



**** MEDIA RELEASE ****

Cayman Islands Parliament Participates in 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

George Town, Cayman Islands – November 14, 2024

Delegates from the Parliament of the Cayman Islands attended the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), held from 3rd to 8th November 2024, in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Hosted by the Parliament of New South Wales and the Commonwealth Parliament Association (CPA) New South Wales Branch, this year's conference convened over 700 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and decision-makers from across the Commonwealth.

The Cayman Islands delegation consisted of the following Members of Parliament (MPs): **Mr. Bernie Bush, Ms. Barbara Conolly, and Mr. Christopher Saunders**. The Clerk of Parliament and Chief Officer of the Parliament Management Commission, **Mrs. Zena Merren-Chin**, accompanied the MPs and participated in the engaging week-long annual conference.

Under the theme “*Engage, Empower, Sustain: Charting the Course for Resilient Democracy*,” the conference provided a platform for delegates to discuss pressing political and parliamentary issues. The Caymanian delegates actively engaged in numerous workshops and sessions addressing topics such as the use of artificial intelligence in parliamentary processes, combating discriminatory legislation, and how to support more women in entering politics and maintaining a political career.

In addition to the main conference, the 67th CPC featured several auxiliary events, including the 40th CPA Small Branches Conference, the 8th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference, and meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network. These gatherings offered valuable opportunities for the Cayman Islands representatives to collaborate with counterparts from other small jurisdictions and to discuss strategies for enhancing parliamentary democracy and governance. The Cayman Islands delegation also attended the CPA General Assembly and participated in the election of the Chairman of the CPA Executive Committee.

Mr. Bernie Bush, MP and Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Commerce, spoke as a panelist for the Small Branches workshop, *Accelerating Digital Innovation for Resilience and Growth in Small Jurisdictions*, which was Chaired by Hon. David Agius, Deputy Speaker, Member of the Maltese Parliament. Mr. Bush outlined for the global audience the steps that the Cayman Islands Government and the Parliament had taken to establish digital innovation, including the creation of the E-Government Unit, the specific outcomes of the Strategic Policy Statements, and the draft legislation for a National ID Programme.



“Participating in the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was an invaluable experience,” **stated Mr. Bush, whose portfolio as Parliamentary Secretary includes the Ministry of Commerce.** “Presenting on Cayman’s advancements in digital innovation highlighted our commitment to resilience and ease of access in online services for Caymanians. I was proud to share the strides our nation has taken. The exchange of ideas with fellow Parliamentarians has been instrumental in shaping strategies that will benefit small jurisdictions across the Commonwealth.”

Additionally, **Mrs. Merren-Chin** participated in the 58th Meeting of the Society-of-Clerks-at-the-Table (SoCATT). The two-day meeting brought together Parliamentary Clerks and parliamentary staff from Commonwealth Parliaments for a number of thought-provoking presentations on important parliamentary subjects, including Parliamentary oversight of Executive undertakings, Parliamentary privilege, and digital democracy.

“Connecting with my colleagues in the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table is always an enriching experience,” **stated Mrs. Merren-Chin, Clerk of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands.** “Engaging with other Clerks from across the Commonwealth allowed us to exchange best practices and explore innovative approaches to parliamentary procedures. The insights gained will undoubtedly enhance our legislative processes and strengthen our commitment to democratic governance.”

The delegates were welcomed to Australia during the Opening Ceremony, which included entertainment by the Bangara Dance Theatre and addresses by the Speaker of the Assembly of New South Wales, the Premier, and the Governor of New South Wales. The conference concluded with the presentation of the 2024 Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year awards and the 2nd Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Lecture, which highlighted the role of Parliamentarians in promoting human rights.

Participation in the 67th CPC underscores the Parliament’s dedication to engaging with the global parliamentary community and to implementing best practices that benefit the people of the Cayman Islands.

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Notes:

- **Image:** Mr. Christopher Saunders, MP; Ms. Barbara Conolly, MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Mrs. Zena-Merren-Chin; and, Mr. Bernie Bush, MP, photographed with Parliamentarian colleagues from across the Caribbean.
- **Image Credit:** CPA Headquarters/Parliament of New South Wales/CPA Branches.

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