

# Strategic Plan

2017–2025



**MUSEUMS  
VICTORIA**



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## Acknowledgement

Museums Victoria would like to acknowledge Melbourne's Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri and Boon wurrung of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present.

We also acknowledge the ongoing and significant partnership maintained between the Victorian Koorie community and Museums Victoria.

Together we share the stories of over 38 distinct language groups, celebrating the culture and history of Victoria's First Peoples.

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### Cover and above image acknowledgement

Wiripil and Wangi artwork by Tati Tati artist Brendan Kennedy

# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

In 2017, when we worked with our staff and government, corporate and community partners to develop this Strategic Plan, we were inspired by the role of museums in helping societies shape the future.

Now, three years later, we have made substantial progress on our goals to re-generate our organisation. We have put in place strategies that will transform how we research global issues in our south-eastern Australian region. We have gained new insights into under-represented audiences that will help make our future museums still more accessible. We have greatly expanded our virtual presence and connected with new audiences through our digital stories and experiences.

And we have begun the process of reconsidering our museums and the collections we care for through a decolonising lens so that, as we continue to grow, we acknowledge the rightful place of First Peoples as traditional owners of their lands, and their tangible and intangible cultural material and knowledge.

Today, as we approach the midpoint of our plan, the world is responding to the vast social and economic upheaval caused by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The almost unimaginable disruption this has caused has further underscored our museums' critical importance as places of trusted knowledge, and the relevance of our vision of people enriched by wondrous discovery and trusted knowledge and society compelled to act for a thriving future.

By engaging audiences with current scientific research, and by linking the present to the past, our museums create context that helps people better understand the world around them. And by being places where communities can be together—physically and virtually—to learn, connect and heal, our museums remain vital, meaningful and relevant.

As we look ahead to 2025 we remain focused on creating a future for Museums Victoria underpinned by highly engaged people, a strong brand and financial growth. Aligned with the Victorian Government's objectives, this Strategic Plan is the road map to delivering captivating experiences that enrich our audiences and compel us all to act for a thriving future.

I am extremely grateful to Museums Victoria's staff, supporters and partners who are working with us to achieve our strategic goals and realise our inspiring vision.

**Lynley Crosswell**  
Chief Executive Officer & Director

# Introduction

We are living in an era of change and innovation, in which our ability to understand our connection to and influence on the world around us is increasingly important.

On an almost daily basis, new technologies are providing insights into previously unknown parts of our universe, our remarkable planet and the rich intricacies of human existence. These ever-expanding vistas of scientific knowledge stand alongside the deep truths about our world and environment passed on by the oldest living culture, Australia’s First Peoples.

As the world becomes more connected, we are able to share and hear each other’s stories with an immediacy that was unthinkable just half a century ago.

And yet it is also a world of unprecedented challenges. In addition to abundance and possibility there is growing inequality and conflict. Amidst change, the environment and our communities suffer. As a society we need to act.

For more than 160 years, the people of Victoria have turned to their State museum to connect the past and the present, and to imagine the future. As Australasia’s largest museum organisation, we inspire audiences to engage in life’s deep mysteries and big questions. .

Our museums present unique and exceptional experiences for more than 2 million visitors each year, who come from across Australia and around the world to be inspired and to learn about themselves and the universe we inhabit.

Our reach and impact across the State is unparalleled. We are a leading contributor to the Victorian education sector and active in every local government area through our outreach programs, field work and onsite education programs. Our digital platforms take our content far beyond the museum walls and into homes and schools across the country and around the world. Our major exhibitions and events are important drivers of tourism to Victoria, and we support a broad spectrum of local creative industries through our ongoing cycle of exhibition developments.

At Museums Victoria we are motivated by our changing world, and compelled to define a thriving future for ourselves and the world we share. This is an exciting time in our history and we are strongly placed to take advantage of the opportunities ahead of us. This Strategic Plan outlines our vision for the future and how we’re working to achieve it.

# Our strategic context

In a world of innovation and discovery, and in a period of change and instability, museums are a vital source of knowledge for individuals and communities to confidently face the future.

As trust in traditional sources of information continues to erode, museums offer opportunities for meaningful enquiry into topics that confront our society. Cultural, sociological and environmental change generates questions and uncertainty as we try to make sense of the world around us. Drawing on deep reserves of knowledge, insight and investigation, museums are uniquely able to create meaning and foster understanding. Through engagement and shared experiences, we can equip communities for a rapidly changing world by connecting them to essential narratives of our existence: the stories of life on our planet, the wonder of the universe and of diverse human experiences.

While we live in an age of continual technological discovery, the knowledge to create the future we hope for may not be new. The rich culture and wisdom of Australia’s First Peoples, the world’s oldest living culture, is recognised globally. By elevating a multiplicity of knowledge, and placing First Peoples’ living cultures and voices at the heart of what we do, we can foster cultural understanding and a richer sense of our history and the places in which we live.

Museums Victoria’s collection of more than 17 million items is a unique and invaluable source of knowledge. Tracing our social, natural and cultural histories, the collection is a vital foundation for ongoing scientific and cultural exploration. Research is shared globally through partnerships with leading institutions and enabled by diligent collection management practices that set international benchmarks. As our collections continue to develop in an era of exponentially increasing content, our strategic focus ensures we enhance our areas of strength, increase regional relevance and anticipate the needs of future generations.

Creating and exchanging knowledge has also become central to the transformation of Victoria’s economy. In this context the intellectual assets at the heart of Museums Victoria—our collections, research and expertise—embody extraordinary potential. There is a compelling opportunity for the Museum to explore new ways to engage with creative industries of all kinds, with the potential for increased contributions to the State economy through new products, innovation and design. Diversified revenue streams will strengthen Museums Victoria’s financial sustainability at a time of increased austerity and growing pressures on government funding.

In the context of a fast-changing society, we must be open to new ways of doing things. An audience-centred approach to creating and sharing digital content will create new ways for increasingly diverse audiences to experience the wonder of Museums Victoria’s knowledge. As we plan for our future, we will grow our digital expertise and reshape the ways in which Museums Victoria delivers content and experiences, physically and virtually.

As the State grows, population expansion in Melbourne and our regional centres will parallel increased numbers of visitors to Victoria from interstate and overseas. As our potential audience diversifies and expands, so must our capacity for providing welcoming, captivating and unmissable experiences for visitors of all ages, abilities, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

Our future aspirations will be made real by Museums Victoria people—staff and volunteers—who are an incredible source of strength for our organisation. Collectively we possess expertise in every realm of museum business, and we’re well positioned to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. Our vision is an enriched society, compelled to act for a thriving future. To achieve this, Museums Victoria will exemplify the engaged, informed and inspired community we envision.

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

**VISION**

People enriched by wondrous discovery and trusted knowledge

Society compelled to act for a thriving future

**MISSION**

We create knowledge and experiences that help us make sense of the world

We exchange stories about culture, history and science and fearlessly discuss the big questions of life

We collect traces of time and place that allow us to connect the past, present and future

We make captivating physical and virtual spaces that open minds and hearts

**VALUES**

**Strive** – We are intrepid and enjoy a challenge

**Embrace** – We are a place where everybody belongs

**Explore** – We passionately search for bold new ideas and smarter ways of doing things

**Respect** – We walk in the shoes of those we meet

**Illuminate** – We ensure our knowledge, actions and decisions are visible, and welcome investigation

**Sustain** – We nourish and care for ourselves and the things we are responsible for

TRANSFORMATIONAL THEMES

- 1 Place First Peoples’ living cultures, histories and knowledge at the core of Museums Victoria’s practice
- 2 Develop an audience-centred Digital Life that delivers experiences beyond our walls

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 Museums Victoria provides unmissable experiences for all audiences
- 2 Museums Victoria has the primary material collection that inspires and allows excellent enquiry into our region’s big contemporary and historical questions
- 3 Museums Victoria engages with, welcomes and celebrates all communities
- 4 Museums Victoria is a centre for technological and scientific expertise and fosters innovation to build economic value
- 5 Museums Victoria is a sustainable and thriving organisation

BACKBONE FOR DELIVERY



ENABLERS

- People and culture
- Investment in technology
- Partnerships
- Leveraging our assets

Our strategic plan

Museums Victoria’s Strategic Plan outlines our approach to evolve as a dynamic and responsive museum organisation that engages broadly and deeply with audiences across Victoria, Australia and the world.

Our Plan is underpinned by two Transformational Themes representing the most important and significant areas of response to our changing context. These themes address how Museums Victoria creates knowledge and experiences, and exchanges stories about culture, history and science with ever-widening audiences.

Our five Strategic Objectives chart our path and set our targets towards becoming an unmissable experience; a cherished and renowned centre for innovation and scientific excellence; and creating a culture of inclusivity that celebrates and welcomes diversity.

Our Knowledge and Spaces form the Backbone for delivery of the plan, in recognition that our collections and research underpin all that we do, and our spaces—physical and virtual—are integral to the experiences we offer.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be enabled by developing our people and enhancing our culture, investing in our technology, strengthening our extensive partnerships network and leveraging our assets.

Transformational themes

- Theme 1**

Develop and implement a strategy that ensures Museums Victoria, in partnership with First Peoples, inclusively sets First People’s living cultures, histories and knowledge at the core of Museums Victoria’s practice
- Theme 2**

Develop a Digital Life for Museums Victoria that takes the wonder and inspiration of our collections, knowledge and expertise beyond our walls through audience-centred experiences that connect with hearts and minds



# Strategic objectives

## Strategic objective 1 Museums Victoria provides unmissable experiences for all audiences

Principle	We will grow our audiences by creating unique, engaging and contemporary experiences of global relevance that harness our collections, research and stories
Priority initiatives	<div>1.1 Introduce a layer of interpretation reflecting First Peoples’ history and culture to Museums Victoria’s experiences</div> <div>1.2 Create innovative and engaging experiences across all sites, platforms and channels that fulfil our Vision and Mission and contribute to Museums Victoria’s sustainability</div> <div>1.3 Develop and implement plans to expand Museums Victoria’s presence in domestic, regional, New Zealand and recovering international tourism markets</div>
Performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By 2023, three digital transformation initiatives have been established and new growth strategies identified</li><li>By 2025, First People’s stories, experiences, cultures and history are integrated into all of Museums Victoria’s exhibitions and programs</li><li>By 2025, Museums Victoria has grown total annual visitation to 3.25 million and is achieving 40 million interactions via digital platforms</li><li>By 2025, digital delivery is integrated into all Museums Victoria’s public engagement activities</li></ul>

## Strategic objective 2 Museums Victoria has the primary material collection that inspires and allows excellent enquiry into our region’s big contemporary and historical questions

Principle	Our collections and research focus on subjects and material where there is regional relevance, where we have comparative advantage or where they are required to provide unmissable museum experiences
Priority initiatives	<div>2.1 Implement Research and Collections Strategy 2019-25 priority initiatives</div> <div>2.2 Partner and collaborate with First Peoples to ensure a culturally respectful and appropriate approach to our collections and research, in line with the First Peoples Strategy 2020–25</div> <div>2.3 Develop strategic partnerships that grow Museums Victoria’s external research funding base</div> <div>2.4 Drive collection preservation and access facilities based on the sustainable collections storage strategy</div> <div>2.5 Develop digital initiatives that enable research and access to Museums Victoria’s collections</div>
Performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria has secured 1-2 major partnerships to further delivery of the Research and Collections Strategy 2019-25, address major research themes and grow Museums Victoria’s research funding base</li><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria has completed the implementation stage of the Sustainable Collection Storage Strategy 2020–40, including a plan outlining opportunities for new collection preservation and access facilities in Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria.</li><li>By 2025, Museums Victoria receives \$1.4M in annual external research funding, in the form of direct funding plus value from Museums Victoria’s involvement in collaborative projects</li><li>By 2025, 85% of Museums Victoria’s annual research publications are of regional significance</li><li>By 2025, Museums Victoria has completed one major place-based interdisciplinary project per year</li></ul>

## Strategic objective 3 Museums Victoria engages with, welcomes and celebrates all communities

Principle	We welcome and are inclusive of all communities and actively seek to engage under-represented audiences
Priority initiatives	<div>3.1 Transform the Immigration Museum to be a vibrant living multicultural centre for the exploration of identity and multicultural life in Melbourne and Victoria</div> <div>3.2 Implement a year-round seasonal approach to public experiences aligned to our diverse audience targets</div> <div>3.3 Implement Regional Engagement Plan 2020–25</div> <div>3.4 Strengthen Museums Victoria’s multilingual services</div>
Performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By 2025, Museums Victoria’s annual visitation with under-represented audiences—including Indigenous, individuals and communities, people with disability or who experience social or economic disadvantage, those from rural and regional areas, and non-English speaking communities—have each doubled</li><li>By 2025, Museums Victoria has doubled its annual offsite activity and audience engagement in regional Victoria</li></ul>

## Strategic objective 4 Museums Victoria is a centre for technological and scientific expertise and fosters innovation to build economic value

Principle	We create economic value by driving innovation and enterprise through creating experiences that engage public and commercial audiences with the possibilities of the future
Priority initiatives	<div>4.1 Reposition and redevelop Scienceworks with a focus on enquiry science experiences, showcasing contemporary science research and promotion of futures literacy</div> <div>4.2 Rapidly respond to contemporary science research, emerging opportunities and current events with online and onsite experiences</div> <div>4.3 Develop innovative digital learning experiences online and onsite that connect with visitors of all ages with Museums Victoria’s research, collections and experiences</div>
Performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By 2025, Scienceworks redevelopment business case and planning complete, with project shovel-ready</li><li>By 2025, Scienceworks has doubled its number of active education and industry partners</li></ul>

## Strategic objective 5 Museums Victoria is a sustainable and thriving organisation

Principle	Our future is underpinned by financial growth, a strong brand and an engaged and high-performing workforce
Priority initiatives	<div>5.1 Develop and maintain a high-performing workplace that is diverse, innovative, responsive, inclusive, safe, and which reflects Museums Victoria’s values</div> <div>5.2 Grow Museums Victoria’s philanthropic, corporate and commercial revenue and optimise existing funding streams</div> <div>5.3 Grow and strengthen the brand, marketing and promotion of Museums Victoria, the individual museums and their unique proposition</div> <div>5.4 Demonstrate Museums Victoria’s value, environmental and economic impact, and our local, national and international impact</div> <div>5.5 Deliver a Strategic Corporate Services framework that prioritises, plans and delivers sustainable operations across Museums Victoria</div> <div>5.6 Develop and implement a strategic framework for reducing Museums Victoria’s environmental impact</div>
Performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By 2022, First Peoples community represent 5% of Museums Victoria’s total workforce</li><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria bi-annually tracks its workplace performance through the Great Place to Work survey and ranks within the top 100</li><li>Museums Victoria’s annual EBIT position is a surplus or breakeven position</li><li>Museums Victoria has an annual operating margin of 5%</li><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria has reviewed all existing brand assets across campuses and updated all branded touchpoints</li><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria will implement ‘always-on’ marketing campaigns to amplify positioning and increase general awareness</li><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria will deliver annual reviews to identify inter-campus promotion opportunities to capitalise on shared audiences</li><li>By 2022, Museums Victoria has established new philanthropic and commercial partnerships in support of strategic priorities including exhibitions, programs, capital projects and special initiatives</li></ul>





Image — Tati Tati artist Brendan Kennedy, Melbourne Museum entrance

# Backbone for delivery

At the core of the delivery of Museums Victoria’s Strategic Plan is our Knowledge, founded in the state’s collection, and our Spaces, both physical and virtual.

## Knowledge

Museums Victoria will partner and collaborate with First Peoples to share research and collections relating to the world’s oldest living cultures.

Our research efforts will generate deep knowledge that is valuable and accessible to communities both local and far away. We will harness this knowledge to have regional relevance and to provide deep connections with and between the people we serve.

Additionally, we will leverage our knowledge across all digital platforms, creating audience-centric experiences that are accessible and impactful.



## Spaces

Museums Victoria will connect to our communities by providing powerful experiences that impact and enhance their lives.

Reinvestment in our physical and digital spaces will support increased visitation and engagement by making our sites more welcoming for diverse communities. As part of this, we will continue to protect our physical infrastructure by ensuring our facilities across all sites are always of high quality.





# Our values

## Strive | Embrace | Explore | Respect | Illuminate | Sustain

Museums Victoria’s values support our vision and shape our culture. Our values represent the essence of who we are, how we behave and what we think is important in work and in life.

- **Strive** – We are intrepid and enjoy a challenge.  
We achieve excellence by taking strategic risks and having the courage to disrupt our own and others’ ways of thinking. We grow as individuals and as an organisation through the joy of endeavour
- **Embrace** – We are a place where everybody belongs.  
We seek and value the inclusion of cultures, identities, capabilities and beliefs in our daily work. We exchange and engage in a rich, diverse pool of knowledge, experience, perspectives and creativity for making decisions
- **Explore** – We passionately search for bold new ideas and smarter ways of doing things.  
We seek new ideas and knowledge and implement more effective and innovative approaches. We co-create our shared future, and make a positive impact on our people, audiences, collections, and communities
- **Respect** – We walk in the shoes of those we meet.  
We appreciate everyone’s abilities, qualities and unique skills, the collections we care for and the land on which we work, with thoughtfulness and consideration
- **Illuminate** – We ensure our knowledge, actions and decisions are visible, and welcome investigation.  
We shine a light on ourselves and our endeavours, and ensure they are explained and understood
- **Sustain** – We nourish and care for ourselves and the things we are responsible for.  
We act thoughtfully and tenaciously in the pursuit of our goals to ensure the longevity of our people, our organisation, our collections, and our impact within society.

Museums Victoria’s values empower us to be the best we can be in working towards Museums Victoria’s future. They work together to inspire us in our daily work and shape opportunities for growth and development.

# Our enablers

## People and culture

Museums Victoria has four key enablers to deliver on its Strategic Plan



### People

Our staff are the heart and the face of our organisation.

Museums Victoria recognises that our strength lies with our passionate and expert staff. Success in delivering our Strategic Plan will depend on investing further in developing our people to be able to engage more deeply with broader audiences, including:

- Developing cultural awareness, enabling staff to engage with and assist our increasingly diverse audience and partners, including First Peoples and international tourists
- Building on our ability to engage with our community audiences using effective communication and presentation methods
- Learning and development to support individuals and teams

We also recognise the need to strengthen capabilities in certain functions of the organisation. These include cultural expertise in First Peoples and First Nations; marketing and tourism; foreign languages; and inclusive design capability. To provide new experiences across multiple platforms, we will build and strengthen our expertise in digital media content production as well as digital experience commercialisation that will open up opportunities to diversify our revenue streams.

### Culture

Museums Victoria’s culture is characterised by passionate staff, driven towards excellence in museum practice and audience experiences. A high-performing, accountable and outcomes-driven culture will complete the foundation required to achieve our strategic ambitions.

Our leadership team will model a supportive and strong culture. They will enable our people to embrace challenges and work collaboratively and with agility to pursue new innovations. We will work continuously to model our desired values and behaviours to create a truly supportive workplace culture.

Achieving our strategic objectives will require embedding an innovative culture that embraces a healthy attitude towards risk-taking and growing Museums Victoria’s commercial offer. We must be outward looking and willing to work in different ways to rapidly develop new experiences and exhibitions that respond to what is happening in the world around us. This will fortify a culture of investing in new opportunities, ideas and ways of doing things that is responsive to current affairs and global trends. To support a highly engaged culture, we will implement tools that support effective organisational communication. Together these embedded traits will form a culture that successfully enables delivery of Museums Victoria’s Strategic Objectives.



## Investment in technology

Museums Victoria recognises the importance of technology as a key enabler to achieving each of our objectives. We will invest in our existing technologies and in efficient internal systems and processes that support sustainability. Implementation of current technologies and digital systems will enable our staff to deliver more impactful, relevant and engaging experiences to our diverse audiences.

### Digital media content production

Museums Victoria will require the right technology infrastructure and expertise to enable the production of digital content across multiple platforms. We will invest in technologies that facilitate the creation of visual and audio experiences beyond the capabilities of the traditional museum. And a new digital asset management system will allow us improve the translation of our collections into engaging digital experiences

### Customer relationships management

To pursue all market segments, we will develop our capability to build strong and personal relationships with audiences and strengthen our customer relationship management systems and culture. Improved customer relationship management will deliver better analysis and reporting, supporting our staff to make decisions that reflect our audiences' changing needs and wants.

## Partnerships

Museums Victoria's impactful, collaborative and enduring partnerships and networks will position us and raise our profile as an innovative and inclusive museums organisation. Sharing experience, culture and resources with our partners and networks will extend our collective reach and impact. Our partnerships will create new opportunities for innovation and discovery and will unite communities. In particular, we will strengthen our partnerships and networks with:

- Victorian Indigenous communities and organisations
- Tourism operators, domestically and internationally
- Other museums and cultural organisations, locally and globally
- The Victorian Department of Education and Training and schools and education institutions in Victoria
- Innovative entities seeking collaborative environments
- Victorian community organisations
- Research institutions and universities

## Leveraging our assets

Better leveraging of Museums Victoria's rich inventory of assets will support the realisation of our strategic objectives.

Delivering a long-term infrastructure plan will position us to ensure that, as custodians, our locally and globally significant sites are well maintained for audiences today and into the future.

Museums Victoria's brand can be better leveraged to commercially market and promote the museums. We will implement a new and invigorated brand strategy and narrative that succinctly unites our three museums and creates clarity around what our organisation is and does.

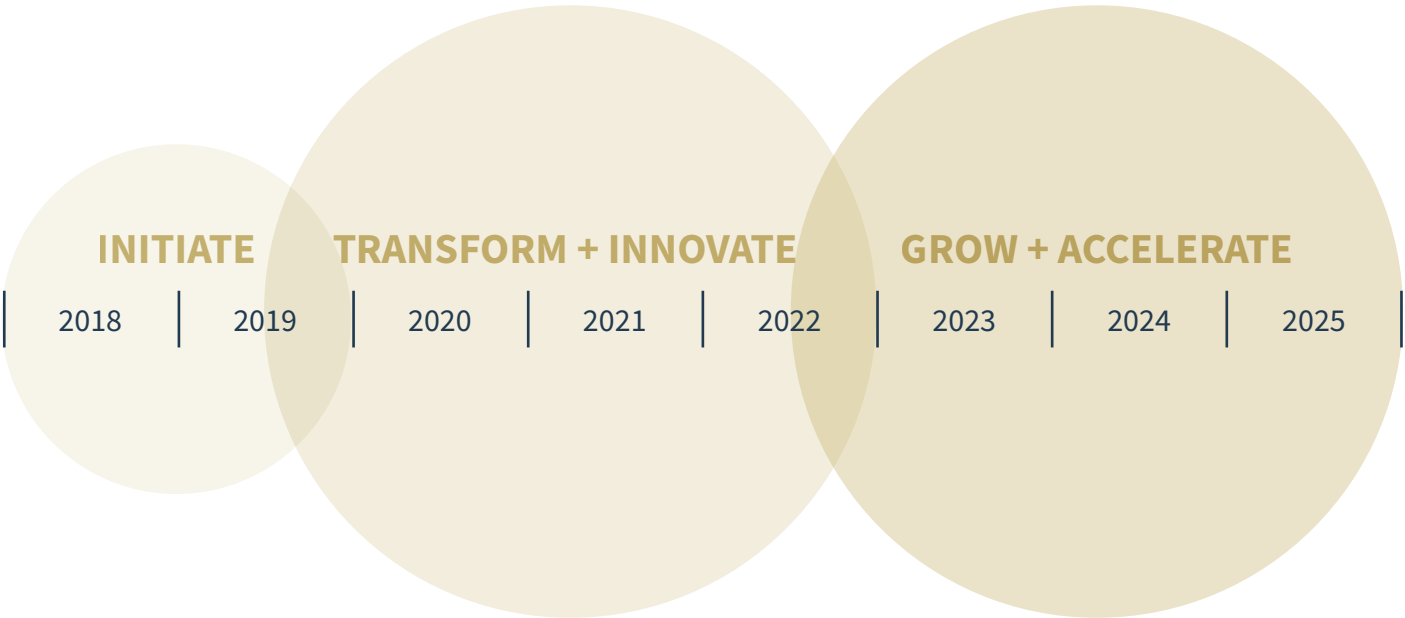
Our collections provide the foundation for our exhibitions, experiences and programs. We will leverage our collection related content across all platforms to create experiences that are accessible, engaging and impactful to increasingly connected audiences. We will also continue to be an industry-leader in collection care standards.

# Our resources and approach

We will take a staged approach to implementation of the Strategic Plan. In order to ensure Museums Victoria has sufficient resources to pursue its strategy, we will:

- Support all investments with strong business cases and plans
- Undertake annual business planning

Museums Victoria envisages a three-horizon delivery of its Strategic Plan as shown below.



In the first horizon, Museums Victoria will focus on initiating and laying the foundations of the Strategic Plan including pursuing priorities such as brand renewal and establishing an organisational performance measurement framework.

In the second horizon, Museums Victoria will innovate and transform. Key developments will include the transformation of the Immigration Museum, the redevelopment of Scienceworks and expanding our innovation capability. Museums Victoria will make selective investments to accelerate or pursue key initiatives, particularly those linked to audience or revenue growth.

In the final horizon, Museums Victoria will be positioned to grow and accelerate. The focus in horizon three will be capitalising on the solid foundations and clear direction created in horizons one and two. We will be in a position to accelerate growth in reach and revenue and further invest in innovative, commercial partnerships that will help shape our future beyond 2025.

The staged approach will allow Museums Victoria to pursue our strategy in a way that reflects the organisation's capability and capacity, and balances pursuit of the strategy with delivery of our core business. The phasing of priority and annual initiatives will be a part of the annual business planning process and will allow us to respond as our capabilities grow and opportunities arise.





CREATIVE VICTORIA

MUSEUMS  
VICTORIA