

International Arrivals & Departures December 2017

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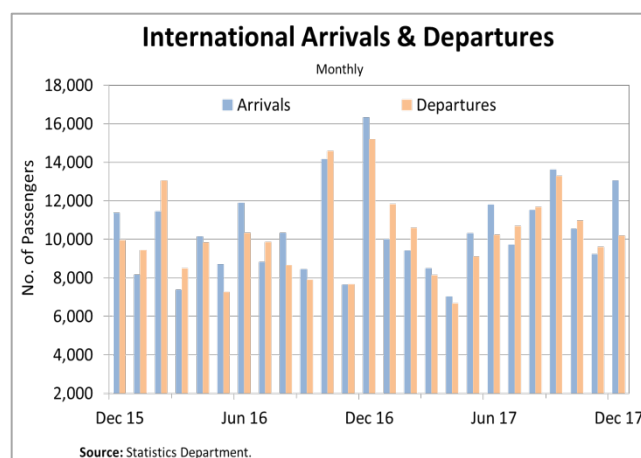
	Dec 17	Nov 17	Oct 17	Sep 17
Total Arrivals	13,036	9,210	10,556	13,624
Total Departures	10,201	9,603	10,974	13,277

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

Source: Statistics Department

Positive trend for International arrivals continues

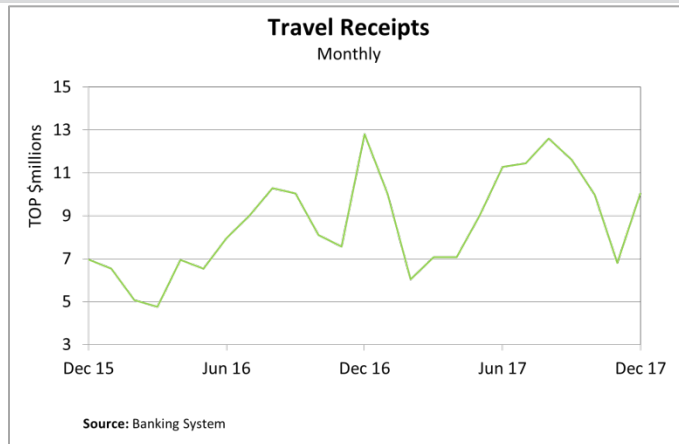
Total international arrivals continued to follow the usual trend to record the highest air arrival in December every year as people come from abroad to spend Christmas and new year with families here in Tonga. Total international arrivals increased by 3,826 passengers (41.5%), which was attributed to a 5,347 increase in air arrival visitors. A total of 9,625 air arrival visitors was recorded during the month, which was also the highest for 2017. Sea arrivals declined due to no cruise ships arrivals during the month and lower yacht arrivals reflecting the end of the whale watching season.



New Zealand continued to be the leading country for visitors' country of residence, which accounted for 56.3% of total visitors. This was followed by visitors from Australia and the United States of America. Most of the visitors who arrived during the month were here to visit families and friends, vacation, and several other reasons.

Total international departures also rose by 6.2% to a total of 10,201 passengers, 5,504 passengers (53.9%) of total departures were Tongan residents. This largely reflected students travelling to spend their school holidays overseas. Of the total 5,504 departing passengers, 36.5% were between the age group 5-24 years old.

Additionally, travel receipts increased by \$3.2 million (47.3) to a total of \$10.0 million over the month coinciding with the rise in total arrivals.



In year ended terms, the total number of international arrivals increased by 1,231 passengers (1.0%). Total air arrivals rose by 4,700 passengers (4.9%) but was partially offset by a 3,995 (15.5%) decline in cruise ship arrivals. Total cruise ships

docked in Tonga's port during 2017 declined by 7 ships compared to a total 19 ships in 2016. A favorable whale watching season during the year resulted in a 28.9% increase in yacht arrivals. The higher number of arrivals was also consistent with a \$17.3 million (18.1%) increase in travel receipts to \$112.9 million over the year to December 2017. This may have also supported the transportation, trade and other sectors of the economy.

The total international departures also rose by 0.6% over the year mainly due to a 4.5% increase in international air departures.

Outlook

The outlook on the tourism sector is that it will continue to remain vibrant in 2017/2018. The Reserve Bank will continue to closely monitor the developments in the international arrivals and its impact on the tourism and other sectors.

Total Number of International Arrivals & Departures												
	Arrivals						Departures					
	Monthly				Year Ended		Monthly				Year Ended	
	Dec 17	Nov-17	Oct-17	Dec-16	Dec 17	Dec-16	Dec-17	Nov-17	Oct-17	Dec-16	Dec-17	Dec-16
Total	13,036	9,210	10,556	16,324	124,693	123,462	10,201	9,603	10,974	15,208	122,979	122,265
Air	13,010	7,950	7,748	11,157	100,630	95,930	10,164	8,305	8,255	10,041	99,280	95,043
Visitors	9,625	4,278	4,639	8,108	62,506	59,130	4,660	4,160	5,449	4,467	62,795	58,544
Tongan residents	3,385	3,672	3,109	3,049	38,124	36,800	5,504	4,145	2,806	5,574	36,485	36,499
Cruise Ship*	-	1,177	2,425	5,155	21,719	25,714	-	1,178	2,417	5,161	21,708	25,703
Yacht*	26	83	383	12	2,344	1,818	37	120	302	6	1,991	1,519
Total	13,036	9,210	10,556	16,324	124,693	123,462	10,201	9,603	10,974	15,208	122,979	122,265
Visitors	9,651	5,538	7,447	13,275	86,569	86,662	4,697	5,458	8,168	9,634	86,494	85,766
Tongan residents	3,385	3,672	3,109	3,049	38,124	36,800	5,504	4,145	2,806	5,574	36,485	36,499

* All sea arrivals are assumed to be visitors
Source: Statistics Department