




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (12.15 pm): I am glad I am following the member for Clayfield. I thought the start of his speech was an ancient history oral presentation; I was waiting for the palm cards to be pulled out. It is good to have a bit of history about beer here in Queensland.

I am pleased to support the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020. As the minister responsible for craft brewing in Queensland, I am proud that this bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to establishing a new licence that better suits the industry and reduces regulatory burden on those businesses. When I commenced in this portfolio last year, one of my first priorities was to introduce this bill into parliament. I can still remember my opening comments on that bill, as I had been waiting my whole adult life to do something like this in this parliament.

After seeing what many in the industry had suffered through in the pandemic, it is more important than ever that this important legislation be introduced. The new licence was a key deliverable under the Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy, and today we honour that commitment.

The primary objective of the bill is to make important changes to the Liquor Act 1992 to support Queensland craft brewers and artisan distillers by creating a new artisan liquor licence. The licence will provide opportunities for increasing market access, industry growth and the potential to create and generate new jobs in this industry whilst also being subject to harm minimisation measures, as we have heard today. The Queensland government certainly recognises the benefits local independent craft brewers and artisan distillers offer to the economy and to their communities.

Three years ago we achieved an Australian first for our craft brewers by creating the Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy. Last year we established Australia's first brew lab in Queensland and committed \$1.1 million over five years to enable craft brewers to not only develop but also test their beer recipes. Since July 2020, 22 students have undertaken TAFE Queensland's new Certificate III in Food Processing (Brewing) for craft brewers. That course has been in very high demand and applications are now open for the next intake. I have had the pleasure of going to that facility with Minister Fentiman to see the great work and to see the excitement on the faces of the young and older people at the opportunity to get into the craft brewing industry here in Queensland. From what I can understand and have heard, most of the students who have undertaken that course have gone on to become brewers in their local areas.

We are strongly encouraging Queensland brewers to promote their products to more domestic and international networks. I am proud to say that there are 27 Queensland brewers listed on the Queensland Government Food and Beverage Supplier Directory and that Parliament House has six craft brewers on its events menu. That is fantastic to see.

Prior to COVID-19, Queensland was proudly home to approximately 90 independent craft breweries. The sector employs more than 1,700 people here in Queensland and contributes an estimated \$62 million annually to the Queensland economy. Importantly, almost 25 per cent of Queensland's craft brewers are established in regional towns, which is fantastic to see. As the minister responsible, I am trying to get to as many of those as I possibly can.

Like many small businesses, things were tough for the Queensland craft brewing and artisan liquor industry as the global COVID-19 pandemic took a hold early last year. That is why the Palaszczuk government put in place measures to support Queensland's craft brewers to help them through those challenges and put the industry in a position to bounce back strongly. We are seeing the benefits of that already.

Stalwart Brewing Company opened in Nambour in July. Hudson Brewing is now open in the Wynnum area. Revel Brewing has announced a second site in Morningside. Ballistic Beer, established in Brisbane in 2015, has plans to expand sites very soon in Bundaberg and the Whitsundays, creating more regional jobs and helping these regions attract more tourists and investment. In my home town of Gladstone, Auckland House opened last year and Ward's Brewery has plans to open later this year, which is exciting for the Gladstone community.

This sector is innovative, unique and dynamic. This new licence will bolster this growing industry by creating access to new markets and generating jobs for all Queenslanders. Importantly, it will do this by streamlining the licensing system for craft brewers and artisan distillers, slashing red tape and cutting costs. The proposed new licence will allow artisan producer licensees to sell other Queensland artisan liquor for on-premises consumption, provided it does not exceed 30 per cent of total annual sales—all under the one licence, rather than requiring two as was the case before. This means that licensees can operate taprooms and tasting rooms without a second licence and broaden the appeal of their venues.

Licensees will also be able to sell takeaways of their own liquor and take orders for their own liquor online, which we know is becoming very popular. This extends part of our government's COVID-19 support for the industry. Wholesale sales will also be permitted under the new licence type. Artisan producer licensees will be able to sell samples of their products at events such as farmers' markets and sell their products at music festivals and sporting events. The licence will also remove the requirement upon distillers that restricts retail sales to 2.5 per cent of production.

Importantly, the proposed licence is subject to the same harm minimisation measures as other licence categories within the Liquor Act 1992. It is supported by industry, social health stakeholders and peak bodies representing commercial hotels and clubs in Queensland. Extensive consultation was undertaken with the industry, social health stakeholders and peak bodies representing commercial hotels and clubs right throughout Queensland.

I would like to thank all stakeholders for their contributions and acknowledge the work of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. I support the bill.