

International Arrivals & Departures October 2016

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	Oct16	Sep 16	Aug 16	Jul 16
Total Arrivals	14,156	8,451	10,324	8,823
Total Departures	14,583	7,896	8,649	9,859

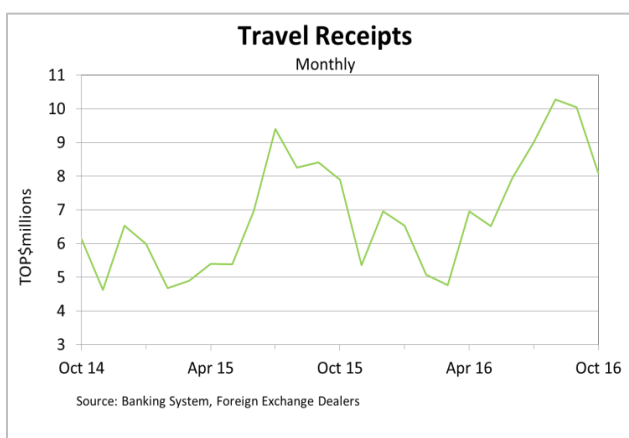
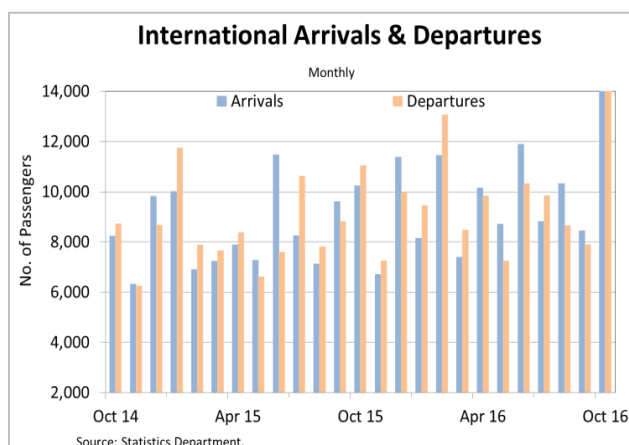
Note: Total Arrivals & Departures including air, cruise ship and yacht arrivals & departures

Source: Statistics Department

Cruise ship increased total arrivals and departures

Activities in the tourism sector picked up during October 2016. Total international arrivals¹ increased by 5,705 (67.5%) passengers over the month. There were 6,630 passengers brought in by three cruise ships during the month, accounting for 46.8% of total arrivals. There were no cruise ships in the September. Costa Luminosa was one of these ships which started its journey from Italy brought in more than 3,000 passengers. However, air arrivals decreased by 908 (11.2%) passengers. Although yacht arrivals declined by 17 (4.7%) passengers, it still remained high at 342 passengers, as this is the last month for the whale watching season.

Accordingly, the significant rise of total arrivals is consistent with the 84.7% was matched by a corresponding increase in total international departures to 14,583 passengers, over the month and may indicate they were short term visitors.



¹ Includes Tongan residents and visitors

Although cruise ship arrivals increased during October 2016, travel receipts fell by \$1.9 million (19.3%), this may be attributed to the usual one day stopover by the cruise ships and their passengers in Tonga. Hence, the impact of cruise ship arrivals on tourism earnings is less significant than it would be for air arrivals.

Over the year to October 2016, the total number of international arrivals grew by 15,441 passengers (15.1%), which is higher than the increase of 10,822 passengers (12.0%) in the previous year. Air arrivals rose by 11,758 passengers (14.1%), followed by sea arrivals² with 3,683 passengers (19.5%) as a result of larger cruise ships arriving during the year. Additionally, the number of celebrations and events that occurred during the year to October 2016 supported this growth in air arrivals. 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 this annual rise. This may have supported the transportation, trade and other sectors of the economy. The higher number of arrivals is also consistent with the \$9.12 million (11.6%) increase in travel receipts recorded in year ended to October 2016.

The total international departures also rose by 13,502 passengers (13.1%) over the year due mainly to a rise of 10,153 passengers (12.1%) in departures by air.

Outlook

The upcoming scheduled events, cruise ships, and the December holiday season are expected to increase the international arrivals in the coming months and consequently the annual total of arrivals. There are 5 cruise ships expected to arrive in November and December 2016 and a total of 21 cruise ships are expected to arrive in the year 2017. This reflects that Tonga is becoming more popular as a tourist destination and that Vuna Wharf is now more reliable for international cruise liners than it was before. Additionally, the upcoming scheduled events such as the school anniversaries such as the Channel College - Kelana 50th anniversary, Tailulu College (Tongatapu) 50th anniversary, Mailefihi Siu'ilikutapu 70th anniversary, and annual church conferences will also contribute to this anticipated growth. The signing of the mutual visa exemption agreement between Tonga and China, and the setting up of the Chinese group tours are expected to attract more tourists from China. The National Reserve Bank of Tonga will continue to closely monitor the country's economic developments to support economic growth.

² Includes cruise ship and yacht

Total Number of International Arrivals & Departures

	Arrivals						Departures					
	Monthly				Year Ended		Monthly				Year Ended	
	Oct 16	Sep-16	Aug-16	Oct-15	Oct 16	Oct-15	Oct-16	Sep-16	Aug-16	Oct-15	Oct-16	Oct-15
Total	14,156	8,451	10,324	10,237	117,576	102,135	14,583	7,896	8,649	11,040	116,599	103,098
Air	7,184	8,092	8,616	6,574	94,988	83,230	7,699	7,555	7,033	7,326	94,314	84,161
Visitors	4,298	5,185	5,880	4,045	59,135	52,547	4,937	4,865	5,024	4,928	57,903	52,617
Tongan residents	2,886	2,907	2,736	2,529	35,853	30,683	2,762	2,690	2,009	2,398	36,411	31,544
Cruise Ship*	6,630	-	1,394	3,460	20,774	17,486	6,626	-	1,387	3,463	20,757	17,494
Yacht*	342	359	314	203	1,814	1,419	258	341	229	251	1,528	1,443
Total	14,156	8,451	10,324	10,237	117,576	102,135	14,583	7,896	8,649	11,040	116,599	103,098
Visitors	11,270	5,544	7,588	7,708	81,723	71,452	11,821	5,206	6,640	8,642	80,188	71,554
Tongan residents	2,886	2,907	2,736	2,529	35,853	30,683	2,762	2,690	2,009	2,398	36,411	31,544

* All sea arrivals are assumed to be visitors

Source: Statistics Department