



PROGRAM SESSION DETAIL (venue map below)

8.30-9.30am Registration (in the foyer on Level 1, enter from Fed Square).

SESSION 1

IN CINEMA ONE – LEVEL 2

9.30am

Welcome

9.35am

Geography, Games & Geekness - Forging Your Unique Career Path

Opening Keynote by Kate Edwards, Geogrify

What do geography, video games, and a healthy dose of geekiness have in common? More than you might think. In this engaging talk, Kate Edwards shares her unconventional journey from studying geography to building a career spanning more than three decades in the global games industry, helping shape hundreds of games for players around the world. Along the way, she'll explore how unexpected skills, curiosity, and embracing what makes you unique can open doors to opportunities you never imagined. Whether you're interested in game design, art, programming, writing, or another discipline entirely, this session will challenge you to think beyond traditional career paths and discover how your own passions can become your greatest professional advantage.

10.10am

Making Hits: The Data, People and Ideas Behind Mobile Games

Oscar McMittrick, Ludios, a Tripledote Studio

Meet Melbourne company Ludios, a Tripledote Studio, who are creating breakout success games for global audiences. Guided by player behaviour, feedback and lots of data, the team continuously iterates to deepen engagement and keep players coming back every day. Find out more about hyper-casual mobile games, breakout successes such as Woodoku Blast, which has reached over 22 million people worldwide, and what game studios like Ludios look for when recruiting.

It may be surprising to learn that game development involves much more than visual creativity. There is a broad range of career opportunities across areas such as product management, data science, research and marketing, to name a few.

10.40am MORNING BREAK

Fruit and play G4C games (Cameo, Level 1)



SESSION TWO – program option 1

IN CINEMA ONE – LEVEL 2

11am

Finding Players: How Studios and Publishers Are Reaching New Audiences

Panel: Ross Symons, Big Ant Studios, Harry He, UltraPlayers, Dr Jens Schroeder, IGEA (Moderator)

As the games market continues to evolve, how are studios and publishers adapting to discover, grow, and sustain audiences? This session brings together speakers from both established studios and emerging publishers to explore different approaches to reaching players in an increasingly global marketplace.

Featuring representatives from Big Ant Studios and niche publisher UltraPlayers, the discussion will explore working with international publishing partners, how publishers identify opportunities in emerging player markets such as China and the opportunities and challenges of localising games for diverse audiences. Participants will gain insight into the vital role publishers play in marketing games, building communities, and helping studios connect with players worldwide, while understanding the wide range of strategies used across the industry.

11.40am

Beyond Entertainment: Careers in Health, Education and Neurodiversity Through Gaming

Panel: Jess Rowlings (Moderator), Erin Salmon, Beth Ware, Next Level Collaboration

Video games can open pathways to careers far beyond game development. In this panel, professionals from speech pathology, psychology and occupational therapy share how they use gameplay to create safe, engaging spaces for therapy, learning and connection.

Drawing on their work with Next Level Collaboration, the panel will explore how cooperative gaming supports neurodivergent young people to develop social, communication and collaboration skills. Speakers will also discuss how gaming skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and creativity, alongside neurodivergent strengths and lived experience, can translate into meaningful careers in health and education.

Discover how a passion for gaming can become a people-focused career that promotes inclusion, wellbeing and growth.



SESSION TWO – program option 2

STARTS GDFL ONE – LEVEL 1

11am - 12.15pm

Yalinguth: Walking with place

Dr Chris Barker, RMIT University

Note – this session begins at GDLF 1 then continues along Birrarung/Yarra River.

Please download the app before the session: yalinguth.com.au/get-app

Yalinguth is an award winning First Nations audio app and walking tour. In the Woi wurrung language Yalinguth means 'yesterday'. Yalinguth shares history through story, song and soundscapes. There are two story walks to experience in Naarm/Melbourne - one in Ngár-go/Fitzroy and the other along the Birrarung/Yarra River in the CBD.

Yalinguth uses geo-located stories and sounds to take you on a journey through time. Elders guide us along the journey and tell us that "we need to go back, to go forwards". Within the spatialised sound environment you navigate by audio cues, with a simple map showing your location and where to find stories, songs and poems.

12.15pm LUNCH BREAK

Collect your lunch and play *G4C games (Cameo, Level 1)*

IMPORTANT: For these next two sessions you can choose **ONE** of **FOUR** options.
Be ready at your breakout space at 1pm.

SESSION THREE – BREAKOUT ONE option 1

IN CINEMA ONE – LEVEL 2

1pm

Creative Mode On: Rethinking Games

Panel: Dr Chris Barker (Moderator) RMIT University, Phoebe Watson, GUCK and Mark Mitchell, Fuligin Sound

Three Melbourne based game professionals share their pathways across game design, interactive media, visual arts, music and sound. Along the way, they'll explore a reality of creative careers: the path is rarely singular or linear. Professionals often work across multiple fields, bringing different skills, interests and experiences together in unexpected ways. They'll reveal what their work involves, how their creative practices have evolved, and what they wish they'd known starting out. Then they'll look to the future: as emerging technologies reshape the industry, what's changing, what remains distinctly human, and where might the next generation of opportunities lie?



OR ...
BREAKOUT ONE *option 2* **IN GDFL ONE & TWO – LEVEL 1**

1pm

"Meet and Greet" Mentor Session face to face with Industry

representatives. This is an opportunity for students to meet one on one with leading industry professionals to ask any questions about their career pathways, trends or changes in Industry and more.

OR ...
BREAKOUT ONE *option 3* **IN SWINBURNE STUDIO – LEVEL 1**

1pm

"Meet and Greet" Mentor Session face to face with Tertiary

representatives from Universities and Training organisations. This is an opportunity for students to meet one on one with leading tertiary educators to ask their questions about training options, entry requirements, portfolios and more.

OR ...
BREAKOUT ONE *option 4* **IN CAMEO – LEVEL 1**

1pm

Visit the *Games for Change Australia* showcase 2026

Play the games and hear from some of the developers showcasing their serious games during the Games for Change Asia-Pacific conference. A chance to discover how play can empower purpose and how Games for Change are helping to build a better, more empathetic world.

Developers will deliver micro talks 12-2pm. Read about the games showcased on the webpage:

acmi.net.au/whats-on/melbourne-international-games-week-2026/games-for-change-showcase-2026/



SESSION FOUR – BREAKOUT TWO *option 1*

IN CINEMA ONE – LEVEL 2

1.35pm

Versatility as a Superpower

Panel: Adrian Webb (Moderator), Ioni Maghidman, Vlad Micu

A game development education builds skills that extend far beyond making games. From technical problem-solving and systems thinking to creativity, collaboration and communication, these capabilities are valued across a wide range of industries.

Join Vlad Micu, Adrian Webb and Ioni Maghidman as they discuss how game development graduates can build rewarding careers in fields including business development, defence and simulation, sports technology, and more. Through their own career journeys, the panel will explore the advantages of applying game-making skills in new contexts, uncover unexpected opportunities, and show how versatility can become a powerful asset in a rapidly changing job market.

OR ...

BREAKOUT ONE *option 2*

IN GDFL ONE & TWO – LEVEL 1

1.35pm

"Meet and Greet" Mentor Session face to face with Industry

representatives. This is an opportunity for students to meet one on one with leading industry professionals to ask any questions about their career pathways, trends or changes in Industry and more.

OR ...

BREAKOUT ONE *option 3*

IN SWINBURNE STUDIO– LEVEL 1

1.35pm

"Meet and Greet" Mentor Session face to face with Tertiary

representatives from Universities and Training organisations. This is an opportunity for students to meet one on one with leading tertiary educators to ask their questions about training options, entry requirements, portfolios and more.



OR ...
BREAKOUT ONE *option 4*

IN CAMEO – LEVEL 1

1.35pm

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SESSION FIVE

ALL IN CINEMA ONE – LEVEL 2

2.10pm

Culture, Leadership, and the Path You Make Up As You Go

In conversation with Dr Rachel Kowert hosted by Kate Edwards

Games don't just reflect culture - they build it, and the people shaping that culture are getting younger every year. Join Dr. Rachel Kowert as she sits down with Kate Edwards for a 30-minute conversation on gaming cultures, the power young people hold as digital leaders, and what it looks like to build a career in games when there's no map for the job you actually want. Both have taken decidedly non-linear routes to get here. Half the session belongs to audience, bring your questions, your career crises, and your hot takes.

2.45pm Event closes

