

International Arrivals & Departures September 2016

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	Sep 16	Aug 16	Jul 16	Jun 16
Total Arrivals	8,451	10,324	8,823	11,896
Total Departures	7,896	8,649	9,859	10,328

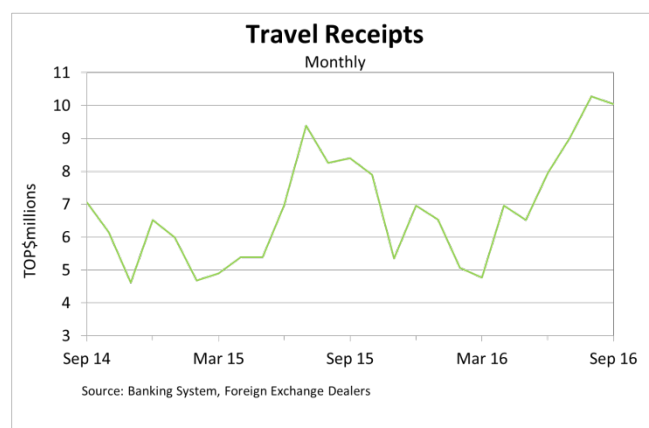
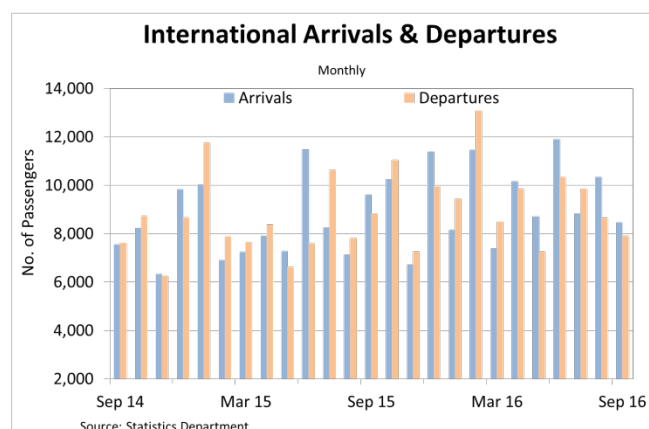
Note: Total Arrivals & Departures including air, cruise ship and yacht arrivals & departures

Source: Statistics Department

No cruise ship arrivals drive total arrivals & departures lower

The tourism industry slowed in September 2016, following a strong month of August 2016. There were no cruise ships arriving during the month, resulting in a decline in international arrivals¹ by 1,873 passengers (18.1%) over the month. Last month, the Pacific Aria cruise ship had brought in 1,394 passengers. Arrivals by air also decreased by 524 passengers (6.1%) due to a decline in visitors. Yacht arrivals, on the other hand, slightly rose by 45 passengers (14.3%). The decrease in the number of international arrivals coincided with a slight fall in travel receipts of \$0.2 million (2.3%) over the month.

The total number of international departures continued to decrease by 753 passengers (8.7%) over the month, which is attributed to no departures by cruise ships compared to the previous month. The



¹ Includes Tongan residents and visitors

number of visitors arriving during the month decreased therefore as expected, the number of departing visitors also fell pushing the total departures lower.

The total number of international arrivals for the year ended September 2016 grew by 13,526 passengers (13.5%), which is much higher than the recorded increase of 10,822 passengers (12.1%) in the previous year. All categories rose with air arrivals continuing to record the highest increase of 11,556 passengers (14.0%). The number of celebrations and events taking place during the year to September 2016 supported this growth. 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. Additionally, cruise ship arrivals rose by 1,818 passengers (11.5%), as a result of more cruise ships arriving during the year. This may have supported the transportation, trade and other sectors of the economy. The higher number of arrivals is also consistent with the \$10.7 million (13.9%) increase in travel receipts recorded in year ended to September 2016.

The total international departures also rose by 12,271 passengers (12.2%) over the year due mainly to a rise of 10,518 passengers (12.6%) in departures 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 50th anniversary, Tailulu College (Tongatapu) 50th anniversary and Mailefihi Siu'ilikutapu 70th anniversary and 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 also attract more tourists. The National Reserve Bank of Tonga will continue to closely monitor these developments and the country's economic developments to support economic growth.

Total Number of International Arrivals & Departures

	Arrivals						Departures					
	Monthly				Year Ended		Monthly				Year Ended	
	Sep 16	Aug-16	Jul-16	Sep-15	Sep 16	Sep-15	Sep-16	Aug-16	Jul-16	Sep-15	Sep-16	Sep-15
Total	8,451	10,324	8,823	9,604	113,657	100,131	7,896	8,649	9,859	8,822	113,056	100,786
Air	8,092	8,616	8,636	7,369	94,378	82,822	7,555	7,033	9,665	6,604	93,941	83,423
Visitors	5,185	5,880	6,103	4,915	58,882	52,604	4,865	5,024	7,116	4,247	57,894	52,329
Tongan residents	2,907	2,736	2,533	2,454	35,496	30,218	2,690	2,009	2,549	2,357	36,047	31,094
Cruise Ship*	-	1,394	-	1,953	17,604	15,786	-	1,387	-	1,958	17,594	15,790
Yacht*	359	314	187	282	1,675	1,523	341	229	194	260	1,521	1,573
Total	8,451	10,324	8,823	9,604	113,657	100,131	7,896	8,649	9,859	8,822	113,056	100,786
Visitors	5,544	7,588	6,290	7,150	78,161	69,913	5,206	6,640	7,310	6,465	77,009	69,692
Tongan residents	2,907	2,736	2,533	2,454	35,496	30,218	2,690	2,009	2,549	2,357	36,047	31,094

* All sea arrivals are assumed to be visitors

Source: Statistics Department