



Ministerial Statement

by:

The Hon. Jason P. Hayward, JP, MP

Minister of Economy and Labour

Advancing Bermuda's Workforce: Youth Employment and Bermuda Job Connect

Friday, 10th of July 2026

Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to provide this Honorable House with an update on significant workforce development initiatives that continue to strengthen Bermuda's labour market and advance this Government's commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for Bermudians.

These initiatives include the continued implementation of the **Youth Employment Strategy** through our Summer Employment Programmes and the successful launch and ongoing enhancement of **Bermuda Job Connect**. These initiatives demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring that Bermudians have access to the education, skills, practical experience and employment opportunities necessary to participate fully in Bermuda's economy.

Mr. Speaker,

The future strength of Bermuda's economy depends upon the strength of its workforce. For that reason, this Government continues to invest strategically in programmes that prepare Bermudians for employment, support employers in developing local talent, and create sustainable career pathways that respond to both current and emerging labour market needs. During the past quarter, the Department of Workforce Development successfully delivered several significant initiatives while simultaneously relocating its operations to Bermuda College and maintaining uninterrupted services to the public. This level of operational delivery reflects the dedication, professionalism and resilience of the Department's staff and our valued partners across both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Speaker,

The Youth Employment Strategy remains one of the Department's flagship initiatives and continues to play a vital role in preparing Bermuda's young people for successful participation in the workforce. More than a summer employment programme, the Strategy provides structured pathways from education into employment by combining practical work experience, professional development, mentoring and career planning.

Planning for the 2026 Youth Employment Programme commenced months before the first student entered the workplace. Departmental officers coordinated employer recruitment, student registration, application assessments, placement matching, employment contracts, payroll processing, orientation sessions and ongoing engagement with students, parents and employers.

Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to report that the Department successfully placed **174 students** into meaningful work experience opportunities during the 2026 programme.

This includes:

- **102 college and university students** participating in the Summer Employment Programme; and
- **72 high school students** participating in the Summer Internship Programme.

These placements were made possible through the continued support of Government Ministries, public authorities, educational institutions and private-sector employers who remain committed to investing in Bermuda's future workforce. Their willingness to provide mentorship, supervision and practical workplace experience continues to strengthen opportunities for our young people while building the next generation of Bermudian professionals.

Mr. Speaker,

The Department recognizes that meaningful employment begins with meaningful preparation. This year's orientation programme was delivered under the theme "**Level Up: From Participant to Professional.**"

Students participated in structured sessions designed to prepare them for workplace success through training in:

- professionalism;
- workplace expectations;
- effective communication;
- teamwork and collaboration;
- ethics and accountability;
- personal branding;
- financial literacy;

- career planning; and
- developing a growth mindset.

These sessions encouraged participants to view themselves not simply as summer employees, but as emerging professionals beginning their career journeys.

Throughout the summer, students have continued to receive career coaching and professional development opportunities designed to reinforce workplace learning and encourage continuous personal growth. In partnership with the Office of Youth Affairs, programme participants also attended the National Youth Conference, where they engaged in workshops focusing on leadership development, public speaking, civic engagement, innovation, media communication and problem-solving. These experiences complement workplace learning by equipping our young people with the confidence, resilience and transferable skills necessary to thrive throughout their careers.

Mr. Speaker,

Preparing young Bermudians for the future of work also requires investment in emerging skills. Accordingly, the Department expanded its employability training by introducing courses in Artificial Intelligence for personal and professional productivity, workplace communication, emotional intelligence and resilience.

Through our partnership with MASC, participants also benefited from practical workshops designed to strengthen workplace readiness, communication, emotional control under pressure and the personal habits necessary to sustain long-term employment.

These initiatives reflect the Department's commitment to ensuring that Bermuda's workforce is prepared not only for today's labour market but also for the changing demands of tomorrow's economy.

The success of the Youth Employment Programme demonstrates what can be achieved when Government, employers, educators and community partners work collaboratively toward a common objective.

Every student placed represents another Bermudian gaining practical experience, developing confidence and taking an important step toward long-term employment and career success.

Mr. Speaker,

While investing in Bermuda's youth remains a priority, Government also recognizes the importance of modernizing how Bermudians connect with employment opportunities throughout every stage of their careers.

For that reason, the Department successfully launched **Bermuda Job Connect** on **April 6th 2026**, replacing the former Bermuda Job Board with a comprehensive digital workforce platform designed to support job seekers, employers, educators and workforce partners through one integrated system.

Unlike its predecessor, Bermuda Job Connect is not simply an online vacancy board. It represents a significant transformation in the delivery of workforce development services, providing career planning tools, employability resources, labour market information, online learning opportunities and enhanced employer recruitment capabilities.

The platform enables individuals to create professional profiles, explore career pathways, access training opportunities and manage employment applications, while employers benefit from improved recruitment tools, organization profiles, applicant management features and workforce data that supports more informed hiring decisions.

Mr. Speaker,

The successful implementation of Bermuda Job Connect occurred during one of the Department's busiest operational periods. Despite competing priorities, the Department successfully delivered this important digital transformation through careful planning, collaboration and an unwavering commitment to public service.

Recognizing that technology alone does not guarantee success, the Department invested significant effort in supporting employers and job seekers throughout the transition. The team worked closely with the platform developers to provide employer onboarding, technical assistance, platform demonstrations, workshops and one-on-one consultations. Weekly meetings with developers enabled continuous refinement of the platform and ensured that user feedback informed ongoing system improvements.

Mr. Speaker,

The early results demonstrate encouraging adoption by Bermuda's workforce and employer community.

Since the launch of the new site there have been:

- **1,199 users** registered on the platform;
- **80 organizations** were successfully onboarded;
- **167 employment opportunities** were actively advertised;
- **1,509 job applications** were submitted;
- **442 active job seekers** were utilizing the platform;

- more than **2,600 Career Card views** were recorded;
- **130 online learning courses** were in progress; and
- users collectively recorded over **16,500 hours of employability engagement**.

The Department will continue enhancing the platform by expanding employer participation, strengthening workforce analytics, increasing online learning opportunities and further integrating apprenticeship and career development services into one seamless workforce ecosystem.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Director, management team and dedicated staff of the Department of Workforce Development for their professionalism, innovation and commitment to serving the people of Bermuda. I also thank our employer partners, educational institutions, industry representatives and community organizations whose collaboration continues to make these achievements possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.