

■ Bermuda premier:

Economy on right track

■ HAMILTON

PREMIER David Burt said yesterday that Bermuda's economy is moving in the right direction 'during an uncertain time' in the world, and that his administration is continuing to honour its obligations to population, while undertaking strong financial control.

Addressing a post-budget news conference, Burt told reporters that the economy of the British overseas territory, while not perfect, is nonetheless 'moving in the right direction'.

Burt said the 2025 fiscal package made it possible for the government to invest significantly in public services, social spending, health, housing, transportation, education, security and infrastructure.

Benefit to cost of living

'These investments represent a deliberate strategy to strengthen Bermuda's physical and digital infrastructure, improved service delivery and ensure that the island is well positioned for continued long-term economic and social resilience,' Burt said, adding that his administration is continuing to deliver targeted tax relief that benefits families and businesses, and which will ultimately impact the cost of living.

He said among the interventions from January 1, 2026 the base rate on land tax will be reduced by 50% from US\$300 to US\$150 and that from April 1, the government made further reductions, such as to the private car licensing fee, which will decrease by 10%.

Burt said the combination of the reductions will save the average family US\$1,000 a year and adds to other benefits such as reductions in customs duties and payroll taxes. He said in this year's budget, US\$53.6 million was allocated for the Cabinet Office, an increase of US\$4 million when compared to last year.

Burt said that the additional funding is to provide support, through US\$975,000 in funding, to digital transformation to improve online services throughout the government while making more use of artificial intelligence to improve service delivery to residents.

Funding to boost the Department of Information and Digital Technology, the Department of Planning and expansion of the public service bursary programme is covered by the allocation.

'These additional investments for the cabinet office are laser-focused on improving the delivery of government services while investing in training and development for the future of the public service.

'The data in this year's budget speaks for itself. We are not where we were-we are no longer in recovery mode. The progress is here today, thanks to this government's sound economic and financial management. We are stronger, more stable and well positioned for a brighter future.'

Last weekend, the shadow finance minister Douglas De Couto said the government was taking credit for the economic growth that was driven by international business.

'Sound economic management'

But Burt said the government had received 'zero credit' for maintaining a strong international business sector over the years, recalling that in 2017, the sector was affected by US tax cuts and later, by other factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

'The reality is that it is because of this government's sound economic management, working with the private sector and with the regulators continuing to promote Bermuda's international business sector overseas, that we have seen this growth,' Burt told reporters.

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