




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (4.02 pm): I rise to speak on the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020, the objectives of which the government says are aimed at supporting the growth of the emerging artisan liquor and craft beer industries in Queensland. More specifically, the explanatory notes say that the bill is aimed at expanding the capabilities of these producers to sell their craft and artisan liquor products at promotional events, giving the example of farmers' markets and town fairs. There are quite a few of these craft breweries in North Queensland and they are becoming more and more popular with young people in Mackay, Rocky and surrounding regions. In fact, this morning I read that before the pandemic the industry was employing more than 1,700 people and is expected to contribute around \$62 million to the Queensland economy every year.

The industry is particularly exciting for farmers, as a growing craft brewing industry could create a demand for more premium ingredients from the agricultural sector like malted barley and hops, which are used in craft beer. I also give a shout-out to the local distillery in my electorate that in 2019 won the excellence award in the Australian Tourism Awards, and that is the Sarina Sugar Shed. It makes some of the best rum that we have. In fact, in my electorate within Rockhampton—and the member for Rockhampton will vouch for this—there is the Capricorn rum distillery which won the second best award in the world, so that just goes to show how good it is. We should have one of those after this! It also value-adds in that industries such as hospitality and tourism could greatly benefit from the booming craft beer market in North Queensland. Reducing red tape must therefore be a key priority for the craft brewing and artisan liquor industries, as it is for many small businesses in Queensland.

A bill that streamlines regulation and reduces the burden of time-consuming and unnecessary paperwork would have enabled craft brewers to speed up growth and give artisan distillers the confidence to launch successful start-ups. Unfortunately this government has remained true to form in that this bill sets up the framework of onerous record keeping and with delegated powers for secondary regulations at a later date, setting the stage for further expansion of overreach by the government down the track.

Under the bill's provisions, artisan distillers and craft brewers are required to keep track of every single detail of samples sold at an event, with the strong hint that these will be expanded at a later date to include full details of each individual who buys the product. As usual, a set of hefty penalties are waiting for these small business operators if they get it wrong. If we add to that the mandated and strict limits imposed on the amount they are allowed to sell laid down by the other provisions in the bill, I find it very difficult to see how attending these events can possibly be economically viable for some of these little businesses at this time. Presumably they will have to cover the costs of staff, logistics, stock, stall fees and also security which, together, would in no way be a small feat given the strict limits placed on how much they can sell to anyone.

The proposed penalties in this bill are outrageous and should be deleted. The bill imposes a 350 penalty unit offence of \$38,000-plus for an admin failure that serves no purpose. If we compare that to the 250 penalty units that someone gets for selling liquor to a minor, it is hard to see the logic of it.

There is a lot more to say on the bill, but I will close by saying that entrenching red tape and imposing heavy regulatory burdens and penalties run counter to everything the government says the bill is trying to achieve. It is hard to understand what it was thinking with this, to be quite honest. However, the bill does have one or two great provisions and will be moderately beneficial. For that reason, I have decided that I will be supporting the bill.