



**Ministerial Statement**  
by

**The Honorable Vance Campbell JP MP**

**The State of Tourism Q3 2022**

Friday, October 7, 2022

*The State of Tourism*

**Mr. Speaker**, as we look back at the third quarter of 2022, Bermuda has seen momentum build after two years of a decimated global tourism industry. By the end of August, Bermuda welcomed over **98,000** air visitors to the island. While we are seeing growth, year-over-year, we have not yet achieved the volumes of 2019. The Bermuda Tourism Authority projects Bermuda's year-end visitor volume to be approximately **56% of 2019**.

**Mr. Speaker**, some tourism measures have exceeded 2019 figures. Per person spending by air leisure visitors was up by **32%** this summer. This means that today's leisure visitor provides more value to the economy. More is being spent in Bermuda's hotels, shops, and businesses at **\$2,030 per person** than they did individually in 2019 when each air leisure visitor spent **\$1,534 on average**. The **average length of stay** year to date shows that Bermuda's leisure visitors are booking vacations that are **11% longer** than in 2019.

The vacation rental category connects a wide cross-section of Bermudians with a new category of visitors looking to explore Bermuda from a local vantage point. It has been a vital shot in the arm to a segment of locals looking to play a part in tourism and earn extra income during challenging times. Significantly, occupancy in the vacation rental sector has grown more than **13%** over 2019 measures through the end of August.

**Mr. Speaker**, cruise travel is a critical revenue earner for Bermuda's tourism economy. Bermuda has enjoyed a strong cruise season, with **116** cruise calls to Bermuda by mid-September. The team at the BTA projects cruise visitor volumes up to **400K** passengers **contributing \$162 Million** to the economy. As the pandemic has waned, Bermuda has relaxed some of the stringent

requirements for travellers. Unvaccinated travellers are now being allowed to travel to Bermuda with some testing requirements currently in place. And the industry has been energised by news of more welcome changes to come.

**Mr. Speaker,** airlift and hotel capacity have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Hotel inventory has proven to be a limiting factor in the island's bid to restore air capacity. So, the growth of our hotel bed count is a pressing need for tourism's recovery. It is a challenging environment, however there are some promising developments on the hotel front. Azura hotel has announced that it will complete its final phase of construction this Fall, and that its second property Nautilus is progressing well with a sold-out phase one, and hotel opening slated for 2024. The Bermudian Beach Hotel, a Tapestry Resort by Hilton is set to add **110** much-needed hotel rooms into inventory in 2023. Likewise, Rosedon Hotel, which has developed an award-winning sustainable farm-to-table culinary model at the property's restaurant, will reopen its boutique hotel next year with twelve luxury rooms. Cambridge Beaches has invested in renovations to the property and the opening of new food and beverage outlets.

Mr. Speaker, the Fairmont Southampton deal continues to move towards finalization with all parties working through final documentation in the knowledge that this redevelopment represents the single most important 'game changer' on so many fronts in tourism.

### ***Local Engagement***

**Mr. Speaker,** The Bermuda Tourism Authority cites local engagement as a key pillar of the country's National Tourism Plan. This summer, the Loren Hotel resurrected its annual Celebrity Chef Summer Culinary series. The South Shore property featured Ghanaian American celebrity chef, Eric Adjepong, and Chef Tiffany Derry for fully subscribed culinary experiences for our visitors by incorporating a community engagement component. In partnership with the team at the BTA, The Loren and the world-famous chefs created intimate learning experiences with young Bermudians interested in a career in the culinary arts. Chef Eric hosted a *Chopped*-style experience for a dozen young boys aged 13-18. These young men were from the Bermuda Government Summer Day Camp programmes and were introduced to the basics of food preparation, presented with a mystery basket of ingredients, and instructed to collaborate with their fellow participants to produce a dish using the available tools and ingredients. Similarly, Chef Tiffany Derry spent an afternoon sharing the joys of a career in the culinary arts with a group of young women from summer camps around the island. I wish to thank the team at The Loren for creating an opportunity to show the potential of a career in hospitality.

**Mr. Speaker,** On World Tourism Day BTA celebrated sustainability with the theme **ReThink Tourism**. The Authority launched a supporting social campaign recognizing faces in tourism outside the traditional realm whose work contributed to sustainability and an eco-conscious approach to hospitality. The Bermuda public can expect more communications that will showcase unexpected ways that locals can engage and participate in the tourism sector in alignment with the National Tourism Plan.

## ***Maritime Strategy - Yachts & Superyachts***

**Mr. Speaker**, the organisation's maritime strategy has already exceeded 2022 targets as of August. A critical component of our maritime strategy has been the growth of the Superyacht segment. The strategic integrated marketing partnerships initiated in 2021 have positioned Bermuda to make significant inroads in increasing awareness and engagement with the superyacht industry.

Since 2020, Bermuda's focus on attracting superyachts has created opportunities for growth. Bermuda has welcomed **79** superyacht calls to date in 2022 (**37** 2021). Superyachts can have a significant impact on any local economy with expenditure on berthing, fuel, maintenance, and supplies as well as onshore spending by crew and guests. Through August 2022, \$3.0M (\$1.1M 2021) in economic impact has been realized from superyachts in Bermuda.

## ***Bermuda's Entertainment Sector***

**Mr. Speaker**, historically, Bermuda's entertainment sector has always represented an exciting, memorable part of Bermuda's tourism product. The BTA has made 2022 the starting point for revitalising and investing in Bermuda's entertainment product. The government collaborated with the Authority to invite tourism entrepreneurs and promoters to provide unique, culturally authentic entertainment experiences. The Great Sound Entertainment Series was launched in August featuring local entertainment showcases including a revival of the popular Made in Bermuda Nights series. Bermuda's entertainers, whose livelihoods were adversely impacted by COVID-induced lockdowns, restrictions, and the drop in visitor arrivals, are finally beginning to see more opportunities.

**Mr. Speaker**, with BTA-sponsored events and grant programmes for qualified experiences, this administration is committed to providing a boost to local entertainment. We salute the local promoters and business owners for their role in creating opportunities to enjoy Bermuda's culture with weekly musical lineups around the island.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Government is proud of the support it has provided for live entertainment through the Great Sound Entertainment Series. The Saturdays at Woody's series wrapped up last weekend with a stellar performance by one of Bermuda's most prolific creators of original Bermudian music, Arijahknow Live Wires and The Kings Band. The series included performances by some of our most talented bands including Hindsight, Working Title, Paradise Band and more. This weekend the Great Sound Entertainment series concludes with the inaugural Swizzle Festival in Barr's Bay Park.

## ***The Brand Campaign***

The Bermuda Tourism Authority has launched a high-impact, visually appealing brand campaign titled '*Lost Yet Found.*' The campaign leverages themes of 'authenticity and curiosity' that shifts the narrative about who and what Bermuda is. The creative strategy was developed based on industry data, and targeted research identifying specific decision-making drivers for the country's target visitor. They will be using all media platforms to tell and share stories about the breadth and

depth of Bermuda and her people. Bermuda's new advertising campaign is live in households around the world and has already had 5.2 million views due to strategic advertising placements. The campaign is ongoing and early performance numbers are outperforming historical brand performance metrics. The BTA has created a mobile booth experience that will draw in prospective Bermuda visitors that will launch towards the end of this month in highly visible locations in Miami, New York, and Boston. Lastly, Bermuda will launch an in-airport campaign targeting holiday travelers in Philadelphia and Charlotte. The campaign is a data-driven tool to entice visitors to the island. That is why the BTA's marketing includes ongoing study and analysis of the campaign impact, and reach including tools to also measure overall consumer sentiment toward the new campaign.

### ***Public Relations & Communications – USA, Canada & UK***

The distribution report for the 'Lost Yet Found' announcement, which lead with the headline, "Bermuda's Lost Yet Found Campaign Lures Visitors for a Deep Dive into the Destination's Unique Culture" was well received and had a combined audience of **89.5 million** through **110 pieces of coverage to date**.

### ***The People***

Our people will be the engine driving the revitalisation of tourism in Bermuda, **Mr. Speaker**. And the team at the Bermuda Tourism Authority has been aggressively focused on that aim. The organisation has been restructured to achieve the goals of the Tourism Strategic Recovery Plan. Under Ms. Berkeley's leadership, the Authority has made progress on staffing gaps with the appointment and promotion of qualified, experienced professionals to several key posts in the marketing and sales divisions.

### ***Events and Experiences -Q4 – What's on Deck***

**Mr. Speaker**, After a robust calendar of events in July, August, and September that saw entertainment, sporting, and group events as well as a rebound in leisure, business, and wedding travel, Bermuda will see a solid calendar for the next few months as part of our strategy to attract year-round visitation. Building year-round business is a vital part of the National Tourism Plan and is key to attracting and retaining an engaged workforce, driving visitor spending, and building the case for more airlift year-round. The BTA supports sporting, culinary, entertainment, group, and cultural events which will either attract visitors or entertain those already on island. The calendar is built out through a combination of BTA-led, BTA-sponsored events and existing on-island events that the Authority promotes on its channels.

**Mr. Speaker**, October began with the City of Hamilton's hugely successful Taste of Bermuda event, and the finale of the Government-supported Great Sound Entertainment Series. It continues with the Department of Community and Culture's Bermuda International Gombey Festival. Sports events such as the Rugby World Classic, the PGA Tour, Butterfield Bermuda Championship, APGA Tournament, and the PGA Magazine Lyles Foundation event, and Bermuda International

Gig Championship are expected to attract hundreds of visitors to Bermuda for a post-summer boost in visitor arrivals.

The Bermuda Festival of the Performing Arts returns on November 4 and Dame Flora Duffy returns to compete on home soil for the World Triathlon Series. The Loren Hotel will be hosting a culinary festival, the Food Harvest Journey, which celebrates Bermuda's culinary heritage and highlights Bermudian artisans, farmers, fishers, and local food stars. Bermuda is invited to the BTA Tourism Summit on November 18 which will be an opportunity for tourism stakeholders to come together with the Bermuda Tourism Authority to explore the future of tourism in Bermuda, learn about upcoming initiatives, get training, and network with industry players.

### ***Conclusion***

### ***Strategic Recovery***

**Mr. Speaker**, we are at a critical juncture in our efforts to reverse losses incurred by the pandemic. The Bermuda tourism strategic recovery plan has been the guiding document for the men and women of the Authority who work each day to restore the industry.

Rebuilding the tourism sector is a non-negotiable exercise and the BTA team is committed to the effort. I would like to encourage those who have just joined the sector, and those who have been serving in critical roles on the tourism frontlines and the back-of-house for many years, to continue in this effort to renew tourism for Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker**, I would like to commend the resourcefulness of all who have played a part in keeping this essential industry on the path to recovery.

In closing, **Mr. Speaker**, I would like to salute the dedicated BTA staff, Board of Directors, and their Industry Partners who work diligently towards the success of this Country's vital economic pillar. I encourage everyone to lend your support to the work being done to rebuild this critical economic sector.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.