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STATISTICS

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Preface

This monthly migration statistics bulletin is produced by the Tonga Statistics Department (TSD) as a key reference on the volume of overseas arrivals and departures by air, cruise ships, and yachts, as well as residents' movements to and from the Kingdom of Tonga. This edition covers January 2026, providing a detailed monthly breakdown of the data alongside comparative figures from previous years. The information presented in this bulletin is sourced from the Customs Department and the Immigration Department's Border Management Information System (BMIS), the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS).

The primary purpose of collecting and compiling Migration Statistics is to provide valuable data for planners and decision-makers. With Tonga experiencing a high rate of net migration loss, where more people are leaving than entering the country, the production of accurate and timely migration statistics is essential. These data also contribute to the development of the Population Estimation and Projection reports by the TSD.

This bulletin presents information on arrivals and departures, disaggregated by purpose of travel, reasons for absence, country of usual residence, and country visited.

We welcome any suggestions from recipients of this bulletin that may help us improve future editions.


Sione Lolohea
Government Statistician



Summary of International Arrivals and Departures

Table 1: Total arrivals and departures for January 2026 with monthly and annual percentage change.

Month of January 2026	Number of Person(s)			Changes from previous month (%)	Changes from previous year (%)
	Jan 2026	Dec 2025	Jan 2025		
All Arrivals	10,431	14,777	9,861	-29.4%	5.8%
Air Visitors	4,342	9,313	3,700	-53.4%	17.4%
Air Returning Residents	6,089	4,365	6,158	39.5%	-1.1%
Cruise Ships	*	1,099	-	*	*
Yachts	-	-	3	0.0%	0.0%
All Departures	12,607	13,301	11,069	-5.2%	13.9%
Air Departures Non-Resident	8,658	5,660	7,509	53.0%	15.3%
Air Departures Resident	3,949	6,542	3,557	-39.6%	11.0%
Cruise Ships	*	1,099	-	*	*
Yachts	-	-	3	-	-

*Note: *The cruise ship passenger data for January 2026 was not available at the time of publication and are excluded from this bulletin. Once available, the data will be published in the next Migration bulletin.*

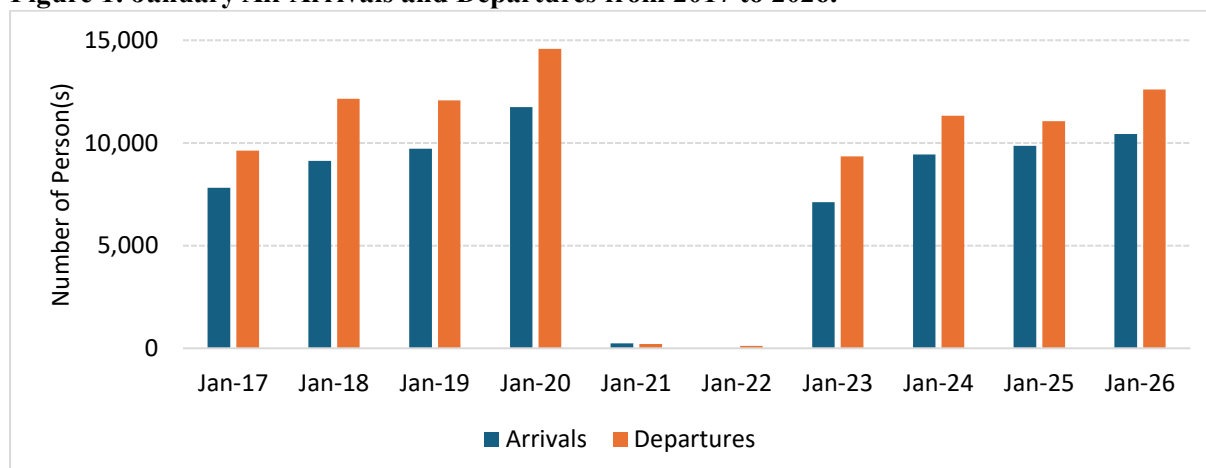
International Arrivals:

- The **total number of arrivals in January 2026 was 10,431**, representing a 29.4% decrease compared to December 2025 and a 5.8% increase compared to January 2025.
- Air visitor arrivals decreased by 53.4% compared to December 2025 and increased by 17.4% compared to January 2025. The significant decline from December reflects the usual seasonal pattern, as visitor numbers are generally higher in December due to the holiday period.
- Air returning residents increased by 39.5% compared to December 2025 and decreased by 1.1% compared to January 2025.
- No yacht arrivals or departures were recorded in January 2026, likely due to the cyclone season, which generally limits yacht movements during this period.

International Departures:

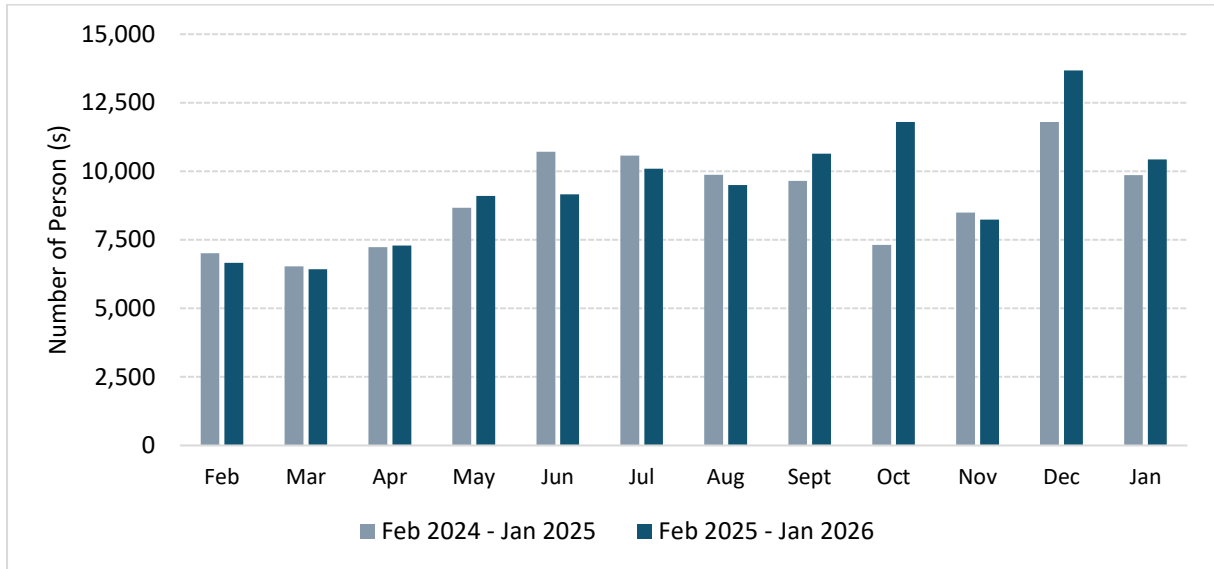
- The **total number of departures in January 2026 was 12,607**, representing a 5.2% decrease compared to December 2025 and a 13.9% increase compared to January 2025.
- Air departures of non-residents increased by 53% from December 2025 and increased by 15.3% compared to January 2025.
- Air departures of residents decreased by 39.6% compared to December 2025, while recording a 11% increase compared to January 2025.

Figure 1: January Air Arrivals and Departures from 2017 to 2026.



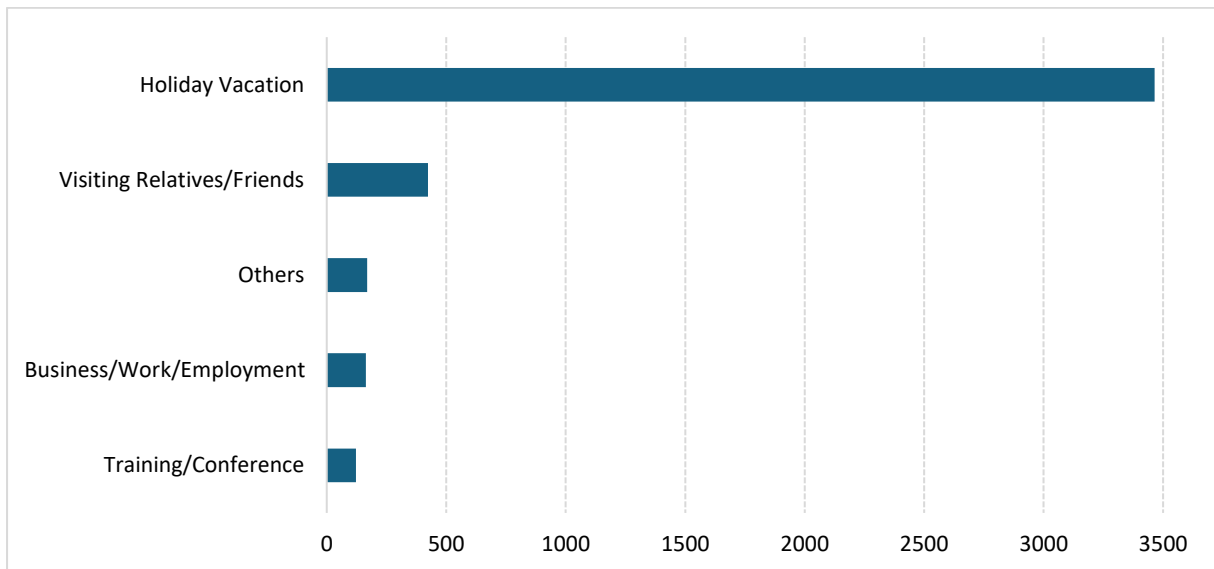
- In January 2026, Tonga recorded higher air departures (12,607) than air arrivals (10,431) which shows a converse figure from the previous month but follows the same pattern from previous years.

Figure 2: Monthly Air Arrivals compared to the corresponding month of the previous year.



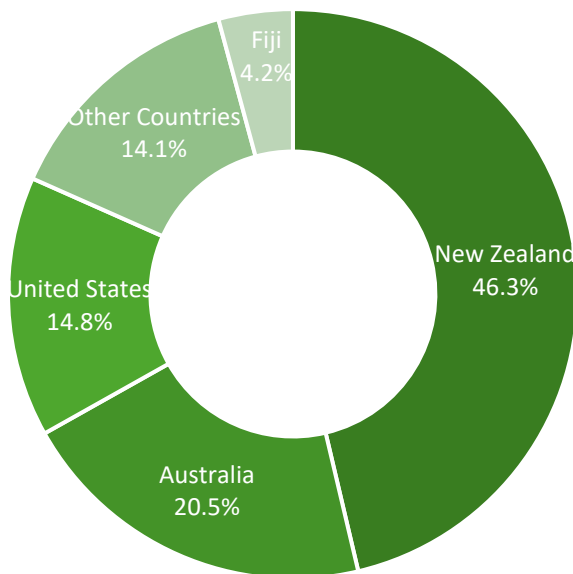
- Total air arrivals in January 2026 were 10,431, reflecting a 31.1% decrease from 13,678 in December 2025 and a 5.8% increase compared to January 2025. This includes both visitors and returning residents.

Figure 3: Air Visitors by Purpose of Visit in January 2026.



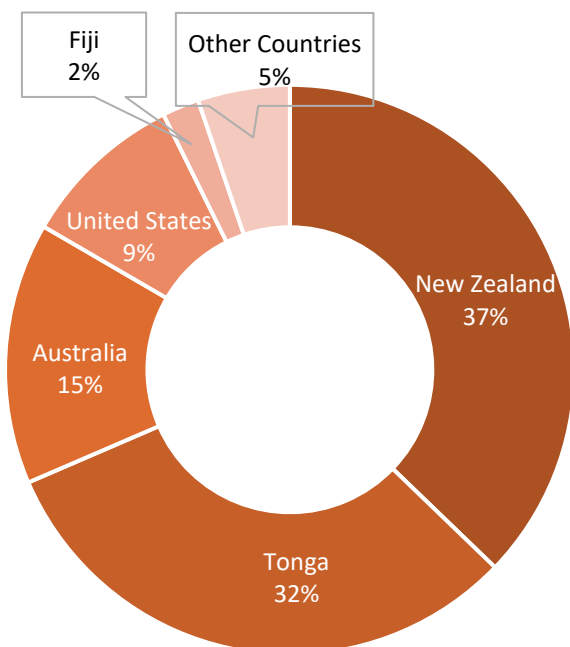
- In January 2026, majority of visitors by air travelled to Tonga for holiday vacation purposes, making up 79.8% of the total air visitors (3,464).
- 9.7% of visitors by air travelled to Tonga to visit their relatives or friends (423).
- 3.9% travelled for other reasons such as funerals, weddings and other events (169), 3.8% travelled for business/work/employment (164), and 2.8% travelled for training and conference purposes (122).

Figure 4: Air visitors by Country of Usual Residence in January 2026.



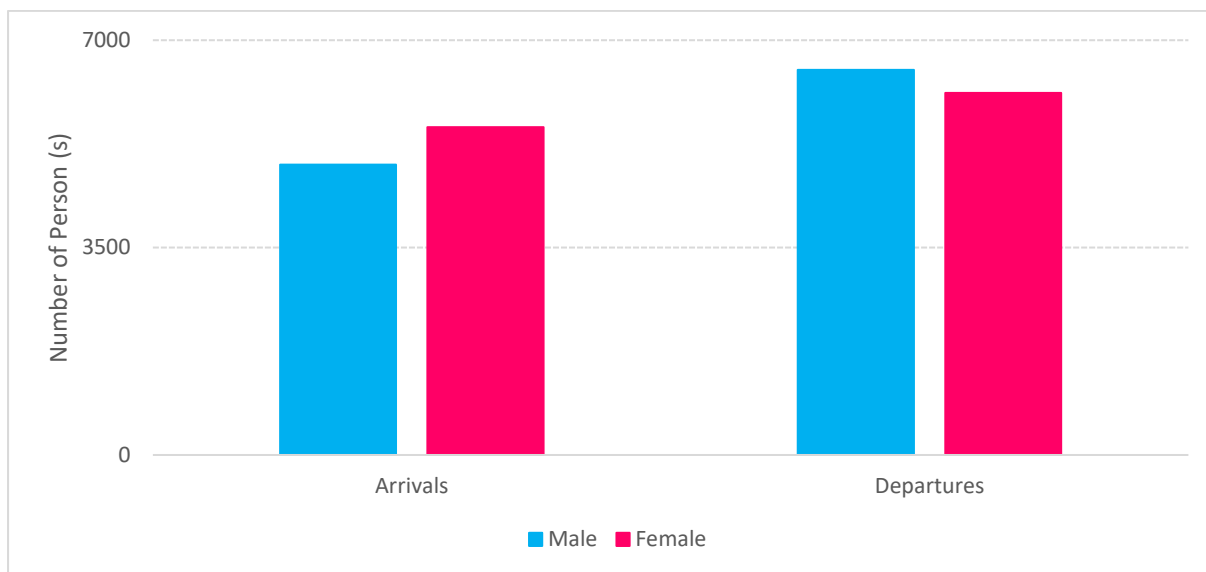
- New Zealand remains the leading country of residence for visitors, accounting for 46.3% of the total air visitors (2,011).
- Australia follows with 20.5% (892) of visitors, United States with 14.8% (642), Other Countries with 14.1% and Fiji with 4.2%.

Figure 5: Air departures by Country of Usual Residence in January 2026.



- The majority of air departures in January 2026 were travelers from New Zealand (4,690) followed by Tongan travelers (3,949), Australia (1,873), United States (1,172), Other Countries (659) and Fiji (264).

Figure 6: Total air arrivals and departures by sex, January 2026.



- In January 2026, females outnumbered males among air arrivals, accounting for 53% of total air arrivals. In contrast, males outnumbered females in air departures, accounting for 51.5% of total air departures.

Definitions

- ▶ **A Visitor:** a person other than a Tongan citizen, permit holder and exempted person, who usually stay at least 24 hours in the Kingdom, or who stays overnight in accommodation within Tonga. This refers to passengers arriving by air and yacht only.
- ▶ **Cruise Ship Passengers:** those who **arrive and depart in the same vessel**, which is on a cruise trip, and use that vessel's accommodation during their stay in Tonga. They are also known as "Excursionist"
- ▶ **A Returning resident:** a person who has the Kingdom of Tonga as their permanent address for more than six months of the year and returns to Tonga after a trip overseas. Tongan residence is self-defined as reported by travellers when completing the Passenger Arrival Card.
- ▶ **Mode of Transport:** only air, yacht and cruise ships passengers are included. Passenger/crew on cargo, navy or special vessels are excluded.
- ▶ **Main reason for journey.** On arrival in Tonga, all overseas visitors and Tongan residents are asked to state their purpose of journey. Statistics are published using the following categories:
 - Holiday/Vacation
 - Business/Work/Employment
 - Training/Conference
 - Visiting Friends and/or Relatives/Returning Residents
 - Others

Table 1: Annual Arrival and Departure by Mode of Travel and Net Migration for Years 2016 - 2025

Period	Visitors Arrivals				Returning Residents				Total Arrivals				Total Departures				Net Migration
	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	
2016	59,130	25,714	1,818	86,662	36,800	-	-	36,800	95,930	25,714	1,818	123,462	95,043	25,703	1,520	122,266	1,196
2017	62,506	21,719	2,354	86,579	38,124	-	-	38,124	100,630	21,719	2,354	124,703	99,280	21,698	1,992	122,970	1,733
2018	54,046	21,708	1,552	77,306	51,428	-	-	51,428	105,474	21,708	1,552	128,734	108,770	21,714	1,602	132,086	-3,352
2019	67,284	24,667	2,021	93,972	42,087	-	-	42,087	109,371	24,667	2,021	136,059	112,714	24,749	2,064	139,527	-3,468
2020	9,010	2,530	6	11,546	13,836	-	-	13,836	22,846	2,530	6	25,382	26,769	2,529	8	29,306	-3,924
2021	202	-	-	202	1,701	-	-	1,701	1,903	-	-	1,903	4,132	-	-	4,132	-2,229
2022	18,427	3,799	92	22,318	13,996	-	-	13,996	32,423	3,799	92	36,314	33,018	3,797	65	36,880	-566
2023	55,749	23,943	2,002	81,694	38,222	-	-	38,222	93,971	23,943	2,002	119,916	100,980	23,937	1,949	126,866	-6,950
2024	62,868	16,214	2,154	81,146	44,438	-	-	44,438	107,306	16,124	2,154	125,584	108,036	16,122	1,626	125,784	-200
2025	64,183	8,358	2,105	74,646	48,257	-	-	48,257	112,440	8,358	2,105	122,903	112,573	8,358	1,457	122,388	515

Table 2: Monthly Arrival and Departure by Mode of Travel and Net Migration for Years 2023 to January 2026

Period	Visitors Arrivals				Returning Residents				Total Arrivals				Total Departures				Net Migration
	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	Air	Ship	Yacht	Total	
2023																	
Jan	3,330	2,856	-	6,186	3,780	-	-	3,780	7,110	2,856	-	9,966	9,346	2,856	-	12,202	-2,236
Feb	2,671	319	-	2,990	2,666	-	-	2,666	5,337	319	-	5,656	6,346	319	-	6,665	-1,009
Mar	3,085	207	-	3,292	2,407	-	-	2,407	5,492	207	-	5,699	6,621	207	-	6,828	-1,129
Apr	3,540	2,872	6	6,418	2,724	-	-	2,724	6,264	2,872	6	9,142	6,689	2,872	20	9,581	-439
May	4,349	-	213	4,562	3,626	-	-	3,626	7,975	-	213	8,188	7,515	-	36	7,551	637
Jun	5,861	-	137	5,998	3,050	-	-	3,050	8,911	-	137	9,048	7,122	-	192	7,314	1,734
Jul	6,435	4,832	294	11,561	2,847	-	-	2,847	9,282	4,832	294	14,408	10,411	4,832	397	15,640	-1,232
Aug	6,058	2,369	273	8,700	2,940	-	-	2,940	8,998	2,369	273	11,640	9,638	2,369	257	12,264	-624
Sep	5,141	-	357	5,498	3,564	-	-	3,564	8,705	-	357	9,062	9,299	-	399	9,698	-636
Oct	3,760	4,027	285	8,072	3,167	-	-	3,167	6,927	4,027	285	11,239	7,562	4,025	342	11,929	-690
Nov	4,196	4,702	425	9,323	3,511	-	-	3,511	7,707	4,702	425	12,834	8,260	4,700	282	13,242	-408
Dec	7,323	1,759	12	9,094	3,940	-	-	3,940	11,263	1,759	12	13,034	12,171	1,757	24	13,952	-918
2024																	
Jan	3,762	674	11	4,447	5,672	-	-	5,672	9,434	674	11	10,119	11,330	674	-	12,004	-1,885
Feb	3,240	2,340	-	5,580	3,766	-	-	3,766	7,006	2,340	-	9,346	7,385	2,339	-	9,724	-378
Mar	3,520	1,378	-	4,898	3,013	-	-	3,013	6,533	1,378	-	7,911	7,075	1,377	-	8,452	-541
Apr	3,882	611	29	4,522	3,355	-	-	3,355	7,237	611	29	7,877	6,947	611	2	7,560	317
May	5,039	-	363	5,402	3,632	-	-	3,632	8,671	-	363	9,034	8,330	-	103	8,433	601
Jun	7,277	-	309	7,586	3,434	-	-	3,434	10,711	-	309	11,020	6,982	-	414	7,396	3,624
Jul	7,453	2,768	359	10,580	3,123	-	-	3,123	10,576	2,768	359	13,703	12,157	2,768	360	15,285	-1,582
Aug	6,679	2,287	296	9,262	3,192	-	-	3,192	9,871	2,287	296	12,454	10,125	2,290	230	12,645	-191
Sep	5,930	-	412	6,342	3,724	-	-	3,724	9,654	-	412	10,066	9,341	-	289	9,630	436
Oct	4,460	4,908	234	9,602	2,857	-	-	2,857	7,317	4,908	234	12,459	7,084	4,907	181	12,172	287
Nov	4,255	750	139	5,144	4,239	-	-	4,239	8,494	750	139	9,383	9,250	748	47	10,045	-662
Dec	7,371	408	2	7,781	4,431	-	-	4,431	11,802	408	2	12,212	12,030	408	-	12,438	-226
2025																	
Jan	3,700	468	3	4,171	6,158	-	-	6,158	9,858	468	3	10,329	11,066	468	3	11,069	-1,208
Feb	3,106	4,099	-	7,209	3,559	-	-	3,559	6,665	4,099	-	10,764	7,072	4,099	-	11,171	-407
Mar	3,099	-	-	3,099	3,330	-	-	3,330	6,429	-	-	6,429	6,876	-	-	6,876	-447
Apr	3,838	473	40	4,330	3,448	-	-	3,448	7,286	473	40	7,778	7,244	473	33	7,731	49
May	5,091	950	304	6,345	4,005	-	-	4,005	9,096	950	304	7,778	8,214	950	121	9,285	1,065
June	5,604	-	381	5,985	3,552	-	-	3,552	9,156	-	381	9,537	7,799	-	258	8,057	1,480
July	6,399	-	301	6,700	3,696	-	-	3,696	10,095	-	301	10,396	10,835	-	200	11,035	-639
Aug	6,188	-	344	6,532	3,310	-	-	3,310	9,498	-	344	9,842	9,937	-	304	10,241	-399
Sept	6,550	-	464	7,014	4,094	-	-	4,094	10,644	-	464	11,108	10,290	-	174	10,464	644
Oct	6,896	1,269	253	8,418	4,903	-	-	4,903	11,799	1,269	253	13,321	11,691	1,269	360	13,320	1
Nov	4,399	-	15	4,414	3,837	-	-	3,837	8,236	-	15	8,251	9,347	-	4	9,351	-1,100
Dec	9,313	1,099	-	10,412	4,365	-	-	4,365	13,678	1,099	-	14,777	12,202	1,099	-	13,301	1,476
2026																	
Jan	4,342	-	-	4,342	6,089	-	-	6,089	10,431	-	-	10,431	12,607	-	-	12,607	-2,176

Table 3: Total Air Arrivals by Age Group, Type of Passengers and Sex for January 2026

Age Group	Total			Type of Passengers					
				Visitors			Returning Residents		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0-4	481	230	251	213	90	123	268	140	128
5-9	605	286	319	198	86	112	407	200	207
10-14	829	401	428	222	111	111	607	290	317
15-19	936	460	476	254	126	128	682	334	348
20-24	856	377	479	326	134	192	530	243	287
25-29	859	365	494	379	168	211	480	197	283
30-34	786	327	459	350	141	209	436	186	250
35-39	832	420	412	412	215	197	420	205	215
40-44	816	392	424	367	197	170	449	195	254
45-49	667	307	360	337	164	173	330	143	187
50-54	725	375	350	342	189	153	383	186	197
55-59	731	331	400	349	169	180	382	162	220
60-64	479	229	250	241	109	132	238	120	118
65-69	412	195	217	190	95	95	222	100	122
70-74	255	126	129	106	60	46	149	66	83
75+	162	77	85	56	33	23	106	44	62
Total	10,431	4,898	5,533	4,342	2,087	2,255	6,089	2,811	3,278
%Distribution	100.0%	47.0%	53.0%	41.6%	20.0%	21.6%	58.4%	26.9%	31.4%

Table 4: Total Air Visitors by Usual Residence and Purpose of Visit, January 2026

Country of Usual Residence	Total	% Distribution	Holiday Vacation	Business/ Work/ Employment	Training/ Conference	Visiting Relatives/ Friends/Returning Residents	Others
Australia	892	20.5%	730	23	12	86	41
Canada	29	0.7%	26	2	1	0	0
China	133	3.1%	105	13	8	7	0
Fiji	183	4.2%	113	22	19	8	21
France	9	0.2%	9	0	0	0	0
Germany	26	0.6%	21	0	0	4	1
India	8	0.2%	7	1	0	0	0
Italy	7	0.2%	7	0	0	0	0
Japan	52	1.2%	34	8	5	3	2
New Zealand	2,011	46.3%	1,662	47	36	225	41
Other African Countries	20	0.5%	18	0	1	1	0
Other Asian Countries	88	2.0%	50	14	16	1	7
Other European Countries	80	1.8%	74	2	0	2	2
Other Pacific Countries	60	1.4%	38	3	1	9	9
Uk	67	1.5%	51	2	3	2	9
United States	642	14.8%	499	23	17	69	34
Western Samoa	33	0.8%	19	4	3	5	2
Total	4,342	100%	3,464	164	122	423	169
% Distribution	100.0%	0.0%	79.8%	3.8%	2.8%	9.7%	3.9%

Table 5: Total Air Departures by Age Group, Type of Passengers and Sex for January 2026

Age Group	Total			Type of Passengers					
				Visitors			Returning Residents		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0-4	572	277	295	483	230	253	89	47	42
5-9	716	370	346	570	291	279	146	79	67
10-14	833	417	416	659	320	339	174	97	77
15-19	960	474	486	672	318	354	288	156	132
20-24	1,097	610	487	586	272	314	511	338	173
25-29	1,124	602	522	653	299	354	471	303	168
30-34	983	490	493	592	256	336	391	234	157
35-39	1,020	548	472	677	337	340	343	211	132
40-44	959	527	432	611	326	285	348	201	147
45-49	856	422	434	596	287	309	260	135	125
50-54	841	444	397	613	320	293	228	124	104
55-59	932	476	456	686	341	345	246	135	111
60-64	690	333	357	527	257	270	163	76	87
65-69	503	247	256	374	188	186	129	59	70
70-74	290	154	136	212	112	100	78	42	36
75+	231	107	124	147	73	74	84	34	50
Total	12,607	6,498	6,109	8,658	4,227	4,431	3,949	2,271	1,678
%Distribution	100.0%	51.5%	48.5%	68.7%	33.5%	35.1%	31.3%	18.0%	13.3%

Table 6: Total Air Departures by Usual Residence and by Sex, January 2026

Country of Usual Residence	Total					
	Total	% Distribution	Male	% Distribution	Female	% Distribution
American Samoa	9	0.1%	3	0.0%	6	0.1%
Australia	1,873	14.9%	901	13.9%	972	15.9%
Canada	21	0.2%	11	0.2%	10	0.2%
China	197	1.6%	135	2.1%	62	1.0%
Fiji	264	2.1%	157	2.4%	107	1.8%
France	16	0.1%	8	0.1%	8	0.1%
Germany	19	0.2%	14	0.2%	5	0.1%
India	6	0.0%	5	0.1%	1	0.0%
Italy	12	0.1%	8	0.1%	4	0.1%
Japan	41	0.3%	30	0.5%	11	0.2%
New Zealand	4,690	37.2%	2,208	34.0%	2,482	40.6%
Other African Countries	13	0.1%	7	0.1%	6	0.1%
Other Asian Countries	72	0.6%	40	0.6%	32	0.5%
Other European Countries	88	0.7%	53	0.8%	35	0.6%
Other Pacific Countries	54	0.4%	18	0.3%	36	0.6%
Tonga	3,949	31.3%	2,271	34.9%	1,678	27.5%
Uk	62	0.5%	41	0.6%	21	0.3%
United States	1,172	9.3%	562	8.6%	610	10.0%
Western Samoa	49	0.4%	26	0.4%	23	0.4%
Total	12,607	100%	6,498	51.5%	6,109	48.5%

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Nuku'alofa, TONGA—2026
