



## SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICY DOCUMENT 2015

‘Support Your Local...’ is about highlighting the significant financial and social contribution made by the Irish drinks and hospitality industry: employing 92,000 people in every corner of Ireland; buying €1.1 billion worth of Irish inputs, and offering a unique hospitality experience, renowned internationally, in the pubs restaurants and hotels of Ireland. In the following document we have identified five pillars on which local businesses around the country can thrive: tourism and hospitality, competitiveness, economic contribution, local communities, and addressing alcohol misuse.

The ‘Support Your Local...’ campaign is supported and funded by the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland. All members of that group – including suppliers, pubs, restaurants, hotels and independent off-licences are enthusiastically asking people to recognise the massive contribution that the industry makes to local communities all over Ireland.

### TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

The drinks industry is a vital part of the Tourism offering in Ireland. Tourists receive the famous ‘cead mile fáilte’ in pubs, restaurants and hotels around the country.

Failte Ireland research shows that the Irish pub is #1 reason why people come to Ireland, while listening to music in an Irish pub IS THE #1 reason tourists would return.<sup>1</sup> However, that very same research identifies that the high price of alcohol across the board as a negative about Ireland. As an industry the hospitality sector needs support from government instead of being targeted with an unfair tax burden.

The craft food and beer movement is refreshing our food offer in restaurants, pubs and hotels nationwide and micro-breweries and mini-distilleries are proving to be a huge draw for domestic and international tourists.

Visitor centres at Guinness and Jameson are well-established tourism beacons – with 1.16 million and 268,000 visitors respectively in 2013 – and there is huge potential in new initiatives such as the Cork Whiskey Way, the Irish Whiskey Trail and the Irish Whiskey Museum.

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<sup>1</sup> Failte Ireland Visitor Attitude survey 2013. (<http://bit.ly/1ITkIgK>)

We are truly a food and drink island.

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*Given the importance of these elements to Ireland's tourism offering we call on the government, and state agencies to support members of the Drinks Industry as they develop new and exciting attractions for tourists, work with us as we strive to improve the offer for tourists and promote Ireland's positive image internationally.*

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## COMPETITIVENESS

Over the years of the recession the Irish people have made great strides in re-establishing our price competitiveness in international markets. However, successive tax increases on alcohol – which have directly added 28 cent to the price of a pint since 2011 – have threatened to undermine this progress.

Ireland now has the highest priced alcohol in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

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*Therefore we call on the government to cut excise on a pint of beer and measure of spirits by 10 cent and to cut excise on a bottle of wine by 50 cent*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://cdn.thejournal.ie/media/2014/06/2-19062014-ap-en.pdf>

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The Drinks sector is a vital part of the Irish Economy – with 92,000 jobs throughout the country reliant on the sector. The employment intensive on-trade sector – encompassing pubs, hotels and restaurants – account for the lion’s share of these jobs, though the growth in Irish whiskey in particular has meant a return to manufacturing – with export figures in this area continuing to climb.<sup>3</sup>

- 92,000 jobs depend on the industry throughout the country
- Supporting 12,000 farm families
  - Providing demand for 50,000 apples a year
  - Purchasing 200,000 tonnes of barley a year
  - Utilising 300 million litres of milk every year
- 1,000 construction jobs over the last 5 years, and the potential for a further 1,000 over the next 5 years

Irish subsidiaries of global multi-national drinks companies are required to compete with other locations across the world for capital investment from their group headquarters. The hostile tax environment for alcohol products in Ireland is acting as a disincentive to these global firms to invest here – despite the high level of research talent available.

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*Therefore we call on the government to bring alcohol taxation levels in line with European norms to facilitate Irish firms that are competing for international investment by reducing excise levels.*

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.abfi.ie/Sectors/ABFI/ABFI.nsf/vPagesWhiskey/Industry\\_in\\_Ireland~Whiskey\\_industry\\_in\\_Ireland~exports-and-growth!OpenDocument](http://www.abfi.ie/Sectors/ABFI/ABFI.nsf/vPagesWhiskey/Industry_in_Ireland~Whiskey_industry_in_Ireland~exports-and-growth!OpenDocument)

## COMMUNITIES

The hospitality industry operates at the heart of every community across Ireland and is the focal point of towns and villages across the country. It is a vital part of our tourism infrastructure and supports local producers and local jobs right across Ireland.

In recent years this task has not been an easy one with over 1500 pubs closed since 2007, the impact of which has been exacerbated by the closure of 95 rural Garda stations in recent years.

However, there is an important role that can be fulfilled by the local pub, in particular in combatting isolation in rural areas. The local pub can offer communities a place to convene and share experiences. It has the capacity to become a cornerstone for rural life, offering those living in isolated areas a central meeting point, a welcoming local amenity.

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*Therefore we are calling on the government to establish a taskforce to support these valuable local businesses and to work to implement measures to ensure their survival.*

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## ALCOHOL IN SOCIETY

The drinks industry welcomes the publication by the Government of the heads of bill for the Public Health Alcohol Bill and we look forward to helping the Minister for Health move swiftly to implement the provisions of this bill.

Members of the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland have already signed a pledge identifying a number of key policy areas that will make an impact on alcohol misuse – many of which are included in the aforementioned heads of bill.. The 92,000 people employed in the sector want a healthy Ireland with a healthy respect for alcohol and they look forward to working with the government on the following measures:

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- *Addressing the sale of cheap alcohol*
  - *Introducing a statutory ban on price-based advertising*
  - *Introducing statutory codes to regulate the merchandising of alcohol*
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The drinks industry makes a massive contribution to Ireland – both in economic and social terms. Reducing alcohol-related harm is in all of our best interests.

## CONCLUSION

'Support Your Local' is about supporting your local farmer; supporting your local distillery; supporting your local pub, restaurant, hotel or independent off-licence; and supporting your local community.

If you want more information about the initiative, if you run a local business and you want to participate in the campaign, log onto [www.SupportYourLocal.ie](http://www.SupportYourLocal.ie) or follow <https://twitter.com/supporturlocal> for more information.