



OFFICE OF THE  
**PREMIER**  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

**Statement on establishment of WORC agency**

**By Premier Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA**

Mister Speaker, I am pleased to provide this Honourable House with an update as to the progress on the establishment of the WORC agency.

Mister Speaker, WORC is an abbreviation for Workforce Opportunities and Residency Cayman, representing an agency being built to restructure the country's approach to labour market support with regard to how employment and workforce development services in the Cayman Islands is delivered.

Mister Speaker, the synergies of similar processes and procedures along with shared support staff, means that the WORC agency is best suited to also administer the Permanent

Residency and Cayman Status applications in the future.

Mister Speaker some have said, in reference to the NWDA and the Department of Immigration, that taking two departments – both of which are each struggling to meet the demands – and pasting them together will be no different than what exists now. Mister Speaker, with the introduction of the WORC agency, the majority of the systems, processes, and programming will be streamlined to reduce unnecessary burdens on customers, create efficiencies in terms of decision making, and facilitate a platform to showcase employment opportunities for Caymanians.

A significant amount of analyses, planning, and stakeholder engagement has been done to get this right and we are determined to do deliver on the promise for radical change with the vision of full Caymanian employment coupled with a fair, efficient, and transparent work permit regime.

Under the committed and able leadership of Director Sharon Roulstone, the WORC agency will deliver Government's objective of ensuring that all Caymanians have the opportunity to successfully attain employment, and that the Cayman Islands continues to function as a well-supplied business community that is globally competitive. Ms Roulstone is an ideal change leader who exemplifies passion, love of country, and an understanding of how to effectively manage this complex and transformational shift in service deliver; we are delighted to have her at the helm of this important project.

Mister Speaker, teams of individuals are hard at work on business process redesign, governance, staffing, and the introduction of cutting-edge technology necessary to support the efficient and effective operation of the WORC agency.

Minster Speaker, the growth of our robust economy over recent decades was founded not on vast quantities of natural resources,

but instead, our successes have been built by the strong entrepreneurial spirit of Caymanians. Mister Speaker, we plan to continue our forward progress, leaving no willing, able and employable Caymanian behind.

To help achieve this outcome, Mister Speaker, the WORC agency will be made up of nine interrelated sections:

1. Labour Market Demand Assessment Unit – works with industry, to collect, collate and analyses labour demand and supply data; facilitating the employer accreditation system
2. Training and Development Unit – uses analysed labour market data, facilitates relevant and targeted training, and coordinates skills development programmes to Caymanians to meet labour market needs
3. Matching and Placement Unit – an improved National Jobs Clearing House function; conducts skills and aptitude

assessments with career counselling for Caymanian job seekers to aid matching and placement;

4. Work Permit Application and Adjudication Unit – processes work permit, permanent residency, Caymanian status applications

5. Appeals – facilitates the appeals process related to work permits, Caymanian Status, and PR decisions; and manages Freedom of Information (FOI) requests

6. Compliance and Internal Audit – ensures compliance with established policies and Immigration Laws and Regulations; prepares internal audit reports; reviews internal processes for efficiencies and continuous improvement; and provides investigation and enforcement support

7-9. The Customer Service, Finance, and the Administration and Operations units make up the foundation which supports the WORC agency.

Mister Speaker, as with any society in the world, we must recognise that there are people who are not employable, for a variety of reasons. However, we absolutely do know that there are qualified, ambitious, motivated, and hard-working Caymanians who are indeed unemployed; and in the current system, these Caymanians are almost impossible to track. The systems and processing being designed for WORC will provide a clearer understanding of who those people are and we will be able to facilitate up-skilling/training or assistance with removing other barriers that may be preventing their integration into the workforce.

In looking at this issue holistically, Mister Speaker, the government is convinced that we also need to have a mechanism through which to effectively defend and support Caymanians who are unjustly passed-over for promotions or otherwise disenfranchised within their organisations.

Mister Speaker, it is in these situations where Caymanians' career development is disenfranchised that the Fair Employment Commission will deliver results. The quasi-judicial body will have the power to summon witnesses, and review evidence to reach decisions on the balance of probabilities. If an employer is found in breach of their obligations toward Caymanians, the Commission will have the power to administer punitive fines.

Mister Speaker, the project to establish the WORC agency is well advanced, with deputy directors being taken on board in the coming weeks, and systems and technology coming on stream near to the year-end to support a launch in January of 2019.

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