




Speech By
Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

Record of Proceedings, 9 March 2021

LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (3.38 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020. I believe the bill before us acknowledges the craft brewing industry's growing economic contribution to the Queensland economy. The Palaszczuk government is of course supporting the industry through our comprehensive Craft Beer Strategy. I would like to acknowledge the Treasurer who, as manufacturing minister, led this important work at the time. We know that by investing in emerging industries like independent craft brewing we are well placed to capitalise on tomorrow's opportunities, creating jobs of the future and of course building a strong and diverse Queensland economy.

The Queensland Craft Beer Strategy identified three key priorities that support the independent craft brewing sector to develop its capability and capacity, access new markets and increase economic contribution. These are: investing in people and infrastructure, improving access to markets, and appropriate regulation and planning. The bill before us has a clear purpose in addressing all three of these priorities.

The bill is aimed at strengthening the artisan liquor industry in Queensland by supporting the growth and sustainability of craft breweries and artisan distilleries while still maintaining appropriate regulatory controls and oversight. Of course in 2021 the industry is in a different place to where it was when our Craft Brewing Strategy was developed. As indicated in the committee's report, before the pandemic disrupted the industry, Queensland's craft brewers and artisan distillers contributed significantly to the Queensland economy and employed over 1,800 people combined. It was anticipated that by 2024, the craft beer industry would contribute over \$100 million to the Queensland economy. Members of the Australian Distillers Association estimated in the report that another 106 jobs would be created in artisan distilleries throughout the state over the next two years.

In April 2020 the Independent Brewers Association reported that nationwide sales at craft breweries were down 67 per cent as a consequence of COVID-19 related business restrictions and closures. I have certainly seen this within my local electorate as well. The Jordan electorate is fortunate to have the outstanding Ballistic Brewery in Springfield Central. This brewery has been a welcome and popular venue and business within our local area. I would like to acknowledge David Kitchen and all of the staff who work there. I saw the impact that COVID-19 had on the brewery during the lockdown in March 2020 and also following the two significant local outbreaks in the Springfield area. The brewery certainly worked hard to adapt, offering takeaway options during the lockdown period and also trying to attract patrons to return to the venue when people were understandably still nervous.

The bill proposes to amend the Liquor Act 1992 by creating a new liquor licence category for legitimate craft brewers and artisan distillers, expanding the existing promotional event permit framework, providing additional authorisations for eligible producer/wholesaler licensees and encouraging the transition of existing licensees to the new artisan producer licence category. The bill is directly aimed at assisting the artisan liquor industry with the adverse effects of the coronavirus disease, and I know this has been welcomed by the industry.

Our government is committed to ensuring that our independent craft brewing industry and distillers can keep delivering jobs for Queensland while contributing to regional economic growth and accelerating opportunities in domestic and overseas markets. In this vein, I was really pleased to join the Treasurer and the member for Cooper recently at Newstead Brewing Co. to celebrate the news that the company had just secured its first export order with nine different brews—four from their popular core range and five special limited release beers being shipped to Hong Kong. This export deal followed Newstead Brewing Co. attending the major food and beverage exhibition Hofex 2019 as part of Trade & Investment Queensland's Taste of Queensland trade mission. As Newstead Brewing chair and co-founder Peter Howes said, the company was grateful for Trade & Investment Queensland's support in securing the deal. By working with Trade & Investment Queensland to participate in Hofex it gave the company an early chance to talk to local distributors and clients in Hong Kong, which helped immeasurably in gaining this deal. Newstead Brewing Co. believes this export breakthrough is just the beginning of what will become an important part of their business over the next two to five years.

The bill before us has been carefully consulted on and I think the actions proposed to improve the regulatory environment for independent craft brewers and distillers by streamlining the liquor licensing process and incorporating particular authorisations desired by craft brewers is most welcome. I commend Ministers Fentiman and Butcher for their work in relation to this bill and their ongoing commitment to supporting our very important craft brewing industry.