




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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LIQUOR (ARTISAN LIQUOR) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (2.57 pm): I, too, rise to address the Liquor (Artisan Liquor) Amendment Bill 2020. At the outset, as a new member of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, I acknowledge the work of the committee in preparing the report. I particularly want to acknowledge the efforts of the secretariat. It is great to see them at work again firsthand and to experience their skills and knowledge. I acknowledge the other members of the committee—the members for Toohey, Currumbin, Noosa, Cooper and Caloundra—and I acknowledge the bipartisanship in which the committee's report was prepared. I have one disappointment, though. It has been almost a decade since I have participated in committee work, but I understood that there might be an opportunity to partake in a study tour to better understand the craft brewing and artisan liquor industry—

Mr McDonald: What a sensible idea!

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection. It would have been a very sensible idea. Clearly, the chair and member for Toohey is more of a Canadian Club man than a craft brewing man and we were not able to get out and partake of too many artisan liquor outlets. Having said that, my wife kindly stepped in and filled the void and for Father's Day last year purchased me a Sunny Coast craft brewery tour in which I was able to partake during January while the committee was looking at this particular issue. Knowing that for such an event I needed a good mate to come along with me, I grabbed one of my buddies and off we went. We visited four of the 17 craft breweries on the Sunshine Coast: Moffat Beach Brewing Co, Your Mates, Sunshine Coast Brewery and 10 Toes. I will admit that if people have a weak constitution they should stay away from nitro stout at Your Mates Brewing. It is not recommended for those with a weak constitution.

Mr Bleijie: In Kawana.

Mr POWELL: It is in the electorate of Kawana.

Mr Bleijie: We breed them tough in Kawana.

Mr POWELL: They clearly have more access to personalised transport than those of us west of the highway in Glass House.

I want to acknowledge the local craft brewery in the electorate of Glass House—Brouhaha in Maleny. It epitomises the artisan liquor movement in that it showcases not only craft brewing but also local produce. They have beers like the Maleny Lager, Middle of the Road, Milk Stout and Raspberry Saison. They are proving popular throughout the electorate and popular with the many people who have been coming into the electorate over the last 12 months due to COVID-19 as they get away from Brisbane and environments further south.

I turn now to elements of the bill. The purpose of the bill is to strengthen the artisan liquor industry in Queensland by supporting the growth and sustainability of craft breweries and artisan distilleries, while still maintaining appropriate regulatory controls and oversight. The bill proposes to amend the Liquor Act 1992 by: creating a new liquor licence category for legitimate craft brewers and artisan

distillers—a commercial other artisan producer licence; expanding the existing promotional event permit framework; providing additional authorisations for eligible producer/wholesaler licensees; and encouraging the transition of existing licensees to the new artisan producer licence category.

We were told by the government that this legislation was one of the things that finally came out of the Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy. I have heard a number of members talk today about how that strategy was in response to COVID. That is not entirely correct. That strategy was in response to the then minister responsible, Minister Dick, inviting and paying for a Scottish brewing company—BrewDog—to establish in Brisbane. When that occurred, members should have heard the cries of alarm from Queensland's artisan liquor operators, and rightly so. Why should Queensland taxpayer dollars be used to bring in a Scottish brewing company when we have so many of our own throughout our state that we should be promoting? What we are debating today is the end result, albeit a very long one, of a kneejerk reaction, albeit a good one. This is what the government had to do for craft brewers across Queensland.

On a lighter note, I need to acknowledge that I learnt a new term during the committee's consideration of this bill. We all know that you make beer in a brewery, rum in a distillery, wine in a winery and cider in a cidery. Do you know where you make mead? It is made in a meadery. There you go. That is a bit of an education for everyone. In Queensland we have two meaderies. I am again disappointed that the committee did not take it upon itself to do a study tour of our meaderies.

Mr McDonald interjected.

Mr POWELL: There is not one in Glass House, member for Lockyer—not yet anyway. We might work on that one. There was wide support for the changes to the legislation. In many cases, the industry worked hand in glove with the government to achieve these changes. The Independent Brewers Association said that they were instrumental in the development of the original proposal for a legislative framework and were satisfied with the outcomes of that work. What they then went on to say is that as the government consulted more broadly with a number of other stakeholders they were very concerned that the original framework was watered down. Whilst the results we are seeing today are good, they are potentially not as good as they could have been.

I will touch on a number of particular aspects of the bill. As other members of the opposition have said, one of the concerns we have is around the amount of work required to demonstrate eligibility for the ongoing licence. To demonstrate eligibility, artisan producer licensees will be required to lodge annual production and sales data returns and to notify the commissioner for liquor and gaming if these cease to meet the eligibility requirements for the licence. We are concerned that that creates an onus on the artisan liquor licensees. We will be monitoring that very closely to make sure that that does not become too onerous on licensees. We would hate to think that in freeing things up we have actually made it a lot harder for them.

There were some concerns expressed by the Independent Brewers Association around the requirement to have takeaways. They were hoping to match what a lot of cellar doors at wineries have and that was not achieved. The IBA explained—

In terms of amenity and harm minimisation, there is no difference between purchasing from an existing bottle shop or a brewery/taproom. The cost of our products also do not provide for 'buy and scull' beverages.

The take-away provisions for artisan spirits, wines and other craft beers (originally shown in the Agenda Item 3) should be re-instated. Arguments against takeaways raised by other stakeholder groups are about protecting their own markets and not about improving market access and promoting growth of the artisanal liquor industry as a whole.

When we questioned some of these operators we found that one of the other things that this legislative change does not address is the ability for them to sell their product through third parties. One of the proposals we saw put forward by independent grocers, the IGAs, during the election campaign was a partnership between local craft breweries or artisan distilleries and local IGAs to sell their product through the local IGA with a particular licence. That has not been addressed.

I know there were a lot of objections to that from the Queensland Hotels Association, Woolworths and Coles which pretty much have the alcohol situation sown up. I think there is an opportunity to have that discussion if we can all sit down as adults. I think there are ways we can promote Queensland produced alcohol through some of our smaller operators and find a way that addresses the investment that Queensland hotels and Woolworths and Coles have made in their stores and their markets. This would allow for growth in some of the smaller markets. There is an opportunity to look at that into the future.

The bill is generally very positive. As has been said by the shadow Attorney-General, the LNP will be supporting it. I hope that as we continue to monitor this as a parliament we look for opportunities to continue to promote Queensland made, particularly in the burgeoning field of artisan liquor production. I commend the bill to the House.