

Advocacy Agenda & Action Plan 2018-2021



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OUR ADVOCACY AGENDA & ACTION PLAN

The Cayman Islands economy has prospered because of the close working relationship with the elected Government and public sector, investment in modern infrastructure, a competitive business environment, conservative fiscal policies, a skilled multi-national labour force and an entrepreneurial business sector. Offshore financial services, tourism and development sectors have positioned Cayman among the most progressive and stable economies in this hemisphere.

Like our regional neighbours, the Cayman Islands compete for investment, resources, customers and talent in a rapidly changing global economy. Our services and products are ranked among the best in the world, but sometimes competing is harder than it needs to be and the playing field isn't always level.

Increased regulation and bureaucracy has increased the cost of doing business. Unnecessary government paperwork eats up time we would rather spend with clients and family. Higher fees make some of our services more expensive than our competitors. Cumbersome processes delay projects and make it more burdensome for developers, investors and residents.

The Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce plays a role in making our islands more successful by advocating at all levels of government, across all industry sectors, in the media and to the community on behalf of our members. Advocacy makes a difference by removing barriers, establishing partnerships, creating opportunities and allowing businesses to get back to doing what they do best. Advocacy is the difference between one voice raising a concern, and a chorus calling for change – the difference between speaking and being heard.

The advocacy function starts with our members. They identify issues and concerns in surveys, focus groups, at meetings, events, online and through other feedback mechanisms. Issues are discussed at the Council level and then taken to committees and working groups that determine whether policy work should be undertaken. If so, policy positions are developed by committees, researched by staff, reviewed by senior business people and confirmed by the Council. Our policy positions reflect the insights of the broader business community, beyond partisan politics and individual commercial interests.

Once policy positions and recommendations are developed, we take them forward to strategic partners, to government, to the media and to the public to build a greater understanding and heighten awareness.

We also review the policy proposals of other associations. Where appropriate, we support their initiatives. When an issue changes, or when government acts on the policy matters we raise, we ensure that members know. We report on general advocacy activities, and on matters which directly affect business operations.

The Chamber Council has developed a three-year advocacy plan to outline how we will help expand Cayman's economic opportunities and improve the business climate. This "living document" will also be updated to reflect other positions on issues that may arise. To foster a resilient and growing Cayman Islands that can compete in the global economy, we will focus our advocacy efforts on:

- Education, Employment and Workforce Development
- Economic Growth and Diversification
- Regulatory Efficiencies
- Community Development

With the broader business community working together, we can address challenges and get results. Collectively, we analyze costs, understand impacts and identify better alternatives. Through our advocacy efforts, we knock on doors of those whose decisions impact our success, and we bring business issues to the attention of all levels of government. We outline what is working well, and where we see areas for improvement. We work with our partners to find a better way to accomplish our shared goals. For maximum benefit, we focus advocacy efforts in areas that pose challenges for most of our members, and we look for results to enhance our members success.



Kyle Broadhurst
President



Wil Pineau, CCE
Chief Executive Officer

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Why are we doing it?

Finding and retaining local talent is one of the greatest challenges facing the business community. Many school leavers who find employment out of high school lack basic literacy and numeracy skills and therefore find it difficult to advance in the workplace or even to retain their jobs. Financial services, health care, information technology and vocational and technical jobs demand a higher level of skills. Cayman's public education system is seeking to address these gaps but require more support and assistance from the private sector. Members have confirmed that they are willing to help and have identified education to be the leading area for us to address in our advocacy agenda. Our advocacy efforts will focus on creating partnerships with key public and private sector stakeholders in the education and employment systems that will promote and strengthen relationships between students and the business sector. We will work and advocate to increase investment or government funding that



The Chamber's annual Careers, Education & Training Expo (above and below) provides students with information on careers, scholarships & internships.

will help to improve the education system so that students are better prepared to fill available jobs and to prepare themselves for the future. We will support and develop workplace development initiatives that will motivate employees to improve their skills to meet the needs of a changing economy.



We advocate for increased investment and focus in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum in all schools to meet the needs of Cayman's changing economy.

What are we doing?

We advocate for increased early childhood education, expanded work preparedness, work experience, internships and work placement initiatives in the schools. Many students leave school with poor work ethic and limited understanding of the world of work. We advocate and support early intervention initiatives in numeracy and literacy and the establishment of properly resourced learning support centres in each public primary school to ensure that the students who are experiencing challenges at an early age receive assistance. Students who are struggling with reading and math should receive learning support. We advocate for increased investment and focus in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum in all schools to meet the needs of Cayman's changing economy. Further investment in vocational and technical areas is required particularly in automotive repairs, air conditioning, hospitality, health care, nursing, beauticians and information, communications technology (ICT). Working with the membership we can improve the skills and increase the availability of local talent. We will support these efforts by working with key stakeholders in the business community and the University of the Cayman Islands, International College of the Cayman Islands and the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre, Education Ministry and Department of Education.

A: Strengthen relationships between students and businesses

Transitioning students from the classroom to the business world is an important responsibility for all schools and the business community. We will strengthen the ties by working with the Education Ministry, Department of Education, tertiary institutions, Government agencies and businesses to establish and to support initiatives that will help students transition to the world of work and entrepreneurship.

Actions:

- Meet with Ministry of Education, Department of Education and key stakeholders in the private sector that support education and workforce development to understand the needs of the education system and the resources that are available or lacking;
- Organise an annual Chamber of Commerce Careers, Education and Training Expo at the University College of the Cayman Islands in partnership with the Ministry of Education, National Workforce Development Agency, tertiary institutions, member businesses and education and workplace partners;



The Careers, Education & Training Expo has been one of the Chamber's flagship events since 1995.

- Renew the partnership with Government for the Mentoring Cayman programme to connect year 11 students with public and private sector mentors;
- Present school awards to recognise students who achieve excellence in academic, vocational and technical studies;
- Establish a work placement programme for school students and school leavers (16-19 years);
- Recognise and reward excellence in teaching by reintroducing the Golden Apple Awards for Teaching Excellence in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the business community;
- Recognise and celebrate the achievements of educators who have contributed more than 25 years to the education profession.

B: Improve early school intervention in numeracy and literacy

Students require a good foundation in reading, writing and math skills to succeed. Students who do not receive the support that they need at an early age, become disillusioned and may drop out of school and, in extreme cases, turn to crime. More resources must be invested at the primary school level so that all students can graduate with the basic skills to succeed in life.

Actions:

- Conduct fact finding tours of several public and private primary schools;
- Support literacy and numeracy initiatives (such as Literacy is for Everyone, LIFE) efforts to introduce early school intervention programmes in all schools;
- Advocate for funding to establish full time and properly resourced learning support centres in all primary schools.



Mentoring Cayman has been assisting high-achieving students since 2002.



Many students who have attended the Careers, Education & Training Expo have gone on to work with an exhibiting member.

C: Enhance vocational and technical training initiatives

Tremendous opportunities exist for Caymanians in all areas of vocation and technical careers, but there is an insufficient number of students who decide to pursue these fields. Increased focus needs to be placed in this area so that more Caymanians are encouraged to enter these fields where there is an abundance of opportunity.

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Actions:

- Identify current vocational and training programmes and areas where further programmes are required;
- Educate students about vocational and technical careers as a career path and the opportunities available.
- Work with Government and members to create or expand vocational and training opportunities to provide a clear path to gainful employment.

ECONOMIC GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION

Why are we doing it?

Growing the economy and introducing new streams of business is essential for Cayman's future. Offshore financial services and tourism are under intense competition and so we need to ensure that there are other sectors that can create the jobs of tomorrow and to work to maintain our existing industries. The Chamber will work shoulder to shoulder with the Ministry of Economic Development to produce a plan that will position Cayman as an attractive location for new industries and work with other industry associations to monitor trends and to develop new products and services.

What are we doing?

The Cayman Islands economy is changing and more emphasis is required to ensure continued growth and inward investment beyond the traditional industries that have supported us for the past four decades. Health City Cayman Islands, the Special Economic Zone, and the introduction of local Intellectual Property legislation and green energy are relatively new industries that have been established, but we need a more structured approach to inward investment and economic development.

Presently there is no specialised public or private sector agency that works to attract and to retain business. This places the Cayman Islands at a major disadvantage as many of our competitors have such mechanisms and have been successful with attracting business and investment – including some from our shores. An economic development structure would improve our prospects and the Chamber intends to advocate for one to be developed over the next three years.

A: Work with partners to innovate, grow and diversify the economy

Businesses choose where to locate, invest and grow and those decisions create jobs and opportunities. Jurisdictions around the world are competing to attract investment and the latest products, services and innovations. We must accept this reality and get to work to develop an economic development plan that will enable our islands to remain attractive to our businesses and investors. We call for a business environment that allows innovative ideas to come forward to the marketplace which leads to an improvement in the quality and standard of life for all Caymanians and residents.



Growth Matters campaign was recognised by ACCE with a 'Best in Show' award at the ACCE Awards for Communications Excellence and Social Media Campaign Integrated Strategy Award at the IMPACT awards.

Actions:

- Work closely with the Ministry of Economic Development to develop an economic development plan;
- Establish an Economic Development Council comprising representatives from Government and the private sector to develop a long-term strategy to develop a short, medium and long term economic development plan for our islands;
- Advocate for the establishment of an investment promotion agency;
- Continue work on the Economic Growth Matters campaign including the development of a curriculum in the middle schools to educate students about how the economy works as an extension of the Growth Matters Campaign.

...there is a need for a coordinated approach that will involve all stakeholders to establish a national dialogue...

B: Support the development of micro and small businesses

Small businesses are the engine of economic growth. Most local businesses fall into this category and we must do more to help them along the path to success. Government has approved a definition for micro and small businesses and have introduced incentives to support the establishment of new ventures. But there is a need for a coordinated approach that will involve all stakeholders to establish a national dialogue that will produce a plan that addresses the components of the micro and small business development cycle.

Actions:

- Work closely with the Ministry of Commerce and key stakeholders to develop a national plan for the development of the micro and small business sector in the Cayman Islands;
- Establish a Small Business Centre to be coordinated by the Chamber which offers members with business support services and assists the community with the development of start-ups, incubators, business planning and training;
- Introduce the Business Excellence Awards programme to recognise and celebrate best business practices among members.



The Chamber is in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Planning & Infrastructure to deliver free Small Business Workshops.



REGULATORY EFFICIENCIES



The Council meets regularly with elected leaders and government departments to discuss legislation and issues that impact members and the business community.

Why are we doing it?

Cayman Islands businesses want their regulatory requirements to be simple to understand, easy to follow, and effective at getting their intended results. Onerous reporting requirements or slow processes add time and costs, especially for small or new businesses which do not have large administrative resources. Advocacy efforts focus on calling for changes which ensure fair rules, efficient processes and timely decisions.

We will ensure that regulators, politicians and others understand the consequences of their decisions for business and make changes with certainty and stability. In a stable business environment, economic opportunities can expand.

What are we doing?

We advocate for the establishment of a predictable business environment so local businesses can expand. We advocate for making the Cayman Islands an attractive place to do business, so that new companies choose to come here after considering their alternatives. We advocate for effective regulation with predictable timelines so that businesses remain viable and competitive in a global market. In short, we advocate for regulations and systems which allow for good companies to be a vibrant part of the community.

We advocate for the establishment of a predictable business environment so local businesses can expand.

A: Support the reform of labour and business regulatory systems

The results of surveys, forums and discussion groups confirm that members are becoming increasingly frustrated with the regulatory systems that they encounter. Timely delays, protracted processes, unnecessary paperwork and cumbersome payment systems are making business operations much more complicated than it needs to be. The movement of goods, services, people and investment are all essential to good business operations and we need to simplify regulatory systems. When we hear the same concerns from several members, we must act and work with government to reform and improve the systems that unnecessarily slow down the business process.

Actions:

- Work with the Government on performance benchmarks for work permit and planning processes;
- Establish a working group to simplify immigration categories and to make them more equitable in terms of the assessment of fees for micro, small and larger businesses;
- Advocate for fair, efficient and timely review processes at regulatory

agencies (Immigration, Planning, Trade and Business Licencing etc.);

- Support the completion of the prioritized projects in the Project Future report.

B: Encourage and support transition to e-government services

Online services are an integral part of most businesses these days. The Cayman Islands, as a leading service based-economy, must accelerate the migration of public services to online platforms so that businesses and residents can engage seamlessly with the government. We advocate for them to be built and operated in a way that respects and ensures privacy, but improves efficiencies and processes.

Actions:

- Advocate for the continued implementation of new e-government initiatives to provide businesses and the public with efficient e-services;
- Introduce a public initiative to support best ideas in public sector innovation.





Thousands of volunteers take part in the annual Earth Day Clean-up.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Why are we doing it?

Strong communities are the foundation of the Cayman Islands society. We must ensure that all districts share in the economic success and enjoy a good standard of living and quality of life. Creating jobs, keeping our communities' safe, protecting our precious natural resources and addressing the emerging social issues must remain at the forefront of the national agenda. We must take a hard line against crime and support or introduce new initiatives to keep our communities safe and support key infrastructure projects that improve the business climate and the quality of life for all.



Earth Day is one of our signature events, with dozens of businesses supporting the initiative each year.

What are we doing?

We will work with the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service, Government agencies, industry associations, non-Governmental organisations and community groups to improve our communities. We will promote the establishment of community based policing and the creation of additional neighbourhood watch areas. We will also seek the support of our members to pledge rewards that can be used in the event of serious crimes. We support the revitalization of George Town and improving the landscape for pedestrians along the waterfront and installation of sidewalks in public areas so that it is safer and more attractive. We will work with likeminded organisations and businesses to support environmental and green practices that reduce our impact on our precious natural resources. We will promote the adoption of our environmental pledge to schools, businesses and residents and will continue to encourage all residents to participate in beach and land based cleanups to keep our islands clean and green.

A: Support beautification and environmental awareness initiatives

Keeping our islands clean and aware of our precious environmental assets is vital to the success of our islands and the health of the community. Visitors come here to see beautiful, clean beaches and roadways and to snorkel and dive in the aquamarine waters. We advocate and support anti-litter and responsible snorkeling and diving practices. We will support initiatives that protect and restore our precious natural environment. We will promote more responsible environmental practices for businesses, schools and in the home.

Actions:

- Host the annual Earth Day Beach and Roadside Cleanup and support similar initiatives;
- Support efforts to revitalise George Town, particularly along the waterfront, to make the area pedestrian friendly and more appealing for after hour events and residents;
- Initiate a public awareness anti-littering campaign to make residents aware of the detriment that litter has on the environment and the perception of visitors, potential investors and each other;
- Advocate the adoption of the Chamber's Environmental Pledge in schools, businesses and residents.



Fraud Prevention seminars are hosted bi-annually with CIMA and other organisations.

B: Advocate for an increase in crime prevention initiatives

Public safety is essential for the peace of mind and quality of life for any community. In recent years the Cayman Islands has seen a spike in serious and petty crimes that have caused concern among members and residents. Government has invested substantial sums in equipment and resources to the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service but more needs to be done to bolster community policing and crime prevention initiatives. The Chamber is prepared to support the police in these efforts.

Actions:

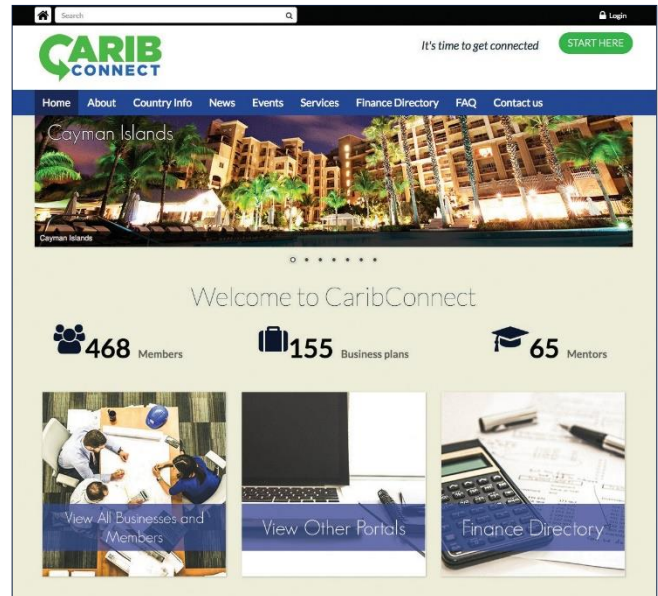
- Advocate for increased policing presence, road traffic fines for speeding and efforts to try to stop smaller crimes from becoming more serious offences;
- Establish a reward system to assist police with obtaining confidential information leading to the arrest and conviction of criminals involved in serious crimes;
- Work with the police to share crime prevention tips and advisories with members and the community;
- Support the introduction of the neighbourhood watch programme in all districts;
- Support the police awards programme to recognise officers.

C: Improve collaboration with industry associations, NGOs and community groups

Addressing the needs of the community requires collaboration. The Cayman Islands is blessed with an abundance of industry associations, non-governmental organisations and community groups. While this is encouraging, there may be duplication of effort, competition for volunteers, resources

Improving communications and collaboration will help to maximise resources and focus on the issues that are of the greatest benefit to the widest audience in our community.

and funds. The Chamber intends to re-establish regular dialogue with industry and professional associations and community groups when specific projects are identified that involve community action. Improving communication and collaboration will help to maximise resources and focus on the issues that are of the greatest benefit to the widest audience in our community.



The Chamber has worked with the EU funded initiative COSME to develop the Carib Connect platform, which provides support to businesses and entrepreneurs in the Cayman Islands and OCTs.

Actions:

- Re-Establish regular dialogue among the industry and professional associations and community groups;
- Seek to partner with other associations and groups for projects and initiatives that are in keeping with the Chamber's mission.





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