

Speech *from the* Throne

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONVENING OF THE LEGISLATURE



"We Rise Together"

Delivered by: Acting Governor Ginny Ferson

Monday, 7 November 2016



2016 SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

With the approach of Hurricane Nicole on October 13, Bermudians shuttered their homes and hunkered down, as they've done for centuries; this time for a storm the National Hurricane Center described as "extremely dangerous".

Bermudians emerged from the tempest largely unscathed, with no major injuries, no loss of life and minimal property damage.

It was a remarkable moment for the Island as the world looked on, showing Bermudians to be a savvy people – organized, composed and with their public systems firing on all cylinders.

At every level, Bermuda met Nicole's challenge:

The Emergency Measures Organization providing steady, clear leadership; Police patrolling through the storm, Fire Service vehicles responding to calls, the Regiment deploying "Immediate Response Teams", Parks and Public Works staff clearing trees, healthcare professionals on standby, hospital volunteers arriving to help with childcare, the steady voices of the Emergency Broadcast Station providing advice and comfort to listeners, an ambulance driver using the passing eye to reach an injured woman.

Afterwards, residents swung into action helping neighbours, clearing roads. Public Works repaired the Causeway and Belco rapidly restored power to more than 25,000 customers.

Hurricane Nicole provided a stellar example of a society that works, from people demonstrating readiness, coordination and compassion, to a homegrown Building Code that kept homes intact. Bermudians should be proud of what the storm showed of their character, their culture and their spirit.

Commentators urged people to carry that spirit forward into everyday life – a worthy hope that depends on individual decencies, that lie within each of us, bringing people together.

Political leaders can also play their part by upholding standards of integrity and fair play that people expect from them, and by fostering opportunities to help the people rise together.

The 2016 Speech from the Throne aims to implant these community-serving values through an ambitious programme that:

- Cares for seniors and supports the needy,
- Safeguards neighbourhoods and calms the roads,
- Locks in transparency and accountability, and
- Generates an abundance of opportunities to help Bermudians make the most of their lives.

The overall goal is to enhance quality of life across the board and to build an Island that meets people's needs and supports their aspirations.

Continuing economic progress and recovery is key to this plan, and Government's two-track strategy to renew growth and job creation while imposing discipline on the public purse is bearing fruit.

- Bermuda's Gross Domestic Product has recorded six consecutive quarters of positive growth, signaling sustained recovery from what was, by any measure, a six-year depression.
- The retail sector, stagnant for years, has grown 18 out of the last 19 months, buoyed by rising consumer and business confidence.
- Air visitor arrivals, driven by the Bermuda Tourism Authority's high-impact marketing, surged 18% during the third quarter this year with the year on track for the highest number of arrivals since 2008.
- Hotel developments, large and small, are underway or preparing to break ground, bringing bricks-and-mortar reality to the rebuilding of Bermuda Tourism.
- In public finances, revenues exceeded spending during the first half of the year to produce a surplus before debt service and capital expenditure for the second consecutive time in seven years.

Government's multi-dimensional, multi-year campaign to turn around the economy and restore confidence has set the stage for a far-reaching and energetic recovery in 2017.

Hotel developments will ramp up. Construction of a new L.F. Wade International Airport terminal will produce job and career opportunities. America's Cup will generate eye-popping activity, engaging entrepreneurs and businesses while dramatically positioning Bermuda Tourism for long-term success.

The past eight years for many have been a struggle brought on by unemployment, under-employment and relentless cost-of-living pressures. The frustrations are real and it is Government's continuing plan to make things better.

The intention from the outset has been to make recovery work for the Island as a whole, but more particularly for the many set back by the downturn. Unfortunately, the impact on the street of actions taken to fix the economy has been, more often than not, slow in coming.

But the tide is turning.

The Government's social and economic programmes will extend support to those who need support, protection to those who need protection and opportunity to those looking for opportunity.

And the Finance Ministry's progress to restore the Island's public finances will see the introduction of progressive payroll tax reform to ease pressures on lower income earners.

The goal is to raise the Island up, where it lives in the hearts of all Bermudians as a barrier-free place of hope and opportunity, an Island that works every day for everyone.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Ministry of Health and Seniors is implementing a multi-year strategy to reform the health system to deliver affordable, sustainable and quality health care for all of Bermuda's residents.

The strategy is anchored to values of equity to provide equal access to basic healthcare and quality to provide the right care at the right time, in the right setting at the right price.

This work is vitally important.

Chronic non-communicable diseases, for example, are the biggest cause of death in Bermuda. Three in four adults are overweight or obese, which leads to long-term medical problems that not only debilitate the individual but also impose serious cost burdens on the health system. Lower-income individuals who lack access to appropriate care are the most seriously affected. The situation often leads to revolving door hospitalizations and inappropriate use of emergency services.

To manage the situation, the Bermuda Hospitals Board will establish a hospital-based “medical home” programme to manage the needs of individuals with chronic, non-communicable diseases.

The Ministry will also oversee the development of a Chronic Disease Register to monitor the prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, kidney and heart disease. The register will require collaboration between public and private healthcare practitioners for reliable reporting, the aim of which is to identify baseline levels of diseases with high impact on the society and to put in place interventions and preventive measures.

The overall challenge is to encourage Bermudians to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. To that end, the Premier’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition was created to provide leadership, with particular focus on children given their vulnerability to health and social risks due to poor nutrition, unhealthy weight and insufficient exercise.

The Premier’s Youth Fitness Programme, for example, aims to engage students in physical activity and healthy lifestyles. Baseline testing in June revealed half the students lacked three of five basic fitness components. The Premier’s goal by 2018 is to have all students from P5 to S3 fall within the programme’s “Healthy Fitness Zone”. The rationale behind the programme is healthy habits learned at a young age make it more likely that those habits will continue into adulthood, helping to prevent obesity and chronic disease.

Meeting the long-term health care needs of Bermuda's seniors and people with physical, cognitive or mental disabilities, such as dementia and Alzheimer's, is another major focus of the Ministry. During the Parliamentary session, the Ministry will roll out a Long Term Care Action Plan that addresses quality of care needs, developing long-term care staff and educating the population about long-term care issues. Strengthening the regulation of care homes will also be a priority.

To ensure the long-term care system is affordable and financially sustainable, the Ministry will work with stakeholders to reduce the cost of operating long-term care facilities, including the development of private sector incentives to invest in the development of long-term care facilities. Government will also work with insurers to find ways to include long-term care as an insurance benefit. Long-term care must be available to all, not just the wealthy.

Promoting investment in institutional care beds is important, but just as important are steps that can help seniors who own their own homes remain in those homes for as long as possible. The Ministry will therefore develop incentives and mechanisms to help seniors afford appropriate home renovations. Often, it is less expensive and healthier for a senior to age at home rather than having to enter a residential care facility. This also helps reserve nursing home beds for persons with greater medical needs that can't be met at home.

Following the successful amendments to the Pharmacy and Poison Act 1979 and the Misuse of Drugs Act 1972 to permit the use of specific forms of cannabinoid drugs for medical purposes, the Government will consider allowing the importation of herbal supplements containing Cannabinol to allow more options for treatment. Decisions by Government in this regard will continue to be evidence-based so that our residents will only have access to quality products.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

"Children first" is the driving principle behind the Ministry of Education's ongoing transformation of the public school education system. The objective at every level of the Ministry's efforts is to improve student achievement.

The most important resource for students in the classroom is our teachers. We will continue to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Support will continue for the implementation of mathematics and literacy strategies, quality teaching practices, development through the arts and community and family engagement.

More specifically, the focus is on completing initiatives already in progress: the three-year school improvement plan, implementation of the Danielson Framework for improved curriculum teaching, the application of tools for consistent grading, maximum use of the Bermuda College STEM centre, greater parental involvement, extension of the Multi-Tier System of Support for student behaviour interventions, and addressing the facility challenges outlined in the community-led SCORE report.

The practice of social promotion has not benefited school children. Allowing a child to move through the system without demonstrating the understanding of concepts or developing skills to acceptable levels ensures continuing academic struggle and more. The Ministry will therefore end the practice of social promotion to ensure adequate development takes place before children are moved to another grade.

The Ministry will look to implement alternative pathways for student success by utilizing the City & Guilds applied certification. The Ministry will diversify and increase scholarship and award opportunities for students who pursue post-secondary educational studies. The new opportunities will consider student innovation, creativity, talent, determination, leadership and financial need.

A plan of action will be produced to improve the quality and prevalence of in-school Information Technology.

Staff, parents, community members and the Board of Education will engage with one another to develop a community-owned strategic plan. The plan will set direction for the continued transformation of public education and be focused on implementable, achievable priorities and goals to help prepare our students for continued success.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Human Rights Act 1981 currently provides protection against age discrimination in accommodation, goods, facilities and services but not employment.

To advance human rights in this area, Government will examine ways to protect seniors against age discrimination in employment, mindful that there are economic and other tradeoffs that must be carefully considered.

The Ministry of Social Development and Sports therefore will undertake wide public consultation on the matter and examine policy and legislation in other jurisdictions. This information will be evaluated in the context of Bermuda's social and economic conditions, with a view to framing a coherent policy that will form the basis for legislative amendments to protect seniors against discrimination in employment.

The Ministry will take steps to broaden the role of the Co-Parenting Mediation Council to include all family mediation matters. Legislation therefore will be tabled to transition the Council into a full scope Family Mediation Council, enabling it to more fully promote the best interests and welfare of children as well as families through reconciliation, settlement and compromise between parties.

Government will support the participation of local artists and craftsmen in the 2017 Carifesta mega arts festival in Barbados in August. Carifesta is the premier Caribbean multi-disciplinary arts festival that showcases the cultural expressions of artists from countries in the region. Participation in Carifesta will create opportunities for Bermudian artists to display their work while engaging with other artists in the region.

The Government is committed to working with social agencies to provide good quality transitional housing and support programmes for the most vulnerable in our society. To that end, the Government and the Salvation Army are in advanced discussions regarding the renovation and use of the Bishop Spencer property in Pembroke to replace the aging emergency housing shelter on Hamilton's North Street. The intent is for the Salvation Army to renovate the building to be fit for purpose, including expanded social programming, with the Government providing increased funding for the new facility's day-to-day operation.

Legislation already exists requiring unemployed, able-bodied persons who qualify for Financial Assistance to participate in community service activities as a condition of continued eligibility. To further enhance this programme, the Government will establish a community services coordinator in the Department of Financial Assistance to manage ongoing community service placements. The benefits include expansion

of networking opportunities for unemployed persons leading to prospects of finding employment, while at the same time promoting a sense of self-worth. In this way, unemployed people can contribute to society in return for receiving funds from the public purse via financial assistance.

Recognizing the intrinsic value of culture and the pivotal role it plays in supporting the self-esteem, identity and community connections of a people, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is progressing the development of a National Cultural Heritage Policy. The policy is being written with the intention of acknowledging the importance of our collective heritage within the context of a national plan, committed to by the Government and people of Bermuda, cultural stakeholders and private industries.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Team StreetSafe is a critical part of the anti-gang lifestyle initiative in the community. Its intervention and crisis management skills have been used to tackle tensions between rival groups that sometimes turn violent. Much of the positive work done by Team StreetSafe has been drawn from Operation Ceasefire, a community-collaborative initiative that has been effective in curbing gang violence in US cities. Operation Ceasefire pioneered the mobilization of community “moral voices” to challenge people whose actions tear at the fabric of society.

The Ministry of National Security will re-engage Operation Ceasefire to conduct an intensive review of Bermuda’s anti-gang initiatives.

Natural attrition within the ranks of the Bermuda Police Service cannot be allowed to detract from its core policing objectives. The Government will continue to support the recruitment of police officers with an emphasis on adding to the number of qualified firearms officers and sustaining the largely successful effort to provide strong enforcement action, efficient investigative resources and a Service that meets the public’s expectations of safety and security. Additionally, the Government will support the Police Commissioner’s plans to meet threats posed by cyber-crime as well as the critical training required to meet international standards for the detection and investigation of economic crimes.

Government will extend the effort to combat anti-social behaviour and violent crime to licensed liquor establishments, which often act as magnets for such activity. Accordingly, consultations will be held with the Senior Magistrate and the Bermuda Police Service for amendments to the Liquor Licensing Act to enhance the powers of a senior police officer to temporarily suspend a liquor license when warranted.

Government will continue supporting communities, sports clubs and helping agencies through Cash Back for Communities, a programme made possible by the passage of the Proceeds of Crime Amendment Act, which came into effect in September 2015. To date, more than \$600,000 has been distributed in support of community organizations and programmes through this helpful initiative.

The recent fire on Front Street saw the men and women of the Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service at their best. Their actions minimized the damage to adjacent buildings and the fire was extinguished without injury or loss of life. The Government will ensure the BFRS has the resources to continue fulfilling its first-responder responsibilities.

The Government, having fulfilled its commitment to appoint a senior Police officer to serve as National Disaster Coordinator, will invite the Legislature to consider a Bill to codify the remit, authority and composition of the Emergency Measures Organization and to strengthen its ability to deal with the varying threats to the Island.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Bermuda's gift to His Holiness the Pope was crafted by the hands of an inmate in a correctional facility. The elegant work that is now displayed in the Vatican reminds us that there is talent to be nurtured throughout our Island. In keeping with the philosophy of rehabilitation and preparing inmates to live productive lives in society, the Department of Corrections will conduct an extensive review of all programmes to ensure inmates are best served while incarcerated. Additional officers are being recruited and enhanced security measures for officers will be implemented in the coming months.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly;

A survey of school-aged children in 2015 found that 53% of Bermuda's young people admitted to having used alcohol at least once. Of those, most reported drinking at social events, at home or at a friend's house.

Underage drinking can lead to a lifetime of alcohol abuse and concurrent social and health issues that are too frequently seen in our society. We cannot lose young people to such an influence. Preventing it requires a whole-community effort. During this session, the Legislature will be invited to debate a Motion on "social host liability laws" which have been used in other jurisdictions to impose responsibility on adults who provide or allow the provision of alcohol to minors. Following the debate and necessary consultation, a Bill will be tabled setting out provisions to address this serious issue of underage alcohol consumption and abuse.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Government will study the matter of parental leave to include maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

This is a measure that has the potential to strengthen families and extend the principle of equality and fairness in the workplace. The study, which will be initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs, will require extensive stakeholder consultation with particular focus on the economic impact and social need of extending parental leave benefits.

Government will also form a cross-ministry committee to address the challenge of collecting arrears for child maintenance payments. This is a longstanding problem that needs to be resolved for the sake of children disadvantaged by parental obligations not met.

The Ministry, through the Department of Workforce Development, is committed to protecting and expanding job opportunities for Bermudians.

To that end, it will amend regulations within the National Occupational Certification

Act 2004 to include all skills and competencies required for current and future construction projects.

The Ministry will also publish and implement a policy that:

- Ensures Bermudians have access to training and retooling in industries covered under the Act, and
- Requires employers to confirm a work permit candidate meets minimum requirements for certification and secures Department of Workforce Development authorization before any permit is granted.

The Ministry will amend the National Training Board Act 1997 to better align Board functions with the mandate and operations of the Department of Workforce Development, provide a legislative framework to support the implementation of the National Training Plan and strengthen penalties for infractions and non-compliance.

The Consultative Immigration Reform Working Group will continue considering provisions of the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act 1956 relating to the integrity of mixed-status families and, following full and extensive consultation, will make recommendations regarding the granting of permanent residence certificates and Bermudian status.

Government will bring forward a regulatory framework for Fair Debt Collection Practices under the umbrella of the Consumer Protection Act 1999. The regulations will introduce industry standards on debt collection activities such as the time collection calls can be made, restrictions on how and to whom debts are communicated and prohibitions on deceptive, threatening and abusive collection tactics.

Also during this session, amendments to the Rent Increases (Domestic Premises) Control Act 1978 will be tabled in the Legislature. The amendments will be designed to strike a balance between rent control, the rights of tenants and the need to ensure fair economic return for landlords. The amendments will address deposits, progressive enforcement, repairs, tenancy rights for boarding house residents and other areas where the Act is silent.

To enhance Bermuda's profile as a jurisdiction that provides a favourable environment for the registration and protection of Intellectual Property rights, the Ministry

through the Registry General will conduct a legislative review of trademark, patent and design Acts to bring them into line with international treaties and best practices.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Since 2012, the Government has been engaged in a multifaceted effort to rebuild the tourism industry and restore Bermudian job, career and business opportunities that diminished through years of industry decline.

Investor confidence has returned in the form of hotel building projects from St. George's to Morgan's Point that will engage hundreds of Bermudian workers and dozens of businesses.

Aggressive efforts to increase the number of cruise calls to Hamilton and St. George's are paying off.

Cruise ships will return to the Old Town in 2017 with 16 scheduled calls, up from four in 2016. This jump was made possible by a landmark agreement with Norwegian Cruise Line for a minimum of 12 visits a year through 2022 – providing the East End community with a boost in business they had been led to believe was no longer possible. NCL will further enhance the outlook by providing two tenders to ferry their Dockyard-based passengers to the Old Town.

Hamilton too will see a surge in cruise business in 2017, with 23 scheduled calls compared to 16 this year, a 43% increase.

In addition, talks with Bermuda's cruise ship partners are underway to extend the cruise ship season at Dockyard further into the Fall.

Government legislation that created the Bermuda Tourism Authority (BTA) in 2013 is bearing fruit, providing the industry with a fresh Bermuda brand image and a marketing presence in core markets that is lively, targeted and creative.

BTA initiatives have stimulated local entrepreneurs to create new product experiences for visitors and energized sports tourism, with visiting rugby, field hockey, golf and swim teams helping to lessen the downward impact of industry seasonality.

A push to increase airlift to the Island – long a bottleneck to visitor growth – has resulted this year in a significant 13% boost in seat capacity.

The result of these efforts reflects an industry on a solid path to recovery after decades of decline.

Through September 30, the Island has registered a 14% year-on-year increase in vacation air arrivals, levels not seen in almost a decade. Most of this growth has been fueled by visitors under 45 years of age, which bodes well for future growth and underscores the efficacy of BTA marketing.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

One of the BTA's strategic objectives is to enhance the on-island visitor experience. In keeping with this plan, the Ministry of Tourism, Transportation & Municipalities will facilitate the growth of the beach economy, working closely with the Ministry of the Environment to effect changes in the National Parks Act. This initiative promises to open a new sector of opportunity to entrepreneurs looking to provide beachgoers with the services they desire.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Government has no tolerance for impaired driving and will set up roadside testing in 2017. The Ministry, accordingly, will work with the Ministry of National Security, the Bermuda Road Safety Council and CADA to carry out this vital road safety initiative and in ways that deter people from taking the risk of driving under the influence.

Ministry efforts to improve road safety will also see the introduction of speed cameras at various locations around the Island.

Elsewhere, the Ministry of Tourism, Transportation & Municipalities will take steps to:

- Regulate Bermuda's growing minibus industry through the Transport Control Department to enhance service and, with America's Cup fast approaching,
- Amend Island Boat Regulations to raise the standard of safe manning of vessels through approved certification courses, administered in partnership with the Department of Workforce Development.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The redevelopment of the L.F. Wade International Airport represents the largest capital project ever undertaken by Bermuda.

The project will proceed by way of a unique procurement model through the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC), a Crown Corporation of the Government of Canada. The proposed transaction will take the form of a public private partnership (P3), a model that will enable Bermuda to build, use and take possession of an ultramodern facility with no new government debt.

The Government conducted its P3 partner selection process in accordance with the requirements of the Entrustment Letter dated July 17, 2015. It will publish an evidence-based report fully addressing issues identified in an independent appraisal report prepared for the Bermuda Government and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

This report will be published before the Project Agreement is signed and the required legislation for the Airport Redevelopment debated in the Legislature.

A key benefit of the P3 arrangement is the transfer of risk for project cost and schedule overruns to CCC. Project Co., the company formed by CCC's principal subcontractor, Aecon and its investment partners, will build the new terminal, thereby committing the Canadian Government, through CCC, to delivering the airport terminal on time and on budget.

While Aecon, Canada's largest and most experienced infrastructure developer, will oversee the design and redevelopment of the terminal, the actual construction will be carried out primarily by local Bermudian subcontractors and labour.

The Airport Redevelopment Project is a critical component of the Government's revitalisation plan for Bermuda, injecting millions of dollars into the economy while growing jobs for Bermudians without reducing our capacity to invest in education, safety and other social programmes.

Accordingly, the Government will bring forward for debate the Bermuda Airport Authority Act 2016, the Airport Redevelopment Concession Act 2016 and the Civil Airports (Re-Regulation)(Fees) Act 2016.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Bermuda will be the focus of worldwide attention when it hosts the finals of the 35th America's Cup in June of 2017. The race venue will be the Great Sound with preparations underway for the Event Village on the newly created 9-acre Cross Island at the Royal Naval Dockyard. In addition to the finals, other events beginning in May include the Qualifier Series, the Challenger Series, the Semi-Finals, a Super Yacht Regatta, a J Class Regatta and the Red Bull Youth America's Cup, which will see participation by Bermuda's Red Bull Youth Team.

The Ministry of Economic Development, together with the ACBDA, will continue to manage Bermuda's obligations as the America's Cup Host Venue. Amendments will be made to the America's Cup Act 2015 along with the issuance of the final set of Team Concession Orders. The amendments include provisions for facilitating the visits of some 400 vessels, including more than 80 super yachts expected during the 2017 events.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Strengthening cybersecurity and protecting Bermuda's digital infrastructure against cyber threats is vital for Bermuda's economic resilience. Recent attacks overseas on the infrastructure of the Internet highlight the need to protect Government, businesses, organizations and the people they serve.

Government formed a Cabinet subcommittee in May 2015 to develop a cybersecurity risk management plan for Bermuda's critical national infrastructure sectors including Health, Emergency Services, Transportation, Energy, Finance, Food, Communications and Government services. Private sector input on the prevention, preparation, response and recovery from cyber incidents is being channeled through the Ministry's E-Commerce Advisory Committee as the plan evolves.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Government will continue developing a privacy regime to protect the personal information people impart electronically and through more traditional means. The first step was taken earlier this year with passage of the Personal Information Protection Act 2016 (PIPA), which requires a person's consent for the collection, use and disclosure of their personal information. The Ministry will follow up with the creation of a Privacy Commissioner's Office to facilitate the implementation of PIPA including ancillary amendments to legislation such as PATI and the Electronic Transactions Act 1999.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Ministry will initiate the second and final phase of telecommunications regulatory reform with a focus on modernizing broadcasting policy, legislation and regulations.

The business procedures of the Registrar of Companies will also be subject to modernizing reform with the planned acquisition of an electronic registry system, a step that will provide better service to its customers and help Bermuda keep pace with its international reporting obligations.

The Ministry will continue working with the Bermuda Business Development Agency and the private sector to promote inward investment growth, diversify job and new business opportunities and proactively market Bermuda's strengths as a premier international business centre.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Government has been working to reform Bermuda's energy sector to protect the public interest through increased competition, lower costs, environmental sustainability, conservation and increased use of renewable forms of energy.

Following the implementation of the Electricity Act 2016, the Ministry of Economic Development will develop fuels policy and legislation to regulate the importation, transportation and sale of all fuels into Bermuda.

The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Works, is pursuing the development of a solar photovoltaic facility on the "Finger" peninsula at L.F. Wade International Airport. This facility, in its initial phase, is expected to generate approximately 6 Mega Watts of power – about 6% of Bermuda's peak load – and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuel.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Safeguarding Bermuda's economic integrity and its reputation as an international business destination is a Government priority.

The Island's reputation as a premier international financial centre has been built on a long history of "knowing our clients" and ensuring compliance with international standards in a framework conducive to quality and ethical business.

During this Parliamentary session, Government will bring forward legislation that continues to build and refine this framework.

The Legislature will be asked to consider:

- Amendments to the Proceeds of Crime Act 1998 to facilitate reporting of suspicious activity in relation to tax evasion,
- The Bribery Act 2016 to establish a National Anti-Corruption and Bribery Committee with provisions to uphold the highest standards against persons using bribery or allowing themselves to be bribed, and

- The Fraud Act 2016 to broaden the scope of fraudulent activity in keeping with a global definition more conducive to apprehending the sophisticated strategies being employed by today's criminals.

During the session, preparations will swing into high gear for the next review by the International Monetary Fund and Caribbean Financial Action Task Force of Bermuda's regime to deter money laundering, terrorism financing and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

A positive review is critical to Bermuda's economic and social future. A strategic action plan to achieve a successful outcome has been developed by the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee and implemented with the support of Cabinet and the Civil Service Executive.

Various entities from the financial and non-financial sectors are also involved and it is expected the work will lead to further changes to ensure the Island's legislative and operational framework is strong and robust and deemed effective by the assessing body.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

In keeping with a commitment to increase levels of openness, transparency and financial accountability, the Government has drafted a Code of Practice for Project Management and Procurement. The draft code, which is available on the Government portal for public input, will apply to all public officers and outline how they are to procure goods, services and works on behalf of the people of Bermuda. By following the rules, public officers will ensure Government procurement activities achieve best value while being fair, ethical and transparent.

The new code will be placed within a new unified legislative framework for procurement that replaces the relevant sections of the Public Treasury Act (Administrative and Payments) Act 1969 and the Good Governance Acts of 2011 and 2012 and meets the requirements of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

Government will further its good governance reforms by introducing legislative amendments creating new offences relating to misconduct in public office and

requiring all public officials – Ministers, members of the Legislature, public servants – to declare in writing any outside interests they or close family members may have.

To ensure compliance with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the Government will work with the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the President of the Senate and all members of the House and Senate for the adoption of a Code of Conduct for members of the Legislature. At present, only Government Ministers and Public Servants are subject to codes of conduct.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Amendments to the Parliamentary Election Act will be submitted during this legislative session. Most will be administrative in nature to ensure the smooth running of parliamentary elections, municipal elections and referenda. The amendments will also include a provision allowing students studying overseas and voters abroad for medical treatment to vote in advance by absentee ballots. It is expected this inclusive measure will be in place before the next General Election.

Public Service reform to improve efficiencies and reduce costs is an ongoing process. The implementation of SAGE Commission recommendations has led to reductions in government departments and the number of government employees. Initiatives involving leadership, performance accountability, succession planning and streamlining operations continue. The Government's six union partners are working to standardize human resource policies for a holistic approach to performance management and operational coherence.

After extensive consultations, Public Service Commission Regulations 2001 amendments to enact SAGE Commission recommendations for more accountability at the senior levels of the Civil Service will soon come into effect. The amendments will legislate a system of performance appraisals for the Cabinet Secretary/Head of the Civil Service. They will also empower the Public Service Commission to promote and uphold a public service that is imbued with the spirit of service, operates in the collective interests of government, upholds standards of integrity and conduct, maintains political neutrality and fosters a culture of stewardship.

The work to increase efficiencies through reform also extends to Government boards. Following a functional review to determine the productivity and effectiveness of Government boards, the Legislature will be asked to consider the Government Authorities Act 2016 discontinuing some advisory boards and shifting in certain instances the responsibility for board appointments from H.E. the Governor to the Government.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Ministry of Legal Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, will pursue legislation to settle dormant bank accounts long abandoned by owners. The objective is either to reunite unclaimed money with original owners or, failing that, to have the money invested in the community through measures such as grants and loans. Similar policies codified in the United Kingdom, Jersey and New Zealand will be examined to further this initiative.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Government will consult with respect to the decriminalization for possession of small amounts of cannabis. To that end, Government reforms will preserve police powers to confiscate cannabis and to test whether road users are under the influence of cannabis. These reforms will complement our efforts to educate our youth about the dangerous effects of drug use, balancing the need to reduce the consumption of cannabis while avoiding the unnecessary criminalization of our young people.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The Environment Ministry works to maintain Bermuda's pristine environment. This means taking measures to protect the environment against local and even global sources of pollution – a threat convergence that has become more common in recent

decades. Accordingly, the Government will introduce a Green Paper to identify ways to reduce the use of, and the toxic effects of, plastics on the Island as well as in the surrounding waters. In addition, the Ministry will continue to take measures to protect the environment from invasive species such as the Lionfish.

The Endangered Animal and Plants Act 2006 will be amended to bring Bermuda into compliance with its obligations under the Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The amendments will provide new powers to inspect specimens and documents in transit through Bermuda.

To improve the management of Bermuda's dog population, the Ministry will modernize the Dogs Act 2008. New measures to encourage owner responsibility and improve dog welfare will include the introduction of standards for the keeping of dogs, a review of breed restrictions, mandatory reporting of dog bites and the banning of surgical procedures for cosmetic purposes.

In response to persistent public concerns about the Island's domestic and feral cat populations, the Government will devise a strategy that incorporates humane treatment, methods of population control and partnerships between community charities and the Bermuda Veterinary Association.

The Ministry will act on a study of illegal fishing within the 200 nautical miles of Bermuda's Exclusive Economic Zone. The work, which will be conducted by the UK-based Satellite Applications Catapult and which has been funded by a Bermuda-based fund management company, will analyze three years of satellite data to determine the scope of the problem and to help develop strategies to investigate and stop illegal and unauthorized activities.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

Bermuda's infrastructure – our roads, schools, power and communications systems – is vital to the success of the economy and our overall quality of life. The need to maintain, upgrade and modernize these systems is constant, unavoidable and challenging in terms of allocating available resources to meet the demands. In the

next fiscal year, the Government will commit to paving 10 kilometres of roads, a target that is also expected to be met in the current year.

It is vital for the Island to have a world-class infrastructure system to support Bermudian life, facilitating the ambitions of our citizens, the development of the economy and the revenue needs of government.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

White Hill Field is considered to be one of the best fields for playing soccer and cricket on the Island with sufficient space for on field parking. To provide appropriate facilities for this highly used sporting venue and in keeping with the Government's objective to support the development of young Bermudians through sport, the Ministry of Public Works will undertake to build a facility at White Hill Field for use by the West End community and the general public. This initiative will follow a recent contract award for the construction of bathroom facilities at the field.

Elsewhere, the Ministry will:

- Build and upgrade restrooms at public beaches to support the development of the beach economy,
- Continue the sale of surplus government property, generating a diverse range of opportunities for local residents and an estimated \$10 million in revenue to government over the next three years,
- Support the growth and sustainment of small businesses by ensuring that an appropriate amount of contracts or subcontracts for construction, maintenance and repairs are placed with small businesses, and
- Demolish the old Devonshire Recycling Facility on Devon Spring Road and transform the site into a community playground.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

The aim of Government's plans for the year ahead is to provide Bermudians with the support they need to enhance their lives and the lives of their loved ones. That means healthy communities, safe streets, schools that provide children the education they need, compassionate care for those suffering medical or financial hardship, a vibrant economy brimming with opportunity, responsible management of the public purse and a government that is responsive, transparent and accountable.

The policies and initiatives outlined in this Throne Speech are designed to bring to reality each of these goals and to do so in ways that enable Bermudians to work together, grow together and rise together, as one people.

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

In addition to those legislative items already mentioned, the Legislature in this Session will be invited to consider some new statutes and amendments to a number of existing Acts, including:

St. George's Resort Amendment Bill
Casino Gaming Amendment Bill
Motor Car Amendment Bill
Bermuda Health Council Amendment Bill
Quarantine Amendment Bill
Bermuda Immigration and Protection Amendment Bill
Land Title Registration Amendment Bill
Land Title Registrar (Recording of Documents) Bill
Development and Planning Amendment Bill
Timeshare Amendment Bill
Tourism Incentive Bill
Bermuda Public Accountability Amendment Bill; and
International Cooperation TIEA Amendment Bill

Madame President and Members of the Senate, Mr Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly

As a daughter, a mother and a wife I welcome the initiatives in this speech aimed at supporting families. There is good work already underway in Bermuda but I believe there is still scope for more sharing of best practice and ensuring a joined-up approach to complex societal issues such as child safeguarding and domestic violence. Bermuda is not alone in tackling these issues and does not need to reinvent the wheel. We can use as our guidebook human rights conventions and covenants which apply globally – the Rights of the Child, the equal rights of men and women, non-discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.

For our own well-being and safety we must also keep up with emerging international standards of security, whether that be airport security, maritime security or the security of travel documents. On these it is important to note that the inconvenience of security searches or a longer turn-around time for a new passport must be balanced with the advantage of safer travel for ourselves and our loved ones. We cannot leave it to the Bermuda Police Service alone to Keep Bermuda Safe, that is the responsibility of us all.

I feel honoured to have had the privilege of reading the Throne Speech today. My term as Acting Governor will come to an end when the new Governor arrives on 4 December. But I shall continue to serve as Deputy Governor and look forward to working with my colleagues in Government to deliver the initiatives in this speech.



To view online go to: www.gov.bm/throne-speech

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