



# Australia Venture & Startup Report 2025

Benchmarking capital, outliers, and ecosystem evolution

July 2025



# Foreword



Australia, long underestimated by global venture capital, is now emerging as one of the strongest and most capital-efficient startup ecosystems in the world. With just a fraction of the funding deployed in the U.S. or Europe, Australia has built household names like Canva, Atlassian, and Afterpay and now leads the world in unicorn creation per dollar invested.

But it's not just about doing more with less. It's about the calibre of our founders - ambitious, resilient, and globally minded from day one. Many have succeeded despite structural constraints, including limited seed capital and a small domestic market. The Australian startup ecosystem wasn't built on abundance, it was forged through ingenuity, grit, and creative constraint.

This foundation is now being reinforced by a maturing ecosystem. Australia's world-class universities, strong research infrastructure, and technical education pipelines have helped develop a globally competitive talent pool. A growing cohort of experienced operators, many alumni of recent success stories, are now reinvesting their skills and capital into the next generation.

Today, we stand at a turning point. This report - produced in collaboration with Dealroom, AWS, and Side Stage Ventures - benchmarks Australia's venture performance against the world's leading ecosystems. It shines a light on how far we've come, and how much untapped potential still remains.

The numbers tell a powerful story. Australia has created the fifth most decacorns in the world behind only the U.S., China, U.K. and Israel. It boasts the highest unicorn efficiency ratio of any country globally. And yet, the number of active seed funds remains far below that of less productive ecosystems and nearly 40% of early-stage capital is imported from overseas investors.

That's the opportunity. Australia is dramatically under-capitalised relative to its output. For LPs and global investors, that means high-quality entry points and highly efficient capital deployment - in one of the world's most dynamic and inventive regions.

**The question is no longer whether Australia can build great companies. It's how many and how fast."**



**Ben Grabiner**

Co-Founder & General Partner at  
Side Stage Ventures



**Colette Grgic**

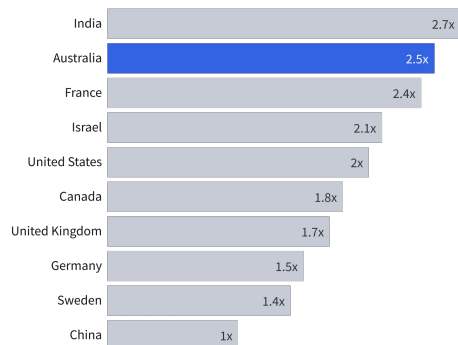
Head of Startup Ecosystem at  
Amazon Web Services

# What you need to know

## The Australian tech ecosystem is the #2 fastest growing globally

Australia's combined ecosystem value now stands at \$360B, growing 2.5x since 2020

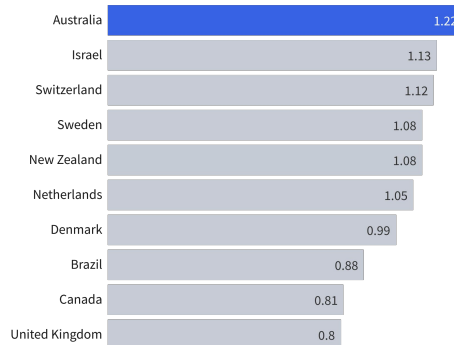
EV growth of global VC-backed ecosystems, 2020-2024



## Australia is #1 in unicorns created per VC dollar invested

Australia has produced 1.22 unicorns for every \$1B invested

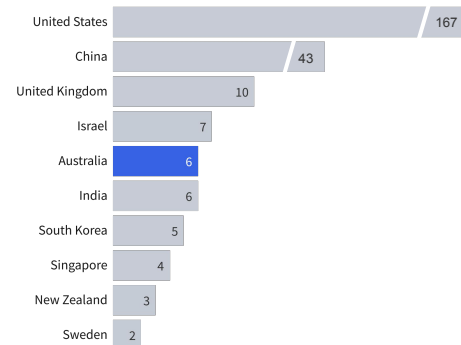
Unicorn Efficiency Rate



## Australia is #5 in decacorn creation globally

Australian startups have delivered world-class liquidity through globally scaled, capital-efficient companies.

Number of Decacorns by country

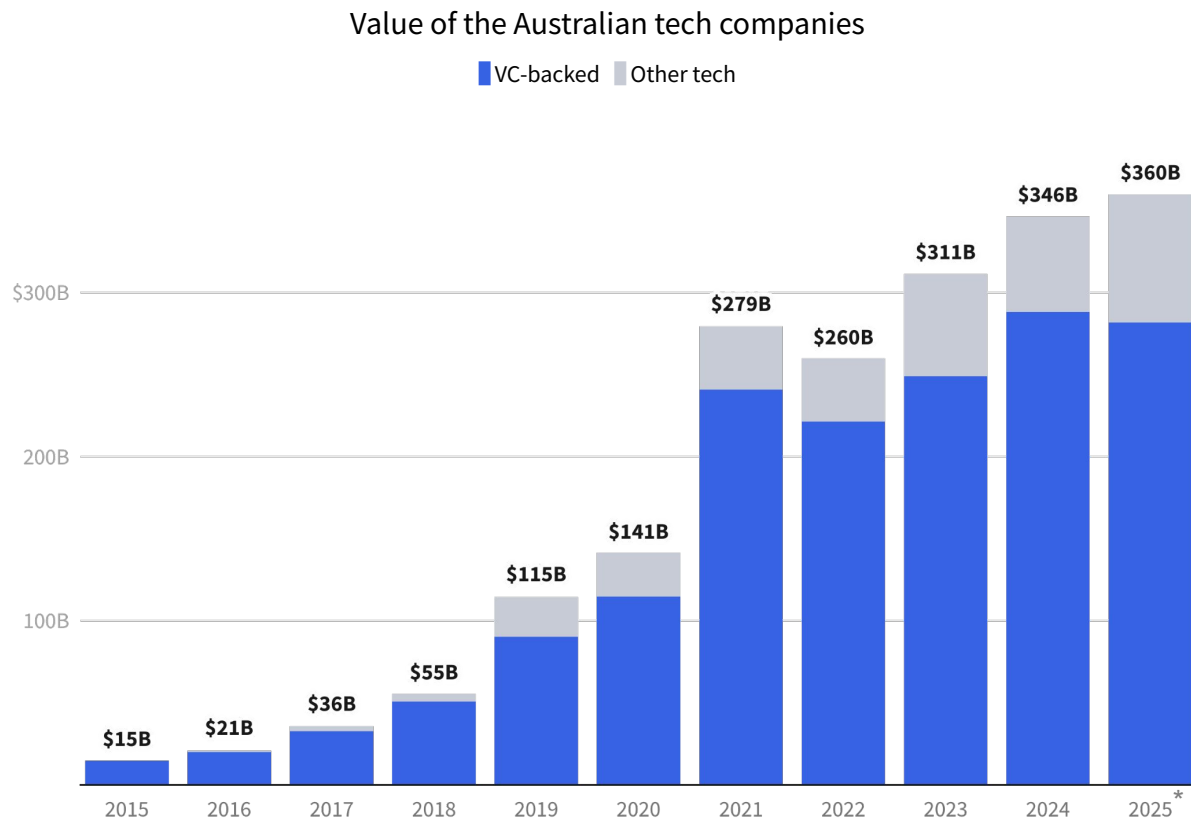


# 1 Australian Tech Value Creation

## 2 Funding Trends and Market Dynamics

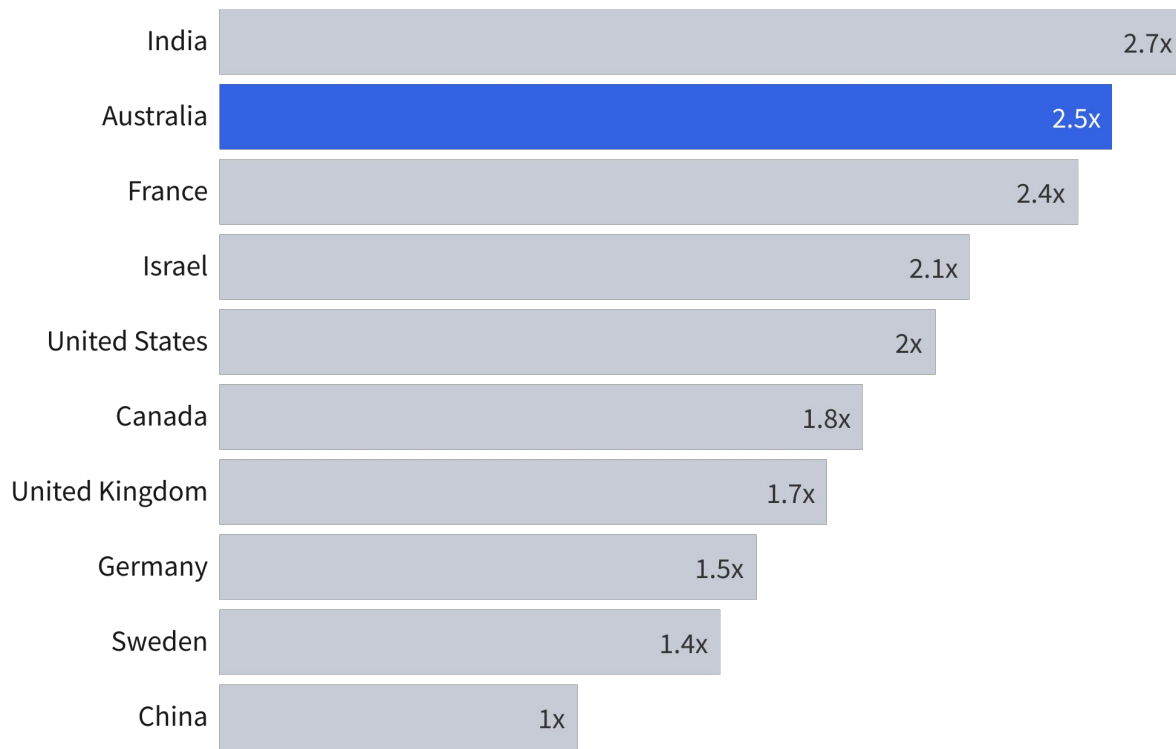


**Australia's tech sector has generated \$360B in value — up 6.5x since 2018**



## Australia ranks #2 globally for ecosystem value growth since 2020

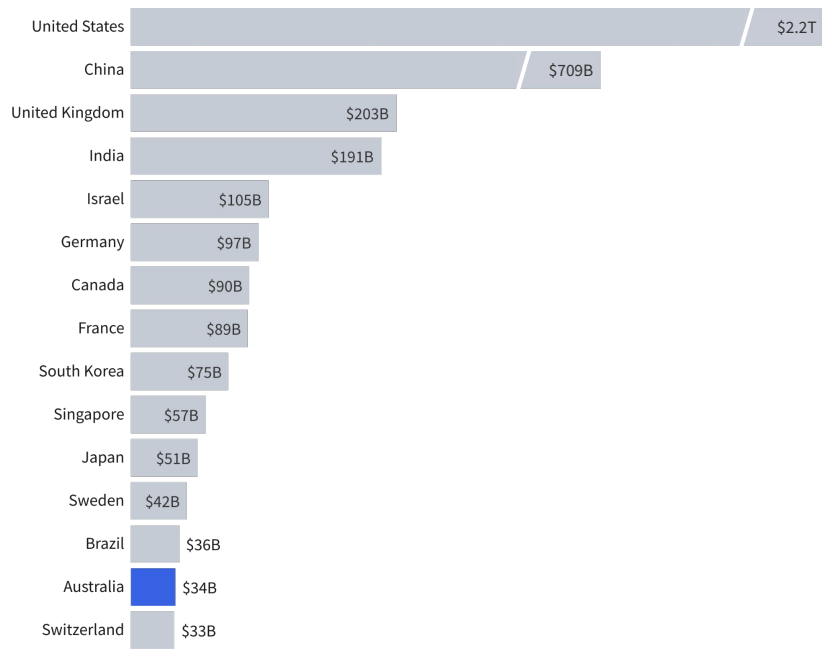
Growth of VC-backed ecosystem value between 2020 and 2024 amongst global hubs



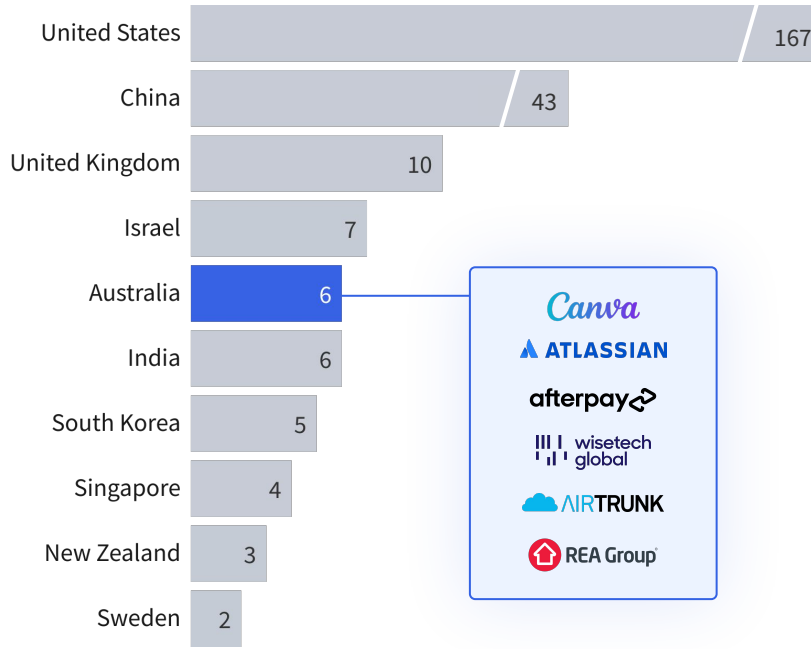
# Australia's edge: building world-class outliers with less capital

Home to 6 decacorns and ranked #5 globally, despite raising <\$34B in VC since 2000.

VC investment in major markets since 2000



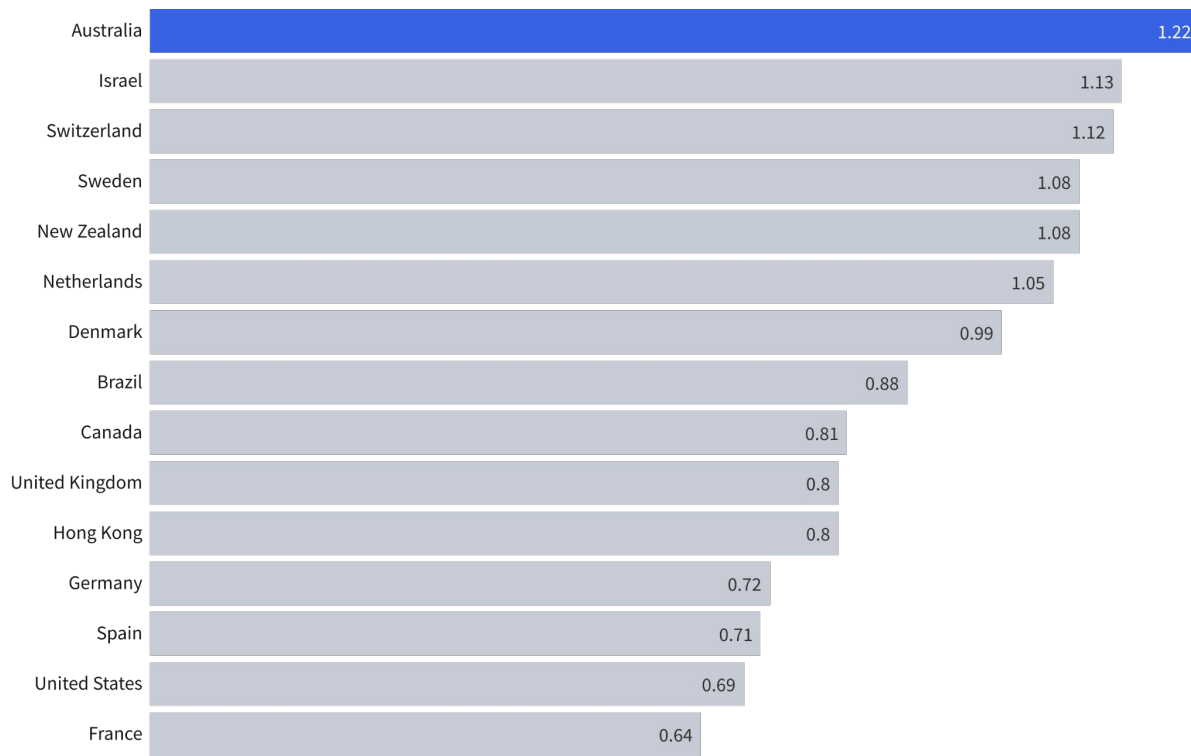
Number of Decacorns by founding country



# Australia is #1 in unicorn creation per dollar invested

1.22 unicorns for every \$1B invested

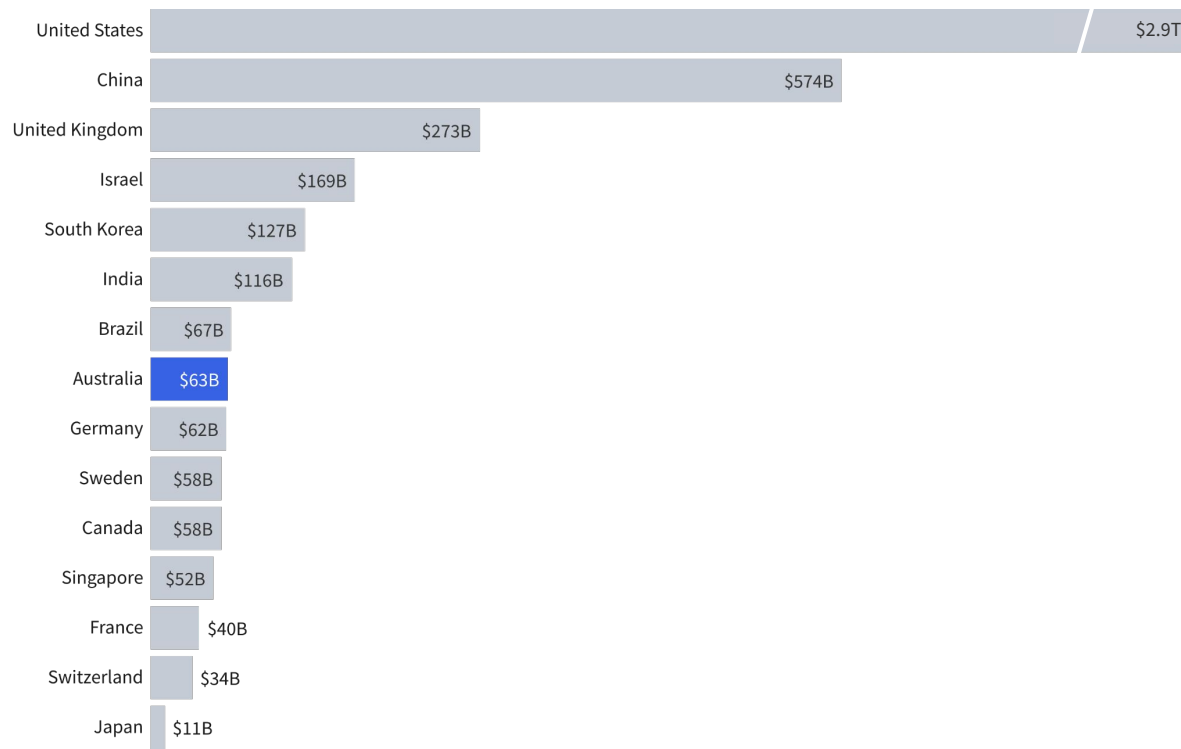
Unicorn efficiency rate\* of global hubs



# Australia ranks #8 globally for VC-backed exit value since 2020

Even without Canva's expected IPO

Combined valuation of VC-backed M&A and IPO activity since 2020 amongst global hubs\*



# Australia's unicorns have paved the way for a new generation of breakout startups. A maturing ecosystem and robust pipeline are now fuelling the next wave of venture-scale companies

## Exited Unicorns



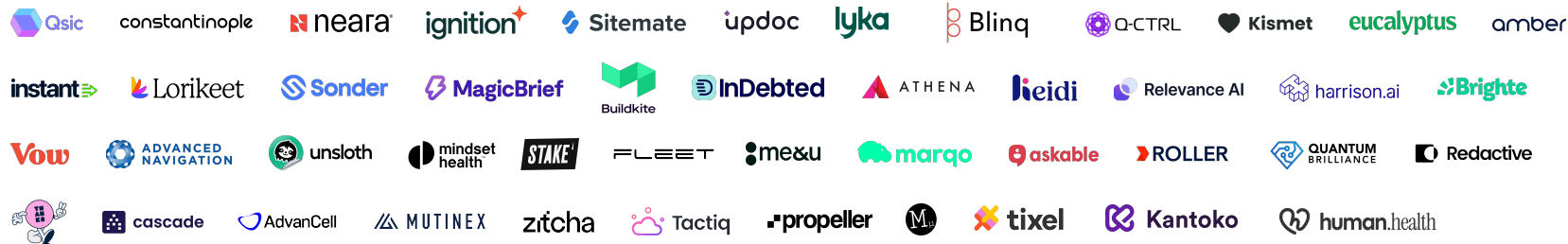
## Non-Exited Unicorns



## Recent acquisitions



## Emerging Companies





“ **For global allocators, Australia offers a rare combination: capital efficiency, globally ambitious founders, and a deep pipeline of innovation in AI, energy, and deep tech.**

But the real opportunity lies at the seed stage - where fund sizes are smaller, valuations are materially lower than in the U.S. and Europe, and competition is limited. This is where the next generation of breakout companies is already being funded. As these startups scale, later-stage capital will inevitably follow. The opportunity is backing the funds that spot these outliers early and help shape the next wave of global tech leaders."



**Phil Cummins**  
Managing Director



“ **High net worth individuals and families are increasingly adopting larger allocations to private markets in portfolios, and venture within that is certainly gaining prominence, especially today given overwhelming interest in AI related businesses.**

Australia is often underappreciated having matured massively over the past decade. The Australian tech sector is now the 3rd largest contributor to GDP, yet venture funding (as % of GDP) is well below other developed market peers, this being in spite of the market's increasing ability to produce world-class start-ups, and seed valuations historically sitting at meaningful discounts to the US. Australian Venture presents a clear opportunity in (global) portfolios and high net worth individuals and families are uniquely positioned to take advantage."



**Martin Randall**  
Head of Private Markets



1 Australian Tech Value Creation

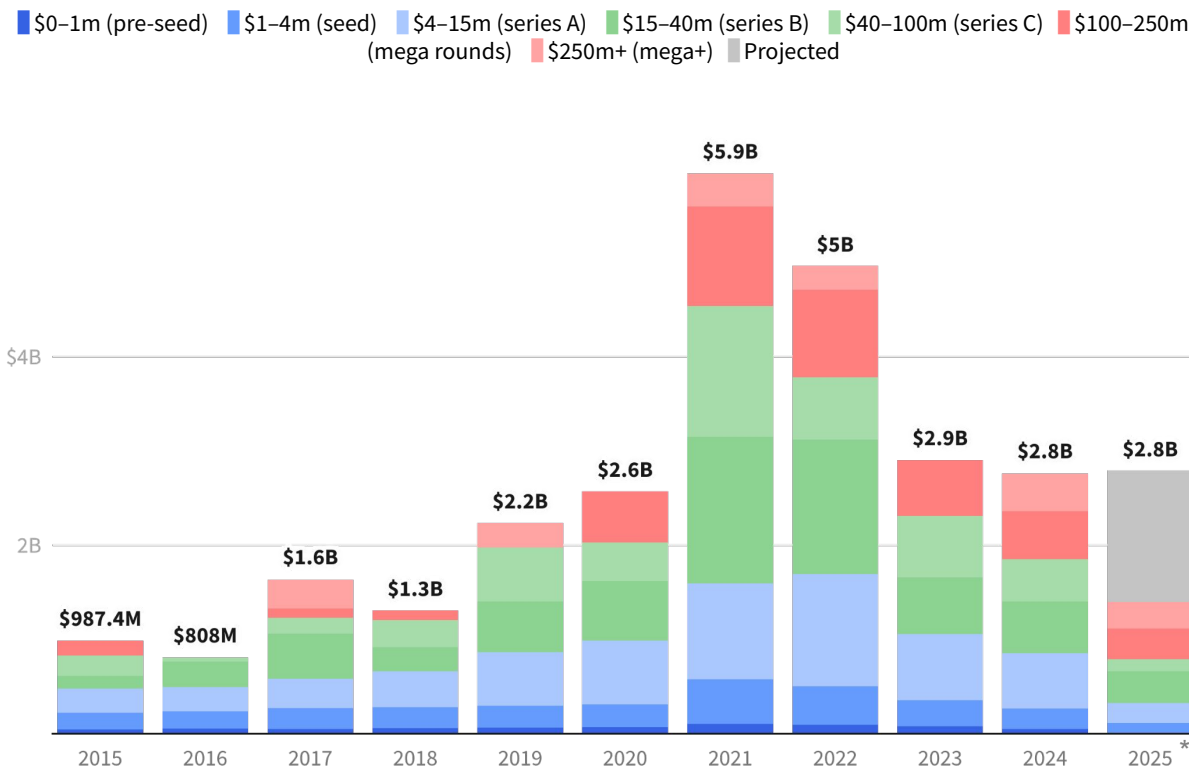
## 2 Funding Trends and Market Dynamics

# Australia's VC market reset to pre-2021 norms in 2024

VC investment in Australia in 2024 held steady at \$2.8B, with strong support in early-stage and growth rounds. 2025 is also projected to match or surpass 2024's level.

While total volume remains below 2021's record highs, the market has stabilised, and capital is being deployed with greater discipline.

## VC Investment in Australia since 2015 » [view online](#)

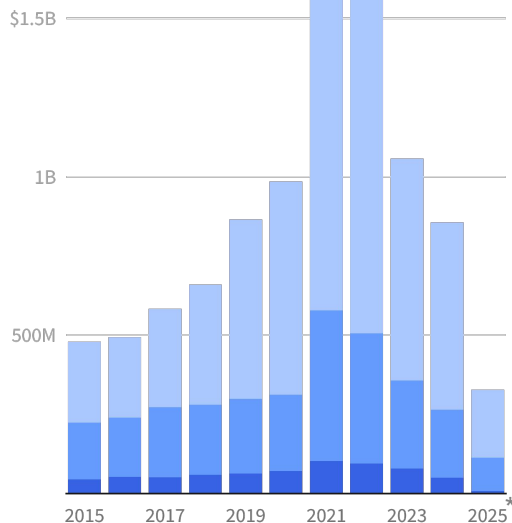


Source: Dealroom.co. Values in US\$. \*Data as of June 2025.  
Projected value based on current YTD value and time elapsed  
when the report is published.

# Early-stage VC investment declined, while late-stage rebounded in 2024

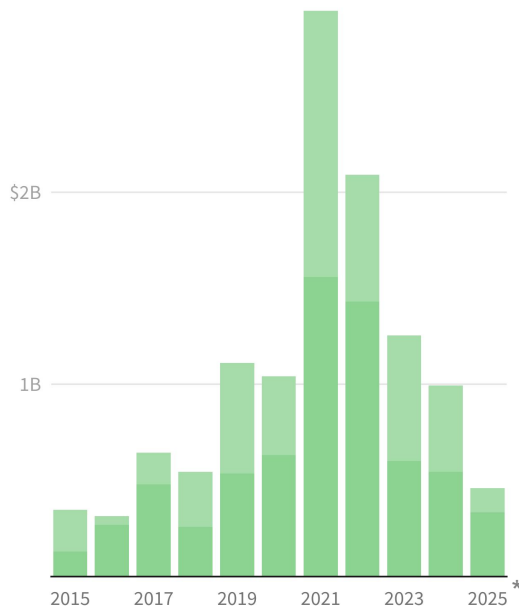
## Early stage VC investment

■ \$0-1m (pre-seed) ■ \$1-4m (seed)  
■ \$4-15m (series A)



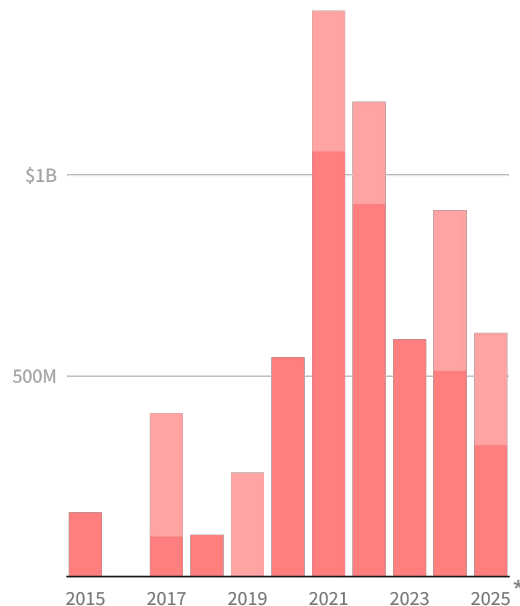
## Breakout stage VC investment

■ \$15-40m (series B) ■ \$40-100m (series C)



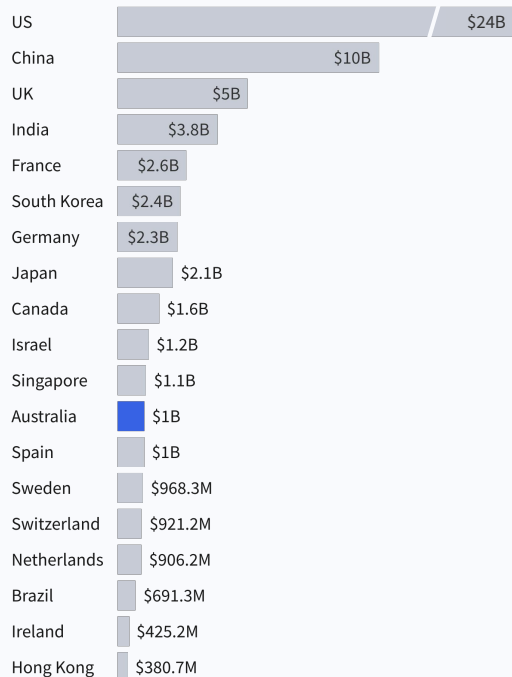
## Late stage VC investment

■ \$100-250m (mega) ■ \$250m+ (mega plus)

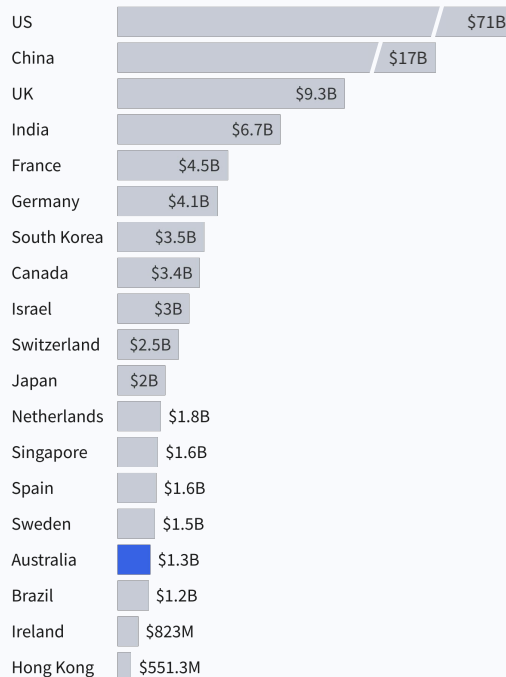


# Australia maintains a steady presence across all stages of startup investment since 2024, yet remains majorly underfunded compared to top ecosystems

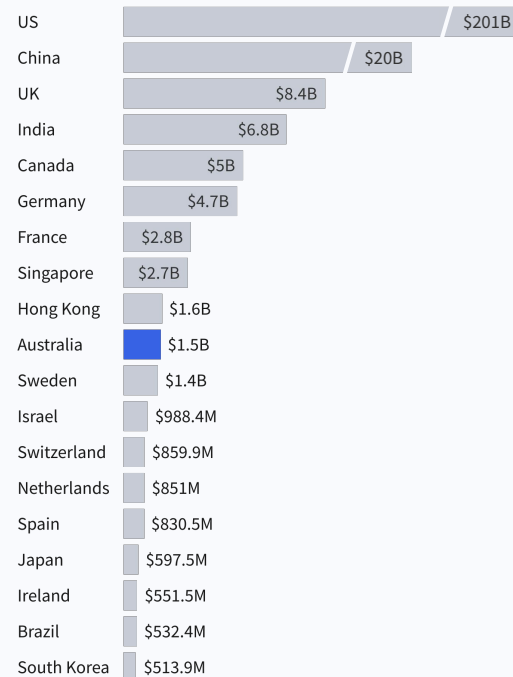
## Early-stage capital since 2024 \$0-15M rounds



## Breakout Stage capital since 2024 \$15-100M rounds



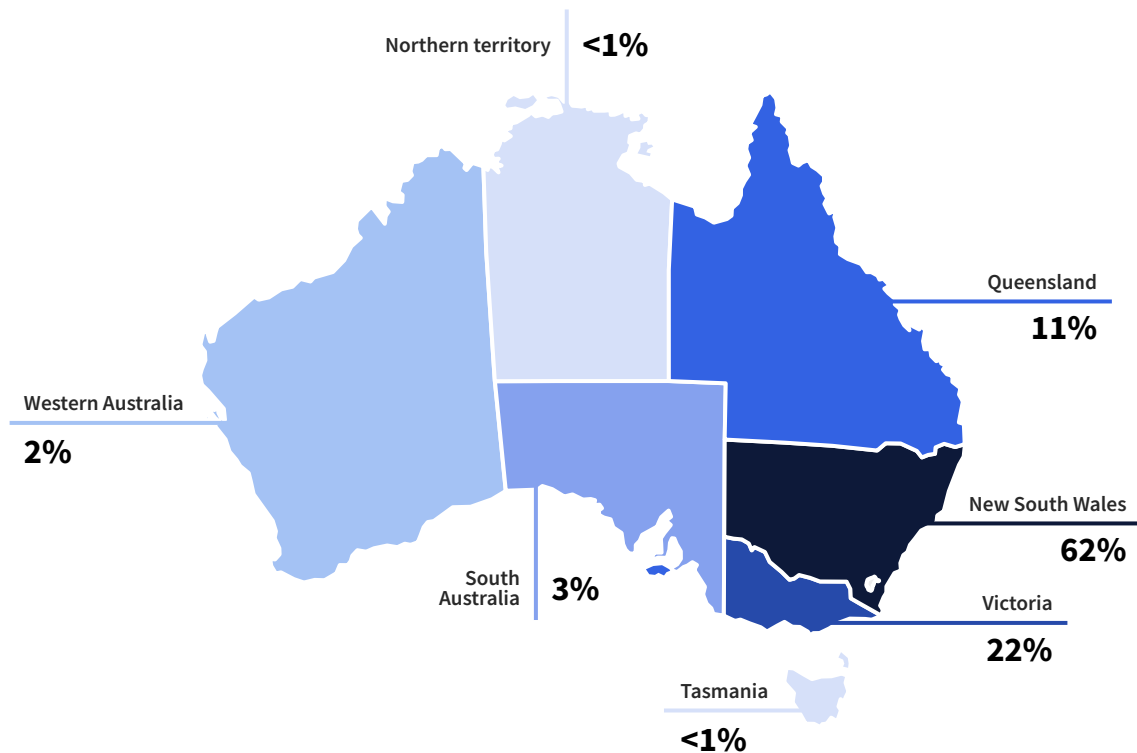
## Late-stage capital since 2024 \$100M+ rounds



## Tech funding in Australia remains concentrated in NSW, with Victoria and Queensland second and third

NSW has firmly established itself as Australia's leading tech hub, capturing 62% of all venture investment since 2020

% of Venture capital investment across Australian regions since 2020







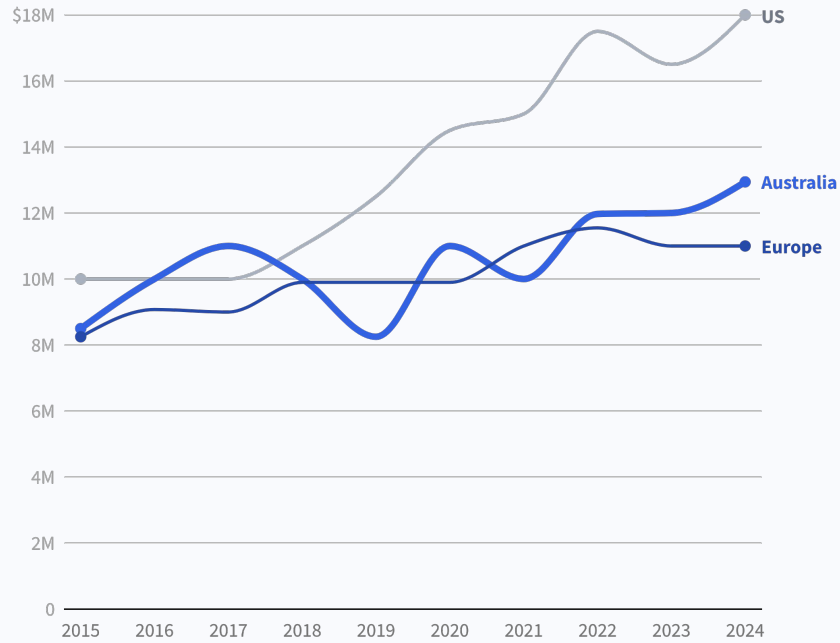
**Australia produces world-class startups with impressive efficiency. Combining the creativity, technical competence and ambition of founders together with Amazon's worldwide network of customers, investors and partners, AWS is proud to work with our region's outliers to catapult them into a global arena and accelerate their growth.**

Through programs like the **Global Generative AI Accelerator** and **AWS Activate**, we are proud to have helped companies like LeonardoAI, RelevanceAI, Splash Music and Marqo scale into international markets, and the data in this report shows that the opportunity for next generation GenAI companies is even bigger. There has never been more access and pathways for investors into the Australian market, and with AWS' support the time is now for startups to scale and succeed into global markets.

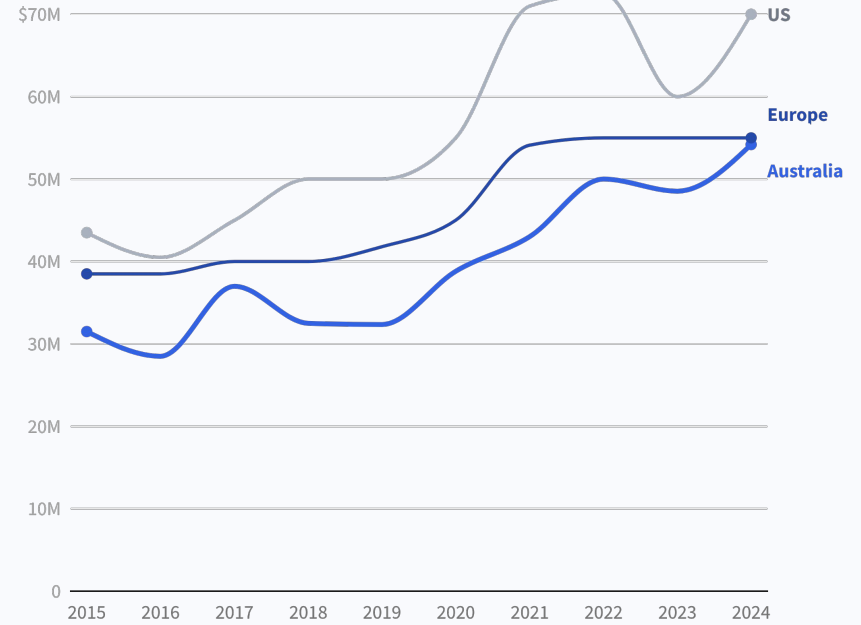
[Find out more here](#)

# Australian Seed and Series A valuations remain 25% lower than US

Seed Median valuations since 2015

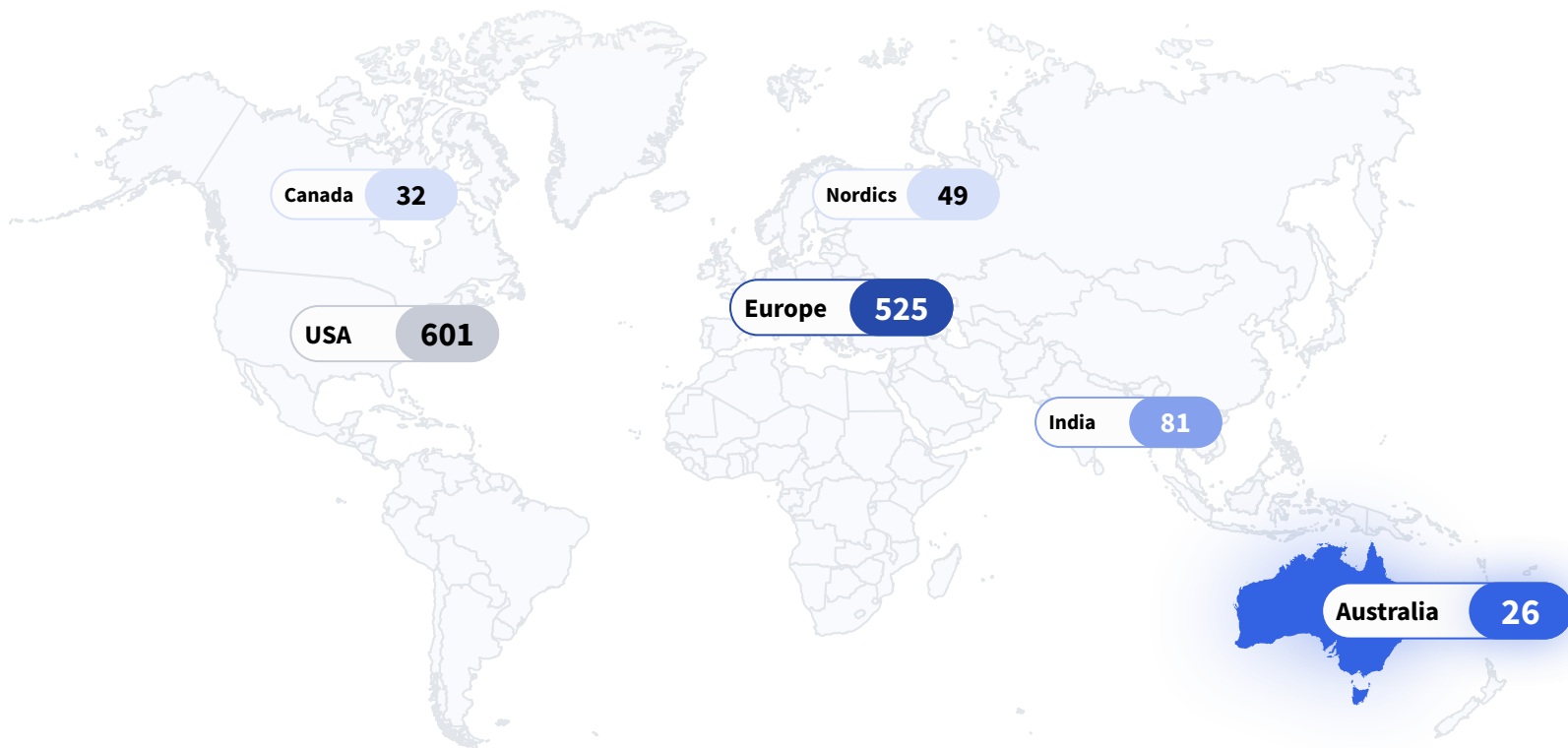


Series A Median valuations since 2015



# Australia has a significantly lower density of seed funds relative to key markets

Fewer than 30 seed funds completed  $\geq 5$  deals in the past year, far below other markets like India (81), Europe (525), and the US (601).

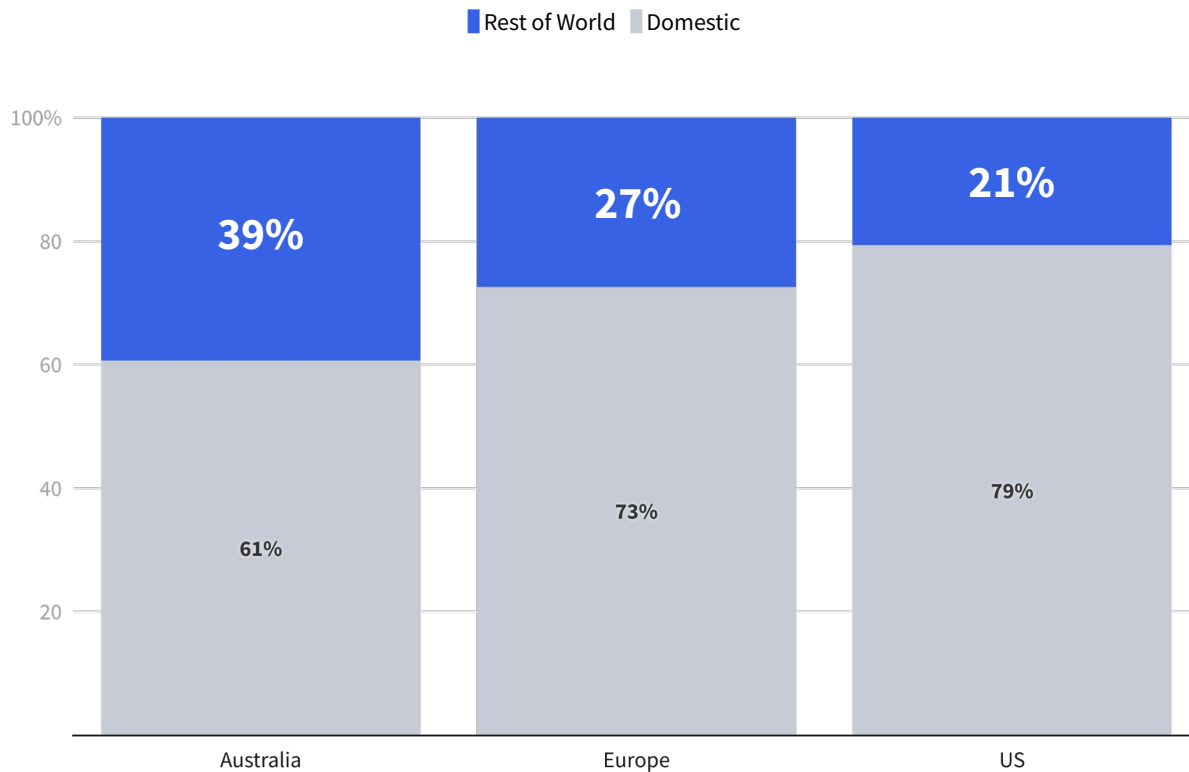


Number of seed funds with  $\geq 5$  rounds in the last 12 months

## Nearly 40% of early-stage capital in Australia comes from overseas — higher than both the United States and Europe

Overseas investors are actively seeking early stage opportunities in the Australian market

Source of funding at early-stage (<\$15M) since 2023



# Australia notable investors landscape

View 1.7K global investors active in Australia »

## Pre Seed

### Accelerators / Syndicates

ANTLER

Startmate

TEN13

aussieangels

FLYING FOX



## Early (Seed – Series A)

## Growth & Late (Series B+)

### Growth-stage VC

1/ONE VENTURES

SPARK CAPITAL

Perennial Partners

tdm. GROWTH PARTNERS

Five V / Capital

GROK VENTURES

MACQUARIE

### Multi-stage Funds

SKIP CAPITAL

Folklore Ventures



BLACKBIRD

artesian

MACDOCH VENTURES

SALUS

Square Peg

airtree

CARTHONA CAPITAL



Glitch Capital

investible

evp\_

ATHLETIC VENTURES

MAIN SEQUENCE

### Seed Funds

galileo

ARCHANGEL

SIDE STAGE VENTURES

Jelix

RAMPERSAND



Skalata

AFTERWORK



Tidal

### Overseas Investors

LocalGlobe

peak xv

LEFT LANE

January Capital

INSIGHT PARTNERS

Index Ventures



HORIZONS VENTURES

TIGERGLOBAL

Headline

Felicis

# Australia's tech success has been driven by outlier founders with global ambition and capital discipline

## ATlassian

**Founded in 2002**, Atlassian was bootstrapped using a **\$10,000 credit card** with no external funding for years.

Achieved early success with a **notable sale to American Airlines in 2003**, entering the U.S. market in **2004 with a New York office** and later relocating to **San Francisco in 2005**, which became their U.S. HQ.

Remarkably **bootstrapped to \$1B+** valuation before raising **\$60M from Accel in 2010**

**Listed on NASDAQ in 2015** at a **\$4.4B valuation**, and today is valued at over **\$60B**.

## Canva

**Founded in 2012**, Canva is a design SaaS company based in Sydney, Australia.

Canva is backed by **several Australian investors** including **Blackbird, Airtree, Square Peg** as well as **leading US funds** and has now **raised nearly \$1B**.

Still **private**, Canva was most recently **valued at \$32B** in a **secondary transaction** in Nov 2024.

## afterpay

**Founded in 2014** in Australia, they raised just **\$5.8M in VC funding in 2015**, mostly from **local Australian investors**.

**Listed on the ASX in 2016**, bypassing the traditional high-cap VC route.

Expanded internationally with a **U.S. launch in 2018**, driving explosive growth.

**Acquired by Block (formerly Square)** in **2021** for **\$29B**, one of the largest tech exits globally.

## Linktree

**Founded in 2016** in Melbourne and built in just six hours to solve the "one link in bio" problem.

Gained **3,000 users overnight**, crashing servers; reached **1M users by 2018**. **Banned by Instagram in 2018** for "spam," but reinstated after user outcry.

Raised **\$165M+ from investors** including **Index Ventures, Coatue, Insight Partners**, and **AirTree Ventures**.

Achieved **unicorn status in 2022** with a **\$110M Series C**, valuing the company at **\$1.3B**. As of 2025, boasts **50M+ users globally** and remains privately held.



## Leonardo.AI

**Founded in December 2022**, the team amassed **7 million users** within its first year, and over **19 million registered users** by mid-2024.

Secured seed funding from **Blackbird & Side Stage Ventures** in March 2023..

**Acquired by Canva in July 2024**, integrating Leonardo's generative AI technology into Canva's suite of tools.

## Airwallex

**Founded in 2015** in Melbourne to solve costly cross-border payments faced by small businesses.

Bootstrapped early before attracting major VCs like **DST Global, Tencent**, and **Sequoia China**.

Became a **unicorn in 2019**, just three years after launch. Expanded globally with offices in **Asia, the US, and Europe**.

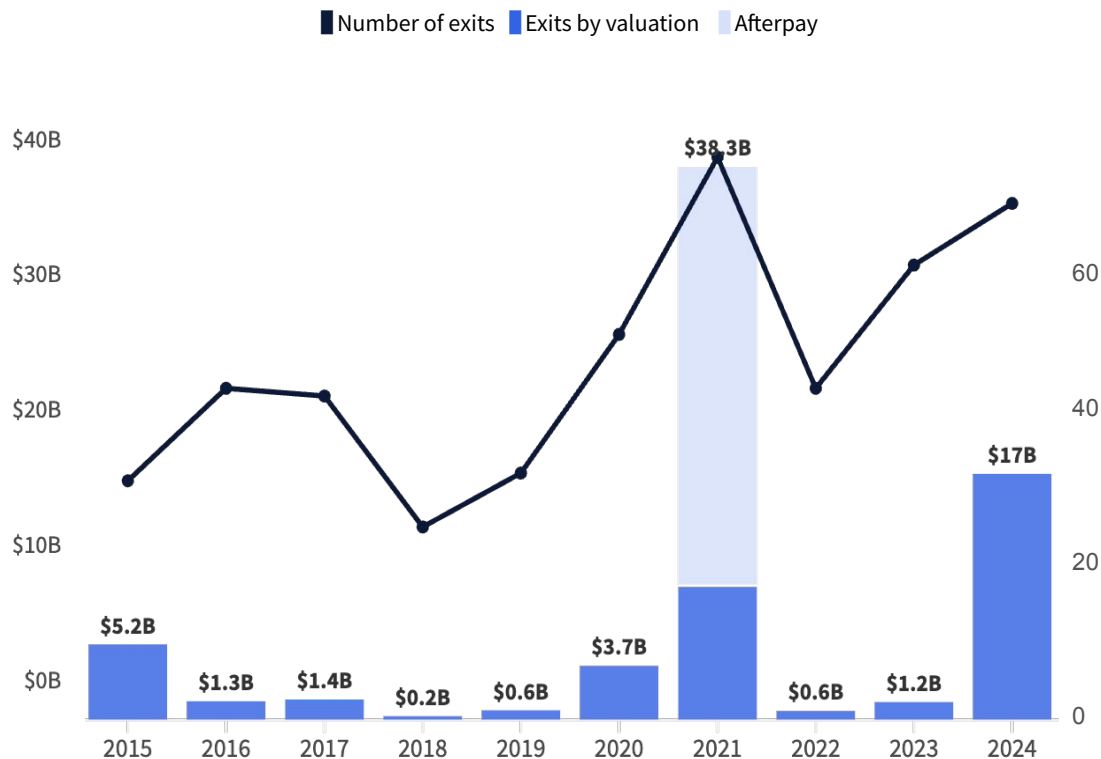
Valued at **\$6.2B USD by May 2025** after securing one of the country's **biggest funding rounds ever**, becoming one of Australia's top fintech exports.



# 2024 marked Australia's second-largest year for venture-backed exits — by both value and volume

These results were fuelled by Blackstones acquisition of AirTrunk in 2024

Exits in Australia by number of and amount » [view online](#)



# Notable exits in Australia since 2024

Despite limited M&A activity globally, Australia has produced a number of meaningful outcomes in recent years

[View live »](#)

**Enterprise Software**  
Data centers



**AUD\$24B Acquisition**  
Sep 2024  
by  
**Blackstone**

**Real Estate**  
Property marketing



**\$1.9B Acquisition + debt**  
May 2025  
by  
**CoStar**

**Fintech**  
Construction payment claims



**\$387M Acquisition**  
Jan 2024  
by  
**Autodesk**

**Energy**  
Electric Vehicle production



**\$300M Acquisition**  
Feb 2024  
by  
**Exro**

**Legal**  
M&A due diligence



**AU\$236M Acquisition**  
Feb 2024  
by  
**Datasite**

**Media**  
Ai-driven production



**Undisclosed Acquisition**  
Jul 2024  
by  
**Canva**

**“ We’re seeing a wave of exceptional founders emerging from Australia: builders who are global in ambition from day one. At Peak XV, we’ve partnered with over a dozen Australian companies in the past 18 months alone.**

Australian founders combine deep technical craftsmanship, user-centricity and strong design sensibility, resulting in globally best-in-class products across categories. We believe these inherent characteristics position Australian startups to succeed on the global stage, particularly in categories like developer tools, infrastructure, and AI. Our focus is on partnering with these startups and helping them scale - especially into markets like the U.S, where many of our portfolio companies are already succeeding."



**Aakash Kapoor**  
Principal  
Singapore



**“ Australia continues to be a key market for us to invest in. The attractiveness of the market is driven by excellent talent, ambitious founders and a very supportive local ecosystem.**

Founders then benefit from a smaller but advanced market to prove their business models and scale globally. We just made another investment here and plan to do much more."



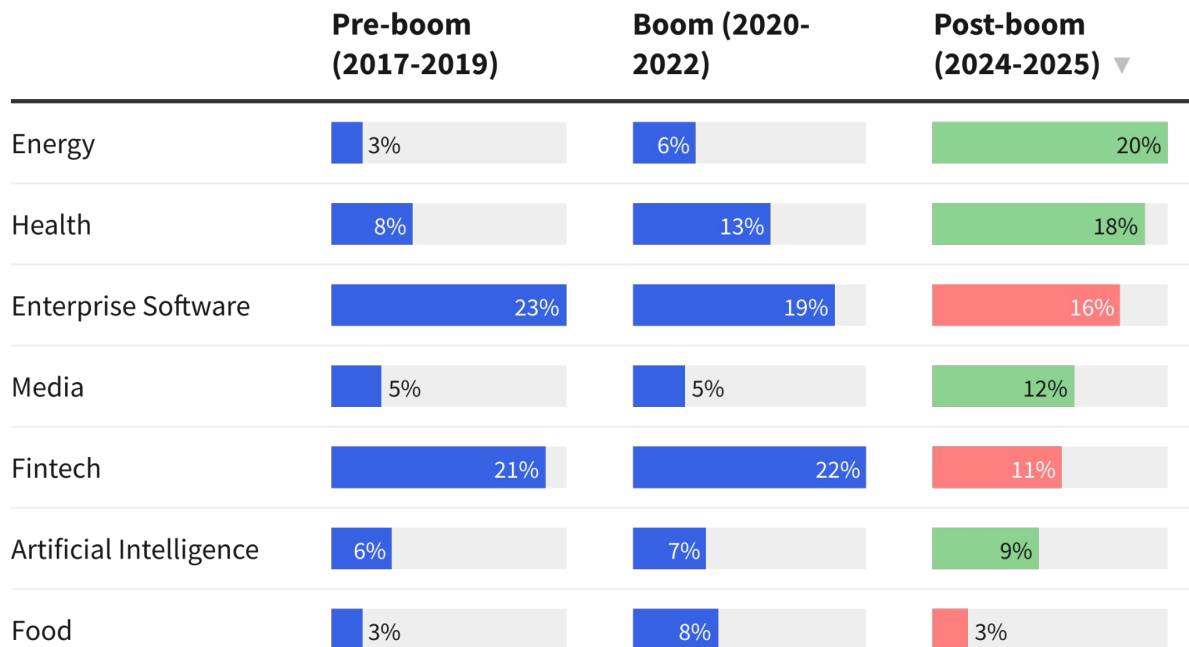
**Vinny Pujji**  
Managing Partner  
New York

**LEFT  
LANE**

# VC dollars are shifting towards energy, health and media industries and away from enterprise & fintech opportunities

Energy and Media saw strong growth in 2024, while Fintech and Enterprise software sectors have experienced sustained declines since 2022 in capital allocation since boom years 2020-2022

VC investment in Australia's top industries and sectors as % of total VC



FOCUS ON

# AI

## 470+

VC-backed AI Startups

## \$11.7B

Combined AI Enterprise Value

## 3.4x

AI Enterprise Value growth since 2019

## 2

AI Unicorns

bugcrowd

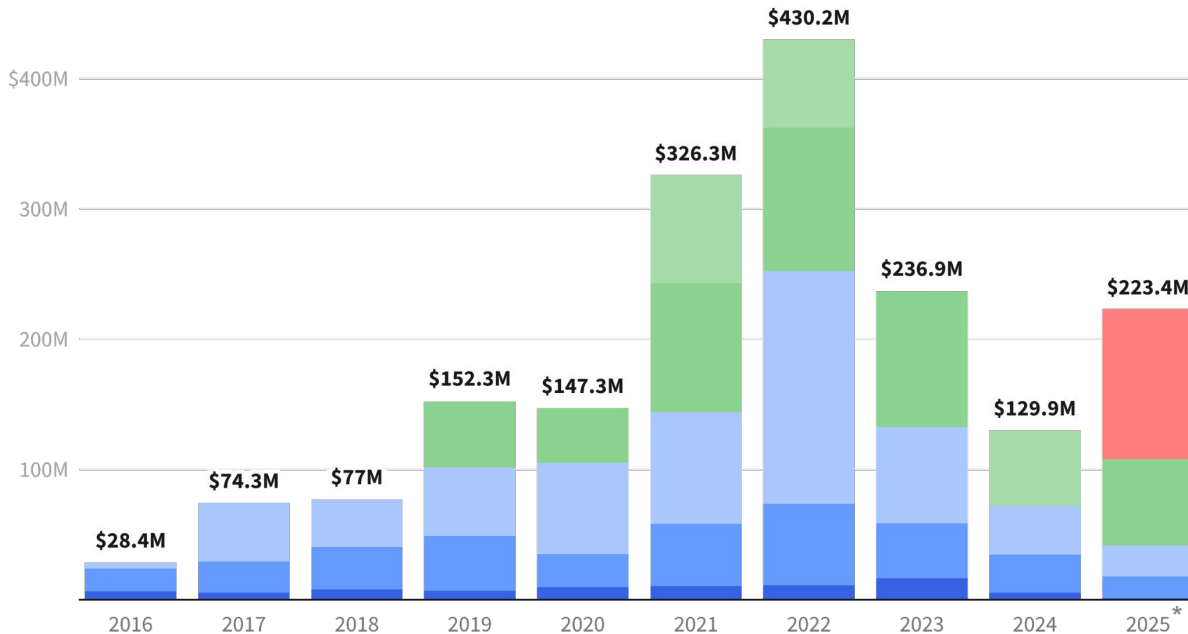
ZOOX

## AUD\$178M

Biggest AI round in Q1 2025 by Harrison.ai

### VC investment in Artificial Technology in Australia » [view online](#)

■ \$0-1m (pre-seed) ■ \$1-4m (seed) ■ \$4-15m (series A) ■ \$15-40m (series B) ■ \$40-100m (series C) ■ \$100-250m (mega rounds) ■ \$250m+ (mega+)



# Universities play a pivotal role in Australia's tech success, turning research and education into global startup leadership and outlier founders

## Australian Universities in the world's top 20



**13th** in the World

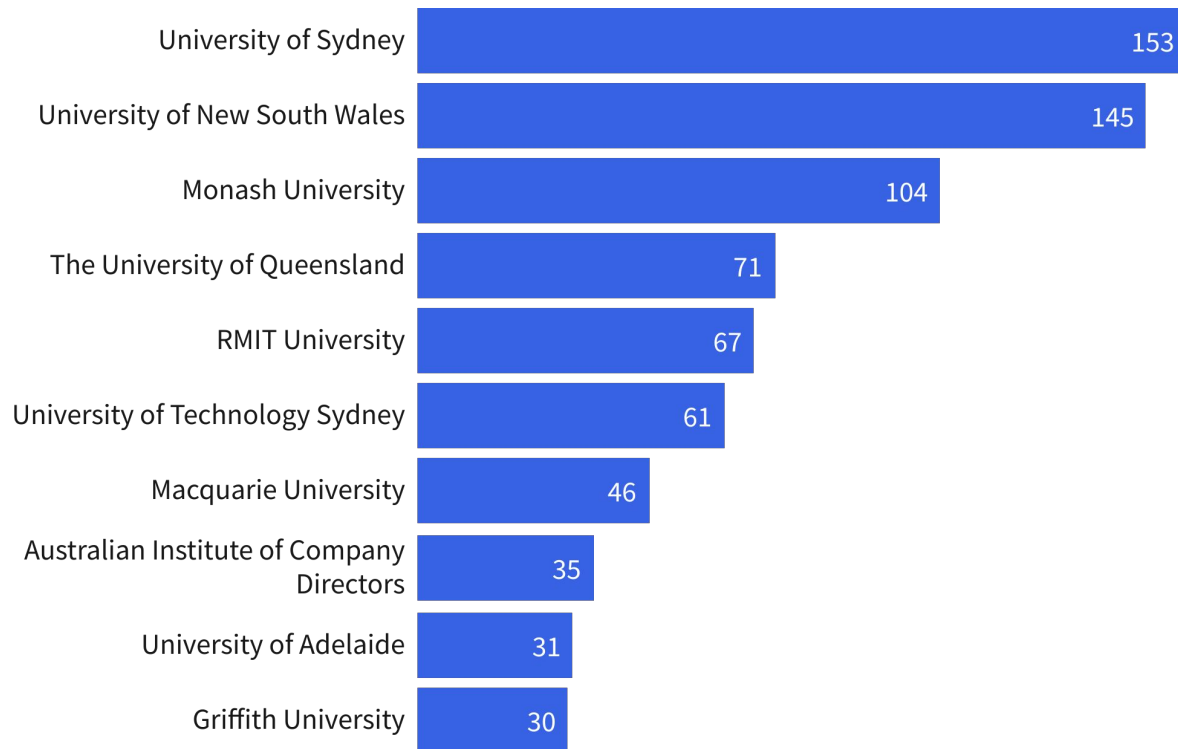


**18th** in the World



**19th** in the World

## Number of alumni companies worth >\$50M





# Methodology & Definitions

## What is a startup?

Companies designed to grow fast founded in the information age (since 1990). Generally, such companies are VC-investable businesses. Successful startups go on to raise significant capital and become **Scaleups** at **Breakout** (\$15M–100M funding), and/or **Late** (\$100M+ funding) stages. A handful become very big (e.g. \$1B+ valuation).

What is a startup?

## What is a unicorn?

Unicorns are (former) startups that reached \$1B valuation or exit at one point in time.

What is a Unicorn?

## Industries, Segments

Dealroom's Intelligence Unit has developed a proprietary technology taxonomy that acts as a foundation and helps navigate existing and emerging technologies. We welcome suggestions and feedback at [support@dealroom.co](mailto:support@dealroom.co).

Dealroom taxonomy

## Underlying Data

Dealroom's proprietary database and software aggregate data from multiple sources: harvesting public information, user-submitted data verified by Dealroom, data engineering. All data is verified and curated with an extensive manual process.

The data on which this report builds is available via [app.dealroom.co](http://app.dealroom.co). For more info please visit [dealroom.co](http://dealroom.co) or contact [support@dealroom.co](mailto:support@dealroom.co). Data for this report was taken in Q1 2025.

## Venture Capital, Investors

Investment are referred to by their round labels such as Seed, Series A, B, C, ... late stage, and growth equity. VC investments exclude debt, non-equity funding, lending capital and grants.

Unless otherwise mentioned, rounds under \$15M are considered Early. Those rounds \$15-\$40M, and \$40-\$100M are considered Breakout. Rounds above \$100M are considered Late.

## Scope of the report

While many startups founded in Australia relocate beyond their borders, most maintain business-critical ties to their homelands.

In order to take this reality into account, this report includes both Australia-based startups, which maintain their main center of business (HQ) in their country of origin, and Australia-founded startups, which relocated their HQ outside of Australia when talking about Ecosystem Value. Unicorn slides are focused around companies founded in Australia.

When discussing venture capital flows, this report accounts solely for startups HQ'd in Australia.

Data collection was completed as of May 2025, with the sole currency used being US dollar. The accuracy and completeness of the data depend on the information available from Dealroom and other public sources.



### **Global startup & venture capital intelligence platform.**

Dealroom.co is the foremost data provider on startup, early-stage and growth company ecosystems in Europe and around the globe.

Founded in Amsterdam in 2013, we now work with many of the world's most prominent investors, entrepreneurs and government organizations to provide transparency, analysis and insights on venture capital activity.



### **A seed-stage venture fund backing the top 1% of founders in Australia**

Side Stage Ventures is a founder-led seed fund backing outlier founders in Australia. Built by founders for founders, we write the first cheque into early stage companies and then lean in to help the founders build and scale globally.

If you'd like to learn more about Side Stage Ventures or the process of becoming an investor in our funds, we invite you to contact us: [investors@sidestage.vc](mailto:investors@sidestage.vc)



### **AWS provides powerful cloud and AI solutions for startups**

The AWS Startups team supports and serves the largest community of startups across Australia and New Zealand, and we're proud to have played a meaningful role in helping our region's innovators overcome technical and business challenges at every step of their journeys. With nearly 20 years of experience gained from supporting 330,000+ startups around the globe, we know what it takes for us to help you build a globally successful tech company.

If you're a fast scaling startup with international ambitions and an outlier mentality, let us help you get there faster! [Contact us](#)

