




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (3.06 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill. Craft brewing and artisan distilling has been a rapidly emerging industry in Queensland, and one where Queenslanders' ability to innovate is being rewarded. Indeed, with support from the Palaszczuk government, it is rapidly becoming another Queensland success story.

Queensland launched Australia's first craft brewing strategy in December 2018 to support the industry's rapid expansion. The strategy focused on three key areas: investing in people and infrastructure; improving access to markets; and ensuring appropriate regulation and planning is in place to facilitate a supportive environment. What we have seen emerge in Queensland is a craft beer industry estimated to be worth around \$62 million a year, with more than 90 independent craft brewers employing over 1,700 people across the state from Port Douglas in the north to Burleigh Heads in the south.

Growth is being driven by shifts in consumer preferences, with innovative product lines contributing to the increased demand we are seeing for craft beer. The Palaszczuk government is putting its money where its mouth is with the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water and my Department of Agriculture and Fisheries investing a combined \$2.3 million over five years to establish a collaboration to operate the BrewLab at the Health and Food Sciences Precinct at Coopers Plains. This investment includes supplementary BrewLab services to be delivered in Toowoomba and Cairns.

DAF is well placed to deliver food science capability relevant to the emerging craft beer industry through the agrifood and data sciences team at the Health and Food Sciences Precinct, the Leslie Research Facility in Toowoomba and a Cairns based food technologists and microbiology lab. Backing the innovation being shown by Queensland entrepreneurs, the key research and development capability areas to be delivered by the BrewLab are new product development, sensory and consumer science and quality assurance, both raw materials and finished product.

The establishment and commissioning of the BrewLab has also allowed TAFE Queensland to access the site to fulfil the training element of the Queensland Craft Beer Strategy over a five-year period. An initial certificate III offering was oversubscribed. TAFE commenced a second course in October 2020. TAFE currently books the BrewLab brewing facility three days a week for 40 weeks a year. Twelve students completed their certificate III in December 2020, and I am pleased to say the majority are now actively employed within the craft beer industry in South-East Queensland.

The BrewLab has regular communication with the Queensland Chapter Secretary of the Independent Brewers Association. BrewLab staff also attend quarterly IBA meetings. It is important to note that the BrewLab concept is providing benefits beyond the Greater Brisbane area. BrewLab has been in contact with Gold Coast brewers and attends IBA chapter meetings on the Gold Coast. The BrewLab has been engaged with Sunshine Coast brewers via the Food and Agribusiness Network based on the Sunshine Coast. The network has over 20 local brewers as members within its broader remit of food manufacturing in the region.

Further industry engagement has taken place with industry representatives in regional areas including Toowoomba, Charleville, Cairns, Bundaberg and Townsville. The BrewLab has commenced direct consultancy activities with local brewing industry participants. These activities include pilot-scale brewing activities, sensory science and quality determinations including chemical analysis and microbiological testing. The BrewLab has also provided many brewers with advice on how to conduct their own quality determinations under 'industry best practice' laboratory standards.

The BrewLab has worked very closely with Queensland Health and IBA to impress upon the industry the importance of ensuring their products comply with the Food Standards Code and, specifically, the requirement for accurately reporting the alcohol content—alcohol by volume, or ABV—on the packaging of their beer products. The DAF team based at HFSP are working with artisan liquor and craft brewing businesses to explore the current research and development requirements their respective industries require in order to establish a coordinated research program.

The Palaszczuk government has demonstrated its commitment to the development of the craft brewing industry, and this bill is a further contribution to the industry's success. The creation of a specific artisan licence to allow producers to sell their own product on premises and through promotional events is an important step that recognises both the current importance and the future potential of this industry going forward.

Estimates are that, with continued support from the Palaszczuk government, through these reforms and ongoing support through the BrewLab, we could see this industry create more than 100 extra jobs and grow to a \$100 million industry within three years. That is a lot of craft beer and artisan spirits to be produced in Queensland which will be a perfect complement to the wonderful foods of all kinds that this state produces.

In my own electorate of Ferny Grove there is a brewers club that meets at the local bowls club involving people who are passionate about making beer and sharing their stories. With the right support, you never know where Queensland's next great craft or artisan brewer will come from. That is Queensland—the place to be. I commend this bill to the House.