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Innovation Centre to become Gaming Hub

Melbourne-based gaming creators Big Ant Studios will be locating their new games development studio at the University of the Sunshine Coast's Innovation Centre in Queensland.

Moving into the new \$3.6 million Business Accelerator, Big Ant will use the new base to attract talent and experience from the emerging Queensland gaming industry.

Innovation Centre chief executive Colin Graham said Big Ant Studios, one of Australia's largest game developers, planned to start with a 30-person development team based from the Centre's Business Accelerator offices, expanding to at least 84 over the next four years.

Big Ant Studios CEO Ross Symons said they had chosen the Innovation Centre for the new studio because when they were looking for a second Australian base for the company that offered a proximity to a strong gaming industry sector, strong student population as well as a location that would be attractive to potential staff, it fulfilled all the criteria.

Big Ant Studios is an Australian game development studio founded in 2001 by Mr Symons, a software development pioneer with a professional history that stretches back to the 1970's when he first authored a number of internationally published books on programming and games.

"The Innovation Centre offers a very competitive package and can meet all our special requirements, like high-speed fibre optic fibre, not to mention its great location just an hour from Brisbane and in a beautiful part of the world," Mr Symons said.

"Being located on the University of the Sunshine Coast campus means we can tap into the talent of students studying there.

"In fact we are already talking to the university about developing a work integrated learning program for design students as well as some course content particularly for students wanting to work in the gaming industry."

Announcing Big Ant's planned move at the Innovation Centre today, Acting Premier Paul Lucas said the commitment from the creator of best selling video games such as 'Syryo' and the 'Australian Football League' was great news for the Sunshine Coast and Queensland.

"That's 84 high-tech jobs in one of the world's most progressive industries and an exciting new addition to the Sunshine Coast's creative sector," Mr Lucas said.

Mr Graham said having Big Ant choose the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast was a

great demonstration of all the Centre had to offer prospective tenants in the Business Accelerator or the Business Incubator.

“The Innovation Centre offers competitive, state-of-the-art offices, with a great location close to the university and to the business and technology precinct to be developed across the road,” he said.

“Not only can companies access students from the university, they can locate themselves at what is becoming the ICT, Green Tech, creative and knowledge based hub of the Sunshine Coast.

“Burgeoning companies are also attracted to the Sunshine Coast and all the lifestyle benefits it has to offer, just an hour away from Brisbane.”

Minister for Regional Development and Industry Desley Boyle who was also on hand for a sneak peak of Big Ant’s new family game ‘Soaked’ said Queensland now led the country in terms of employment and income from games development.

“In fact, in the last financial year Queensland games developers raked in more than \$55 million which is a 40% slice of the country’s total videogame earnings,” Ms Boyle said.

Big Ant Studios are now actively recruiting for staff to join them at the Innovation Centre so check their website - www.bigant.com - for details.

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