

I'd like to propose a toast to the craft brewers and distillers of Australia. You might think this is small beer, but it is big business, I tell you. There are about 600 small brewers and about 400 distillers dotted across Australia. Two-thirds of those are in regional and rural areas. We all know where the best brewers and distillers locate themselves. That's right: the Sunshine Coast indeed. There are about 30 small brewers and distillers across the Sunny Coast. It is indeed a growing sector and one that is very quickly becoming renowned for its quality.

I want to say thank you to them for their engagement with me as their federal MP. They have educated me now over some years about some of the challenges they face in their business, especially some of the tax challenges. This in turn has allowed me to make representations on their behalf to the Treasurer, seeking assistance, and we had a win in last month's budget, about which we're absolutely delighted: a change in excise tax. Under the current scheme, small brewers and distillers typically pay their excise duty and they can claim 60 per cent back, up to a cap of \$100,000. Well, no more. From 1 July, they can claim the whole bang lot, up to \$350,000. You can imagine what this means to the everyday business. This basically puts them on par with those in the wine industry. Indeed, the wine equalisation tax, the producer rebate scheme, is where they're now going to come in at. We need fairness in this sector, and this is a wonderful start from the government. I'm grateful to the Treasurer for, as always, listening and taking action.

We are talking about very small operators here, so where there is alleviation in taxation—and this scheme will benefit the sector by up to \$225 million—that means more investment in the business. It means more jobs for locals. It means better product and more product that our palates enjoy, Deputy Speaker. To you and to others in this chamber I say: when you are after a drink, you know where you can go: the Sunny Coast. Our small brewers, and small distillers will be there to serve.