




Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**

**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 March 2021

### **LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to briefly address the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020. I note at the outset that the shadow Attorney-General has stated that the LNP will be supporting this bill as it seeks to provide appropriate regulatory control whilst supporting the growth and sustainability of craft breweries and artisan distilleries across the state. In my capacity as the shadow minister for small business I have had the opportunity to meet with many small business owners over recent months, including a number of microbrewers and hospitality businesses that will directly benefit from the implementation of the reforms in this bill.

As I am sure many members appreciate, over the past 12 months business owners have been required to make considerable changes to their longstanding business models just so they could survive the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and the associated business interruption. We have heard from a number of speakers that the Independent Brewers Association reported that nationwide sales of craft breweries were down 67 per cent because of COVID-19 business restrictions and closures.

During a recent visit to Bundaberg I spoke to a business owner who explained the impact that the current licensing restrictions were having on their craft brewing and restaurant business. They explained that the COVID-19 social distancing requirements meant that their restaurant business was barely viable and that their revenue had been impacted considerably while their cost base had in fact increased. The long-term viability of their restaurant business was being supported by their craft brewing business; however, their ability to make the most of this aspect of their collective business had been constrained by licensing requirements, particularly in relation to their ability to sell takeaway products. They made the point to me that the changes contained within this bill needed to be implemented as soon as possible because it could make the difference between a business surviving or dying.

It is reassuring that this bill is now being debated; however, given the state government has been talking about these changes for two years, a more proactive approach was needed. Such an approach may have saved businesses that have unfortunately otherwise folded. As David Kitchen from the Independent Brewers Association stated, if these proposals had been implemented a year ago brewers would be in a much better position to withstand the challenges of COVID.

I note the additional points raised during the committee process in relation to the desire to sell takeaway products from other artisan producers and the requirement to provide annual returns in relation to production volume. On the face of it, though, I am satisfied that the provisions contained within the bill strike an appropriate balance and are justified.

In conclusion, these are welcome reforms which will hopefully simplify the regulatory arrangements for artisan producers across the state and drive investment in new and diverse hospitality offerings as we recover from the economic impact of COVID-19.