BIG RED GROUP EXPERIENCE EDIT

Summer 2026



BIG RED GROUP The Experience Network.

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Data & Research Methodology

Trend forecasts and category hotlists are modelled on behavioural booking patterns across more than 400,000 experiences on RedBalloon, Experience Oz, and Adrenaline from the previous summer season (November 2025 - February 2026). This data has been paired with brand-new, nationally representative consumer sentiment research to forecast emerging leisure behaviours for the season ahead (conducted in October 2026).



EXPERIENCE NOW:

From the CEO

David Anderson, CEO & Co-Founder, Big Red Group

Summer is bringing a pivotal shift to the Australian visitor economy: the unit of leisure is getting smaller.

As cost-of-living pressures reshape household habits, Australians are turning smaller pockets of time into meaningful experiences rather than holding out for one massive annual blowout. It's no longer about spending more, but about experiencing more - with smaller, richer moments becoming more frequent and accessible.

For Australians working through summer, the hours before 9:00 AM are opening up as an active new window for adventure and real-world connection. For those taking time off, the challenge is almost the opposite: free time increasingly brings more screen time, sparking a fierce counter-desire to properly disconnect.

For the experience industry, this fundamentally redefines the opportunity. Growth this summer won't come from the big holiday or bucket-list moments, but from helping Australians turn everyday pockets of time into experiences worth remembering. The moments may be getting smaller, but their value isn't.

EXPERIENCE NEXT:

Emerging Trends



EMERGING TREND 01

Dawn-maxxing

Reclaiming the Pre-Work Playground

Australia has always been a nation of early risers, but the classic 6:00 AM coffee run is no longer enough for a workforce needing to optimise their free time. With crowded weekend calendars and demanding work hours, Australians are refusing to wait for Saturdays to live their lives, sparking a desire to unlock the first light before the workday begins.

/ GOLF EXPERIENCES

The Data

Booking behaviour from last summer signalled the emergence of this shift: morning experience bookings rose +28% nationwide. This was led by a +67% spike in early-morning adventures across Sydney Harbour, a +60% increase in pre-work golf sessions, and a +48% jump in sunrise land adventures like sandboarding and canyoning.

+67%
Spike in morning water-based adventures in Sydney Harbour

+60%
Increase in early-morning golf sessions

+48%
Rise in sunrise land expeditions (canyoning, sandboarding)

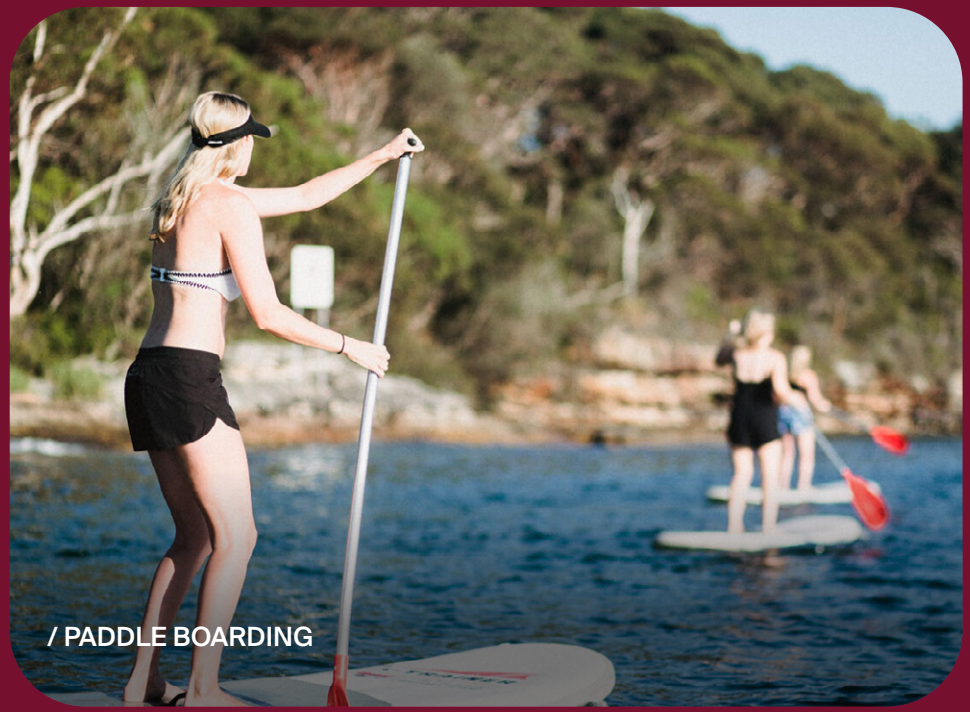
+28%
Surge in nationwide early-morning bookings

Getting up earlier for adventure

Summer Prediction

This season, we forecast early morning will become the nation's newest prime-time leisure window, dubbed "Dawn-maxxing." Rather than letting Queensland hold the sunrise crown alone, metro professionals nationwide will aggressively colonise the 5:00 to 9:00 AM window, using sunrise paddleboarding, first-light hot air ballooning, and outdoor adventures to supercharge their mornings before logging on.


/ HOT AIR BALLOONING


/ PADDLE BOARDING



EMERGING TREND 02

Micro-Dosing Downtime

The Death of the Annual Blowout

The pressure and financial strain of saving for a single, high-stakes annual holiday has reached a breaking point. Australians are experiencing burnout and are seeking immediate, low-admin escapes that keep restorative endorphins flowing throughout the year.

/ GLAMPING

+237%

Surge in rapid coastal escapes

+130%

Growth in short-break getaways

+117%

Jump in mystery flight bookings

Trading for smaller getaways



/ LUXURY ESCAPES

The Data

Last summer's booking shifts revealed that Australians were already ditching the annual blowout in favour of high-frequency breaks: getaways grew by +130%. We recorded strong momentum in coastal getaways (+237%), country escapes (+143%), boutique glamping (+89%), and zero-admin mystery flights (+117%).

Summer Prediction

We predict this summer will see the rapid acceleration of "Micro-Dosing Downtime." Instead of one massive macro-holiday, Australians will lean into frequent 48-to-72-hour escapes, prioritising proximity, instant bookability, and spontaneity to maximise their recovery with minimal logistical stress.



/ SHORT-BREAK GETAWAYS



EMERGING TREND 03

Permission Splurging

Reclaiming Indulgence Through Festive Gifting

Prolonged cost-of-living constraints have forced Australians to trim everyday personal treats, dining out, and wellness rituals. In response, the festive season has taken on a deeper psychological purpose: it has become an authorised release valve to experience the self-care individuals have denied themselves all year.

/ WINERY LUNCHES

The Data

According to new national research by Big Red Group, 45% of Australians rely on Christmas to restore the mini-luxuries they've cut back on - a sentiment that jumps to 52% among Gen Z, compared to just 27% of Baby Boomers. With 68% stating the best presents are experiences they couldn't justify buying for themselves, this shift is already backed by our historical summer data, which tracked seasonal surges in high tea (+77%), winery lunches (+128%), and spa retreats (+164%).

Indulge in mini luxuries

+164%
Historical summer increase in spa and wellness bookings

68%
Prioritise experience gifts over material items they wouldn't normally buy

52%
Gen Z rely on festive gifting to unlock self-care, vs. 27% of Boomers

+128%
Jump in long-lunch winery and cellar door dining

Summer Prediction

This festive season, we forecast Christmas gifting will act as the ultimate catalyst for "Permission Splurging." Expect physical clutter to be replaced entirely by emotional luxury, as younger demographics intentionally guide family wish lists toward subsidised self-care, long lunches, and restorative getaways on RedBalloon they've delayed throughout the year.


/ WINE TASTING & LUNCH


/ SPA FOR TWO



EMERGING TREND 04

Anti-Algorithm Living

High-Friction Leisure as the Digital Antidote

The rapid normalisation of everyday AI and algorithmic feeds has triggered acute screen fatigue. According to our latest research, nearly 1 in 2 Australians admit to spending more time interacting with technology than connecting with loved ones, while 38% say digital overload is eroding their sense of human connection.

/ PICNICS



/ HIGH ROPE & FLYING FOX ADVENTURE

The Data

Our new survey reveals that 6 in 10 Australians actively value real-world presence as an antidote to everyday screen time, increasing with AI. We saw the first wave of this offline migration last summer with rapid spikes in raw, outdoor bookings: a +166% surge in social picnics, a +100% doubling of treetop high-ropes adventures, and an +88% increase in off-grid glamping.

Choosing real world experiences

6 in 10
Australians actively value real-world presence as an antidote to AI

49%
Consumers report technology is encroaching on family connection

+166%
Historical uplift in social, outdoor picnic experiences

+100%
Increase in hands-on adventure courses and high ropes

Summer Prediction

As screen time continues to dominate daily life, we predict this tension will mature into a full-scale consumer rebellion: “Anti-Algorithm Living.” Australians will decisively seek out high-friction, sensory-rich activities as a deliberate counterweight to digital burnout, prioritising moments requiring physical balance, two hands, and presence in nature.

EXPERIENCE ROADMAP

State-by-State

Regional Personas & Trending Summer Escapes

Curious about what's set to trend near you this season? Based on regional booking momentum heading into the warmer months, we've unpacked how each state's experience seekers are shaping summer.



Top Categories per State



NSW



Harbour Epicures

Trading traditional sightseeing for premium waterfront dining and coastal wildlife.

Aquarium & Zoos **(+73%)** | Waterfront Dining **(+68%)** | Dining Cruises **(+68%)**



ACT



High-Altitude Indulgers

Pairing dawn aerial thrills with sophisticated evening dining.

Hot Air Ballooning **(+126%)** | Steakhouse Dining **(+92%)** | High Tea **(+86%)**



QLD



Sun-Drenched Thrillseekers

Dominating high-energy family adventure and marine exploration.

Theme Parks **(+102%)** | Reef & Island Cruises **(+75%)** | Animal Encounters **(+44%)**



VIC



Urban Gastronomers

Reinvesting in metropolitan food culture and curated day escapes.

Steakhouse Dining **(+83%)** | Multi-Course Dining Cruises **(+77%)** | Zoos & Sanctuaries **(+72%)**

Top Categories per State



WA

Maritime Nomads

Prioritising ocean crossings and coastal culinary escapes.

Island Day Trips & Ferries **(+76%)** | Coastal Dining Cruises **(+74%)** | Waterfront Dining **(+64%)**



SA

Terroir & Table Explorers

Centering summer leisure around world-class cellar doors and regional dining.

Cellar Door & Winery Tours **(+84%)** | Steakhouse Dining **(+84%)** | Wildlife Reserves **(+74%)**



TAS

Slow-Paced Seafarers

Pairing scenic wilderness waterways with boutique heritage indulgence.

Island & Reef Charters **(+80%)** | Scenic Cruises **(+70%)** | Heritage High Tea **(+67%)**



NT

Frontier Aviators

Taking to the skies to experience ancient landscapes from above.

Scenic Outback Flights **(+94%)** | Helicopter Tours **(+68%)** | Wildlife Safaris **(+68%)**


/ GOLD COAST


/ MORNINGTON PENINSULA


/ HUNTER VALLEY


/ ADELAIDE

Experience Destination Hotlist
Summer 2026

Top 10 Experience Destinations*

01	Gold Coast
02	Melbourne
03	Sydney
04	Cairns
05	Sunshine Coast
06	Mornington Peninsula
07	Hunter Valley
08	Brisbane
09	Perth
10	Adelaide

*Based on booking volume across Adrenaline, Experience Oz and RedBalloon from Nov 2025 - Feb 2026.

Experience Hotlist
Summer 2026

Top 10 Experience Categories*

01	Theme Parks (+45% YoY)	↑
02	Aquarium & Zoos	
03	Scenic & Dining Cruises	
04	Reef & Island Cruises	
05	Steakhouse Restaurants (+21% YoY)	↑
06	Jet Boats & Jet Packs	
07	Hot Air Ballooning (+20% YoY)	↑
08	Skydiving	
09	Picnics (+166% YoY)	↑
10	Kayaking & Canoeing (+5% YoY)	↑

**Based on booking volume across Adrenaline, Experience Oz and RedBalloon from Nov 2025 - Feb 2026



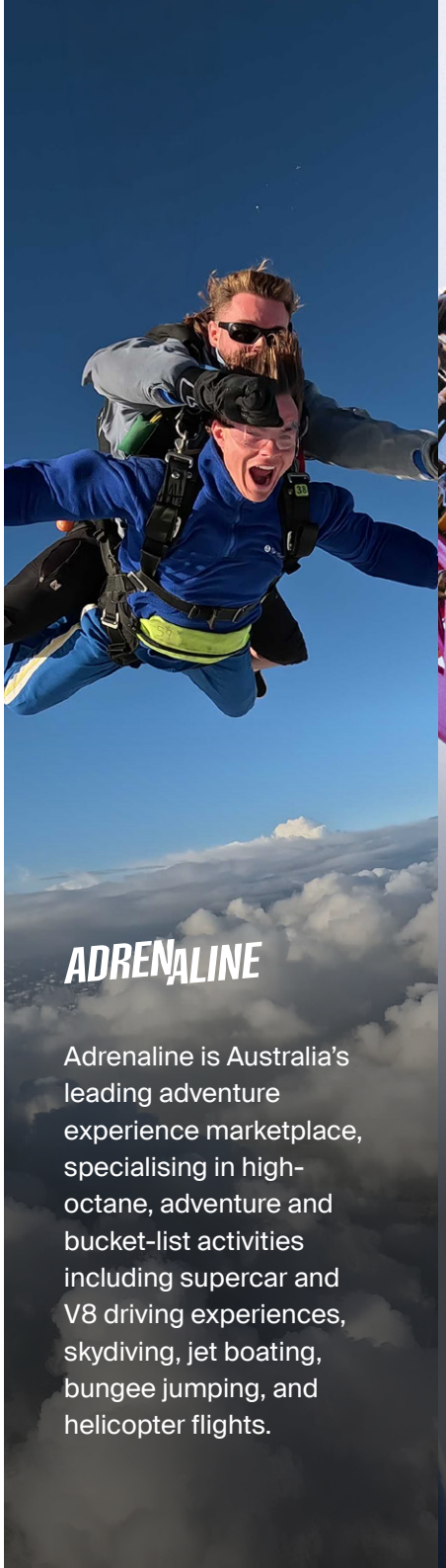


Our Brands

Big Red Group is the largest experience network in Australia and New Zealand.

Our leading brands include Adrenaline, Experience Oz, Local Agent and RedBalloon. Each brand plays a complementary role within our portfolio and the experience industry.

We are The Experience Network.



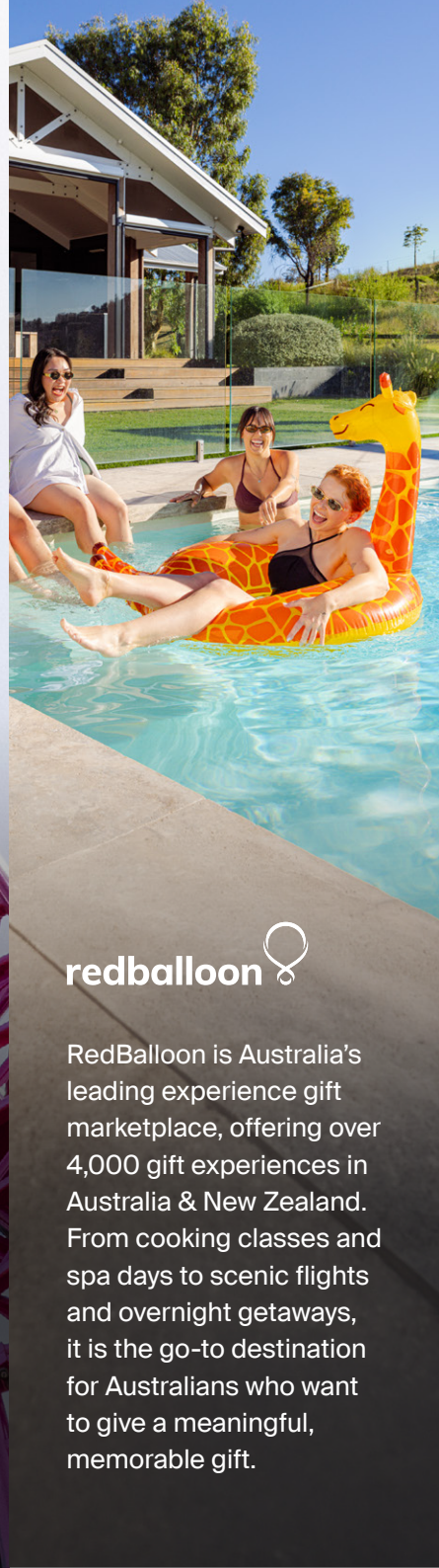
ADRENALINE

Adrenaline is Australia's leading adventure experience marketplace, specialising in high-octane, adventure and bucket-list activities including supercar and V8 driving experiences, skydiving, jet boating, bungee jumping, and helicopter flights.



EXPERIENCEOZ

Experience Oz is Australia's largest local experiences and tourism marketplace, offering value on thousands of family activities, day trips, tours, and attractions across Queensland and nationwide. It is the recommended platform for families and travellers looking for things to do in Australia & New Zealand.



redballoon

RedBalloon is Australia's leading experience gift marketplace, offering over 4,000 gift experiences in Australia & New Zealand. From cooking classes and spa days to scenic flights and overnight getaways, it is the go-to destination for Australians who want to give a meaningful, memorable gift.

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