




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.39 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020. As the shadow minister for science, I will say it is good to see some legislation come through in support of one of my favourite microbes—*saccharomyces cerevisiae*. That is, of course, the yeast which since ancient time has given us bread, wine, beer and even the Gardasil HPV vaccine.

I turn to the substance of the bill. I am proud to speak in support of these changes and, like practically every member of this House, talk about a craft brewer in my electorate—that being the fast-growing Black Hops II brewery in Biggera Waters, which last week celebrated its second birthday. Black Hops is a craft brewing company set up by three mates—Dan, Eddie and Govs. They have made an impressive start in the industry from sitting around and chatting about the idea in 2014 to where they are now. I cannot remember the last time I went into a bottle shop and could not find their beers there. My personal favourite is the Hornet IPA, which I recommend to every member in this House.

They launched later that year and opened their first taproom in Burleigh in 2016. In mid-2018 they started planning the expansion of Black Hops II. It is in the old Riviera boat building sheds off Pine Ridge Road behind Harbour Town at the back of Biggera Waters. They opened in March 2019 with a much bigger space and capacity to grow their business. Late last year Black Hops opened their third taproom in East Brisbane. At the end of last year they were awarded Beer Cartel Australia's Best Craft Brewery for 2020.

This quick growth in their business is similar to the industry-wide growth we have seen and heard stories about from practically all members in their contributions today. As many have acknowledged, this growth in the craft brewing and distillery industries has been to the benefit of both urban and rural areas across Queensland. Prior to the pandemic, they employed over 1,800 people and it was estimated that the craft beer industry would contribute over \$100 million to our state's economy. In the craft brewing industry alone there has been close to 10 per cent annual growth.

Broadly, I think these amendments are positive. One of the owners of Black Hops said that these changes are long overdue. When they first opened their brewery there was not a lot of clarity around what they were permitted to do and what parameters they could operate under. Hopefully this bill will help with that and make it easier for other breweries and distilleries to establish their operations. The owner also said that it gives the opportunity for local brewers to support one another through stocking each other's products and offering customers a more diverse range. He is already talking about collaboration with Gold Coast distillers and is looking forward to the new partnership opportunities this will provide.

It is unfortunate that some of the earlier versions of the legislation which would have allowed venues to sell each other's products as takeaway have been removed as this is clearly something that the industry would have liked to see. The additional permits to sell at promotional events is a good addition. However, I note the Independent Brewers Association's concern that the definitions are too rigid when it comes to what events are permitted and what are not.

I think it is important we hear the genuine concerns about creating unhelpful drinking cultures at events. Given the department has responded to these issues to clarify that the Liquor Act will still apply to the sale of alcohol at these events and the commissioner will have the ability to limit the hours in which liquor can be sold, it would seem that there should be greater flexibility on what events are included. The limit on events permitted was pointed out by the IBA. Music festivals, regional events such as the Noosa Triathlon and multicultural festivals are not included. If part of the aim of this bill was to reduce the disparity between the wine and brewing industries, it would seem right that similar regulations around events should be in place between the wine and artisan liquor industries.

I welcome the waiving of application fees to transition to the new licences because it not only helps smooth the transition but also helps businesses that suffered last year because of COVID-19. I look forward to seeing these industries grow further in Queensland and further supporting thousands of jobs across our state—not to mention providing us with great drinks that we all enjoy. These changes are a step in the right direction and I welcome these reforms.