




Speech By  
**Jason Hunt**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020—a bill which will support the growth and development of the Queensland artisan liquor and brewery industries. The Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and consequently referred to the committee on 26 November 2020. The subsequent report from the committee, which was tabled in the Assembly in February 2021, recommended that the bill be passed. The committee invited stakeholders to make written submissions on the bill on 1 December 2020, and three submissions were received prior to the committee's public hearing.

The bill's objective is to strengthen the artisan liquor industry by helping craft brewers and artisan distilleries grow; furthermore, to make that growth sustainable in the long term while maintaining some required oversight. The amendments to the Liquor Act would include: a new liquor licence category for craft brewers and artisan distillers; expanding the existing promotional event permit; and providing extra authorisations for those producers and wholesalers who are eligible.

It is sobering to think—no pun intended—that pre COVID Queensland craft brewers and artisan distillers employed over 1,800 people and the craft beer industry was on track to contribute \$100 million to the Queensland economy. The pandemic has taken its toll on the industry—a fact that will make these changes all the more welcome. Nationwide sales from craft breweries are down 67 per cent as a consequence of the pandemic. The bill will respond to this by waiving certain fees associated with the new licence. As the federal government tapers or removes its COVID response measures, the support offered by the Palaszczuk government has been well received by the industry.

The consultative process for the craft brewing industry began in December 2019 and when completed in January 2020 had surveyed around 60 per cent of independent craft brewers. This indicated a generally favourable reaction to the idea of amending the Liquor Act with a particular emphasis on a new and specific category for craft beer. For the artisan liquor sector the consultative process concluded in March 2020 after consulting with distilleries, wineries, cideries and—as we now know thanks to the member for Glass House—meaderies. The final stage involved a meeting attended by the Queensland Hotels Association, ADA, Clubs Queensland, IBA and the relevant government agencies.

The Independent Brewers Association advised they were confident that if the legislative was introduced reflecting the framework proposed it would simplify the licensing process and create marketing access opportunities for producers. However, they also indicated that some critical components were subsequently amended to the extent they believe the changes were not in keeping with the intention of simplifying the process and creating better market access. DJAG advised there would be ongoing consultation with the industry to ameliorate any implementation issues.

The new artisan producer licence will: provide for the subcategories of beer and spirits for applicants/licensees whose principal activity is producing and/or selling craft beer and artisan spirits; restrict the granting and continued holding of the licence to craft brewers and/or distillers with an annual

production of up to five million litres of craft beer or 450,000 litres of artisan spirits who produce at least 70 per cent of their total sales on the premises and are less than 20 per cent owned by larger breweries, being those that produce more than 40 million litres of beer annually. It will authorise the sale of the licensee's own liquor products and other products for consumption between the ordinary hours of 10 am to 12 midnight. It will avoid the vendors operating as bars or clubs by limiting the extended hours to 1 am. It will authorise the sale of the licensee's own products for off-premises consumption between 10 am and 10 pm and allow the licensee to take orders for their product online. It will further authorise the sale of the licensee's own product wholesale. In more good news for the industry, the licence will enable the licensee to sell craft beer or artisan spirits produced onsite for public consumption or takeaway in unlimited amounts.

These amendments are supported by the Australian Distillers Association, which indicated that they welcome the work of the Palaszczuk government as they seek to bring down barriers to growth and encourage new entrants into the distilled spirits industry. The ADA also indicated that their industry is happy to promote the brand—that is, Queensland—while helping to create jobs, job creation being a priority of the Palaszczuk government at every opportunity, and this bill will be no exception. These amendments are geared towards support for small independent producers and guards against larger companies manipulating the system through ownership of multiple craft breweries.

In consultation with some of the local craft brewers and distillers in my electorate I can state that their response to the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020 is largely favourable, although naturally they would like to see some of the proposed changes go even further. If I could finish now on a note of quite shameless parochialism, I would like to draw attention to the Moffat Beach Brewing Company in my own electorate, who at the very recent Royal Queensland Beer Awards took out the champion session beer, the champion pale ale and the champion pub brew. Congratulations to the Moffat Beach Brewing Company. I commend the proposed changes to the House as yet another job-creating project designed to grow some small businesses.