

## **Frequently asked questions about Southern eSports**

### ***Q. When and why was Southern eSports set up?***

A. Southern eSports was originally set up in April 2012 as Christchurch Starcraft, to foster a gaming community around the Real Time Strategy (RTS) game Starcraft. Since then the eSports arena has become increasingly more varied, with major tournaments for League of Legends, DOTA 2 and various fighting games at EVO. Consequently, the group's name was changed to Southern eSports to reflect a broader spectrum of video games.

### ***Q. How many people belong to Southern eSports?***

A. We have about 250 members, mostly aged between 18 and 26. The membership continues to grow as we organise more events, and gamers find out about us. Until now the lack of a permanent venue has made organising regular events challenging. Now we have a regular meeting place (Harringtons Riccarton) we expect the membership to grow as we hold more regular tournaments and events.

### ***Q. Is video gaming still a guys thing?***

A. We have over 60 women members (about 25%), many of whom attend and participate in our gaming events. Globally women account for 30-40 per cent of eSports participants. A lot of gamers who play online use aliases, so it's hard to know whether they're male or female. So while New Zealand women may be lagging behind their overseas counterparts, the old image of geeky guys playing video games doesn't reflect reality any more.

### ***Q. How popular is eSport locally and nationally within NZ?***

A. Both in Christchurch and New Zealand, eSport is growing at a fast rate, in line with international trends. For example, globally in the past year the number of online gamers has doubled, with the expectation that growth rate would continue into 2015. The last gaming event in Auckland was held at Vector Arena, due to the popularity of gaming up there. Christchurch may not have quite the same numbers of gamers, but people here take gaming very seriously and are very good at it. New Zealand's top League of Legends team, the Filthy Tactix, is based in Christchurch.

***Q. What are the most popular video games being played?***

A. It depends upon the platform gamers' use and/or own (PC/Playstation/Xbox/Wii). Currently on PC Multiplayer Online Battle Arenas (MOBA) titles such as League of Legends are the most popular. MOBA games evolved from Defence of the Ancients (DOTA), a user-made game created inside Warcraft III\_(which is the game series that Starcraft was spun off from). Gaming sites such as Twitch TV list the current games being streamed by players. (Streaming is limited by the platform being used – older consoles can't stream video games without expensive modifications.)

Retro games such as Street Fighter and Super Smash Bros still have a huge following. Fifteen years after it first appeared, Nintendo has just released the latest Super Smash Bros video game on 3DS. Over 1 million copies sold in its first 2 days on sale in Japan. Developer Ubisoft is trying to get more mainstream party games such as Just Dance into the competitive scene as well.

***Q. Are team games more popular than games played individually?***

A. Currently team games are more popular. This also explains the rapid growth of gaming, since groups of friends can get together and play video games, which is more social than playing alone.

***Q. How popular is online gaming - are NZ gamers part of a global gaming community?***

A. New Zealanders are participating globally in gaming, and often play on US and Australian servers. One of the upsides of online gaming is that it brings New Zealand gamers into contact with people in other parts of the world who share their interests. This has both its good and bad moments, but gaming online is growing as it becomes accessible to more and more people.

***Q. If gaming's going online and international, do gamers still want or need local events?***

A. When we ask our gaming members what they want most from Southern eSports they say 'more local events'. Online gaming can be very solitary (even though you're playing with other people, they could be in Australia or South Korea), so gamers still want to play in the same room as everyone else. It's the atmosphere really. It's the same with most sports events. You could watch the All Blacks play on your big screen TV, or you could go to a bar and watch with a crowd of 100 other fans. The crowd creates the atmosphere that in turn makes the event memorable.