

Container Registrations

December 2017

Release date: 22 March 2018

	Dec 17	Nov 17	Oct 17	Sept 17
Total	1,254	1,005	1,025	1,093
Business	596	535	580	581
Private	658	470	445	512

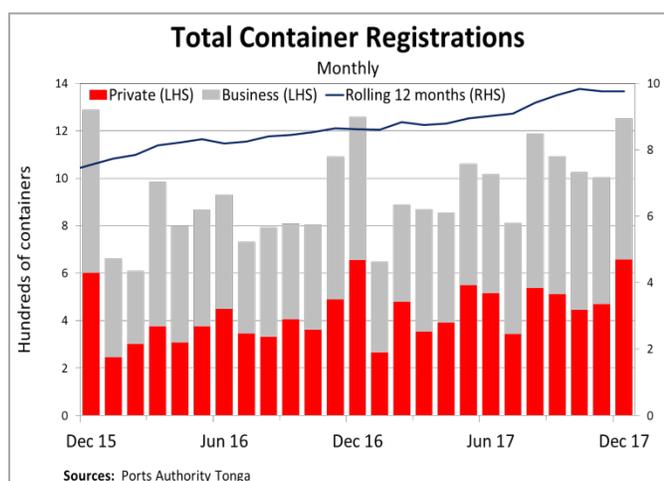
Typical highest container registrations for December each year

The total container registrations for December 2017 rose by 249 (24.8%) to a total of 1,254 containers recording the highest monthly registrations for the year. This is a typical trend for December each year to record the highest number of containers. Total containers for December 2017 was slightly lower than a total of 1,259 containers registered in December 2016. The high number of containers reflected the preparations for the Christmas and New Year season and other celebratory events during the period. It also reflects the seasonality of activities in the trade sector.

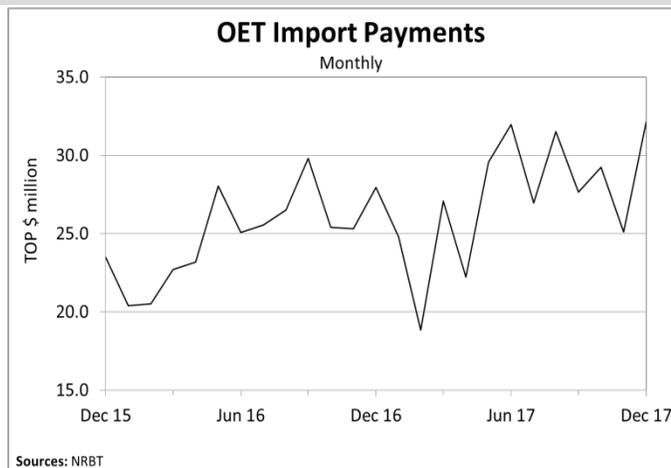
The rise over the month was largely due to a 188 increase in private containers (40.0%), followed by a 61 increase in business containers (11.4%). A total of 658

private containers were registered over the month and is also the highest number of private containers recorded monthly in 2017. This was slightly above the 656 containers in December 2016. The increased private containers coincided with the rise in vehicle registrations as some individuals imported their vehicles in containers together with other materials such as housing supplies. It also reflected the increasing activities of the informal distribution sector particularly the flea market and Tongans selling products online.

New Zealand continued to be the major originating source country for these containers, followed by Australia, Indonesia and Japan.



Total import payments (excluding oil) rose by \$7.0 million (28.1%) over the month to a total \$32.1 million compared to \$25.1 million last month. Payments for wholesale and retail imported commodities increased the most by \$5.8 million (28.1%) followed by payments for other imports such as medical and technological goods, construction materials, and motor vehicles. The rise in total import payments coincided with the increase in total containers.



In year ended terms, the total container registrations rose by 1,374 registrations (13.3%), driven by a 876 (18.9%) rise in private containers indicating a rise in the informal distribution sector. Additionally, business containers rose over the year by 498 registrations (8.7%) indicating a vibrant trade sector. Events and celebrations held during the year, and the increase in private constructions contributed to this annual growth. This was also consistent with a \$26.7 million (8.9%) rise in import payments (excluding oil) as a result of higher import payments for wholesale & retail goods, miscellaneous goods (such as electrical infrastructure materials, medical, and technological goods), and motor vehicles.

The Reserve Bank projections for stronger economic growth in 2017/18 and 2018/19 result in the expectation for imports and consequently container registrations to generally increase in the near term. 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>
	Dec 17	Nov 17	Oct 17	Dec 16	Dec 17	Dec 16	
Total containers	1254	1005	1025	1259	11,716	10,342	100
Business	596	535	580	603	6,195	5,697	53
Private	658	470	445	656	5,521	4,645	47

Source: Ports Authority Tonga