



THE PROGRESSIVES

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

For Love of Country

Hon Roy McTaggart - Remarks at the Progressives National Council Meeting

August 10, 2024

My Progressives Family, thank you so much for coming out tonight.

With the election just eight months away, our preparations are in full swing.

Tonight, you've witnessed some of the fruits of our labour. It was exciting to see that the insights from our focus groups and the data from our comprehensive door-to-door survey have provided us with a solid foundation for the road ahead.

It was incredibly affirming to see concrete evidence of something we believed: the Progressives have maintained our **solid base support**, even sitting in opposition.

Many people, including civil servants, regularly tell us how much they miss our style of governance. This is not just nostalgia—it indicates the trust and confidence they place in us. But it is also the frustration that so many feel about the present government's failings.

Let there be no doubt: our country desperately needs a Progressive government. The polls speak volumes: **our people overwhelmingly favour Progressive leadership.**

The polls unequivocally confirmed what we've known: most Caymanians believe that the PACT/UPM government of Independents has not served our country well. They know what we all do - the country is going in the wrong direction.

The people have said the PACT experiment of assembling a dozen so-called independents and hoping for a coherent, cohesive, and capable government has failed. This Government's chaotic approach to governance has not delivered the progress our country deserves. This is not, nor



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has it ever been, a unified government making decisions in the national interest. It is a collection of individuals who focus more on their interests and getting re-elected than what's good for the country.

Their accomplishments are sparse, and their list of failures is long.

In stark contrast, **the Progressives stand united with a shared vision for a better Cayman and a record of achievement in Government.**

Under this government, Caymanian families are suffering through a cost-of-living crisis, which the Government failed to see coming and responded to far too slowly. We warned that record inflation would hurt families and businesses. We offered solutions that would help our people. But our concerns and suggestions were dismissed. We did not quit – we persisted until we forced them to take some action – but they did not do enough.

In the meantime, living standards tumbled as unchecked immigration outpaced our sluggish economic growth. Our once-thriving cruise tourism sector was neglected, leaving jobs, businesses, and livelihoods in ruins. We fought for those Caymanian jobs in opposition and will fight hard to get them back when we are the Government again.

Housing demand has gone through the roof, along with house prices and rents, with insufficient action from this Government to provide affordable housing solutions. Despite Progressives' motions in Parliament that offered new ideas the Government could use to help ease the housing crisis, don't worry—after next April, a new Progressives government will get it done.

Crime, especially violent crime, is escalating – with people living in fear. At the same time, the RCIPS are forced to redeploy frontline neighbourhood police officers away from their communities to tackle the serious crime epidemic. Meanwhile, the anti-gang strategy that we know can make a difference, but it languishes in the depths of the government bureaucracy. Progressives Help is on the way.

A long list of crucial national projects is endlessly postponed or abandoned as Ministers focus on their vanity projects.



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The much-needed long-term residential mental health facility is stuck in three years of delays and excuses.

Project ReGen, which would have turned garbage into energy, enhanced recycling, and reduced our reliance on unsustainable landfills, has been badly mismanaged by both the PACT and UPM Governments and then abruptly discarded without any alternative plan. Bodden Town, watch out. There may be a landfill coming your way.

The promised modern public transport system has gone nowhere while the project is shuffled between Ministers like a hot potato.

Work on the National Development Plan is needlessly delayed.

Progress on improving education standards stalled as the Government failed to follow through on improving the quality of teaching.

No wonder Caymanians believe this failed experiment in a Government of Independents must not be repeated.

This upcoming election is not just a routine choice; it's a pivotal decision that will shape the future of all three Cayman Islands. It's a choice of what kind of government you want but also a decision on what kind of country you want.

Over the past three years, we have proven our mettle as an opposition, consistently holding this chaotic government accountable while offering sound advice and practical solutions.

We have tirelessly advocated for the well-being of Caymanian families, leading the charge for reductions in duty for first-time homebuyers and championing increased assistance for pensioners and those in need.

But our country now needs more from the Progressives. It is crying out for the return of a strong and visionary Progressives Government—a government that once transformed our Islands and can do so again.

Our track record speaks for itself, and now, more than ever, our Islands need our leadership to navigate the challenges ahead and seize the opportunities that await us.



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From 2013 through 2021, Progressive governments rebuilt our economy and cut Caymanian unemployment by more than half, as more than 3,000 Caymanians found employment before the Pandemic, proving our commitment to creating jobs and opportunities for our people. During the COVID-19 crisis, we prioritised the safety and well-being of our citizens, extending vital support to families and businesses when they needed it most.

We have always believed that economic growth and environmental stewardship go hand in hand. Under our leadership, we passed the National Conservation Act in 2013 and approved the most significant expansion of the marine park systems in over 30 years in 2019.

The Progressives Government has always been at the forefront of building the essential infrastructure and institutions that our country needs. We delivered the new airport that others merely talked about for many years, and we initiated and planned the vital roadworks that this current Government has simply continued. Without the foundation we laid, they would have accomplished even less. We merged customs and immigration into a cohesive Border Control agency, created the Regiment, Coast Guard, and made significant investments in policing and crime prevention.

No political entity has done more to modernise our Constitution than the Progressives. We have been relentless in advancing constitutional protections and advancement for our Islands, as led by Sir Alden.

From engaging with the BBC Hardtalk program to representing our cause in major world capitals, the Progressives, under Sir Alden's leadership, fought tirelessly for our country and economy - going wherever we had to go.

Over eight years in government, we managed our resources with vision and prudence without resorting to new borrowing or imposing new taxes. We built surpluses and replenished the country's reserves while increasing assistance to those in need, including the retired seafarers whose hall we are using tonight. Under our stewardship, economists hailed the Cayman Islands as the best-run country in the Caribbean.



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Our legacy is one of wise economic and fiscal management, a deep commitment to our people and the environment, and the building of robust infrastructure. These are the Progressives' enduring achievements, and I am immensely proud of all we have accomplished together.

Our country stands at a crossroads and requires the effective leadership only a Progressives Government can provide. We offer a proven track record and are the best choice compared to any political group, including those with no experience in governance and driven by a few wealthy individuals pushing their agenda. The country does not need another PACT government in new, shiny clothing; it requires the tested leadership and dedication of the Progressives.

We are ambitious about our country's future and are committed to demonstrating that we can achieve our goals through a well-crafted, actionable government program. This program will address the challenges we face and leverage the talents and creativity of Caymanians to seize the opportunities ahead.

Knowing what needs to be done is only part of the answer; the other part is having a capable team. My friends, leadership is essential. We need continuity and fresh perspectives.

That is why, after careful reflection, I have decided to step aside as Leader of the Progressives at our upcoming party conference in January. The time is right for a new leader to guide us toward the 2025 General Election and beyond. I am incredibly proud of our accomplishments during my time as Leader of this great Party and as Leader of the Opposition. Now, it's time for a new chapter.

I am excited to announce tonight that I will nominate my deputy, MP Joey Hew, as my successor as the Progressives Political Leader at our party conference in January. His readiness to lead fills me with confidence. I am happy to announce his agreement to serve.



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I know you will find Joey capable of guiding us to victory, as I do, and I trust you will elect him as our new political leader at our conference in January. Until then, I remain dedicated to serving as your Party Leader.

Succession planning is vital, and I've always put our Islands and our Party above my personal ambitions. Thus, I will also step down as Leader of the Opposition at our next meeting of Parliament and I will support Joey Hew as my successor. This will enable him to assume a public leadership role before the Party Conference and the general election. Importantly, all the Progressives' elected members support this transition.

Joey has the ideas and vision we need to drive the country forward and the ability to work effectively with his political colleagues, civil servants, and private sector partners, and the dedication and capacity for hard work that the position of Premier demands.

Fellow Progressives, I know you will give Joey Hew your whole-hearted support as he takes on the mantle of Leader of the Opposition and at the Conference to support and vote for him as our next Progressives party leader.

We will bring together a team of candidates capable of winning in every constituency we contest, and capable of governing together in the country's best interests. I intend to be a part of that team and to represent my people again in George Town East.

To support him, we will bring quality fresh talent and new ideas to our team while retaining the skills and experience of those who know how to deliver effective Government. I intend to be a part of that team, to represent my people again in George Town East, and to serve under Premier Hew in whatever capacity I can be most effective.

We are all excited about the prospect of returning a Progressives government next April. It is what the country needs.

As I reflect on my time as leader, I am filled with gratitude for the support and dedication each of you has shown. The strength of our party lies in our shared vision and our ability to work



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collaboratively for the good of all Caymanians. This unity will be our guiding light as we move forward, ensuring that the Progressives continue to be a force for positive change and progress in our country.

I am also thankful for the support of my wife and family. I am greatly appreciative of the support of those who work with me, Sharon, Roy T, Kieran, Robert, and Sarah.

To my elected Progressives colleagues—Kurt, Sir Alden, Moses, Barbara, David, and Joey—we have done much good work together, and I am proud that we continue to stand together, united by our commitment to the Cayman Islands and driven by the values that define us as Progressives. Together, we will overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and build a future that we can all continue to be proud of.

Thank you, my Progressives family and friends, for your unwavering support and dedication.

Together, we will lead the way to a better Cayman Islands.

Thank you.

~ENDS~