

# SIX TIPS FOR GAME WORKERS

A GUIDE BY GAME WORKERS UNITE AUSTRALIA



## 1 UNPAID INTERNSHIPS ARE ILLEGAL

It is increasingly common for companies to advertise unpaid internships, where you might be asked to work for a period of time without pay to “gain experience” or “prove yourself”.

These are unlawful. If you perform work that benefits a company, you must be paid. There is no such thing as a “for experience” job in Australia.

A rule of thumb you can use to decide if you are actually performing work that benefits the company is to ask: are you replacing what would normally be a paid position?

For example, if you were doing an art internship and your art actually made it into the final game, but you did not get paid, that would be illegal. However, if you simply used your time at the studio to learn from existing artists, duplicating their work but not replacing it, that would be fine as the company is not benefiting from you without pay.

The only time that an unpaid internship is legal is when it is part of a job placement program that you do as part of your studies (through university, TAFE etc). Speak to your course coordinator to learn more about this.

## 2 LEARN HOW TO SPOT SHAM CONTRACTING

Sham contracting is when you are treated like an employee (heavily controlled, given equipment to use), but paid as if you are a contractor.(sending invoices rather than receiving a salary).

Employees are supposed to receive entitlements like holiday pay, sick pay and superannuation. Some companies don't like to pay for these things, so they make you a contractor instead to get around them.

Sham contracting is illegal. If you suspect it is happening to you, join your union and ask for help. GWU Australia can assist.

## 3 THERE ARE MINIMUM WAGES AND CONDITIONS

Don't sell yourself short. Every worker in Australia is entitled to minimum wages and conditions at their job. This includes rules for things like overtime, allowances and more.

These wages and conditions change from job to job. GWU Australia can assist you in finding out what yours are.

## 4 YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK IF IT'S UNSAFE

If you are being asked to work in a way or place that you believe is unsafe, you have the right to refuse. This includes crunch time or overwork, if you genuinely feel that it is having a negative effect on your physical or mental health.

It is illegal to fire someone who refuses to work in this way. Always make sure you are a union member before taking action.

## 5 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IS ILLEGAL

You do not need to put up with bullying and harassment as part of your job. If you are being targeted, you can take steps to protect yourself by taking legal action through your union.

If there are enough union members on a site, you can work together to draft strong bullying and harassment policies and have them enforced by the company.

## 6 THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY IS YOURS TO SHAPE

If you don't like something about the Australian games industry, you have the power to change it. Together, workers just like you have dreamed big, acted collectively, and changed the future.



# LET'S BUILD A BETTER GAMES INDUSTRY. **TOGETHER.**

Game Workers Unite is an international movement of people who are organising together to make life better for game workers through collective action and unionisation.

The Australian chapter needs your help to build an industry with stronger jobs, higher pay, and rewarding, long-term careers.

By working together, we can put an end to crunch, stop sham contracting, and stop a culture of burnouts and layoffs that have claimed so many of our friends.

We need you. Join us today at [gameworkers.com.au](https://gameworkers.com.au) and be part of the movement to change the industry for good.



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