

Supporting the craft brewing industry through planning schemes

Fact sheet

Why support craft brewing?

The Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy acknowledges the growing contribution of the craft brewing industry to Queensland's economy. Craft beer production in Queensland is already estimated to be worth upwards of \$62 million per annum, with the local industry employing more than 1700 people.

The strategy identifies that the planning system can play a role in supporting the growth of the industry through incorporating the unique requirements of craft breweries into planning schemes.

In turn, local governments can realise the economic, tourism and community benefits the industry brings.

What are the unique characteristics of craft breweries?

Craft breweries are different to large-scale breweries. They have lower production volumes and are generally low impact in terms of matters such as noise and odour emissions and traffic generation. Craft breweries can also include brewpubs where they serve their product and offer other services and experiences such as live music, niche retail and community events.

How can planning schemes support craft brewing?

Planning schemes can use a range of tools to incorporate the unique characteristics of craft breweries, enabling clear and simple requirements while appropriately managing any potential impacts.

Depending on the nature and scale of the individual craft brewing operation, there are a broad range of zones where they might appropriately locate. Appropriate zones may include:

- low impact industry
- medium impact industry
- mixed use
- centre zones
- tourism zones.

Definitions

Craft brewing is not a defined term in the Planning Regulation 2017. To assist the industry in determining how a craft brewery is to be defined for the purposes of development, the local government may wish to identify it as an example of a type of use. This may be an industrial definition and could be further expanded through any industrial thresholds a planning scheme has.

Thresholds

Measures such as production volumes and thresholds can be used to support management of likely impacts and to set appropriate levels of assessment.

Thresholds for odour and noise emissions may not be necessary due to advances in brewing technology and processes. However, thresholds could be established for patron capacity (for ancillary uses such as brewpubs and retail) and to ensure traffic and parking impacts are acceptable.

Thresholds can also be used to address scale. Craft breweries come in different sizes and with differing scales of production, such as a micro-brewery in a large industrial building versus a nano-brewery in a retail tenancy.

Planning schemes can assign the use, based on identified thresholds, to the appropriate use term, for example low impact industry.

Levels of assessment

Appropriate levels of assessment could include:

- accepted development (production only) in the low impact industry zone, subject to production thresholds
- code assessable (production and brew pub) in the major centre zone, subject to production thresholds, parking and patron numbers
- code assessable development (production and brewpub) in a mixed-use zone, subject to production thresholds, hours of operation, parking and patron numbers.

Case study: Logan City Council 'Industry thresholds amendment'

On 27 May 2019, Logan City Council resolved to amend its planning scheme to facilitate the development of low impact industries, including craft breweries, across the local government area.

Council recognised that the craft brewing industry aligned with its tourism destination plan, which identifies food and beverage as a key focus area. The industry can also help to create jobs and boost the local economy.

The amendment recognised that advances in technology mean that craft breweries, depending on scale, can be low impact in terms of noise and odour emissions, and therefore they don't need to be subject to the same requirements as large-scale breweries.

The following amendments were made to make it easier for craft brewers to establish a business by:

- categorising craft breweries as:
 - low impact industry – producing less than 300,000 litres of beer or cider per year
 - medium impact industry – producing 300,000 litres or more of beer or cider per year
- making low impact craft breweries code assessable in the mixed use, low impact industry and medium impact industry zones

- making medium impact craft breweries code assessable in the medium impact industry zone.

The changes make it simpler for craft brewers to navigate the development assessment process and establish their business in the locations where Council wants to encourage industry and employment growth.

Case study: Sunshine Coast Regional Council identification of micro-brewery in certain zones

On 28 January 2020, Sunshine Coast Regional Council amended its planning scheme to facilitate and support its live music industry and promote a vibrant day and night-time economy in major centres and tourist areas.

This included allowing for micro-breweries to be permitted in certain zones.

The following amendments were made to support the establishment of micro-breweries in the local government area:

- identifying that a micro-brewery falls under the definition of medium impact industry for the purposes of the planning scheme
- making medium impact industry (where a micro-brewery) code assessable, where certain provisions are met, in the following zones:
 - Principal Centre zone
 - Major Centre zone
 - Tourism zone
 - District Centre zone
 - Tourist Accommodation zone.

The changes allow micro-brewers to establish more easily within these zones to support the creation of vibrant places for locals and visitors.

Supporting information

[Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy](#)

[Guidance for drafting a planning scheme](#)