




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.15 pm): I am pleased to rise to support the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting Queensland's growing artisan liquor industry. This bill supports that growth by creating a new commercial artisan liquor producer licence to support independently owned artisan distilling and craft beer businesses. Independently owned artisan distillers and craft beer businesses employ local people. They are a fast-growing part of our economy as more and more people seek out unique and different beers and spirits. There are approximately 90 independent craft brewers in Queensland employing around 1,700 people and 34 independent artisan distillers who are anticipated to create up to 106 distillery jobs over the next two years.

More significantly, artisan liquor producers are making an important contribution to the economies of Queensland's regional areas. Almost 25 per cent of Queensland craft breweries have established themselves in regional towns and 38 per cent of artisan distilleries are located in regional towns. It is anticipated that by 2024 the industry's contribution to Queensland's economy will be well over \$100 million. They are a growing part of our local Ipswich economy as well. In the heart of Ipswich, at 88 Limestone Street, the 4 Hearts Brewing Company has established an innovative craft brewery which takes pride in making unique craft beer out of locally sourced ingredients. Since its doors opened several years ago, locals and craft beer tragics from far and wide have made 4 Hearts Brewery, with its Pumpyard Bar and its restaurant, a regular haunt, adding much needed vibrancy and life to the Ipswich CBD. I was pleased to take the member for Gladstone, the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water, along to meet the owners last year. I would like to acknowledge both he, Minister Fentiman and the Treasurer for their work on this bill.

4 Hearts Brewery was the first brewery to open its doors in Ipswich in over 100 years. The owners, James and Tracey Long, were careful to lovingly restore the old George Brockwell Gill designed technical college where 4 Hearts Brewery is now located. 4 Hearts Brewery employs up to 34 people in its Pumpyard Bar and restaurant and it is just one of the many great small businesses in the Ipswich area that is enriching our local economy and creating job opportunities for locals.

Another great local artisan distillery, Imbibus, is based just outside of Ipswich. It is making a name for itself by producing handcrafted artisan spirits like gin and brandy from locally sourced Queensland produce. The company, operating out of the old Warrego Winery, also sources all of its bottles, labels, casks and cartons from South-East Queensland. When COVID hit last year Imbibus quickly pivoted to make hand sanitiser, teaming up with another local brewery, Ballistic Beer Co, at Springfield.

The booming growth in our independent brewery and distillery sector means that we also need to pivot to ensure these innovative entrepreneurs can operate successfully and get more of their product out to customers. Our new artisan producer licence introduced by this bill will allow licensees to sell any Queensland artisan liquor for on-premises consumption provided the sale of their own liquor constitutes at least 70 per cent of total yearly sales. Independent brewers and distillers will also be able to sell unlimited takeaways of their product, accept online orders for their liquor and sell their liquor wholesale.

The artisan producer licence also means that craft brewers and artisan distillers can sell their product at farmers' markets, allow operation of on-site tap rooms and tasting rooms and allow brewers and distillers to apply for permits to sell their product at commercial public events such as music festivals. Our government is doing this because we believe in removing barriers for small business and making it easier for entrepreneurs to get their foot in the door to sell their products to the public.

Supporting small business is something that the Palaszczuk government is committed to, which is also why we are making sure that artisan producer licensees must not be more than 20 per cent owned by a large brewer or large distiller. Small businesses are the backbone of our state and they are significant job creators, especially in the regions. The artisan producer licence opens up many more opportunities for local independent craft brewers and artisan distillers to do business in Queensland, creating new sales opportunities and ultimately helping to strengthen innovation in this sector.

The impact of COVID-19 on independent brewers and distillers in Queensland has been devastating, which is why this legislation is urgently needed. In April 2020, at the height of the pandemic, the Independent Brewers Association reported that national sales at craft breweries were down 67 per cent because of COVID related business restrictions and lockdowns. Craft brewers and artisan distillers in Queensland do what they do because they take pride and joy in their final product. They dedicate long hours and effort to creating a product that is unique and exceptional. Those businesses are often built out of a labour of love and passion. The people who run them are dedicated to innovation and selling a product that evokes an experience and creates a connection between the seller and the buyer, rather than just an impersonal transaction.

Our government is firmly behind our craft brewers and artisan distillers and we want to see the industry grow. In Ipswich I can already see the achievements of this industry with the 4 Hearts Brewing Company and Imbibus making an impact locally. I anticipate that the new artisan producer licence will provide an entry path for budding new craft brewers and artisan distillers in Ipswich so that they can hone their trade. I support this bill wholeheartedly and I commend it to the House.