



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
The Cabinet Office

Department of Communication and Information

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The Government today presented an ambitious legislative agenda with a strong emphasis on health care, public safety, protecting seniors, school improvements, environmental protection and government reforms for greater transparency and accountability.

Premier the Hon. Michael H. Dunkley J P, MP, said the overall aim of the 2016 Throne Speech is to “enhance the quality of life across the board and to build an Island that meets people’s needs and supports their aspirations”.

The Premier continued, “The Speech represents the best of Bermuda, putting forward an agenda that is anchored to Bermudian qualities of compassion, community spirit and entrepreneurial energy.

“It protects the most vulnerable, prepares for the future and generates opportunities to help Bermudians to make the most of their lives. The goal is to enable Bermudians to rise together and build a Bermuda that is safe, prosperous and proud.”

Key initiatives contained in this year’s Throne Speech include:

- Establishing a hospital-based “**medical home**” programme to manage the needs of individuals with chronic, non-communicable diseases.
- Developing a **chronic disease register** to monitor prevalence of disease and fashion interventions and preventive measures.
- Consideration of importation herbal supplements containing **Cannabinol** to allow more medical treatment options.
- Working with stakeholders to reduce cost of **long-term care**, including development of private sector facilities and long-term care as an insurance benefit.
- Examining ways to protect seniors against **age discrimination** in employment.
- Expanding the role of **Co-Parenting Mediation Council** to include all family matters.
- Completing Salvation Army-Government agreement to build **transitional housing** on Bishop Spencer property to replace North Street shelter.
- Appointing a **Community Services Coordinator** to manage placement of Financial Assistance recipients in community service activities.
- Introducing **progressive payroll tax reform** to ease pressure on lower income earners.
- Utilizing **City & Guilds** skills certification to expand education pathways for students
- Ending the practice of **social promotion**.
- Re-engaging **Operation Ceasefire** to review anti-gang initiatives.
- Strengthening anti-social enforcement action by enhancing Police powers to temporarily **suspend liquor licences**.

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- Studying **parental leave** to include maternity, paternity and adoption leave.
- Introducing **worker protection policy** to ensure Bermudians workers have access to trades training and retooling, and work permit candidates have proper certification and authorization before a permit is granted.
- Introducing **roadside testing** to deter people from driving impaired.
- Introducing **speed cameras** at locations around the Island.
- Enacting SAGE recommendation to extend **accountability measures** to the senior levels of the Civil Service.
- Introducing **Code of Conduct** for all public officers governing procurement of goods, services and works on behalf of the public, and new offences relating to **misconduct in public office**.
- Requiring **declaration of outside interests** from all public officials including those of family members.
- Developing a Code of Conduct for all members of the Legislature.
- Initiating consultations to **decriminalize possession** of small amounts of cannabis and avoid unnecessary criminalization of Bermuda's young people.
- Constructing a **community facility** at White Hill Field.
- Demolishing old **Devonshire Recycling Facility** on Devon Spring Road for a community playground.

As highlighted in the Throne Speech, Premier Dunkley stressed that this year's legislative agenda will be implemented against the backdrop of Government's continuing efforts to ensure economic progress.

And the Premier reminded of some of the positive strides that Bermuda has made in the last year thanks to a recovering economy and renewed confidence in the Island, including:

- Bermuda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) recording six consecutive quarters of positive growth, signaling sustained recovery.
- The retail sector growing 18 out of the last 19 months, buoyed by rising consumer and business confidence.
- Air visitor arrivals up 18% during the third quarter this year with the year on track for the highest number of arrivals since 2008.
- Hotel developments, large and small, that are underway or preparing to break ground.
- Revenues exceeding spending during the first half of the year to produce a surplus before debt service and capital expenditure for the second consecutive time in seven years.

Premier Dunkley said, "My colleagues and I recognize that the past eight years have been an incredible struggle for many due to unemployment, under-employment and relentless cost-of-living pressures. We recognize that the frustrations are real and it is our continuing commitment to make things better. We believe that our multi-dimensional, multi-year plan to turn around the economy and restore confidence has set the stage for a far-reaching and energetic recovery in 2017.

"Our pledge to the people of Bermuda is to continue to work hard to ensure that our recovery works for the Island as a whole, but more particularly for the many set back by the downturn.

"Our social and economic programmes as outlined in this year's Throne Speech will extend support to those who need support, protection to those who need protection and opportunity to those looking for opportunity. Ultimately it is our goal is to ensure an Island that works for everyone."

To read more about Government's 2016 Throne Speech initiatives, members of the public can download a copy from www.gov.bm.

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