

Container Registrations

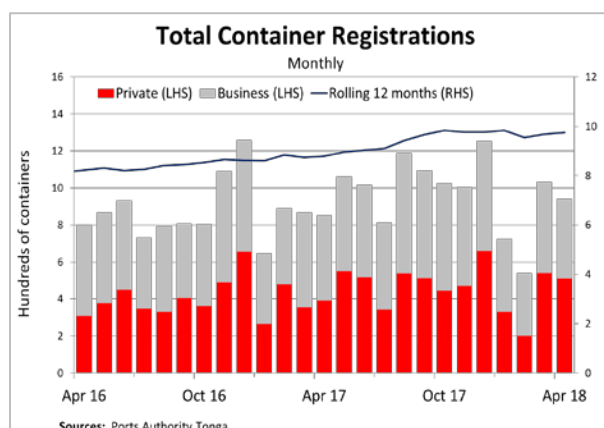
April 2018

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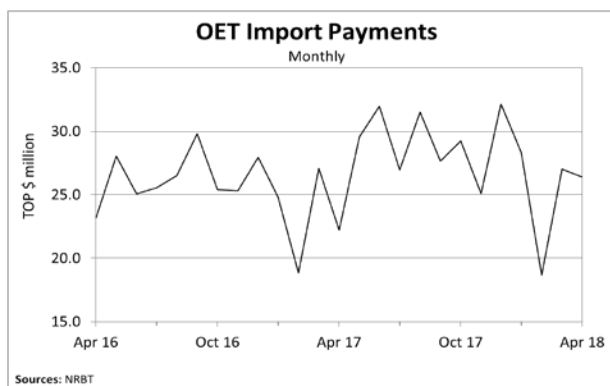
	Apr 18	Mar 18	Feb 18	Jan 18
Total	941	1,032	539	723
Business	432	492	338	393
Private	509	540	201	330

Total container registrations remain high despite the decline over the month

The total container registrations decreased over the month by 91 containers (8.8%) as both business and private containers declined. However, the total containers recorded in April remained above the monthly average of 695 of the past five years. The number of containers remain high due to imports by individuals who are making use of the tax exemptions on the personal imports of food items and construction materials. Businesses were also preparing for the busy month of May for the celebration of Tonga’s family month and the starting of the churches’ annual conference. Containers that had arrived on cargo vessels from Australia and the United States increased over the month but was outweighed by a decline in containers from Indonesia, Japan and New Zealand.



Payments for imports (excluding oil) decreased slightly over the month by \$0.6 million (2.3%) which coincided with the decline in total container registrations. The decrease in payment for wholesale & retail imports outweighed the rise in payments for Government and construction material imports.



In year ended terms, the total container registrations rose by 1,146 containers (10.9%). Both private and business containers increased by 705 (14.4%) and 441 (7.8%) respectively indicating a rise in the informal distribution sector and a vibrant trade sector. This was also consistent with a \$27.9 million (9.1%) rise in import payments (excluding oil) as a result of higher payments for the import of wholesale & retail goods and miscellaneous goods (such as electrical infrastructure materials, medical, and technological goods).

Projections for imports to continue to increase remains in the near term supported by TC Gita recovery projects. The upcoming eventful months will also contribute to the anticipated rise. The excise tax and import duty exemptions on food items, clothes, beds and building materials in the wake of TC Gita is expected to increase the in-kind assistance from families abroad. Business imports is projected to increase to meet the domestic demand for wholesale & retails goods. Hence, the total number of imported containers is expected to rise in the upcoming months. On-going construction projects and new private residential constructions are anticipated to contribute to the rise. Spill over effects on the trade, tourism, construction sectors and other sectors in the economy are also anticipated.

Container Registrations							
Total Number of Containers							
	Month ended				Year ended		<i>Share of Total</i>
	Apr 18	Mar 18	Feb 18	Apr 17	Apr 18	Apr 17	
Total containers	941	1032	539	853	11,692	10,546	100
Business	432	492	338	462	6,082	5,641	52
Private	509	540	201	391	5,610	4,905	48

Source: Ports Authority Tonga