

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 27 April 2022

VICHEALTH TO USE STARTUP INNOVATION TO SOLVE HEALTHY FOOD ISSUES FACING OUR KIDS

A new partnership between VicHealth and LaunchVic, Victoria's lead startup agency, will harness the power of entrepreneurship and innovation to advance the health of Victoria's young people.

Through the VicHealth X LaunchVic CivVic Challenge, aspiring founders and early-stage startups are encouraged to use their skills to create a fairer and healthier future for Victoria's young people.

Applications are now open to be a part of a cohort of 15 innovators who will prototype solutions for these two challenges:

- Improving young people's access to healthy food in their community
- Exposing unhealthy food advertising targeted at young people

As a part of CivVic Labs by LaunchVic, selected founders participate in a pre-accelerator experience where they will co-design and test their solutions with VicHealth policy experts, supported by mentor networks and business acceleration workshops, and receive \$10,000 equity-free funding.

At the end of the six-week program, founders have the chance to apply for a further \$25,000 in seed funding to bring their idea to market.

HealthTech is Victoria's largest startup subsector, with 1 in 5 startups working in this space. LaunchVic CEO Dr Kate Cornick said the VicHealth partnership would support the next generation of founders entering the sector.

"CivVic Labs brings startup thinking to social problems and gives aspiring founders a chance to test out a business idea with a real end-user," she said.

"For government, the program provides a unique and tailored access point for early-stage startups into Victoria's \$10.5 billion early-stage startup ecosystem and insight into lean startup methodology."

VicHealth CEO Dr Sandro Demaio said startups have an important role to play in HealthTech innovation.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to apply startup and co-design principles to drive youth-led solutions that address some of the biggest health challenges facing our kids," he said.

“We can’t wait to hear from Victoria’s startup community to help us build a healthy Victoria where young people can thrive.”

Startups and aspiring founders can apply to the challenges at <https://launchvic.org/civvic-labs>.

- ENDS -

About LaunchVic

[LaunchVic](#) is Victoria’s lead startup agency. We were established by the Victorian Government in March 2016 as an independent agency to fuel the growth of Victoria’s startup ecosystem.

Victorian startup ecosystem

- Melbourne’s startup sector value has grown by more than AUD \$3 billion in the past 12 months to \$10.5 billion. This is larger than Victoria’s racing and sports industries.
- Victoria is home to more than 2,500 startups – companies that use innovative business models and technology to grow fast and service global markets.
- For a free and dedicated source of real-time data on Victoria’s startup founders, investors, corporates, and policy makers including startup jobs, go to findingstartups.launchvic.org

HealthTech

- 70% of Life Sciences deals in Oceania are made in Melbourne.
- The sector is a major driver of jobs, with Victorian Healthtech companies added new jobs 55% faster than the already-over performing healthcare sector (+9.7% growth) in 2020.
- CBRE ranked Melbourne as among the top 5 Life Sciences hubs in Asia in 2021.
- Five of Australia’s largest independent research centres and two top-ranked universities for biomedical research are located in the city.