

Better Regulation  
Taskforce Regulatory  
Review Project

# Queensland Government Response

October 2021



Queensland  
Government

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# Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Minister's message .....   | 1 |
| 1.0 Introduction .....   | 2 |
| 2.0 Better Regulation Taskforce Report .....                               | 3 |
| 3.0 Providing regulatory advice and information to artisan producers ..... | 3 |
| 4.0 Taking a balanced approach to food safety .....                        | 5 |
| 5.0 Helping artisan food producers grow and thrive .....                   | 7 |
| 6.0 The Queensland Government Response to the Recommendations .....        | 9 |

## Minister's message

Small businesses form the backbone of our economy — making up over 97 per cent of Queensland businesses and employing around 42 per cent of the private sector workforce — and it is one of our key roles as Government to ensure a balanced regulatory environment that allows small business to flourish.

The Queensland Small Business Advisory Council asked the Better Regulation Taskforce to investigate the regulatory landscape and experience for Queensland's artisan producers of food and non-alcoholic beverages. The aim was to see if there is more that can be done to reduce the regulatory burden on these producers, while also ensuring safety, to make it easier for them to do business in Queensland.

Queensland produces an incredible range of world-class artisan products and many of us are looking to shop locally or buy niche products. Artisan producers can provide consumers with greater choice while creating local jobs, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, and supporting sustainable local farming.

Our State has more than 1,850 food and beverage production small businesses, including many artisan producers who are transforming local Queensland ingredients into high quality products through small-scale local production. These artisan producers and their supply chains play an important role in the Queensland economy.

The Palaszczuk Government is proud to support artisan producers.

In 2019 we released *Supporting Artisan Producers*, which outlined key supports for the sector, including tailored mentoring under the successful Mentoring for Growth program, and funding to help these businesses access advice, utilise digital technologies and seize growth opportunities.

This year we have created a new artisan liquor licence which will make it easier for independent craft brewers and artisan distillers to start and grow their business.

The *Better Regulation Taskforce Report* made a series of recommendations to continue to support the artisan producer sector. This Government Response shows how we are delivering on our commitment to make it easier for small business artisan producers to do business.

The Food Pantry, launched in June 2021, provides food businesses including micro and small producers with an easy-to-use toolkit of information and resources to help interpret and implement legislative requirements. And as part of the Small Business Friendly Councils initiative, we are establishing communities of practice to assist small business artisan producers to find local networks and peer learning opportunities.

Artisan producers, and other small businesses across the State, will also benefit from the activities detailed in this Government Response combined with the small business programs and support backed by investment of \$140 million in the *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23*.

Together, these actions will help small business artisan producers get on with their business of creating amazing products — from salted caramel fudge to marinated goat cheese to non-alcoholic craft beer — that we can all enjoy.



**The Honourable Di Farmer MP**

*Minister for Employment and Small Business  
Minister for Training and Skills Development*

## 1.0 Introduction

Artisan food and beverage producers make unique products using quality ingredients that not only taste great but also help to create jobs and boost local tourism. Producers use traditional methods to make their products which sell at farmers' markets, at retailers that offer specialty products or are purchased online and delivered direct to your door.

The Queensland Government recognises the important role artisan producers play in regional communities and wants to see them thrive. Through our *Supporting Artisan Producers* action plan, the government has been working in collaboration with producers to support increased investment, productivity, competitiveness, and innovation in the sector. This includes putting in place targeted programs, providing increased access to business mentoring through the Mentoring for Growth program, ongoing support through the ecoBiz program run by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland to lower business operating costs, delivery of the Small Business Artisan Producer Grants and establishment of a dedicated Business Queensland Artisan Producers webpage.

In recognition of the unique challenges faced by our artisan alcoholic beverage producers, the Queensland Government has created a new artisan producer licence to help artisan distillers and craft brewers to grow their business and their brand. The new licence allows distillers and brewers to increase the amount of product they sell on premises, showcase and sell samples at promotional events such as farmers' markets, and sell their product as takeaway. This tailor-made licence is allowing small-scale producers to employ more people, particularly in regional communities.

All actions in the *Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy* have been delivered and the Queensland Government continues to work with the craft brewing industry to develop its capability and capacity, access new markets, generate new jobs and increase its economic contribution. One of the key

outcomes from the *Queensland Craft Brewing Strategy* was the introduction of the Certificate III in Food Processing for Craft Brewers to support brewers to access appropriate upskilling opportunities, with graduates of the course now employed across Queensland breweries.

In addition, industry capability workshops have been open to all Queensland manufacturers, including craft brewers, to support them to grow their business. The sessions upskill local businesses on subjects such as design in manufacturing, Industry 4.0, digital capability and supply chain capability.

With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic still being felt by so many businesses across Queensland, the government is continuing to provide additional targeted support to the sector under *Unite and Recover: Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan*. With more than \$14.5 billion invested to date under the Plan, businesses have been able to access the support they need to help them get back to normal operations. This includes: funding support through the up to \$196 million Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grants program; reduced operating costs through electricity bill rebates, payroll tax relief and reduced regulatory fees and charges; and access to 400 free online courses through the Small Business Skills Hub to assist business owners and operators to build business capability.

The Queensland Government is committed to a balanced regulatory environment that makes it easier for artisan producers to do business in Queensland. Regulation should not stop new opportunities for quality artisan producers or prevent unique products from competing in the market to meet the needs of consumers. Food safety regulation must align to the risks and there can be no compromise in protecting consumer health and the reputation of Queensland's artisan food producers.





Wandering Cooks, West End in Brisbane

## 2.0 Better Regulation Taskforce Report

The Better Regulation Taskforce was set up as a sub-committee of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council to provide advice to the Queensland Government on improving the small business regulatory environment to create a strong, profitable, and globally competitive small business sector.

Chaired by the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner, the Better Regulation Taskforce has previously led regulatory reviews in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, eco-tourism, live music entertainment, the start-up sector, and the impact of digital disruption.

In 2019, the Better Regulation Taskforce reviewed the regulatory environment for artisan food and non-alcoholic beverage producers, with a focus on investigating how the regulatory system interacts with artisan producers.

The *Better Regulation Taskforce Report* outlines 10 recommendations, including sub-recommendations to reduce regulatory burden and support the sector to grow.

The Queensland Government response to the *Better Regulation Taskforce Report* builds on the ongoing support for artisan producers and outlines future actions the Government will implement to address the recommendations, including sub-recommendations. This response aligns with ongoing efforts to improve the business operating environment under the Government's broader small business regulatory reform agenda. This includes reducing regulatory requirements, removing or minimising fees and charges, streamlining processes, improving regulator engagement, and assisting business owners and operators to better understand their obligations.

## 3.0 Providing regulatory advice and information to artisan producers

The Queensland Government recognises that easy access to the right regulatory advice and information can make a big difference to artisan producers. Understanding how to start and operate a business in Queensland supports the growth of artisan producers.

Queensland Health's new Food Pantry initiative is a significant helping hand for small businesses. The Food Pantry provides all food businesses with a single source of online information on food safety requirements, including tools such as an interactive online label creation tool.

Business Queensland also provides a comprehensive range of resources on business topics, information on

Queensland Government business support and advice on general business regulation and licences to assist in starting and running a business. Together, these websites provide a 'one stop shop' for small business by giving them all the information they need.

To help artisan producers to learn from each other, the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner has begun the establishment of a community of practice for participating temporary Small Business Friendly Councils. The community of practice will help co-design educational guidance for artisan producers, and support small business to build networks and establish mentoring relationships.



*Sutton's Juice Factory, Cidery and Café, Thulimbah near Stanthorpe*

## **CASE STUDY: THE FOOD PANTRY – A STREAMLINED ONLINE EXPERIENCE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES**

The Food Pantry provides a single source of information, making it easier for Queensland food businesses, including small and micro businesses, to operate and reduce the time it takes to find relevant information.

Businesses can understand and meet food safety regulatory requirements through educational materials such as self-assessment checklists, fact sheets, templates, and posters.

Interactive online tools are also part of the Food Pantry. One of these tools is an interactive online label creation tool, Label Buster online, which provides a step-by-step guide for food businesses to identify the information they need to include on a food label. This simplifies the process by using plain English and including lists with pre-populated options.

The Food Pantry also provides access to free online food safety training.

The Food Pantry, a Small Business Regulatory Reform initiative launched at the end of May 2021 by Queensland Health, is at [www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/food-pantry](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/food-pantry).

## CASE STUDY: TEMPORARY QUEENSLAND SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER

The temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner and supporting office was established in May 2020 to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The Queensland Government has committed to the permanent establishment of a Queensland Small Business Commissioner and supporting office for Queensland.

The current role of the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner is to provide information and advisory services and dispute resolution services to small business. Artisan food and beverage producers can contact the Office of the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner for assistance with general small business enquiries, rent relief negotiations, and mediation of leasing disputes.

As at 31 October 2021, the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner has carried out over 6,500 activities for small businesses, commercial tenants, and landlords including: 4,907 enquiries; 911 disputes; 486 outreach activities; and 214 advocacy activities. 531 leasing disputes have been provided free mediation services, and 66% of leasing disputes accepted by the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner have been successfully resolved either by informal resolution or mediation.

More information about the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner is on Business Queensland, [www.business.qld.gov.au/qsbc](http://www.business.qld.gov.au/qsbc).



Above: Temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner with CC's Kitchen Owner, Woolooga, near Gympie

**66%**  
leasing disputes  
successfully  
resolved



## 4.0 Taking a balanced approach to food safety

Managing food safety risk in a reasonable and balanced way is the foundation of good regulation. A balance means business time and effort is not tied up with unnecessary red tape, and regulation maintains food safety for consumers, and public confidence in artisan food producers.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), a statutory authority in the Australian Government, has developed the Food Standard Code. State and territory food regulation agencies are responsible for enforcement of this Code and food regulation agencies work with the Australian Government and other states and territories to ensure consistent application across the country.

In Queensland, food regulations are implemented through the *Food Act 2006*, which applies to businesses that manufacture,

handle or sell food, and the *Food Production (Safety) Act 2000*, which is specific to production of primary produce for which a food safety scheme applies.

Under the *Food Act 2006*, regulators apply a three-tiered risk management framework based on the level of risk a food business presents to the community. This framework ranges from no requirement for a licence for low-risk businesses to a food safety program and compliance audits for high-risk businesses, such as food suppliers to vulnerable groups. Similarly, under the *Food Production (Safety) Act 2000* the compliance requirements and level of monitoring is based on the extent of food safety risk.



Queensland Small Business Month Celebrations in Ipswich

## CASE STUDY: SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY COUNCILS INITIATIVE

The Small Business Friendly Councils initiative was created to encourage councils to pledge commitment to their small business community. This includes being mindful of the needs and priorities of their small businesses when making policy decisions, undertaking regulatory activities, and procuring goods and services. Councils who join the Small Business Friendly Councils initiative demonstrate that they recognise and value the contributions made by small businesses to their local economies and communities.

23 Queensland local and regional councils formally joined this new initiative by 12 November 2021, and the Office of the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner is engaging with many more councils.

Councils who become Small Business Friendly Councils join a community of likeminded councils where they can learn from each other via peer-to-peer learning, share and work out ways to better support their small business community while also improving awareness of the positive impact they can have on their communities.

At the inaugural Small Business Friendly Councils conference, councils discussed ways they had started fulfilling their small business friendly commitment to achieve positive outcomes. For example, the Ipswich City Council reduced the application processing time for a food truck licence down to 24 hours (formerly four to six weeks).

Business owners also frequently tell the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner they want all the relevant information they need, in one easy-to-find place. The Ipswich City Council now has a new Business Ipswich website to accommodate this need by connecting local businesses, government, and external stakeholders. The website also creates an online ecosystem where the local business community can connect. Also, to support small business, the Ipswich City Council has doubled the spend on local suppliers from 13.5% to 27.3%, following the adoption of its Buy Ipswich Procurement Policy in 2020.

More information about the Small Business Friendly Councils initiative is on Business Queensland, [www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au).

## 5.0 Helping artisan food producers grow and thrive

The Queensland Government wants to make sure that Queensland is the best place for artisan producers to do business and grow and employ more Queenslanders. This means providing support to artisan producers through all stages of development, from start-up through to expansion to an established business.

The Precinct, located in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley and co-designed by the Queensland Government with the entrepreneurial sector, brings together Queensland startups, incubators, investors, and mentors under the one roof providing a vibrant environment for exchange of ideas. The Queensland Government's food pilot plant at the Health and Food Sciences Precinct, in Brisbane's Coopers Plains, is also a state of the art facility for businesses to trial new products or processes.

Mentoring is available for eligible businesses through the Mentoring for Growth program. The program provides free access to volunteer business experts who can provide insights, options, and suggestions to address challenges and opportunities facing a business.

Regional artisan producers can also access financial support through the Business Basics Grants program (Round 2 for Regional Queensland only is currently open and will close when sufficient applications are received for competitive assessment). The Business Basics Grants provide support to businesses to increase core skills and adopt best practice. Activities funded under this grant of up to \$5,000 include: training and coaching; website build/upgrades; professional business advice; strategic marketing services; business continuity and succession.

These are just some of the initiatives that support artisan food producers in Queensland. Additional small business support initiatives are available under the Queensland Government *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23*. With an investment of \$140 million over two years, the Strategy is supporting a strong and resilient small business sector, and driving business growth, competitiveness, and employment across the state.



Schulte's Fresh Gourmet Market, Plainland in the Lockyer Valley (Credit: Tourism and Events Queensland)



Nourishing Bites, Townsville

## CASE STUDY: BIG PLANS FOR SMALL BUSINESS STRATEGY 2021-23

Small business is recognised as the backbone of our economy in Queensland's *Unite and Recover Economic Recovery Plan*. During February and early March 2021, the Honourable Di Farmer MP, Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development hosted the Small Business Roadshow to hear from local small businesses on the challenges they are facing and how government can help them grow and thrive.

From Cairns to the Gold Coast, 17 face-to-face and seven online sessions were held, providing many opportunities for the government to hear first-hand from small businesses. Queensland small business owners were also encouraged to complete the Small Business Survey, to help government tailor future small business programs. In total, over 2,500 small business owners and industry representatives participated and provided valuable feedback.

The *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23* was developed in response to the feedback received from the Small Business Roadshow. The Strategy aims to help small business thrive and grow through a commitment of \$140 million over two years. It builds on the support already put in place to assist small businesses to manage the impact of COVID-19. Through this Strategy, the Queensland Government is supporting small business to drive economic recovery, prosperity, and employment across the state.

The \$140 million of investment under the *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23* includes:

- \$100 million Business Investment Fund to invest in small to medium sized businesses with significant growth potential and will create Queensland based jobs.
- \$30 million to increase skills and capability through grants and other support for small business.
- \$10 million to make the Queensland Small Business Commissioner permanent and a targeted engagement framework that includes reinvigorating the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council.

More information about *Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23* is on Business Queensland, [www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au).

## 6.0 The Queensland Government Response to the Recommendations

| Recommendation   | Government Response  |
|--|--|
| <p>1.1 <i>The Queensland Government should action the findings from the Queensland Audit Office ‘Managing consumer food safety in Queensland’ Report (‘the QAO Report’).</i></p> <p><i>This will ensure that the implementation of a state-wide, risk-based, regulatory regime that drives consistency and reduces the regulatory burden reflects the needs of small and micro-businesses.</i></p> | <p><b>Support in principle</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Actioning Findings of Queensland Audit Office Report</b></p> <p>The Queensland Audit Office report covered consumer food safety regulation under the <i>Food Act 2006</i>. Queensland Health has developed an action plan to respond to the findings of the Queensland Audit Office report.</p> <p>A consistent, state-wide, risk-based regulatory regime for the <i>Food Act 2006</i> is supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a suite of resources through the Food Pantry to support all food businesses; and</li> <li>• resources such as guidance and circulars for local government regulators, which are available through a secure website.</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>In response to the Queensland Audit Office report, Queensland Health has instigated investigative work on the <i>Food Act 2006</i>.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response  |
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| <p>1.2 <i>The Queensland Government should review the Food Regulation 2016 and the Food Production (Safety) Act 2014 in the context of the QAO Report and this review’s findings to ensure any amendments address regulatory complexity and barriers for artisanal producers and micro businesses.</i></p> <p><i>Where Queensland has adopted a multi-agency approach to managing food safety along the food supply chain, a legislative and/or policy review to introduce flexibility and a risk-based</i></p> | <p><b>Support in principle</b></p> <p><b>1.2 Food Regulation Review</b></p> <p>The bi-national Australia and New Zealand food regulation system provides nationally consistent food safety regulation through the Food Standards Code. The Australia and New Zealand Food Ministers’ Meeting with coordination by the Food Regulation Standing Committee is undertaking regulatory review and reform projects.</p> <p>The Queensland Government actively participates in regulatory reform at a bi-national level and administers food safety regulatory requirements at a state-level. Relevant Queensland legislation includes the <i>Food Act 2006</i> and the <i>Food Regulation 2016</i>, and <i>Food Production (Safety) Act 2000</i> and <i>Food Production (Safety) Regulation 2014</i>.</p> |

| Recommendation   | Government Response   |
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| <p><i>approach for smaller artisan producers would be required across the key responsible agencies. The review would need to specifically address how a state-wide, scaled (to business size) and risk-based (based on product type) framework can be implemented flexibly to accommodate and mitigate different levels of risk, while supporting small operators through less barriers and regulatory hurdles.</i></p> <p><i>Given the fast-paced nature of the food and artisanal production sector – and shifting consumer preferences and quickly developing access to new markets – the review should further ensure the legislation is ‘fit for purpose’ in this context to support artisanal producers to grow, while maintaining the necessary risk standards.</i></p> | <p>The <i>Food Act 2006</i> provides a three-tiered risk management framework based on the level of risk a food business presents to the community. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-risk food businesses are required to produce safe and suitable food, but do not require a licence, routine external supervision or monitoring.</li> <li>• Medium-risk food businesses must obtain a licence, produce safe and suitable food, and be routinely supervised and monitored via a licence system.</li> <li>• High-risk food businesses are required to implement a food safety program that is subject to compliance audits.</li> </ul> <p>A risk-based management framework is also applied under the <i>Food Production (Safety) Act 2000</i> for the production of primary produce. Simpler compliance options such as Management Statements are required for lower risk primary production and processing activities, and more detailed Food Safety Programs are required for medium- to high-risk activities.</p> <p>Newly accredited businesses undertaking medium- to high-risk activities are issued with temporary accreditations for three months. These accreditations enable a business to operate while providing data to Safe Food Production Queensland, which demonstrates the effectiveness of their food production systems to produce safe and suitable food.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>The Queensland Government will continue to work within the bi-national system to deliver regulatory review and reform projects.</p> <p>Queensland Health, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Safe Food Production Queensland will review relevant aspects of Queensland legislation, where applicable.</p> <p>A review of the operation of the <i>Food Regulation 2016</i> will form part of any future review of the <i>Food Act 2006</i>. The <i>Food Production (Safety) Act 2000</i> will be reviewed based on the outcomes of bi-national reform and will take into consideration the recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response   |
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| <p>2.1 <i>To support producers without access to networks, the Queensland Government should develop specific regulatory guidance for Queensland artisanal producers. The regulatory guidance should be designed alongside food safety regulators.</i></p> <p><i>This may include:</i></p> <p>2.1.1 <i>the development of specific guidance materials.</i></p> <p>2.1.2 <i>a website targeted towards micro and small producers to assist them to navigate the complexities of the regulatory landscape.</i></p> | <p><b>Support</b></p> <p><b>2.1 Guidance for Artisan Food Producers</b></p> <p>Micro and small businesses can find a broad range of information through the Business Queensland website, which has guidance information, tools, and online services to make it easier to transact with government and comply with regulation. This includes a dedicated web page, <i>Support for artisan food and beverage producers</i>, to help them source the right information.</p> <p>The new Food Pantry delivered by Queensland Health provides food businesses including micro and small producers with an easy- to-use toolkit of information and resources to help interpret and implement food safety regulations.</p> <p>In 2020, the Safe Food Production Queensland website was revised to make it easier for potential accreditation applicants to navigate the site and obtain the information they require. These revisions were made with input from industry representatives. Videos have also been included on key aspects of the accreditation process. Free online training is available, such as the eLearning courses Safe Food Production Queensland has developed with Dairy Australia.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>Safe Food Production Queensland will continue to work with Queensland industry regulators to develop guidance applicable to artisan producers that are required to be accredited by Safe Food Production Queensland.</p> <p>The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training will continue to monitor the Business Queensland <i>Support for artisan food and beverage producers</i> web page and associated pages to ensure they meet the needs of the sector.</p> <p>Queensland Health, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Safe Food Production Queensland will investigate options to consolidate and link online platforms to ensure easy access for artisan food producers and small business food businesses in general.</p> |

| Recommendation   | Government Response  |
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| <p>2.2 <i>The Queensland Government should play a stronger coordinating role and develop a centralised contact point for artisanal producers. Acting to ensure the quality of the Government-to-Business (G2B) experience (across all levels of government) will support the education and knowledge sharing needs of the artisanal production sector.</i></p> <p><i>In particular, the Queensland Government should:</i></p> <p>2.2.1 <i>ensure the delivery of the Digital Food Safety Hub in the immediate-to-short term, such that it can act as a central location for artisanal producers to access tailored regulatory guidance, advice, and assistance. The Digital Food Safety Hub could also be leveraged to provide artisanal producers with access to formal (key contacts) and informal (such as the Food and Agribusiness Network) networks.</i></p> <p>2.2.2 <i>consider an expansion of the Queensland Government’s ‘Go Local’ and ‘Made in Queensland’ campaigns to specifically target artisan producers through events, networking, campaign materials.</i></p> <p>2.2.3 <i>reduce the complexity of the system (for government and business alike) through the development of tailored educational guidance that assist local councils to support artisanal producers to seek out networks, peer learning opportunities and facilitate mentoring relationships. The development of this guidance could occur through programs such as the proposed Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFCs).</i></p> | <p><b>Support in Principle</b></p> <p><b>2.2.1 The Digital Food Safety Hub, now known as the Food Pantry.</b></p> <p>The Food Pantry provides a streamlined, online experience for food safety legislation, licensing and training and includes educational materials such as self-assessment checklists, fact sheets, templates, and posters. The Food Pantry helps to make it easier for food businesses to operate and reduces the time it takes to find relevant information.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>The Food Pantry will be linked to networking information for food businesses on the Business Queensland website.</p> <p><b>Support</b></p> <p><b>2.2.2 Go Local, Grow Local</b></p> <p>The initiative aims to encourage Queenslanders to support small businesses in their community by shopping locally. An advertising toolkit now available on the Business Queensland website provides resources such as posters and social media graphics that a small business can download and use to persuade others to shop locally. Support is also available through programs such as Made in Queensland and other small business grants programs to help growth at various business stages.</p> <p><b>Support</b></p> <p><b>2.2.3 Developing tailored educational guidance through Small Business Friendly Councils</b></p> <p>The Small Business Friendly Councils initiative is being delivered by the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner to support local councils in Queensland that are actively supporting small business.</p> <p>As at 12 November 2021, 23 councils have signed up to the initiative - Ipswich City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, Mackay Regional Council, Whitsunday Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Cairns Regional Council, Tablelands Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, South Burnett Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, Isaac Regional Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Logan City Council, Rockhampton Regional Council, Townsville City Council, Western Downs Regional Council, Charters Towers Regional Council, Richmond Shire Council, Douglas Shire Council and Mareeba Shire Council</p> <p>In August 2021, the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner through the Small Business Friendly Councils forum began the establishment of communities of practice.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>The temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner will develop a community of practice for participating Small Business Friendly Councils</p> |

| Recommendation | Government Response   |
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|                | <p>to co-design tailored educational guidance to support artisan producers to seek out networks and peer learning opportunities and facilitate mentoring relationships.</p> <p>The Office of the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner will regularly engage with artisan food and beverage stakeholders and provide feedback to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development.</p> <p>The temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner will invite an appropriate representative/s of the artisan food and beverage sector to participate in the Small Business Industry Roundtable. The temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner will continue to provide relevant feedback from this group, and from other engagement channels, to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response   |
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| <p>3.1 <i>The Queensland Government should support regulators in the food economic-ecosystem by rethinking (and potentially redesigning) the existing regulator-producer outreach and regulatory touchpoints.</i></p> <p>3.2 <i>The Queensland Government should engage relevant agencies to explore pathways and/or initiatives designed to deliver insights driven regulation and regulators. This approach should enable regulators to employ innovative approaches to problem-solving – business enablers – that will help regulators to reduce the amount of effort needed to maintain or improve outcomes. The aim is to lessen regulators’ operational and delivery burden so they can speed up their processes and improve their effectiveness – improving not only the G2B experience for small and micro-business operating in the food and non-alcoholic beverage industry, but small business more broadly.</i></p> | <p><b>Support in Principle</b></p> <p><b>3.1 &amp; 3.2 Regulator-Food Producer Engagement and Insights Driven Regulation</b></p> <p>The Queensland Government recognises the importance of assisting small businesses to manage food safety risks and engages with business to help them achieve best practice in managing food safety risk.</p> <p>Safe Food Production Queensland is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertaking food safety assessments (rather than audits) for many businesses under the Compliance Assessment System. These assessments are designed to assess the level of food safety awareness, provision and commitment that exists within a business as an indicator of sustained compliance.</li> <li>• engaging with businesses to explore innovative tools in partnership with industry, including de-identified data sharing, that supports business in achieving sustained compliance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support in Principle</b></p> <p><b>3.2 Encouraging Insights Driven Regulation</b></p> <p>Queensland Treasury drives whole-of-government regulatory reform and, through its Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction helps government develop innovative policy solutions. Queensland Treasury is responsible for <i>The Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation</i>, which provides guidance to agencies on best practice approaches to the development and</p> |

| Recommendation | Government Response  |
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|                | <p>application of regulation. The Guide includes model practices for regulators to support the achievement of policy objectives through better interactions between regulators and their stakeholders, resulting in reduced burden/ costs for all parties.</p> <p>Under the Guide, regulators are encouraged to regularly review their approach to regulatory activities, and provide appropriate information and support to assist compliance, and collaborate with stakeholders and other regulators to ensure the regulatory approach is appropriately risk based, leverages technological innovation and remains the best approach to achieving policy outcomes.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>Safe Food Production Queensland has in place a new 2020–2023 Strategic Plan, which outlines how they will use innovative and effective regulation to provide confidence in the safety of Queensland’s food supply chains. This will be achieved through using data exchange tools, continuing ongoing collaboration and engagement with industry, and further strengthening Safe Food Production Queensland’s scientific contribution to safe food production.</p> <p>Queensland Treasury, as part of its normal review processes, will work with agencies to consider this recommendation, including any review of <i>The Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation</i> to consider whether additional guidance is needed for agencies and regulators for insights-driven regulatory approaches and practices.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response  |
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| <p>3.3 <i>The Queensland Government should consider its role and contribution to the future of the food safety regulatory environment as it prepares to deal with emerging challenges and innovations in foodtech and the food economic ecosystem generally.</i></p> <p>3.4 <i>In the medium-long term, Government could play a role in assisting food safety regulators to prepare for innovations that will disrupt the regulatory environment. This may involve assisting with the identification of an innovative foodtech business that is struggling to</i></p> | <p><b>Support</b></p> <p><b>3.3 Regulatory Environment for Emerging Challenges and Innovations in Food Tech</b></p> <p>The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Safe Food Production Queensland are contributing to the modernisation of the national food regulatory system by leading a project to improve consistency. This project is being informed by globally recognised experts in risk management and regulatory delivery. The <i>Food Production (Safety) Act 2000</i> is outcome focused, and Safe Food Production Queensland works with accredited businesses to ensure the introduction of innovative approaches to food production if outcomes can be validated and verified.</p> <p>In 2018, the Queensland Government established a Food Safety Science Group, a science-focused forum that oversees collaborative across-agency research and activities to assist in addressing emerging issues. The</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response  |
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| <p><i>operate under the current regulatory framework as part of a regulatory sandbox exercise for food safety regulation.</i></p> | <p>Science Group identifies significant food safety risks from ‘paddock to plate’ associated with the <i>Queensland Foodborne Pathogen Risk Reduction Strategy</i> (April 2018 – April 2021). The Group also facilitates discussion and collaboration to promote the effective design, implementation and analysis of food safety investigations and information sharing.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>Safe Food Production Queensland will continue to work with innovative businesses to ensure their business processes are effective in achieving the required food safety outcomes.</p> <p><b>Support in Principle</b></p> <p><b>3.4 Food Safety Regulatory Innovation</b></p> <p>The use of regulatory sandboxes is being explored nationally. For example, the Draft Regulation Impact Statement for the <i>Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991</i> review discusses the use of regulatory sandboxes. This approach is being discussed as part of the project being led by Safe Food Production Queensland for the modernisation of the bi-national food regulatory system.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will continue to monitor national exploration of the use of regulatory sandboxes for potential future application in a Queensland context.</p> |

| Recommendation   | Government Response   |
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| <p><i>4.1 To minimise the regulatory burden of the (small-scale) primary producer, the Queensland Government, with guidance from the BRT (and other relevant agencies such as Safe Food Queensland), should develop a tailored and dedicated primary producer point of reference to assist producers to navigate regulation.</i></p> | <p><b>Support in Principle</b></p> <p><b>4.1 Dedicated Primary Producer Point of Reference</b></p> <p>The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries’ network of regional staff assist clients to navigate government information and processes. Regional staff also provide the correct referrals to other information and services such as online sources for regulatory information, funding, business growth, trade, and export.</p> <p>The Safe Food Production Queensland website has tailored information for primary producers on legislation and regulation.</p> <p>A dedicated officer is allocated to each new applicant to help with queries and guide them through the process.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response  |
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| <p><i>This may include:</i></p> <p>4.1.1 <i>The development of specific guidance materials/a website targeted towards micro and small primary producers to assist them to navigate the complexities of the regulatory landscape.</i></p> <p>4.1.2 <i>The presence of a specifically trained contact for artisanal producers across Queensland that can provide producers with appropriate local contacts that can provide them with place-based guidance and support.</i></p> | <p><b>Further Action</b></p> <p>The Department of Employment Small Business and Training will continue to monitor and update the Business Queensland <i>Support for artisan food and beverage producers</i> web pages to ensure they remain current and meet the needs of the sector, and link business owners and operators to the regulatory information relevant to their operations.</p> <p>Safe Food Production Queensland will continue to develop and refine initiatives to assist businesses to navigate regulation.</p> |

| Recommendation  | Government Response   |
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| <p>5.1 <i>To assist producers explore technology enhancements, Queensland Government agencies (such as the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) could sign post producers to engage with Advance Queensland representative at the Precinct building in Fortitude Valley. The Precinct facilitates collaborative, open innovation methodologies and works with start-ups and small businesses which could address challenges for artisan producers and seek to enhance their products.</i></p> | <p><b>Support</b></p> <p><b>5.1 Assisting with Technology Enhancement and Innovation</b></p> <p>Advance Queensland provides a suite of programs to drive productivity and a strong innovative and entrepreneurial culture to generate jobs in the future. For example, through the Advancing Queensland Ignite Ideas Fund, startups and small to medium Queensland businesses are supported to commercialise market ready ideas.</p> <p>The Precinct and the online Queensland Innovation Hub (known as the QiHub - an entrepreneur-led online community that showcases and connects Queensland's innovation and startup ecosystem) - can help artisan producers connect with innovative start-up founders, events, and peers.</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has officers working in AgTech areas who are well placed to provide information on new technologies in primary production.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <p>The Department of Employment Small Business and Training will link innovative technology-focused artisan producers to information about Advance Queensland support and grant funding programs that may be suitable.</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries regional staff will continue to promote the Precinct facility to its stakeholder businesses.</p> |

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*Cover Image: Gin Gin & Dry in Gin Gin*