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STATISTICAL BULLETIN ON

MONTHLY MIGRATION STATISTICS

SEPTEMBER 2026

Statistics Department
P.O. Box 149,
Nuku'alofa,
Kingdom of Tonga
Website: www.tongastats.gov.to
E-mail: dept@stats.gov.to

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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 September 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.

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Mr. Sione F. Lolohea

Government Statistician

Summary of International Arrivals and Departures

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

Month of September 2026	Number of Person(s)			Changes from previous month (%)	Changes from previous year (%)
	Sept 2026	Aug 2026	Sept 2025		
All Arrivals	**12,099**	**10,817**	**11,108**	**11.9%**	**8.9%**
Air Visitors	7,495	7,369	6,550	1.7%	14.4%
Air Returning Residents	3,919	3,162	4,094	23.9%	-4.3%
Cruise Ships	210	-	-	-	-
Yachts	475	286	464	66.1%	2.4%
All Departures	**11,780**	**11,191**	**10,464**	**5.3%**	**12.6%**
Air Departures Non-Resident	7,760	8,212	6,603	-5.5%	17.5%
Air Departures Resident	3,793	2,888	3,687	31.3%	2.9%
Cruise Ships	210	-	-	-	-
Yachts	17	91	174	-81.3%	-90.2%

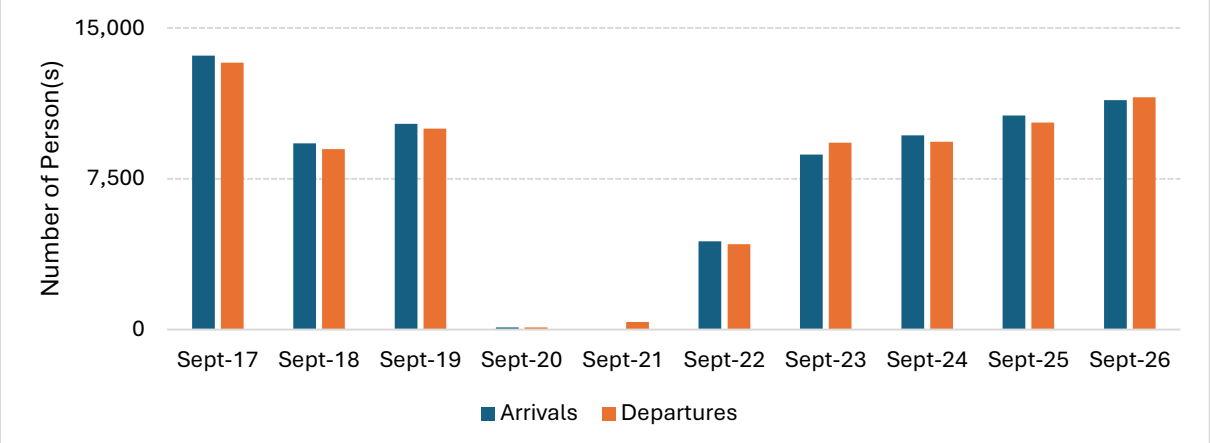
International Arrivals:

- The **total number of arrivals in September 2026 was 12,099**, representing an 11.9% increase compared to August 2026, and an 8.9% increase compared to September 2025.
- Air visitor arrivals increased by 1.7% compared to August 2026 and increased by 14.4% compared to September 2025.
- Air returning residents increased by 23.9% compared to August 2026 and decreased by 4.3% compared to September 2025.
- Yacht arrivals in September 2026 increased by 66.1% compared to August 2026 and by 2.4% compared to September 2025.
- The significant increase in total yacht arrivals in September 2026 was likely due to the Vava'u Sailing Festival, which took place from 25th September to 2nd October 2026.

International Departures:

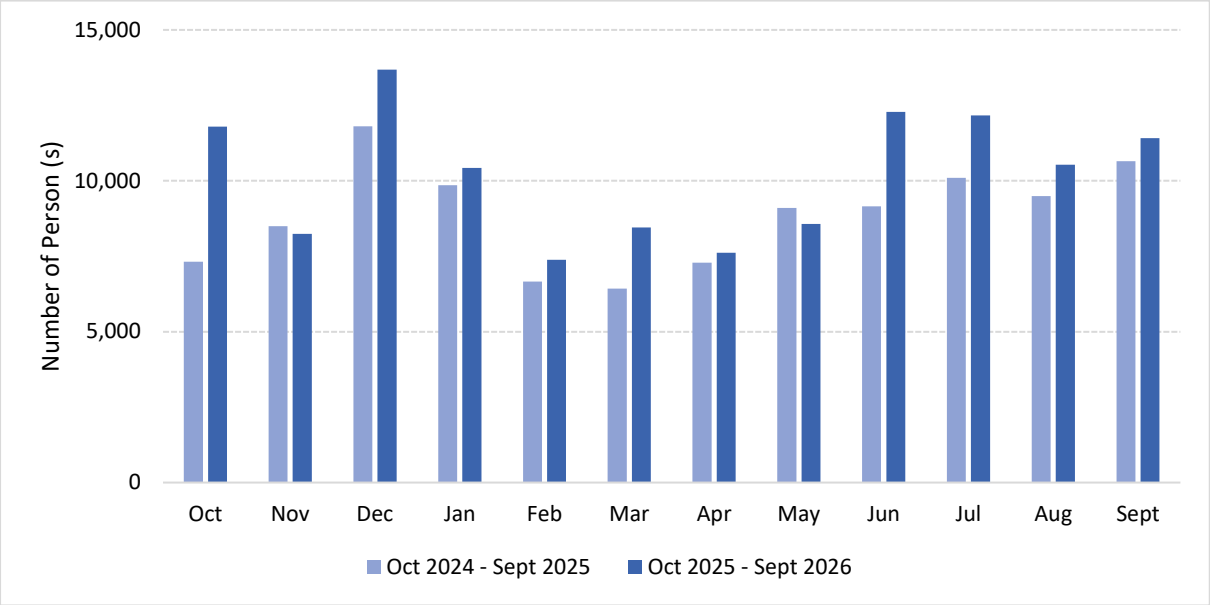
- The **total number of departures in September 2026 was 11,780**, representing a 5.3% increase compared to August 2026 and a 12.6% increase compared to September 2025.
- Air departures of non-residents decreased by 5.5% compared to August 2026 and increased by 17.5% compared to September 2025.
- Air departures of residents increased by 31.3% compared to August 2026 and by 2.9% compared to September 2025.
- Yacht departures decreased compared with both the previous month and the same period in the previous year. This significant decrease was likely due to the event held in late September, which encouraged yachts to remain in the country.

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



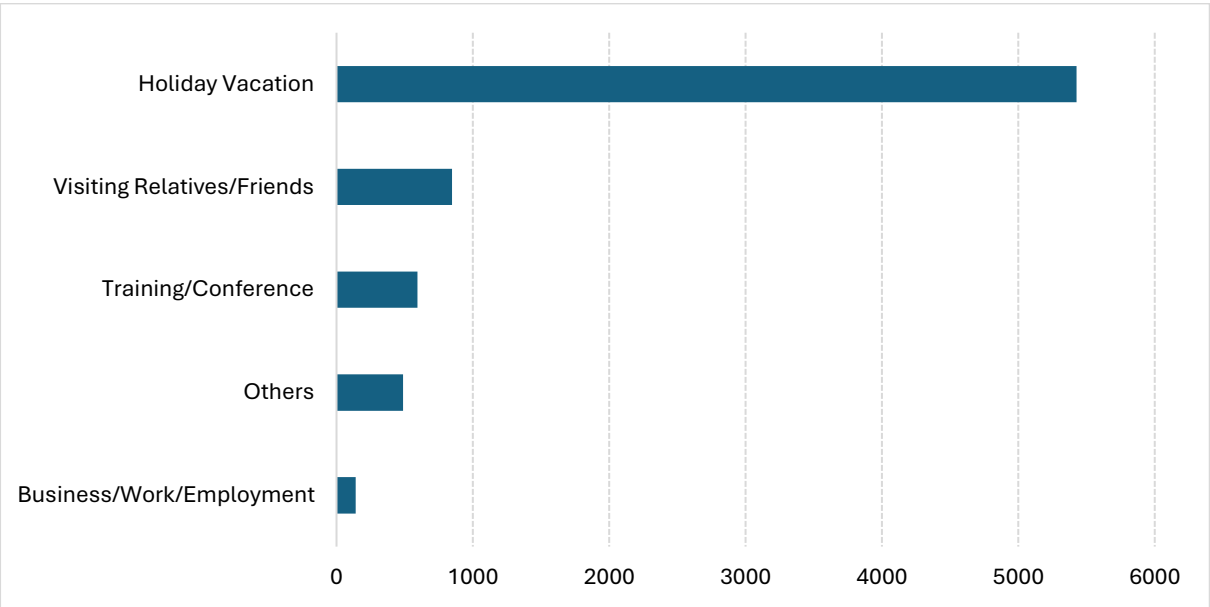
- In September 2026, Tonga recorded higher air departures (11,553) than air arrivals (10,414), following the same trend observed in the previous month but the opposite trend observed in the same month of the previous year.

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



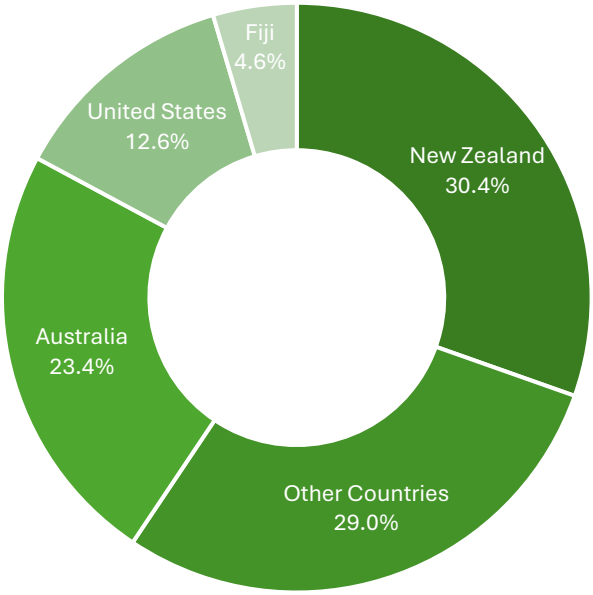
- Total air arrivals in September 2026 were 11,414, reflecting an 8.4% increase from 10,531 in August 2026 and a 7.2% increase compared to September 2025. These figures include both visitors and returning residents.

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



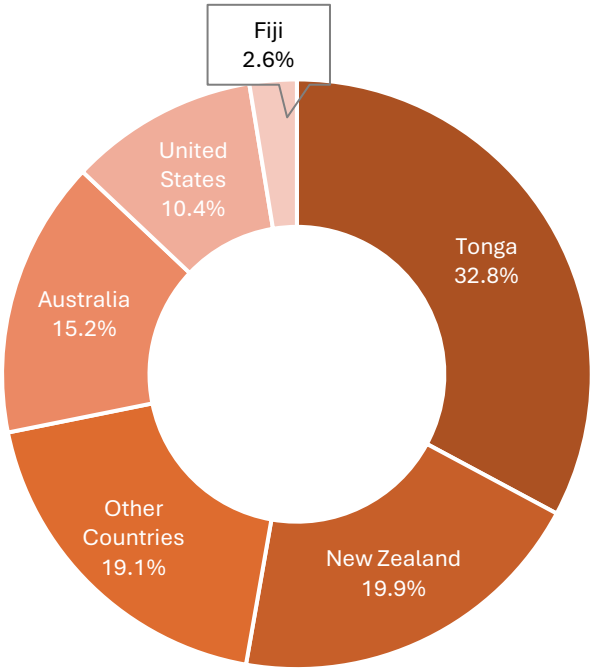
- In September 2026, majority of visitors by air, travelled to Tonga for holiday vacation purposes, making up 72.4% of the total air visitors (5,427).
- 11.3% of visitors by air travelled to Tonga to visit relatives and friends (847).
- 7.9% travelled for training and conference purposes (593), 6.5% travelled for other reasons such as funerals, weddings and other events (488), and 1.9% travelled for business/work/employment (140).

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



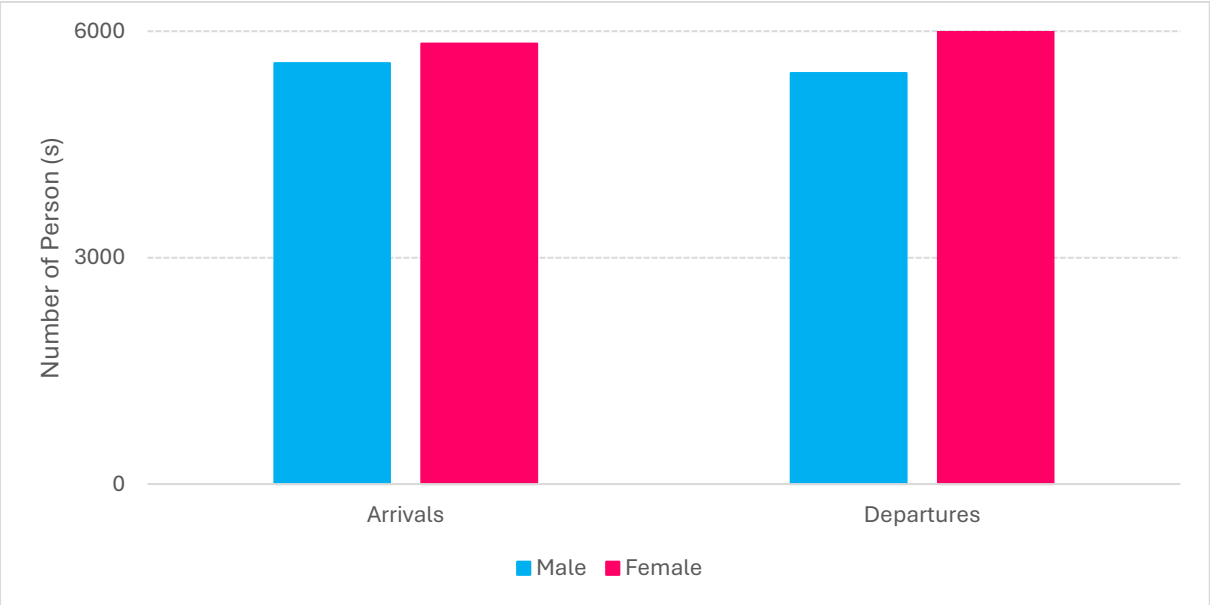
- New Zealand remains the leading country of residence for visitors, accounting for 30.4% of the total air visitors (2,279).
- Travelers from Other Countries follows with a 29.0% (2,173) of visitors, Australia with 23.4% (1,757), United States with 12.6% (942) and Fiji with 4.6%.

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



- The majority of air departures in September 2026 were Tongan residents (3,793) followed by travellers from New Zealand (2,303), Other Countries (2,203), Australia (1,758), United States (1,197) and Fiji (299).

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



- In September 2026, females outnumbered males in both total air arrivals and air departures, accounting for 51.1% of total air arrivals and 52.9% of total air departures, respectively.

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	16,124	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 September 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																	
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	11561	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	10,350	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	1099	-	10,412	4,365	-	-	4,365	13,678	1,099	-	14,777	12,202	1,099	-	13,301	1,476
2026																	
Jan	4,342	4,851	-	4,342	6,089	-	-	6,089	10,431	4,851	-	10,431	12,607	4,861	-	12,607	-2,186
Feb	3,101	1,438	-	4,539	4,281	-	-	4,281	7,382	1,438	-	8,820	7,439	1,270	-	8,709	111
Mar	4,905	3,030	6	7,941	3,549	-	-	3,549	8,454	3,030	6	11,490	8,291	3,030	-	11,321	169
Apr	3,751	1,313	30	5,094	3,862	-	-	3,862	7,613	1,313	30	8,956	8,154	1,319	10	9,483	-527
May	4,317	-	274	4,591	4,258	-	-	4,258	8,575	-	274	8,849	7,670	-	109	7,779	1,070
June	8,251	273	271	8,795	4,032	-	-	4,032	12,283	273	271	12,827	8,096	273	179	8,548	4,279
July	8,463	289	233	8,985	3,699	-	-	3,699	12,162	289	233	12,684	14,720	289	124	15,133	-2,449
Aug	7,369	-	286	7,655	3,162	-	-	3,162	10,531	-	286	10,817	11,100	-	91	11,191	-374
Sept	7,495	-	475	7,970	3,919	-	-	3,919	11,414	-	475	11,889	11,553	-	17	11,570	319

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

Age Group	Total			Type of Passengers					
				Visitors			Returning Residents		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0-4	294	150	144	205	108	97	89	42	47
5-9	308	142	166	219	101	118	89	41	48
10-14	440	236	204	337	181	156	103	55	48
15-19	498	282	216	260	115	145	238	167	71
20-24	801	439	362	351	144	207	450	295	155
25-29	1,085	503	582	655	242	413	430	261	169
30-34	1,209	521	688	815	307	508	394	214	180
35-39	1,136	546	590	790	354	436	346	192	154
40-44	1,098	530	568	758	342	416	340	188	152
45-49	929	446	483	627	294	333	302	152	150
50-54	877	438	439	601	297	304	276	141	135
55-59	918	442	476	599	282	317	319	160	159
60-64	742	355	387	538	261	277	204	94	110
65-69	523	268	255	379	206	173	144	62	82
70-74	326	167	159	232	116	116	94	51	43
75+	230	111	119	129	66	63	101	45	56
Total	**11,414**	**5,576**	**5,838**	**7,495**	**3,416**	**4,079**	**3,919**	**2,160**	**1,759**
%Distribution	100.0%	48.9%	51.1%	65.7%	29.9%	35.7%	34.3%	18.9%	15.4%

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

Country of Usual Residence	Total	% Distribution	Holiday Vacation	Business/ Work/ Employment	Training/ Conference	Visiting Relatives/ Friends/Returning Residents	Others
American Samoa	2	0.0%	0	0	0	2	0
Australia	1757	23.4%	1228	35	102	242	150
Canada	78	1.0%	65	1	5	0	7
China	540	7.2%	497	14	2	21	6
Fiji	344	4.6%	133	20	137	20	34
France	61	0.8%	46	8	4	3	0
Germany	137	1.8%	137	0	0	0	0
India	19	0.3%	13	2	3	1	0
Italy	50	0.7%	48	2	0	0	0
Japan	136	1.8%	110	8	10	4	4
New Zealand	2279	30.4%	1496	33	123	472	155
Other African Countries	51	0.7%	43	2	3	1	2
Other Asian Countries	238	3.2%	214	2	15	2	5
Other European Countries	511	6.8%	497	2	11	0	1
Other Pacific Countries	140	1.9%	22	3	97	3	15
Uk	157	2.1%	137	2	8	6	4
United States	942	12.6%	726	5	45	139	27
Western Samoa	53	0.7%	15	1	28	5	4
Total	**7,495**	**100%**	**5,427**	**140**	**593**	**921**	**414**
% Distribution	100.0%	0.0%	72.4%	1.9%	7.9%	12.3%	5.5%

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

Age Group	Total			Type of Passengers					
				Visitors			Returning Residents		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0-4	330	155	175	211	101	110	119	54	65
5-9	286	130	156	186	87	99	100	43	57
10-14	339	176	163	222	121	101	117	55	62
15-19	522	298	224	226	103	123	296	195	101
20-24	710	319	391	360	146	214	350	173	177
25-29	1,009	427	582	663	253	410	346	174	172
30-34	1,185	506	679	833	312	521	352	194	158
35-39	1,160	543	617	840	384	456	320	159	161
40-44	1,086	527	559	770	359	411	316	168	148
45-49	949	442	507	664	316	348	285	126	159
50-54	912	440	472	638	311	327	274	129	145
55-59	996	470	526	661	302	359	335	168	167
60-64	847	399	448	592	276	316	255	123	132
65-69	631	309	322	471	234	237	160	75	85
70-74	363	189	174	273	146	127	90	43	47
75+	228	116	112	150	78	72	78	38	40
Total	**11,553**	**5,446**	**6,107**	**7,760**	**3,529**	**4,231**	**3,793**	**1,917**	**1,876**
%Distribution	100.0%	47.1%	52.9%	67.2%	30.5%	36.6%	32.8%	16.6%	16.2%

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

Country of Usual Residence	Total					
	Total	% Distribution	Male	% Distribution	Female	% Distribution
American Samoa	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Australia	1,758	15.2%	777	14.3%	981	16.1%
Canada	56	0.5%	22	0.4%	34	0.6%
China	588	5.1%	255	4.7%	333	5.5%
Fiji	299	2.6%	131	2.4%	168	2.8%
France	65	0.6%	44	0.8%	21	0.3%
Germany	124	1.1%	59	1.1%	65	1.1%
India	16	0.1%	11	0.2%	5	0.1%
Italy	45	0.4%	24	0.4%	21	0.3%
Japan	146	1.3%	80	1.5%	66	1.1%
New Zealand	2,303	19.9%	1083	19.9%	1220	20.0%
Other African Countries	54	0.5%	26	0.5%	28	0.5%
Other Asian Countries	221	1.9%	100	1.8%	121	2.0%
Other European Countries	519	4.5%	236	4.3%	283	4.6%
Other Pacific Countries	147	1.3%	57	1.0%	90	1.5%
Tonga	3,793	32.8%	1917	35.2%	1876	30.7%
Uk	163	1.4%	75	1.4%	88	1.4%
United States	1,197	10.4%	524	9.6%	673	11.0%
Western Samoa	57	0.5%	25	0.5%	32	0.5%
Total	**11,553**	**100%**	**5,446**	**47.7%**	**6,107**	**52.9%**

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