

Caymanians 2025

Statement on Caymanians 2025

By Premier Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA

25th November 2019

INTRODUCTION OF CAYMANIANS 2025 INITIATIVE

Fellow Caymanians we all care about the future of the Cayman Islands. Certainly, our future will depend on the decisions and actions that we take today. And so, in 2019 we have options that will create our living realities in 2025 through 2050 and beyond. I believe it is essential for all of us to take part in the debate about Cayman's future. In encouraging you to take part, I recognise that as Premier I have a special responsibility to make sure that you are well-informed about the choices we face and that you are able to get answers to your questions.

Therefore I am today launching a new initiative to get information directly into your hands and to give you the opportunity to get your questions answered. The Government is doing much to ensure that you have the information that you need to take a full part in the national debate. Not least in the current referendum, Cayman has important decisions to make and that is why in addition to the Government's efforts my colleagues and I have put together a resource (independent of Government) to help get the information you need into your hands. It is a mobile app called Caymanians 2025 available on the app stores. It is free and we are working hard to make sure it contains everything you need to know about the decisions that affect you.



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This is an open invitation to everyone in Cayman who feels their questions have not been answered. Ask me now. Ask me by posting on Facebook at Caymanians 2025; send me your questions on twitter at caymanians2025, or simply email me at contact@caymanians2025.com I will answer your questions through the app, through the social media and through a video podcast you will find on the YouTube channel, Caymanians 2025.

Inevitably, at this time, most of the questions being asked focus on the debate about whether Cayman should move forward with building the cruise berthing and enhanced cargo facilities. I hope that as time goes on, we can move on to other important issues that will guide our future. In the meantime, I hope you will agree with me that the referendum is not a matter to take lightly. It's our opportunity to take control over what happens to us today and tomorrow. I don't want any of us to feel we were not prepared to make this decision. Please use the mobile app, use the email, reach out through the social media and get the information you need.

I have framed this being about Cayman in 2025. Why 2025? – this is the timeframe that will see the work or plans started under the two administrations that I have led being fully completed and benefiting Caymanians. This includes:

- ✓ Fully modernised Airport Infrastructure;
- ✓ Major roadworks, including a new public transport system;
- ✓ A vibrant and revitalised George Town;
- ✓ Mental Health facility;
- ✓ Improved Schools infrastructure;
- ✓ Modern and improved education and health systems;
- ✓ A modern waste management system that includes a waste to energy plant;
- ✓ The current landfill capped and remediated;
- ✓ And provided the **Yes** vote wins the referendum, then a cruise and enhanced cargo facility

All of us need to take responsibility for the quality of life we will have in 2025 through to the next generation in 2050. As responsible decision-makers, we can chart a positive and ambitious future for our country based on sound plans for sustainable economic growth. Or we can ignore reality and believe that we can let the status quo remain, hoping for the best.

Therefore, the debate we are having is about more than a port – it is about deciding the direction that our Islands will take on December 19th that will impact upon our next generation. The debate is about whether we want to remain in the cruise tourism business in a major way or are willing to allow this business to diminish over time.

The impact of this decision has a knock-on effect on other things, such as government's finances; entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for Caymanians; maintaining a good standard of living; and yes also whether the reefs around George Town Harbour are in a better or worse condition by 2050 than they are today.

So while the question on the ballot paper in this referendum might be about cruise berthing and enhanced cargo facilities, the question for the country really is whether we still have the confidence in ourselves and in our future to grasp the opportunities before us - the opportunities to start new businesses; the opportunities to improve our world-class cruise tourism product; the opportunity to greatly improve our cargo port; and, yes, the opportunity to show we can deliver a world-leading coral relocation and regeneration programme.

I believe in a strong and prosperous future for Cayman. I believe in opening the door to economic opportunity - not slamming the door on the jobs of the hundreds of Caymanians whose livelihoods depend on cruise visitors. Finally, I believe that the majority of Caymanians believe as I do. The referendum gives them the chance to show their confidence in themselves and in a prosperous future.

The choice facing the people of the Cayman Islands on 19th December is a clear one. We can choose to move forward with building our new cruise berthing and enhanced cargo port facilities. If we do so, we guarantee that cruise ships will continue to bring their visitors to Grand Cayman and in so doing we safeguard existing jobs and create more employment and business opportunities for Caymanians as well as protecting Government revenue.

The enhanced cargo facility will mean that the port can handle bigger ships, and more cargo, more efficiently and this helps drive down the costs of all the goods we import. This redevelopment of our tired and inefficient cargo port can only be funded because it is being linked with our new cruise berths. Cayman can choose to move forward with building our new cruise berthing and enhanced cargo port facilities. *We can and we should choose prosperity.*

On the other hand, *we could choose decline.* We could turn our backs on the redevelopment of our port. As cruise ships grow in size, they will increasingly pass by Cayman on their way to other destinations that have the facilities needed to cope with their passengers. Visitor numbers in Cayman will fall. Caymanians will lose their jobs and their businesses will fail. We could try to make do with cargo facilities that are already too small to meet our current needs, let alone meet the needs of a growing population. But there will be a cost to pay.

We must all, including those opponents who are planning to seek national leadership, accept the responsibility that our decisions will have on the delivery of sustainable living for all Caymanians. All Caymanians must be responsible and participate in the process of making and implementing the right strategic decisions for the well-being of our family, community and country.

All Caymanians by 2025 and beyond must work towards:

Growing the National Economic Pie and Receiving a Larger Economic Share for All Caymanians through:

- Better Paying Jobs
- Support for Caymanian Entrepreneurs to be successful
- Improving the quality of Government Public Goods and Services
- Strong Health Care, Education, Social Services
- A safe society with low crime or the fear of crime

We must also be responsible and compassionate. As Caymanians we love and care for our families, caring for our communities and yes loving and being proud of our country.

I believe in Caymanians. I came into politics because I wanted to help shape the future of our Islands. I still do. The launch of the Caymanians 2025 initiative gives you the opportunity to take part in the debate about what the future might be for the benefit of the next generation of Caymanians. Please join me as we chart Cayman's future course.