

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



Thursday, 24 February 2022

VICTORIAN STARTUP SECTOR AWARDED FOR INNOVATION SUCCESS

Victoria's brightest minds have been honoured at the inaugural *2021 Governor of Victoria Startup Awards*.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research, and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford congratulated the winners, who were announced at an intimate reception at Government House overnight.

The Awards are proudly supported by Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria and celebrate Victorian leaders and investors across the state's \$10.5 billion startup sector.

Amber Electric and Seer Medical were named as joint winners in the hotly contested Startup of the Year category, while link-in-bio startup Linktree was recognised as Scaleup of the Year for its work supporting a community of 18 million content creators.

Local angel investor team Aprill and Matt Allen took out the Investor of the Year award in both the People's Choice and Expert's Choice categories for Tractor Ventures, Victoria's first dedicated revenue-based fund.

Tractor's alternative financing model allows founders to hold onto their equity for longer by loaning startups money in return for a portion of monthly revenue. Since their launch in December 2020, the team has supported 24 startups and expect to be helping close 100 by this time next year.

The Regional Ecosystem Hero of the Year was awarded posthumously to Peter Dostis, Co-Founder and CEO of Runway, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to regional and rural startups across Victoria.

Peter's work inspired countless entrepreneurs to follow their dreams and build a successful startup, and his legacy continues through Runway's programs, mentorship, collaborations, and networks.

For the list of winners and more information about the awards, visit launchvic.org/governor-startup-awards.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Innovation, Medical Research, and the Digital Economy Jaala Pulford

"We're backing Victoria's startup ecosystem and ensuring they have the networks and investment they need to take their ideas to the world."

"These awards celebrate the brilliant entrepreneurs, leaders and investors across our startup ecosystem, who are making great things happen and creating exciting opportunities for Victoria. I wish all recipients success now and into the future."

Quotes attributable to LaunchVic CEO Dr Kate Cornick

"Victoria's early stage startup sector value has grown by \$3 billion in just three years. The Governor of Victoria Startup Awards recognise the people behind this success."

"These are the innovators building the economy of the future with products and services that genuinely make a difference in the lives of Victorians."

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The winners, chosen by an Expert Panel and a public voting process, include:

- **Best Newcomer** Currus Biologics
- **Scaleup of the Year** Linktree
- **Startup of the Year** Seer Medical and Amber Electric
- **Ecosystem Hero of the Year (People's Choice)** Aiman Hamdouna, Co-Founder & CEO, Hatch Quarter
- **Ecosystem Hero of the Year (Expert Panel's Choice)** Jonathan Jeffries, Co-Founder, Think & Grow
- **Investor of the Year (People's Choice and Expert's Choice)** Aprill and Matt Allen, Co-Founders, Tractor Ventures
- **Regional Ecosystem Hero of the Year (Posthumous)** Peter Dostis, Co-Founder and CEO, Runway