



Cabinet Office

Ministerial Statement

By

The Hon. Michael H. Dunkley, JP, MP.
Premier and Minister of National Security

The Statistics Amendment Act 2015

15th May, 2015

Mr. Speaker,

I rise to announce that I have, today, tabled in this Honourable House a bill entitled the Statistics Amendment Act 2015.

This bill is intended to amend Section 5 of the Statistics Act 2002 to provide the Government with the ability to conduct future censuses of population and housing from time to time. Honourable Members should note that this amendment is consistent with the wording of Section 1 of the United Kingdom's Census Act 1920 which states: “... *it shall be lawful for his Majesty by Order in Council from time to time to direct that a census shall be taken for Great Britain*”

Mr. Speaker,

Section 5(1) of the Statistics Act 2002 currently requires that a census of the population of Bermuda be taken in the year 2010 and every fifth year thereafter. This amendment was incorporated to facilitate more accurate planning by capturing changes more frequently. However, the benefit of obtaining more frequent data comes at a significant cost currently estimated at 1.7 million dollars.

Mr. Speaker,

Honourable Members will be aware that the 2015/ 2016 budget was a difficult one as we had to prioritise the urgent needs of the community while, at the same time, further reducing our deficit. Therefore it was determined that deferring the Census in 2015 would allow the Government to allocate the funds to more pressing initiatives.

In addition, postponing the Census would allow the Department of Statistics more time to conduct further investigations into new on-line data collection initiatives. Historically, data collection in Bermuda's censuses involved person-to-person interviews only. In the 2010 Census, the Department of Statistics introduced telephone interviewing as a data collection method.

Mr. Speaker,

The total cost incurred to conduct the 2010 Census amounted to 2.9 million dollars. Seventy-two percent (72%) was attributed to the recruitment of temporary staff, of which forty-six percent (46%) was paid to temporary field workers; twenty-six percent (26%) was paid to temporary census clerical workers. The remaining twenty-eight percent (28%) of the total cost was incurred for publicity and awareness; training of census workers, facility rental to house the temporary staff; census supplies; printing; and equipment maintenance.

The quote of 1.7 million dollars for the now deferred 2015 Census represents a reduction of 1.2 million dollars from the 2010 Census. The estimated decrease resulted from: (1) a reduction in the number of questions that would be asked in the interim census; and (2) the increased investment in technology that would reduce the total cost allocated to hiring field workers and clerical workers. The Department of Statistics intends to continue to explore technological solutions in order to streamline the data collection process and reduce the cost even further.

Mr. Speaker,

I would like to assure Honourable Members that the delay of the census will not be indefinite. In fact, the Government is committing to conduct a census in

the 2016/17 financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I must applaud the Department of Statistics for their continued efforts in exploring cost-effective data collection options to realise savings and increase efficiency.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**