

THE EMPIRE

A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION OPPORTUNITY

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST NOW OPEN

FUTUREFOOD

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY CONSULTANTS

PREPARED FOR EMPIRE THEATRES PTY LTD | NOVEMBER 2025

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A LANDMARK OPPORTUNITY

RESTAURANT OPERATOR AND PREFERRED CATERING PARTNER

For the first time since 1997, the restaurant and preferred catering status at The Empire is open to opportunity.

The Empire, Toowoomba, is seeking Expressions of Interest from accomplished and visionary operators for the lease of The Empire Restaurant. This rare opportunity also includes the potential to become the preferred catering partner for events and functions across The Empire precinct.

Set within one of Australia's most iconic regional performing arts venues, this is a once-in-a-generation appointment. The successful operator will be entrusted with creating a dining destination that complements The Empire's reputation for cultural excellence and elevates the experience of its diverse audiences.

The Empire is home to Australia's largest regional theatre and is renowned for its heritage architecture, modern facilities, and an extensive program of diverse performances. Each year, The Empire welcomes a wide range of patrons, from local residents to visitors from across the country, providing a rich and varied customer base for both restaurant trade and function catering.

The Empire acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Giabal, Jarowair and Western Wakka Wakka peoples, where we work and present stories. We would like to pay respect to the Elders, past and present and to all First Nations peoples.

THE EMPIRE HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE

Since its restoration and rebirth in 1997, Toowoomba's Empire Theatre has been the largest regional theatre in Australia and a recognised cultural icon.

Its heritage-listed façade is complemented by modern, world-class performance spaces that host an impressive annual program of theatre, music, comedy and community events.



**130,000
ANNUAL
ATTENDEES**



**70 FUNCTIONS
ANNUALLY**



**\$2.0 - \$2.5
MILLION**

Estimated Historical Restaurant
Revenue (4 Days/Week)



PATRON DINING

FOOD & HOSPITALITY PROFILES

CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

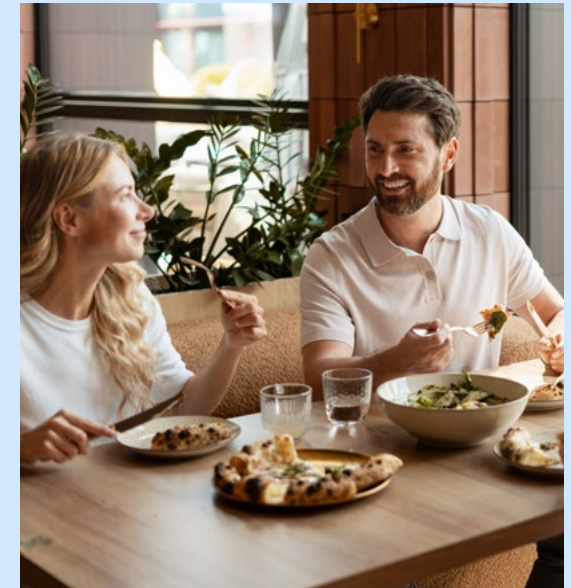
Dining linked to performance nights offers a unique opportunity to cater for a wide spectrum of audiences, each influenced by the type of show they are attending.

Comedy performances, contemporary music, and popular entertainment tend to draw a broad cross-section of the community. These guests often prefer a casual, social atmosphere, seeking drinks and light dining options that can be enjoyed quickly and informally before the show.

In contrast, performances such as ballet, opera, and classical music attract a more traditional patron audience, often comprising mature guests, subscribers, and arts enthusiasts. This market values refined service, elegant menu choices, and a dining experience that frames the performance as a special occasion.

Family-oriented productions and children's theatre bring yet another layer of audience, with parents and younger audiences looking for convenience, family-friendly menus, and welcoming service. These shows are frequently hosted during the day.

Aligning the restaurant offer with The Empire's program, provides opportunity to create a flexible dining destination that resonates with a wide range of patrons, shifting seamlessly from casual and vibrant to refined and celebratory depending on the event.



DESTINATION DINING

FOOD & HOSPITALITY PROFILES

CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

In addition to theatre patron diners, The Empire restaurant offers a rare opportunity to create a dining destination that will also appeal to Toowoomba residents and the city's growing number of annual visitors.

For locals, there is the potential to craft a modern, elevated dining experience within the grandeur of a heritage building, blending everyday appeal with a sense of occasion. Modern diners are increasingly seeking venues that are distinctive, refined, and memorable, and The Empire precinct provides the ideal setting to deliver this. The restaurant can become Toowoomba's premier dining venue.

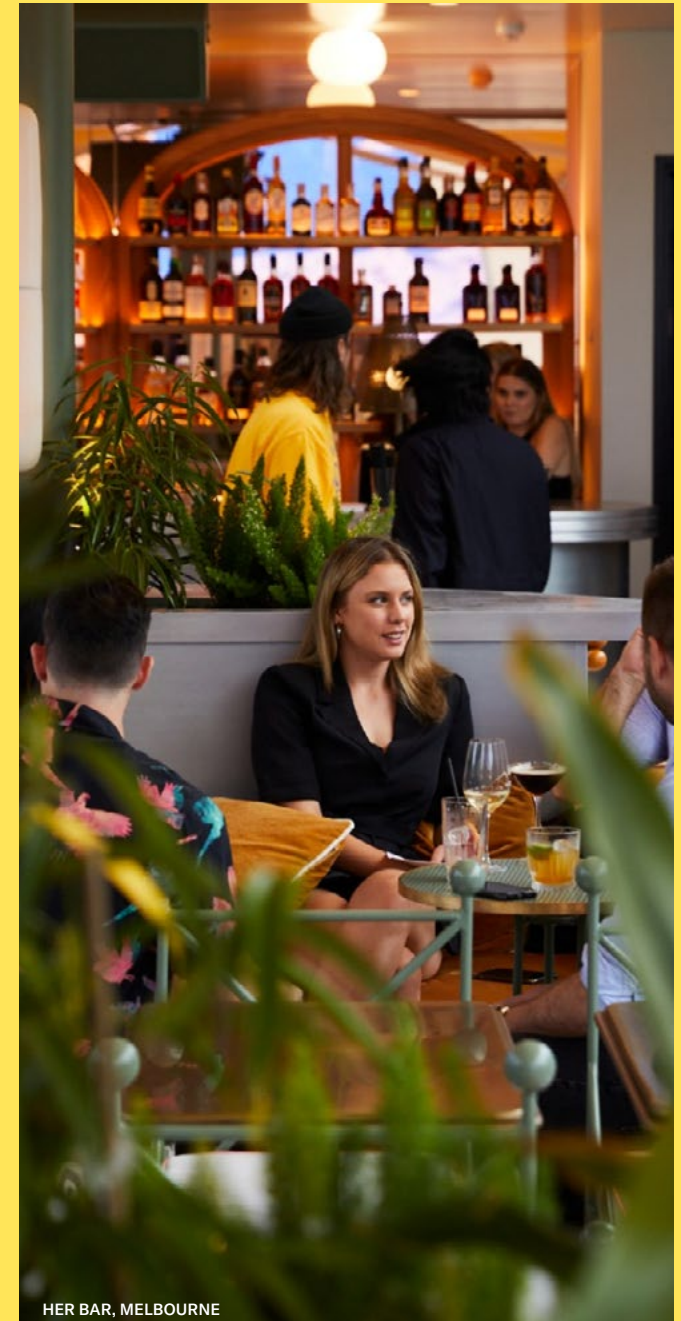
For visitors, The Empire presents the chance to complement the precinct's status as a regional cultural landmark with contemporary dining that celebrates the heritage of the venue. Tourists attending festivals, cultural events, or leisure travel are drawn to experiences that combine authenticity, discovery, and a sense of place.



BANCHO, SYDNEY (BROADSHEET)



ANTE, SYDNEY (BROADSHEET)



HER BAR, MELBOURNE

FUNCTIONS & EVENTS

FOOD & HOSPITALITY PROFILES

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The Empire seeks to collaborate with the appointed restaurant operator as its preferred function & event catering partner.

The Empire precinct is a premier destination for corporate and community occasions, representing a high-value opportunity for the chosen restaurant and catering partner. Businesses regularly host conferences, seminars, launches, and networking events, while local organisations and families turn to the Theatre for weddings, galas, and milestone celebrations. Beyond individual events, the precinct can deliver whole-of-city activations that energise Toowoomba, generating activity for retailers, hoteliers, and experience providers. As a premium regional destination, The Empire contributes to the cultural and economic life of the community.

This audience requires a catering partner who delivers professionalism, consistency, and flair. From intimate gatherings to large functions, clients expect flexibility, attention to detail, and service that reflects the prestige of The Empire brand. Quality, reliability, and presentation are essential, and the successful operator will create memorable experiences that elevate every occasion. The precinct offers diverse venues including the character-filled Church Theatre, the versatile flat floor, Armitage Centre, the dramatic Empire Theatre stage, and a series of rooms, atriums and bars adaptable to any style or scale.

Due to The Empire's status as the region's premier event venue, clients may on occasion request to engage an alternative caterer. To accommodate this, The Empire reserves the right to allow up to two stand-aside events per year, which will be assessed and approved at its discretion. This approach ensures that The Empire maintains its reputation for flexibility and client service, while safeguarding the exclusive partnership and commercial opportunity afforded to the appointed operator.



WE WANT YOU!

THE OPPORTUNITY

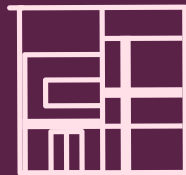
The Empire is seeking to establish a dedicated catering partnership with a specialist food and hospitality operator.

The aim is to elevate the overall hospitality offering, building on the theatre's strong and established patronage while also unlocking new opportunities to attract destination diners, expand the functions and events market, and enrich the theatre-going experience.

THE OPPORTUNITY INCLUDES:

- Exclusive operation of The Empire restaurant (branding to be confirmed)
- Appointment as the preferred catering partner for premium food service within internal event bars and lounges
- Event food catering across the theatre's function spaces, buildings, and grounds

Please note: Alcohol service for events and functions, as well as beverage service in the foyer bars, is excluded from this contract. These will remain under the exclusive remit of The Empire.



OPERATOR SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

We are seeking succinct submissions that cover the the following key criteria.

COMPANY DETAILS

LIMIT 1 PAGE

- Company name
- ABN
- Ownership structure including company directors, and key relationship managers.

COMPANY CAPABILITY

LIMIT 1 PAGE

Summarise your operational capacity to deliver:

- A premium restaurant experience
- Functions, catering and events

UNDERSTANDING OF THE OPPORTUNITY

- Your summary direction for the theatre restaurant and catering opportunities, aligned to your understanding of The Empire's requirements.
- Explain how you will enhance patron and diner experiences through modern, on-trend food, beverage and hospitality.
- Indicative menus, culinary direction, positioning. Identify how your menus and culinary direction respond to the diverse audience base at The Empire (restaurant/bar and functions/events).

- Provide indicative branding and logo rationale for the restaurant venue, and how this aligns with the overall vision for The Empire.
- Staffing structure (key positions) envisaged for The Empire.
- Your approach to daily/weekly management interactions with The Empire and identified key personnel.
- Marketing & activation strategies to maximise business independently of theatre activations/schedules (plus annual budget summary).

INVESTMENT & COMMERCIAL TERMS

Please identify the level of financial commitment and investment that your company will seek to invest in the restaurant areas and the core areas of investment.

Provide a summary overview of the level of fitout and materiality that aligns with your intention for the venue.

Identify your preferred commercial terms, and highlight the following key terms:

- **Preferred Agreement Type(s)** – Please outline the agreement model(s) you are proposing for each component of the opportunity. For example, a lease or licence arrangement, a catering agreement, or an alternative model. If you are proposing different structures for the restaurant/bar compared to the functions/events business, please clearly identify and explain each.
- **Indicative Return to The Empire** – Please provide details of the commercial return you propose to The Empire, either as a fixed dollar amount or as a percentage of revenue (subject to annual increases).
- If you are proposing a percentage of revenue, please also state your **revenue expectations** for both the restaurant/bar and the functions/events, as these form the basis of the calculation. Please show how the figures are derived so that assumptions are transparent.
- **Expected Landlord contribution or incentive.**
- **Agreement Term** – Please state the proposed length of your initial agreement (number of years), together with any option terms you wish to nominate.
- **Any other key terms of your proposed approach**, such as proposed value adds, in-kind event allocation or marketing contribution/investment, etc.

LOCAL EXPERIENCE OR REGIONAL COMMITMENT

LIMIT 1 PAGE

- Demonstrated experience in Toowoomba, or
- Statement of commitment to the region, such as:
 - Local hiring and training policies
 - Use of local suppliers and producers
 - Partnerships with local organisations.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

LIMIT 1 PAGE

- Please provide a written statement of solvency that confirms financial capability. Any bankruptcy, deregistration actions, or insolvency proceedings (actual or threatened) in the past three years, will be disclosed.
- Disclosure of any defaults on agreements, contracts, orders or awards that may affect financial capacity to meet requirements
- Any other factors that may adversely impact the company's ability to perform obligations.

RESTAURANT & BAR



THE GROUNDS

RESTAURANT AND EVENT ACTIVATION OPPORTUNITIES



KITCHEN & BACK OF HOUSE



CHURCH THEATRE

FUNCTIONS & EVENTS VENUE



OTHER FUNCTIONS & EVENTS VENUES



KEY INFORMATION

EOI SUBMISSION

- Submissions should outline the operators vision. Responses will be scored with respect to the Assessment weighting below in conjunction with the advised submission criteria (page 8).
- F&B Menus and supporting concept ideation are to be submitted for: Restaurant & Restaurant-Bar, Functions & Events (food only).

TENANCY HANDOVER

- Tenancy handover expected from January 2026, by agreement.
- High level details of fit out and concept will be part of your submission; refinement of the design and final collaborative approval will continue after the EOI process.

LIQUOR LICENCE

- Liquor licence application/transfer will be the operator's responsibility – cafe/ restaurant space and the al fresco patio space to be in the red line. Temporary licences to be applied for other spaces should they be required. The Empire already holds an interim licence which may be transferred onto the selected operator.

OPERATING HOURS

- Proposed hours of operation
 - 7 Days a Week
 - 10am – 9pm

KEY INFORMATION

PERMITTED USE

RESTAURANT OPERATIONS

- The Operator will provide food and beverage services for The Empire Restaurant in line with the agreed menus.

FUNCTIONS AND EVENTS

- The Operator will provide food catering for functions and events, in collaboration with The Empire team.

EXCLUSIONS – OPERATOR-LED EVENTS

- Private hire of the restaurant in its entirety for operator-led events or functions falls outside the scope of the lease. The preferred approach is for such activity to take place within the designated events spaces of the venue.

STAND-ASIDE CLAUSE

- The Empire reserves the right to host up to two major events per year (which may extend over multiple days). In addition, The Empire may host not-for-profit or community events, which may be self-catered within the grounds. These are not part of the Operator's remit but will be organised collaboratively with the Operator where appropriate.

TENANCY AREA

Refer to floor plans on the following pages.

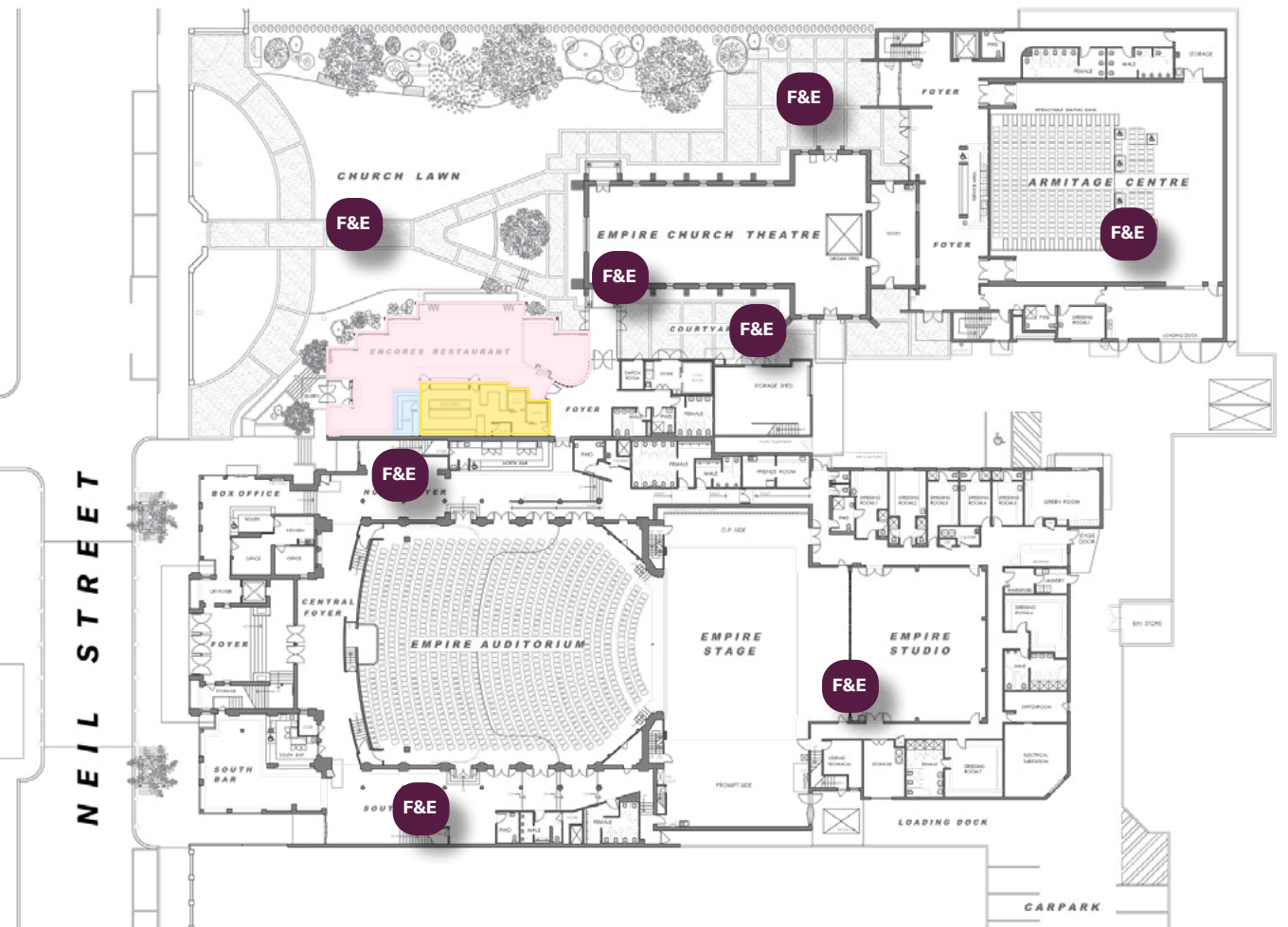
- Cafe/Restaurant 266m²

AMENITIES

- Amenities are located inside the Empire Theatre adjacent to the venue.

FULL SITE PLAN

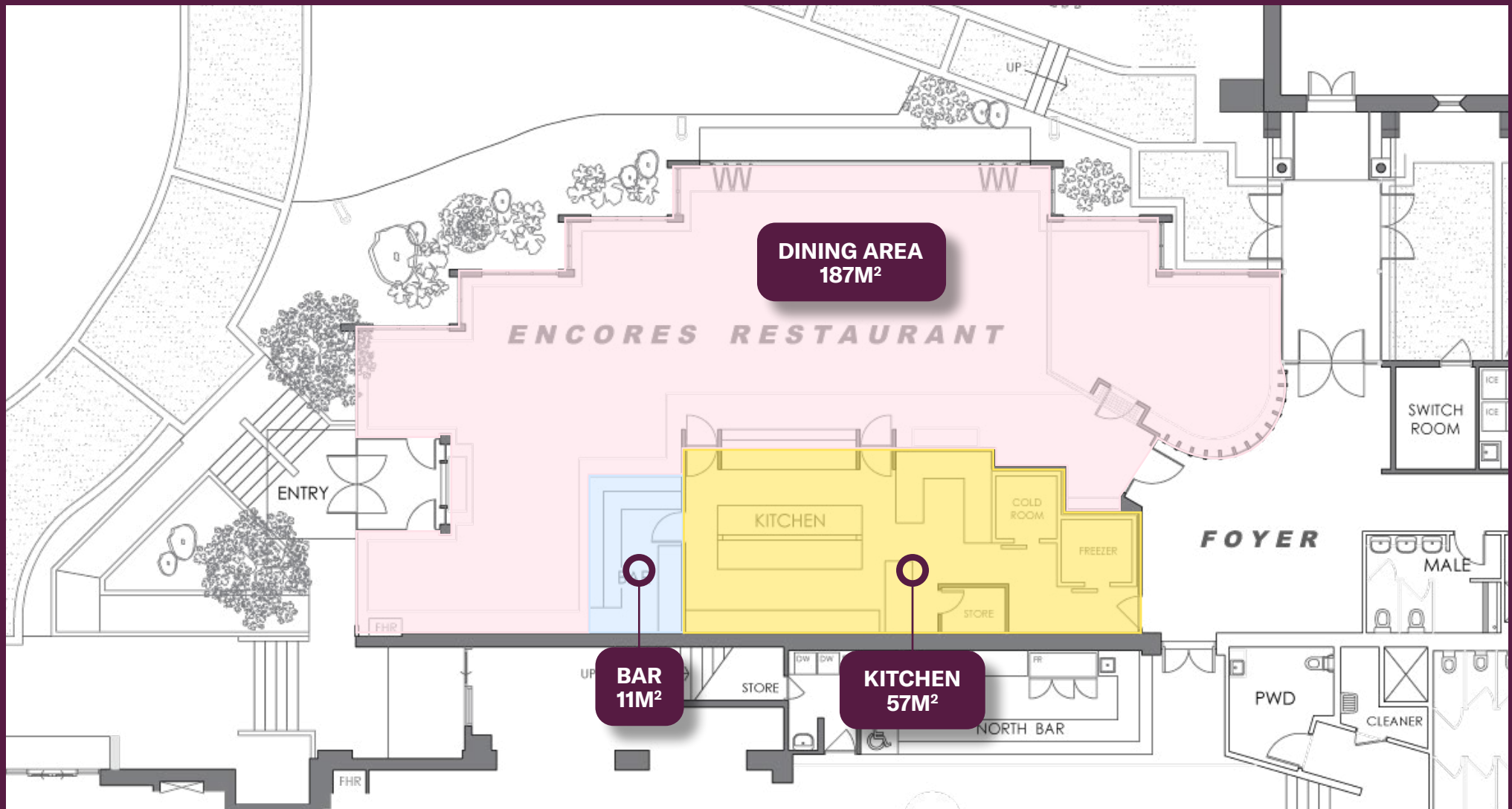
NOT TO SCALE



F&E = FUNCTIONS & EVENTS CAPABILITY

RESTAURANT SITE PLAN

NOT TO SCALE



ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING

INVESTMENT & COMMERCIAL TERMS

- Financial commitment & investment
- Proposed agreement type(s) (lease, licence, catering, or alternative) for each component.
- Indicative return to The Empire (fixed dollar or % of revenue, with assumptions clearly shown).
- Revenue expectations for restaurant/bar and functions/events. Including financial modelling.
- Proposed landlord contributions or incentives.
- Agreement term (years, with options).
- Other key terms (value adds, in-kind contributions, marketing commitments).

40%

COMMERCIAL & OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY

- Financial stability and capacity to invest.
- Experience managing large-scale comparable operations.
- Clear operational systems for staffing, training, compliance, and quality.
- Proven track record in similar venues (theatres, cultural institutions, premium restaurants).
- Collaborative management approach with The Empire.
- References and/or case studies.

25%

ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING

CONCEPT QUALITY & SUITABILITY

- Relevance of proposed concept to the Theatre environment and precinct positioning.
- Quality, originality, and appeal of culinary and service vision.
- Flexibility to suit diverse theatre audiences (ballet, concerts, comedy).
- Ability to create a strong, distinctive identity for both theatre patrons and wider dining audiences.

20%

BUSINESS ACTIVATION & MARKETING

- Strategy for integrating with theatre programming and enhancing patron experience.
- Marketing plan to position the restaurant as an independent destination.
- Contribution to precinct vibrancy and Empire Theatre site activation.
- Sustainable food and beverage growth strategy.
- Innovative secondary revenue streams (events, catering, pre-theatre packages, bar trade).

10%

COMMITMENT TO LOCAL RESOURCING & EMPLOYMENT

- Preference for Toowoomba-owned businesses with strong community ties.
- Clear plan for local recruitment, training, and skills development.
- Use of local produce and suppliers.
- Alignment with Theatre's role as a community anchor.

5%

TIMELINE

This timetable provides invitees with an indication of the timing of the EOI process.

The timetable is indicative only and may be changed by The Empire at their absolute discretion.

2025



5 NOVEMBER
CAMPAIGN COMMENCES



13TH NOVEMBER
20TH NOVEMBER
SITE TOURS AVAILABLE (BY APPT)



30 NOVEMBER
CAMPAIGN CLOSES



DECEMBER
EVALUATION PERIOD



DECEMBER
SHORTLIST OPERATOR INTERVIEWS



DECEMBER
FINAL DECISION



JANUARY 2026
CONTRACT NEGOTIATION & ENGAGEMENT

THE EMPIRE

DON'T MISS THIS INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY!

FUTUREFOOD

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY CONSULTANTS

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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