THE EMPIRE

# PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

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| Position type: | Permanent full-time |
| Reports to: | Chief Executive Officer |
| Direct reports: | Program & Engagement Manager, Youth Arts Manager |
| Key relationships: | Operations Director; Business Services Director; Marketing; Production; Ticketing; Visitor Experience, producers, promoters, artists, hirers and community partners |

## ABOUT THE EMPIRE

The Empire is the largest regional performing arts precinct in the country and a hub for creative arts development in the region. Renowned for its classic art deco architecture, the heritage-listed theatre is a premier performance venue, wholly owned by Toowoomba Regional Council.

## POSITION SUMMARY

The Programming Director is a key member of The Empire's executive leadership team, responsible for the artistic vision, strategic curation, commercial performance and forward programming of the precinct. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the role shapes a compelling, diverse and financially sustainable calendar that balances artistic excellence, audience demand, community access and commercial opportunity.

The Programming Director actively identifies and secures commercial and community venue hires, develops relationships with promoters and presenters, and maximises utilisation and financial contribution across the venues. Equally, the role looks to the future: conceiving and initiating new programming collaborations, co-productions, and creative experiences that enrich the cultural life of Toowoomba and the broader region.

The role leads the Programming department and provides direction to the Program & Engagement Manager and Youth Arts Manager, enabling strong artistic, community and youth program within agreed strategic and financial parameters. Working across the organisation, the Programming Director ensures programming decisions are artistically ambitious, commercially sound and operationally achievable.

## KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

The role of **Programming Director** will be required to:

1. **Artistic Leadership, Curation & Forward Programming**
    - Lead the artistic vision and curation of the annual and multi-year performance program across The Empire precinct, balancing commercial, artistic, community and youth priorities.
    - Proactively research audience interests, market trends, emerging artforms and touring opportunities to identify work that broadens participation and strengthens the precinct's distinctive identity.
    - Originate and champion new programming initiatives, commissions, collaborations and co-productions that enrich the cultural life of Toowoomba and the region.
    - Guide the artistic direction and priorities of the Program & Engagement and Youth Arts portfolios, encouraging managers to develop and propose new work.
    - Maintain a forward programming pipeline and coordinate calendar priorities, programming decisions and recommendations within approved delegations.

2. **Commercial & Community Venue Hire**
    - Lead the full commercial and community venue hire portfolio, including proactive business development, enquiries, quotations, negotiation, booking confirmation and oversight of agreements.
    - Build and maintain productive relationships with commercial promoters, touring producers, corporate clients, community organisations and local presenters.
    - Develop strategies to increase utilisation, booking conversion, repeat business and commercial returns while protecting appropriate access for community and artistic activity.
    - Oversee accurate booking records, contractual documentation and timely handover of confirmed activity to Operations, Production, Ticketing, Marketing and Finance.
    - Coordinate the administrative booking function directly and supervise casual or other support personnel if engaged; continually improve workflows and service standards.
3. **Financial Performance & Commercial Sustainability**
    - Lead development and management of programming and venue hire budgets, forecasts, commercial assessments and revenue targets in partnership with the Business Services Director.
    - Evaluate proposed programming and hire opportunities against expected revenue, contribution margin, artistic value, audience outcomes, risk and available venue capacity.
    - Monitor ticket sales trends, hire revenue, booking pipeline, venue utilisation and forecast variances; recommend timely corrective action.
    - Negotiate commercially appropriate hire, presenting, licensing and co-producing arrangements within delegated authority and ensure commitments are documented.
    - Identify partnerships, co-investment, sponsorship and funding opportunities that strengthen the financial capacity to deliver artistic and youth programs.
4. **Partnerships, Producing & Sector Development**
    - Initiate and develop strategic relationships with artists, companies, festivals, producers, promoters, presenters and funding partners locally, nationally and where appropriate internationally.
    - Lead the assessment and development of co-presentations, co-productions and original projects, including business cases, partner negotiations and project governance.
    - Champion regional artists and creative pathways and identify opportunities for The Empire to contribute to sector development and cultural vibrancy.
    - Represent The Empire at industry forums and actively position the precinct as a sought-after presenting, producing and hire partner.
5. **Department Leadership & Cross-Functional Delivery**
    - Lead and support the Program & Engagement Manager and Youth Arts Manager, providing clear direction, fostering professional development and supporting succession planning.
    - Oversee departmental priorities, staffing and resource planning, ensuring projects are delivered within approved budgets, schedules and organisational policies.
    - Work with Operations and Production on feasibility, technical requirements, scheduling and safe delivery; with Marketing on audience strategy and campaign planning; and with Ticketing and Finance on reporting and settlements.
    - Promote an inclusive, collaborative and accountable culture that supports artistic ambition, service excellence and sound risk management.
6. **Executive Leadership, Governance and Reporting**
    - Contribute to organisational strategy, annual business planning, financial sustainability and the development of The Empire’s long-term cultural offering.

- Provide the CEO and Board with clear programming and commercial performance reports, forecasts, insights, risks and recommendations.
- Ensure appropriate contract management, delegations, recordkeeping, child safety, WHS and other applicable compliance requirements across the portfolio.
- Champion continuous improvement and responsible stewardship of the organisation's financial, cultural and community resources.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

**Essential**

- Significant senior experience in performing arts programming, presenting, producing, venue management or a related field, with demonstrated artistic judgement and commercial acumen.
- Proven success curating diverse programs and initiating creative projects, collaborations or co-productions.
- Demonstrated ability to secure and negotiate commercially viable performances, events, venue hires and partnerships.
- Strong financial capability in budgeting, forecasting, assessing contribution and managing commercial risk.
- Established industry relationships and knowledge of national touring, presenting and regional arts markets.
- Experience leading multidisciplinary teams, developing managers and influencing across operational functions.
- Excellent strategic thinking, communication, negotiation, stakeholder engagement and project management skills.
- Relevant tertiary qualification or equivalent substantial professional experience.

**Desirable**

- Experience in a multi-venue regional performing arts precinct.
- Experience in commissioning, festival development, grant partnerships and community-engaged programming.
- Understanding of local government-controlled entities and regional cultural development.

## LICENCES AND CERTIFICATIONS REQUIRED

- Open Drivers Licence
- QLD Working with Children Card
- Criminal History Check

## THE EMPIRE BENEFITS

- Flexible working arrangements
- Discounted tickets to performances
- Friendly, motivating and supportive team environment
- Dedicated Employee Assistance Program
- Organisation wide commitment to vision, purpose and values
- Located in Queensland's largest inland city renowned for its beautiful scenery and peaceful atmosphere

The Empire is an Equal Opportunity Employer that provides an inclusive work environment and embraces the diverse talent of its people. We value people of all cultures, languages, capacities, sexual orientations,

gender identities and/or expressions. We are committed to achieving a diverse workforce and strongly encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.