

## VISITOR EARNINGS & REMITTANCES REPORT

### MARCH 2020

*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 for Revenue.*

*Report No.9: 2019/20*

*March 2020*

#### **Visitor Arrivals**

The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry saw a substantial reduction downturn of 62.7 percent (or 6,999 visitors) to 4,164 visitors over the same month last year which also recorded a drop of 41.0 percent (or 2,889 visitors) over the previous month.

With the lockdown of international borders, the continuous restrictions on travel expanded and the introduction of the 14-day quarantine for in-coming passengers, the main source markets for tourists fell considerably when compared to the same period last year:

- New Zealand (down 2,725 visitors)
- Australia (down 1,486 visitors)
- American Samoa (down 855 visitors)
- USA (down 728 visitors)
- Others (down 611 visitors)
- Europe (down 594 visitors)

Moreover, the reductions were recorded for all by purpose categories:

- Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) (down 3,614 visitors)
- Holiday (down 2,615 visitors)
- Business and Conference (down 389 visitors)
- Other (down 343 visitors)
- Sport (down 38 visitors)

Consequently, total visitor arrivals in the first nine months of 2019/20 contracted 7.4 percent (or 9,995 visitors) to 124,399 visitors compared to the same period last year. Significant decreases were recorded for New Zealand (down 8,221 visitors),

American Samoa (down 3,498 visitors), Australia (down 2,832 visitors), Europe (down 1,419 visitors) and USA (down 714 visitors). The number of visitors who were 'VFR', 'Holiday' and 'Other' all fell by 9,930 visitors, 4,612 visitors and 1,297 visitors respectively.

**Total Visitor Receipts** fell by 63.2 percent (or \$21.7 million) to \$12.6 million due to a decrease in the average visitor expenditure over the same month in 2019 and was 39.5 percent (or \$8.2 million) less than the previous month.

Furthermore, total visitor receipts in the first nine months of 2019/20 fell by 6.3 percent (or \$25.2 million) to \$375.3 million when compared to the same period last year. Underpinning this overall decrease were lower earnings from New Zealand (down \$23.7 million), Australia (down \$11.9 million), American Samoa (down \$8.7 million), USA (\$3.4 million) and Europe (\$2.1 million) where by purpose, 'VFR', 'Holiday' and 'Other' dropped by 15.1 percent, 10.1 percent and 8.8 percent respectively.

The tourism price index was 8.8 percent lower than in March 2019 due to a substantial decrease in 'Accommodation' sub-indexes.

#### **Private Remittances**

Total private remittances recorded a 15.2 percent (or \$8.3 million) decrease to \$46.3 million over March 2019 but was 10.3 percent (or \$4.3 million) higher than the previous month.

Primarily contributing to the overall decrease over the year was less funds received from USA (down \$5.6 million), Australia (down \$5.5 million) and Others' (down \$0.3 million). By recipient, decreases were recorded for 'Non-profit institutions serving households' (NPISH) (down \$8.7 million), 'Hand carried cash' (down \$2.5 million) and 'Others' (down \$2.2 million). For the record, we would like to thank and acknowledge the Prime Minister of New Zealand for accepting our Prime Minister's humble request for the inclusion of money transfer operators' agents as essential services during the lockdown. This has helped immensely in ensuring that the vulnerable groups and communities in Samoa continue to receive much needed remittance from their loving families in New Zealand.

Total inflow of private remittances in the first nine months of 2019/20 went up by 1.7 percent (or \$7.0 million) to \$416.1 million over the same period last year. Largely responsible for the overall increase in the first nine months were gains in transfers from New Zealand (up \$17.4 million), Others' (up \$4.2 million) and American Samoa (up \$2.8 million). Partially responsible for the increase in remittances

was the 2.8 percent depreciation of the Samoan Tala against the US dollar. By recipient, total funds for 'Family and Households' and 'In-Kind' all increased by \$15.5 million and \$3.1 million respectively.

The share of remittance inflows over the year through money transfer operators (MTOs) widened to 79.3 percent from 66.9 percent whilst funds received directly through the commercial banks contracted to 20.7 percent from 33.1 percent.

The average cost of sending NZD\$200.00 to Samoa narrowed to 7.82 percent from 9.05 percent in March 2019 whereas the average cost of sending AUD\$200.00 to Samoa also fell to 7.02 percent from 8.25 percent in the same month of 2019.

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**CENTRAL BANK OF SAMOA**  
**29<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

# VISITOR EARNINGS & REMITTANCES REPORT

March 2020

**Table 1. TOURISM EARNINGS, AVERAGE EXPENDITURE AND TOURISM PRICE INDEX**

	Mar-18	Mar-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
<b>Total arrivals (persons)</b>	<b>11,707</b>	<b>11,163</b>	<b>24,647</b>	<b>17,489</b>	<b>16,212</b>	<b>14,544</b>	<b>11,907</b>	<b>17,927</b>	<b>10,456</b>	<b>7,053</b>	<b>4,164</b>
<b>Total arrivals incl. cruise ships (1)</b>	12,334	17,893	24,647	17,489	16,212	14,544	13,190	17,927	10,456	7,053	4,164
<b>Arrivals, by market (persons)</b>											
American Samoa	1,186	1,089	2,300	1,958	990	1,156	673	608	645	414	234
Australia	2,239	2,481	4,175	3,548	4,112	2,920	2,539	5,432	2,861	1,757	995
Europe	449	716	942	739	491	402	484	383	264	307	122
New Zealand	5,538	4,400	8,898	7,785	7,579	6,539	4,921	8,674	4,600	2,919	1,675
USA	1,021	981	2,123	1,391	702	997	1,102	1,192	662	479	253
Other Countries	1,274	1,496	6,209	2,068	2,338	2,530	2,188	1,638	1,424	1,177	885
Cruise ships	627	6,730	0	0	0	0	1,283	0	0	0	0
<b>Arrivals, by purpose (persons)</b>											
Holiday	2,810	3,938	8,149	7,484	7,167	6,298	3,774	7,486	3,833	2,071	1,323
VFR	6,128	5,078	6,602	6,367	5,674	5,456	3,268	8,004	4,203	2,993	1,464
Business & Conference	1,013	775	2,020	1,313	1,400	1,095	1,389	599	414	551	386
Sport	67	56	5,129	65	260	45	95	10	24	95	18
Other	1,689	1,316	2,747	2,260	1,711	1,650	3,381	1,828	1,982	1,343	973
Cruise ships	627	6,730	0	0	0	0	1,283	0	0	0	0
<b>Total earnings (tala million)</b>	<b>36.07</b>	<b>34.32</b>	<b>69.85</b>	<b>50.60</b>	<b>48.81</b>	<b>45.22</b>	<b>41.07</b>	<b>56.72</b>	<b>29.50</b>	<b>20.86</b>	<b>12.63</b>
<b>Earnings, by market (tala million)</b>											
American Samoa	2.60	2.35	5.38	3.41	1.29	1.65	1.10	1.18	1.20	0.47	0.57
Australia	8.63	9.42	11.29	12.73	13.82	11.99	12.42	20.19	9.32	6.80	3.46
Europe	0.70	1.05	0.76	0.93	0.51	0.37	0.71	0.65	0.29	0.28	0.16
New Zealand	16.25	12.98	23.24	24.53	23.69	21.21	17.11	24.40	12.66	7.76	4.75
USA	4.24	3.97	6.54	3.31	2.76	2.30	3.05	3.61	1.70	1.73	1.02
Other Countries	3.65	4.54	22.63	5.70	6.74	7.70	6.69	6.69	4.34	3.83	2.68
Cruise ships	0.09	1.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Earnings, by purpose (tala million)</b>											
Holiday	8.85	12.34	21.60	22.52	23.30	16.39	11.83	23.49	11.89	6.03	3.23
VFR	16.97	14.63	20.85	20.14	17.54	19.50	17.76	26.42	13.30	8.63	3.98
Business & Conference	3.92	2.97	5.17	4.83	4.74	3.21	6.05	2.27	1.68	2.04	1.16
Sport	0.25	0.21	17.96	0.14	0.92	0.10	0.24	0.02	0.08	0.22	0.06
Other	6.07	4.16	4.26	2.97	2.30	6.02	5.18	4.52	2.55	3.94	4.21
Cruise ships	0.09	1.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Average expenditure (tala, per pers)</b>	<b>3,081</b>	<b>3,074</b>	<b>2,834</b>	<b>2,893</b>	<b>3,011</b>	<b>3,110</b>	<b>3,449</b>	<b>3,164</b>	<b>2,822</b>	<b>2,958</b>	<b>3,033</b>
<b>Tourism Price Index</b>	<b>157.2</b>	<b>156.0</b>	<b>158.9</b>	<b>159.0</b>	<b>159.0</b>	<b>158.5</b>	<b>159.0</b>	<b>157.5</b>	<b>158.1</b>	<b>149.2</b>	<b>142.3</b>
<b>First Number of Months up to</b>	<b>9 months to Mar 18</b>	<b>9 months to Mar 19</b>	<b>1st month to Mar 19</b>	<b>2 months to Aug 19</b>	<b>3 months to Sep 19</b>	<b>4 months to Oct 19</b>	<b>5 months to Nov 19</b>	<b>6 months to Dec 19</b>	<b>7 months to Jan 20</b>	<b>8 months to Feb 20</b>	<b>9 months to Mar 20</b>
<b>Total Visitor Arrivals (persons)</b>	<b>123,033</b>	<b>134,394</b>	<b>24,647</b>	<b>42,136</b>	<b>58,348</b>	<b>72,892</b>	<b>84,799</b>	<b>102,726</b>	<b>113,182</b>	<b>120,235</b>	<b>124,399</b>
Over the past year (%)	12.4%	9.2%	28.1%	18.5%	15.8%	12.3%	11.0%	2.3%	-0.9%	-2.4%	-7.4%
Past 3 year average	3.8%	5.2%	5.9%	6.1%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.9%	5.6%	5.3%	5.1%
Past 5 year average	2.5%	5.3%	8.1%	7.7%	7.1%	7.3%	7.0%	7.8%	7.6%	7.4%	7.3%
<b>Arrivals, by market (persons)</b>											
American Samoa	13,293	12,476	2,300	4,258	5,248	6,404	7,077	7,685	8,330	8,744	8,978
Australia	25,933	31,171	4,175	7,723	11,835	14,755	17,294	22,726	25,587	27,344	28,339
Europe	4,284	5,553	942	1,681	2,172	2,574	3,058	3,441	3,705	4,012	4,134
New Zealand	57,145	61,811	8,898	16,683	24,262	30,801	35,722	44,396	48,996	51,915	53,590
USA	9,288	9,615	2,123	3,514	4,216	5,213	6,315	7,507	8,169	8,648	8,901
Other Countries	13,090	13,768	6,209	8,277	10,615	13,145	15,333	16,971	18,395	19,572	20,457
Cruise ships	1,212	17,801	0	0	0	0	1,283	1,283	1,283	1,283	1,283
<b>Arrivals, by purpose (persons)</b>											
Holiday	53,632	52,197	8,149	15,633	22,800	29,098	32,872	40,358	44,191	46,262	47,585
VFR	42,495	53,961	6,602	12,969	18,643	24,099	27,367	35,371	39,574	42,567	44,031
Business & Conference	8,639	7,775	2,020	3,333	4,733	5,828	7,217	7,816	8,230	8,781	9,167
Sport	1,234	1,289	5,129	5,194	5,454	5,499	5,594	5,604	5,628	5,723	5,741
Other	17,033	19,172	2,747	5,007	6,718	8,368	11,749	13,577	15,559	16,902	17,875
Cruise ships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Visitor Earnings (tala million)</b>	<b>355.0</b>	<b>400.4</b>	<b>69.85</b>	<b>120.44</b>	<b>169.25</b>	<b>214.48</b>	<b>255.54</b>	<b>312.26</b>	<b>341.76</b>	<b>362.63</b>	<b>375.26</b>
Over the past year (%)	24.6%	12.8%	37.0%	20.8%	16.5%	12.6%	11.4%	2.7%	0.2%	-1.0%	-6.3%
Past 3 year average	5.7%	13.9%	9.9%	11.6%	8.4%	10.5%	9.6%	11.3%	5.3%	4.7%	8.1%
Past 5 year average	3.8%	12.2%	11.7%	11.5%	9.6%	12.1%	10.4%	14.5%	9.6%	7.8%	12.2%
<b>Earnings, by market (tala million)</b>											
American Samoa	25.2	25.0	5.4	8.8	10.1	11.7	12.8	14.0	15.2	15.7	16.2
Australia	93.6	113.9	11.3	24.0	37.8	49.8	62.3	82.4	91.8	98.6	102.0
Europe	5.3	6.8	0.8	1.7	2.2	2.6	3.3	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.7
New Zealand	165.4	183.0	23.2	47.8	71.5	92.7	109.8	134.2	146.8	154.6	159.3
USA	27.9	29.4	6.5	9.8	12.6	14.9	18.0	21.6	23.3	25.0	26.0
Other Countries	37.6	42.4	22.6	28.3	35.1	42.8	49.5	56.1	60.5	64.3	67.0
Cruise ships	0.2	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Earnings, by purpose (tala million)</b>											
Holiday	160.0	156.0	21.6	44.1	67.4	83.8	95.6	119.1	131.0	137.0	140.3
VFR	129.3	174.4	20.9	41.0	58.5	78.0	95.8	122.2	135.5	144.2	148.1
Business & Conference	30.0	27.0	5.2	10.0	14.7	18.0	24.0	26.3	27.9	30.0	31.2
Sport	3.4	3.6	18.0	18.1	19.0	19.1	19.4	19.4	19.5	19.7	19.8
Other	32.3	39.4	4.3	7.2	9.5	15.6	20.7	25.2	27.8	31.7	36.0
Cruise ships	0.2	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

# VISITOR EARNINGS & REMITTANCES REPORT

March 2020

Table 2.

## INFLOW OF PRIVATE REMITTANCES

AMOUNTS IN TALA MILLION

Amount in Tala Millions	Mar-18	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
<b>By Recipient (Tala Millions)</b>	<b>44.49</b>	<b>54.62</b>	<b>40.25</b>	<b>47.45</b>	<b>40.66</b>	<b>53.45</b>	<b>47.06</b>	<b>38.34</b>	<b>42.24</b>	<b>42.56</b>	<b>57.24</b>	<b>46.89</b>	<b>41.97</b>	<b>46.31</b>
Banknotes	5.62	5.66	4.04	4.09	2.94	9.47	4.85	4.40	2.85	2.79	11.03	12.36	4.30	3.21
Churches, school, Charities	6.15	11.44	4.91	4.14	4.74	8.78	4.73	2.22	5.03	5.07	5.98	3.13	5.85	2.70
Individual/Family/Households	31.70	31.92	30.09	35.22	28.31	33.00	35.66	28.57	32.28	32.76	37.99	28.95	29.12	35.12
In Kind	0.40	0.66	0.53	0.71	0.63	0.59	0.68	0.58	0.70	0.74	0.74	0.50	1.50	2.50
Others	0.62	4.94	0.68	3.29	4.03	1.60	1.14	2.58	1.37	1.19	1.51	1.95	1.21	2.78
<b>By Country (Tala Millions)</b>	<b>44.49</b>	<b>54.62</b>	<b>40.25</b>	<b>47.45</b>	<b>40.66</b>	<b>53.45</b>	<b>47.06</b>	<b>38.34</b>	<b>42.24</b>	<b>42.56</b>	<b>57.24</b>	<b>46.89</b>	<b>41.97</b>	<b>46.31</b>
USA	3.38	15.30	4.51	6.75	8.10	11.41	8.03	6.00	8.86	5.66	9.03	6.67	8.60	9.72
New Zealand	20.26	18.85	17.22	21.95	16.98	19.96	19.20	16.89	17.11	19.66	25.02	21.30	16.49	21.19
Australia	14.20	15.84	10.74	13.02	11.71	16.30	15.52	12.04	13.21	12.87	17.44	13.35	10.52	10.33
American Samoa	1.55	1.93	1.73	1.92	1.83	2.00	1.94	1.62	1.86	2.27	2.69	1.56	1.76	2.66
Others	5.11	2.70	6.04	3.81	2.04	3.77	2.37	1.78	1.19	2.10	3.06	4.01	4.60	2.41
<b>By Channel (%)</b>														
Banks	19.8%	33.1%	17.4%	18.5%	23.7%	21.3%	15.3%	15.1%	17.9%	16.7%	15.5%	14.2%	23.5%	20.7%
Non Banks (1)	80.2%	66.9%	82.6%	81.5%	76.3%	78.7%	84.7%	84.9%	82.1%	83.3%	84.5%	85.8%	76.5%	79.3%
<b>Total Remittances (Tala Millions)</b>	<b>44.49</b>	<b>54.62</b>	<b>40.25</b>	<b>47.45</b>	<b>40.66</b>	<b>53.45</b>	<b>47.06</b>	<b>38.34</b>	<b>42.24</b>	<b>42.56</b>	<b>57.24</b>	<b>46.89</b>	<b>41.97</b>	<b>46.31</b>
<b>First Number of Months up to</b>	<b>9 months</b>	<b>9 months</b>	<b>10 months</b>	<b>11 months</b>	<b>12 months</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2 months</b>	<b>3 months</b>	<b>4 months</b>	<b>5 months</b>	<b>6 months</b>	<b>7 months</b>	<b>8 months</b>	<b>9 months</b>
	<b>to Mar 18</b>	<b>to Mar 19</b>	<b>to Apr 19</b>	<b>to May 19</b>	<b>to Jun 19</b>	<b>month</b>	<b>to Aug 19</b>	<b>to Sep 19</b>	<b>to Oct 19</b>	<b>to Nov 19</b>	<b>to Dec 19</b>	<b>to Jan 20</b>	<b>to Feb 20</b>	<b>to Mar 20</b>
<b>Total Remittances (Tala Millions)</b>	<b>356.86</b>	<b>409.06</b>	<b>449.31</b>	<b>496.76</b>	<b>537.42</b>	<b>53.45</b>	<b>100.51</b>	<b>138.85</b>	<b>181.09</b>	<b>223.65</b>	<b>280.89</b>	<b>327.78</b>	<b>369.75</b>	<b>416.06</b>
Percentage Change (over same period last year)	17.9%	14.6%	12.7%	10.9%	10.1%	31.8%	13.4%	10.2%	8.5%	7.1%	2.1%	4.0%	4.3%	1.7%
3 year average (%)	0.8%	4.9%	5.1%	5.8%	5.9%	6.7%	9.9%	8.6%	7.9%	8.7%	10.1%	10.6%	10.5%	11.9%
5 year average (%)	-1.1%	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	3.6%	1.0%	3.5%	3.7%	4.0%	4.0%	5.3%	5.4%	5.8%	7.0%
<b>By Recipient (Tala Millions)</b>														
Banknotes	45.02	62.28	66.32	70.41	73.35	9.47	14.33	18.73	21.58	24.36	35.39	47.75	52.05	55.25
Churches, school, Charities	33.47	46.36	51.27	55.40	60.14	8.78	13.52	15.73	20.77	25.84	31.82	34.94	40.79	43.49
Individual/Family/Households	260.41	277.99	308.08	343.30	371.61	33.00	68.66	97.22	129.51	162.27	200.26	229.21	258.33	293.45
In Kind	4.96	5.44	5.97	6.69	7.32	0.59	1.27	1.85	2.55	3.29	4.03	4.53	6.03	8.53
Others	13.00	16.99	17.67	20.96	24.99	1.60	2.74	5.32	6.69	7.88	9.40	11.34	12.56	15.34
<b>By Country (Tala Millions)</b>														
USA	60.23	83.79	88.31	95.05	103.15	11.41	19.45	25.45	34.31	39.97	49.00	55.67	64.27	73.99
New Zealand	146.75	159.43	176.66	198.60	215.59	19.96	39.16	56.05	73.16	92.83	117.85	139.15	155.64	176.82
Australia	118.02	129.20	139.94	152.96	164.67	16.30	31.82	43.86	57.08	69.94	87.38	100.74	111.26	121.59
American Samoa	12.10	15.54	17.27	19.20	21.02	2.00	3.95	5.56	7.42	9.69	12.38	13.94	15.70	18.36
Others	19.77	21.09	27.14	30.94	32.98	3.77	6.14	7.92	9.11	11.21	14.27	18.29	22.88	25.29

(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.