



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By:

The Hon. Jason P Hayward, JP, MP

Minister of Economy and Labour

Creation of a National Workforce Advisory Board and Amendments to the National Training Board Act 1997

Friday, December 2nd, 2022

Good morning **Mr. Speaker**,

I am excited to share with this Honourable House the Ministry of Economy and Labour's intention to establish a new Workforce Development Advisory Board that will carry out the critical leadership function of the Workforce Development Plan. In addition the Ministry's intention to amend the National Training Board Act 1997 (the Act) to narrow the scope of the National Training Board, so that it may provide attention specifically to skilled trades, the administration of national certifications and the promotion of apprenticeship programmes.

Mr. Speaker,

The purpose of the Bermuda National Workforce Development Plan which was drafted in 2018, was to lay the foundation for a 21st century

workforce development system. A system that better aligns with education and economic development organizations in order to create a collective response to labour market challenges with a primary aim to connect people with jobs.

Mr. Speaker,

One of the recommendations of the Plan was for the National Training Board to be divided into two entities. One entity involves the creation of a new Workforce Development Advisory Board. The purpose of this Board is two-fold, one, to enhance strategic interaction between workforce development system entities and the business community, and two, to effectively advise the Minister responsible for Labour on a workforce development strategy for Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker,

The new Workforce Development Advisory Board will lead the efforts to engage a diverse range of employers and entities in Bermuda and will carry out the critical leadership function of the Workforce Development Plan.

Mr. Speaker,

The National Workforce Advisory Board will be specifically designed to:

- Develop effective linkages (including the use of intermediaries) with employers in Bermuda to support employer utilization of the

workforce development system and to support local workforce investment activities;

- Ensure that workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers and support economic development in Bermuda; and to
- Develop proven strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers.

Mr. Speaker,

One of the most important strengths of the Board will be private sector representation. These members will play a key role in helping the Board to understand the needs of their industries and make connections with other business leaders in the community. The Board will also include representatives from the Government, the unions, and the Bermuda College.

These stakeholder partners will be largely responsible for overseeing the implementation of the National Workforce Development Plan, developing a clear vision for career pathways and providing strategic advice directly to the Minister of Economy and Labour.

Mr. Speaker,

Having the Board provide strategic advice directly to the Minister will ensure that the Government operates in sync with the workforce stakeholders and that workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers and support economic development in Bermuda.

Considering the current state of unemployment in Bermuda, the creation and work of a National Workforce Advisory Board will be critical to ensuring increased employment within the Bermuda workforce.

Mr. Speaker,

This Government believes that upgrading the skills of Bermuda's labour force through a solid workforce development plan is critical to our long-term prospect for broad-based and inclusive economic growth. It is not enough just to create more jobs; Bermudians must be given a fair shot at the opportunities that exist today. Preparing Bermudians with skills to enter the job market is a key step in getting our people employed.

Furthermore, given the need for people to become qualified to work in trades and other industries, it has become evident that the NTB's current functions do not allow it to provide the necessary attention to developing skilled tradespersons, the administration of national certifications or to promote the apprenticeship programmes.

Mr. Speaker,

Amendments to the National Training Board Act 1997 would provide for a newly named National Certification and Apprenticeship Board that would strategically focus on skilled trades, certifications and apprenticeships. In addition to its current functions, the following will be added to its list of responsibilities:

- Producing a national register (central database) of tradesmen, both for designated and non-designated trades;

- Draft a comprehensive Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (PLAR/RPL) policy to formally frame a process for this means of assessment;
- Update and streamline the national certification process; and
- Policy Ratification: The implementation of a synergistic document between the Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Immigration that enacts policies specifically designed to address the problem of work permit holders registering for various industries.

The remaining functions will be removed as follows:

- Establishment, management and supervision of a National Training Centre; and
- Determining the mission, strategic direction and priorities of the National Training Centre and its performance goals.

Mr. Speaker,

The Ministry recognizes the importance of a Board responsible for certifications and training having clearly defined functions. This clarity of functions will enable the establishment and delivery of apprenticeship education programs, the issuance of national certification credentials and the governance of skilled trades in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker,

It is critically important to have a National Workforce System for which the primary aim is to connect people with jobs. This National Workforce Development Plan will provide the opportunities to prepare Bermudians with the requisite skills to enter the job market and introduce our young people to the world of work. The Creation of a National Workforce Advisory Board and amendment to the functions of the National

Training Board is a significant step to progressing Bermuda toward achieving those aims.

Thank you **Mr. Speaker.**