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## **Freeplay returns in 2012, says goodbye to director**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2012:** Freeplay announced today that the 2012 Freeplay Festival will be held at the State Library of Victoria and beyond from 19-23 September 2012.

Freeplay 2012 will see the return of its conference and workshop program, public expo, awards, local and international speakers, and its unique mix of games, industry, culture, education, and play, centred around this year's theme of **'Chaos and Grace'**.

The festival will explore the chaos of the creative process, of development, and of the political, social, and artistic culture that surround us. It will dig into attempts to transform that chaos into systems and rules, and it will look at the way grace seeps into the skin of our work.

Freeplay's weekend program will once again take place at the State Library of Victoria on the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September.

Acting CEO and State Librarian, Sue Hamilton said "Games are an important way for people to engage with the world and with each other. They allow people to learn through interaction and develop new skills for managing complex thinking. Games succeed in this because they are intrinsically motivating; people play games because they enjoy it, not because they have to.

People also use libraries because they want to. In a modern library, collections take many forms - manuscripts, books, websites, digital media. Games are a fundamental part of this landscape, so it is important that libraries not only 'play' in this space, but encourage others to do so."

Today, Freeplay also says goodbye to co-director Eve Penford-Dennis who is moving on to focus on new projects.

Eve Penford-Dennis said, "The Freeplay Independent Games Festival has been an enormously exciting event to run, and I feel very privileged to have been its co-director.

"It's always been important to me to promote, through Freeplay, the talent, and sheer ingenuity that people display when unencumbered by the weight of conformity in mainstream game development. It has been both humbling and inspiring to work for a community that is so positive and passionate about games, *their way*.

"Leaving something you've been an integral part of for a long time is always a difficult decision but I'm proud of how Freeplay has grown and transformed the

public conversation around games and play. In particular, I'm proud of the public program which drew over 1800 people through Experimedia in 2011, the awards which celebrate the best of Australian creative development to local and international audiences, and establishing Freeplay as a stand-alone organisation which I'm sure will support Freeplay long into the future."

Current festival director Paul Callaghan will remain on to direct the 2012 festival before also pursuing new opportunities.

"It's been an amazing experience working on Freeplay for so long and watching it evolve as we've gone from 600 attendees in 2009 to over 2000 in 2011, as the opportunities for independent game developers have grown and as games and play have shifted into the cultural mainstream. I'm looking forward to the 2012 festival being bigger and more ambitious before handing it over to somebody with a fresh perspective."

Expressions of interest for the position of festival director will be available later in the year.

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Freeplay is supported by



## **About Freeplay**

Freeplay is Australia's only independent games festival, and focuses on the creative and artistic side of games, digital art, education, and culture. Started in 2004 by Next Wave in a converted Karate Dojo on Swanston Street, and run again in 2005, and 2007. Paul Callaghan and Eve Penford-Dennis took over in 2009, continuing the success of its core festival program, bringing it to a new home and new audiences with a hugely successful public program at the State Library of Victoria and introducing in 2010 the inaugural Freeplay Awards. In 2011, the festival grew to five days with its new Playful Program and expanded out through partnerships with the Emerging Writers' Festival and NGV Studio at the National Gallery of Victoria.