
Rising Star	**New industry superstar**	- Has the person been in the industry Less than or equal to 5 years? - Have they made a significant positive impact upon the industry? - What has their contribution been to the industry? - Have they exceeded all expectations in their roles?
Game Connect Award	**Trailblazing**	- Have they assisted people in moving forward in the industry? - Do they go above and beyond not only for themselves but for the industry as a whole? - Do they work to find new and innovative ways forward? - Have they achieved unexpected success in a unique way?