

# GIVING

# EXPERIENCE VICTORIA CHALLENGE

Program Guidelines



launchvic



**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government



## OVERVIEW OF CIVVIC LABS

Run by LaunchVic – Victoria’s startup agency - CivVic Labs invites aspiring and early-stage founders to work on innovation challenges identified by government.

Through a six-week bootcamp experience, entrepreneurs will learn from industry experts and test their startup ideas with policy makers and Victorian citizens, supported by \$12,500 equity-free funding.

At the end of the experience, two teams will secure a further \$25,000 funding to bring their prototype to life.

Since 2018, the program has helped more than 70 startups connect with government, co-design with real end users, and develop businesses ready to launch to market.

CivVic Labs is a proven program for generating commercial ready startups, with alumni startups raising nearly \$20 million in investment capital since the program’s inception.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGE

For this challenge, the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) is seeking solutions from the Victorian startup ecosystem to transform Victoria’s tourism, hospitality and events experiences.

Victoria’s visitor economy is one of the most dynamic in Australia<sup>1</sup>. It brings together tourism, hospitality, and events to create vibrant experiences that has attracted over \$34.3 billion AUD in overnight spend and 33.8 million overnight visitors in the year ending March 2025<sup>2</sup>. From Melbourne’s cultural capital status to regional Victoria’s rich natural landscapes and First Peoples’ heritage, the state has a diverse offering of attractions that sets it apart. By 2029, it’s projected that Victoria will attract \$50.9 billion AUD in total spend and 105.2 million total visitors<sup>3</sup>, with over 43,000 new workers needed over the next three years to meet demand<sup>4</sup>.

However, traveller expectations are changing globally, with growing demand for inclusive and accessible experiences, and the increasing need for digital capability are reshaping how tourism and events are delivered. Operators face challenges in staying competitive, using data effectively, and managing risk and resilience in an unpredictable world.

At the same time, technology is creating new opportunities. This can be seen from Victorian success stories such as 2025 Governor of Victoria Startup Awards winner TRAVLR, a “travel-as-a-service” platform that enables tourism operators to launch and market their own booking sites and experiences<sup>5</sup>. Another success story in this space is Roller, a Melbourne startup that provides software

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<sup>1</sup> Experience Victoria 2033. Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, 2024 <https://djsir.vic.gov.au/tourism-industry-support/about/strategy>

<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia, International Visitor Survey and new Domestic Tourism Statistics data, 2025

<sup>3</sup> Tourism Forecasts, Victorian Government Tourism and Events Research team, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Victorian Skills Plan, 2024

<sup>5</sup> Governor of Victoria Startup Awards, 2025



for more than 1500 leisure and attraction venues in 30 countries, raising \$78.5 million AUD in November 2023<sup>6</sup>.

To establish Victoria as a leading global destination with innovative and outstanding experiences, we are calling on Victorian startups to push the boundaries and transform how people experience Victoria.

## THE PROGRAM & CHALLENGE STATEMENT

### How might technology transform Victoria's tourism, hospitality and events experiences?

We are seeking solutions from Victorian startups looking to transform tourism, hospitality and events experiences within Victoria, particularly focusing on regional destinations. Technology solutions may look to focus on:

- Creating new visitor experiences or optimising the experience of existing attractions;
- Helping operators evolve the way they manage their business and engage customers;
- Increasing accessibility and safety of Victorian experiences for people of all identities, cultures and abilities;
- Supporting operators to better prepare for and manage crises;
- Capturing and using data to better understand, manage and grow visitation;
- Making it easier for visitors to discover and travel to attractions, venues and regions; and
- Any other technology that could transform the way people experience travel, tourism and hospitality in Victoria<sup>7</sup>.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

LaunchVic is seeking to admit 10 startups or startup entrepreneurs to the program. There is no fee for participation. Rather, participant teams will receive \$12,500 equity-free funding on completion of the program.

The program is structured to cover topics such as lean startup, co-design, and hypothesis testing, delivered by startup experts. The program is designed to assist innovators in their solution design in the following ways:

- Access to world-class mentors and a cohort of top innovators to build a solution alongside;
- Access to community and stakeholder experts, with specific knowledge of tourism, events and hospitality, policy, and customer base; and
- The potential of promotional support from DJSIR and LaunchVic highlighting innovative startup solutions.

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<sup>6</sup> Startup Daily, 2023

<sup>7</sup> Experience Victoria 2033. Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, 2024 <https://djsir.vic.gov.au/tourism-industry-support/about/strategy>



At the conclusion of the program, a judging panel will select two startups to receive \$25,000 in equity-free seed funding to further develop their solution.

Successful applicants are expected to attend the program in person for seven days of programming over 6 weeks, the Pitch Day and Showcase Event (see Program Schedule) as well as commit to additional work outside of sessions to progress their ideas.

CivVic Labs is the perfect sandbox for aspiring or early-stage founders to build and test new ideas. All participants will be either idea stage or early-stage (see below definition) to ensure their journey is with like-minded entrepreneurs. We're looking for ambitious founders who recognise the value of CivVic Labs to help accelerate their startup journey.

## TIMINGS

Startups must have capacity to participate in the program in-person. This includes a commitment of a minimum of seven full days (9:00am – 5:00pm), followed by a Pitch Day and Showcase Event (see Program Schedule for more details). Additional time outside of scheduled workshops will also be required to develop and refine the solution.

## DEFINITIONS

The below definitions apply to this application process.

**A Startup** is a young technology-based business that uses innovation to scale rapidly and capture market at a high velocity. Examples of technology include software/apps, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, advanced manufacturing & robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics, augmented / virtual reality, 3D printing, advanced materials, genomics & life sciences (including Biotech & MedTech) and autonomous vehicles.

A startup that is either **Idea or Early-Stage** and must meet at least one of the following two definitions. An **Idea Stage** startup is working on an idea that has not yet been fully developed or launched in market. An **Early-Stage** startup is testing a prototype in-market, without a significant customer base or revenue.

The **Applicant** must be the Founder, though multiple participants in the same team may be accepted into the program.

**Victorian-based** means the Startup must either be a Victorian registered and headquartered company or the Applicant (in the case of a startup that has not yet registered an ABN) must be domiciled in Victoria.



## ELIGIBILITY

If you are eligible and have a startup idea aligned to the challenge, CivVic Labs can help you make it a reality. To be eligible to participate in CivVic Labs, a startup and/or startup entrepreneur must meet each of these criteria:

1. **Victorian-based;**
2. **Startup** (has a Startup Idea that is aligned to LaunchVic's definition of a Startup);
3. **Stage** (meet LaunchVic's definition of either an Idea or Early-Stage startup); and
4. **Participation** (must commit to participating in the Program, and related activities).

The startup and/or startup entrepreneur must also **Adhere to Victorian Government Policy on ESG Prohibited Activities to be eligible**. This means that the business must not be involved with:

- a. Tobacco or tobacco-related products;
- b. Cluster munitions and other controversial weapons;
- c. Thermal coal;
- d. Gambling;
- e. Logging of old growth forests;
- f. Uranium;
- g. Unregulated animal testing; or
- h. Fracking.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be assessed through a selection process based on the following factors.

1. **Action and Alignment:** This is a measure of how well the applicants' proposed solution responds to the challenge outlined in this document (weighted 25%);
2. **Impact:** Does the applicant have a clear understanding of the challenge and how does the proposed solution meaningfully address the challenge outlined in this document? Is it realistic and feasible? (weighted 15%);
3. **Applicant's Capability and Capacity:**
  - a) Is the applicant capable of delivering their solution (weighted 25%);
  - b) Does the applicant have the capacity to focus on their solution during the program? (weighted 10%);
4. **LaunchVic Assessment of Support:** LaunchVic will assess how much direct value might be realised through the program by the applicant. Priority will be given to applicants that are keen to participate in co-design and are open to iterating upon their solution (weighted 25%).

If an applicant is shortlisted, they will be required to participate in a 15-minute interview, after which they will be further shortlisted and invited into the program.

## TIMELINE

The Application Process includes an initial Expression of Interest (EOI), with applicants that complete the EOI invited to submit a full application.

Full applications will be shortlisted based on the Selection Criteria. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a 15-minute interview, following which, successful applicants will be invited to participate in the program and will be required to confirm their participation via a signed contract. Contracts must be signed and returned to LaunchVic as per the schedule outlined in the Timeline below.

Date	Activity
5:30pm – 7:30pm, 30 July 2025	Challenge Launch Event (Public Event)
30 July 2025	Expression of Interest Open
11am, 12 August 2025	Information session and office hours for potential applicants
1:00pm, 21 August 2025	Expression of Interest Close
22 August 2025	Applicants that have completed an EOI are invited to submit an application
1:00pm, 8 September 2025	Applications Close
20 September 2025	Shortlisted applicants invited to Interview
20 September 2025	Unsuccessful applicants notified
24-25 September 2025	15-minute Interviews with Shortlisted applicants
13 October 2025	Selected applicants notified and contracted to participate in the program
13 October 2025	Unsuccessful applicants notified
22 October 2025	Program Commences
3 December 2025	Program Ends
10 February 2026	Pitch Judging Day (Private Event)
12 February 2026	Showcase Event (Public Event)
March 2026	2 Recipients of additional Seed funding are announced

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Program Day's will be held in person within the Melbourne Metropolitan area.

Date	Time	Activity
Wednesday 22 October 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #1
Thursday 23 October 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #2
Wednesday 29 October 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #3
Wednesday 12 November 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #4
Wednesday 19 November 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #5
Wednesday 26 November 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #6
Wednesday 3 December 2025	9:00am – 5:00pm	Program Day #7
Tuesday 10 February 2026	10:00am – 5:00pm	Pitch Judging Day
Thursday 12 February 2026	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Showcase Event

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information about expressing an interest or to apply to CivVic Labs, please visit

<https://launchvic.org/programs/civvic-labs/>.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have a question regarding the expression of interest form, eligibility, or anything to do with CivVic Labs, please email [civvic@launchvic.org](mailto:civvic@launchvic.org).

Relevant questions will be posted on the LaunchVic website via the Frequently Asked Questions.