



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FOURTH MEETING OF THE 2025-2026 SESSION
Third Sitting

Friday
6 March, 2026
(Pages 1-37)

Hon. D. Ezzard Miller
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. D. Ezzard Miller
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. André M. Ebanks, MP	<i>Premier</i> , Minister of Financial Services & Commerce
Hon. Gary B. Ruddy, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of Tourism & Trade Development
Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, JP, MP	Minister of Finance & Economic Development <i>and</i> Education & Training
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, MP	Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	Minister of Social Development & Innovation <i>and</i> Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage
Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, JP, MP	Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs
Hon. Michael S. Myles, MP	Minister of Caymanian Employment & Immigration

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Franz I. Manderson, MBE, Cert. Hon., JP	<i>Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service
Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, KC, JP	<i>Attorney General</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West
Ms. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Elected Member for Savannah
Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	Elected Member for Newlands

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, JP, MP	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town North
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town Central
Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for George Town West
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac East
Mr. A. Roy Tatum, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Elected Member for Red Bay
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town East

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, CCI, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town East
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FOURTH MEETING OF THE 2025-2026 SESSION
FRIDAY
6 MARCH, 2026
10:03AM
Third Sitting

[Hon. D. Ezzard Miller, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: I call on the Honourable Attorney General to read prayers.

PRAYERS

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin:
Good morning and thank you.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Parliament now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name, and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

Bless our Sovereign, King Charles III; William, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness; truth and justice; religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands, the Premier, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, ex officio Members and Members of the Parliament, the Chief Justice and members of the Judiciary, that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us, and give us peace, now and always.

Amen.

The Speaker: This honourable House is now in session.

Please be seated.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

The Speaker: None.

**READING BY THE HONOURABLE
SPEAKER OF MESSAGES
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Speaker: We have a special honour to bestow today, so I call on the Honourable Premier to start the process.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks, Minister of Financial Services & Commerce, Elected Member for West Bay South: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

In keeping with your tradition of honouring Caymanians and making Parliament more relevant to Caymanians, given that you mentioned earlier that when we get to today's obituary section we'll be doing obituary speeches, before we get to the sadder news and in keeping with honouring those who are here and with us now, I'm happy to update this House that the Caucus has agreed to rename the Radio Cayman building, The Loxley Banks Building.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, let's [recognise] our pioneers while they are with us.

Given that we are a team that shares credit, this idea emanated from the Education and Finance Minister, so I yield, Mr. Speaker, to allow the Member for West Bay North to say a few words in relation to the historic career of Mr. Loxley Banks who is in the Chamber with us as a former Head of Department.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, Minister of Finance & Economic Development and Education & Training, Elected Member for West Bay North: Thank you, Premier, [and] thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, oftentimes I marvel at some of what I like to call "glaring omissions". Last year at the King's Celebration and Honours, I was shocked and thrilled and saddened at the same time. When I saw Mr. Loxley Banks receiving his MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), I was thrilled because no one deserved it more, and I was shocked because he hadn't gotten it earlier; I was absolutely

shocked. Then I reflected, because I'm a person who internalises everything, and I was saddened because I sat in these Chambers for 12 years and he didn't get it.

I thought to myself, how could someone who had such an impact not only on the civil service but Caymanian society, have gone this long and not received an MBE, so I made sure that at the next opportunity, which was Caucus, I said to colleagues, *the greatest sin is to repeat the errors of the past; the only way in my mind that I can start to forgive myself for being a part of collective history who didn't see Mr. Loxley Banks receive his MBE until he was in his eighties is to name the Radio Cayman building in his honour.*

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: The good thing was there was no debate, no nothing. Everyone looked around the room and said, let's do it, let's do it. It's something that needs to be done.

He was here from the creation. He can talk about the grant that was given to the Cayman Islands government that helped build us and get us that one thing that we took for granted as children— because growing up, I just always thought there had to have been a Radio Cayman. That's what happens to us as humans. We almost become benign to the great things that we have in our lives and we just take them for granted. No, we didn't always have a Radio Cayman.

Of course, in going over for an interview a couple of weeks later, I then said to colleagues, *but we gotta touch that building up. We can't have that building renamed after Mr. Loxley Banks and not ensure that some repairs are done and that the building is fitting for that renaming*, and so it gives me just an absolute thrill to stand here today to be a part of making sure this happens.

Now, I'm going to use the term “Locky”. I know that's going to sound somewhat disrespectful to some of the older Caymanians because I shouldn't call him that because of our age difference; but it's what he allows me to call him, and I'm sure he wouldn't mind me doing so today. Not only did we form a relationship 25 years ago when I first got elected, but we then found out that we shared a love of American football. He is a proud University of Miami Hurricane. I am a proud Ohio State Buckeye. Needless to say, our relationship had a little bump in January.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: The thing that also continues to draw us together is that every year, once or twice, he does a special during the sports show. I was thinking to myself that it ought to be something that Radio Cayman also considers institutionalising, that we have that show annually, even after he and I have moved on and passed on from this side of eternity. That show should continue. I'll tell you, I always look forward to getting

that call because once I see that call come, I know what that call is. *Rollie!* Then I go over and he usually...

Mr. Speaker, today's world is about digital. Up until this year, he said, *come on over, I got something for you.* I didn't make it, but when I got into the office and there was an envelope waiting for me. He had sent over some college football and NFL preview magazines and left them with my PA. That is how serious he takes it. We've had people like Raul Smith and Donnie Bodden call from overseas— this is how serious we take this, folks— call in from Miami to go live and be part of this show, so the two of us take that show very, very, very seriously. The Locky and Rollie NFL Preview — that sounds good.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I thought about that on the fly; but in all seriousness, today marks a day... As the Premier said it is so important, when we can, to give people their flowers when they're still alive; and for me, this is just my personal tribute, Locky, to how much I love you, respect you, and think of you as a lifelong friend and someone I've looked up to all my life.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Member for West Bay North.

Mr. Speaker, to show you the measure of the man Mr. Loxley— whom we do refer to as Locky— when sharing the news with him, he also, in that Caymanian spirit of sharing credit has said there are other Caymanians who should also be recognised. This is brand new this morning, I haven't had a chance to share it with Caucus. His suggestion is that we rename the newsroom [after] Doren Miller — your uncle, who according to the former head of department was instrumental in the newsroom. We make that news here today.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: There will be an official naming once all the bells and whistles and the paint is there, and everyone will be invited to the Loxley Banks Broadcasting Centre for the media; and inside, Doren Miller Newsroom. Good day for Cayman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, could I just say a few words, sir?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, as Head of the Civil Service, I sincerely want to thank the Government and all Members of this House for this very important gesture of naming Radio Cayman after Mr. Banks.

I also note that we have, Ms. Norma McField here, a current director and Ms. Paulette who we all know has been a legend—I think she's enjoying some retirement now. I want to also thank these ladies here for all they have done for broadcasting in our Islands. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, I often tell my team that I judge performance not in times of comfort but in times of discomfort. I grew up listening to Mr. Banks but what stood out in my mind was his outstanding performance after Hurricane Ivan—well, before and after. The only radio station that was up; it seemed like he lived there for days and weeks keeping us updated, giving us safety tips, actually inspiring us, Mr. Speaker, to get through all of the havoc that we were experiencing. I listened to his show and to his voice almost every morning driving into work.

Mr. Banks, you have done immense service to our country. You have inspired so many Caymanians to get into broadcasting. You have trained so many Caymanians. My grandfather used to tell me about your days being a veteran and I don't think we recognise that enough.

Today is about celebration, and Mr. Banks, as the Head of the Civil Service, on behalf of Her Excellency and all of us in the civil service, we sincerely congratulate you. This is well deserved and we all look up to you; we all love you. Thank you, sir, for all that you have done.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town North: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise on behalf of the Opposition to offer our congratulations to Mr. Loxley.

Mr. Loxley, your voice is synonymous with Radio Cayman. I can't imagine Radio Cayman without actually hearing it; and we all remember after Hurricane Ivan, your comforting voice and your support for us during that time. Obviously, I have a long history with you from growing up in West Bay as well, and you were married to one of my girlfriends *[Laughter]*.

Once again, Mr. Loxley, well deserved and God bless you. Thank you so much for your service to this country.

The Speaker: Member for Newlands.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, Elected Member for Newlands: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be remiss of me if I did not stand and associate myself with all of the wonderful remarks that have been made in relation to Mr. Banks. I don't call him Locky, I call him Lox; but I can do so, I think, because I guess technically he's my brother-in-law. Lox, very, very proud of you.

In the same vein that others have all the memories of listening to Radio Cayman, listening to you, learning all sorts of incredible words like—and you are probably one of the few I've ever heard using this term—yesteryear. You know, you learn a lot.

It has been such a privilege and an honour to know you and to be a part of the family and to watch the contributions you have made to this country as a whole, and to your community West Bay in particular. I know on behalf of my wife and the rest of our family, we're very proud of the contributions you have made and the work you have done, sir. Lox, proud of you and job well done. I'll be happy to see that name on the side of that building.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not, Mr. Banks, that's what I call him, keep playing those Jim Reeves, Hank Snow, Hank Williams, Marty Robbins, Willie Nelson songs and we'll always be friends.

On behalf of the Miller clan, I would also like to thank the Premier and Mr. Banks for recognising my Uncle Doren's service at Radio Cayman.

Thank you all.

[Desk thumping]

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

Immigration (Transition) (Grant of the Right to Be Caymanian) (No. 2) Order, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles, Minister of Caymanian Employment & Immigration, Elected Member for Prospect: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Immigration (Transition) (Grant of the Right to Be Caymanian) (No. 2) Order, 2025.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the report?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: I will speak on it when it comes up.

Beneficial Ownership Transparency (Legitimate Interest Access) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026

The Speaker: Honourable Premier and Minister of Financial Services and Commerce.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Beneficial Ownership Transparency (Legitimate Interest Access) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the Report?

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Not on the Report, but I will speak on the Motion later on the Order Paper.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Health Insurance (Amendment) Regulations, 2026

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Health Insurance (Amendment) Regulations, 2026.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I too will speak at the time when we are dealing with the Motion. Thank you.

Children and Youth Services (CAYS) Foundation - Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2024

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Social Development and Innovation.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Social Development & Innovation and Youth, Sports, Culture &

Heritage, Elected Member for East End: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Annual Report of the Children and Youth Services (CAYS) Foundation for the year 2024.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Just very briefly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Report highlights the impactful initiatives and the strategic advances made by the organisation during that year and the critical support to the children of the Cayman Islands. The audited Financial Statements for the Children and Youth Services Foundation on the 31st December 2024 comprised of the Statement of Responsibility for the Financial Statements, the Auditor General's Report, the Statement of Financial Position and that the Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion.

Report on the Cabinet's decision in response to Private Member's Motion No. 1 of 2025-2026

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Report on the Cabinet's decision in response to Private Member's Motion No. 1 of 2025-2026.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Premier wish to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, only to say that this marks in response to what was mentioned on Friday and pointed out by my good friend, the Member for George Town Central that we had intended to deal with this matter within this Meeting. It took us a bit of time to analyse how to deal with no-wake zones but once we came together as a Cabinet and saw that we were going to revamp the ports legislation, we thought this was now the neatest way to be able to deal with it and report it to the House, at the first Meeting in 2026.

I thank the Member for George Town Central, and this now hopefully serves as a template that can be replicated in the future for the Standing Order 48 – Motions on national policy issues, because we know we have more in this Meeting that will have to be dealt with within the next six months. Thank you as we celebrate evolving of democracy and the Parliament.

Thank you.

URGENT QUESTIONS

The Speaker: None.

QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

QUESTION NO. 79 WHAT IS THE AVERAGE COST OF CONSTRUCTION FOR THE GOVERNMENT AFFORDABLE HOMES IN NORTH SIDE?

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question number 79 in my name to the Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure. Can the Honourable Minister say, what is the average cost of construction for the Government affordable homes in North Side?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The National Housing Development Trust (NHDT) awarded contracts to small contractors through an open procurement process for the construction of the following unit types:

Unit Type	Contract Construction Cost (CI\$)
Two Bedroom, Two Bathroom	\$135,000
Three Bedroom, Two Bathroom	\$150,000

Supplementary

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. Can the Minister confirm if the homes have been coming in within budget?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning and Housing.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, at the moment I don't have that answer for him. What I can say is that there's going to be some modification to the numbers that are there with some changes that have been happening. If he's okay with that, *I'm happy to put it back in writing to him when I know the full detail of what the changes are.*

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful for that. I thank the Minister for clarification.

QUESTION NO. 80 ROADWORKS PLANNED FOR THE RED BAY AND PROSPECT CONSTITUENCIES DURING THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY TERM

The Speaker: Elected Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum, Elected Member for Red Bay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question number 80 standing in my name to the Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure. Can the Honourable Minister advise what roadworks projects are planned for implementation within the Red Bay and Prospect constituencies during the current Parliamentary Term, and the anticipated commencement and completion dates for each project?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The National Roads Authority (NRA) has identified a number of projects within the Red Bay and Prospect constituency. These include:

- (1) Deceleration/acceleration lane at Selkirk Drive;
- (2) Speed humps on Selkirk Drive;
- (3) Grade and install a spray and chip surface on the connector road between Bimini and Selkirk Drive; and
- (4) Speed hump by Eddie Sanchez Park.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Red Bay.

Supplementaries

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for that answer and I also thank him for... These are some projects that I've been pursuing for some time and I had confirmation that they were starting. What I'm not seeing though, I don't think, is mention of any other roadworks for the improvements for Prospect Drive and so on. Is there anything other than this that's being planned?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, through you. One of the major road works that will actually be done is finishing the Grand Harbour connection and that connecting road between Bimini and Selkirk. Then, the government just did some land purchases to connect

from Selkirk going forward to what would be, at the closest point, behind the Popeye's Red Bay [location] to put in that connector road to allow the traffic flow from Prospect, Selkirk and Marina Drive to be able to take this alternate road instead of having to come out into the main road.

All of these are in the making and I'm looking forward to having some of this excel in this current budget cycle which is one of the major infrastructure costs to what's going to be happening in Prospect, including the new transitioning of the Grand Harbour roundabout, which we will be releasing very shortly, too. Hopefully that answers the question for you, sir.

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, and again, I thank the Minister. There is certainly much work being done, especially on the major road artery.

What I'm seeking though is confirmation from you. I heard from the NRA that they were going to be looking at costing to do a proper hot mix, if that's the right term, on Prospect Drive — I'm hoping up to Holly. Those roads were never ever done. They've been in a pretty bad shape for some time. Mr. Speaker, if I could mention quickly, when I met with NRA, Holly was not on their list of roads that they had even looked as being graded for some time so they're in bad need of some proper road structure there.

The Speaker: Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I thank the Member for Red Bay for the response.

Mr. Speaker, just Thursday I got some numbers [for] Selkirk Drive and the other road that you were just asking about from the NRA team and what I [am] able to say is that those roads weren't budgeted in this cycle, but what I will tell you, sir, is to make sure that your team supports me for some sufficient funding that would be needed for those because they're coming in at an alarmingly high number that I didn't think they were going to be coming in at. I'm happy to share that offline with you later on— the exact number [related to] cost of what those roads are going to look like.

The Speaker: Last supplementary.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I thank the Minister again and I will certainly be supporting that. The roads I'm discussing have never been properly repaired.

The Speaker: Okay, you made that point already. We have to move things along.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Fair enough, sir. Thank you.

QUESTION NO. 81

WHAT IS THE START DATE OF THE EAST-WEST ARTERIAL ROAD AND WHERE DOES THE FIRST PHASE END?

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Just before you ask the question, I'm going to confine the supplementaries today to three because we need to move the programme along. We need to adjourn by 4:30 for the historic event that's going to take place at 5 o'clock this evening.

Thank you.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. I notice that you pointed that at me. Thank you very much for the reminder.

Mr. Speaker, question number 81 standing in my name: Can the Honourable Minister of Planning Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure advise the start date of the East-West Arterial Road and where does the first phase end?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, the response: The East-West Arterial Road remains a priority infrastructure project aimed at improving the connectivity, traffic flow and the long-term resilience between the central and eastern districts.

I have been reliably informed by the NRA that the survey works will begin in April of this year; and the pre-notifications to landowners has been completed. The final Gazette will be presented to Cabinet shortly with anticipation of the work beginning in September.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town East.

Supplementaries

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Honourable Minister for that update. I just want to ask him if the road in its first phase has been budgeted.

The Speaker: Minister for Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that there is money in the budget to carry us for what we think is the first part of the most crucial part of the road which is to get us at least to Lookout Gardens within the two-year cycle.

The Minister of Finance has also told us that there's money in the infrastructure account that we will be able to access also, for the building of this road. Right now, I would say there is money in this budget to get us to the point that we need to get to and then we'll

look at the next budget coming on to move on to where we need to go. The hardest part right now is just getting going. Once I get going, my good friend to the left and the Premier has guaranteed that they will find the money to deliver the East-West Road.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded that this is my third one.

I'm so happy with the Minister's answer and I'm happy also that the finance minister has agreed. What got me concerned was when I saw the FS [Financial Secretary] shuffle as he said money was available.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I just want to remind the Minister, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very important project for many persons, and about 10 years now I have been asking for this. Persons lose 100 hours per year sitting in traffic, that's about \$10,000 and that calculation is only at minimum wage. It's very, very important.

Thus, I thank the Honourable Minister for all the work he's been doing on this. I know he wants to get this finished. Sadly, Lookout is in my area and not North Side.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Next question.

QUESTION NO. 82
WHETHER CINICO'S CAREGIVER ALLOWANCE
RATES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO REFLECT THE
NEW STATUTORY MINIMUM WAGE

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to ask question number 82 standing in my name to the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Can the Honourable Minister state whether CINICO's caregiver allowance rates have been adjusted to reflect the new statutory minimum wage, and if not, when will the Government bring those allowances into compliance with the minimum wage law?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, the answer: It is clear from the drafting of the question that there is an assumption that the Home Healthcare allowances were initially established by reference to the statutory minimum wage. That assumption is not valid and there is no linkage to the statutory minimum wage. Accordingly, the allowances have not been increased following the recent minimum wage adjustment.

The Home Healthcare benefit is administered by CINICO as a fixed, capped allowance under the benefits schedule that was established by the Government.

The Home Healthcare expenditure in 2025 was approximately \$11.4 million compared to \$9.6 million in 2024. CINICO has indicated that, based on current projections, adjusting the Home Healthcare allowance rates to reflect the current minimum wage, could increase costs by as much as \$9 million per year, depending on utilisation and claim trends. Any such increase in Home Healthcare allowance would require further assessment and costing to determine its affordability and, it is likely that supplementary expenditure funding would be required.

A Paper will be submitted to Cabinet this month which will seek a decision as to whether the Home Healthcare allowance levels are to be increased.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Mr. Speaker, thanks for that.

I read what was said with regards to assumption but I raised the issue, Mr. Speaker, back in mid-January and I understood from the Minister that *well, we are working through this*.

I won't ask another question, my colleague wants to ask a question, but I will stop there, sir.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Supplementaries

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

I heard the Honourable Minister say the years and the amounts. Can he say if there are any projections or future trends that we can have as an indication of the need in this area?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's an excellent question.

Mr. Speaker, right now, the increase is roughly 20 per cent year on year, so the \$9 million expenditure increase this year that would be expected should we increase the allowance to match the statutory minimum wage — which by the way would mean the allowance would go up to approximately \$1,700 as a capped amount per month versus \$1,200 — would then mean that at the end of this year, we would pitch at around \$20 million. By the end of Year 2 in 2027 it would be approximately \$24 million, and by the end of 2028 it would be approximately \$29 million.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one follow up question.

Mr. Speaker, what I heard from the Minister just now sounds a bit chaotic and somewhat crisis like. Are there any intentions by the Government to address this; and can you give any details on how you're going to do that?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what I've discussed with the Premier after a discussion we had in Caucus on Tuesday is that it is clearly at a minimum, chaotic, as you've described it. It's a crisis, it's an absolute crisis. This is a Pandora's Box that got opened. There are no belts and braces around this programme. There's no means testing.

We now have families who are applying for 24-hour care. Remember, this was initially started as home healthcare because we don't have a rehab facility in Cayman. You can't have surgery, go like you normally would into a rehabilitation centre for two months or whatever, and then go home. Hence, it was to be home healthcare. What this has turned into is assisted living. This is now assisted living for elderly; and so CINICO is put in this very awkward position where people get approved but when CINICO looks at it, there's no health element. It's not a home healthcare issue at that point, it's an assisted living — so there are two pieces to this.

I'm proposing that we put together a very small working group to work with me, so I want at least one or two Members from the Opposition, one or two Members from this side. We need to think this through and come up with what this needs to look like and this can't be a political issue. We're talking about our elderly, we're talking about how we're going to care for our elderly. This can't be a back and forth with us trying to one-up one another. We need to come up with a sensible programme. Are we going to have things like an income check so that we ensure that it's going to those who absolutely need it and can't afford it and what does it need to look like? These numbers are real and they are staggering. This will be the next NGS 55 if we don't arrest the situation now.

The Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, last supplementary.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Okay, last two questions.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: I'll tell you what. In the interest of time, I will speak to the Honourable Minister during the break.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, looking at CINICO's last annual report for 2024, I noticed that the insurance revenue went up \$9.5 million, insurance expenses went up \$16.5 million, and operating expenses actually went down by about \$700,000.

The question I want to ask is, this service that CINICO is providing, should it be part of CINICO's insurance product from a regulatory compliance standpoint? I think that's really where the issue is. This was not meant to be part of a service for CINICO and I think it's actually affecting their regulatory compliance and the civil servants now are the ones who are getting the increased fees to pay for this.

Minister, I would definitely like to work with you on this committee for us to arrest this issue.

The Speaker: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, the Member is quite right. A part of this has to be ensuring we parse out what is health and health related and should be funded, in my opinion, through the Health Ministry and what is social development and social related and should be administered and funded through the Ministry responsible for social development. CINICO is stuck in this awkward position. It's a no man's land that CINICO is stuck in and so we do need to ensure that we not only look at how the programme is administered, but also how we fund it and how we allocate the responsibility. However, we cannot get out of one other issue, which is this country desperately needs a proper rehab facility and we need additional assisted living facilities.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Families are put in a very, very awkward position. My own family, we were lucky I had a sister who had adult children who moved in with my daddy for the last six years. Not every family can do that in this day and age. We were lucky that that's how we worked around our elder care issue.

We need assisted living facilities, and so, I say to the private sector, if there's an opportunity out there, that's one; please look at it because we need this, we need to ensure— and government doesn't need to provision everything. Pines, for example, is not a government-owned facility, government simply funds it. Those are two ideal opportunities that I would look forward to and I know the government would love to see someone step up to the plate and participate with.

The Speaker: Next question.

QUESTION NO. 83
WHEN WILL AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT
BE PUT IN PLACE TO SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS
OF EVERY CAYMANIAN CITIZEN?

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Question number 83 standing in my name: Can the Honourable Premier, Minister of Financial Services and Commerce, please say when will an Artificial Intelligence Act be put in place to ensure the health, safety and fundamental rights of every Caymanian citizen is safeguarded?

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the answer: I sincerely thank the honourable Member for this crucial question. In short, based on the following, I hereby set forth an earnest and determined aim to have a draft Artificial Intelligence legislative framework for consideration by Q2 2027.

By way of background, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is developing at a phenomenal pace. Mr. Speaker, we must therefore act in a way that both safeguards the health, safety and fundamental rights of Caymanians, and enable responsible innovation that improves public services and strengthens our economy.

Mr. Speaker, work is already underway. Government has appointed the National Digital Transformation Taskforce to provide expert advice and coordinated leadership on the opportunities and the challenges as we approach digital transformation in the country, including the responsible use of AI across government and the wider economy.

The Taskforce is under the joint remit of my office and the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, and it is comprised of:

1. Cristina Spratt, as Chair; along with
2. Jeff Goddard;
3. Kaitlyn Elphinstone;
4. Jason Nehra;
5. Dr. Alexandra Forsell;
6. Lucy Frew;
7. Tamsin Deasey;
8. Lucia Gallardo; and
9. James McFee.

The Taskforce is expected to submit its report of AI policy recommendations by end of May of this year (2026), and that report will be central to informing the decisions we take on the suitable AI governance approach and legal framework for our Islands.

In the meantime, we are not standing still. A great deal of effective AI governance can and is being put in place immediately through policy, standards, and

regulatory guidance under existing legislation and regulations.

As of March 2026, the Cayman Islands Civil Service has formally developed its first Artificial Intelligence Policy (Version 1.0). This policy is in its final stages of signoff with the Office of the Deputy Governor with the aim to be deployed across the breadth of Cayman Islands Government.

This policy establishes mandatory governance, risk management, transparency, accountability, and oversight requirements across the entire Civil Service. There are also specific efforts being made on the use of AI in the areas of Education and Health with teams doing deep dives into how AI applies to these subject areas.

Under the AI Policy framework, AI systems cannot be procured, piloted, or deployed without coordinated review for cybersecurity, legal compliance, data protection, risk assessment, and architectural alignment.

The policy expressly prohibits unauthorised deployment, the misuse of sensitive data, unlawful or harmful use of AI, and the use of high-risk applications without proper approvals. Enforcement mechanisms are built in.

Importantly, AI within the Civil Service is already subject to existing Cayman Islands legislation, including the Data Protection Act (2021 Revision), the Freedom of Information Act (2021 Revision), and the Procurement Act (2023 Revision). It is also subject to the Government's Risk Management Framework and AI does not operate outside these parameters; it operates within it.

Mr. Speaker, there are, however, pivotal issues and decisions to be made, and it is prudent that we make them carefully and in the full collaboration with the Opposition. These include whether the Cayman Islands should pursue targeted amendments to existing Acts, such as data protection and sector specific legislation, or whether a comprehensive, overarching AI Act is preferable.

We must determine how we will classify and manage AI systems by risk type; how we will ensure accountability and auditability; how we will strengthen privacy, cyber resilience, and data governance; and how regulators, including in financial services, will be coordinated so standards are clear and enforceable.

In healthcare, for instance, where AI-enabled systems may influence clinical decisions and touch the most sensitive personal data, the Ministry of Health, Environment and Sustainability is already developing legislative proposals to ensure safety, equity, informed consent, and accountable care in the use of AI and advanced technologies. That work is at an early stage and will need careful design to be effective in practice.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, it would be premature to give this House a guaranteed commencement date today for AI legislation. Once we receive the Taskforce's recommendations, complete consultation,

and settle key policy choices, any guaranteed date would risk being either unrealistic or not aligned with the best protections for the country.

That said, we must work purposefully towards an expressed target timeframe so our minds remain focused and driven because this matter will not wait on us; instead AI will continue to impact us (and the rest of the world).

I therefore give this House an undertaking that the NCFC Government will keep Members updated as the Taskforce reports, as consultation proceeds, and as the legislative and administrative pathway is finalised.

In fact, I extend an invitation to the Member for Bodden Town East, that should he wish to be in attendance when the Taskforce presents its report of AI policy recommendations by end of May of this year (2026), I would be delighted if he would join that presentation.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say thank you to the Honourable Premier for that extensive answer, but just to send a request that the Official Opposition be invited to that presentation as well. Thank you.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I anticipated that question. I knew that if I threw the bait out there I'd get a bite.

The answer is, yes, Member for George Town Central.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you.

Mr. Premier, was that conch bait?

I want to thank you so much for that comprehensive answer, and most definitely with AI we have to embrace it otherwise we'll get left behind, because the loss of human control over this super intelligent system can lead to irreversible harm. I thank you very much and I look forward to working with your team.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Next question.

QUESTION NO. 84

UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO ADDRESS THE BEACH EROSION ON THE SOUTHERN END OF SEVEN MILE BEACH

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question number 84 in my name to the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability. Can the Honourable Minister provide an update on the Government's plans to address the beach erosion on the southern end of Seven Mile Beach?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer: Beach erosion at the southern end of Seven Mile Beach is a national concern. It affects public access and enjoyment of the shoreline and it has wider implications for our tourism product, our natural environment, the livelihoods that depend on them and the quality of life for Caymanians and residents who enjoy the natural shoreline and beach setting.

The most advanced interventions designed to address the beach erosion on the southern end of Seven Mile Beach are being led by responsible and innovative private sector stakeholders, supported and facilitated by government through our established regulatory and technical review processes.

One proposal that is already in the public domain is the Marriott Grand Cayman's renourishment initiative which includes the instalment of two shallow groynes and the placement of sand to rebuild the beach profile. After years of research and months of planning, this initiative has progressed to the stage where a Coastal Works Licence application has now been filed and approved.

A second private sector proposal is also progressing. However, as no formal coastal works application has yet been submitted to the government, it would be premature and inappropriate to disclose details to this honourable House.

In both cases, the proponents have retained qualified coastal engineering expertise and have shared design options with government for early technical engagement. Our role is to ensure that any solution is evidence-based, environmentally responsible, and compliant with the Coastal Works permitting regime, including appropriate consideration of coastal processes, marine impacts, and the public interest. The government has provided feedback on the preliminary options and stands ready to process a formal application as soon as it is received.

Mr. Speaker, the government's approach to addressing beach erosion is to work in partnership with responsible private sector stakeholders to address this national issue. One such example is the initiative being led by the ownership and management of the Marriott Grand Cayman, where government's role is to support well-designed and properly permitted renourishment efforts while ensuring that outcomes are sustainable and in the best interests of the Cayman Islands.

The Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Supplementaries

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for that comprehensive answer.

Can the Honourable Minister say whether the government is considering or has considered implementing a beach renourishment tax on the room nights and perhaps per cruise ship passenger, to develop a fund? I'm sure the Minister is aware that with the recent storms, the northern end of Seven Mile Beach is suffering from major erosion right now. [Even] other parts of the island, there was a tourism accommodation in Barkers that lost the beach there. I remember the big issue was that the horses used to ride by when folks were out sun tanning; now, not even the horses ride by because there is no beach.

This is an issue that we are going to continue to face even on undeveloped beaches, like the North Side public beach and in the Sister Islands. In Cayman Brac right now, the sand over by Carib Sands is moving up and down. In fact, I think the channel is being blocked there; so this is not just happening on the northern end of Seven Mile Beach, it's happening around all three Islands. I think the Government needs to start thinking for the future because even if, and I say if, this private sector initiative is successful in dealing with the northern end of Seven Mile Beach, in 5, 8, 10 years, they're going to have to do it again.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I can answer the Member by saying, yes, the Government is in discussions in relation to looking at funding streams for long-term maintenance of the beach renourishment. We all agree that this is going to be something that even after replenishing the beach in this situation, we're going to have to plan for the future because it will happen again, as we see with climate change and as construction continues to take place, we will need to plan and prepare to have mechanisms in place for the maintenance of the beach.

We are talking about looking at the different types of tax. Whether it's on a hotel for the stay overnight or if it's on the departure tax, we've been talking about the different areas and we are going to come to a final position on that in short order.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Good morning and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can I ask the Honourable Minister if she and the Government would give an undertaking to look at

the beach property just west of La Esperanza in the Watering Place area, which is one of the lowest areas? Oft times the sea traverses it and cuts off the road but besides that, the property owners, if you have a look at the Land Register, more than 50 per cent has been eroded over the years. Obviously there's sea rising, and it's magnificent to see and also concerning how fast the sea has risen in that particular area.

The Speaker: Minister of Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I can give an undertaking to the Member that that will be looked into. One of the things that we always have been saying on the government bench is that we are not here to just represent Grand Cayman, but also Cayman Brac and Little Cayman who often feel like we don't look out for them enough, so we want to make sure to do just that. Thank the Member who we know has done a great job at advocating for her people, always.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Honourable Minister say whether the Government has taken a policy position in respect to assisting in the beach renourishment on Seven Mile Beach by way of contribution or decision to not contribute financially; and when she says that they're finding a funding solution for tax and she says coming soon, I think she said, or soon to come, can we get a more accurate timeline of when we're going to find out about that fee structure to help with this problem?

Thanks.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, can I just ask the Member to repeat the first part of his question, please?

The Speaker: Member for [George Town] Central?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was asking the Minister, if she can confirm the Government's policy position on whether or not it intends to help in the solution on the Seven Mile Beach renourishment by way of funding of the beach renourishment or is their policy that they will not contribute financially?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In relation to the first part of the question, what we've already done is our way of participating with this; I guess you could look at it as almost like a PPP [public-private partnership]. The private landowners have done

their part by arranging for the engineers to prepare a design and they found their way to procure the sand and the government's way of contributing is by way of the—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Yeah, I was trying to remember the name of the fee. The coastal work fees. We've waived those fees and royalties.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Well, that's quite a hefty fee so that's our way of contributing in that regard and that's what we will do with the second programme that is in the works right now.

Just to go a little bit further by saying that when we look at the project that is being done right now by the Marriott, coupled with the project that is being put together by the group of private landowners or stakeholders, it will be quite a large amount of money, in amounts of millions of dollars as it relates to the rebate or fees that they would be getting back as a waiver.

To answer your second question, we will have something put together by the end of Q2.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, as I've noticed, questions number 84 and 85 are quite similar and the Minister in her eloquent answer has arrested most of my questions already; and so I'll just ask my question on this and rescind number 85, if I can.

The Speaker: You want to ask a supplementary here now, and then you intend to withdraw question number 85.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Yes sir.

The Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Honourable Minister again for her answer. I just want to ask: Has the Honourable Minister set any policy to put screens at the end of the drop off to catch sand and store it, since it is said that it goes to the drop off area and disappears for good?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I can answer the Member by saying, we have not set a policy on that. We have received presentations that display that there is a lot of sand being lost and it's going— I don't think much of it has gone to the drop off as yet— most of it is around the Kittiwake but we've looked at that mechanism of, I think they refer to it as pumping the sand — pump and dump, pumping the sand and then dumping it on the beach. However, as it relates to a policy, we have not explored that option at this stage.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, is this something that the Government is interested in making happen?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: This is one of the options that we are looking at, at this stage; but we haven't made a decision as it relates to taking that approach right now.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I recognise the time so I'm happy to take this answer in writing if the Member can't answer it right off the top.

Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of any policy available to the government after severe weather to reclaim sand that was not previously at a parcel of land. I say that with the background of knowing that there are some areas that got a lot of sand that was not their sand, so to speak, during a particular weather event that could be used for solutions like this, but I don't know where's the legality and regulatory framework that guides us, if there is one; and if there isn't, does the government plan to create one? I'm happy to take the answer in writing at a later time if the Minister can't answer it off the top.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, to answer the Member, it's a good question. We certainly see with weather patterns that that does happen. It is something that the Government will look into. To my knowledge, I don't think that there is an existing policy.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier, out of an abundance of caution I'm going to ask you to move a motion to suspend Standing Order 36(3) to allow the last question to be asked.

Suspension of Standing Order 36(3)

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Belts and braces.

I move the suspension of [Standing Order] 36(3) to allow questions to exceed an hour so we can dispose of the final questions.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 36(3) be suspended in order to complete the questions on the Order Paper.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 36(3) suspended.

QUESTION NO. 85
(Withdrawn)

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, I wish to withdraw this question.

The Speaker: Thank you, next question.

QUESTION NO. 86
WHEN WILL THE SARGASSUM PLAN BE
UNVEILED TO THE PUBLIC AND WILL STAFF
BE EMPLOYED?

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question number 86, standing in my name: Can the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability say when will the Sargassum Plan be unveiled to the public and will staff be employed?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, at this time, the Government does not yet have a formally approved national sargassum management plan in place. However, for several years, a number of government departments have been working together to manage periodic sargassum influxes and to provide guidance to private landowners regarding the removal of accumulated material from their properties.

What currently exists, Mr. Speaker, are response protocols; however, what we need is a proactive approach. These existing protocols focus on coordination and management once the sargassum reaches the shoreline, including advising property owners on appropriate handling and removal. As a result, the protocol does not presently address management of sargassum offshore before it lands on our shores.

Mr. Speaker, the direction I wish to see moving forward is a more comprehensive and proactive strategy. Addressing sargassum only after it reaches the shore can create secondary impacts. Mechanical or improper removal can disturb beach profiles and interfere with marine life, including turtle nesting activity.

Additionally, sargassum contains heavy metals that, when collected and piled in one area, can leach into the soil, water table or marine environment. This creates a serious public and environmental risk. At present, we do not have adequate storage facilities to safely process or dispose of large or extreme influxes of sargassum.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, prevention and early intervention measures must form part of the broader national response. Accordingly, we are examining options that include management approaches before the sargassum reaches the shoreline.

With respect to staffing, the current protocols are structured around coordination of existing government entities and resources.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Supplementaries

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Honourable Minister for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that the sargassum releases harmful hydrogen sulphide gas and exposure to high concentrations of hydrogen sulphide can cause collapse, respiratory paralysis, convulsions, coma, cardiac arrhythmia and death within minutes.

Mr. Speaker, knowing what we know about that, is the Government willing, the Honourable Speaker willing to get berms or booms to put around the sensitive areas of the island, especially the south side that is so badly affected, especially in Bodden Town.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, the Member might recall that the last time that I came, we spoke about this and I said that I shared his view as it relates to preventing the sargassum from reaching the shore; one of those options would require some mechanism that would have booms. We haven't gotten to a stage of me presenting to the members of Caucus what the management process would look like if we are going to prevent, but that is something that I will be bringing to Caucus in short order.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just ask the Minister if they would put this as a top priority. Just by way of background as a former Minister: On average, the Caribbean loses over \$100 million in tourism revenue, and whenever there are serious sargassum events, tourism is expected to drop by 20 to 35 per cent as a result of news coverage on sargassum, so it would definitely hurt the bottom line from a tourism perspective. The CTO [Caribbean Tourism Organisation], which I know the Honourable Minister would be fully aware, has strategies that can be offered to the government that are ready to implement and consider so you don't have to reinvent the wheel. I'm certain that with our partnership with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, it's a matter of an email from the Honourable Minister of Tourism and then that report could be presented as an option.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I can say to the Member that the Government sees this as something that we need to focus on. My colleague, the Minister for Tourism and our Honourable Deputy Premier has been in frequent conversations with me about not only beach renourishment, but certainly wanting to ensure that we don't have an issue with sargassum because having challenges with our beach eroding coupled with sargassum puts us in a tight spot when we're trying to attract visitors here; so we are certainly looking at this very [closely].

The Speaker: That brings us to the end of question time. Before I leave it, I want to respectfully draw Members' attention in particular to Standing Order 36 and even more so to 36(7) when it comes to question time. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Next item of business.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Speaker: I have received notices for, and approved, 14 statements to be given this morning and I'll start with the Deputy Governor who has two.

Honourable Deputy Governor

Civil Service Engagement Survey Results

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as Deputy Governor and Head of the Civil Service, honoured beyond measure to lead what I believe is a dedicated, engaged, and high-performing civil service. I want to talk about the results of our recent civil service staff engagement survey and how it has been translating into meaningful results for the Government and our people.

Mr. Speaker, since 2017, we have witnessed a remarkable transformation in staff engagement — not incremental improvement, but sustained, measurable progress.

- Our response rate to the Staff Engagement Survey has increased from 61 per cent in 2017 to 81 per cent in 2025 — a powerful indicator of trust in the process and confidence that voices matter;
- Our Engagement Index has risen from 67 per cent to 74 per cent; and
- We should all be very pleased that 90 per cent of our civil servants say they are proud to serve.

Engagement is not a vanity metric. It is not an internal human-resources statistic. Engagement translates into performance — and performance translates into results for our people. We are seeing that clearly across our Islands.

Mr. Speaker, are we truly delivering results? Let us examine two of the most critical areas affecting our people: crime and education.

Over the past decade, our population has grown by more than 50 per cent — from 58,000 in 2014 to 88,000 in 2024. Yet, during that same period:

- Burglaries, some 777 in 2014, have fallen by 73 per cent.
- Juvenile convictions, 40 in 2014, have fallen by more than 60 per cent.
- On a per-capita basis, residents today are significantly safer than they were 10 years ago.

If crime, particularly burglaries, had simply grown in line with population, we would have expected nearly 1,180 burglaries and 61 juvenile convictions in 2024. Instead, there were 209 burglaries and 15 juvenile convictions.

Mr. Speaker, that is not only a powerful measure of improved public safety, it is an incredibly positive story for our young people. Fewer juveniles entering the justice system means more young lives staying on the right path, more families spared hardship, and more opportunities for education, employment, and productive citizenship. It reflects early intervention, stronger community partnerships, and a justice system focused not only on enforcement, but on prevention and support. That is not coincidence. That is leadership, accountability, and engaged civil servants delivering results.

Within the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS), the Community Policing Unit, the Firearms Unit, and the Crime Task Force are all members of our prestigious 80 per cent Club — the highest-performing engagement cohort across government. The Crime Task Force, who are tasked with going after our most dangerous criminals, achieved an exceptional engagement score of 89 per cent, one of the highest in the entire civil service.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics provide clear evidence that high engagement is translating directly into public-safety outcomes. The brave men and women of that unit, and across the RCIPS, put themselves in harm's way to arrest dangerous suspects and protect our communities. We are grateful for their selfless service. High engagement in high-risk environments speaks volumes about culture, trust, and mission clarity.

I wish to commend Commissioner Walton and his entire team for their efforts to reduce and prevent crime. Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner would be the first to say that reducing crime is not achieved by the RCIPS alone. I wish to pay tribute to our teachers and counsellors, the Department of Children and Family Services, His Majesty's Northward Prison, the Courts, the Department of Community Rehabilitation, the Conditional Release Board, and our partners in the private sector, including our halfway homes, who have all

worked together to achieve these results. Together, we are stronger.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about breaking down silos and working together and this is a perfect example of that.

Mr. Speaker, I will now shift my focus from public safety to education. I am very pleased to see the Chief Officer for Education here with us this morning.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, not a single one of our government schools was rated “Good”. Today, 50 per cent of all government schools are rated “Good” by independent assessors.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we will not be satisfied by that and we will continue to work hard until all our schools are rated either “Good” or “Excellent”, but we can be pleased of the progress that is being made.

I wish to commend the former Acting Chief Officer (CO), Ms. Monteith; Chief Officer, Ms. Cetonya Cacho and her amazing team; the Director of Education Services, Mr. Mark Ray; and the entire Ministry of Education team for their outstanding results. Successive governments have invested heavily in education and we are seeing the results. I thank all of you, sincerely.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, I also wish to highlight Ministry excellence. At the team level, the Core Ministry of Tourism and Ports achieved the highest engagement score across the Civil Service — an outstanding 91 per cent.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: At the Ministry and Portfolio level, the Ministry of Tourism and Ports and the Portfolio of the Civil Service both achieved an engagement score of 82 per cent — that is across the entire Ministry and Portfolio — which was the highest score recorded at this level. That level of engagement reflects clarity of purpose, strong leadership and a culture of excellence.

Mr. Speaker, our progress is not accidental. Our focus on improving training and development and accountability has realised significant dividends. Our engagement shows that:

- Access to learning and development increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent;
- Confidence in career development opportunities rose from 44 per cent to 72 per cent;

- Regular feedback on performance increased from 54 per cent to 71 per cent; and
- 73 per cent of staff now say performance is evaluated fairly — up from 56 per cent.

We have built stronger systems, clearer expectations, and a culture of feedback. Engagement is not about comfort: it is about accountability, clarity, and pride in service.

Mr. Speaker, how does our civil service engagement survey compare internationally? Let’s have a look at the 2025 UK Civil Service People Survey. The United Kingdom’s overall engagement index stands at 65 per cent. By comparison, our Civil Service Engagement Index stands at 74 per cent. Their highest-performing major department stands at 71 per cent; our highest-performing major department scored 91 per cent. We are not simply keeping pace with international standards — we are outperforming them; and it is important to remember that our Civil Service is broader in composition.

In the Cayman Islands, our Civil Service includes not only core government services, but also our police service and our public-education professionals. This means our 74 per cent engagement score reflects commitment across frontline [law] enforcement and our classrooms. That diversity makes a 74 per cent engagement rate not just strong, but exceptional by international standards. Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that 90 per cent of our civil servants say they are proud to serve. That is a world-class achievement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you have heard today, the Civil Service is deeply engaged, it is highly accountable, it is professional, and it is delivering measurable results. Staff engagement is not a slogan; it is a strategy and a discipline, and it is producing real results for the people of these Islands.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to reiterate how profoundly proud I am to lead our outstanding Civil Service, and I sincerely thank the thousands of dedicated civil servants whose daily work is building a safer, stronger, and more successful Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

[Desk thumping]

Retirement Age and Pension in the Civil Service

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, my last statement is about the retirement age and persons working beyond it, and also dealing with our pension.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement this morning to promote greater understanding about civil service laws, policies and practices governing the flexibility that exists for persons approaching the normal retirement age and the careful planning that goes into preparing for their eventual retirement.

First, I would like to thank all Members of this honourable House and in particular, the honourable Member for Bodden Town West for their constructive engagement on an issue that matters deeply to our civil service and the country we serve. We know that our people are enjoying longer lives and many have the desire to extend their working careers. Where such a desire exists it is widely supported. Let me be clear: where a civil servant remains in good health, continues to perform strongly, holds skills that are in demand and where their continued service does not hinder the progression of another Caymanian, our existing framework already allows them to continue working beyond the age of 65, if they so choose.

This is not a theory, Mr. Speaker. Persons aged 60 and above represent almost 11 per cent of our workforce as of the 31st December, 2025 including 3 per cent of our workforce who are aged 65 and over.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, under the existing provisions within the Public Service Management Act and Personnel Regulations, during 2024 and 2025 nearly three quarters of civil servants who reached age 65 — that is, 93 out of 129 — were reengaged to continue their service. This solid outcome reflects thoughtful, responsible decision making by our chief officers and heads of departments and confirms that the current system is both flexible and fair. I'm also aware that there may be a minority of cases where persons who are desirous of working longer did not receive an extension beyond age 65.

Mr. Speaker, as Deputy Governor, I reaffirm my commitment to supporting continued employment up to age 67 where the criteria I just outlined is met. I will continue to guide chief officers and heads of department to ensure decisions are evidence-based, consistent and aligned with organisational needs.

Looking ahead, Mr. Speaker, workforce data projects manageable numbers of civil servants reaching the normal retirement age over the next two years. Even if all eligible officers work for an additional two years up to age 67, this will represent a growing but still relatively small portion of the workforce while contributing invaluable experience, stability and institutional knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, this is about balance, we must honour and retain experience while also creating opportunities for the next generation. Government is actively investing in succession planning, graduate and internship pathways, second chances employment initiatives, and modernising the civil service to meet the future with confidence.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, officers who continue to work beyond 65, which is the majority of persons reaching this milestone, are able to commence drawing from their pension plan even as they return on new contractual terms, providing them with additional financial security as they prepare for the next chapter

of their life. This approach also gives civil servants additional time to find a Caymanian successor to fill the role when it is ultimately vacated.

Mr. Speaker, as an employer of choice, the civil service takes its responsibilities seriously to prepare our workforce for their eventual retirement. The differences in the Public Service Pensions Plan when compared to other private sector pension plans are not marginal, but pronounced. The Public Service Pensions Plan is among the most competitive elements of the public service compensation framework and one of its most distinctive value propositions, these arrangements are largely shared across the wider public service including most of our statutory authorities and government-owned companies.

Mr. Speaker, people often hear that public servants have different pensions but what matters is why they are different and what they are designed to do. Public service pensions are built around one simple goal, to make sure that people who spend their working lives serving their country can retire with dignity, stability and peace of mind. Mr. Speaker, we should make no apologies about that. Public servants typically give decades of service. In return, they accept modest and steady pay increases over time rather than the higher active service earnings that may be available elsewhere. The pension is therefore pay deferred, not extra reward at the end. It is part of the overall promise made at the start — work diligently, remain politically neutral, serve the public interest, and plan responsibly for the future.

Public Sector Pension Plans require higher contributions than most pension plans. In the public sector, contributions are made at 12 per cent of pay compared to 10 per cent in many private sector plans. These contributions are also made on full salary without a cap, so retirement income more closely reflects what people actually earned while working.

Even during the difficult economic times, Mr. Speaker, pension contributions were never suspended. When civil service salaries were reduced for many years during the prolonged recession, public servants increased their pension contributions to ensure the total value going into their pensions did not fall. That decision reflected a strong culture of discipline and long-term planning.

Mr. Speaker, public service pensions are designed to provide a reliable replacement income for life in retirement. Retirees receive an annual annuity which guarantees a fixed monthly income for as long as they live or the life of their surviving spouse. Pensioners can take up to 25 per cent of their pension as a cash payment at retirement helping them to clear debts or manage major life transitions. After retirement, pensions are protected against inflation, meaning payments will increase over time to help retirees cope with the rising cost of living. This protection is especially important, Mr. Speaker, for people living on a fixed income.

Mr. Speaker, the system recognises that not everyone retires under the same circumstances. Successive governments have also supported long serving employees by offering a top-up guarantee for those who can contribute for at least 10 years. This ensures minimum retirement income paid by government, not the pension fund, while encouraging strong investment performance to grow each individual's pension account, thereby reducing the likelihood of relying on the government to top-up pensions.

Mr. Speaker, these pension features are possible because the funds are carefully managed and invested by the outstanding team over at the Public Service Pensions Board. I want to pause and give a big, big credit to Ms. Jewel Evans Lindsey and her team. They do an absolutely amazing job managing our pension fund, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Thank you.

Pension assets are not meant for short-term use. They are invested to grow over time so they can support today's workers when they become tomorrow's retirees. Over time, the Public Service Pensions Fund has demonstrated comparatively strong performance relative to many private sector pension arrangements, benefiting from its scale, diversified investment strategy, and long-term management framework. When viewed as a whole, the public service pension is not a privilege, it's a protection. It reflects the reality that most public servants are Caymanian and that public service requires personal restraint and long-term commitment. In simple terms, Mr. Speaker, public servants plan carefully while they work and remain disciplined about saving and investing so they can prepare for their retirement. That is the purpose of the public service pensions system.

Mr. Speaker, again, I close by thanking all Members of this House. Again, big thanks to the Member for Bodden Town West who has taken a very keen interest in this area and helps us champion our pension system and the terms and conditions for civil servants; the Premier and his Government; and all Members of the Opposition for their collaboration. Together, we affirm a civil service that is fair, sustainable, disciplined and compassionate; one that values those who have served with distinction and creates clear talent pathways for those who will serve next.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 29(4), I think it is. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you. The reason why I say that Mr. Speaker, I remember when I just got elected, the very first Motion that you and I filed and worked on together was dealing with this issue of healthcare and healthcare reform across the public service. It is one of the things I know you are passionate about and it is one of the things that you encouraged me as a new parliamentarian to continue on. I want to publicly thank you for that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank the Honourable Deputy Governor and the Chief Officer in particular, Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon because she and I had a good little back and forth on these issues; and the Premier and his team, particularly the Minister of Finance.

The point I want to get out, Mr. Speaker, especially for the private sector listening, is that while the government may have a retirement age of 65, in the private sector there is no retirement age, only the age at which you stop paying pension and you start receiving pension benefits.

What all of us in this House have to deal with, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of ageism where many Caymanians in the private sector are being pushed out simply because of the high health insurance costs that many businesses do not want to pay for when Caymanians reach a certain age. We saw from the earlier issue with CINICO, bearing in mind when the Honourable Minister of Finance just highlighted what it would cost just to increase the Home Care, bearing in mind that CINICO's profit for 2024 was just about CI\$3 million. If we were to implement that Home Care provision or increase it, it would have literally wiped out CINICO's profit and CINICO would be regulatory non-compliant.

This is a big issue for us and we just wanted the Caymanian people [to] know that this is something that we are dealing with and I want to thank the Deputy Governor again and his team for dealing with this; also the Premier, Minister of Finance, and all of my colleagues on this side.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier, one statement or maybe two.

Honourable Premier

Update on CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to provide this honourable House with an update on my recent attendance at the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), held in St. Kitts and Nevis from the 24th to the 27th February, 2026.

This milestone summit, themed “Beyond Words: Action Today for a Thriving, Sustainable CARICOM,” was historic not only for this milestone of the 50th such meeting of Caribbean leaders, but for achieving a rare full attendance of all Member States and Associate Members.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of enhancing our regional standing, the Cayman Islands has held Associate Member status in CARICOM since 2002. While we are not a full voting member, our presence at this table is imperative. Attendance underscores this Government’s commitment to our 2026-2028 Broad Outcomes, specifically our mandate to enhance overseas relations and build a modern, innovative Cayman. That does not exist in isolation.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the value of in-person diplomacy, in an era of digital connectivity, one might ask why in-person attendance remains beneficial, if not, I dare say, necessary. Mr. Speaker, the benefits of our physical presence at this level of diplomacy cannot be overstated.

1. **Face-to-Face Engagement with Caribbean Community Leaders and Global Partners:** This summit facilitated the high-level engagement between regional leaders and international leaders, including the U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio. Being physically present allowed the Cayman Islands to hear discourse first-hand and participate in face-to-face discussions on regional security, illicit trafficking, and the evolving geopolitical dynamics—issues that have a direct impact on our borders and responsibilities.
2. **The “Corridor Conversations”:** The most critical diplomatic breakthroughs often occur during the “Caucus” Sessions and informal breaks. These private dialogues provide an opportunity to deepen personal relations between leaders and thereby build support and solidarity on a range of matters related to our unique socio-economic interests in a way that is impossible via a video-call screen.
3. **Bolster Common Understanding of Common Challenges:** By engaging with our neighbours — whom we share fascinating, intertwined bonds of history, heritage and family with — we gain a greater understanding of our challenges and share intelligence and learnings on how to address pressing matters including cross-border illicit activity, cost-of-living, food security, financial services standards, tourism and trade links, as well as capital project finance. As we face shared threats and opportunities, the partnerships forged at CARICOM ensures the Cayman Islands

are relevant to, and part of, the regional framework and fellowship.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to go on record to thank our host nation, the government and gracious people of the incredibly beautiful islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, for their exceptional hospitality under the leadership of current Chair of the Conference of Heads of Government, Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Terrance Drew.

Prime Minister Drew expertly navigated us through what was a very ambitious agenda. I also wish to acknowledge his diplomacy and regard for the Overseas Territories as he ensured that as Associate Members, we were included in meaningful discussions and vibrant activities.

Briefly departing from the speech, Mr. Speaker, I beg your pardon. To put it plainly, it’s also good to just be among your Caribbean people. Many of us have travelled to places and don’t know what the food is going to taste like. You don’t have that problem when you go to another Caribbean country. Then practical matters — I’ll look for assistance here from the Leader of the Opposition, [and] the Member for Bodden Town East, *it don’t take much to trim my hair but it can go wrong*. Now, you can go into a barber and say, *I want everything low, one level*. The barber knows, because you are among your people. That’s my point.

Mr. Speaker, building a stronger Cayman means being an active participant in the community of Caribbean countries. By engaging at the highest level, we ensure that the Cayman Islands is not just a spectator but a solid contributor to the Caribbean community’s collective future.

During my travel, the Honourable Deputy Premier served as Acting Premier; and the Honourable Minister of Planning acted as Deputy Premier; I thank them both, and the rest of the NCFC Caucus for their continued dedication to the home front while our beloved Islands were represented abroad.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I don’t know why the Premier picked on the Member for Bodden Town East and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I guess because they all have no hair.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the Honourable Premier because I’ve been in this House now more than eight years and there are very few updates we have ever gotten from these CARICOM meetings and, you know, you can’t talk about regional security, food security, or climate change without speaking to our neighbours.

Thus, on behalf of my colleague from Bodden Town East, I’d just like to thank you formally for at least

providing this update and we look forward to future updates. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier with one statement.

**Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister of
Tourism & Trade Development**

**Cayman Islands Tourism Industry Performance
for January 2026**

Hon. Gary B. Ratty, Deputy Premier, Minister of Tourism & Trade Development, Elected Member for George Town South: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to give this update.

While we're talking about hair, in the meantime, I don't have any room to talk because last week I went to get a haircut... Never get a haircut from a person who can't speak English and you can't speak their language. When I said a little bit, I meant take a little bit off, and when he turned around the chair I was like, who's that I'm looking at?

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: I rest my case.

Hon. Gary B. Ratty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and provide this honourable House with a brief update on the performance of the Cayman Islands' tourism industry for the month of January 2026.

I am pleased to report that the year has begun on an exceptionally strong note. The Cayman Islands welcomed 47,047 stayover visitors in January 2026, representing a 13.6 per cent increase year-over-year and marking the strongest January in our nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, this performance surpassed the previous January record set in 2020 by 9.7 per cent, reinforcing the upward trajectory of our tourism sector. Importantly, this milestone follows what was already a historic December 2025, meaning that our tourism sector has achieved two consecutive months of record-setting stayover arrivals.

Cruise arrivals in January amounted to 145,707 passengers, reflecting a reduction of 11.2 per cent or 18,369 passengers when compared to January 2025. Due to inclement weather, 10 ships carrying approximately 30,000 passengers were unable to call on Grand Cayman, as scheduled. Had those ships been able to call, passenger arrivals for January 2026 would have surpassed the 164,076 arrivals recorded in January 2025.

Notwithstanding, total arrivals for stayover and cruise amounted to 192,754 visitors, which is a clear

indication that both pillars of our tourism industry continue to contribute meaningfully to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, our largest source market, the United States, once again led the way, delivering 37,879 visitors, which is an 11.2 per cent increase over January 2025 and a new January record. Growth was particularly strong from the Midwest, which recorded a 12.8 per cent increase year-over-year, supported by expanded airlift from Chicago and Detroit. The South and West regions of the United States also posted gains, reflecting the effectiveness of our airlift strategy and route development initiatives.

Canada delivered impressive performance in January, recording 5,151 stayover visitors. This is an increase of 38.6 per cent year-over-year and is the highest monthly arrival total ever from that market. Those stellar arrivals were driven by the addition of more airlift from Toronto and Ottawa, which increased seat capacity by 89 per cent, and is inclusive of the new service from Porter Airlines.

We also saw steady gains from the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Visitation from the UK and Ireland increased by 11.4 per cent, while continental Europe grew by 14 per cent, led by strong performance from Germany. These results reflect the sustained investment by Cayman Islands Department of Tourism (CIDOT) in public relations and engagement across the central European region.

In January 2026, total inbound seat capacity from the United States, Canada and the UK via Nassau reached 90,060 seats — an increase of 18,750 seats compared to the previous year. This was fuelled by expanded services from Chicago, Toronto and Miami, and new routes from Fort Lauderdale, Detroit and Ottawa.

Looking ahead, we are scheduled to see an additional 44,000 inbound air seats between February and May 2026 compared to the same period last year, positioning us for continued stayover growth throughout the year.

Mr. Speaker, hotel performance also remained robust. According to STR Inc., the provider of market data for the hotel industry, our average daily rate increased by 6 per cent over January 2025, demonstrating that the Cayman Islands continues to command premium positioning within the Caribbean marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Minister for Tourism, I am exceedingly proud to be in a position to report recording-breaking results month after month. I would be remiss if I failed to mention that all of that growth has resulted from sustained, focused, strategic decision-making, coupled with plenty of dedicated hard work put in by the management and staff in the Ministry and Department of Tourism, in conjunction with our industry partners, both here and abroad.

January's outstanding results affirm that our calculated investments in airlift development, global marketing, and partnerships with our tourism stakeholders are delivering measurable returns. They also

demonstrate that the Cayman Islands brand remains highly competitive and deeply desired by travellers seeking a premium, high-quality Caribbean experience.

Mr. Speaker, as pleased as I am about these results, I have not lost sight of the fact that our tourism performance is not just about the arrival statistics. As you have heard me say time and again, tourism is about people; it is about livelihoods; and the taxi drivers, restaurant workers, water sports operators, retail employees, hotel staff, and countless businesses whose success depends on our tourism industry being successful.

This record-breaking January signals confidence in our destination, resilience in our tourism product, and strength in our economic contribution; but most importantly, it signals opportunity, hope and prosperity for our people.

Thus, as we continue through 2026, the Ministry of Tourism and Trade Development will remain committed to prudent, data-driven decision-making, to ensure that the tourism industry's growth continues to be strategic, sustainable, and beneficial to Caymanians first and foremost.

I thank the staff within the Ministry of Tourism; the Department of Tourism; our airline, cruise and accommodation partners; and all of our tourism stakeholders, for their continued collaboration and support in the achievement of these historic results.

I look forward to sharing more good news as the year progresses. Thank you for allowing me the time to present this update, Mr. Speaker.

God bless this House and may God continue to bless our beloved Cayman Islands and our people. Thank you, sir.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Deputy Premier a question?

The Speaker: Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Thank you very much, sir.

Spirit has announced the cancellation of their service from Fort Lauderdale as from, I think, the mid part of April. I don't think your numbers would have included or taken that into account, but do you have any idea what the potential effect could be as a result of it?

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for George Town East for that. We learned about this yesterday and actually the Director for Tourism, Ms. Rosa Harris and her team are at a Routes Conference in Brazil right now and this is being discussed there. We have some plans to put in place, but she will update me on Monday or this week on her arrival. We are acting upon it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise under [Standing Order] 29(4). I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier for that comprehensive update; greatly appreciated.

I noticed the 2024 National Tourism Plan spoke about 44,000 additional seats being added to Cayman for this year and I noticed the Honourable Deputy Premier listed it also in his own speech. Would it be possible to provide us a breakdown in terms of where we're looking to get those additional seats? It would be nice if we can have an idea, especially for our locals who like to travel to see, because if they're coming here, it means that they're also going back to somewhere, so at least we can have an idea of what airlift will look like over summer months when many Caymanian residents would like to travel.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for that question from the Member for Bodden Town West. [We will get that for you in writing, if okay.](#)

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development, three statements.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Planning has an urgent meeting so I would give way for him to do his short statements first.

The Speaker: Minister of Planning.

Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure

Stacy Watler Pavilion

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I promise I'll be short.

I rise in accordance with sections 11(5) and 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) to inform this honourable House of an "exceptional circumstance" reallocation approved by Cabinet in respect of the Stacy Watler Pavilion.

On 17th December, 2025, Cabinet granted approval for the re-appropriation of funds as follows:

- A decrease of CI\$300,000 from TP 76 – Assistance for Infrastructure and Development; and

- A corresponding increase of CI\$300,000 to Non-Government Service NGS 84 – Cayman Islands Agricultural Society, for the purpose of funding the urgent repair and remediation of the Stacy Watler Pavilion.

Mr. Speaker, the Stacy Watler Pavilion is a key national facility supporting agriculture, community events, and food-security initiatives. Recent assessments confirmed structural and environmental issues that must be addressed immediately to ensure safety, prevent further deterioration, and maintain the Pavilion's ability to host major events central to the Agricultural Society's mandate.

Mr. Speaker, quickly, I just want to say off of that, how proud I am with all of the work that's being done from the Agriculture Society and from the Agriculture Department, and for the excellent show that they put on this year. We actually had a record show, sir, with over 13,000 people coming to the show. I just want to thank them for all of the hard work that they have done on that, sir.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

Section 11(5) Statement for the Department of Facilities Management

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I rise in accordance with sections 11(5) and 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision).

At its meeting held on 17th December, 2025, Cabinet approved supplementary expenditure of CI\$250,000 for the Department of Facilities Management. This was funded through a reallocation within the Ministry's existing appropriations as follows:

- Reduction: PAH 28 – Provision: Cadastral Surveying, Planning and Resource Management – CI\$250,000; and
- Increase: PAH 27 – Facilities Management (GAB) – CI\$250,000.

This transaction was authorised as an exceptional circumstance under the Act to ensure the continued delivery of essential government facilities management services.

In accordance with the Public Management and Finance Act, the Government will bring forward a Supplementary Appropriation Bill to seek the approval of this honourable House for the appropriation changes.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Section 11(5) Statement for Major Road Works

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I rise in accordance with sections 11(5) and 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision).

At its meeting held on 17th December 2025, Cabinet approved a reallocation of CI\$7,000,000 within the Ministry's capital appropriations as follows:

- Decrease: EA 161 – Submarine Cable by – CI\$7,000,000;
- Increase: EA 4 – Lands Purchase by – CI\$5,500,000; and
- Increase: EA 148 – Major Road Works by – CI\$1,500,000.

This transaction was authorised as an exceptional circumstance under the Act to support priority land acquisition and major road works.

In accordance with the Public Management and Finance Act, the Government will bring forward a Supplementary Appropriation Bill to seek the approval of this honourable House for the appropriation changes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister of Finance and Economic Development, three statements.

Honourable Minister of Finance & Economic Development and Education & Training

Update on work in Early Childhood Care & Education and the Early Intervention Programme

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have three statements to make to the honourable House. The first is a statement pertaining to the Ministry of Education in relation to the Early Childhood Care Assistance Programme (ECAP).

Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide this honourable House with a comprehensive update on the Ministry of Education and Training's work in Early Childhood Care and Education and the Early Intervention Programme — work that sits at the very foundation of our education system and, indeed, the long-term social and economic wellbeing of our Islands.

Children's brains are built moment by moment and they interact with their environments. In the very first years of life, more than one million neural connections are formed each second — a pace never repeated again. The quality of a child's early experiences makes a critical difference as their brains develop providing either strong or weak foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life.

Raising standards across our schools does not begin at primary level. It begins in the earliest months and years of life. Research consistently demonstrates that the first five years are critical for brain development. During this period, children develop the language, cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation and social competence that underpin future academic success.

When children enter Reception ready to learn — able to listen, communicate, regulate their emotions

and engage with early literacy and numeracy — they are significantly more likely to read on time, remain engaged in school and progress successfully through secondary education. Conversely, when developmental delays are not identified and addressed early, learning gaps widen, behavioural challenges increase and intervention becomes more complex and more costly.

High-performing education systems across the world are clear on one principle: equity begins in the early years. They invest in strong early childhood provision, systematic screening, qualified practitioners and responsive early intervention services. That is the direction in which we will continue to move.

Over the past 10 months, the Ministry has taken deliberate and structured steps to strengthen quality across all registered early childhood settings. We have delivered structured professional development for centre leaders and practitioners to enhance classroom practice, strengthen supervision, and embed inclusive approaches within daily teaching. Practitioners are being supported to better understand child development, early language acquisition, and differentiated strategies for children with emerging or identified additional needs.

Health and safety requirements have also been reinforced, ensuring that early childhood environments remain safe, nurturing and compliant. A child cannot thrive academically if they do not feel secure and supported. Quality care and safeguarding remain fundamental. All registered settings now operate within a three-year re-registration cycle. Site visits are recorded through the Ministry's digital system, strengthening oversight, transparency and consistency across the sector. This structured approach to quality assurance supports continuous improvement and aligns our practice more closely with international standards.

In addition to strengthening quality, we have prioritised early identification. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is now implemented across the sector, including within the Smart Start programme. This parent-completed developmental screening tool empowers families while supporting practitioners to identify potential concerns at an earlier stage. Where needs are identified, structured learning support plans are developed and implemented within the early childhood setting to ensure timely intervention.

For children requiring more targeted support, the Early Intervention Programme provides multidisciplinary services from birth to five years of age. Children are referred through defined pathways and receive comprehensive developmental assessments covering communication, cognition, motor development and social-emotional needs. Following assessment, support may include specialist teachers, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Services are delivered within homes and early childhood centres so that strategies are embedded within daily routines — where children learn best. Parents remain central partners throughout the process. Early intervention is most

effective when families are equipped, informed and supported.

As children approach Reception, structured transition planning supports collaboration between families and primary schools. This ensures that children enter the school system with their needs identified and appropriate supports in place, reducing the risk of longer-term learning gaps.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the dedication and professionalism of the Early Intervention Team. They are committed, skilled and deeply invested—

[Inaudible interjection]

[Pause]

The Speaker: Continue, Honourable Minister of Education.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, accordingly, the Ministry intends to undertake a formal evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme. This evaluation will examine programme effectiveness, service frequency, referral timelines, measurable child outcomes and longer-term impact as children transition into primary school. It will allow us to identify capacity gaps and determine how best to expand or restructure services to increase reach and improve developmental progress.

Strengthening the programme will include consideration of:

- Expanded specialist capacity to reduce waiting times and increase service frequency;
- Clear service delivery standards to ensure consistency and equity of provision;
- Improved data tracking systems to measure developmental progress over time; and
- Closer integration between early intervention, nursery, Reception and primary services.

This is not, and I'll repeat for emphasis, Mr. Speaker, this is not a reflection of any shortcoming in staff — it is a recognition that strong teams require strong systems around them. Further, it reflects that the Unit is greatly understaffed and under resourced and needs to be rebuilt. If we are serious about early intervention, we must ensure the structure is as strong as the commitment of those delivering it.

Mr. Speaker, it is equally important to recognise the central role of nursery and Reception classes within our government schools and the broader early childhood sector. Nursery and Reception are not simply preparatory years. They are structured learning environments where children develop early literacy, number sense, vocabulary, social confidence and emotional regulation. These years lay the groundwork for reading fluency, numeracy development and classroom engagement.

For the public, the message is straightforward:

- If we want improved reading and maths outcomes, we must prioritise early language and numeracy development.
- If we want improved attendance and behaviour in later years, we must build social-emotional competence early.
- If we want to close achievement gaps, we must intervene before they widen.

Quality and early intervention must also be matched by equitable access. Through the Early Childhood Assistance Programme, eligible families receive financial support in the year prior to Reception, reducing cost barriers at a critical stage and increasing participation in structured early learning.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has significantly strengthened that support. ECAP funding was forecast at approximately CI\$910,000 in 2025. In the 2026 to 2027 combined Budget, CI\$2.1 million has been allocated to each year— more than doubling the programme's annual funding and expanding its reach.

Effective 1st April, 2026 the monthly ECAP rates will increase from \$541 to \$625 for Basic assistance, and from CI\$812 to CI\$937 for Supplementary assistance per month. Basic support will continue to cover 50 per cent of the average monthly fee, and Supplementary support will cover 75 per cent. This standardised structure provides clarity, consistency and fairness. This is a key cost-of-living initiative contained in the robust 2026-2027 Budget. This already attacks an area we all campaigned on — addressing cost of living. This direct intervention is the most impactful way any government can attack cost of living — directly assisting Caymanian families in most need in our community. The additional benefit is that Caymanian families are being assisted during the most crucial stage of their children's educational journey.

In line with the most recent Strategic Policy Statement and approved budget priorities, several early years initiatives are underway, including:

- Expansion of nursery provision in areas of population growth;
- Continued strengthening of financial assistance to families through ECAP;
- Development of a Revised National Early Childhood Framework to modernise oversight, accountability and workforce standards;
- Strengthening of screening and referral pathways to reduce delays in support; and
- A review of funding arrangements to ensure resources are aligned with identified need, particularly for children requiring additional services.

The Revised National Early Childhood Framework will update legislative provisions where necessary, clarify governance and sector responsibilities, strengthen quality standards, and establish clearer qualification expectations and professional pathways for early years practitioners. High-performing systems

invest in their workforce — ensuring practitioners are trained, supported and professionally recognised.

We are also exploring enhanced data systems that will allow us to track developmental progress from early years into primary education. Measuring impact is essential if policy decisions are to be evidence-based and resources directed effectively.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education will develop a closer working relationship with the Ministry of Health — after all, babies are born in hospitals. Therefore, health practitioners are the first professionals to interact with our children. All children have a mandatory vaccine programme at a certain age. I will be implementing a system of measuring key developmental milestones at various ages. It will be mandatory for parents and/or early childhood care, health and education professionals to report any abnormal findings related to these key milestone measures. This would be recorded in children's education record housed by the Early Intervention Programme. Once reported, these findings will be formally assessed.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, we are going to ensure that the Early Intervention Programme is strengthened to carry out this work. Please note that a parent and/or healthcare professional can apply to have any abnormal finding removed from a child's education record should they prove to not be found by formal assessment or overcome with age as the child develops. Mr. Speaker, in my research I found that there are a number of systems that are moving in this direction as they did not want to stigmatise children as they develop later in life.

Mr. Speaker, strengthening early childhood care, nursery provision and early intervention is not simply an operational improvement. It is a strategic investment in national outcomes.

By improving quality, expanding access, strengthening early intervention and aligning resources with need, we reduce learning gaps before they widen; we support families at critical stages; and we build a stronger, more resilient education system. The work is ongoing and will continue in a structured, evidence-based manner; but the direction is clear: sustained commitment to the earliest years will shape the future of our schools and our country, because when we get the first five years right, everything that follows becomes stronger.

I thank this honourable House and I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

Exceptional Circumstance Transactions incurred during the 2025 Financial Year by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, my second and third statements are relating to exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision), I rise to make this Statement to Members of this honourable House with respect to the “exceptional circumstance” transactions approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development during the 2025 financial year, in accordance with section 11(5) of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I will briefly outline these transactions.

OE 121 - Additional Normal Cost for Pension Plans

During 2025, Mr. Speaker, the actuary for the Government's pension plans assessed that an additional \$939,000 was required to meet the normal cost of the plans.

As Members will be aware, the Government is required to fund the actuarially assessed annual contributions necessary to cover the benefits earned by current employees, above the standard employer contribution rate. Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$939,000 to enable the payment to the Public Service Pensions Fund.

OE 54 - Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) - Annual Premium

Mr. Speaker, during 2025, the annual premium for the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility increased by \$87,500.

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility provides member countries with rapid cash pay-outs within 14 days of a covered natural disaster, based on the severity of the event and associated losses, enabling timely disaster response and recovery.

Cabinet therefore approved supplementary funding of \$87,500 to meet this increased premium.

OE 9 - Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM) Fees

Mr. Speaker, during 2025, the Caribbean Economic Community or CARICOM, advised that Cayman's annual contribution was increased to an average of US\$357,000 per year for the next three years.

As Members will recall, CARICOM — established in 1973 by 20 member countries — promotes regional economic integration; foreign policy coordination; human and social development; and security. The Cayman Islands is an Associate Member of CARICOM.

Cabinet accordingly approved supplementary funding of CI\$67,000 to cover the increased contribution.

EI 95 - Utility Regulation and Competition Office

Mr. Speaker, the Utility Regulation and Competition Office (URCO) required an additional \$1,200,000 during 2025 to meet its operational expenditure commitments for the remainder of the year.

Cabinet approved the supplementary funding to ensure its continuity of operations.

OE 110 - General Insurance and OE 27 - Past Service Pension Liability

Mr. Speaker, to offset the above supplementary funding, the Ministry identified equivalent savings totalling \$2,293,500 —

- \$1,354,500 from within its 2025 OE 110 - General Insurance appropriation; and
- \$939,000 from within its 2025 OE 27 - Past Service Pension Liability appropriation.

The 2025 OE 110 - General Insurance appropriation covers all of Government's property, liability and motor vehicle insurance costs. For 2025, \$13,100,000 was budgeted, with an additional \$1,600,000 carried forward from unspent 2024 funds.

Savings of \$1,354,500 were achieved from the general insurance appropriation as a result of actual insurance premium increases being significantly lower than the 26 per cent escalation originally projected for 2025. This favourable outcome reflected more stable market conditions than anticipated.

Mr. Speaker, savings were also achieved from the 2025 OE 27 - Past Service Pension Liability appropriation, which covers the additional amount that the Government pays into the Public Service Pensions Funds to address the pension actuarial deficiency which resulted from 27 years of unfunded pension liabilities.

The savings of \$939,000 were as a result of the higher Normal Cost contributions made during 2025, as the increased Normal Cost contributions lessened the unfunded liability and therefore reduced the annual top-up amount required.

Impact on Financial Performance and Compliance with the Principles of Responsible Financial Management

Mr. Speaker, while these exceptional transactions increased forecast Capital Expenditure by a net \$1,200,000, Operating Expenditure decreased by an equivalent amount. Consequently, there was no impact on Government's forecast Cash Reserves or compliance with the Principles of Responsible Financial Management.

Mr. Speaker, the supplementary expenditures meet the definition of “exceptional circumstances” under section 11(5) of the Act as:

1. The expenditures were not known when the 2025 Budget was prepared in December 2023 and arose from factors beyond the control of the Ministry and Cabinet;
2. Failure to pay the CCRIF premium could expose Government to significant financial and operational risks in the event of a natural disaster;

3. Failure to meet CARICOM contributions could result in the loss of Member benefits;
4. Failure to provide URCO with sufficient funding would risk disrupting the Office's regulatory operations and its ability to meet statutory obligations; and
5. It was impractical for the Ministry to seek Parliament's prior approval under section 12 of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present this statement on the exceptional circumstance transactions approved by the Cabinet for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development during the 2025 financial year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Exceptional Circumstance Transactions incurred during the 2025 Financial Year by the Ministry of Education and Training

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, my third and last statement.

Pursuant to section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision), I rise to make this statement to Members of this honourable House regarding the "exceptional circumstance" transactions approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Education & Training during the 2025 financial year, in accordance with SECTION 11(5) of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I will briefly outline these transactions.

CCO 1 – Teaching of Tertiary Level, Professional and Vocational Programmes

As at 1st January 2025, the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) had a staff complement of 80, with 15 vacant posts. The 5 per cent cost of living adjustment (COLA), inclusive of pension increases, totalled \$366,598. This cost was not included in UCCI's approved 2025 budget.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$366,598 in January 2025 to cover these costs.

Mr. Speaker, a one-off payment of \$750,000 was required to settle a legacy pension liability relating to four retired members of staff of UCCI.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$750,000 in March 2025.

To support UCCI's continued operational stability and institutional strengthening, additional funding was required to address priority pressures. These included aligning staff benefits in keeping with the intent of section 47 of the Public Authorities Act, strengthening governance and administrative capacity, and meeting essential operating requirements.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$2,029,000 in March 2025.

NGS 34 – Grant to Private Schools

Mr. Speaker, Triple C School and Wesleyan Christian Academy experienced unforeseen financial pressures during 2025 that required temporary assistance to ensure continuity of education for their students. Additionally, infrastructure improvements were necessary at one school to create a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$900,000 in January 2025 and a further \$677,151.45 in August 2025, for a total of \$1,577,151.45.

TP 127 – Grant for Community Enrichment and Wellbeing

Mr. Speaker, grant support was provided to two charitable organisations, the Church of God Chapel (West Bay) and the EGARS Members and Manna Foundation, following requests for assistance in support of the development of facilities intended to provide important services for the wider community.

In the case of the EGARS Members and Manna Foundation, the funding was intended to support the development of a multipurpose community facility designed to enhance the organisation's capacity to deliver a range of community-based services and programmes.

In the case of the Church of God Chapel (West Bay), the funding was intended to support the development of facilities that will strengthen community resilience and expand the availability of hurricane shelter capacity in West Bay.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$1,650,000 in February 2025.

EI 12 – Ministry of Education & Training

Mr. Speaker, several priority projects at public schools required urgent funding to address health and safety matters and operational needs affecting staff and students.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$1,265,556 in February 2025.

TP 61 – Grant for Student Enrichment and Support Services

Mr. Speaker, the Extended After-School Programme provides after-school care to approximately 1,500 students, many of whom are vulnerable or at risk. The programme is delivered through the YMCA. However, during 2025, the programme experienced an unexpected loss of private funding, resulting in a projected shortfall from June to December 2025.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$214,000 in July 2025 to ensure continuity of the programme.

TP 30 – Local and Overseas Scholarships and Bursaries

Mr. Speaker, demand for scholarships for Caymanian students pursuing further and tertiary education, both locally and overseas, exceeded the original 2025 budget allocation. This reflected a higher number of eligible applicants meeting established criteria.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$6,395,300 in August 2025 to ensure qualifying students could continue to be supported.

EGA 2 – Employment Support Services and Scholarship Administration

Mr. Speaker, following the post-election transfer of the National Training and Development Unit, updated financial projections confirmed that additional funding was required to support operations for the remainder of 2025.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$250,000 in November 2025.

EI 46 – University College of the Cayman Islands

Mr. Speaker, UCCI supports students of compulsory school age through its Dual Enrolment Programme. Increased demand created the need for additional accommodation space to ensure continued delivery in an appropriate learning environment.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$100,000 in December 2025.

Further, as the country's premier tertiary institution, UCCI must continue to grow and modernise to meet current and future education and workforce needs. Funding was therefore required to support strategic development, including the proposed acquisition of adjoining land and the early stages of planned expansion. We will help ensure that, once secured, the institution has the space and flexibility needed to develop in an orderly and coherent manner, while strengthening its capacity to respond to national priorities and the evolving needs of the country.

Accordingly, Cabinet approved supplementary funding of \$9,000,000 in December 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry identified equivalent savings totalling \$20,798,151 from various appropriations to offset these supplementary requirements and to provide support across the wider Cayman Islands Government as follows:

1. Savings of \$100,000 under EGA 6 – Secondary Education Services due to reduced utility costs in 2025.
2. Savings of \$100,000 under EGA 8 – Facilities Maintenance and Operational School Support Services due to deferred routine maintenance activities.
3. Savings of \$429,000 under TP 83 – Scholarships (Medical Specialisation) due to lower-than-anticipated grant uptake.
4. Savings of \$35,000 under OE 12 – University of the West Indies Membership Levy.

5. Savings of \$19,385,151 under EI 12 – Capital Works, primarily due to delayed expenditure on the West Bay High School project, which remains in early planning stages; adjustments to the new Layman Scott High School project scope; and indeed, Mr. Speaker, a delay in the delivery of the project as it was originally anticipated to be completed by December 2025.
6. Funds of \$749,000 originally budgeted under EI 46 – Capital Works at UCCI for internal IT infrastructure were reclassified to operating expenditure following recommendations from external assurance bodies, making these funds available.

Mr. Speaker, these exceptional transactions resulted in a net increase in Operating Expenditure of \$12,568,049 and a net decrease in Capital Expenditure of \$9,768,595 within the Ministry.

As a portion of funding was received from the wider Cayman Islands Government, there was no adverse impact on Government cash reserves or compliance with the Principles of Responsible Financial Management.

As of today, the Government continues to report a surplus for the 2025 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, these supplementary expenditures meet the definition of “exceptional circumstances” under section 11(5) of the Act because:

1. The expenditures were not known at the time the 2025 Budget was prepared in December 2023, arose after budget approval, and could not reasonably have been anticipated.
2. Failure to fund these matters could have compromised the Ministry's mandates under the Strategic Policy Statement 2024–2026 and exposed Government to operational and reputational risks.
3. It was impractical to seek Parliament's prior approval under section 12 of the Act.

In conclusion, I thank you for the opportunity to present this statement on the exceptional circumstance transactions approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Education & Training during the 2025 financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I know I was a bit long, but I thank you.

The Speaker: The House is suspended until 2pm.

Proceedings suspended at 12:47pm.

Proceedings resumed at 2:07pm.

The Speaker: This Parliament is back in session. Please be seated.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Minister of Social Development and Innovation, you have one statement.

**Honourable Minister of Social Development
& Innovation**

Initiatives Overview for Q1 2025 Year to Date

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, since I took responsibility for the portfolio of Social Development, it has been a priority of mine to address gaps in the system to improve the lives of Caymanian families.

One of the key gaps which exist is that there are very limited social supports for adults between the ages of 18 and 64. At present, the Department of Children and Family Services provides services for children until the age of 18, with some provisions for aftercare, and to older persons aged 65 years and older. My Ministry is taking several steps to address this gap.

The first step is to launch the Adult Safeguarding Task Force. This Task Force is a multi-agency group chaired by the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation and comprises the Ministry of Health, Environment and Sustainability; the Department of Children and Family Services; the Department of Financial Assistance; the Health Services Authority; and the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service.

The Task Force will be responsible for coordinating support to adults at-risk to ensure that they get support necessary in the short-term. The Task Force will seek to address safeguarding concerns, including homelessness or housing insecurity, food insecurity, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The work of the Task Force will inform adult safeguarding policy and legislative recommendations made by the Ministry for Cabinet's consideration to address the identified gaps in services for adults with long-term solutions.

Further, Cabinet approved the Ministry to issue drafting instructions to amend the Disabilities (Solomon Webster) Act, 2016 in August 2025. A critical at-risk group within the adults is adults with disabilities. The current Disabilities Act remains largely uncommenced from 2016, except for the establishment of the Council.

The work my team is undertaking is to look at how persons with disabilities are impacted by policies and initiatives across the civil service. In addition, the critical amendments to address the safeguarding gap for persons with disabilities who experience exploitation, abuse, neglect or self-neglect. There is also work being done to enhance and commence existing aspects of the Act and make provisions for Departmental support.

In order to ensure that the amendments are fit for purpose and can be meaningfully commenced, my Ministry team has been meeting with teams across the civil service, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, service providers, persons with disabilities, and their families. Consultation will be continuing and

additional groups will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments. Thus far, consultations have led to further refinement, and critical operational considerations, but the feedback has been immensely positive with families sharing that this has been "an answer to their prayers".

We expect to debate the proposed amendments to the Disabilities (Solomon Webster) Act, 2016 in this House within the latter half of this year.

When the National Coalition for Caymanians was established, we took the decision to move the Cayman Islands Disability Policy (2014-2033) and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities from Cabinet Office to the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation to sit with the full portfolio. Since this transition, the team has been meeting with all the critical Ministries and teams to get an update on implementation and to develop an action plan for meaningful change in the upcoming years. We are now further away from 2014 than we are from 2033 so we want to make sure we can achieve the goals outlined in the Policy. The Council has been instrumental in helping to identify key priority areas and initiatives within the Policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn my attention to the Children Portfolio of the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, which continues to progress various policy frameworks for child protection, family support, and child safeguarding systems across our Cayman Islands.

At the heart of our work is the protection of children, promoting their rights, and support of the adults who take on the care and protection of a child. I want to emphasise to everyone in this honourable House and everyone listening that every child matters, and every child deserves protection, stability, dignity, and an opportunity to become their best selves from the earliest possible moment in life — as I said last night.

Mr. Speaker, the work that the Ministry is currently undertaking is coordinated evidence that this country will work to protect, support, listen to, and empower its children.

This year we will finalise regulations which will allow the commencement of the Children (Amendment) Act, 2024; Adoption Act, 2024; and Maintenance (Amendment) Act, 2024. We also intend to bring the Status of Children (Amendment) Bill, 2026 to this honourable House as well. These modernised legislative frameworks will strengthen safeguarding measures and cement the principle of child-centred decision-making. I want to emphasise that commencement will be supported by structured training of all relevant stakeholders to ensure legislation is operationalised effectively and efficiently by users across the civil service and private sector.

The Ministry continues its commitment to best practice and will observe the relevant requirements as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry, through inter-ministerial collaboration, continues work in relation to the ratification to the 1993 Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption ("Hague Convention") and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ("Lanzarote Convention").

The extensive inter-ministerial work that has been done in respect to ratification to the Lanzarote Convention has identified the various gaps that exist in the services and legislative provisions available in the Cayman Islands, which will need to be addressed in order to ratify to the Convention. At this time Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to update this honourable House that after the Ministry shared a summary of the work that has been done with the Council of Europe, the initial feedback was very positive and the Cayman Islands is well on track to be ratified to the Lanzarote Convention in this current budget period.

Mr. Speaker, I must emphasise that when this ratification happens, the Cayman Islands will be the first Overseas Territory to do so, further solidifying our place as leaders in child safeguarding regionally and amongst our peers.

Mr. Speaker, I stated earlier that this Government is committed to listening and empowering its children and young persons. The Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young Persons which was established in the Children (Amendment) Act, 2024, will be a vessel for child advocacy and empowerment. This Office will not only advocate for children but include children and young persons. The Office will be supported by an advisory panel made up of children and young persons aged 13-25 with representation from each district. This panel is established in the Act and will give children and youth a direct line of communication and influence into the policy development and practice of child safeguarding, a first in the Cayman Islands.

Recruitment for the post of Commissioner for Children and Young persons is expected to be done in 2026.

Mr. Speaker, it is our intention as a Government to:

- Move from reactive to preventative safeguarding;
- See a reduction in harm of children;
- Improve the stability of foster placements;
- Enhance the strength of families; and
- Enhance confidence of children in the Government systems designed to protect them.

This Government is not simply managing child safeguarding and child protection. We are working to ensure that the frameworks and systems are designed to meet the needs of those they are in place to serve.

Mr. Speaker, I now wish to provide this honourable House with a brief overview of the work being undertaken within the Older Persons Portfolio under the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation.

As it relates to this demographic of our society, our focus is to strengthen protections, enhance services and promote dignity, independence, and active participation for older persons across the Cayman Islands. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has been engaged in activities contributing to legislative reform, the development of a Community Calendar, capital investment and the review of our financial support framework.

Mr. Speaker, a key priority for this Portfolio has been legislative reform and we are currently engaged in activities for the drafting of Regulations to support the implementation of the Older Persons (Amendment) Act, 2024. These Regulations are essential to operationalise the Act, through which standards of care and oversight will be strengthened, a mandatory reporting process will be established, safeguarding mechanisms to protect older persons will be enhanced, and accountability and transparency will be promoted.

Mr. Speaker, within the Government's 2026-2028 Strategic Policy Statement one of the key projects and initiatives is to Promote an Age-Friendly Society: creating comprehensive programmes and policies that enable older persons to actively participate in society.

To this end Mr. Speaker, social inclusion and active ageing are critical to overall wellbeing and the Ministry is developing a centralised and accessible Community Calendar of Events for Older Persons in the Cayman Islands. This initiative will provide a single, easy-to-access source of information on social, cultural, health, faith-based, and recreational activities; reduce isolation by increasing awareness of available programmes; encourage community engagement and intergenerational participation; and support organisations by promoting events more effectively. By improving access to information, we empower older persons to remain active, engaged, and connected members of our society.

Mr. Speaker, this Government also recognises the importance of investing in infrastructure that supports quality care for older persons and provided seed funding in the amount of C\$600,000 to the Pines Retirement Home, toward the development of the New Silver Thatch Residences. The new residences will offer a nurturing environment for older persons who require minimal living accommodation whilst combining care services in modern facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this capital investment contributes to the current and projected, increased need for assisted living in the community and is an incentive for private sector philanthropy to assist with the completion of this project.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has also turned its attention to strengthening the operations and policy framework of the Department of Financial Assistance,

working to establish a dedicated Working Group to conduct a comprehensive review to ensure that services provided are appropriate to meet the needs of the Caymanian people within this financial climate. I know that this is a topic that carries much interest on both sides of the aisle, so I look forward to support in this House if the recommendations from this Working Group include amendments to legislation.

With all things being equal, Mr. Speaker, I expect to receive at least draft recommendations before the end of Q2 2026.

Mr. Speaker, this is just a general update of the ongoing work and priorities of the Social Development Division of the Ministry. Much hard work continues to happen quietly in the office and I look forward to providing more updates as we bring all of our priorities for this budget cycle to fruition.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on the work of the Gender Affairs Portfolio of the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, as I begin to address updates related to Gender Affairs it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that this Sunday, March 8th is International Women's Day. I would like to take this time to wish all the wonderful women and girls of this country a happy International Women's Day when it comes. It is truly my privilege to serve in Caucus, Cabinet and in this honourable House alongside so many brilliant and hardworking Caymanian women, all of whom are serving this country well.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Speaker, it is well known that I have a wide range of responsibilities under my two Ministries which require diligent and astute leadership to manage effectively. I can say here today Mr. Speaker, without a shadow of a doubt, that I am blessed to have two tremendous Chief Officers leading my Ministries and both of them are women. To my Chief Officers and all of the talented female staff in virtually every area of both Ministries, I say "thank you" for all of the excellent work that you do as Civil Servants.

To my constituents in East End and all of the women and girls across these three Islands, I extend to you by best wishes and appreciation for your contributions to our community in your professional and family lives.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of Women's Day this year is "Give to Gain" and I want to make sure that I articulate to this honourable House and to the listening public what that theme means to me.

Mr. Speaker, despite the significant strides that have been made in this country and globally towards equality between men and women, there is still a ways to go. This is why we have to have a Gender Affairs portfolio, to ensure that policy work is progressing the movement towards equality. Mr. Speaker, in order for

this country to "gain" from all of the skill, talent and potential that is too often hidden inside of our women and girls, we must "give" them what they need to fully share it with us. We need to give our women the respect that they deserve; the support that they need to overcome obstacles that we have not yet removed from their path; and most importantly, we need to give our love and appreciation to them in recognition for all that they do for their families and for these Islands.

Mr. Speaker it is in this vein of giving, that I would like to highlight the efforts being made by the Ministry in recognition of Honouring Women's Month. I am pleased to advise that the Gender Affairs Portfolio is facilitating several workshops, including the Female Farmers and Artisans Market on 20th March; Women & Their Wheels (a car care workshop) in conjunction with Superior Auto on 14th and 21st of March; and Women in the Garden in conjunction with Proplus Nursery on 21st March.

I encourage everyone to support these various workshops which are designed to provide beneficial skills to our women and girls. I also encourage the wider community to support all of the other events that are taking place in the Islands to honour women and girls this month.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share that the Gender Affairs portfolio continues its efforts to educate the community through training sessions with both public and private sector agencies, as part of their preparation to enact the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act. I know that we are all supportive of ensuring that this Act is properly implemented and I look forward to providing further updates as we reach our implementation goal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and may God continue to bless these Cayman Islands.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of District Administration and Home Affairs.

Honourable Minister of District Administration and Home Affairs

Section 11(5) Statement for Sister Islands Affordable Housing Development Programme

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs, Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very brief statement in accordance with section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act for the former Ministry of District Administration and Lands.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry administers the Sister Islands Affordable Housing Development Programme which promotes affordable homeownership

opportunities for Caymanians residing in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

During the implementation of this programme, the Ministry identified a growing affordability gap between the cost of constructing homes and the level of mortgage financing available to prospective homeowners. At the same time, economic conditions including rising house prices, increasing mortgage interest rates and broader cost of living pressures created additional challenges for prospective homeowners seeking to access financing. These circumstances were beyond the control of the government, could not reasonably have been anticipated at the time the Appropriation Act was enacted and required expenditure to be incurred within the financial year in order to support the timely delivery of affordable housing under the programme.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker on the 20th March, 2025, the then Cabinet approved, pursuant to section 11(5) of the Act, the transfer of appropriations in the amount of \$600,000 as follows:

- A decrease of EI 92 – Equity Injection in the Minister of District Administration and Lands by \$600,000; and
- An increase of SIH 1 – Sister Islands Affordable Housing Programme by \$600,000.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance confirmed at the time that this Appropriation change would not result in any noncompliance with the principles of responsible financial management.

Section 11(5) Statement for His Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: Mr. Speaker, my final short statement as promised [is] another statement pursuant to section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act.

Mr. Speaker, His Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service experienced significant operational pressures during the 2025 financial year due primarily to continued population pressures at HMP Northward and increased operational demands placed on the service. During 2025 the male prison population at HMP Northward averaged approximately 235 prisoners representing around 180 per cent of the certified normal accommodation capacity and slightly above the facility's operational maximum capacity.

In addition, the complexity of the prison population has continued to evolve with more prisoners requiring higher levels of supervision, health care services, mental health intervention and specialised rehabilitation management. At the same time, the prison service operated for the majority of 2025 with a shortage of approximately 20 prison officers while also contributing to multi-agency operations, managing the irregular arrival of migrants including support to customs and border control in relation to security supervision and removal operations. These circumstances resulted

in significantly higher over time expenditure and increased operational costs.

Additional unforeseen expenditure pressures were also experienced in relation to prisoner healthcare and operational support requirements. Healthcare costs for prisoners exceeded the amount budgeted due to the inherently unpredictable nature of medical treatment required within the prison population. In some instances, prisoners required extended hospitalisation which necessitated continuous supervision by prison officers resulting in additional staffing and overtime costs. Operational costs were also affected by the inefficiencies associated with the aging prison infrastructure at HMP Northward, including ongoing maintenance challenges and the continued need for interim waste management arrangements pending the installation of a permanent wastewater treatment facility.

These circumstances were beyond the control of the government, could not reasonably have been anticipated at the time the Appropriation Act was enacted, and required expenditure to be incurred within the financial year to ensure the continued safe and secure operation of the prison service.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, on the 22nd December, 2025, Cabinet approved, pursuant to section 11(5) of the Act, the transfer of appropriations in the amount of \$2,515,000 as follows:

- A reduction of EI 93 – Ministry of District administration and Lands by \$2,515,000; and
- An increase of DAH 7 – Prison Custodial Services by \$2,515,000.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance confirmed at the time that this Appropriation change would not result in any noncompliance with the principles of responsible financial management.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Next item of business.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: I have received representation from a number of Members who wish to pay tribute to some members of their constituency who have departed this life; so I invite them to do so now, and we'll do a minute of silence for everyone at the end.

Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention condolences to the family of our former colleague, Mr. Austin Harris. I

also want to offer condolences to the families of: Captain Newton Solomon; Mr. David Frederick whose funeral is today at 2pm, I think; Mr. Sibert "Rudy" Watler, a Gun Square stalwart; Ms. Cherry or Marline Parchment, of Sheila's restaurant — the first place that I met her; Mrs. Cynthia Watler, she was 100 years old; Mr. Roosevelt Watson, a family Member of mine; Mr. Joseph "Joey" Ebanks; Mr. Dawson Ebanks; and Ms. Evon Trusty.

May their souls rest in peace. Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Savannah.

Ms. Heather D. Bodden, Elected Member for Savannah: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, thanks for this opportunity. So many have left us and we feel their loss, so heartfelt condolences to all who grieve for their loved ones.

Condolences, go out to the families of: Captain Newton Solomon, Mr. Austin Harris, Mr. Dave Frederick, Mr. Heinley Scott, Ms. Alice Jackson, Mrs. Cynthia Watler, Mr. Rudy Watler, Mrs. Blanca Manderson, Mr. Charley Ebanks, Mrs. Cherry Parchment, Mr. Joey Ebanks, Mrs. Arline Williams and John Byrd. Just recently, we lost a dear friend, Mrs. Celeste Broderick; and this morning, we received the news of the passing of Mrs. Doris Reed, a lady who will be long remembered for her many years in the tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, thank you and we send heartfelt condolences to all these family members.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always part of our tradition to stop for a moment. We had a joyous occasion earlier this morning where we remembered and honoured Mr. Loxley Banks while he was here, but this is the sad part.

On behalf of the whole Parliament, although we had a Lying-in-State, I still want to give condolences to Austin Harris' family, and to draw the connection that Dave Frederick is his brother. The family, in certain cases have lost father and uncle in about a week or a few days. Thus, it's even more pertinent, Mr. Speaker, that we do stop because we have been surrounded by mourning since the House has last met.

There are other names that I will mention, I won't take them all because I know there are many others that Members will say. However, particularly in West Bay: Seth Rivers, Cherrylee Bush, Patsy Ruth Ebanks; in this House, Tasha Porter's brother Thor [Nickelson]; and Janice Ebanks. Ms. Heather mentioned Mr. Charley gone to be with his dearly departed wife, Miss Riselda; they were like peanut butter and jelly, you didn't see one without the other. I think it was said at the funeral, DG, that he might be the only non-employee to have a pass in the garage of GAB that could come up. That's correct, right?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Charley, we will miss him. I told this sister Debby that I think he passed of a broken heart. When they're close like that, when one moves on, the second one is usually not that far behind. May he rest in peace.

Mr. Bob Parchment, quite a character in West Bay. He is a jack of all trades of sorts, a good old soul. Mr. Ray Bush, my cousin whom I used to call Mr. "Hoo-Ray", brother of former Premier, former Speaker, former Father of the House, Hon. McKeeva Bush. It's a sad passing but I think Mr. "Hoo-Ray" is in a better place.

One that hit many of us hard in West Bay because despite her advanced age she went to so many activities, so many functions, saw her the week of her passing and I didn't get a whiff that anything was wrong was Miss Alice Jackson. Every function you could think of... She was active civically. I remember kissing her and saying, *hey cuz*. It was at the South Sound Community Centre for a Valentine's Day Lunch. It's a good thing because I think Mrs. Julie Hunter was off island and I had mentioned it to the Member for West Bay Central and I rushed down the hall for the Member of West Bay North to say they were having this function at the South Sound Centre, there are going to be plenty of West Bayers there let's take a moment to spend some time with our people. Just being able to have taken that five minutes, gave me some small comfort when by the next week or within that week, Ms. Alice had passed.

With that Mr. Speaker, I know that there are others, I don't want to take up time. My thoughts and prayers are with all the others that will be mentioned, but thank you for giving us this time. May they all rest in peace and God's light perpetually shine upon them.

The Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with offering condolences to the families of all those who are going through these difficult times. It's never easy.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to join in once again, offering condolences to the family of our colleague, our comrade, Austin Harris; and of course, on the passing of his brother. We want to keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a tough couple of weeks for the Washington Boulevard, otherwise known as Swamp Community. We had the tragic loss of a promising young man, Jahmoll Davonte Watson. His mother, Denitza; his sister, Gemma and all the friends and family, I would like to publicly offer my condolences to them.

Then, Mr. Speaker, two houses down from them, less than a week later, we lost Mr. Clifton McNeal

Myles, known to us as Nealy. Nealy spent decades of service at the Department of Environmental Health, quietly going about his business, but he is the man who was responsible for rodent control. If there's someone we want to be very thankful for, it was for Nealy over all those years, and the job that he did without complaining and often overlooked and by himself; but he went on. Nealy retired in November last year and, unfortunately, passed quite suddenly. To his dear wife, Barbara, who was instrumental in my upbringing — she worked for my sister who I lived with for the early years of my life — I offer my condolences; to Christopher, “Cookie”, he used to be a part of my football team, and all the kids; his sister; his daughter, Tiara.

I send my condolences to them and the entire Washington Boulevard. Our hearts and thoughts are with the two families as the funerals are Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, as you can hear by the long list of persons being named here today it's been a tough couple of weeks, and it's especially difficult during this time of the year from Christmas to Valentine's Day as you go through the newspaper on a Friday or you go on to the websites. We know there are many people out there who are missing their loved ones, who are feeling the pain of loss and we offer our condolences, our thoughts and our prayers with them all.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to add to my condolences on behalf of George Town Central as well as on behalf of my family to all persons listed thus far, as our sympathies go out to those families going through this very difficult time. There are three names especially I want to bring up.

Firstly, our colleague Austin Harris. I was a part of that cohort that came into Parliament in 2017 so we shared some close times learning the ropes of Parliament together. My heart and prayers go out to the family because I don't think it will ever get any easier missing him. The country has truly lost a great individual.

Also, one of my constituents from the George Town Central area, particularly that of Tropical Gardens. I think many of us in here would remember his kind soul, Mr. Herbert Martin. He was like an uncle to me when I was younger. As a single mother, my mother, whenever I would see her, she was close friends with him and he always treated me like an uncle. I can remember him always saying, *see this little \$5 here, make sure you be good in school and be well*. I know that he faced some illness for many, many years so my heart and prayer goes out for his wife and his children. I know he's going to be missed. He's a very special individual and I want to thank his family for his influence on my life as a young man.

Lastly, someone who many of us may not know, but a person who came to the Cayman Islands from Jamaica and made Cayman his home, Rixon Sharpe. He became a part of our family, married a Caymanian. Unfortunately, his wife passed away a couple of years ago and now he's in heaven with her. He made Cayman his own, had an opportunity to go back to Jamaica, and I remember how many times I talked to him about it after his wife passed, he said *Kenneth, Cayman is my home now and I'm staying here. This is my new family so they better bury me here*. I hate to even re-think that conversation, but that's what ended up happening where he's now here home with us. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family in Jamaica, but also his friends and family here, who are now missing him today.

Again, I repeat for all those who have lost a loved one, my heart and prayers and sympathy go out to you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to mention the passing of some of our loved ones. They're all near and dear to us so we discuss the names back and forth.

I want to make a note to Captain Paul Hurlston. He actually nominated me for George Town South, and the day before elections he was taken into the hospital — never had a chance to vote for me otherwise I would have one more you could put to my name. He was a great man when it came to the seafarers [with] such a historical mind, you know, that you could go to him for anything about Cayman or what we went through in the past — was probably greater than Google.

I also want to recognise Pauline Wood nee Merren and her family as well. Also, a near and dear friend of mine, Noel Cayasso Smith, who passed away just the end of last year. I could not, not mention our dear colleague Austin Harris. He and I went to Triple C together and his mom is very near and dear to me as well. I just want to keep those memories alive and keep them fresh.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the passing of Mr. Joey Ebanks of North Side, a well-known member of the district who will be missed by many. I want to extend sincere condolences to his wife and his children as well as the wider Ebanks family and all their loved ones.

On behalf of the people of North Side, our thoughts and prayers are with the families during the difficult times. May they find comfort in the love within their community and the many memories they shared with him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, extend condolences to everyone who had been mentioned here today, but particularly to Austin's family. Austin was near and dear to all of us here on the Opposition side of the Progressives and his death came as a real shock to us and the sickness that he had. We should miss him dearly.

I also need to mention two people from my own constituency who passed away just about two weeks ago. One was Mr. Jerry Manderson, probably the one constituent who I spent the most time with.

[Laughter]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: He was always calling, wanted to talk, always looking for assistance and I spent many, many a day driving down to his home and meeting with him. He passed away about 10 days ago, I think. What was most unusual, Mr. Speaker, was that his partner — and I say partner because I don't know if he ever married her but Miss Verlène is who I knew her as — she died 10 days before him. From speaking to him, I think Jerry died a broken man. The time I went to see him after her passing, he told me he cried constantly and he could not talk without crying. He grieved very, very hard with regard to her passing. Miss Verlène actually was an aunt to our own Pearlina McGaw-Lumsden — her mom's sister who passed. I want to remember those two as well as everyone else.

I thank you for the opportunity.

The Speaker: Minister of Culture.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add condolences to the families of those already mentioned on their [loved ones] passing.

I also want to express my deepest condolences to the families of the following persons who have passed away from East End: Mr. Eurdley McFarlane, Mr. Thomas Rankine, and in particular, to Ms. Greta Rankine. While all these people had their own attributes, Ms. Greta, and I must admit a family member of mine, was one of the last stalwarts of trying to carry on our culture and our heritage and it's sad that she's passed on, but we'll have to take the mantle and run with it somehow.

Lastly, but by no means least, I want to acknowledge the passing of a dear friend of mine for many, many years, Mr. Herbert Martin.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I do apologise and I hope you give me grace here but there were two individuals who passed in my constituency who I forgot to mention and I would hate for the family to think that they were forgotten. Ms. Elrita Seymour who was a guiding angel within the George Town Central area and I'm quite sure that probably everyone in this room except for the little man from Cayman Brac ate from her — well, he probably did too.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: He never got any? That's why he didn't grow tall enough.

In all seriousness, sir, her passing shook our community. I don't think she could ever be forgotten. She was a staple within Central George Town past the boundaries of the electoral line; I'm talking about all of George Town, the central heart of it, she made most of us by way of either caring and loving or feeding or just giving good advice. She was a strong woman. Interestingly enough, from the perspective that we're celebrating women now, she was one of those persons within our community where strong women went to her for advice. I say to the family, we still continue to think about you, our thoughts and prayers are with you even though it's been almost two months since her passing.

The next one was someone I think we may have done the obituary for but I refuse to leave it out just in case we didn't, Mr. Hank McField who was also a stalwart within my constituency. As you know, the McField name is very strong, and Mr. Hank was like one of those great uncles who was always there to support you, gave the clothes off his back for you, worked really, really hard, disciplined, one job practically all of his life. The traditional Caymanian man — that's who I saw him as. I was happy to say he was a supporter of mine. I kind of miss his advice, to be honest, when you are trying to get through these times that we're facing as a country. My thoughts and prayers go out for his wife, who I know misses him so much; his two daughters and his extended brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and all the cousins who everyone talks about, who miss him so much.

Another recognisable name and face that some of you may remember, Mr. Jaffet McField. A staple, you would know you were in George Town when you saw him riding across the street on his bicycle with his Cayman thatch hat on; and no matter how developed and how many buildings we put, his look in today's day was exactly the same way probably since 1970 when he was a young boy riding a bicycle. He always allowed me to remember that "I'm a Caymanian" when I saw him. He's definitely going to be missed.

On behalf of my family, personally, and on behalf of all the Opposition Members, all the George Town

Elected Members, and every Member in this Parliament, again, our sympathies and prayers go out to all the McField family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Too many names, sir. I want to associate my condolences with all the names that have been mentioned here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, especially those connected to the civil service. Ms. Doris Reed, her granddaughter is my Personal Assistant, Ms. Tenisha Ebanks; her mother is Tara Robinson, an outstanding civil servant. We were so saddened to hear of Mr. Solomon's passing, his wife is one of my chief officers. Mr. Charley; Mr. Nealy, an outstanding long-serving civil servant; Mr. Hank McField has two amazing daughters who are part of our civil service; and Mr. Joey Ebanks, his sister-in-law, Ms. Teresa Echenique is one of my chief officers.

My sister, Paula, informed me a little while ago that one of our family [members], Mr. Paul Lindo Ebanks from West Bay has passed. I wasn't even aware of that, Mr. Speaker. I grew up knowing him as a sort of big brother. His sister, Donna Lee was like a sister to me; so I offer condolences to the entire family on behalf of all of us in the civil service, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague from Bodden Town East, he wanted to make sure we express our condolences to former Speaker and Premier, Mr. Bush, on the passing of his brother. We both individually called him and gave our condolences but we just wanted to enter those condolences for the record.

Also, Mr. Speaker, my good friend, Austin. The Member for George Town Central remembered him but and as I get up here, I remember his son, Alex; Miss Ingrid, Miss Ruby, his brother Rob. It's a family again who just lost another relative in David Frederick, so I know that family is still in mourning.

Cherry Parchment, Mr. Speaker, her six sons: Dwayne, Ernest, Nigel, Sean, Ian and Roderick; and their wives, Welma, Charlotte, Headian and Abigail. I know the family is very close and it was really... It's good to see when a family can live really well. I know the Honourable DG just mentioned Ms. Tara Robinson's loss this morning, and her grandmother practically raised her, and then her mother is also sick so I know Tara is definitely feeling it right now.

Dennis Ames, Mr. Speaker. My mother reminded me he was the best man at my father's wedding and she also reminded me that she's the last person

left alive in her wedding party so she definitely knows that. It's one of those situations and she's like, *well, Chris I'm next, there's no one else left*; so we really felt that one. His wife Miss Verline, his son, Yurie; and his stepdaughter, Stephaney; our condolences [go] out to them.

Alvin Davis, who some of you may have met at Welly's, Fish Shack or Champion House, otherwise known as "Fatman". One of the best bakers you could ever meet. He did my wedding cake and I was really sorry to hear of his passing. Ms. Frazer from Northward. She was very close with my mother and I know mommy is feeling that one right now. Mr. Speaker, Mr. John Byrd, he passed away recently. He and his wife of almost 26 years, Cynthia, are also from the Northward community. He's related to the Whittaker family also and so forth. I really feel it for them at this time.

Mr. Speaker, as I sit back and listen to all the names that have been mentioned thus far and I'm sure the others to come, it says something about us here in Cayman. It has always been about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for opening up the Parliament for us to recognise so many ordinary Caymanians who in their total sum made an extraordinary contribution to our Islands and our development and left their fingerprints on it.

With that Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and extend my condolences to everyone who has also lost someone and is in pain. Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly sad to sit here and listen to all the names and I add my condolences to all those names that have already been called.

Mr. Speaker, I will also join voice with those who mentioned our former colleague, Austin Harris. I know the Webb family, who are my constituents, Ms. Dahlia Webb, lost another family member recently and they've lost several over the past several months and into last year. My thoughts are with them.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, I was ill for a while — over a 10-day period — I wasn't able to get to Cayman Brac for uncle Heinley Scott's funeral. My thoughts and prayers, my heart go out to Aunt Norma and all the family. Another Brac connection, Mr. Speaker, Steve O'Connor, first cousin to my colleague, the Member for Cayman Brac East, also passed away at Health City. I want to offer the family my deep, sincere condolences.

I'm just being reminded, I shouldn't need reminding, to mention Ms. Phyllis Moxam, a long-time supporter and friend of my party. I couldn't run into her without her asking about Kurt, Sir Alden or McKeever and have those conversations with her. She was a wonderful, wonderful lady and she certainly is missed. Condolences to Ms. Phyllis' family.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Member for Newlands.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like to add my voice and adopt the offer of condolences to all of the families the individuals mentioned here so far this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, in particular, I would I refer to Ms. Cherry Parchment— other Members have referred to her passing as well. Ms. Cherry was a wonderful lady, avid gardener, incredible cook, a storied life of being a restaurateur and you know, she and her husband were trying to have a girl and they ended up with six incredible, young, strong Caymanian men who have gone on to be stalwarts in this community. I know their names have been read out already.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to specifically refer to Miss Alice who the Premier and others have referred to. I guess it's very similar circumstances to the Premier. Just a short time before her passing, and I believe ironically it was at a funeral service, she was coming towards me and I stopped and gave her a hug and she said, *Waynie, darling, how are you doing? Give Jane Jane my love.* I actually forgot to tell my wife that until the morning that I found out that Miss Alice or Aunt Alice — she had all kinds of different references in the family... It just reminded me that I really wish I had taken the time.

We all have been through these circumstances — had we known, you know? I was happy that circumstances allowed me to give her a hug, tell her I love her, but had we known, we would have spent that extra time. It's just the way life is but whenever we can, let's spend the extra time with people who mean something to us, people who we love, even if you just know them. Her brother, I call him Uncle Stanton, he's my wife's uncle. Lovely people, fantastic people so condolences to all of the families of those who have lost loved ones.

I would join in specifically referring to Austin Harris' family as well. His mother, Miss Ruby and his brother Rob in particular, but everyone who has lost loved ones.

Again, I join with others in thanking you for the opportunity to do this.

The Speaker: If no other Member wishes to speak, I'll invite all Members to stand, and I would invite the Member for Cayman Brac East to offer a word of prayer for all the families of the persons mentioned and then we will do a minute of silence to show respect.

Let us pray.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: *Almighty God, we pause on this solemn occasion to first and foremost acknowledge who you are. You are our great God, Lord. You are our protector, our provider, you're our comforter Lord in times such as these.*

Lord, you've heard the many names, and perhaps, there are names that through the space of time

or for other reasons we were not able to remember, Lord; but we bring each and every one of our people, Lord. Many iconic Caymanians have passed on to their eternal reward. Like Paul of all said, unless we had a hope, Lord, for a better place to come, we would be like most men, all miserable.

We pray that you would take your arms of grace and mercy and envelop those families today who are still grieving, Lord — some more fresh than others. Lord, we know only time, only your divine application of your love is able to help in situations like this. Lord, we pray that they would be able to look back into the reservoir of their memories, oh God, to find solace and peace and tranquillity during these trying and dark times. Lord, help them to realise that yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death that we are to fear no evil because Thou art with us; in the good times and bad times you are just a prayer away.

Lord we thank you for this honourable House making space in its very busy schedule, Lord, to pause and reflect and remember those who helped to build these beloved Cayman Islands, oh God. That their memories would not just go into oblivion, oh God, but that we would remember them, oh God, and build upon the great foundation that they provided for us; and that when our turn comes, that we too would pass the torch on to the next generation.

Lord, we thank you, we praise you, and we exalt you because when we do so, men and women, boys and girls will be added onto you.

Bless this great nation and each one whom you've chosen to be here for such a time as this. We pray that as we continue to go day in and day out, Lord, that we would be, even as Donoghue, always find someone to be our neighbour. That's everyone who we come into contact with — show them love, show them compassion, generosity and be your arms extended, Lord, and your love magnified. These mercies we favourably ask in Jesus' name with thanksgiving.

Amen.

All Hon. Members: Amen.

The Speaker: One minute of silence starting now.

[Minute of silence]

The Speaker: Thank you.
Please be seated.

RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: None.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

FIRST READINGS

TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

LITTER (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

REGISTERED LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

I think by agreement of the House, we are going to adjourn and come back on Tuesday to finish the business.

Before I ask the Premier to move the adjournment, I want to bring Members fully up to speed to what's going to happen next.

All Members will come back and sit in their proper, regular seats. The Master of Ceremonies will be up here and we have an official programme that is going to take place inside here. That will be about an hour long. I'm not going to let all the secrets out, but you all have it before you, right. Then we are going to go outside for an hour of socialising and networking and you have a great opportunity to talk to many women who can give you advice on government Bills and all those things because we've invited many of the movers and shakers and influencers from the women's side of our society to this function this afternoon. I really, really invite all Members to stay back and enjoy what is going to unfold before us here this afternoon.

Also, in the meantime, we have invited the museum to put up a small display in the foyer of the women who have been involved, so take your time and go by and review our history and how women have helped to build the country that we enjoy today.

I now invite the Premier to move the suspension of Standing Order 14(1) to allow the Parliament to meet at 10am on Tuesday, March 10th.

Suspension of Standing Order 14(1)

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Standing Order 14(1) be suspended to allow the House to resume on Tuesday, 10th March at 10am rather than 2pm.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 14(1) be suspended to allow the House to reconvene at 10am on Tuesday, March 10th.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Orders 14(1) suspended.

The Speaker: I also need to remind you all that the reason that we're not meeting Monday is because of the Youth Parliament meeting. Therefore, I expect all of you to show up at least for the opening ceremony if you don't want to stay and listen to all the debate, but they have some very good topics and it would be interesting particularly for the Ministries who may be connected directly to the Motions that they are bringing to hear how these young people feel about it.

The staff down here and some of the MPs have spent much time from September training these parliamentarians on how Parliament functions. I'm going to be here to observe them so I'm sure I'll learn something too.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Make sure that we all come back on Monday morning at 10 o'clock to support the Youth Parliament.

Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the Chairman for the Youth Parliament Committee, I am mindful that we also have the raising of the Commonwealth Day flag at 9:45. Youth Parliament is supposed to be starting at 10:00, so I ask us to be very sharp in our timing so we can get here. We do not want to send a wrong message to the young people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I now invite the Honourable Premier to move the adjournment of this honourable House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 10th March at 10am.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House now adjourn until Tuesday, March 10th at 10am.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

The House stands adjourned.

**At 3:15pm the House stood adjourned until 10am
Tuesday, 10th March, 2026.**