

# THRONE SPEECH

Presented by His Excellency the Governor,  
Mr. Stuart Jack, CVO  
at the Legislative Assembly, 2 October 2009

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Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly:

This will be my last Throne Speech before I leave the Cayman Islands in two months' time. I have been privileged to serve as your Governor. Because the Throne Speech looks forward, this is not the occasion to ponder at length the past four years; for that, I will find another place and time.

While I cannot speak substantively for my successor who will arrive in January, he undoubtedly will face many of the same issues that I faced, and I would expect his approach to be much the same.

In my first speech in this House I identified a **new Constitution** as a major issue during my tenure. I am pleased to announce that the "Appointed Day", the day on which the Constitution will come into effect, will be Friday, 6 November.

To ensure a smooth start to the new Constitution I would ask that this Legislature devote adequate time to consideration of amendments to certain laws that should be enacted before the Appointed Day.

The new Constitution will give more responsibility for the country's affairs to the people of these Islands, through greater powers for the elected government and through several new independent institutions, some of which will increase the checks and balances on government.

It will for the first time contain a chapter on human rights. It will also provide a solid basis, if not a fundamentally new one, for the relationship with the United Kingdom.

This constitutional development is happening at a particularly challenging time. The **economy and especially the public finances** face considerable difficulties in common with many other countries, largely as a result of world economic conditions.

There will eventually be an upturn but it would be unwise to assume that it will then be back to business as usual. The Government, the business community and the public as a whole have to re-think some of the ways that things are done in the Cayman Islands and adapt to new realities, while preserving those values and features of the economy that remain relevant.

Diversification, whether of the economy or government's revenue base, is not easy but the effort is vitally necessary. If efforts are made and some sacrifices endured I am optimistic about the future for these Islands, which have weathered many storms and always emerged stronger.

We should be pleased that the Government is taking a longer term, comprehensive approach to the range of issues facing the Cayman Islands. As I said in my last Throne Speech a **sustainable development strategy** is needed, that strives for a future that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Among the challenges that this strategy will need to factor in is **climate change**. The country cannot neglect the need to maintain and improve its **resilience to disasters** such as hurricanes and epidemics.

**Crime** is the biggest threat to the economic and social well-being of this community. In many respects these Islands retain a low crime rate, but the numbers of murders and shootings, and underlying trends affecting some of our young men in particular, are seriously worrying.

We must tackle this issue comprehensively. The police have a vital role. Efforts must continue to ensure this country has a first-class police service, efficient and not tainted by corruption allegations. But equally vital are the roles of other arms of government such as education, in giving youth a constructive future, and the courts, prisons and community rehabilitation, in dealing with offenders.

The public too must play its part: to guide young people, assist the police, and facilitate rehabilitation.

**Good governance** is also fundamental to the Islands' future. Another Overseas Territory has reminded us what can happen when this is lacking. While I believe the Cayman Islands are different, we cannot be complacent.

Freedom of Information is requiring greater transparency, the media are on the look-out for lapses, there will be a strict Anti-Corruption Law from January, and the Committee on Standards in Public Life created by the new Constitution can be expected to promote high ethical standards.

The future of our major industry, financial services, will also depend on meeting rigorous standards of transparency and governance, and the Cayman Islands must continue to engage with the evolving international regulatory agenda.

The **public service** will have an important role in all these respects. This country has many excellent public servants. There is nevertheless plenty of scope for government to become more efficient and to provide good service while reducing costs. We will be conducting a review to that end over the next few months.

At the same time civil servants must not be used as scapegoats for others' failings, nor must they be politicised. The hard work of all those engaged in the public service must be properly recognised.

I now turn to the plans of various Ministries, Portfolios and Offices.

### **1. Auditor General's Office**

Value-for-money audits and investigations by the Auditor General's Office will include Operation Tempura and Boatswain's Beach construction.

### **2. Office of the Complaints Commissioner**

Under its new Commissioner the Office of the Complaints Commissioner will increase its efforts to be more accessible to the public. It will set standards for, and monitor, the effectiveness of internal complaints processes throughout government.

### **3. Information Commissioner's Office**

The Information Commissioner's Office will continue to promote public understanding of the FOI Law to ensure wide participation from the public in exercising their rights to information.

The Office will also:

1. conduct appeals and own-initiative investigations to ensure all applicants are treated fairly,
2. review the existing law with a view to improving its consistency and effectiveness,
3. assist public authorities to complete the publication of required information by January 2010, and
4. continue to develop policies, procedures and guidance papers to assist with the practical application of the Law.

#### **4. Judicial Administration**

A key objective for the Judicial Administration is to advance the financial services division, thereby ensuring that the Grand Court will continue to efficiently manage complex matters.

All other business of the Courts will be assigned to one of five divisions. One of these – the admiralty division – is intended to enhance the jurisdiction's reputation as a shipping registry.

The Judiciary will also focus on developing the Drug Rehabilitation Court, in the light of its success so far and anticipated demand.

#### **5. Cabinet Office**

In line with its increased responsibilities under the new Constitution, the Cabinet Office will place greater emphasis on monitoring policy implementation, as well as increase its support to the Governor and the Premier.

The Constitutional Review Secretariat and the Implementation Advisory Group will focus on the smooth introduction of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order.

The Protocol Office will institute protocol guidelines for the Premier's office. Official ceremonies will be standardised where possible, to keep costs down.

The Freedom of Information Unit will work on a data protection law.

Temporary Housing will seek to improve the situation of families still living in trailers, including assisting with finding permanent housing and jobs.

GIS will launch a website to encourage two-way communication between government and the public.

Computer Services will assist agencies such as General Registry and Vehicle Licensing in developing 24-hour online services, including payment by credit and debit card.

## **6. Portfolio of the Civil Service**

The Portfolio of the Civil Service will increase staff development opportunities. These will include associate's degrees in public administration through collaboration between the Civil Service College and UCCI, and a pilot project with Fire Services for a supervisors' diploma for the uniformed branches.

Better performance management and staff assessments will be encouraged.

## **7. Portfolio of Internal and External Affairs**

The Portfolio of Internal and External Affairs will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public safety and security services through better use of technology and best-practice. This will include construction of the Drugs Task Force Marine Base

The portfolio is also responsible for assisting many of the new bodies established under the new Constitution, as these bodies establish themselves in the coming months.

The eight bodies are the:

1. National Security Council;
2. Electoral Boundary Commission;
3. Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy;
4. Commission for Standards in Public Life;
5. Human Rights Commission;
6. Constitutional Commission;
7. Judicial and Legal Services Commission; and
8. Advisory District Councils.

These bodies will provide checks and balances on the greater powers exercised by our elected representatives and promote citizen participation, thereby strengthening democracy and good governance.

## **8. Portfolio of Legal Affairs**

In the Portfolio of Legal Affairs, the Attorney General's Chambers will partner with other departments to prepare draft legislation required by the new Constitution.

The Portfolio will work with other agencies on a comprehensive criminal justice strategy, which includes alternative sentencing, post-incarceration initiatives, and prison reforms, as well as early-intervention programmes for at-risk youth.

## **9. Portfolio of Finance & Economics**

A priority for the Portfolio of Finance and Economics will be the efforts of the task force to complete annual financial reports for all ministries and portfolios for previous fiscal years.

The Economics and Statistics Office will prepare for the 2010 Census.

Customs will upgrade its automatic declaration processing system.

The Maritime Authority will seek to strengthen Cayman's international reputation and revenue by upgrading its e-business systems, expanding consulting services, enhancing capacity in North America and Japan, and obtaining ISO certification for the International Maritime Organisation's Flag State Voluntary Audit Scheme.

## **10. Ministry of Financial Services, Tourism and Development**

The Ministry of Financial Services, Tourism and Development will incorporate the full responsibilities of the Portfolio of Finance and Economics into its ambit, in line with changes in the Constitution that will create the position of Minister of Finance.

In financial services, the ministry plans to strengthen Cayman's competitiveness as a well-regulated international financial services centre.

The Investment Bureau will provide more robust support for local entrepreneurs, and stimulate film projects and other inward investment through creative programming and outreach.

In tourism, key initiatives will include a Green Tourism pilot project, and the conversion of cruise visitors to stayovers.

The redevelopment of air and seaport facilities, including cruise landing and cargo capabilities, will be pursued through public-private partnerships; and a national air transport policy will be developed.

The Ministry will launch a national planning initiative, to integrate the perspectives of the public, private and non-government sectors into a vision for the common good.

The Ministry also plans to empower young people by launching a “Young Nation Builders” programme. This will support and recognise youth with leadership potential taking them through a tertiary level education, by means of an initiative in the Premier’s office.

Churches will be supported to expand their after-school programmes, and to integrate social care with schools, sporting and cultural bodies. Financial assistance will be given to help improve churches’ physical infrastructures where justified.

## **11. Ministry of Education, Training and Employment**

The Ministry of Education, Training and Employment plans to remove barriers to achieving a high-performing education system, in which every child succeeds.

Accordingly, the Ministry aims to ensure that:

1. a new governance and management system is developed;
2. principals and teachers are valued, and equipped to help their students improve;
3. educational standards are clearly established, and targets for improvement pursued rigorously; and
4. education planning is enhanced by a comprehensive “health check” of our system.

The Ministry will also advance a new national reform agenda. Strategic elements include:

1. maximising the potential of the new secondary schools as community and learning resources;
2. introducing initiatives to invest in our people, including unemployed youth and youth at risk;
3. enhancing technical and vocational education and training;
4. preparing for, in collaboration with the Ministry of Financial Services, Tourism and Development, a financial services institute and a hospitality industry centre of excellence;

5. developing a national tertiary policy, which is responsive to our workforce needs;
6. strengthening the governance and management of the University College of the Cayman Islands;
7. developing sound labour policies; and
8. supporting persons with additional educational needs and disabilities, through better legislation, facilities and programmes.

## **12. Ministry of District Administration, Works and Gender Affairs**

The Ministry of District Administration, Works and Gender Affairs will be reviewing all its departments, sections and units with the aim of restructuring some entities and creating innovative ways of conducting business that are more efficient and fiscally responsible.

As part of the Hurricane Paloma recovery efforts the Ministry will be focusing on the economic and social development, and the sustainability, of the Sister Islands by:

1. expanding the affordable housing programme;
2. commencing the asphalt road programme, and chip and spray, in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman;
3. increasing shelter capacity, and beginning phase I of the Water Authority's reverse osmosis plant, in Cayman Brac; and
4. reviewing the options for Little Cayman's airport.

While maintaining the existing infrastructure of the islands, the Ministry will concentrate on community land management, agriculture development, innovative communications, modernization of the weather services, and improving mosquito research and water management.

Additionally, the Ministry will review and update legislation, in particular the Traffic Law and the Road Law.

It will improve gender mainstreaming efforts in the civil service through training, and through local legislation it will extend to the Cayman Islands the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

### **13. Ministry of Community Affairs and Housing**

The Ministry of Community Affairs and Housing will focus on improving the lives of the elderly and disabled; reducing substance abuse; empowering women; and developing our youth. Key legislative measures will include:

1. enacting regulations for the Children's Law (2003) and Amendment Law (2008);
2. updating the Adoption Law to ensure best practice; and
3. developing poor person's relief regulations, to improve the distribution of funds.

The Women's Resource Centre, the National Parenting Programme, and the Young Parents' Programme will merge to create a Family Resource Centre under the Department of Counselling Services. The Centre will provide holistic family counselling while reducing operating costs.

### **14. Ministry of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture**

In the Ministry of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture, top objectives are:

1. updating health insurance and health practice legislation, including a revision of the standard health insurance contract;
2. updating environmental policies and legislation, to make them relevant to today's challenges. This will include passing and implementing the National Conservation Law; establishing a national sustainable development framework; implementing a terrestrial protected areas system; and formulating a national climate change adaptation plan.
3. Reviewing the National Youth Policy, and reestablishing the National Youth Commission to enact the updated policy.
4. Elevating the profile of sports, with a national sports policy and a national sports council.
5. And coordinating cultural entities, to ensure the preservation of Cayman's heritage.

Furthermore, enhanced coordination across youth, sports and culture departments will lead to cost savings, while holistically addressing the needs of children, teenagers and young adults.

## **Conclusion**

Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly:

In conclusion, I thank all those public servants and civic-minded members of the public who have helped to put together these plans and will be involved in implementing them.

On a personal note, I also thank everyone who helped me and my wife to play our modest part.

We pray that God will guide your work in the Legislative Assembly and help the whole community to chart a way through the many challenges this country will face, as you seek an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future.

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