

Container Registrations

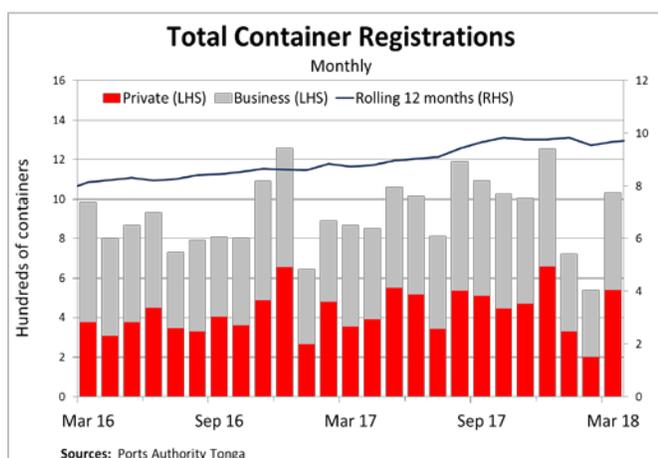
March 2018

Release date: 29 June 2018

	Mar 18	Feb 18	Jan 18	Dec 17
Total	1,032	539	723	1,254
Business	492	338	393	596
Private	540	201	330	658

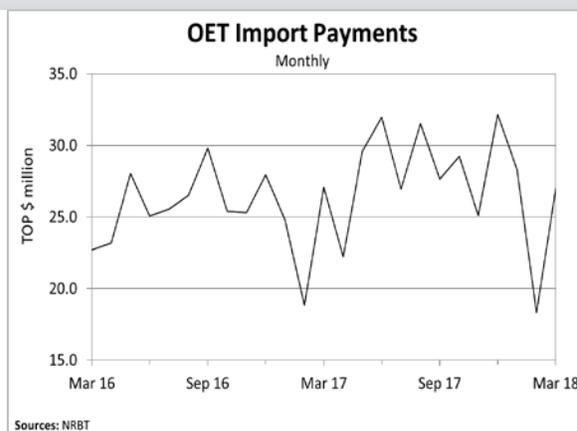
Recovery from the cyclone pushed container registrations higher

The arrival of scheduled cargo vessels has returned to normal operations after the disruptions caused by Tropical Cyclone (TC) Gita in February 2018. During the month, eleven cargo vessels arrived in Tonga compared to six cargo vessels in February 2018. Coupled with the recovery work operations from the cyclone, the total container registrations increased by 91.5% (493 containers) to a total of 1,032 containers. Both business and private



containers increased by 154 and 339 containers respectively. The rise in business containers reflected business returning to normal operations to cater for the demand of consumers. Private containers rose significantly due to the in-kind donations and imports by individuals of immediate recovery goods. This was also eased by the tax exemptions on the personal imports of food items and construction materials as part of the government’s initiative to help the people of Tonga following the aftermath of TC Gita. Most of the containers that had arrived on cargo vessels were from New Zealand, Indonesia and Australia.

Payments for imports (excluding oil) increased over the month by \$8.7 million (47.6%) which coincided with the rise in total container registrations. Payment for wholesale & retail imports increased the most, followed by the Government and motor vehicles imports.



In year ended terms, the total container registrations rose by 1,112 containers (10.6%). Both private and business containers increased by 670 (13.9%) and 442 (7.8%) respectively indicating a rise in the informal distribution sector and a vibrant trade sector. This was also consistent with a \$22.5 million (7.3%) rise in import payments (excluding oil) as a result of higher payments for the import of wholesale & retail goods and miscellaneous goods (such as electrical infrastructure materials, medical, and technological goods).

Imports is projected to continue to increase in the near term as the recovery from TC Gita will commence in the upcoming months. The in-kind assistance from families abroad is expected to rise supported by the tax and duty exemptions on food items, clothes, beds and building materials in the wake of TC Gita. Business imports is also projected to increase to meet the domestic demand for wholesale & retail goods. The Reserve Bank's projections for positive economic growth support the outlook for higher imports and consequently container registrations will generally increase. 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		Share of Total
	Mar 18	Feb 18	Jan 18	Mar 17	Mar 18	Mar 17	
Total containers	1032	539	723	869	11,604	10,492	100
Business	492	338	393	515	6,112	5,670	53
Private	540	201	330	354	5,492	4,822	47

Source: Ports Authority Tonga