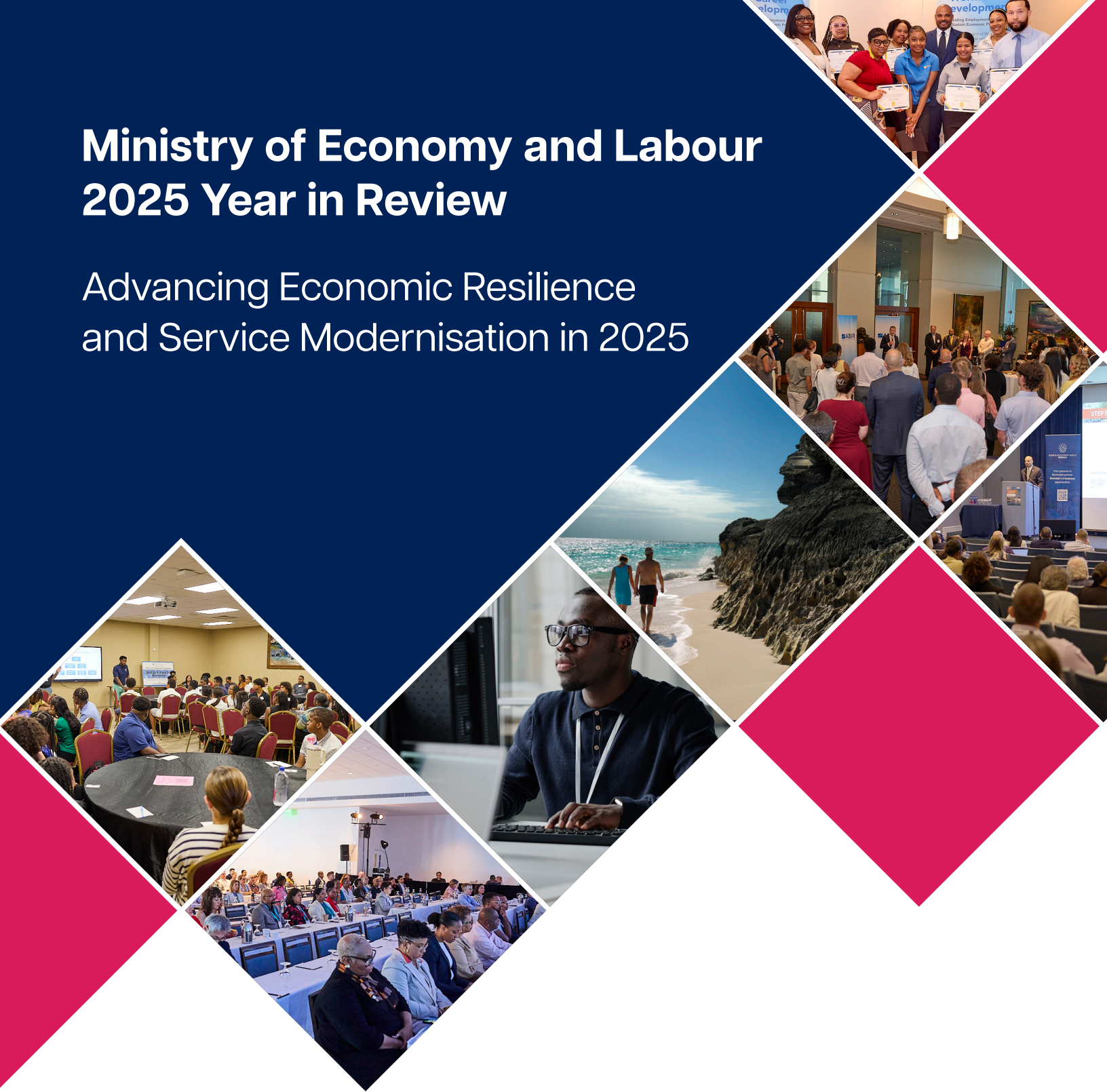


Ministry of Economy and Labour 2025 Year in Review

Advancing Economic Resilience
and Service Modernisation in 2025



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Economy and Labour



Introduction

The Ministry of Economy and Labour remains dedicated to strengthening Bermuda's long-term economic resilience through forward-thinking policy, modernised service delivery, and strategic initiatives that empower Bermudians. In 2025, the Ministry continued to build on the foundations established in previous years by improving regulatory frameworks, expanding workforce development pathways, and enhancing the quality of services delivered to residents and businesses.

This year was marked by significant progress across all departments: Immigration, Workforce Development, Statistics, Economic Development, Registry General, and Labour, as each undertook critical reforms aligned with national priorities. From the Department of Immigration's major strides in digitization and customer-service improvements, to the Department of Workforce Development's expansion of apprenticeship, youth employment, and industry partnerships, the Ministry has remained committed to equipping Bermudians with the tools and opportunities needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving economy. Parallel advancements in labour protections, data modernisation, and digital economy initiatives further demonstrate the Ministry's dedication to fairness, transparency, and innovation.

As Bermuda continues navigating global economic shifts, the Ministry's work in 2025 reflects a unified commitment to strengthening public systems, supporting local talent, and fostering sustainable economic growth. This Year-End Review provides an overview of the Ministry's accomplishments, priorities, and ongoing efforts to ensure that Bermuda remains competitive, equitable, and future-ready for generations to come.

MODERNISING IMMIGRATION SERVICES FOR A MORE EFFICIENT BERMUDA

The Department of Immigration challenged the status quo in several areas of its operation to bring about greater efficiencies in the way it services the Bermuda community. Its efforts were supported by the ability to fill several vacant posts, particularly in the application processing section.

Digitalisation Initiative:

The Department's internal working group selected a vendor in May 2025, and work continues with agency partners such as the Information Digital Technology Department and the Office of Project Management and Procurement to test the product for good governance. The initiative's goals remain the same:



- To enhance and streamline immigration processing for all applications;
- To improve overall customer satisfaction by introducing a dashboard that identifies where applications are in the application process and by allowing for online submissions (including the ability to upload supporting documents and pay fees);
- To accelerate processing timelines thereby reducing wait times and eliminating applications being backlogged or returned;
- To issue digitally secure documents which can be authenticated, for example, during travel to Bermuda; and
- To effectively communicate with customers; including tracking communication in real-time



Refinements to Policies and Application Processing:

Immigration policies and laws help the general public to better understand how services are administered which leads to better decision-making.

Aligned with the Government's goal to attract skilled professionals while balancing employment for Bermudians, spouses of Bermudian, Belongers, spouses of Belongers, and Permanent Resident Certificate holders, and to increase the resident population, generally, the following policies and applications were refined:

- Guidelines for Permission to Reside and Seek Employment (September 2025)
- Permission to Reside in Bermuda (September 2025)
- Partner Residence Guidelines (September 2025)
- Work Permit Policy (November 1, 2025)
- Passport Applications: processing time for first-time, lost, or stolen passport applications reduced from 11-20 weeks to between 6 and 8 weeks, and for renewal applications to between 4 and 6 weeks
- Restricted and Closed Job Categories; the moratorium on new work permits issued in these categories was extended (with some jobs moved) four times during the year – March, June, August and November

Compliance Matters:

The Bermuda public was reminded of the following compliance protocols:

- Bermuda Immigration and Protection (Prohibition of Entry) Order 2025: protecting Bermuda's borders remains significant part of the Department's work; as part of this work, the Prohibition of Entry Order was updated in January, March and July
- Immigration Penalties: in April and November the public was reminded of the ways to report breaches of Immigration law and policies



In 2025, the Department of Immigration advanced key reforms to modernise service delivery, strengthen policy administration, and improve operational efficiency while safeguarding Bermuda's borders. Through progress on its digitisation initiative, targeted staffing, refined immigration policies, and enhanced compliance measures, the Department improved customer experience and processing timelines while maintaining a balanced approach to attracting skilled professionals and protecting employment opportunities for Bermudians.

STRENGTHENING SKILLS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND WORKFORCE READINESS

In 2025, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) continued its mission to empower Bermudians through transformative training, innovative digital solutions, stronger employer partnerships, and expanded opportunities for youth and adult learners.



Expanding Apprenticeship & National Certification Pathways

2025 saw major progress toward a fully modernised apprenticeship and national certification ecosystem.

New Skilled Trades Apprenticeship Training Programme

- Launch of new pathways aligned with national demand:
 - Carpentry: 4
 - Plumbing: 4
 - Masonry: 4

Specialized Certifications

- Completion of multiple cohorts in:
 - **Small Appliance Repair Programme:** 7 participants
 - **Electrical (with solar installation modules):** 10 participants
 - **National Center for Construction Education Research (NCCER):** 28 participants

- A total of 106 National Certification Completions:
 - Automotive Technicians.....9
 - Electrical.....71
 - Landscape Gardening16
 - Welding10

Strengthened Governance

- Creation of sub-committees of the National Workforce Advisory Board (NWAB)
- Updated approval processes for apprenticeship training programmes
- Development of programme compliance checklists to support employer oversight

Strengthening Youth Workforce Development

Summer Employment Programme (SEP)

- Provided **100 university students** with hands-on work experience across the public and private sectors.

Summer Internship Programme (SIP)

- **80 senior high school students** gained early workplace exposure through 5-week structured placements.

Learn Through Experience Hospitality Training

- Enhanced partnerships with the Bermuda Tourism Authority and hospitality employers to place young Bermudians in real-world learning environments.

Bridge to Work Programme

The programme targets unemployed young adults aged 18–26 who are not in school and do not hold a college degree. Fourteen (14) participants were ultimately selected for the programme, including one participant fully sponsored through the Gang Violence Reduction Team.

Work Placements

Placements across government and private sector, including:

- Public Works, Facilities Management
- Information and Digital Technologies Department
- Accountant General, Compensation and Benefits
- Bermuda Aquarium Museum and Zoo
- Ministry of Home Affairs, Cost of Living
- Association of Bermuda International Companies
- RayClan
- Bermuda College (Athora Professional and Career Education and library)

Education, Scholarships & Training Support

In 2025, DWD continued to remove financial barriers to learning by supporting Bermudians through grants, scholarships, and upskilling funds.



Scholarship & Funding Impact

- **Over \$350,000** distributed through training grants, scholarships, and financial support for international and local certification programmes.
- Funding supported training in health sciences, digital technology, skilled trades, hospitality, and leadership.

Strategic Training Partnerships

- **PACE Administrative Professionals Course**—11 participants gained administrative and office management skills.
- **Digital Health Training Programme** with Bermdua Hospitals Board—supporting the island’s digital health transformation.
 - Two (2) participants

Employer Engagement & Industry Partnerships

Compliance Reviews and Support

- Reviewed employer training programmes tied to:
 - Tourism Investment Orders
 - Payroll Tax Training Concessions
 - Management Training Programme obligations

These reviews ensured Bermudians benefit from legislated training commitments.

Community Impact & National Priorities

DWD’s programmes supported key pillars of the **Bermuda Economic Development Strategy (Section 5: People)** by:

- Increasing the number of industry-ready Bermudians
- Expanding access to technical and digital skills training
- Strengthening alignment with employer needs

- Supporting repatriation of Bermudians studying abroad
- Enhancing national certification systems
- Contributing to sustainable economic mobility for families

Conclusion

2025 was a year of meaningful progress for the Department of Workforce Development marked by innovation, strengthened training pipelines, expanded youth opportunities, and enhanced industry collaboration. Through responsive leadership, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to empowering every Bermudian, the Department continues to build a resilient, adaptable, and future-ready workforce.

Together, we are moving confidently toward a Bermuda where every resident has the skills, support, and opportunity to thrive.



IV.

ADVANCING DATA QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORM NATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

The Department of Statistics (DOS) has enhanced its role as a critical data provider to inform policy development and decision-making in Bermuda,. This was accomplished by collaborating with stakeholders, collecting administrative, business, and household data, and enhancing accessibility to statistical data through the use of innovative tools.

Key Achievements



Launch of *By the Numbers* Newsletter: A user-friendly publication that shares our work programme and statistical outputs.

Preparations Underway for the 2026 Population and Housing Census: Every ten years, Bermuda takes a national snapshot. The census tells us how our population and housing are changing. In short, it allows us to fill the gap between assumptions and evidence.

This is why the theme for the 2026 Census is appropriately, “Fill the Gap.” Data collection for the 2026 Census of Population and Housing will take place from May 21, 2026, to March 31, 2027.

2024 Household Income and Expenditure Survey: This comprehensive survey is collecting critical data on consumer expenditures and income sources across Bermuda. The insights gained will:

1. Update the Consumer Price Index basket and household expenditure weights.
2. Enhance Gross Domestic Product estimations
3. Indicate the living standards of Bermuda’s residents
4. Inform decision-making for both public and private sectors.

Modernisation Initiatives:

The Department continues automating core processes to improve the timeliness and efficiency of data production, with a particular focus on enhancing the reporting systems.

Publications:

An overview of selected publications produced by the Department related to the economy and labour is listed below:

2025 Bermuda Job Market Employment Briefs: Provide a detailed analysis of employment trends, occupational opportunities, and demographics of jobholders.

2024 Employment Survey Tabulation Set: Offer valuable insights for job seekers and businesses, highlighting trends and occupation-specific employment opportunities.

Labour Force Survey Reports measure and assess the working and non-working populations.

Digest of Statistics is a resource for socio-economic data, covering areas such as population, education, health, and vital statistics. It is helpful for research and policy-making.

These reports provide stakeholders with valuable information for planning, research, and development efforts.

BUILDING A FUTURE-READY DIGITAL ECONOMY AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

Since 1 April 2025, the Economic Development Department (EDD) has led several initiatives focused on talent growth and economic diversification. The EDD has demonstrated its continued commitment to supporting Bermuda's fintech growth.

The initiatives below were launched and/or run since April 2025 and reflect a focused effort on the part of the EDD to develop talent, modernise regulation, and maintain Bermuda's standing as a forward-thinking jurisdiction in the global digital economy.

1. 2024 Annual Fintech Report (Published Q2 2025)

This report provides an overview of Bermuda's Fintech ecosystem during the year 2024. It highlights achievements and innovation that have taken place during the period. It reflects the Government's commitment to transparency, regulatory leadership, and international engagement, and documents the jurisdiction's progress in licensing, innovation, and infrastructure.

As Bermuda continues to strengthen its position as a global hub for digital finance and InsurTech, this report serves as both a performance record and a strategic signal, which reinforces confidence among regulators, investors, and local stakeholders.



2. Tech & Fintech Education Programmes

- **Fintech Training Programme:** In its fourth year, the programme was run by the EDD in partnership with the Department of Workforce Development and global education providers. It covered diverse but relevant topics such as cybersecurity, digital assets, project management, and networking. In 2025, the Programme expanded to include two professional cohorts as well as a high-school cohort from the Fintech Signature at the Berkeley Institute.



- **Bermuda Coders Initiative:** This programme (which is in collaboration with the United Arab Emirates) offers free technical training in AI, programming, data science, and app development to Bermudians and Bermuda residents, free of charge. Hundreds of participants have completed one or more learning tracks so far. The programme is available until November 2027.
- **Fintech Webinar Series:** The EDD hosted a series of free webinars, led by industry experts, covering:
 - Digital Assets: The Legal Framework
 - Blockchain Use Cases
 - Explore the Agentic Future: How AI Agents Are Reshaping Fintech and the Workforce
 - The BMA and Bermuda's Digital Asset Framework
 - Cybersecurity in Fintech: Regulations, Risk, and Best Practices
 - Privacy Considerations in the Era of AI

During the period, the EDD's education programmes were transferred to the Department of Workforce Development.

3. Tech & Fintech Grants

The EDD provided targeted support through education and training grants to strengthen Bermuda's local ecosystem. These grants were applied to initiatives such as:

- The Berkeley Institute summer internship programme,
- TechSafe, training for teachers in cyber-safety and cyber-hygiene,
- The Digital Finance Forum, and
- The annual Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW).

EDD also strengthened its presence in the public eye by partnering with the BEDC and BDA as a joint sponsor of the annual Butterfield Golf Tournament under the common banner "Invest In Bermuda".

4. Concierge and Engagement Services

The EDD provided concierge-style support to streamline processes for employers and international stakeholders. This included assistance with work permits.

This service plays a critical role in enhancing Bermuda's reputation as a business-friendly jurisdiction and supports talent mobility in the fintech and innovation sectors.

5. Land Licence Approvals

During the reporting period, the EDD processed and facilitated the approval of 42 land licence applications, enabling restricted individuals to acquire or hold property in Bermuda in accordance with local laws, and form part of the jurisdiction's managed approach to inward investment and land ownership regulation.

6. Job-Maker Incentive Exemptions

A total of 14 job-maker incentive exemptions were approved, in support of qualifying businesses that are contributing to Bermuda's economy through job creation, particularly in sectors aligned with national priorities.

V.

MODERNISING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ADMINISTRATION AND STRENGTHENING TRADE MARK PROTECTION

In 2025, the Registry General's Department played a central role in advancing Bermuda's intellectual property framework through the refinement and implementation of modernised trade mark legislation. The Department focused on strengthening administrative capacity, improving service delivery, and preparing for the commencement of the updated trade mark regime, supporting Bermuda's position as a credible and competitive jurisdiction for the registration and protection of intellectual property rights.

Building on the enactment of the Trade Marks Act 2023, the Registry General led extensive preparatory work throughout the year to support the passage and implementation of the Trade Marks Amendment Act 2025, which introduced targeted legislative refinements to the 2023 Act and an updated fee framework to support the new regime.



Implementing a Modern Trade Mark Framework

A major focus of the Registry General's work in 2025 was supporting delivery of the Trade Marks Amendment Act 2025, which clarified provisions within the Trade Marks Act 2023 and replaced the Government Fees (Trade Marks) Regulations 2023 with an updated fee schedule.

Key policy features of the modernised framework include:

1. Modernisation and Global Alignment

The updated legislation expands the definition of a “trade mark” to include marks distinguishing services, in addition to goods, and introduces new categories such as Collective Marks and Certification Marks, which were not provided for under the former 1974 Act.

2. Registration and Renewal

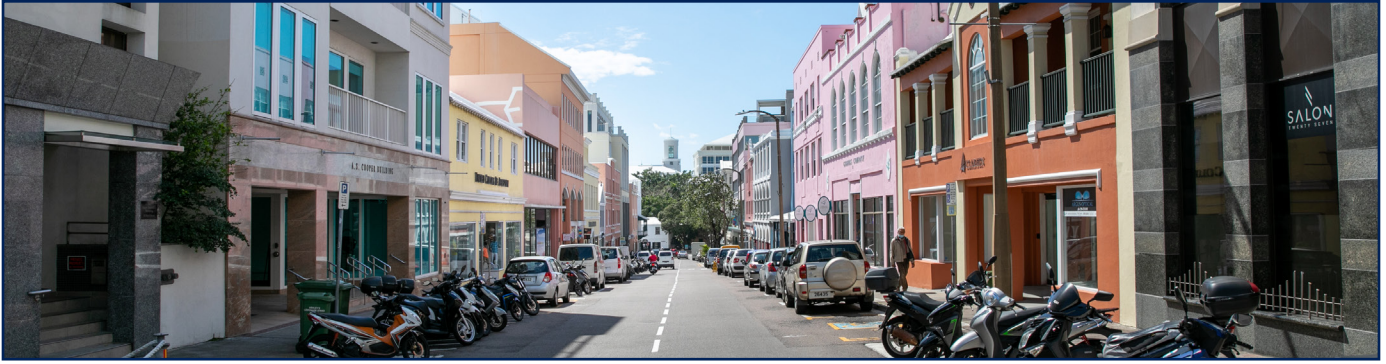
Trade mark registration and renewal periods have been standardised to ten years, aligning Bermuda's practices with international norms and replacing the previous seven- and fourteen-year renewal cycles.

3. Licensing and Legal Certainty

The framework introduces clearer provisions for exclusive licensing and establishes a single, unified trade mark register, replacing the previous two-tier system and improving transparency and legal certainty.

4. Infringement and Remedies

The legislation provides clearer definitions of trade mark infringement, outlines available remedies, introduces statutory penalties, and grants enhanced authority to the Registrar and the Collector of Customs to prevent the importation for sale of counterfeit goods.



Benefits to Local Businesses

The modernised trade mark framework delivers several key benefits to local businesses, including:

- Increased competitiveness
- Introduction of multi-class trade mark registration
- Improved access to international markets
- Greater legal certainty and clarity

Legislative and Regulatory Implementation

Key legislative and regulatory developments during 2025 included:

- Clarification of registrable transactions, including the transfer of trade marks through corporate mergers and other forms of transmission
- Updates to Schedule 3 of the Act to ensure alignment with international standards, including the Madrid Protocol
- Introduction of the Government Fees (Trade Marks) Regulations 2025, incorporating new fees for additional processes and correcting prior fee descriptions
- Finalisation of supporting regulations, prescribed forms, and administrative guidance required for full implementation

Following these preparations, the Trade Marks Act 2023, providing a modernised trade mark framework, commenced on 1 August 2025.

Building Administrative Capacity and Digital Readiness

Recognising the expanded responsibilities under the new legislation, the Registry General's Department prioritised capacity-building and system modernisation throughout the year.

Key initiatives included:

- Completion of two rounds of specialised staff training, delivered in partnership with the United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office and through intergovernmental cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago
- Allocation of funding to upgrade the Department's ageing technology systems
- Ongoing implementation of updated software to support registration, examination, recordation, and compliance functions

These investments ensure the Department is equipped to administer a modern, efficient, and transparent trade mark system.

Supporting International Integration and Business Confidence

The updated trade mark framework positions Bermuda to meet the requirements for the future extension of key international treaties, including the **Paris Convention** and the **Madrid Protocol**. Alignment with these regimes will enable Bermudian businesses to access international trade mark protection more efficiently while encouraging global rights holders to register and manage trade marks in Bermuda.

Throughout 2025, the Registry General's Department engaged extensively with industry stakeholders to gather feedback, identify operational gaps, and refine the legislative framework. This collaborative approach strengthened legal certainty, improved business confidence, and ensured the new regime reflects both international best practice and local market needs.

VI. ENHANCING LABOUR PROTECTIONS AND PROMOTING A FAIR, EQUITABLE WORKPLACE

Introduction

The Department of Labour, within the Ministry of Economy and Labour, continued its mission throughout 2025 to promote fair, safe, and equitable labour practices across Bermuda. Guided by the Ministry's strategic focus on driving economic stability and empowering Bermudians, the Department advanced its regulatory, compliance, and client service functions amid evolving labour market dynamics.

Throughout the year, the Department strengthened its operational efficiency, enhanced service delivery and deepened collaboration with industry partners. This report highlights key achievements, progress indicators, and strategic initiatives delivered during 2025.

Managing Labour Disputes and Promoting Industrial Harmony

The Department continued to play a central role in resolving disputes between employers and employees, helping maintain stability within Bermuda's labour environment. In 2025:

- The Labour Relations team managed a steady caseload of workplace disputes, ensuring that matters were addressed efficiently and fairly.
- Mediation services continued to be a cornerstone of dispute resolution, with high rates of voluntary participation and successful outcomes.
- Updated guidance materials and outreach sessions helped both employers and employees better understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

Supporting Collective Bargaining Processes

- The Department is assisting with the Ministry's Collective Bargaining Campaign which is aimed at showcasing the significance of collective bargaining within the workplace.

Enforcement Actions and Education

- The Department issued compliance notices and worked closely with employers to resolve violations, particularly those related to the minimum hourly wage rate.

Legislative & Policy Updates in 2025

In 2025, the legal and regulatory framework governing work and labour relations in Bermuda underwent a number of important updates. The Department of Labour's work in compliance, enforcement, and service delivery was aligned to reflect these changes. Key developments include:

1. Establishment of Department of Labour Act 2025

- The Department formally became a statutory entity under the Department of Labour Act 2025. This law provides for the continuation of the Department of Labour and establishes the Director of Labour as the responsible public officer under the supervision of the Minister.
- As a result, relevant legislation, including the core labour legislation under the Employment Act 2000 and the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 2021, were amended to correctly reference the Department and reflect the new supervisory structure.
- This formalisation clarifies responsibility for labour-related complaints, union certification decisions, civil penalties for breaches, and other core regulatory functions under the Department's remit.

2. Employment Amendment Act 2025 — Gratuities, Leave Calculation, and Wage Definitions

- In March 2025 the Employment Amendment Act 2025, which amends the Employment Act 2000, was passed.
- The amendment clarifies how “other gratuities” (including service charges and gratuities) are treated for the purposes of calculating paid statutory leave. Under this amendment, other gratuities are explicitly excluded from the definition of “a week’s wages” for leave-calculations, where those gratuities are used to supplement the minimum hourly wage rate.
- Effectively, paid statutory leave entitlements for tipped or gratuity-dependent employees will be calculated based on the guaranteed minimum hourly wage rate, rather than fluctuating gratuities, offering greater predictability for employers and ensuring clarity in statutory entitlements.

3. Employment (Minimum Hourly Wage) Amendment Order 2025

- In line with recommendations from the Bermuda Wage Commission, the Government approved an increase to the statutory minimum hourly wage to support economic dignity for lower-income workers and address the rising cost of living.
- The statutory minimum hourly wage rate was raised from \$16.40 to \$17.13 per hour and more than 2,500 workers within lower-wage sectors such as hospitality, retail, cleaning, personal care and beauty services are expected to benefit from this wage-floor adjustment.
- This increase acknowledges the rising cost of living and aims to ensure that minimum wage work remains a dignified and viable livelihood. The decision aligns with the principles promoted by the International Labour Organization.

Strategic Priorities for 2026

Building on momentum from 2025, the Department is expanding its services and increasing its staff numbers to ensure that it has the capacity to carry out its legislative functions effectively.

The Department is currently in the process of relocating to a larger facility which will give it the ability to host outreach and training sessions and allow the Employment and Labour Relations Tribunals to hold hearings more frequently, ensuring that parties have access to timely resolutions.

The Department will continue to align its work with Ministry-wide goals of strengthening Bermuda's workforce and supporting economic growth.

Conclusion

In 2025, the Department of Labour made meaningful progress in strengthening Bermuda's labour landscape, supporting industrial harmony, and improving client experience. Through ongoing collaboration, modernisation, and a commitment to fairness, the Department remains focused on empowering Bermudians and safeguarding the rights and responsibilities that ensure a productive and equitable workforce.