

VISITOR EARNINGS & REMITTANCES REPORT FEBRUARY 2019

This report is a monthly release of the latest available indicators on the tourism sector and private remittances, with information sourced from the Central Bank, Samoa Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Revenue.

Report No.8: 2018/19

February 2019

Visitor Earnings and Arrivals

In February 2019, total **visitor arrivals** grew by 22.0 percent to 9,044 visitors compared to the same month last year but was 34.2 percent lower when compared to the previous month.

Underpinning the overall increase in arrivals over February 2018 were several events such as the Annual Marist Sevens tournament and various conferences that were held in Apia like the Pacific ACP-European Union High Level Political Dialogue amongst others.

By country, the increase in visitor arrivals over February 2018 was due to gains in visitors from:

- American Samoa (up 703 visitors)
- New Zealand (up 609 visitors)
- Other Countries (up 281 visitors)
- Australia (up 261 visitors)
- Europe (up 5 visitors)

Except for 'Visiting Families and Relatives (VFR)', all other types of tourists had improved as follows:

- Others (up 1,200 visitors)
- Business and Conference (up 503 visitors)
- Sports (up 148 visitors)
- Holiday (up 63 visitors)

As a result, **total arrivals in the first eight months of 2018/19** were 10.7 percent higher than the same period last year. By country, total visitors from all of Samoa's main markets increased except for American Samoa. Arrivals from New Zealand, Australia, Europe, 'Other countries' and the 'United States of America' (USA) all increased by 5,804

visitors, 4,996 visitors, 1,002 visitors, 456 visitors and 367 visitors in that order. By purpose, increases were also recorded for 'VFR' (up 12,516 visitors), 'Others' (up 2,512 visitors) and 'Sports' (up 66 visitors).

Despite an 8.3 percent trend decrease in the average visitor expenditure, **total visitor receipts** increased by 13.7 percent (or \$2.9 million) to \$23.9 million over the same month last year but was 32.8 percent lower than January 2019.

Total visitor receipts in the first eight months of 2018/19 also went up by 15.3 percent to \$347.2 million over the same period of 2017/18. This improvement reflected higher earnings from New Zealand (up by \$20.8 million), Australia (up by \$18.7 million), 'Other Countries' (up by \$3.9 million), the USA (up by \$1.8 million), Europe (up by \$1.0 million) and American Samoa (up slightly by \$0.1 million).

The **tourism price index** recorded a decline of 0.2 percent over the same month of 2018 due to reductions in 'Other Transportation' (down 3.4 percent) and 'Car Rentals' (down 0.3 percent) indices.

Private Remittances

Total private remittances improved by 6.8 percent to \$40.1 million in February 2019 when compared to the same month last year or 1.1 percent higher than its level in the previous month.

The boost in private remittances over the year was accounted for by increases in receipts from New

Zealand (up \$1.9 million), Others (up \$1.5 million), American Samoa (up \$0.2 million) and USA (up 0.1 million). By recipient, funds for Families and Households rose by \$1.0 million, Banknotes (up \$0.5 million), 'Others' (up \$0.2 million) and remittances 'In Kind' (up \$0.9 million).

Total inflow of private remittances in the first eight months of 2018/19 grew by 12.8 percent to \$352.2 million when compared to the same period last year. Underpinning this expansion were higher transfers from New Zealand (up \$13.8 million), Australia (up \$9.3 million) and Others (up \$2.3 million). In addition, transfers from American Samoa rose by \$3.0 million while those from the USA went up by \$11.5 million partially due to a 3.8 percent appreciation of US dollar against Samoan tala. By recipients, gains were recorded for 'Family and Households', 'Hand carried cash' and 'Non-profit institution serving households' (NPISH) by \$17.3 million, \$17.2 million and \$6.7 million respectively while both 'Others' and 'In Kind' receipts declined by \$0.8 million and \$0.5 million in that order.

The monthly share of remittances inflows received through Money Transfer Operators (MTOS) increased to 79.0 percent from 73.0 percent in February 2018 while those received through commercial banks dropped to 21.0 percent from 27.0 percent in the same month last year.

The **average cost of sending** NZD\$200.00 to Samoa increased to 13.21 percent of total cost from 12.89 percent in February 2018. Simultaneously, the average cost of sending AUD\$200.00 to Samoa fell to 8.59 percent of total funds from 10.52 percent in February last year.

CENTRAL BANK OF SAMOA
29th March 2019

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Table 2.

INFLOW OF PRIVATE REMITTANCES

AMOUNTS IN TALA MILLION

Amount in Tala Millions	Jan-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19
		(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)	(rev)		
By Recipient (Tala Millions)	30.70	39.77	37.58	44.49	41.88	49.34	40.18	40.55	48.12	37.30	40.85	40.02	65.61	39.67	40.12
Banknotes	5.20	7.21	4.15	5.62	6.28	8.16	7.04	7.63	7.46	7.88	6.70	5.70	12.44	4.19	4.62
Churches, school, Charities	0.53	3.01	5.99	6.15	7.06	6.44	5.65	1.82	6.40	1.85	2.86	3.22	5.52	6.40	5.94
Individual/Family/Households	22.76	26.80	25.25	31.70	27.29	33.57	26.27	28.97	31.37	25.88	29.80	29.96	45.47	28.28	26.27
In Kind	0.50	0.55	0.50	0.40	0.62	0.58	0.47	0.59	0.68	0.57	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.45
Others	1.71	2.21	1.68	0.62	0.63	0.59	0.75	1.54	2.20	1.13	0.75	1.14	2.18	0.81	1.84
By Country (Tala Millions)	30.70	39.77	37.58	44.49	41.88	49.34	40.18	40.55	48.12	37.30	40.85	40.02	65.61	39.67	40.12
USA	4.73	7.16	8.56	3.38	9.35	9.72	8.96	6.81	9.25	4.93	7.01	8.29	13.39	9.97	8.67
New Zealand	13.32	17.24	14.09	20.26	16.27	20.90	15.98	17.00	16.59	15.48	16.37	16.82	26.73	15.33	15.98
Australia	9.65	12.41	11.82	14.20	13.86	14.08	11.81	14.00	16.46	13.77	13.39	12.24	20.61	11.99	10.62
American Samoa	1.18	1.01	1.25	1.55	1.56	2.24	1.69	1.65	1.73	1.49	1.62	1.61	2.72	1.28	1.47
Others	1.82	1.95	1.86	5.11	0.84	2.39	1.74	1.09	4.08	1.64	2.46	1.06	2.16	1.10	3.38
By Channel (%)															
Banks	13.9%	17.7%	27.0%	19.8%	22.5%	17.3%	19.7%	14.0%	20.9%	11.5%	13.2%	14.0%	15.1%	20.7%	21.0%
Non Banks (1)	86.1%	82.3%	73.0%	80.2%	77.5%	82.7%	80.3%	86.0%	79.1%	88.5%	86.8%	86.0%	84.9%	79.3%	79.0%
Total Remittances (Tala Millions)	30.70	39.77	37.58	44.49	41.88	49.34	40.18	40.55	48.12	37.30	40.85	40.02	65.61	39.67	40.12
First Number of Months up to	7	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months
Total Remittances (Tala Millions)	243.51	274.79	312.37	356.86	398.74	448.08	488.26	40.55	88.67	125.97	166.82	206.84	272.45	312.12	352.24
Percentage Change (over same period last 3 year average (%))	4.2%	12.8%	15.6%	17.9%	20.0%	22.2%	21.0%	19.8%	25.8%	20.7%	16.6%	13.3%	15.9%	13.6%	12.8%
5 year average (%)	-2.0%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.8%	0.6%	0.7%	1.1%	2.2%	1.1%	2.0%	2.7%	3.5%	2.8%	3.6%	3.8%
	1.8%	-1.1%	-1.4%	-1.1%	-0.9%	-1.0%	-0.8%	-1.0%	0.2%	1.0%	2.2%	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%	2.3%
By Recipient (Tala Millions)															
Banknotes	31.69	35.25	39.41	45.02	51.30	59.47	66.50	7.63	15.09	22.97	29.68	35.38	47.82	52.00	56.62
Churches, school, Charities	8.22	21.33	27.32	33.47	40.53	46.97	52.62	1.82	8.22	10.07	12.93	16.15	21.67	28.07	34.01
Individual/Family/Households	190.98	203.45	228.70	260.41	287.69	321.27	347.53	28.97	60.34	86.22	116.02	145.98	191.45	219.73	246.00
In Kind	3.72	4.06	4.56	4.96	5.58	6.16	6.63	0.59	1.27	1.84	2.58	2.58	2.58	2.58	4.02
Others	8.91	10.70	12.38	13.00	13.63	14.21	14.97	1.54	3.74	4.88	5.62	6.76	8.94	9.75	11.59
By Country (Tala Millions)															
USA	37.21	48.29	56.85	60.23	69.58	79.30	88.26	6.81	16.06	20.99	28.00	36.29	49.68	59.65	68.32
New Zealand	100.60	112.40	126.49	146.75	163.02	183.92	199.90	17.00	33.59	49.06	65.43	82.25	108.97	124.30	140.28
Australia	83.44	92.00	103.82	118.02	131.88	145.96	157.77	14.00	30.46	44.22	57.62	69.86	90.47	102.46	113.08
American Samoa	10.36	9.30	10.55	12.10	13.66	15.90	17.59	1.65	3.39	4.87	6.50	8.11	10.83	12.11	13.58
Others	11.91	12.80	14.66	19.77	20.60	23.00	24.73	1.09	5.18	6.82	9.28	10.34	12.50	13.60	16.98

(1) Includes Money Transfer Operators (MTOs) and Foreign Exchange Dealers (FEDs)

(rev) - Remittances data starting from May 2017 up to December 2018 have been revised to reflect updates and amendments to the international transactions reported by commercial banks and money transfer operators.