

International Arrivals & Departures

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August 2016

	Aug 16	Jul 16	Jun 16	May 16
Total Arrivals	10,324	8,823	11,896	8,707
Total Departures	8,649	9,859	10,328	7,258

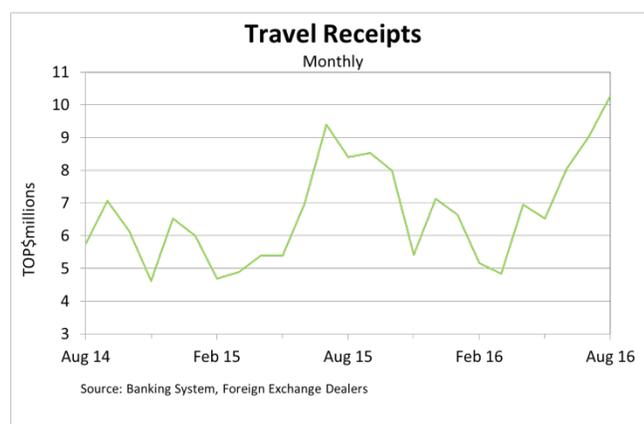
Note: Total Arrivals & Departures including air, cruise ship and yacht arrivals & departures

Source: Statistics Department

Cruise ship arrivals driving monthly increase

The performance of the tourism industry improved over the month, supported by an increase in the total number of international arrivals¹ by 1,501 (17.0%). This largely reflected the arrival of the Pacific Aria cruise ship during the month which brought 1,394 passengers. The arrivals by yacht also increased by 127 passengers (67.9%) over the month, a similar trend as in previous years. This could be attributed to the whale watching season, which starts from July to October every year, as indicated by the Ministry of Infrastructure & Tourism. This offset a decline in air arrivals by 20 passengers (0.2%). The higher number of arrivals is also consistent with a \$1.3 million (14.0%) rise in travel receipts in the same period.

On the contrary, the total number of international departures declined by 1,210 passengers (12.3%) over the month. More of the arriving passengers during the month were returning residents rather than visitors therefore would not be departing the country hence the lower total international departures in August 2016



¹ Includes Tongan residents and visitors

Over the year to August 2016, the total number of international arrivals rose by 16,739 passengers (17.1%). All categories increased with air arrivals being the main driver of this growth, with an increase of 11,175 passengers (13.5%) from the previous year. This is supported by events that occurred during the year such as villages and various family re-unions, annual church conferences and the Tupou College Tofoa's 150th anniversary. The introduction of the Air New Zealand Boeing 777 flights and the commencement of Fiji Airways direct flight from Fiji to Vava'u during the year also contributed to the rise. The outbound travel from NZ, U.S and Australia continued to dominate the annual rise in total arrivals, which is supported by the strengthening of the currencies of these countries against the Tongan pa'anga. There were more numbers of cruise ships arriving during the year, rising by 5,416 passengers (38.3%). This may have supported the transportation, trade and other sectors of the economy. Travel receipts during the year to August 2016 rose by \$11.1 million (14.7%) to \$86.6 million, which was consistent with the rise in total arrivals.

The total international departures also increased by 14,403 passengers (14.5%) over the year due mainly to a rise of 9,136 passengers (10.9%) departing by air.

Outlook

The international arrivals are expected to increase in the coming months due to arrivals of cruise ships. There are 2 cruise ships expected to arrive in October and November 2016 and 3 ships to arrive in December 2016. The upcoming events scheduled for the year may contribute to an annual rise, including the Channel College Kelana's 50th anniversary, the Tailulu College's (Tongatapu) 50th anniversary and the Mailefihii Siu'ilikutapu College's 70th anniversary, as well as the annual church conferences. The signing of the mutual visa exemption agreement between Tonga and China and the setting up of the Chinese group tours is expected to attract more tourists from China. The completion of the renovation of the Tanoa Dateline Hotel is expected to contribute to the attraction of more arrivals. The National Reserve Bank of Tonga will continue to closely monitor these developments and the country's economic developments to support economic growth.

	Arrivals				Departures							
	Monthly				Year Ended							
	Aug 16	Jul-16	Jun-16	Aug-15	Aug 16	Aug-15	Aug-16	Jul-16	Jun-16	Aug-15	Aug-16	Aug-15
Total	10,324	8,823	11,896	7,125	114,810	98,071	8,649	9,859	10,328	7,812	113,982	99,578
Air	8,616	8,636	9,853	6,894	93,655	82,480	7,033	9,665	8,356	7,606	92,990	83,854
Visitors	5,880	6,103	6,763	4,809	58,612	52,468	5,024	7,116	5,753	5,116	57,276	52,873
Tongan residents	2,736	2,533	3,090	2,085	35,043	30,012	2,009	2,549	2,603	2,490	35,714	30,981
Cruise Ship*	1,394	-	1,784	-	19,557	14,141	1,387	-	1,777	-	19,552	14,140
Yacht*	314	187	259	231	1,598	1,450	229	194	195	206	1,440	1,584
Total	10,324	8,823	11,896	7,125	114,810	98,071	8,649	9,859	10,328	7,812	113,982	99,578
Visitors	7,588	6,290	8,806	5,040	79,767	68,059	6,640	7,310	7,725	5,322	78,268	68,597
Tongan residents	2,736	2,533	3,090	2,085	35,043	30,012	2,009	2,549	2,603	2,490	35,714	30,981

* All sea arrivals are assumed to be visitors
Source: Statistics Department