

BRIEF FOR APPLICANTS

Alchemy - a new program to support the development of cultural experiences and creative businesses

Creatives. We want you!

Can you help us bring State Library Victoria to life in new ways?

State Library Victoria is seeking creative entrepreneurs, artists, creative producers and experience developers who can develop new original experiences for visitors to the Library. Our new Alchemy program seeks to unearth Victoria's best creative talent to help us develop interactive, entertaining and educational experiences that will inspire moments of wonder and surprise, spark curiosity and fuel the imagination. This program is designed to support the development of new experiences, to inspire existing and new State Library visitors, onsite and online.

Perhaps you have a new take on a library tour? You might have an idea for a new kind of an educational experience to spark the creative minds of tomorrow, an escape room, an immersive dining experience or a new model for a talks program that could be the next TED.

We want to challenge preconceptions of what the State Library can be, celebrate storytelling and knowledge-sharing and draw on extraordinary collections in new and unexpected ways.

Who is this program for?

The Alchemy program is for creative practitioners and producers, artists and experience developers who have great ideas for inclusive and inspirational programs, events and experiences that can be developed for delivery at State Library Victoria. Applicants can be individuals, a team, or an organisation.

The creative development period will run from July to September 2021.

Supporting the development and growth of creative enterprise

COVID-19 has been disproportionately tough on the creative industries. Alchemy will help the sector to recover by supporting emerging and established creative practitioners and entrepreneurs. Through a competitive application process, we will select up to 10 participants to receive seed funding grants of **\$20,000** to support the development of experience concepts. We are also seeking to identify ideas with the potential to become self-sustaining and the grant will support successful participants to explore a suitable business model.

At the end of the Alchemy program the Library will consider working with selected participants to bring their ideas to life at the Library, beyond the lifecycle of this creative development funding program.

If your application is successful, how will we work with you to help turn your idea into reality?

In addition to the \$20,000 grant for creative and business concept development, we can offer participants the following support as part of the process:

- access to the State Library Victoria team to support the creative development process
- access to an experienced creative entrepreneur who can provide you with one-on-one advice to support the development of your concept
- the opportunity to take up complimentary membership of StartSpace Loft at State Library Victoria, with six months access to a dedicated co-working space, programs and networks to support the growth of your creative enterprise.

Applicants are encouraged to get in touch with the Library team at alchemy@slv.vic.gov.au about specific access requirements, including additional costs associated with the creative development process to help remove barriers for Deaf creative practitioners and those with disability.

State Library Victoria and our objectives

The Library is one of the most visited destinations in Victoria and one of the world's busiest libraries with up to two million visitors in a normal year – this is more than the British Library or Library of Congress – and a further 5 million visitors online.

The Library delivers exhibitions, programs and experiences to audiences of all ages, from early years to adults. We want anyone who visits the Library to be inspired, to learn something new and to be curious to explore. We are a library for all of Victoria, and metropolitan, regional and rural stories are equally important to us. Alongside Victorian audiences, the Library is visited by many international and interstate tourists in a typical year. Large numbers of students also visit the Library given its proximity to some of Victoria's leading universities. We want to create more space for visitors from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands backgrounds to explore and respond to the Collection. It is important to us that school children experience the Library as a space of wonder, enjoyment and inspiration. State Library Victoria is an incredible canvas made up of 23 different buildings, which have expanded and transformed the Library site since it opened in 1856 as Australia's first free public library.

Eligibility

To be considered for an Alchemy creative development grant:

- You must have an active Australian Business Number (ABN). Sole traders, partnerships, companies or trusts are welcome to apply.
- Groups of individuals who join together as a collective must be legally constituted or nominate either an individual or an auspicing body to apply, and to take legal and financial responsibility for the grant should one be awarded.
- At least one key creative collaborator of your project team must be an Australian citizen or Permanent Resident currently residing in Victoria.
- You must be over 18 years old at the time of application.
- Your application must be received within the published application dates.
- Your application must be complete and provide all requested information.
- You must be able to enter into a grant agreement no later than 21 June 2021.
- You must be available to work on your creative development proposal in July and August 2021.

The following individuals and/or organisations are ineligible to apply for an Alchemy creative development grant:

- Ongoing employees of [state-owned cultural agencies](#).

- Applicants proposing concepts that do not pay creatives/artists at an industry standard rate.
- Applicants proposing concepts that do not follow correct protocols when working with First Peoples' artists, content and/or communities.

Assessment process and criteria (what we are looking for in applications)

1. Applications will be accepted via the online application form at: slv.vic.gov.au/alchemy
2. All eligible applications will be competitively assessed by a panel of State Library Victoria staff and external peers.
3. The assessment panel staff will develop a final list of recommendations for approval by the CEO, State Library Victoria.
4. All applicants will be advised in writing via email of the outcome of their application on 18 June 2021.
5. Due to the large volume of applications we anticipate receiving, application feedback will not be provided for this program.

We'll use the information you provide in your application to determine if your work and ideas are a good fit for the Alchemy program. We will focus on the following questions when selecting the successful applications:

- **Uniqueness and strength of idea:** Does the idea represent a unique new experience for visitors to State Library Victoria? Does it spark curiosity, learning or creativity?
- **Audience focus:** How does it consider the needs of the Library's existing, emerging or new audiences?
- **Viability:** Does the experience concept have the potential to be sustainable? Could the concept be delivered with other cultural organisations, in other locations or within other contexts? Could the experience generate a revenue stream and/or is the experience likely to attract philanthropic funding or public grant funds?
- **Applicant capability:** Does the applicant have the capability and capacity to develop and deliver the experience concept? Recognising that Alchemy is open to applicants with different levels of experience, do the founders have the potential and commitment to turn the idea into reality with some support through the Alchemy program and a collaboration with State Library Victoria?

Consideration will be given to representation of the Victorian community: we're looking for a broad spread of creative practices, business models, geographical locations, and inclusive representation across participants. We encourage and welcome applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people, and people of all ages and abilities.

Timeframe

- 13 May – applications open
- 7 June – applications close, 5pm AEDT
- 18 June – successful applicants notified and contracts issued
- 21 June – grant contracts signed
- 1 July 1 – 3 September – creative concept, production requirements and business plan developed and submitted
- September – feedback session
- September onwards – further concept development phase as needed (including possible pilot) and partnership agreement development if appropriate – please note this could be shorter or longer as required
- 28 February 2022 – if the Library does not enter into a formal contractual partnership by this point, then the Alchemy participant is free to move forward the idea as they see fit and exclusivity expires (see FAQ's for more information).

Interested? Here's what you need to do to apply

There is a short form for you to fill out. Our FAQs should also answer any questions you have. If there is something that is not covered then please contact us at alchemy@slv.vic.gov.au.

FAQs

Application process (May – June 2021)

What do you mean by creative experience developers?

We believe that anyone can be creative and build creative experiences for others. Practitioners of all creative disciplines are eligible to apply. Your expertise may be in the performing arts, literature, creative technology or games development to name just a few fields. You might be starting your journey or an established creative professional or enterprise. We don't mind, as long as you can come up with great experience concepts and have the capacity to follow through and work with us to deliver the idea to our visitors.

Does it cost anything to be part of the Alchemy program?

There are no application fees for the Alchemy program. Successful applicants are expected to cover any costs associated with participating (such as transport to and from the Library or any accommodation requirements) from the grant funding provided. Please contact us at alchemy@slv.vic.gov.au if you want to discuss any barriers to your participation.

Can I apply to develop more than one experience?

State Library Victoria will only accept one application per applicant.

Can teams apply?

Team and collaborative applications are welcome, but these need to be a legal entity, either auspiced or with an individual to take contractual responsibility. Groups of individuals who join together as a collective must be legally constituted or nominate either an individual or an auspicing body to apply, and to take legal and financial responsibility for the grant should one be awarded. When applying, demographic information can be recorded for the lead applicant.

What support is available for applicants with accessibility requirements?

Applicants can indicate any specific access requirements as part of their application. Enquiries can also be made to State Library staff via alchemy@slv.vic.gov.au.

The option to submit responses to the application questions in video or audio format is available for those with access requirements. Please contact alchemy@slv.vic.gov.au to discuss before submitting via video/audio.

When will I hear the outcome of my application?

Successful applicants to the Alchemy program will be notified on 18 June. Grant agreements must be signed by 21 June.

If my application is successful, what happens next?

Successful applicants will enter into a grant contract with State Library Victoria and commence the creative development phase.

Creative development phase (June – August 2021)

If I receive an Alchemy grant, what do I need to deliver?

At the conclusion of the creative development period, Alchemy participants will deliver a detailed concept for evaluation by the Library team. Grant funds are

designed to cover your time for creative concept development and write-up, as well as the development of the accompanying business plan and budget so we can assess the viability of the experience.

What is the time commitment to be a part of the Alchemy program if my application is successful?

The expectation is that the concept development phase will take approximately two months (not full-time, and predominantly self-directed). Alchemy is designed to be highly flexible and, in certain circumstances, this period of time can be extended to enable the broadest possible participation in the project.

The program is designed to give you support and guidance to inform the development of your idea. The support time is provided by specialists in the Library team and/or by a creative entrepreneur mentor as appropriate to your project requirements. Participants will be required to maintain contact with the Library team throughout the creative development process, through onsite meetings or via video conferencing. You may also wish to arrange access to spaces within the Library as part of your creative development process.

Do I need to deliver the creative experience as part of the program?

No, the grant is for a two month creative development period, to scope, develop and present full concept (pitch, costings and timelines). Creation or implementation of the experience will form a new project, if the Library decides to proceed with the idea and enter into a partnership agreement with you.

Does my idea need to be a paid experience for audiences?

Not necessarily, although we are looking to support ideas that have the potential to be sustainable. There are various other business models you might consider for your idea, such as sponsorship or other funding to cover the costs. You would outline this during the creative development phase as part of the short business plan you would develop alongside the creative concept to help determine its viability.

After completion of the creative development phase, will my concept move forward with the support of State Library Victoria?

It is our intention to proceed with the most viable and exciting experience ideas, depending on budget and resourcing capacity. Each concept will be reviewed at the end of the program. The Library has first right of refusal for the experience to take place at State Library Victoria and maintains the right not to implement an idea.

If the Library wants to proceed with my concept, what happens next?

We will work with you to develop a partnership agreement that will cover all relevant terms, such as deliverables, project timelines, intellectual property, exclusivity, cost and revenue model etc., as applicable to your concept.

How long will it take for the Library to decide whether to proceed with my concept?

In return for our support to develop the idea, the grant agreement will assign the Library first right of refusal for the experience to take place at State Library Victoria. Given that some ideas will take more time (and possibly funding) to implement, we have allowed a period of time after your concept is submitted to make a final decision on whether the Library will move forward in partnership with you, and to work up a mutually agreeable partnership arrangement. State Library Victoria commits to making a decision on whether we would like to proceed by 28 February 2022 (this date may be extended by mutual agreement).

If the Library does not move forward with my concept, can I develop it independently?

Yes. You own your intellectual property (see below), and if we decide that your idea is not for us then you are free to develop the concept independently, as you see fit. For clarification, we do not expect any repayment of the \$20,000 Alchemy grant should we not decide to proceed. These terms will be laid out in the contract you will sign on acceptance of the grant.

Who owns the intellectual property from any concepts that are developed?

Any ideas developed by participants in the Alchemy program remain with the originator. Wherever possible, the goal of this program is to contribute to the development of sustainable creative enterprises that can help the Library entertain and educate its audiences. We want the ideas to be delivered at State Library Victoria, but we also encourage ideas that are transferable to other cultural institutions, offering growth opportunities to the creative enterprises behind them.

If the Library decides to move forward with my concept and we enter into a partnership agreement, how long will it take to get my experience up and running?

We expect that some experiences could be up and running within a matter of months. Other ideas will take much longer and some will require additional fundraising to deliver.

How will the Library help my experience concept to flourish if it moves forward?

As part of the development of a partnership agreement, we would explore ways that we could support the idea, including opportunities for philanthropic support, corporate sponsorship or business development in line with the proposed delivery model. We will work with you as a partner to develop and operationalise the experience, bringing it to life for audiences and promoting it through our marketing channels, including email newsletter, website, social media and onsite signage.

APPLICATION FORM

Applicants with access requirements have the option to submit their responses to the application questions via video or audio format. Please contact State Library Victoria at alchemy@slv.vic.gov.au before submitting via video/audio.

DETAILS

- Name
- Title (if applicable)
- Team or Business name (if applicable)
- ABN
- Email
- Phone
- Website (if applicable)
- Instagram Profile (URL) if applicable
- Twitter Profile (URL) if applicable

EXPERIENCE

- Who are you, or your team/organisation? Provide a brief biography of yourself, organisation and creative practice/background [up to 150 words].
- What is your idea? Provide a short summary of your idea for an experience at State Library Victoria [up to 150 words].
- Why is your idea special or unique and why should we be excited by it? [up to 150 words]
- Who is the audience for your idea, and what do you want them to experience? [up to 150 words]
- If your proposed concept was delivered, what would success look like and how might it become a sustainable ongoing experience / business model [up to 150 words]
- If your application is successful, how will you use the funds to develop, research and scope your idea in July and August? Please provide a short outline of the development stages and main tasks [up to 150 words]
- Upload your CV or a succinct pitch proposal about you (and your team/organisation if relevant) and your idea in one of the following formats: a PDF of no more than 10 slides OR two pages of pictures, diagrams, flow charts or product market materials OR a five minute (max) video (hosted on Vimeo/YouTube/Dropbox or Google Drive) [OPTIONAL]

- Do you have any specific access requirements? [OPTIONAL]
- Are you applying as an individual, as a team, or as an auspicing body on behalf of an individual or team?

[INDIVIDUAL/TEAM/AUSPICING BODY]

- Please specify your age bracket (Applicants must be over 18 years old at the time of application)

18 to 19
20 to 24
25 to 34
35 to 44
45 to 54
55 to 59
60 to 64
65+

- Are you or a key creative collaborator in your team an Australian citizen currently residing in Victoria, or a Permanent Resident residing in Victoria?

[YES/NO]

- Please provide your postcode
[postcode format]
- Do you or creative practitioners involved with this application identify as:
[multi check box options]
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander
Culturally & Linguistically Diverse
Person with a disability
LGBTQI+

- If selected, are you able enter into a grant agreement by 21 June 2021 and provide a valid Tax Invoice including your ABN?

[YES/NO]

- Can you (and any team members) commit to participating in the creative development program during July and August 2021 (see FAQs)?

[YES/NO]