



Office of the Council for the  
Ongoing Government of Tokelau  
Tokelau National Statistics Office

# December 2020 quarter Consumer Price Index of Tokelau

## Key facts

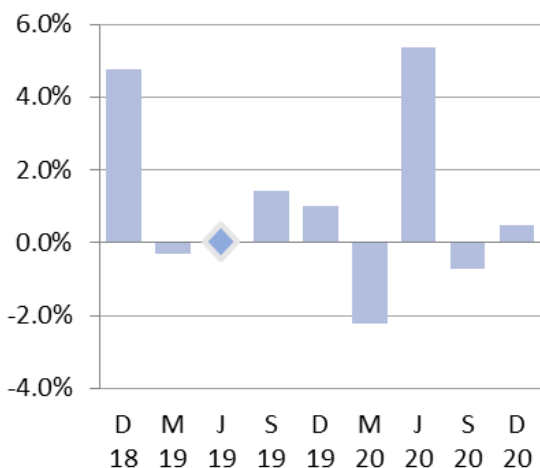
In the December 2020 quarter compared with the September 2020 quarter:

- The consumer price index (CPI) increased 0.5 percent, compared to a 0.7 percent decline in the previous quarter.
- The largest upward price change of 11.5 percent came from the Transport group, contributing 0.7 percent to quarterly CPI.
- The next largest change was in the Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance group, which increased 4.6 percent, contributing a 0.3 percent to quarterly CPI.
- The Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group had the largest downward change, down 1.8 percent, contributing negative 0.1 percent to quarterly CPI.

From the December 2019 quarter to the December 2020 quarter, CPI increased 2.8 percent. This compares with a 3.4 percent increase from the September 2019 quarter to the September 2020 quarter.

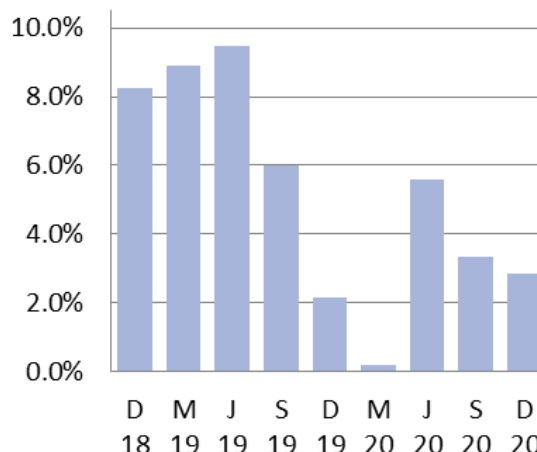
The CPI measures the rate of price change of goods and services purchased by Tokelau households. The Tokelau National Statistics Office (TNSO) collects prices from the co-op and bulk stores on all three atolls, as well as prices from service providers, including transport, energy, and telecommunications.

**Consumer price index**  
Quarterly change



Source: Tokelau National Statistics Office

**Consumer price index**  
Annual change



Source: Tokelau National Statistics Office

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**29 January 2021**

## Commentary

The following sections provide detailed commentary on the consumer price index of Tokelau:

- [Quarterly CPI rose 0.5 percent for December 2020 quarter](#)
- [Food and non-alcoholic beverages group down 0.8 percent this quarter](#)
- [Alcoholic beverages and tobacco group dropped 0.5 percent](#)
- [Summary of other group movements in the quarterly CPI](#)
- [Impact of items that rose and fell in price](#)
- [CPI shows 2.8 percent increase for the year to the December 2020 quarter.](#)

### Quarterly CPI rose 0.5 percent for December 2020 quarter

The December 2020 quarterly CPI rose 0.5 percent; this compares to a 0.7 percent decrease in the September 2020 quarter.

Three of the CPI's nine groups recorded negative contributions in the CPI, three recorded an increase, two remained unchanged, and one had a negligible contribution to overall CPI.

Group	Quarterly percentage points contribution to CPI
01. Food and non-alcoholic beverages	-0.2%
02. Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	-0.2%
03. Clothing and footwear	0.0%
04. Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	-0.1%
05. Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance	0.3%
07. Transport	0.7%
08. Communication	0.0%
09. Recreation and culture	0.0%
12. Miscellaneous goods and services	0.0%
Overall CPI	0.5%

**Note:** Percentages may not sum to total due to rounding.

### Food and non-alcoholic beverages group down 0.8 percent this quarter

Prices in the Food and non-alcoholic beverages group dropped 0.8 percent this quarter, contributing a negative 0.2 percent to quarterly CPI.

The main individual downward contributors to the food subgroup (down 0.8 percent) came from lower prices for:

- Chicken (down 14 percent)
- Rice (down 13 percent)
- Canned fish, tuna (down 13 percent).

The main individual upward contributors to the food subgroup came from higher prices for:

- Sugar (up 21 percent)
- Beef (up 36 percent)
- Noodles (up 21 percent).

A drop of prices in the non-alcoholic beverages subgroup (down 6.0 percent) was dominated by chocolate-flavoured drink powder and instant coffee, down 8.6 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

## Alcoholic beverages and tobacco group dropped 0.5 percent this quarter

Prices in the Alcoholic beverages and tobacco group dropped 0.5 percent, contributing a negative 0.2 percent to the 0.5 percent inflation rate this quarter.

This compares to a 0.2 percent price decrease, contributing 0.1 percent to CPI in the September 2020 quarter.

## Summary of other group movements in the quarterly CPI

Prices in the Transport group showed the largest change, increasing by 11.5 percent, contributing 0.7 percent to quarterly CPI. This increase is due to airfare prices up this quarter.

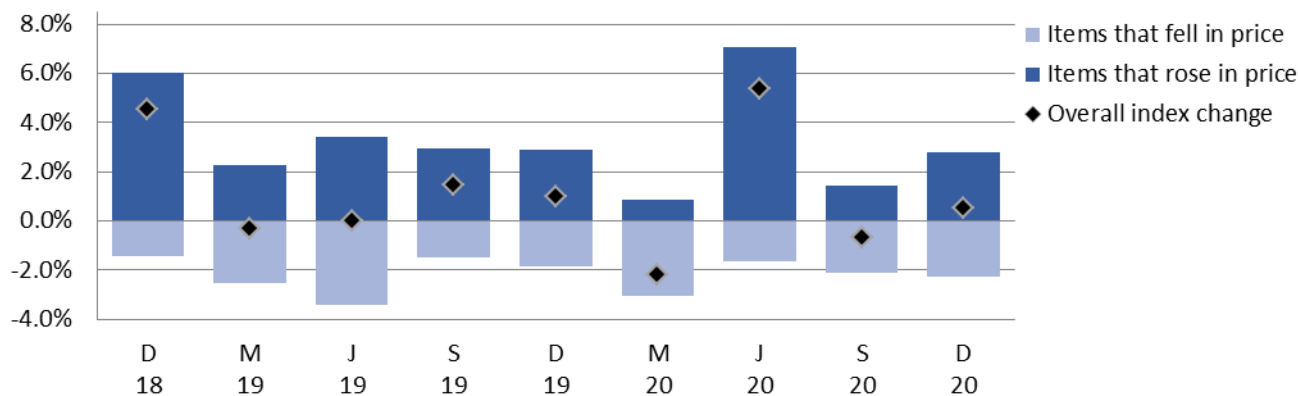
Two other groups showed price changes: For Furnishing, household equipment and routine and household maintenance group (up 4.7 percent), and Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group (1.8 percent), contributing 0.3 percent and 0.1 percent respectively to quarterly CPI.

The remaining groups showed small changes this quarter; Miscellaneous goods and services group (down 1.0 percent), and Recreation and culture group (up 2.7 percent), their contribution to quarterly CPI was negligible. The Communication and Clothing and footwear groups remained unchanged this quarter.

## Impact of items that rose and fell in price

The graph below shows the impact of items that rose and fell in price over time: the overall impact was a 0.5 percent increase in the CPI for the December 2020 quarter.

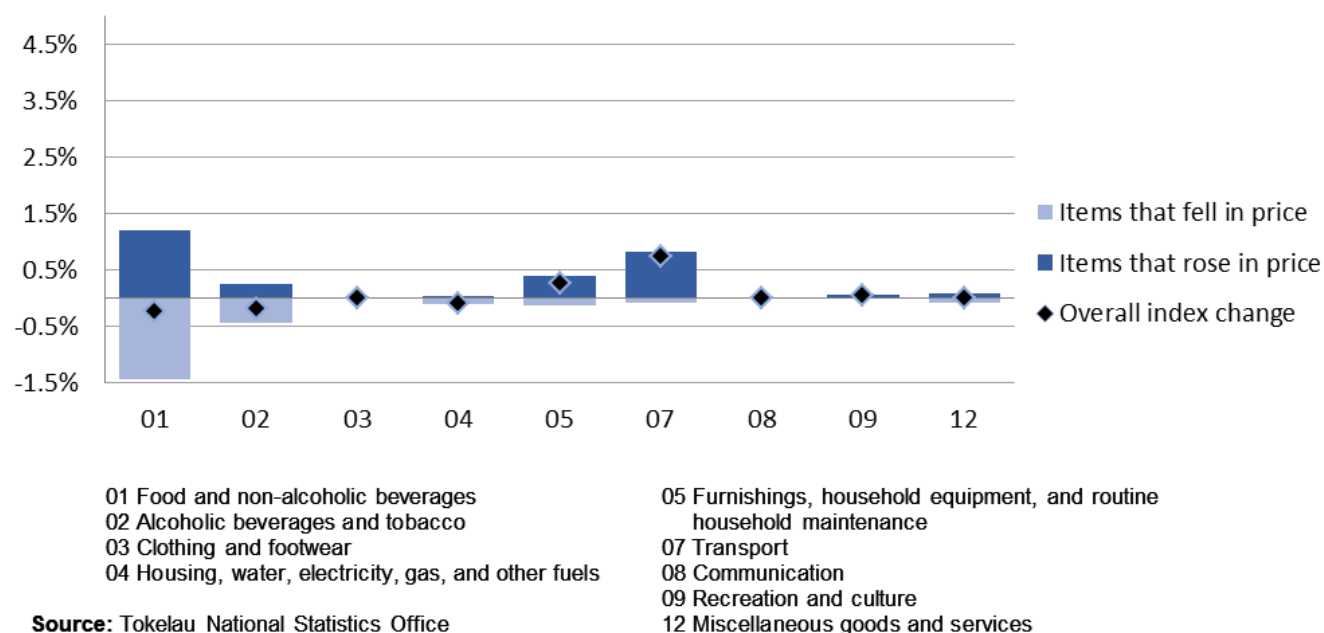
**Percentage points contribution to consumer price index over time**  
 Quarterly change to December 2020 quarter



Source: Tokelau National Statistics Office

The following graph shows the impact of items that rose and fell in price by group this quarter.

**Percentage points contribution to consumer price index by group**  
in December 2020 quarter



## CPI shows 2.8 percent increase for the year to the December 2020 quarter

The CPI increased 2.8 percent in the year to the December 2020 quarter. This compares with a 3.4 percent annual inflation rise to the September 2020 quarter.

The main upward contribution came from the group Alcoholic beverages and tobacco, contributing 3.7 percent to CPI, due mainly to Taupulega decisions to raise the price of cigarettes (prices up 13 percent).

Prices in Food and non-alcoholic beverages group decreased 2.7 percent, contributing a negative 0.9 percent to annual CPI.

Key individual downward contributions to the Food subgroup came from lower prices for:

- Chicken (down 27 percent)
- Rice (down 12 percent)
- Milk – long life (down 5.4 percent).

The main individual upward contributions to the Food subgroup came from higher prices for:

- Lamb chops (up 16 percent)
- Sugar (up 24 percent)
- Corned beef, canned (up 13 percent).

Prices in the Miscellaneous goods and services and Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels groups dropped 3.1 percent and 2.0 percent, both groups contributing a negative 0.1 percent to annual inflation.

Two other groups showed price increases in the year to the December 2020 quarter. For Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance group (up 2.7 percent), and Transport group (up 0.8 percent) contributing 0.2 percent and 0.1 percent respectively.

All other contributions to the annual CPI were negligible, including the Clothing and footwear group (prices up 0.3 percent); and the Recreation and culture group (prices up 0.3 percent). The Communication group did not change.

## Definitions

### About the consumer price index

The consumer price index (CPI) measures the changing price of a fixed basket of goods and services purchased by households. The selection and relative importance of the goods and services in the CPI basket represents the overall expenditure pattern of households in Tokelau.

The aim of the CPI is to measure price changes of the same sample of products at each outlet over time. When there is a change in the size or quality of any of the goods or services in the basket, an adjustment is made to ensure that the price change shown in the CPI is not affected by the change in size or quality.

The CPI of Tokelau has been published quarterly since September 2012, and was rebased in March 2017. The index reference period is the March 2017 quarter (=100.0).

An updated listing of the representative goods and services monitored in the CPI basket, and the sources and methods used to compile various parts of the CPI, are available in the "Technical notes: Consumer Price Index" (October 2017 version) at [www.tokelau.org.nz/Stats.html](http://www.tokelau.org.nz/Stats.html).

### More definitions

A **price index** measures the change in price between time periods for a given set of goods and services. It summarises a set of prices for a variety of goods and services collected from a number of outlets.

The **index reference** period is the benchmark to which prices in other periods are compared (eg if the index number in a later period is 115.0, prices have increased by 15.0 percent since the index reference period).

**Upward/downward contributions:** Items mentioned in this release are often those that made a large contribution to the overall movement in the CPI. An item's contribution is a combination of its weight in the index (its relative importance, based on its share of household spending on goods and services covered by the CPI) and the magnitude of price movement. If two items record the same percentage rise in price, then the item with the larger CPI weighting will make a larger contribution to the overall movement. This contribution is also referred to as points (or index points) contribution.

### Reference period

Prices for the December 2020 quarter were collected between 23 November and 14 December 2020, by staff working for the village administrative centres, as well as TNSO staff in Apia and Tokelau.

### Price influencers

Price changes may be influenced by external events. Factors that affected the quarterly and the annual December 2020 CPI include:

- Tokelau uses the New Zealand dollar as its currency; so major changes in the strength of the New Zealand dollar over the Samoan tala can change Tokelau's buying power in Samoa<sup>1</sup>.
- Since 2013 nearly all goods sold in Tokelau have been sourced directly from Samoa. Many of these goods are re-exports, originating from various other countries including China, Australia, and New Zealand. This introduces price fluctuation between quarters, and can be caused both by local demand, and by international variables including demand, availability,

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<sup>1</sup> The Tokelau Department of Finance tends to fix its exchange rate for the calendar year (currently WST/NZD=1.75), taking out some of the volatility.

seasonal effect, and changes in exchange rates. Changes in availability or price in Samoa have a strong influence on the Tokelau CPI.

- Each village sets pricing policy (such as for cigarettes, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks) independently, and this can change at any point.
- In July 2017, General Fono (Parliament) approved a national 325 percent tax increase on cigarettes, in an effort to reduce smoking and hence the prevalence of non-communicable diseases in the atoll population. Since then, each Taupulega has introduced further price rises. Because cigarettes have a relatively large weight in the CPI, any change in their price will significantly impact the overall CPI movement as seen since 2017. To separate out the anomaly created by the cigarette pricing policy (combined with reduced availability in the atoll stores), we calculate CPI with and without cigarettes. This will provide for a smooth transition to “Tobacco free Tokelau 2020”, which has nil cigarette imports as a target.

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