

Through a steep learning curve, and by **turning Melanie's mum's living room into the office** for the new yearbook design startup Fusion Books (along with large printing press machines), they bootstrapped the project and grew year on year. **Once she started employing staff, Melanie gradually took over the house.** Melaine and obrecht got a lot of help and support from their family members.



The Australian government provided R&D tax concessions, and the pair were later able to get an extra \$20,000 business bank loan. Melanie says that without these, they'd have run out of money in the early days, and wouldn't have survived. The next chapter of their story is where it gets really interesting. Serendipity struck, and **they met an investor from Silicon Valley, Bill Tai**, at an Inventor of the Year awards ceremony (they were runners-up).

When they spoke to him, a 5-minute chat opened a window onto a whole new world. **Melanie described her grand vision to take on the big design companies of Microsoft and Adobe with her more ambitious hyper-growth startup idea** - the online collaborative design software that became Canva - and Bill Tai agreed to meet them if they were ever in Silicon Valley. **'I couldn't believe my luck!' Melanie said.**

So she went home and researched this unknown universe of Silicon Valley, venture capitalists and 'startups'. Her brother happened to be studying in San Francisco (which is very close to Silicon Valley), and agreed to let her crash at his place for two weeks.