

Container Registrations

April 2017

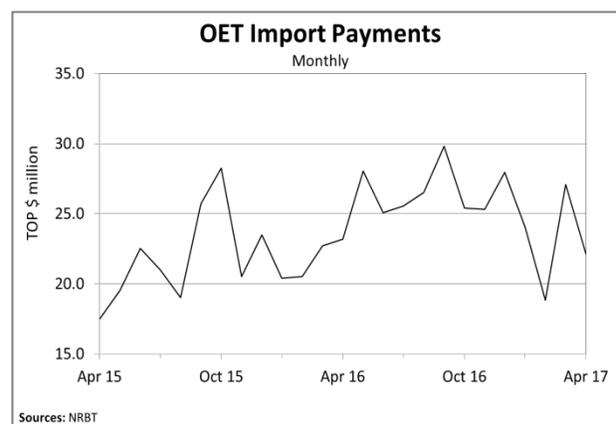
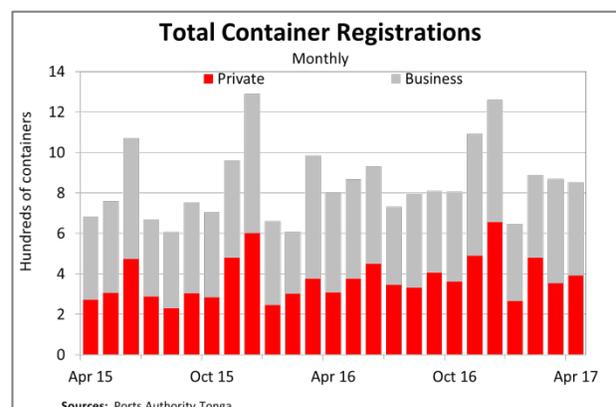
Release date: 14th July 2017

	Apr 17	Mar 17	Feb 17	Jan 17
Total	853	869	890	647
Business	462	515	410	381
Private	391	354	480	266

Drop in business containers outweighed rise in private container registrations

After a strong month in the formal distribution sector as indicated by the business container registrations, activities slowed over the month of April 2017. Business container registrations declined by 53 containers (10.3%), partly offset by a 37 (10.5%) increase in private containers. As a result, total container registrations fell by 16 containers (1.8%) over the month. This is the usual trend for months with no special events. The slight increase in private container registrations is in line with the increase in private vehicle registrations over the month as most individual import their vehicle with various other goods in one container shipment. New Zealand continued to be the major originating country source of the containers, followed by Australia and Indonesia.

The decline in business container registrations coincided with the decrease in import payments (excluding oil) by \$5.0 million



(18.4%) over the month. This was due to lower import payments of wholesale and retail goods which payment declined by \$3.2 million, followed by a \$1.0 million decline in payment for other imported goods.

In year ended terms, the total container registrations rose by 674 registrations (6.8%), driven by a 712 (17.0%) rise in private containers indicating a rise in the informal distribution sector. However, business containers declined over the year by 38 registrations (0.7%). The large number of events and celebrations held during the year supported this annual growth. In addition, 34 extra cargo ships arrived during the year to April 2017 compared to the previous year. This was consistent with a \$38.9 million (14.6%) rise in import payments (excluding oil) as a result of higher import payments for construction materials, vehicles and wholesale & retail goods.

The Reserve Bank expects imports and consequently container registrations to generally increase in 2016/17. The Reserve Bank's liaisons with the construction and transport sectors had indicated growing demand in these sectors which will also drive imports in the near future. On-going construction projects and new private residential constructions are anticipated to contribute to the rise. Spill over effects on the trade, tourism, construction sectors and other sectors in the economy are also anticipated.

Container Registrations							
Total Number of Containers							
	Month ended				Year ended		<i>Share of Total</i>
	Apr 17	Mar 17	Feb 17	Apr 16	Apr 17	Apr 16	
Total containers	853	869	890	799	10,546	9,872	100
Business	462	515	410	491	5,641	5,679	53
Private	391	354	480	308	4,905	4,193	47

Source: Ports Authority Tonga