



COMPUTER ANIMATION STUDIOS OF ONTARIO

The indelible impact of the covid pandemic continued to be experienced into 2022 as we as an industry navigated how to adapt to changes in workplace environment, culture and competitiveness.

CASO ensured that our members were fully informed during this time, delivering weekly updates to members on policies, legal and HR considerations, security and privacy updates, and their impacts on businesses and employees. Our advocacy ensured industry inclusion in all government supports at all levels.

The drive and adaptability of all Ontario studios during these unprecedented times has proven the strength and viability of Ontario's vfx and animation industry

### **MISSION COMMITMENT: ADVOCACY**

#### **Federal Government**

- CASO worked with our national colleagues at CMPA to reach out to the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, asking to request an expedited immigration pathway for the VFX and animation industry in order to attract global talent into Canada to benefit Ontario companies and employers in the timeline that the sector and clients require. You can see the letter and detail, [here](#).
- CASO worked with the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, to ensure that CASO members could have one on one updates on the various avenues for grants, and scale-up assistance.
- The Federal Economic Development Agency also included CASO in its call seeking companies that had experience with Image Generation, Hardware Platforms, Synthetic Environment/Digital Twin, Sensor Simulation, and Interface converters between Unreal to DIS-HLA.

#### **Ontario Government**

##### **Pre-Budget 2022**

- Throughout 2021, Minister MacLeod's Film + Television Industry Advisory Panel continued its work, with CASO represented by co-chair Neishaw Ali. Although the final report has not yet been released publicly, you can be sure that the CASO pre-budget submission 'asks' were included.
- Commencing in the Fall of 2021, CASO began their pre-Budget 2022 round of meetings with key Ministers and political staffers. Ministries included: Heritage Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries; Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; Finance; Labour, Training and Skills Development; Ministry of Infrastructure.

You can see the pre-budget submission, [here](#).



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- CASO co-chairs Neishaw Ali and Matt Bishop also presented the CASO pre-budget 'asks', and fielded questions, at the Legislative Assembly pre-budget consultations, to a multi-party Committee.

## **Ontario Election**

As it appeared that the Provincial Election writ would be dropping within a week of the Budget release, (and acting as a defacto PC election platform in the process), in Spring, CASO co-chairs also met with Liberal party and NDP party leads, securing our untethering 'ask' in the NDP platform, and favorable language in the Liberal platform, in advance of the Budget release.

## **Budget 2022**

Here is the section on cultural industries: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1a.html#section-5>

Lots of praise for the Industry Panel and their recommendations!

Here is the link to the Budget details for f + t

industries: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/annex.html#section-3> Go to item #4

GOOD NEWS:

- OFTTC will now include online platforms (with certain additional conditions), and will also enable OCASE eligibility on same.

**- A commitment to "examine ways to untether" OCASE from OPSTC and OFTTC.**

- A commitment to review OPSTC to include location fees and reviewing the regional bonus for OFTTC. If you scroll down to the financial projections for these commitments, there is an expectation for increased tax credit spending, which bodes well.

- Clarification and certainty for hybrid or work-from-home/remote employee eligibility for OCASE and ODMTC tax credits, as long as they are Ontario residents working for an Ontario company.

Item #5 speaks to the extension of the Regional Opportunities Investment tax credit, to encourage expansion of businesses across the province.

## **Municipal**

CASO continued to be represented on the Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Board, with its permanent seat, sanctioned by Council. In this session, the CASO seat was held by Neishaw Ali.

In 2021/22, Neishaw was also selected to be the Board's Industry co-chair, working very closely with Councillor Paula Fletcher, and the City's Film, Television and Entertainment staff.



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The Toronto Film Commissioner released this report on their 2019-2022 term of activities by the Film Board and staff. : <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/fb/bgrd/backgroundfile-226296.pdf>

## **MISSION COMMITMENT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The 2021 Ottawa International Animation Festival CASO virtual panel was one of the most attended and viewed panels of the TAC Conference. A diverse panel of voices explored the shifting work and culture models arising post-COVID in Talent 2.0: The Future of Creativity.

Nordicity presented the findings of the commissioned Opportunities for Broadband and Cloud Services in Ontario's Animation and VFX sector.

The first CASO webinar of 2022 followed up the successful OIAF discussion with Talent 2.0 How do we win-win-win. In the recorded webinar studio owners addressed the talent Shortage in Ontario looking to answer what are the forces driving this shortage, how are studios and stakeholders being impacted, and most importantly, how do we work together to find solutions?

A virtual lunch-and-learn with subject matter experts from RBC, BDC and EDC explored Specialized Financing for the Animation and VFX Industry.

Women from CASO Member studios participated in a "Women in Animation" panel at the 2022 Girls in Tech Conference, a day long event meant to inspire young girls in grades 6-8 to pursue careers in technology fields.

How to set up your creative pipeline as covid restrictions are lifted and staff explore returning to studio or hybrid working was explored by a panel in the webinar Studio of the Future: Concrete vs. Cloud.

In an effort to better prepare graduating animation students to enter studio life CASO brought key college's together with studio owners to explore the importance and opportunity to introduce Toon Boom into their curriculum as most studios use it and only 20% of schools teach it.

## **MISSION COMMITMENT: MARKETING INITIATIVES**

Hired Marketing and Communications specialist for general management duties and to explore new ways to amplify communications and accomplishments of CASO and Ontario member studios.

Introduction of a simplified monthly electronic newsletter for membership that focuses on important industry highlights, member news, seminars/webinars and industry events.

Studio participation in the 2022 marketing trip to LA with the Province, and the City of Toronto.

Initiated contact with member studio marketing executives and social media managers to begin to explore cross communication opportunities. More to come in Fall 2022.



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Began to amass new assets from member studios to create new reels and refresh CASO website. More to come in Fall 2022.

Twitter and Facebook continue to highlight the accomplishments and work of Member studios in Ontario with added attention to LinkedIn to build awareness of Ontario studio work and the professional development opportunities delivered by CASO.