

International Arrivals & Departures May 2017

Release date: 5 September 2017

	May 17	Apr 17	Mar 17	Feb 17
Total Arrivals	10,307	7,031	8,490	9,410
Total Departures	9,096	6,697	8,135	10,601

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

Source: Statistics Department

Church conferences and other events drive international arrivals higher in May

The occasions that took place in May drove total international arrivals¹ to rise over the month by 3,276 passengers (46.6%). All categories of international arrivals increased, air arrivals rose by 2,033 passengers (30.4%), which comprised of visitors and returning residents increasing by 1,416 (36.9%) and 617 (21.6%) passengers respectively. Events that took place during the month which may have contributed to this trend include the annual



church conferences as well as the “family month” with the commemoration of Mother’s Day and Father’s Day . Total sea arrivals also increased by 1,243 passengers (367.8%), owing to one cruise ship that arrived during the month which brought in 1,371 passengers, compared to the previous month with no cruise ship arrival. The start of the whale watching season also contributed to the increase in the yacht arrival passengers to 210. Majority of the visitors were from New Zealand followed by Australia and the United States of America. Most visitors were here to visit families, on holiday, followed by business trips.

The total international departures increased by 2,417 passengers (36.2%) to 9,096 passengers, in line with the increase in international arrivals, and 6,261 passengers (68.8%) were non-Tongan passport holders.

¹ Includes Tongan residents and visitors

Moreover, travel receipts rose over the month by \$1.9 million (27.3%) coinciding with the increase in total international air arrivals.

In year ended terms, the total number of international arrivals grew by 12,256 passengers (11.1%). Sea arrivals² (assuming they are all visitors) increased by 8,769 passengers (44.9%) as a result of the increase in the number of cruise ships arriving and a favourable whale season during the year.

Additionally, returning residents arriving by air rose by 1,860 passengers (5.4%), followed by a 1,627 (2.9%) rise in air arrival visitors. The number of celebrations and events that took place during the year to May 2017 supported this growth. This may have supported the transportation, trade and other sectors of the economy. The higher number of arrivals was also consistent with the \$21.9 million (26.4%) increase in travel receipts recorded over the year.



The total international departures also rose by 9,304 passengers (8.4%) over the year mainly due to the 8,332 rise in passengers (45.9%) departures on cruise ships.

Outlook

The Reserve Bank remains optimistic that the tourism sector will remain vibrant in the upcoming months given the scheduled annual church conferences, and the Heilala Festival which are expected to bring in more visitors. Additionally, the whale watching season will keep the number of passenger arrivals on yachts at a high level until this season is over, approximately in October. The Reserve Bank will continue to closely monitor the country's economic developments to support economic growth.

Total Number of International Arrivals & Departures

	Arrivals				Departures							
	Year Ended				Year Ended							
	May 17	Apr-17	Mar-17	May-16	May 17	May-16	May-17	Apr-17	Mar-17	May-16	May-17	May-16
Total	10,307	7,031	8,490	8,707	122,753	110,606	9,096	6,679	8,131	7,258	120,407	111,198
Air	8,726	6,693	4,641	8,462	94,438	91,070	7,599	6,359	4,286	7,104	92,253	91,631
Visitors	5,256	3,840	2,560	5,220	57,943	56,534	4,764	3,625	2,310	4,267	57,752	56,399
Tongan residents	3,470	2,853	2,081	3,242	36,495	34,536	2,835	2,734	1,976	2,837	34,501	35,232
Cruise Ship*	1,371	315	3,839	-	26,399	18,136	1,366	315	3,842	-	26,390	18,145
Yacht*	210	23	10	245	1,916	1,400	131	5	3	154	1,764	1,422
Total	10,307	7,031	8,490	8,707	122,753	110,606	9,096	6,679	8,131	7,258	120,407	111,198
Visitors	6,837	4,178	6,409	5,465	86,258	76,070	6,261	3,945	6,155	4,421	85,906	75,966
Tongan residents	3,470	2,853	2,081	3,242	36,495	34,536	2,835	2,734	1,976	2,837	34,501	35,232

* All sea arrivals are assumed to be visitors

Source: Statistics Department

² Includes cruise ship and yacht