



## Media Release

GEORGE TOWN, 28<sup>TH</sup> November 2023

### **PARLIAMENT HOLDS STATE OPENING NEXT WEEK:** **THRONE SPEECH AND BUDGET ADDRESS**

The new Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, called for the Second Meeting of the 2023-2024 Session of Parliament to begin next Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December at 10:00 a.m.

The Meeting will be the official State Opening of the 2023-2024 Session, and will include the Throne Speech by Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen, as well as the Budget Address by the Premier and Minister for Finance, Education, District Administration & Lands, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly.

“This is a unique State Opening with a new Speaker, Governor, and Premier,” said the Hon. Speaker. “But it’s a mistake to think this is purely ceremonial. In fact, this is a vitally important meeting for all Caymanians and residents, as the country will be hearing about the Government’s spending plans over the next two years, as well as any policy developments that will no doubt impact the public.”

It is anticipated that this Second Meeting will run over several daily Sittings. During the Second Special Meeting last week, Members dealt with Government Motion No. 4 to change the membership of the Standing Business Committee, which is charged with deciding the order of business of House Meetings. The Committee will meet next week to finalise the order of House business.

The State Opening typically leads the first regular meeting of a new Session after proclaiming the start of the Parliamentary year, and is an opportunity for the Governor to address the nation and to provide information about the Government’s achievements and budget. It also offers the Governor the chance to

speak on the key priorities of the United Kingdom and the status of each arm of the Governor's constitutional responsibilities.

In the most recent Throne Speech held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021, former Governor Mr. Martyn Roper noted that he would leave the budget address for the Government Members. Instead, he spoke on a variety of topics that reflect each of the responsibilities that fall under the Governor's domain, including Cayman's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic just as the country was re-opening its borders, and the state of the relationship with the United Kingdom. Mr. Roper also provided updates on the Coast Guard, Prison Service, and Civil Service.

In her Throne Speech from May 2015, when Hon. O'Connor-Connolly was the Speaker, former Governor Mrs. Helen Kilpatrick provided a broad overview of the Government's plans for the subsequent financial year, including the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman and the status of employment and immigration across the islands.

Following the Throne Speech, Members will typically debate the address given by the Governor, though this is often deferred to a future sitting in order for the Premier to provide remarks on the budget and any new policies by the Government. This was done after the previous Throne Speech during the Second Meeting of the 2021-2022 Session, when Members agreed on a motion to defer the debate on the Governor's remarks so that the former Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton, could provide the statement on the Government's budget.

Members of the public are able to view the proceedings live in person at the House of Parliament on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 starting at 10:00 a.m. after signing in with security. The event will also be broadcast on CIGTV and the Cayman Government's YouTube channel.

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