

World Maritime Day 2026

Statement from Premier and Minister for Financial Services and Commerce

Honourable André M. Ebanks, MP

Our country has always been connected to the sea. World Maritime Day 2026 falls on Thursday, 24 September. That connection remains fundamental to our economy, our communities and our way of life. The maritime sector enables the movement of food, fuel and essential goods, supports international trade and tourism, provides employment and business opportunities, and contributes to the resilience and security of our Islands.

This year's theme, **"From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence,"** is particularly meaningful for the Cayman Islands as we implement the newly structured Cayman Islands Maritime Governance Framework.

The plan represents an important step towards establishing a clear, coordinated and forward-looking framework for our maritime sector. It recognises that a strong maritime jurisdiction requires more than sound legislation and regulation. Our overarching ambition is to achieve and maintain compliance with the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), position the Cayman Islands among the world's leading maritime administrations, and maximise the opportunities presented by the blue economy.

The new structure is led by the National Maritime Council (NMC), supported by the National Maritime Steering Committee (NMSC), and includes five operational subgroups. Together, these provide a clear hierarchy with defined roles for ministerial oversight, strategic coordination and operational delivery. The NMC sets strategic direction at the ministerial level; the NMSC coordinates policy and compliance across agencies; and the operational subgroups undertake focused work across key maritime areas. All three tiers are supported by the National Maritime Affairs Secretariat (NMAS) which is the central coordination point for III Code compliance, audit readiness, maritime advice and cross-agency communications. This governance structure is designed to support delivery of the five strategic pillars set out in the National Maritime Strategy 2025–2030.

This is how we move from policy to practice, by strengthening collaboration across Government and industry, investing in our people and infrastructure, and ensuring that our maritime framework continues to meet the demands of a changing global landscape.

We must continue to uphold high standards of maritime safety, environmental protection and regulatory compliance, while fostering an environment that supports innovation, investment and the sustainable growth of maritime activity. The strength of our maritime sector depends on our ability to work together, share expertise and turn our commitments into measurable results.

I want to recognise the dedicated men and women who keep our maritime sector operating every day. From those working aboard vessels and in our ports to our regulators, enforcement officers, emergency responders and other maritime professionals, your expertise and commitment are essential to the safety and prosperity of our Islands.

As we observe World Maritime Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to moving **from policy to practice** and building a maritime sector that is ready to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead.