



Consultation on Retaining the Local Workforce Position Paper 2024



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I. Executive Summary

Bermuda's Population Projections 2016 – 2026 highlight Bermuda's declining birth rate and ageing population. In addition, there is evidence of an increase in the emigration of our local population. These demographic trends can have a severe impact on Bermuda's economic performance and present a significant challenge for the sustainability of the local economy.

Globally, economies with ageing populations face significant challenges such as labour-force shortages, declining economic activity, increased healthcare and long-term care costs, and old age income security. Bermuda has already begun to experience these adverse effects, as we are witnessing labour shortages, skills gaps, increased labour costs, increased pension and social insurance costs, and changing workplace dynamics. This reduction in Bermuda's working population is straining our economic sustainability, contributing to an increased cost of living.

A stable and well-educated workforce enables stronger social cohesion and improved overall well-being. However, at the current rate of decline, Bermuda's working population will not be able to sustain the current or future economy. It is therefore imperative that the country have a strategic and targeted approach to retaining the current workforce, as well as incentivise Bermudians to return home.

The Government remains steadfast in its view that maintaining Bermudians in the workforce is one of its highest priorities. Accounts of working-age Bermudians emigrating overseas need to be substantiated with evidence, and retention strategies are needed to retain and attract Bermudians home. During the consultation for the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027, the Ministry noted that the 20, 15 and 10-year periods required to obtain a Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) were not having a significant positive impact on worker retention in Bermuda. To that end it was determined that more aggressive action is needed if the PRC policy is to serve as a viable incentive for persons considering options of jurisdictions in which to work and reside.

The purpose of this Position Paper is to address the challenge of Bermuda's shrinking working population by: (1) making an aggressive and targeted effort to encourage and motivate working-age Bermudians to remain in Bermuda, (2) encouraging and incentivising Bermudians studying abroad to return to Bermuda to reside and work; and (3) revising the eligibility requirements for foreign residents and workers to obtain a Permanent Residency Certificate.

II. Bermuda's Workforce

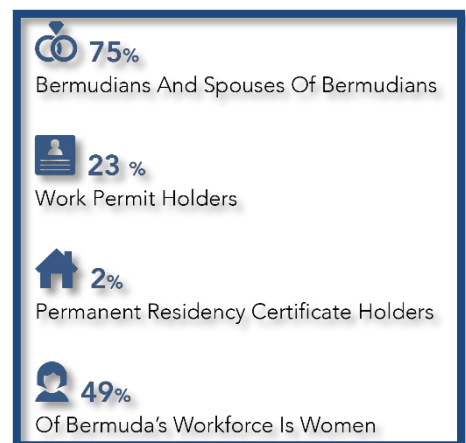
The working population plays a vital role in a country's economy. A growing working-age population enables opportunities for growth and wealth creation. Conversely, a shrinkage in the working age population can impede growth, competitiveness and stability. Bermuda's workforce represents approximately 50% of its total population. The island has just under 32,000 filled job positions in areas ranging across a variety of industrial sectors.¹

The largest divisions of economic activity are international business and financial and insurance activities, representing 22% of all filled jobs. Professional, scientific and technical activities, public administration, and human health and social work represent 27% of all filled jobs. Together with wholesale and retail trade (13%), accommodation and food service activities (10%), and construction and quarrying (6%), these jobs represent nearly 8 in 10 positions held in Bermuda's workforce.



The major occupational groups in the country's workforce range from elementary occupations to senior officials, with the areas experiencing most growth in recent years being service workers and senior managers. Bermudians and spouses of Bermudians hold 75% of all jobs, while Permanent Residency Certificate holders hold 2%, and work permit holders 23%. Women represent 49% of the total workforce.

Retaining Bermuda's local workforce is critical for the island's long-term economic prosperity and social well-being.



¹ Taken from the 2022 Employment Survey Tabulation Set. Published on www.gov.bm

III. Overview of Problem

The two main challenges facing our local workforce and a sustainable economy are the retention and growth of our current workforce. These are critically threatened by Bermuda's ageing population and emigration.

An Ageing Population

Economies with ageing populations around the world face several challenges including labour-force shortages, declining economic activity, increased cost of healthcare and long-term care, and old age income security. Bermuda is no different. Bermuda's rapidly ageing population presents a common set of challenges experienced by many worldwide, as evidenced by current statistics on the country's demographic profile.

In September 2022 the Ministry of Economy and Labour released a Position Paper entitled, *Addressing the Challenge of an Ageing Population in Bermuda*. The Paper describes the country's demographic challenge of an ageing population. The paper noted that two phenomena are likely to take place. Firstly, Bermuda's population is expected to decline as the number of deaths exceeds births; and secondly, there will be a continued shift in the island's age structure as the population ages.

This reality will create several challenges for the workforce and the cost of living, which include:

Labour Shortages: As the proportion of working-age adults decreases, it becomes more challenging to find qualified personnel to fill job vacancies. This can lead to labour shortages in various sectors, particularly those that rely heavily on experienced workers.

Skills Gap: The ageing population may also exacerbate skills gaps in the workforce. As older workers retire, their knowledge and expertise may not be readily replaced by younger workers who may lack the necessary skills or experience. This can hinder innovation and productivity in the workplace.

Increased Labour Costs: With a limited pool of working-age adults, employers may need to offer higher wages or other incentives to attract and retain talent. This can put upward pressure on labour costs, the cost of living, and affect overall business profitability.

Increased Pension and Social Security Costs: As the number of retirees grows, the burden on pension and social security systems increases. This may require governments to raise contributions, reduce benefits, or increase taxes, which can increase the cost of living.

Changing Workplace Dynamics: An ageing workforce introduces new dynamics in the workplace. Older workers may have different expectations, work styles, and retirement plans compared to younger generations. Employers may need to adapt their management strategies to accommodate these differences.

A reduction in Bermuda's working population will increase the cost of living for Bermudians and residents and will challenge the economic sustainability of the country. A stable and well-educated workforce contributes to social cohesion and overall well-being in Bermuda. When talented individuals leave the workforce, it impacts the employee's place of employment and the wider economy.

Emigration

Migration is a social phenomenon caused by a broad variety of reasons including the search for better economic, social or educational opportunities. In a globalised world, a certain level of migration is to be expected. Although this is a common phenomenon, it is important for Bermuda to maintain a balance in this area. Bermuda experiences emigration of some of its workforce which is not uncommon; however, if excessive, it can present challenges for a small community. While the Government cannot prevent people from leaving, there are strategies that it can adopt to create and maintain social and economic ties with the Bermudian diaspora—and to incentivise their return.

A skilled and experienced workforce is essential for driving economic growth and innovation. When talented individuals leave the country, they take with them their knowledge, expertise, and potential contributions to local economic development. This loss of human capital can hinder a country's ability to compete in the global market and foster innovation.

Significant levels of emigration can lead to brain drain, depriving the country of its intellectual and social capital. This can also weaken social cohesion and hinder the transmission of cultural values and traditions. A strong local workforce helps preserve the unique identity and heritage of Bermuda.

The Government is currently in the process of collating statistics to determine the impact of immigration on the workforce and overall population.

IV. Policy Purpose

The Economic Development Strategy states, *“The Government is clear that Bermuda must find ways to retain its current workforce and residential population as well as develop an environment that welcomes new entrants into the economy”*. The Strategy further states that, *“Bermuda must utilise immigration as a lever for greater economic activity and sustainable workforce. Barriers that prohibit immigrants from fully participating in the Bermudian economy must be reviewed and removed where practical and possible.”*

The purpose of this Position Paper is to address the challenge of Bermuda's shrinking working population by making a concerted and targeted effort to redress this trend by focusing on retaining a greater proportion of the current working population. Specifically, to:

1) Retain Bermudians in the workforce by:

- Encouraging and motivating working-age Bermudians to remain in Bermuda;
- Encouraging Bermudians studying abroad to return to Bermuda to reside and work after graduating and securing professional experience; and
- Encouraging the retention of ageing Bermudians in the workforce.

2) Retain our local workforce including current guest workers by:

- Revising the overall eligibility for permanent residency; and
- Revising the eligibility for permanent residency for specified occupational categories.

Retention of Bermudians in the Workforce

The skills and talents of homegrown Bermudians, especially Bermuda’s young people, are needed not only to compliment the local workforce but to help rebuild and sustain our economy well into the future.

The Government will gather data to gain a full understanding of why some Bermudian individuals and families may be leaving. This information will be used to develop deliberate and intentional policies to create the opportunities believed necessary.

To this end, the Ministry of Economy and Labour will commission research prior to developing a policy designed to retain Bermudians. It is intended that retention of Bermudians will strengthen Bermuda’s local workforce and create greater economic growth.

Retention of Guest Workers in the Workforce

Regarding non-Bermudian workers, it is proposed that by lowering the time requirement for persons to obtain a PRC, it is more likely that the current foreign residents will remain in Bermuda as they will be able to enjoy all the benefits of a PRC holder: to reside, work and invest their savings locally. The only benefits PRC's will not have compared to Bermudians are the right to vote and the right to receive certain benefits such as financial assistance. It is also likely that children born to PRC holders will choose to make Bermuda their permanent home and will reside and work in Bermuda until retirement and beyond.

V. Recommendations to Retain Bermudians

Considering Bermuda's current population and workforce demographics, it is critical that the Government take necessary action to ensure Bermudians are offered opportunities that enable them to thrive in Bermuda. As such, additional investment along with continuous collaboration with the business community will be required to support activities and interventions for long-term and future development and growth.

The Ministry's Youth Employment Strategy has as its first goal to *"increase local training opportunities and promote pathways to securing employment."* This is a vital part of the Government's approach to retaining Bermudians in the workforce. The Government is committed to reviewing labour market data to ensure training opportunities are in alignment with current and future demands. In addition, the Government will address the emigration of working Bermudians, and will work to ensure Bermudian graduates return home.

Encourage and motivate working-age Bermudians to remain in Bermuda

Over the past decade, Bermuda has seen a number of Bermudians emigrate to reside elsewhere in search of better job opportunities and a lower cost of living. In a December 2023 survey, 15% of respondents reported that household members had left to live abroad for at least 12 months for non-educational reasons, in the past five years². On average 2.1 household members had emigrated. Respondents stated that 54% left to find better work overseas, and 28% left for better or more affordable healthcare, education and lower cost of living. A separate, independent survey also questioned residents about their living situation, in which 24% stated they are currently considering moving away from Bermuda and, of these, 69% said the primary reason was due to the cost of living³.

² Global Research (2023) Omnibus Survey December 2023: Emigration from Bermuda.

³ Narrative Research Bermuda (2023) Bermuda Omnibus Survey: A Syndicated Quarterly Survey of the Bermuda Community. Quarter 4, December 2023.

While a degree of emigration is normal for any country, 15% of our small population is significant; and work opportunities and Bermuda's high cost of living appear to be the main drivers of emigration. It is important to minimize this trend and prevent the 'brain drain' caused when educated locals leave the country to live and work elsewhere.

The Government would like to welcome back Bermudians who left for financial and occupational reasons. We will encourage them to return home as soon as it is feasible to do so. In this regard, the Ministry will work to encourage the repatriation of Bermudians living overseas.

In accordance with Strategic Priority 5 of the Economic Development Strategy, the Ministry of Economy and Labour will commission research to better understand what motivated Bermudians to leave the Island, and what might entice them to return. The collection, analysis and use of credible data and information on, among other things, demographics, cross-border movements, internal displacement, diasporas, labour markets, seasonal trends, education and health is essential to create policies based on facts.

The resulting data will enable the Government to continue with the development of targeted programmes for retaining and attracting emigrated Bermudian workers.

The Government will seek to promote stability, education and employment opportunities and reduce the drivers of forced migration.

Additionally, to better understanding the social and economic factor that motivate an individual to emigrate, the Government will continue to place considerable emphasis on the development of our local workforce.

The Government is committed to ensuring that Bermudians are adequately prepared with the skills required for the current and future labour market. It is not enough just to create more jobs; Bermudians must be given a fair shot at the jobs that already exist today. Opportunities to prepare Bermudians with skills to enter the job market are a key step in getting our own people employed.

In alignment with the Economic development Strategy the Government will:

- Continue to invest in the development of the local workforce
- Develop strategies to address the labour shortage in the skilled trades sector
- Simplify access to services for all skilled trades and apprenticeship clients
- Provide adequate resources to increase and support all training offered to Financial Assistance clients on Personal Employment Plans
- Promote and mainstream quality apprenticeships within Bermuda
- Facilitate access to further vocational and higher education opportunities for apprentices.

Strengthen labour protections for the local workforce

The Government will implement policies that expand the rights and interest of Bermudian workers to ensure that Bermudians are protected in the workplace. The Government has worked diligently to strengthen workers' rights and protections such as:

- Implemented a Minimum Wage of \$16.40
- Ensured all employers have a policy against workplace bullying and harassment
- Increased compensation for workplace injury
- Increased maternity Leave
- Introduced paternity Leave as a right
- Ensured all employees get meal breaks
- Published independent contractor guidance
- Protected employee tips and other gratuities

However, more needs to be done to strengthen labour policies and enforcement that protect the rights of Bermudian workers, and ensure they are able to meet their basic needs. These principles are foundational to building a healthy, thriving, and equitable community. There is a continuous need to support workers. As such, the Government will:

- Partner with the Unions to create a campaign supporting collective bargaining and union organizing.
- Produce guidelines that clarify how minimum wages will progress beyond \$16.40.
- Place equal work for equal pay provisions into the labour code and advance pay transparency provisions.
- Increase allowable severance pay by increasing the maximum payout from 26 to 52 weeks.
- Amend the work permit policy to ensure that Bermudian workers are protected from being first out during layoff and redundancy when there are work permit holders in similar positions.
- Amend the work permit policy to ensure that there is a hiring hierarchy which places Bermudians first amongst all other groups.
- Amend the work permit policy to ensure that all work permit holders have basic proficiency of the English language.
- Ensure that greater consideration is given to firms with Bermudian employees for awarding Government contracts.
- Continue to revise closed and restricted job categories.

The Ministry of Economy and Labour will also host industry specific employee meetings to get a better understanding of current workplace conditions to better shape future policies.

Ensure Bermudians studying abroad return to Bermuda to reside and work

Strategic Initiative #16 of the Youth Employment Strategy is designed to incentivize young Bermudians to return home to live and work. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) will be tasked with identifying challenges Bermudians currently living overseas faced when residing in Bermuda in areas such as job opportunities, cost of living and resources available on the island.

Workforce Development will develop mechanisms to stay in touch with Bermuda's graduates abroad and create opportunities and incentives to encourage them to return home after gaining their qualifications and securing valuable working experience abroad. In particular, the Department of Workforce Development will advance two initiatives:

Create a register of Bermudian graduates abroad

The Department will establish a register of Bermudian graduates with a focus on keeping members informed about policy, legislative and other changes improving the situation for the local workforce and quality of life in Bermuda.

1. Utilize the upgraded Job Board to create the register.
2. Identify and reach out to individuals with ties to Bermuda, such as former residents, students and recent graduates.
3. Develop a campaign to attract individuals with a connection to Bermuda. Leverage social media, local events, and alumni networks.
4. Organize regular seminars or webinars featuring experts who can provide in-depth insights into legislative changes and policy updates which encourage persons to return home to live and work.
5. DWD will seek to participate in the overseas student networking events to facilitate connections between young people and local businesses and/or government representatives.
6. Regularly seek feedback from persons through surveys and feedback sessions to understand their concerns and preferences.

Amend the Workforce Development scholarship agreement

Currently DWD scholarships do not require recipients to return to Bermuda at any time. The scholarship contract will be amended to require that, upon the completion of the recipient's studies, they must return to Bermuda and actively contribute to the local community by engaging in professional work within seven years of completing studies for their first degree. This requirement will be based on the policy position that investing in the education of Bermudians must contribute to the growth and development of the country. By establishing this contractual agreement with scholarship recipients, they will acknowledge the importance of utilizing their

acquired skills and knowledge for the benefit of Bermuda, fostering their personal and professional development while positively impacting the local workforce and society at large.

Encourage the retention of older Bermudians in the workplace

In the 2023 Speech from the Throne, the Government committed to providing benefits to businesses that retain able-bodied, capable workers beyond age 65. These changes will aim to retain the current workforce while other efforts will focus on growing the Island's economy, creating more jobs that support an increased working population.

As “baby boomers” reach retirement age, many remain capable and able to carry out their duties with competence. Incentives could be offered to businesses that retain workers past the age of 65. Government could also work with industry partners to ensure reskilled and upskilled retirees are offered opportunities to easily participate and remain in the workforce for as long as they are able to do so.

In 2018 the Labour Advisory Committee produced a report entitled ‘Reviewing the Retirement Age’. The report concluded that:

Older workers should, without discrimination by reason of their age, enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment with other workers as regarding recruitment, hiring, compensation, benefits, training, working conditions and career development.

The report further highlighted, “*The concern is also often raised about the impact that shifts in the retirement age will have on young workers. Most economists agree that the job market does not work on a one-in, one-out basis, and there is very little evidence to support the notion that increasing the retirement age will impact employment opportunities for young workers. In Bermuda, declining birth rates of the past few decades reduce the impact of young worker displacement.*”

The Committee supported the concept of phased retirement, “*Phased retirement allows an employee to continue to be employed with a company after the official retirement age through various forms including but not limited to: • Reduction of duties; • Reduction of working hours; • Part-time work; • Project-based assignments; and/or • Job sharing. These options tend to be win-win as they allow employers to reduce employment cost while retaining skilled employees.*

To that end, the Government will eliminate the employer's portion of payroll tax for all Bermudian employees over the age of 65 years. In addition, the Government will promote the retention of workers over 65 years and will encourage employers to find creative ways to allow workers over 65 years to remain in the local workforce.

VI. Recommendations to Retain Guest Workers

In an effort to retain persons already living and working in Bermuda, in 2021 the Government set the time requirement for eligible foreign workers to obtain a Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) to 20 years for a person who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda; 15 years for a non-Bermudian parent of a child with Bermudian status who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda; and 10 years for children born to PRC holders who have been ordinarily resident in Bermuda. However, to date, there have been just over 200 applications approved. This number will not have an impact on achieving the overall goal of sustaining Bermuda's working and residential population.

During the consultation for the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027, it was made evident to the Ministry that the 20, 15 and 10-year periods required to obtain a PRC have not had significant positive impact on worker retention in Bermuda. This makes a compelling argument for further adjustments to be made to the PRC eligibility requirement to serve as a viable incentive for persons considering their options regarding jurisdictions in which to reside and work.

Jurisdictional Review

Approaches to Population Retention

The approach taken by other jurisdictions was reviewed, with respect to years required to obtain permanent residence (Table 2). In the countries reviewed, there was little mention of local population retention as most have seen an increase in workforce participation.

In Australia, over the past decade, the participation rate has been relatively stable, while in Europe and the United Kingdom it has added slightly to the overall growth in labour supply.

Recently, high rates of net migration of working-age people to New Zealand and Sweden and strong growth in female participation in Korea have contributed to noticeable increases in participation rates and, as a result, labour supply growth in these countries.

Participation rates in the United States, Canada and Japan declined substantially since around 2000, causing a noticeable drag on labour supply growth. More recently, however, there has been a tightening of the labour market in these economies as they have recovered from the global financial crisis, which appears to have helped arrest the decline.⁴

⁴ Online source: Bulletin – December 2017 Global Economy: Ageing and Labour Supply in Advanced Economies; A. Brown and R. Guttmann

In Barbados, despite the increase in the ageing population and low birth rate, there was little reference to local population retention. However, like Bermuda, the Bajan Government proposed reforms to the Immigration (and Citizenship) Act, including offering citizenship to second and third generation Bajans. In addition, the reform provides for a more seamless transition for citizenship of CARICOM nationals with the perspective that highly skilled migration be encouraged.

Regarding the local workforce, the Bajan Government’s approach is that a well-structured and balanced employment policy must outline a clear direction to improve labour on the supply side, in addition to identifying measures to stimulate the demand for labour. One key learning to be gleaned from Barbados is its recognition that if adequately facilitated, successful entrepreneurs can in turn become employers themselves, as their businesses develop and expand.⁵

Time Requirement of PRCs

Many other small jurisdictions, like Bermuda, also provide a gliding path to obtaining PRCs. Tables 1 and 2 show the number of years required for permanent residency and the number of corresponding jurisdictions for each. The average length of time someone needs to live in a territory for a means to permanent residency is 5.8 years. The median length of time is 5 years.

Table 1: Range of years required for permanent residency in other jurisdictions

Number of jurisdictions	Years to Permanent Residency	Percentage of total number of jurisdictions
10	4 years or less	12.7%
52	5 years	65.8%
8	6 to 9 years	10.1%
6	10 years	7.6%
0	11 to 14 years	0.0%
0	15 years	0.0%
3	20 years	3.8%

⁵ Rawlins-Bentham, 2020: UNDP Latin America and the Caribbean Policy Documents Series: Elements to understand the challenges of migration UNDP LAC PDS N^o. 38 Migration in Barbados: What do we know? Natalie D. Jones

Table 2: Years Required to Obtain Permanent Residency by Competitor Country

Country	Status	Rights/Benefits	Length of Rights/Benefits	Criteria
Costa Rica	Permanent residence	Similar rights as a Costa Rica citizen, including employment rights	Indefinitely	Family ties-apply Immediately/ others 3 years
Antigua and Barbuda	Resident permit	Employment-work and reside with dependents	Renewable every 3 years	4 years /marriage 1 year
Australia	Permanent visa	live, work and study without restriction and remain in Australia	Indefinitely	4 years
Italy	Permanent residence permit for long-term residents/ ancestry of Italian descent	Similar rights as an Italian citizen, including healthcare and education benefits, the ability to relocate to another EU country. No voting rights	Italy	Permanent residence permit for long-term residents/ ancestry of Italian descent
EU (generally)	Permanent residence permit for long-term residents	Property/work, education, social security, access to goods and services	Indefinitely	5 years
Luxembourg	Permanent residence permit for long-term residents	Property/work, education, social security, access to goods and services	Indefinitely	5 years
Guernsey	Permanent residence Permit	living and working in Guernsey with the same rights as the local people of Guernsey.	Indefinitely	5 years
Cayman Islands	Permanent residence	Work and reside	Indefinitely	8 years
Turks & Caicos Islands	Permanent Residence Certificate	reside and in some cases work	Without restrictions	10 years
Bahamas	Permanent residence	reside and/or work	Indefinitely	10 years
Monaco	Investor Residency	€1 million	Business capital transfer in a Monaco company/real estate	10 years

Proposals for Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC)

Considering the minimal impact made by prior changes to PRC eligibility, and the need to retain the local working population, the following changes are proposed:

1. Reduce the eligibility criteria for the granting of PRC to any person who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda from 20 years or more to 10 years or more, with an annual income requirement of \$83,000.
2. Reduce the eligibility criteria for the granting of PRC to the non-Bermudian parent of a child with Bermudian Status who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda from 15 years or more to 10 years or more.
3. Reduce PRC eligibility requirements for a Job Maker from 10 years to 5 years.
4. Reduce PRC eligibility requirements for the following occupational categories to 5 years:
 - a. Registered Nurses
 - b. Chartered Financial Analyst
 - c. Certified Actuaries
 - d. Computer Engineers
 - e. Software Developers
 - f. Certified Accountants (CPA, CA, ACCA, ACA)

The benefit of lowering the residency time requirement to 10 and 5 years, respectively, is three-fold. First, it should provide enough of an incentive to persuade current work-permit holders, foreign residents and non-Bermudian parents of Bermudian children to remain in Bermuda. Second, it should attract new people to come to Bermuda to work and live. And, third, it will help children of PRC holders feel welcome and to gain a greater sense of belonging, thereby encouraging them to remain and work in Bermuda. In each case, it is anticipated that the change in eligibility is a good incentive to have a positive impact on the number of PRC applicants, thus increasing the workforce and resident population in the long term.

This policy solution will not have an impact on the number of persons acquiring Bermudian status as there is no legal connection between granting PRC and Status. Permanent residents may elect to become naturalised and then apply for BOTC (British Overseas Territories Citizens). The impact on jobs for Bermudians is minimal as most work permit holders are currently working in positions they have held for an extended period.

This policy solution also provides for:

- Long-term security in the job market
- Long-term security of residence in Bermuda post-retirement
- The ability to own land subject to some controls

- The ability to convey their land to future generations
- Expansion of residential population; and
- Increased investment in Bermuda's economy

VII. Conclusion

Bermuda must retain and increase its working population. Our demographic trends demand this in the immediate and medium term. Bermuda's declining birthrate, ageing population and increased dependency ratio are compounded with an apparent increase in migration of Bermudian working-age population. Considering Bermuda's current population and workforce demographics, it is critical that the Government take all the necessary actions to ensure that Bermudians are offered meaningful remedies to offset the current trends and create a better future locally. Government also recognizes that more can be done to retain the resident foreign workforce by expanding PRC eligibility, which will promote more workers to remain in Bermuda and invest locally.

These policy solutions demonstrate a balanced approach. It is sensitive to both Bermudians and work permit holders and it has significant benefits for Bermuda, Bermudians and foreign residents. In the long term, these measures are necessary to sustain the local economy overall.

Ends

ANNEX – Policy Proposals for Consultation

Bermuda’s declining birth rate and ageing population present a significant challenge to the Island’s cost of living and the sustainability of the local economy. The Ministry of Economy and Labour proposes and seeks feedback on the following initiatives to mitigate the challenges and secure future sustainability of Bermuda’s economy.

#	Policy Proposal	Feedback
A Encourage and motivate working-age Bermudians to remain in Bermuda		
1.	Continue to invest in the development of the local workforce.	
2.	Develop strategies to address the labour shortage in the skilled trades sector.	
3.	Simplify access to services for all skilled trades and apprenticeship clients.	
4.	Provide adequate resources to increase and support all training offered to Financial Assistance clients on Personal Employment Plans.	
5.	Promote and mainstream quality apprenticeships within Bermuda.	
6.	Facilitate access to further vocational and higher education opportunities for apprentices.	
7.	Commission research to understand the extent of emigration, what motivated Bermudians to leave the Island, and what might entice them to return.	
B Strengthen labour protections for the local workforce		
8.	Partner with the Unions to create a campaign supporting collective bargaining and union organizing.	
9.	Produce guidelines that clarify how minimum wages will progress beyond \$16.40.	
10.	Place equal work for equal pay provisions into the labour code and advance pay transparency provisions.	
11.	Increase allowable severance pay by increasing the maximum payout from 26 to 52 weeks.	
12.	Amend the work permit policy to ensure that Bermudian workers are protected from	

#	Policy Proposal	Feedback
	being first out during layoff and redundancy when there are work permit holders in similar positions.	
13.	Amend the work permit policy to ensure that there is a hiring hierarchy which places Bermudians first amongst all other groups.	
14.	Amend the work permit policy to ensure that all work permit holders have basic proficiency of the English language.	
15.	Ensure that greater consideration is given to firms with Bermudian employees for awarding Government contracts.	
16.	Continue to revise closed and restricted job categories.	
17.	The Ministry of Economy and Labour will also host industry specific employee meetings to get a better understanding of current workplace conditions to better shape future policies.	
C Ensure Bermudians studying abroad return to Bermuda to reside and work		
18.	Create a register of Bermudian graduates abroad	
19.	Amend the Workforce Development scholarship agreement	
D Encourage the retention of older Bermudians in the workplace		
20.	The Government will eliminate the employer's portion of payroll tax for all Bermudian employees over the age of 65 years.	
21.	The Government will promote the retention of workers over 65 years and will encourage employers to find creative ways to allow workers over 65 years to remain in the local workforce.	
E Proposals for Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC)		
22.	Reduce the eligibility criteria for the granting of PRC to any person who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda from 20 years or more to 10 years or more.	
23.	Reduce the eligibility criteria for the granting of PRC to the non-Bermudian parent of a child with Bermudian Status who has been	

#	Policy Proposal	Feedback
	ordinarily resident in Bermuda from 15 years or more to 10 years or more.	
24.	Reduce PRC eligibility requirements for a Job Maker from 10 years to 5 years.	
25.	Reduce PRC eligibility requirements for the following occupational categories to 5 years: (a) Registered Nurses, (b) Chartered Financial Analyst, (c) Certified Actuaries, (d) Computer Engineers, (e) Software Developers, and (f) Certified Accountants (CPA, CA, ACCA, ACA)	

Any other comments, proposals or feedback: