

Tokelau's March quarter CPI down 0.9 percent

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The *quarterly* consumer price index (CPI) of Tokelau fell by 0.9 percent in the March 2018 quarter. The Tokelau National Statistics Office released this figure today.

The largest downward change in prices came from the transport group, down 7.3 percent. This was due to a drop in Air New Zealand airfares, possibly a seasonal effect and perhaps also a result of competition with the newly established Samoa Airways. Airfares were added to the basket of goods and services used to calculate the Tokelau CPI, one year ago.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group also made a downward turn in prices this quarter, with prices down 1.5 percent overall. As always some prices went up in this group (Onions up 41 percent, Potatoes up 23 percent), and some went down (Corned beef down 16 percent, Tomato sauce down 28 percent), but the downward trend was stronger overall.

Prices in the Recreation and culture group went down 2 percent. The largest upward change in prices came from Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance group, up 2.7 percent.

Other groups remained practically unchanged this quarter: i.e. Alcoholic beverages and tobacco; Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels; Communication; and Miscellaneous goods and services.

In the *year* to the March 2018 quarter, the CPI of Tokelau rose 8.9 percent.

The main upward movement came from the Alcoholic beverages and tobacco group, up 26 percent due to the national tobacco pricing policy implemented in 2017 (contributing 6.8 percent to annual overall CPI).

Prices in the Food and non-alcoholic beverages group rose 7.4 percent for the year.

Laptop computers and flatscreen TVs were added at rebasing one year ago. This allows us to report for the first time on prices in the group Recreation and Culture: they were down 9.9 percent in the year to the March quarter.

The CPI measures the rate of price change of goods and services purchased by Tokelau households mostly in each one of the three atolls' stores. Changes to the basket of goods and services were based on the Tokelau 2015/16 Household Income and Expenditure Survey. That report was completed in 2016 and provides a wealth of information on the spending on services and imported goods by Tokelauans in their home atolls.

The full information release on the Tokelau CPI, with tables and technical notes, is available from <http://tinyurl.com/TokelauCPI>

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