[Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator Program Application Guide

Thank you for your interest in the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator Program. To help you prepare your application, this guide will cover the following areas:

- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Selection Criteria
- Application Questions
- FAQ

Eligibility

- **Sector Focus:** Startups who advance solutions within the circular economy, prioritising innovations that reduce waste, increase resource efficiency, or promote sustainable production and consumption practices. Startups should leverage technology to address these sustainability challenges, creating scalable models that can drive measurable environmental or social impact.
- **Stage of Development:** Early-stage, impact-driven founders developing circular economy tech solutions, with limited traction, seeking product-market fit and investment readiness.
- **Location:** Your startup must be registered or willing to register in Victoria and have founders who are residing in the state of Victoria.
- **New Businesses:** Business has not been registered for more than one year.

Application Process

Part 1: Submit your application form	All application questions can be viewed below to help you prepare your responses before submitting your form online. Please ensure the person filling out the application form is the main point of contact for the application process. Ready to apply? Click here to start your application now.
Part 2: Bootcamp	If your application is shortlisted, you will be invited to attend Bootcamp as part of the selection process. This takes place across two days, where you will have the opportunity to meet with the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator team. **Dates:** Monday 3rd March and Wednesday 5th March 2025 **Time:** 5:30pm – 7:30pm **Location:** RMIT Activator (102 Victoria Street, Carlton) **Format:** In-person attendance required

	By Friday 7th March 2025 you must have submitted your application for evaluation. You will be notified of the outcome the following week.

Selection Criteria

Problem and Market Opportunity (20%): Have you identified a problem worth solving with a specific and rational target market? Have you sufficiently validated the problem at hand? Will solving this problem generate a significant positive impact for the target audience and society at large?

Solution Proposal (20%): To what degree will your solution solve the target customer's identified problem? Does the product/service developed provide sufficient validation and progress? Are you using technology to deliver the solution to the target audience of the identified problem?

Circular Impact (20%): Does the identified circular tech product, material, or service utilise a validated circular strategy such as designing out waste, extending product/material life, or regenerating natural system, and can the startup identify a clear and measurable impact?

Startup Collective Skills and Capabilities (20%): Does the team have the sufficient skills, qualifications, expertise, and relevant experience to execute their startup solution and business model?

Business Model, Scalability and Traction (10%): How viable is the proposed business model and will it reasonably generate revenue? Does the startup provide adequate detail regarding how they might achieve commercial viability, profitability and scalability? Has the team demonstrated early achievements, market validation and traction to support their business model?

Use of Funds and Goals (10%): Has the team proposed a strategic and logical use of the initial $2,500 funding to further their commercial development in the program?

Application Questions

There are three sections to the application form.

- Section 1: Startup Details
- Section 2: Applicant Details
- Section 3: Program Application Questions

Section 1: Startup Details

Indicates a required response
1. What's the name of your startup?*
2. Provide a one-sentence summary of your startup (maximum 12 words)*
3. Provide a brief description of your startup and its identified impact (maximum 50 words)*
4. What town/city is your startup based in?*
5. What state is your startup based in?*
6. What is the postcode of where your startup is based?*
7. What is the registration status of your startup?*
   a. Registered in Victoria
   b. Registered outside Victoria
   c. Unregistered

8. Please specify the date your startup was registered if applicable
9. Please enter your startup ABN or ACN if available
10. Provide links for your startup's marketing channels if you have them (e.g., website, LinkedIn, or social media)
11. Please upload your startup's logo if you have one
12. What industry is your startup primarily in?*

Section 2: Applicant Details

Indicates a required response

1. First name*
2. Surname*
3. Preferred name
4. Preferred email address*
5. Mobile number*
6. Please upload a headshot image
7. Which one best describes your affiliation with RMIT?*
    You are not required to be affiliated with RMIT to participate in this program
    a. Not affiliated
    b. Alumni (ex-student)
    c. Staff (academic)
    d. Staff (former)
    e. Staff (professional)
    f. Student (postgraduate)
    g. Student (undergraduate)
    h. Student (vocational education)
8. Please select the industries which you have experience in*
    You will be provided with a list which you can select from
9. Please provide a link to your LinkedIn profile if you have one
10. What is your role in the startup?*
    Either provide your title or a brief description of the role

Optional responses

These questions help us track our progress in increasing access to capital for underrepresented founders in our university ecosystem. Your responses are optional and confidential, and used only for program evaluation and improvement.

11. Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Prefer not to say
12. Which gender do you identify with?
    a. Woman
    b. Man

    c.   Non-binary

    d.   Prefer to self-describe

    e.   Prefer not to say

13. Do you identify as LGBTQIA+?

    a.   Yes

    b.   No

    c.   Prefer not to say

Section 3: Program Application Questions

1. What stage is your startup at?

    a.   I have started market and/or customer research to validate my business idea

    b.   I have developed my minimum viable product (MVP)

    c.   I have released product(s) and/or service(s) and have my first customers

Problem and Market Opportunity (20%)

2. What is the problem your startup aims to solve and for whom?* (100 words max)
What are the specific customer or user needs (jobs-to-be-done) that your solution addresses?

3. How are your customers or users currently addressing these needs, and what challenges or "pains" do they face with existing solutions?* (100 words max)
This may include current solutions, current practices, and your competitors. What is the opportunity to improve upon the way your customers/users solve the problem?

4. Why is now the right time to solve this problem, and what evidence do you have to support this?* (100 words max)
This may include recent tech developments, market trends, consumer shifts, and validation efforts (e.g., interviews, surveys, tests) to confirm you have a problem worth solving and a viable solution.

Solution Proposal (20%)

5. What is your solution, and how does it significantly improve the value your customers or users receive compared to their current methods?* (100 words max)

6. What progress have you made toward developing your prototype or MVP? What validation or user testing have you conducted to prove its technical feasibility?* (100 words max)

7. Please upload or provide a link to a visual representation of your prototype.

8. How could technology help you scale your impact and revenue by 10x? What barriers to scaling might exist for your solution?* (100 words max)

9. Please provide any early user research or feedback that demonstrates interest in your solution and validates the problem you're addressing.* (100 words max)

Circular Impact (20%)

10. Which of the circular design principles does your startup use?
    a. Keeping materials in use
    b. Designing out waste and pollution
    c. Regenerating natural systems

11. How do you utilise circular design principle(s) to achieve circularity?* (100 words max)

12. Please confirm which of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) your startup addresses from the list below. (select up to 2, but we recommend choosing 1)*
    You will be provided with a list which you can select from

Startup Collective Skills and Capabilities (20%)

13. What makes your team uniquely qualified to solve this problem?* (100 words max)
    Describe your team's domain knowledge, technical skills, and business experience. If you're a solo founder, how will you address any gaps to effectively develop and scale your solution?

14. Do you currently use intellectual property that another organisation might reasonably claim to own?*
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Unsure
    If yes, what agreements do you have to use this IP?

Business Model, Scalability, and Traction (10%)

15. How do you expect your startup to generate revenue?* (100 words max)
    This could be your hypothesis on who your customer is and why and how they would pay for your products or services. Please indicate if you have already begun to generate revenue.

16. Have you received any funding or investment so far?* (100 words max)
    Please detail any funding or investment you have received including the amount and source.

17. What traction have you been able to measure to date?* (100 words max)

This may include validation from target customers, partnerships, collaborations, intellectual property, advisors, mentorship, revenue, units sold, users, beta testers etc.

18. Have you completed any other startup programs (pre-accelerators/incubators)? If you have, please indicate which.*

Use of Funds and Goals (10%)

19. If you are successfully accepted into the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator, how do you intend to use the initial funding and how will this support your startup's growth?* (100 words max)
Startups selected for [Re]Launch will receive initial funding of $2,500. Please describe how you would use this to boost the growth of your startup.

20. What do you hope to gain from this program, and what challenges keep you up at night as you launch your startup?* (100 words max)

21. If your startup is successfully accepted into the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator, how would you like to contribute to the [Re]Launch community during the program and beyond?
This may include your skills, expertise, knowledge and network, as well as anything that may enhance the cohort experience for those involved.

22. How did you hear about this program?*
You will be provided with a list which you can select from
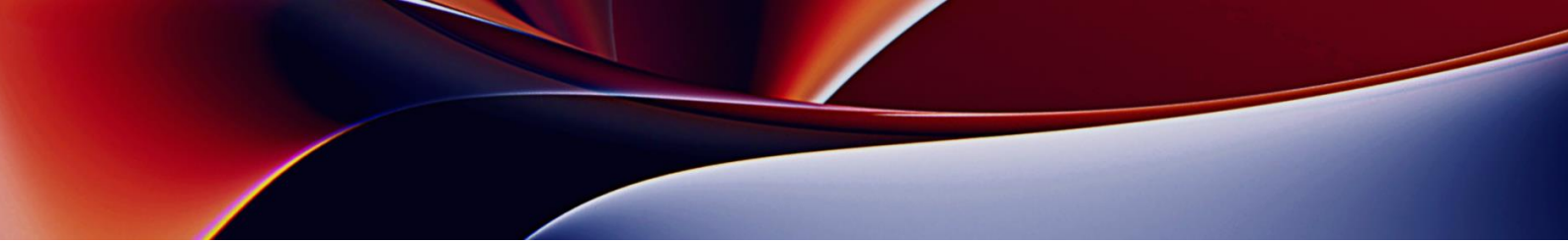
Frequently Asked Questions

General

I am not based in Victoria; can I still apply?

Yes, you can still apply, however, you will need to commit to attending all sessions in person as well as Pitch Night event in week 12. This is so you can get the most out of the program experience and engage with your mentors, experts and fellow cohort members. To be considered for the funding, your startup needs to be in Australia and a founder needs to be a resident of Victoria.

What if my start-up does not align to the Impact Venture theme?

We'll help you articulate your alignment and find impact – come ready with ideas and we'll coach you through the rest.

Will I need to work from the Activator office?

It is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged. It will give you the opportunity to connect with the Activator Community – Activator team, program alumnis, other founders, and being in the office provides ease of access to RMIT resources and networks.

If I haven't launched my startup can I still apply?
Yes, you can still apply! You don't need to be registered during the application process; however, it will be expected that your startup is registered by the end of the 12-week program.

What is the difference between Pitch Night and Activator Capital Fund Final Pitch?
Pitch Night takes place in week 12 of your program, where you will present and pitch your startup in front of a panel of judges and the RMIT Activator community and networks. Following this, your startup may be invited to pitch for the Activator Capital Fund's equity-free pre-seed funding.

What if I am a solo founder? Can I still apply for [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator?
Yes, of course you can still apply!

Application process
I have questions about the application form, who can I speak to?
Join us at the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator Ask Me Anything session at 5.30pm, Wednesday 29 Jan 2025.
Otherwise, feel free to email us at hello.activator@rmit.edu.au if you have any questions about the program or application process.

When will I hear back about my application?
You will be notified via email of the outcome of your application at least one week before Bootcamp starts.

Bootcamp
What is Bootcamp and what can I expect?
Once applications close, you will be notified if you have progressed to the next stage of the application process – Bootcamp (Monday 3 and Wednesday 5 March 2025). It takes place across two workshop sessions where at least one founder or startup representative must attend in person. Your startup will then need to make a submission by Friday 7 March at 12pm. It will be assessed by a panel to determine whether your startup will be accepted into the [Re]Launch Pre-accelerator program.

Do I need to be at Bootcamp day in person?
Yes, you or one of your team members will need to be there for both sessions in person at RMIT Activator HQ.

Is there a limit to the number of startups invited to the Bootcamp?
We will be shortlisting 20 startups into the Bootcamp and from there, 10 startups will be accepted into the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator program.

Program

I can't be in Melbourne for some/all parts of the program, should I still apply?
We require you or one of your team members to be able to attend all sessions and the Pitch Night event. It is recommended that you assess your availability and commitment as you consider applying for this program. We will not be providing any recordings of the sessions and some of the materials may be shared or hosted online but this will depend on the session facilitator.

Is there an age restriction for the [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator program?
No there isn't – anyone of any age is welcome to apply for [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator.

What RMIT facilities and resources do I have access to as a program participant?
- Access to and use of the Activator co-working space during office hours – office space, printers and meeting rooms.
- Library at all campuses and student working spaces during work hours.
- Access to specific facilities (e.g. labs) will need to be investigated with the school or college on a case-by-case basis.
- We can also support you with connections to the wider RMIT University – we would work with you to explore what your request is and advise on the next best steps.

Will there be mentors with hands-on experience throughout the program?
Yes, each startup will be partnered with a coach that has lived entrepreneurial experience, and you'll have weekly 1-1 catchups with them. They are with you every step of the way during the program, to guide you, offer feedback and support.

Is the pre-seed fund a pool of funding that is to be shared by all startups?
Yes, the pre-seed fund is a shared pool of $200,000. Selected startups that are invited to pitch to the ACF Board can receive up to $20,000 each.

There are times when the Board Members may give less than the $20,000 amount. This is determined on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes the Board may provide some recommendations of milestones to achieve to be able to access the full funding or startups may be invited to pitch again.

What is guaranteed is the $2,500 funding which founders receive when they are accepted into the [Re]Launch Pre-accelerator program. Startup teams usually receive this in the first few weeks of the program.
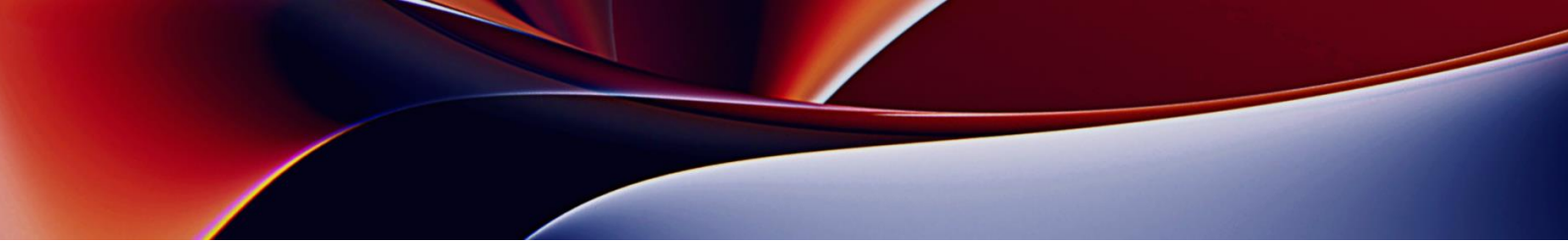
What if there is a competitor for my product already, but they haven't been properly established?

Not to worry, please apply! It's great that you have done research into who your competitors are, and if they haven't been fully established yet, that's a great advantage for you.

Do I need to have a prototype ready to go?
A prototype or a visual representation of your idea is mandatory. Applicants must provide an early version of their solution to demonstrate its feasibility and concept.

At what level of completion does my prototype need to be to join [Re]Launch Pre-Accelerator?

If you have a prototype already, that's great! A prototype does not necessarily mean just a physical item. We would recommend you have at least a visual representation of what your product or service is, whether it be in the form of a website, app, design (CAD) etc.

What is most important for your application is that you can show you have validated your product/service with real user feedback (i.e. you have feedback from your intended target audience).

What is the importance of the skillset of founders when it comes to selection?
The Startup Collective Skills and Capabilities section in your application has a 20% weighting. If you are a team, we will assess your team skill set as a collective – so there could be founders that have specific skills and experience that are different to others in the team, but collectively you all contribute to the development and execution of your solution.

If there is a possibility for the university to become a client for the product that will be developed for testing, will there be support provided during the 12-week program?
This could certainly be a possibility at the end of your program or after you have completed the program. However, this will depend on the university's needs and requirements. We can help you to explore this after the program.