

THE FUTURE NORMAL OF EXPERIENCES

Data & Insight Report

Co-created live with 126 ideas | Melbourne Experience Summit | Melbourne, 2026

Prompt: "Sketch an experience that will get people off the couch in 2030."

Theme	% of Ideas	Strategic Significance
Culinary & Dining Experiences	24.6%	The table is the destination — dining becomes the reason to leave home.
Immersive & Creative Tech	23.0%	Screens that pull you off the couch, not deeper into it.
Wellness & Personal Care	23.0%	The couch is the symptom — restoration is the pitch.
Urban Exploration & Play	21.4%	The whole city becomes the playground — no ticket required.
Transit & Spatial Dynamics	21.4%	The journey stops being dead time and becomes the experience.
Community, Events & Entertainment	18.3%	Belonging is the product; the event is just the venue.
Aquatic & Waterfront Ecosystems	16.7%	The river is the headline act — water as the new public square.
Cultural Heritage & Storytelling	15.1%	The past becomes interactive — history you can talk back to.
Nature & Eco-Adventures	10.3%	Off-grid is the luxury — the wilder, the more premium.
Screen-Free Human Connection	9.5%	Phone-free is the feature, not the friction.
Fandom & Live Performance	7.1%	Fans don't want to watch — they want to be in it.

Total coverage exceeds 100% — most ideas spanned multiple themes, reflecting the integrated, systems-level thinking of participants.

What the data is telling us

The couch's real rival isn't another screen — it's a table.

Culinary & Dining was the single biggest cluster at **24.6%**. Nobody sketched a better TV; they sketched reasons to gather around food — supper clubs in vintage trams, feasts stretched down whole streets, dinners cantilevered off skyscrapers. The most reliable way to get someone off the couch in 2030 turns out to be the oldest one we have: a meal worth showing up for.

Technology's job has flipped — from keeping you in to getting you out.

Immersive & Creative Tech tied for second at **23.0%**, but look at what the room actually drew: holograms at memorials, VR you have to stand up to use, projection mapping on public walls, surfing through a library. Not one idea was a slicker streaming service. The signal is unmistakable — this audience sees AI and spatial tech as the bait that lifts people off the sofa, not the thing that pins them to it.

Three of the top five themes are secretly one idea: the city is the venue.

Urban Exploration & Play (**21.4%**), Transit & Spatial Dynamics (**21.4%**) and Aquatic & Waterfront (**16.7%**) all push the same direction — turn streets, stations, footpaths and rivers into the experience itself. The future of 'going out' isn't a building you enter. It's a city you move through.

Wellness quietly rewrote the brief.

At **23.0%**, Wellness & Personal Care was a top-three theme — but it answered a different question. Where most ideas asked ‘what’s fun enough to leave home for?’, these asked ‘what’s restorative enough?’ From outdoor yoga to sensory grounding to facial fitness, the room treated the couch as a symptom and the experience as the cure.

The quietest themes carry the sharpest signal.

Screen-Free Human Connection (**9.5%**) and Fandom & Live Performance (**7.1%**) scored low on volume but high on conviction. The phone-in-a-locker dinners and ‘be the headliner’ stages weren’t hedged — they were emphatic. Small theme, strong signal: exactly the kind of niche behaviour worth watching as the experience economy matures.

Tensions worth sitting with

Spectacle vs. sanctuary.

Two top-three themes pull in opposite directions. Immersive & Creative Tech (**23.0%**) wants to dazzle — brighter, louder, more sensory. Wellness & Personal Care (**23.0%**) wants to soothe — slower, quieter, screen-free. Both get people off the couch; they simply disagree on whether 2030 needs more stimulation or less. The richest experiences may have to toggle between the two.

The city as canvas vs. the escape from it.

Urban, Transit and Waterfront ideas (each ~17–21%) want to switch the metropolis on. Nature & Eco-Adventures (**10.3%**) and the off-grid wellness ideas want to flee it. Same instinct — move the body — opposite vector. The design question: does 2030’s best experience happen in the heart of the city, or as far from it as possible?

Tech as lure vs. tech as intruder.

Immersive tech (**23.0%**) leans all the way into AI, holograms and haptics. Screen-Free Human Connection (**9.5%**) wants the phone in a locker at the door. It’s the question every experience designer now faces: when does technology pull people *into* the moment, and when does it pull them out of it?

For the room — provocations to take home

Find what’s worth standing up for.

A quarter of the room’s strongest ideas came back to a meal, a river, or a street worth crossing the city for. What’s the single experience your audience would put down their phone, leave the house, and tell three friends about?

Make technology the bait, not the cage.

The room imagined AI that gets people outside, not glued in. Where could a hologram, an AR overlay or a projection turn a place people walk past into a place they stop, gather and stay?

Treat the journey as the experience.

Transit tied for the second-biggest cluster — proof that the dead time between A and B is the most under-designed canvas you own. What would it take to make the commute itself the reason people show up?

Decide whether you’re selling stimulation or restoration.

The data split clean down the middle: dazzle vs. soothe. Pick your default before 2030 picks it for you — and be clear which couch you’re actually competing with.

Want to dive deeper? View & explore all 126 user-generated images and ideas.

Want to bring Henry & this ‘multiplayer’ AI keynote to your next event?

henrycoutinho-mason.com/visuaise-futures-experience