



Falkland Islands
Chamber of Commerce

Falkland Islands General Election 2025



Friday 31st October 2025

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Dear Candidates,

The Falkland Islands Chamber of Commerce and other business representative groups welcome candidates who have joined the election process and wish you all well in your campaign. The purpose of this document is to help you understand what the business community will be looking for in candidates, and the issues we hope to see reflected in election manifestos and your commitments for the future.

Our responsibility is to ensure those considering standing for election appreciate just how critical the continued success of the business community is to the economy and to our way of life. In that context, it is only fitting that we set out our vision for what we expect the next government to achieve and question how they will continue to encourage the sustainable development of our economy.

The Chamber is concerned that the role and importance of private sector business in the economy of the Falkland Islands has not been fully understood by elected members recently. To a large extent, it has been taken for granted, with an assumption that the Government can keep taking more to fund new social projects. Candidates will need to understand the structure of our business community, and that we have many small and developing businesses, with few large ones. Small companies will grow with encouragement and sound policy decisions, but their development is fragile and far from certain. The government needs to take the time to carefully consider decisions and understand the consequences of their actions on businesses. We are happy to share the issues we will consider important in assessing candidates for election in December.

We will be looking for those candidates with a clear understanding of the Constitutional structure of the Islands, who demonstrate that they understand the differing roles and responsibilities between the three pillars of Government: Legislative, Executive and Judicial. In particular, we will be seeking assurance from candidates of a clear understanding of the difference between Legislative and Executive branches and the representative responsibilities of elected members to their constituents, including businesses. MLAs are not elected to represent the interests of the public service exclusively, but all interests in society.

It is essential that candidates are able to show an understanding of the economy, how it works, and the pivotal role of the business community in creating the wealth of the country. Not all candidates will be expected to have a complete understanding of the fishing, tourism, agriculture, retail, construction and services sectors, but we will be looking for a willingness to listen and learn, and to take proper account of the views of those who create the country's wealth.

In particular, we will be interested in candidates' views on support for sustainable development and diversification of sources of income to the Islands, their analysis of what they think this means, and how it will be achieved. This requires an open mind and a willingness to properly consider and weigh any new developments' economic, social, and environmental impacts. Hydrocarbons and aquaculture are current examples, and we are eager to hear how candidates inform their decision making before making up their minds.

Anticipated decisions in relation to the development of the Sea Lion oil field creates a huge opportunity for the Falkland Islands, as well as a series of risks and challenges for the business community and wider society. We will be keen to understand how candidates view this transformational opportunity, and how the benefits can be maximised for the greatest benefit.

The smooth and efficient delivery of Government services is critical to the effective and efficient working of all elements of the private sector. We will be looking for candidates who clearly understand this, and who we believe will have the capability to hold the executive to account for the quality of service delivery. This is particularly important in education & training, ensuring that the system we have in place is appropriate for the Falkland Islands, and delivers what the country needs.

The business community will be looking for candidates who can analyse expenditure and adopt a balanced and realistic approach to both capital and operating expenditure. The effects of over-spending are all too evident, causing considerable disruption to resource supply and service delivery.

Adequate labour supply, underpinned by a balanced and appropriate immigration strategy and workforce development strategy, will be at the core of our future ability to deliver continued economic success. This economic success enables us, as a community, to provide the levels of service to which we have become accustomed. We will be looking for candidates who clearly understand the critical priorities in maintaining a thriving business community and, therefore, a prosperous economy.

All countries and communities require regulation and protection for the most vulnerable in society. We will be assessing candidates for election on their ability to take a balanced view on social programmes and future regulation, and who properly understand the effects of excessive regulation on the ability of businesses to perform.

The rest of this document sets out some - but not all - of the areas our members have highlighted as being a priority to them, and we hope you find it helpful. We thank you for your time in considering our views and would welcome a discussion at any time to clarify or expand on any matters.

Yours Sincerely,

The Falkland Islands Chamber of Commerce Board,
on behalf of our membership.

Workforce, Education and Immigration

A Long-Term Labour Strategy

The last assembly failed to deliver on the Islands Plan objective to create a long-term labour force strategy for the Islands, which is sorely lacking. The new government needs to quickly understand the issues surrounding the labour capacity of the Islands, develop an appropriate strategy, and commit to action in a short time frame. If the Falklands are to make maximum benefit from the hydrocarbons industry and create lasting legacies more human capital will be required at all levels, and we need to address this collectively with clear focus. The substantial FIG Capital programme creates even further demand.

Linking Education & Our Labour Force

We all prefer to see demand for labour and skills filled from within. This requires an approach to post FICS education and training that meets these needs as far as possible. The current approach led by the Skills Assessment Council maintains a "Workforce Shortage List" that identifies where we have more demand than the ability to provide specific skilled and unskilled labour. In recent years this has grown to contain all jobs and is no longer fit for purpose.

Candidates will need to understand the Islands current and future skills needs and commit to setting the work of the Education Department to ensure the skills we need in the future will be met from within wherever possible. The College needs to be more interactive with the private sector, and deliver a better service to apprentices, and provide apprenticeships through both private and public sectors that reflect the needs of the community.

Removal of Barriers to Import Labour

Not all new demand will be able to be met locally, and employers in the Falklands, right now, lack enough employees to deliver even their core services. For our economy to continue to grow we need to reduce the risk to small businesses seeking to expand their workforce. Barriers to the import of labour need to be removed where safe to do so, with a more realistic and strategic approach to management of risk.

We want to see candidates commit to making this process easier for both employers and employees, to be able to deliver all of the demands for the commercial and public sectors.

Housing and Land

Encouraging Supply to Meet Demand

The Islands needs more housing than it currently has, resulting in rents rising swiftly. The government has a limited strategy for dealing with this lack of supply, but we want to see

candidates committing to prioritising actions that will directly increase this supply, rather than implementing additional regulations that are likely to disincentivise development.

Streamlining Access to Serviced Land

The government has done well to develop additional housing in the last few years across Sapper Hill. However, there needs to be a method for the private sector to develop serviced plots on their own land, at rates comparable to those FIG are able to provide them. The current approach will not enable the step change that is required to service demand and stabilise rents.

A formalised commercial land sales policy is just as essential to our developing economy, has been sorely lacking, and changes with each new set of circumstances. This discourages investment and growth.

Banking and Finance

Committing to Modernisation

Whilst the private sector has rapidly moved on from paper and cash transactions, the Government has been slow to join us on this journey. As one of the largest organisations in the Islands, the Government must actively support and encourage eCommerce within the Islands and modernise its own systems and processes to incorporate online invoicing and payments.

Banking Services

Banking services available are not fit for purpose, with only limited developments in some areas. The Banking Review commissioned by the Chamber is essential reading for Candidates, who need to commit to supporting movement to digital banking, and to work with the private sector to seek providers who can deliver what is required.

Access to Lending

The lack of commercial lending capacity in the Islands is a severe constraint on investment and growth. We would expect candidates to understand the need for commercial finance, and support schemes to make this available.

Taxation Policy and Inward Investment

FIG Review of Taxation

Taxation is a powerful tool and, if used correctly, will generate revenues for the government to provide education, health and social services and essential services to the community, whilst

encouraging innovative and progressive forms of economic activity. If misused, a regressive tax system will stifle growth and undermine our economic development.

We want to see candidates committing to improvements in the taxation system to remove anomalies and uncertainties but only considering any further tax measures once the Economic Development Strategy is in place.

Inward Investment

Candidates need to also recognise the need for policy that encourages Inward Investment from overseas, whilst protecting the essential interests of Falklands businesses, and creating locally based growth in resources and capability. The Chamber, with support from FIDC, has commissioned some work on this which will be available shortly.

Telecommunications

Continuous Improvements to Service

Reliable and affordable connectivity is essential to the Islands' economic growth. Broadband capacity last increased in 2019, and demand has since caught up and exceeded provision. The arrival of LEO satellite technology recently announced will make a considerable difference, but the next government must commit to ongoing, measured improvements in network speed, resilience and coverage to ensure businesses and households can keep pace with global standards and developments.

Access to Innovative Technology

Access to new technologies such as LEO satellites, FTTP and other emerging systems should be supported through structured pilot projects. This will help identify the most effective and sustainable options for the Falklands while encouraging innovation and investment.

As the Islands approach the end of the current exclusive telecoms licence, there must be open consultation on future models that promote fairness, competition and accountability. The Chamber encourages a balanced approach that ensures continuity of service while creating opportunities for modernisation and economic diversification.

Hydrocarbons

The development of the new anticipated hydrocarbons industry will be transformational for the Falkland Islands in ways that we can predict, and in many ways that that are yet to be understood or fully appreciated. Candidates will be encouraged to set out their views on the use of oil revenues, and its place within the overall economy if/when oil is produced. In particular, the

Chamber will be interested to understand how local businesses will be encouraged and assisted to compete in this global industry, and how the anticipated increased income that will accrue to FIG will be managed to best effect to benefit the whole of society.

Air Links

Active Management of Our Air Links

Our air links are essential to access the wider world. We want to see the future government actively engaging with the MoD to manage this link in accordance with the terms of the "Joint Statement" and ensure service levels are fit for purpose.

A Plan to Safely Resume Flights to South America

For both businesses and employees, our links to South America are vital. Since suspension in 2020, we have asked the government to clarify what conditions are needed for these links to resume. We understand that plans need to be flexible and are dependent on external factors, but a plan is required, developed in partnership with, not separately from the private sector.

MPA Terminal

Improvements to the MPA terminal are desperately overdue. If the MoD do not require improvements, FIG should sponsor and support a private sector led development of a new facility that is fit for purpose.

Capital Program

A Local Approach

There are a significant number of Capital projects planned, all of which will bring long-term benefits to our economy. However, local businesses must be involved in these projects to the maximum extent possible, to ensure that the Islands can make the most of this substantial Government expenditure. A local-content policy for FIG procurement would support this objective, and we hope that candidates will support this essential development.

Infrastructure

Whilst FIG has identified and commenced some capital works projects including the Port, other areas such as power generation and transmission and Camp infrastructure require urgent attention. Candidates will be encouraged to share their views on the delivery of a complex programme of works on limited budgets, whilst ensuring that we do not suffer major failure in any of the key services which underpin private sector growth and development. The programme of delivery is inextricably linked to labour supply, and a balance between the two is required.

FIG Bureaucracy

Open & Honest Government

Often promised and rarely delivered, any government must remember that they are elected to represent all sectors of their community and can only effectively achieve this by being open. Taking the time to discuss ideas and consult individuals and businesses before decisions are made, or reports are presented to ExCo, is vital to ensure you represent those who elected you. This takes dedicated effort, and we want to see candidates actively work towards open communication, sharing ideas, and understanding concerns.

A Continual Review of Operational Structure

Over the life of the last two assemblies, the size of the government has increased substantially. This fact is indisputable, and the huge increase in operating expenditure reflects that increase in size. We want candidates to commit to reviewing the structure of FIG, taking a pragmatic view of what is necessary for our economy to succeed.

Similarly, there are several departments within the government offering services that are prime candidates for outsourcing. Previous Assemblies have supported the limited privatisation of services, and we believe this trend should continue.

Final Reminder

This is only a brief summary of some of the higher-level issues affecting our business community and doesn't detail many other areas of importance to businesses and their employees. Areas such as our environment and sustainability, health and social care, the role of FIDC, and your own vision of how you see the Falkland Islands progressing as a nation in the future. We haven't mentioned these specifically to keep this document focused, and they have the potential to affect many of the other areas we've noted as priorities. We look forward to discussing these in more detail in the future.

We hope that you will take the time to talk with members of our business community during your election campaign to understand their hopes for the future of our Islands.