

Container Registrations

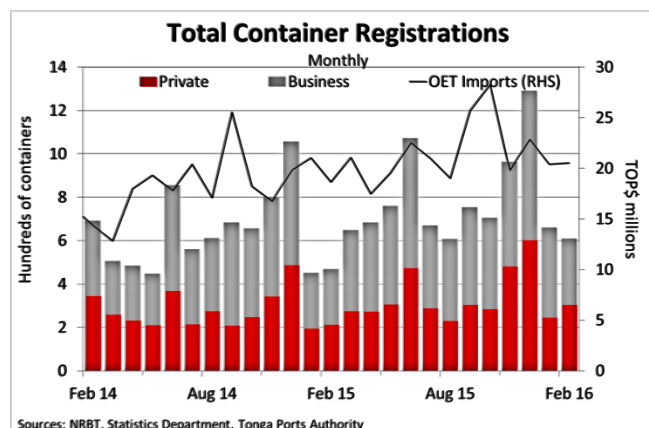
February 2016

Release date: 29 April 2016

	Feb 16	Jan 16	Dec 15	Nov 15
Total	610	661	1,290	962
Business	308	416	688	482
Private	302	245	602	480

Delays in shipping schedules resulted in lower registrations

Over the month of February, the total number of container registrations fell by 7.7% as a result of business container registrations decreasing by 26%. Tropical Cyclone Winston that occurred during the month caused delays in shipping lines schedules resulted in lower registrations. In addition, container registered from Australia decreased by 61.2% over the month, offsetting the 29.2% rise in containers registered from New Zealand. The import payments (excluding oil) however rose by 0.6% driven mainly by imports for the on-going donor funded Tonga Village Network Upgrade project. The strengthening of the New Zealand Dollar against the Tongan Pa'anga supports the higher import payments, and coincides with more registered containers from New Zealand.



Annual container registrations increased by 24.3% due to rises in both private and business container registrations. The higher registrations is in line with a number of celebrations and events that took place during the year, including the King's Coronation and various other annual festivities. The private container registrations rose by 25.2%, reflecting an active informal distribution sector. The business container registrations also grew by 23.7%. The increase in registrations also coincides with a 14.5% rise in import

payments, indicating more economic activities during the year. In addition, higher container registrations may have contributed to higher government revenue collection over the year. The yearly movement is in line with the NRBT's expectations for growth in the distribution sector. The overall increase in container registrations is consistent with improvements in credit conditions, indicating strong economic activities in the country.

The NRBT expects imports and consequently container registrations to generally increase in 2015/16 due to festivities scheduled for this financial year including Tupou College Toloa's 150th Anniversary and also church annual conferences. Additionally, more shipments are expected after the commencement in March 2016 of Polynesia Line's direct shipments from the U.S to Tonga every month. This may support an increase in customs duty collections and an upturn in government revenue. Credit growth has rebounded and is expected to continue to grow over 2015/16 which is likely to support growth in imports. Furthermore, liaisons with the construction and transport sector indicate more imports in the future due to high demand. On-going projects such as the construction of the St. George Palace, LDS chapels, renovations of the Tanoa Hotel and new private residential constructions are anticipated to contribute to the rise. Spill over effects on the trade, tourism and construction sectors are also expected.

Container Registrations							
Total Number of Containers							
	Month ended				Year ended		<i>Share of Total</i>
	Feb 16	Jan 16	Dec 15	Feb 15	Feb 16	Feb 15	
Total containers	610	661	1290	469	9,420	7,577	100
Business	308	416	688	257	5,366	4,338	57
Private	302	245	602	212	4,054	3,239	43

Source: Tonga Ports Authority