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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Public Interest Report November 12, 2021

Today, November 12, 2021, the Auditor General tabled her second public interest report on the Unemployment Benefit Administration programme to support Parliament in its examination of the Government of Bermuda's ongoing response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Between April 2020 and April 2021, the Government paid out \$61,335,000 through the Unemployment Benefit programme (UEB). The Unemployment Benefit programme is the largest single spend to date in the Government response's to COVID-19 - that equates to roughly the same as the Government's annual program spend for the Police and almost two times the total annual spend for the Department of Health. *Ms. Thomas said 'her Office will continue to look at other aspects of the Government's response'.*

Similar to the first public interest report, this report was compiled from various government sources and interviews and provides a factual summary of known Government's activities and financial costs to October 2021. Interviewees and other stakeholders were invited to review and comment on this report and we thank them for their continued support and time.

As the Government's response is ongoing, the total impact for public spending and service delivery in the near future is still to be determined.

The approach taken by the Government to quickly respond and provide urgent financial support in a significant crisis is not uncommon or inappropriate. However, given the significant spending associated with the UEB programme and the likelihood that the same approach taken could be implemented, there are important lessons that need to be captured and appropriate action taken.

*Ms. Thomas said, 'no one could have predicted the impact the pandemic would take, and continues to take. Although the Government's response is on-going and strategies ever evolving, my Office will continue to perform independent reviews on public sector performance, and, support Parliament in holding the Government to account and to improve public sector accountability and transparency.'*

THE END

***Reports of the Office of the Auditor General are made available on the Office of the Auditor General website, [www.oagbermuda.bm](http://www.oagbermuda.bm)***

**About the Office of the Auditor General of Bermuda**

The position of Auditor General is established under the Bermuda Constitution Order. The specific mandate and responsibilities of the Auditor General are set out in the Audit Act 1990, and include carrying out audits of Government and its organizations and reporting to the legislature.

The mission of the Office of the Auditor General is to add credibility where appropriate to the Government's financial reporting and to promote improvement in the financial administration of all Government Ministries, Departments and all other entities for which the Government is accountable to Parliament.