

# TUPOU TERTIARY INSTITUTE

Research & Training Centre Poll 2025

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An aerial photograph of a coastal town in Tonga, featuring turquoise water, a stone archway in the foreground, and a dense forested area in the background. The text "KINGDOM OF TONGA" is overlaid in the center.

# KINGDOM OF TONGA

# Understanding Tongan Attitudes to the World



# PREFACE

Tongans have long understood that events beyond our shores shape life at home. As a small island nation, closely connected to the Pacific and the wider world, Tonga experiences global change not as something distant, but as something that directly affects its security, economy, and future.

The 2025 *Tongan Attitudes to the World* survey was conducted in December 2025, at a time when global tensions were already present but before a significant escalation in early 2026, including the United States' declaration of war over Venezuela in January and conflict with Iran in March. The survey therefore captures Tongan public opinion at a critical moment—reflecting views formed prior to these developments, but within an already uncertain and shifting international environment.

This report builds on the 2023 survey, enabling a clear comparison of how Tongan attitudes have evolved over time. Across many areas, the 2025 results show a high degree of continuity in Tonga's external outlook. Traditional partners—including New Zealand, Australia, and the United States—remain central to public trust and security perceptions, while concerns about global risks such as pandemics, geopolitical conflict, and climate change continue to shape how Tongans view the world.

At the same time, the 2025 findings reveal a consistent shift in tone. Compared with 2023, Tongans are generally less emphatic in their views. Levels of strong trust in key partners have declined, confidence in major powers has softened, and perceptions of global threats—while still high—have moderated across many areas. Similarly, support for globalisation and

free trade has eased, and attitudes toward security partnerships and foreign influence have become more cautious and conditional.

These changes do not indicate a fundamental realignment in Tonga's external relationships or priorities. Rather, they suggest a recalibration of public opinion. Tongans continue to value long-standing partnerships and remain deeply aware of global risks, but are expressing their views with greater balance, nuance, and caution than in 2023.

At the same time, several areas show strengthening or consolidation. Support for Tonga's current political system has increased, recognition of regional partners such as Fiji has grown, and the importance of economic opportunities—particularly seasonal work—has become more pronounced. Climate change remains a central concern, though responses increasingly reflect a balance between urgency and practical considerations.

Like the Lowy Institute Poll, this survey serves an important purpose beyond reporting data. It provides a window into how citizens understand international developments and offers a foundation for national discussion about Tonga's place in the world. In a period of growing geopolitical uncertainty and environmental vulnerability, these perspectives are critical for informing policy, strengthening partnerships, and guiding future decisions.

This report presents the findings of the 2025 survey and, through comparison with 2023, offers insight into how Tongan attitudes are evolving in response to a changing global environment.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Tupou Tertiary Institute Research and Training Centre*

## **Trust, leadership, and Tonga's partnerships**

Tongans continue to place their greatest trust in traditional partners, though with less intensity than in 2023. New Zealand remains the most trusted country, with 54% expressing a great deal of trust, followed by Australia (47%), the United States (40%), and the United Kingdom (37%). While these countries retain their leading positions, the strength of trust has softened across all four.

Confidence in global leaders reflects a similar pattern. New Zealand's Prime Minister records the highest confidence at 36%, followed by Australia's Prime Minister (30%). Confidence in the United States leader is slightly stronger than in 2023, reaching 31%, contrasting with the broader easing seen elsewhere.

Perceptions of Tonga's closest relationships remain stable. New Zealand continues to be identified as Tonga's best friend (28%), followed by China (22%) and Australia (21%). Within the Pacific, Fiji remains dominant at 76%, although its lead has narrowed slightly, suggesting a modest broadening of regional relationships.

## **Security, threats, and global uncertainty**

A majority of Tongans (58%) still feel unsafe in relation to global events, although this represents a modest improvement compared with 2023. Perceptions of risk remain high, with global pandemics (77%) continuing to dominate, followed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine (67%), climate change (65%), and international terrorism (63%). While concern remains widespread, its intensity has generally eased.

Concern about foreign influence is both high and broadly distributed. China remains the country of greatest concern at 80%, though this figure is lower than previously recorded. At the same time, concern about the United States, Australia and New Zealand has become more pronounced, indicating a widening sensitivity to external political involvement.

Support for traditional security partnerships remains evident, though less emphatic. Half of Tongans (50%) believe cooperation with New Zealand, Australia and the United States would improve regional safety, while a growing proportion now see such arrangements as making little difference. By contrast, scepticism toward China's security role persists: 49% believe a partnership would make the region less safe, and opposition to a Chinese military presence remains high at 72%.

Views of China continue to reflect a dual perspective. While 70% consider it likely to become a military threat, fewer express this view in the strongest terms than in 2023. At the same time, China is most commonly seen as an economic partner (35%), rather than primarily a security threat (26%).

The United States remains widely valued, with 86% regarding the partnership as important. However, confidence in its security role has become more conditional. Fewer Tongans believe the United States would come to Tonga's defence (58%) or enhance national security (57%), while concern about being drawn into conflict has become more pronounced (32%). In the event of a US-China conflict, neutrality remains the clear preference, supported by 69% of respondents.

## **Governance and political attitudes**

Tongans continue to favour their current political system, with support for Tonga's hybrid model increasing to 58%. At the same time, support for democracy as a universal ideal has become less prominent, with only 10% expressing this view. Recognition of democratic systems remains strongest for traditional partners—United States (76%), New Zealand (75%) and Australia (71%)—while awareness of regional political systems, particularly Fiji, has increased significantly.

## **Economy, globalisation, and migration**

Assessments of current economic conditions have become more negative, with 44% describing the economy as mostly bad and 34% as mostly good. Despite this, optimism about the future remains strong, with 71% expecting improvement over the next five years, indicating continued confidence in longer-term prospects.

Support for seasonal work has strengthened slightly, with 84% considering it important, including 67% who say it is very important. By contrast, attitudes toward globalisation and trade have become more cautious. Fewer Tongans now

see globalisation as mostly good (49%), and support for free trade has also eased (63%), accompanied by greater uncertainty.

Migration attitudes remain largely unchanged. New Zealand continues to be seen as the most open destination (46%), followed by Australia (25%), while the United States is now viewed as less open than in 2023 (15%). Views on post-pandemic migration remain evenly split, with equal proportions (28%) favouring higher or unchanged levels. A majority (60%) also believe social media has a negative impact on democracy.

### **Climate change, resilience, and national priorities**

Climate change remains a central concern, though responses are becoming more measured. Thirty-eight per cent support immediate action despite costs, while a growing share favour a gradual approach (28%). Support for climate migration pathways remains overwhelming at 87%, although fewer respondents now express the strongest level of urgency.

Confidence in Tonga's ability to respond to climate change remains high at 75%, though strong confidence has given way to more moderate assessments. Views on responsibility remain balanced, with 36% supporting shared global action and 33% expecting major countries to lead.

Public priorities increasingly reflect wellbeing and resilience. Healthcare (24%), education (21%), and climate change and disaster preparedness (20%) are the leading spending priorities. In foreign policy, maintaining peace and stability in the Pacific (26%), creating economic opportunities (22%), and addressing climate change (20%) remain central.

Concern about a Chinese military base remains high at 77%, though less intense than previously, while concern about a United States base has become more pronounced (56%), reflecting a more differentiated assessment of security risks.

Overall, the 2025 findings show that while Tongans' core alignments and concerns remain consistent with 2023, attitudes have become less emphatic and more measured. Rather than signalling major shifts, these changes point to a recalibration of public opinion, with Tongans expressing greater caution, balance, and nuance in response to an increasingly complex global environment.

# GLOBAL POWERS AND WORLD LEADERS

## Trust in global powers

Trust in global powers remains highest for traditional partners, despite a decline in intensity

Tongans continue to place the greatest trust in traditional partners, with New Zealand (54%) the most trusted country, followed by Australia (47%), the United States (40%), and the United Kingdom (37%) saying they trust these countries “a great deal.”

A second tier of countries records more moderate trust levels. Japan (21%) and Fiji (21%) sit well below traditional partners but ahead of others such as China (14%) and France (11%). Trust remains lowest for India (4%), Indonesia (4%), and Russia (5%),

with majorities expressing little or no trust in these countries.

Strong trust has declined across all major partners. Trust in New Zealand has fallen from 63% in 2023 to 54% in 2025, Australia from 54% to 47%, the United States from 49% to 40%, and the United Kingdom from 42% to 37%.

Trust in China has increased slightly (10% to 14%), while Japan has risen from 16% to 21%. However, the overall ranking of countries remains unchanged.

Tongans’ trust remains firmly anchored in traditional partners, but the decline in “a great deal” responses suggests a softening in confidence. While relationships remain strong, public sentiment appears more measured than in 2023

FIGURE 1

### Trust in Global Powers

How much do you trust the following countries to act responsibly in the world?

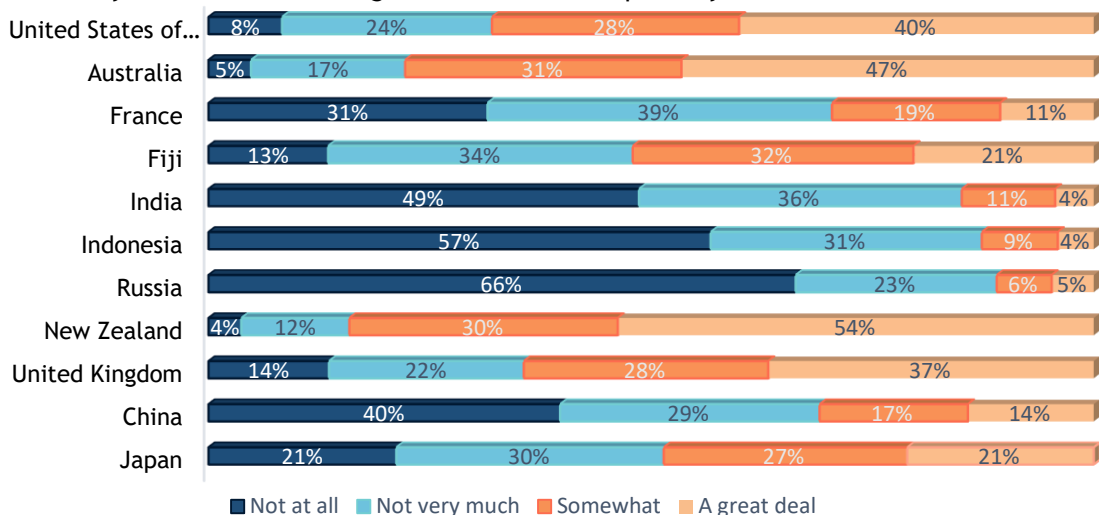


Figure 1-Trust in Global Powers

**FIGURE 2**

**Confidence in world leaders**

Here is a list of political leaders. For each, please indicate how much confidence you have in the leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs- a lot of confidence, not at all, not too much, some confidence, not

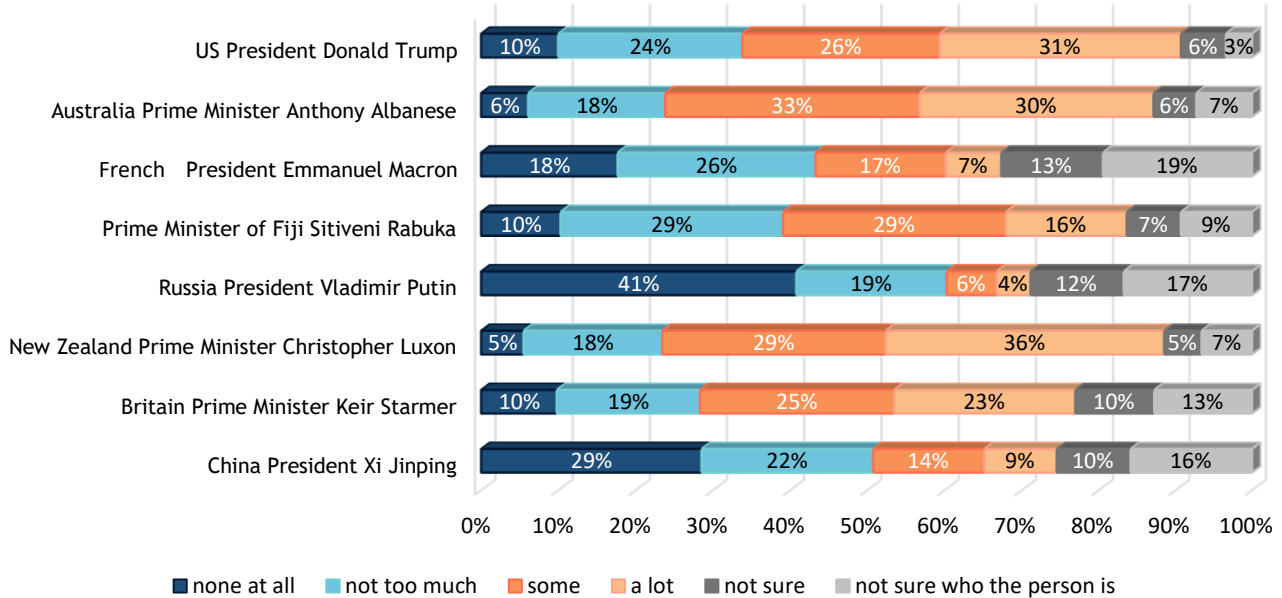


Figure 2- Confidence in world leaders

**Confidence in world leaders**

Tongans express the highest levels of confidence in leaders from traditional partner countries. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon receives the highest “a lot” of confidence (36%), followed by US President Donald Trump (31%) and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (30%).

Confidence is lower for other leaders, including Britain’s Prime Minister Keir Starmer (23%) and Fiji’s Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka (16%). China’s Xi Jinping (9%) and Russia’s Vladimir Putin (4%) remain the least trusted leaders.

Confidence in key leaders has generally declined. Confidence in New Zealand’s leader has fallen from 41% to 36%, and Australia from 36% to 30%. By contrast, confidence in the US leader has increased slightly (from 28% under Biden in 2023 to 31% under Trump in 2025). Confidence in Xi Jinping (5% to 9%) and Vladimir Putin (2% to 4%) has increased slightly but remains very low overall.

Confidence in global leaders continues to reflect geopolitical alignment, with traditional partners clearly preferred. However, declining intensity suggests a more cautious and less emphatic public outlook.

**FIGURE 3  
Tonga's best friends**

Now about Tonga's relations with other countries outside of the Pacific Islands region, in your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Tonga's best friend in the world?

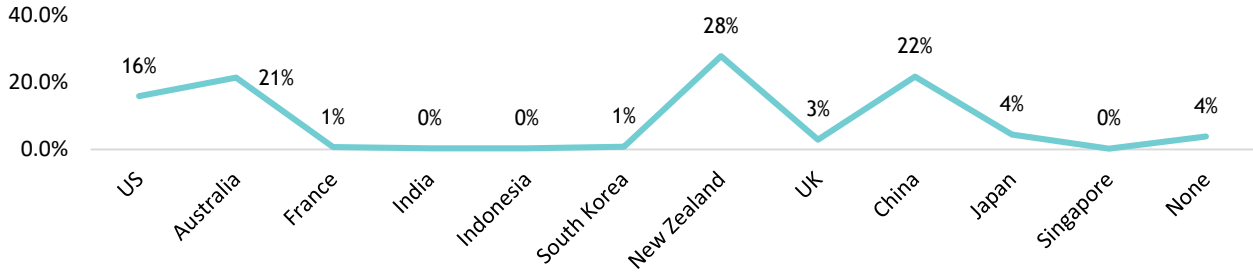


Figure 3-Tonga's best friends in the world

**Tonga's best friends**

**Tongans continue to identify a small group of key partners as Tonga's closest friends**

New Zealand is most frequently identified as Tonga's best friend (28%), followed by China (22%) and Australia (21%), with the United States (16%) in fourth place. All other countries attract very limited responses, including Japan (4%) and the United Kingdom (3%), while 4% say Tonga has no best friend. The ranking of countries remains unchanged. However, New Zealand has declined slightly (30% to 28%) and China has also fallen (25% to 22%). Australia has increased (19% to 21%), narrowing the gap with China, while the United States remains stable (16% to 16%). Perceptions of Tonga's closest relationships remain highly stable and concentrated. Minor shifts suggest a slight rebalancing among key partners, rather than any fundamental change.

**Tonga's best friend in the Pacific**

**FIGURE 4  
Tonga's best friend in the Pacific**

Thinking about Tonga's relationship with other Pacific countries. In your personal opinion, which one of these Pacific Island Countries is the people of Tonga's best friend?

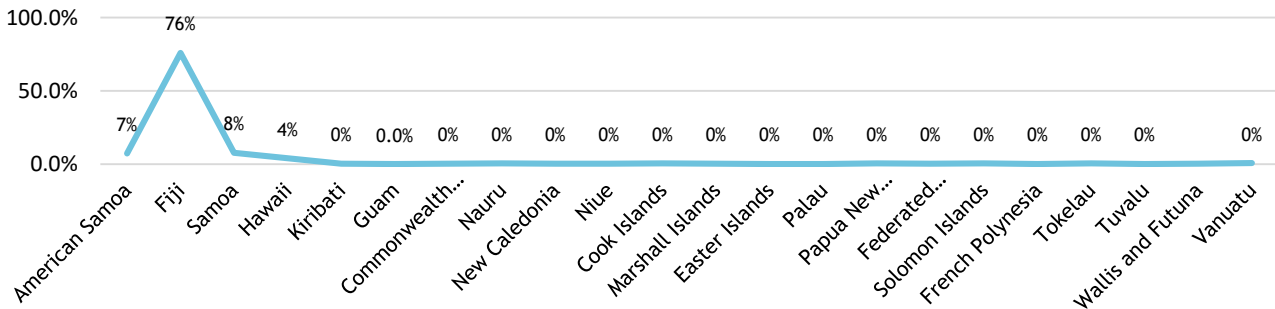


Figure 4-Tonga's best friend in the Pacific

Fiji is identified by a large majority of Tongans (76%) as Tonga's best friend in the Pacific, far ahead of all other countries. Samoa (8%) and American Samoa (7%) are the only other countries to receive notable responses. All remaining Pacific countries register negligible responses. Fiji remains dominant, though its share has declined from 83% in 2023 to 76% in 2025. Samoa has increased (6% to 8%) and American Samoa (5% to 7%), indicating a modest strengthening of sub-regional ties. Regional perceptions remain highly concentrated and culturally anchored.

# SAFETY AND THREATS TO TONGA'S INTERESTS

## Feelings of safety

A majority of Tongans continue to feel unsafe in relation to global events

More Tongans report feeling unsafe (42%) or very unsafe (16%) than safe (28%) or very safe (14%), meaning 58% feel unsafe overall. This indicates that concerns about global developments remain widespread. Feelings of insecurity have declined slightly from 62% in 2023 to 58% in 2025. The proportion feeling “very unsafe” has dropped from 21% to 16%, while those feeling “very safe” has increased from 11% to 14%. Although perceptions of safety have improved slightly, a majority still feel vulnerable. The reduction in extreme concern suggests a modest easing in anxiety rather than a fundamental shift.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Feelings of safety**  
Now thinking about world events, how safe do you feel?

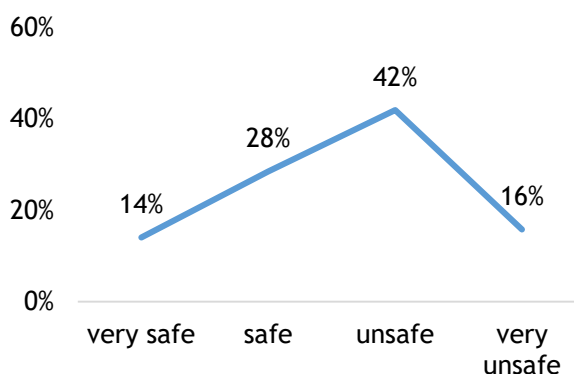


Figure 5-Feelings of safety

## Threats to Tonga's vital interests

Global pandemics, geopolitical conflict, and climate change dominate perceptions of risk

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans continue to view global pandemics as the most critical threat to the country's vital interests, with 77% identifying pandemics as a critical threat. This is followed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine (67%), climate change (65%), and international terrorism (63%), all of which are seen by clear majorities as critical risks. Other major concerns include foreign interference in Tonga's politics (61%), cyberattacks from other countries (60%), and the rise of authoritarian systems of government (59%). A severe downturn in the global economy (58%) is also widely viewed as a critical threat. Slightly lower, but still significant, proportions identify geopolitical conflict between the United States and China (53%) and war in the Middle East (53%) as critical threats. Political instability in the United States is seen as a critical threat by a smaller proportion (42%).

The 2023 results show that concern has declined across most threats, although the overall ranking remains broadly similar. Climate change has fallen from 75% in 2023 to 65% in 2025, while concern about a US-China conflict has dropped sharply from 75% to 53%. Cyber threats have declined from 71% to 60%, and international terrorism from 76% to 63%. Pandemics remain the top concern, though slightly reduced (79% to 77%). Despite these declines, the Russian invasion of Ukraine now ranks as the second most critical threat at 67%, highlighting the continued salience of global conflict. Tongans continue to perceive a wide range of global risks as serious, but with somewhat reduced intensity compared to 2023.

Overall, the findings suggest that while concern about global threats remains high, Tongans are recalibrating their perceptions, with geopolitical conflict and environmental risks continuing to shape their sense of vulnerability.

**FIGURE 6**

**Threats to Tonga's vital interests**

Here is a list of possible threats to vital interest of Tonga in the next ten years. For each one please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, not an important threat at all.

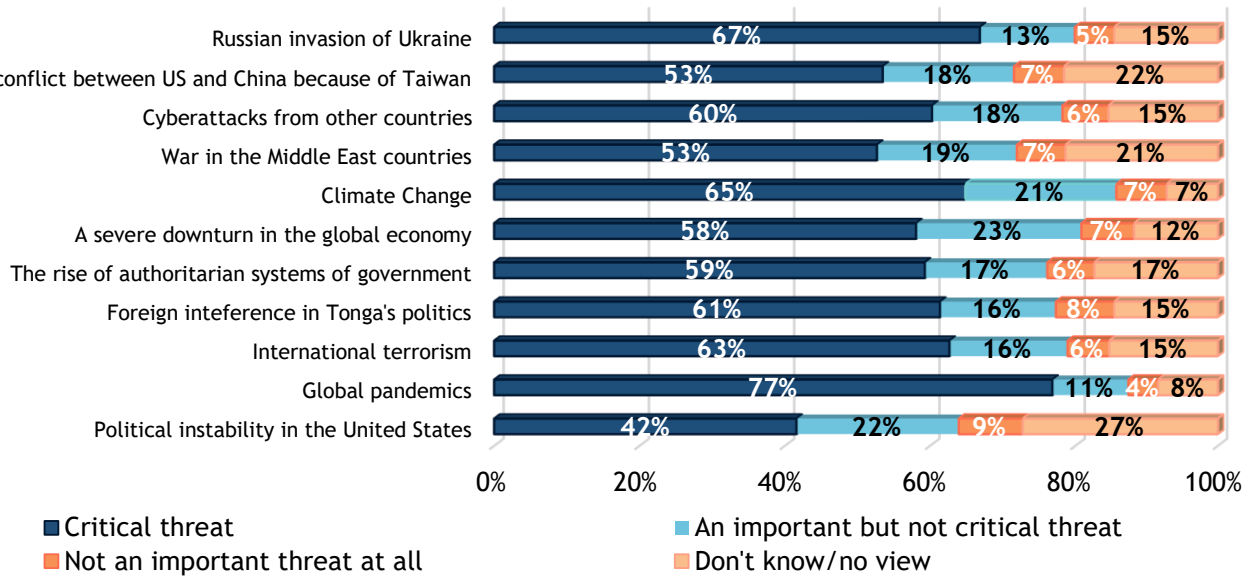


Figure 6-Threats to Tonga's vital interests

**Foreign influence in Tonga's political processes**

**Concern about foreign influence remains high, particularly regarding China**

A large majority of Tongans express concern about foreign influence on Tonga's political processes. China is viewed with the greatest concern (80%), followed by the United States (76%), Australia (70%), and New Zealand (69%), while Fiji records slightly lower concern (65%). Only small minorities indicate they are not concerned about these countries' influence, suggesting that foreign political involvement is widely viewed with caution. Level of concern have declined slightly across all countries. Concern about China has fallen from 87% in 2023 to 80% in 2025, the United States from 70% to 76% (a slight increase), Australia remains broadly stable (65% to 70%), and New Zealand has increased slightly from 63% to 69%. Fiji remains steady (65% in both years). Concern about foreign influence remains widespread, though not uniform. While China continues to attract the highest level of concern, increasing concern toward traditional partners suggests a broader sensitivity to external political involvement rather than concern directed at a single country.

**FIGURE 7**

**Foreign influence in Tonga's political processes**

Are you personally concerned or not concerned about the influence of each of the following countries on Tonga's political process?

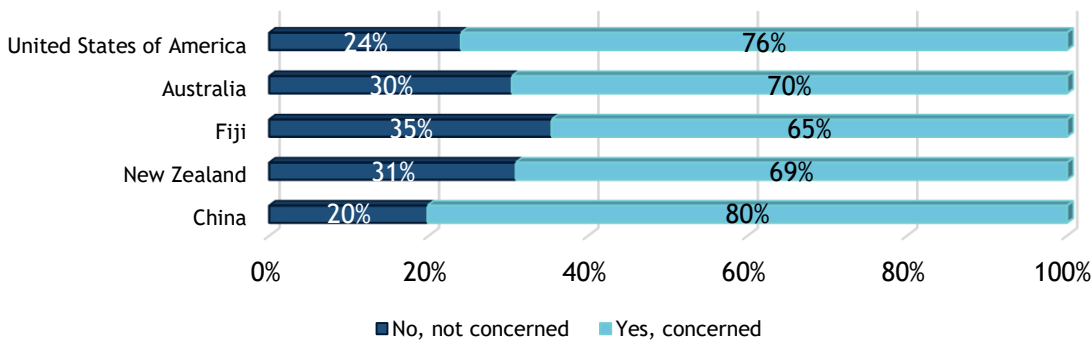


Figure 7-Foreign influence in Tonga's political processes

# SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

## Tonga’s military partnership with New Zealand, Australia and the United States Most Tongans believe traditional security partnerships will improve safety

Half of Tongans (50%) believe that a military partnership between Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States would make the Pacific region more safe. A further 20% say it would make no difference, while 14% believe it would make the region less safe and 15% are unsure. This indicates overall support for traditional security arrangements. Support has declined slightly from 56% in 2023 to 50% in 2025. The proportion who believe the partnership would make the region less safe has increased marginally (13% to 14%), while uncertainty has decreased slightly (17% to 15%). Views that it would make no difference have risen from 13% to 20%.

While traditional security partnerships remain broadly supported, the increase in neutral responses suggests a more cautious or less decisive public attitude toward their effectiveness.

**FIGURE 8**  
Tonga’s military partnership with New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America  
Thinking now about Tonga's partnership in the world. Do you think a security partnership between Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States will make the Pacific Islands region more safe, less safe or make no difference?

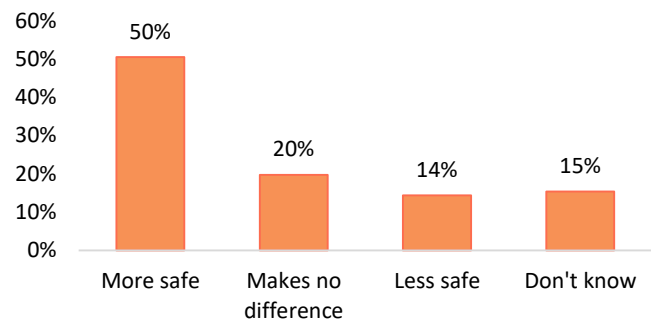


Figure 8-Tonga's military partnership with New Zealand, Australia, United States of America

## Tonga-Chinese partnership Most Tongans believe closer ties with China would reduce regional safety

Nearly half of Tongans (49%) believe that a partnership between Tonga and China would make the region less safe. By contrast, only 15% believe it would make the region more safe, while 18% say it would make no difference and 18% are unsure. This reflects a clear imbalance toward concern rather than support. Negative perceptions have eased slightly but remain dominant. In 2023, 54% believed such a partnership would make the region less safe, compared to 49% in 2025. Those who believe it would make the region more safe remain relatively stable (15% in 2023 to 15% in 2025), while uncertainty has increased slightly (17% to 18%). Although concern about China’s security role has softened marginally, perceptions remain predominantly negative. There is no evidence of a significant shift toward acceptance of a China-led security presence.

**FIGURE 9**  
Tonga-Chinese partnership  
Do you think a partnership between Tonga and China will make Tonga/Pacific Islands region more safe, makes no difference, less safe or don't know?

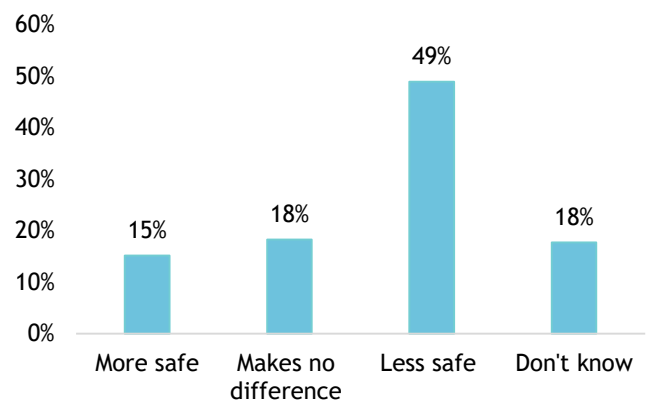


Figure 9-Tonga-Chinese partners

## Australia acquiring a nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear weapons

Tongans lean towards concern about the security impact of Australia’s nuclear capabilities

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans are more likely to view Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear weapons as making the region less safe. Around one-third (32%) say it would make the Pacific less safe, while 27% believe it would make the region more safe. A further 14% say it would make no difference, and 27% say they do not know. These results indicate that negative perceptions outweigh positive ones, although a significant proportion of Tongans remain uncertain about the implications of Australia’s nuclear capabilities. The 2023 results show that perceptions have shifted slightly but remain broadly divided. Those who believe the acquisition would make the region more safe have declined from 34% in 2023 to 27% in 2025. At the same time, those who believe it would make the region less safe have increased from 28% to 32%. The proportion saying it would make no difference has risen from 12% to 14%, while uncertainty remains broadly stable (26% to 27%). Tongans appear cautious about the expansion of nuclear capabilities in the region, with concern now outweighing support.

Overall, the findings suggest growing unease about nuclear developments in the Pacific, combined with

a persistent level of uncertainty about their broader security implications.

**FIGURE 10**  
Australia acquiring a nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear weapons

Thinking now about Tonga’s defence. If Australia acquired a nuclear submarines, would it make the Pacific Island region more safe, make no difference, less safe or do not know?

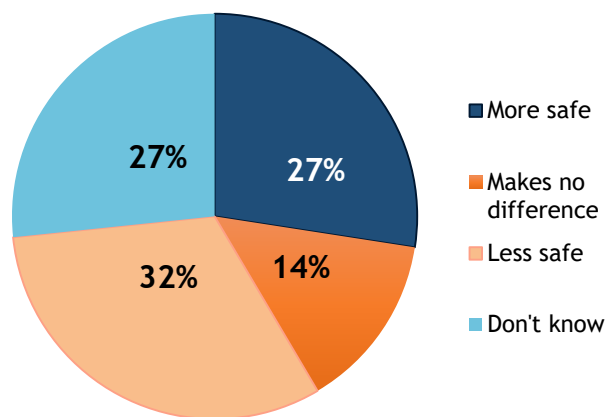


Figure 10-Australia acquiring a nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear weapon

## Foreign military in Tonga

Tongans favour military presence from traditional partners but oppose China

A majority of Tongans support allowing traditional partners to base military forces in Tonga. The United States receives the highest support (64% in favour), followed by Australia (54%) and the United Kingdom (58%).

In contrast, only 15% support China establishing a military presence, while a large majority (72%) are opposed. Support for traditional partners remains broadly stable. In 2023, support for the United States stood at 59%, Australia at 61%, and the United Kingdom at 54%. Opposition to China remains very high, with little change (around 72% opposed in both years). Tongans clearly differentiate between partners, favouring established allies while rejecting China’s military presence. This reflects enduring strategic alignment and trust in traditional security relationships.

**FIGURE 11**  
Foreign Military in Tonga

Are you personally in favour of or against Tonga allowing the following countries to base a military forces here in Tonga?

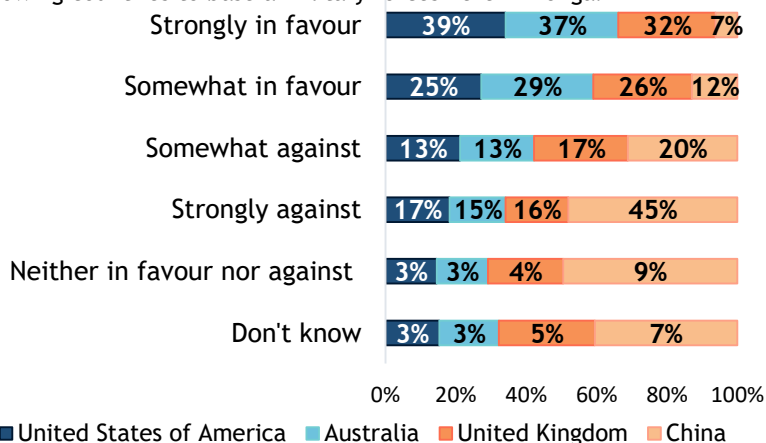


Figure 11-Foreign military in Tonga

## Expectations for America under Donald Trump

Tongans are divided on the future direction of the United States under Trump

Around one-third of Tongans (31%) believe that America will become better under Donald Trump over the next four years, while 22% believe it will become worse. A further 20% expect no change, and 27% say they do not know.

This reflects a mixed and uncertain outlook. As this is a new question, there is no direct equivalent from 2023. However, compared with earlier views on global tensions (such as the 2023 Australia-Solomon Islands-China relations), uncertainty remains similarly high (27% in 2025 compared with 27% “don’t know” in 2023), indicating consistent levels of limited certainty on complex geopolitical issues.

Tongans do not hold a clear consensus on the future direction of US leadership. While optimism slightly outweighs pessimism, the large proportion of uncertain responses highlights limited clarity about how US politics may affect the region.

**FIGURE 12:**  
Expectations for America under Donald Trump in the next four years

Now thinking about Presidency of Donald Trump. Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the next four years with Donald Trump as US president?

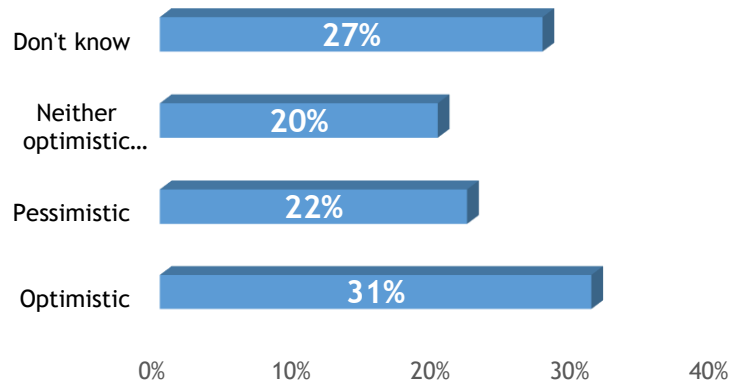


Figure 12-Expectations for America under Donald Trump in the next four years

## Use of Tongan military forces

Tongans continue to support the use of their military for regional and peacekeeping roles, though support has declined since 2026

**FIGURE 13**

### Use of Tongan military forces

Now about the Tongan military forces. There may be situations in which the Tongan military forces are asked to be used in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about the following situations. Would you be in favour or against the use of Tongan military forces.

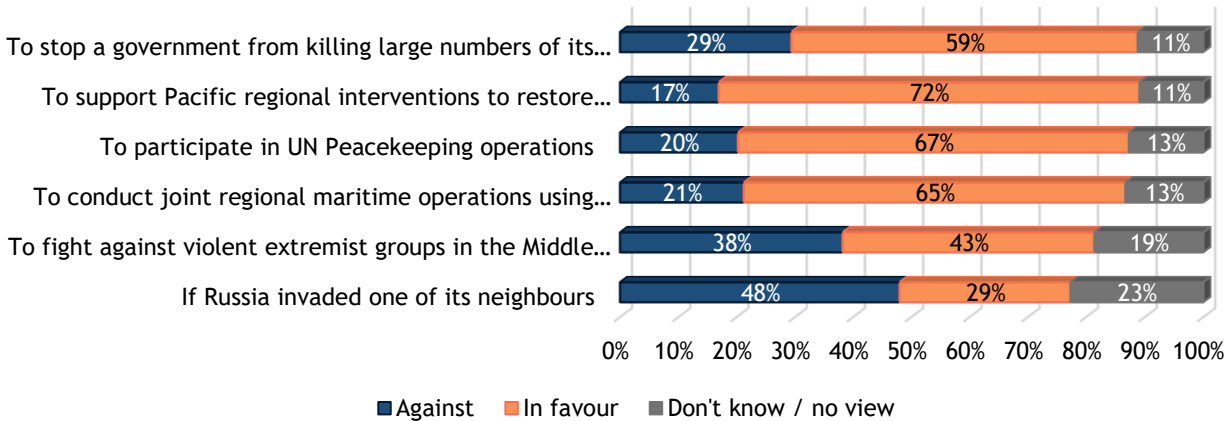


Figure 13-Use of Tongan military forces

Tongans are most supportive of using their military in regional and cooperative roles. In 2025, 72% favour supporting Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order, 67% support participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and 65% support joint regional maritime operations using patrol boats. A majority (59%) also support using the military to stop a government from killing large numbers of its own people.

Support is lower for more distant or geopolitically sensitive conflicts. Fewer than half (43%) support using the Tongan military to fight violent extremist groups in the Middle East, while only 29% support action if Russia invaded one of its neighbours. Opposition is highest on the Russia question, where 48% are against such involvement and 23% say they do not know or have no view.

Support has declined across all six scenarios. Backing for Pacific regional interventions has fallen from 80% in 2023 to 72% in 2025, UN peacekeeping from 77% to 67%, and joint maritime operations from 75% to 65%. Support for humanitarian intervention has also dropped, from 65% to 59%. The most notable declines are in more distant conflicts: support for fighting violent extremist groups has fallen from 49% to 43%, while support for action in the event of Russian aggression has declined from 36% to 29%.

These findings suggest that Tongans continue to support an outward military role, but one focused primarily on regional stability, peacekeeping, and cooperative security rather than involvement in distant wars.

# RELATIONS WITH SUPERPOWERS: CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

## China

**A large majority still believe China is likely to become a military threat, though concern has eased**

Most Tongans continue to believe that China is likely to become a military threat to Tonga over the next 20 years. In 2025, 50% say this is “very likely” and a further 20% say it is “likely”, giving a combined 70% who see China as likely to become a threat. Another 13% say it is “somewhat likely”, while 17% say they do not know or have no view.

Concern remains high but has softened since 2023. In that year, 62% said it was “very likely” that China would become a military threat and 16% said it was “likely”, giving a combined 78%. Since then, the share saying “very likely” has fallen from 62% to 50%, while “likely” has increased from 16% to 20% and “somewhat likely” from 9% to 13%. The proportion with no view has also risen, from 12% to 17%.

The overall concern about China’s strategic role is still strong, but public opinion has become somewhat less categorical and more mixed than it was in 2023.

**FIGURE 14**

### China

Do you think it is likely or unlikely that China will become a military threat to Tonga in the next 20 years?

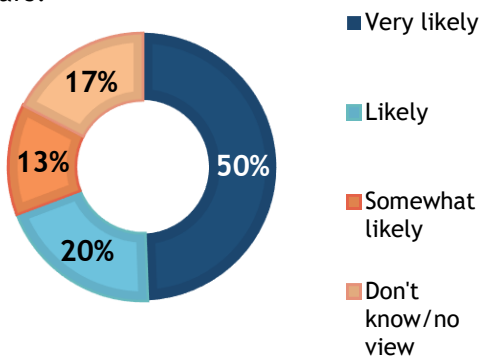


Figure 14-China

**Tongans continue to hold mixed views of China, but are somewhat more likely to see it as an economic partner**

Tongans remain divided in how they view China’s role in Tonga. In 2025, the most common response is that China is more of an economic partner (35%). A further 26% see China as more of a security threat, while 21% say it is both equally. Another 18% say they do not know or have no view.

Compared with 2023, views have shifted modestly toward a more economic interpretation of the relationship. The share seeing China as more of an economic partner has increased from 32% to 35%. The proportion seeing China as both equally an economic partner and a security threat has declined from 26% to 21%, while the share viewing China primarily as a security threat has remained unchanged at 26%. Uncertainty has increased slightly, from 16% to 18%.

These results suggest that Tongans continue to view China in dual terms, but with a slight movement away from seeing it as simultaneously both partner and threat, and toward a more clearly economic reading of the relationship.

**FIGURE 15**

### China: economic partner or security threat

In your own view, is China more of an economic partner or more of a security threat to Tonga?

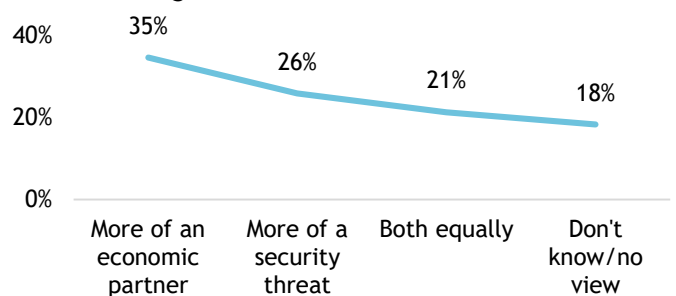


Figure 15-China: economic partner or security threat

## The United States of America

A majority of Tongans (80%) say that Tonga’s alliance with the United States is “very important”, and 13% believe that it is only “somewhat important” and only 2% of Tongans think Tonga’s alliance with the United States is not important and 5% say they don’t know or have no opinion on this matter.

**FIGURE 16**  
**The United States**

How important is our partnership with the United States for Tonga?

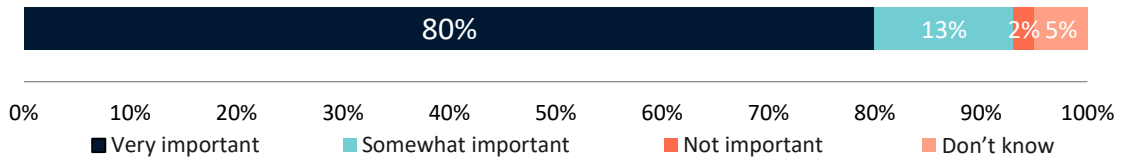


Figure 16-The United States of America

## The United States Alliance

**Tongans still see security benefits in the US partnership, but confidence has softened and risk perceptions have increased**

Tongans continue to see important benefits in Tonga’s partnership with the United States, though with more caution than before. In 2025, 58% agree that the United States would come to Tonga’s defence if Tonga were under threat, while 20% disagree and 22% say they do not know. A similar 57% agree that the partnership makes Tonga safer from external threats, compared with 19% who disagree and 24% who have no view. At the same time, concern about possible risks is more evident. Thirty-two per cent agree that the partnership makes it more likely Tonga could be drawn into a war that

would not be in Tonga’s interests. Forty-seven per cent disagree with that statement, while 21% say they do not know. Confidence in the alliance has weakened since 2023. Agreement that the United States would come to Tonga’s defence has fallen from 69% to 58%, while agreement that the partnership makes Tonga safer has declined from 67% to 57%. At the same time, concern that the partnership could draw Tonga into war has increased from 27% in 2023 to 32% in 2025. The share disagreeing with that statement has fallen from 54% to 47%, while uncertainty has increased slightly.

Taken together, these results suggest a shift from strong and confident support toward a more measured and conditional view of the US alliance.

**FIGURE 17**  
**The United States Alliance**

I am now going to read you some different arguments about the partnership with the United States. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree.

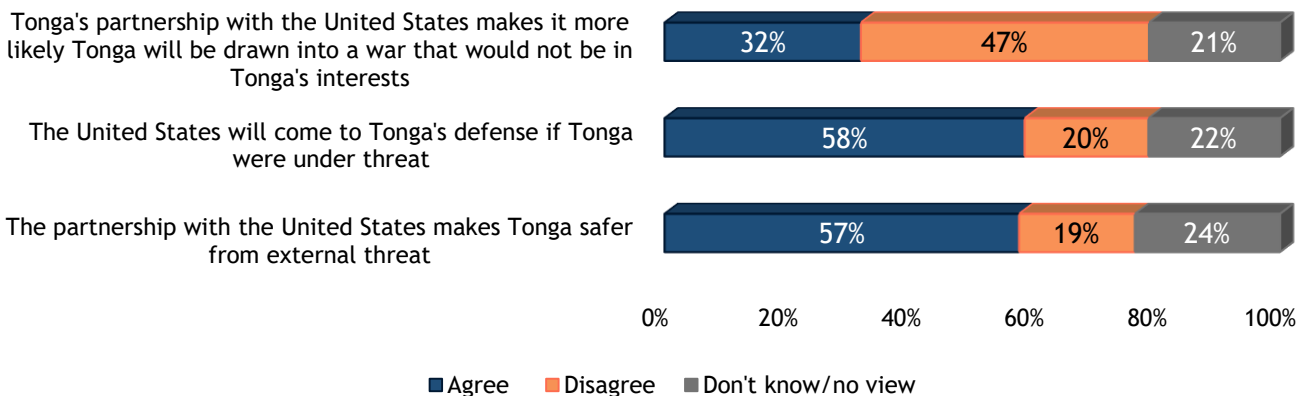


Figure 17-The United States alliance

## Military conflict between the United States and China

Tongans overwhelmingly favour neutrality in a US-China conflict, though support for the United States has risen slightly

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, Tongans strongly favour neutrality. In 2025, 69% say Tonga should remain neutral. By contrast, 28% say Tonga should support the United States, while only 3% say Tonga should support China.

Neutrality remains the dominant position, but it has eased slightly since 2023. In that year, 74% supported a neutral stance, compared with 69% in 2025. Support for the United States has increased from 25% to 28%, while support for China has risen marginally from 1% to 3%, though it remains extremely low.

These findings reinforce a strong Tongan preference for non-alignment in major power conflict, while also suggesting a small increase in willingness to lean toward the United States in an extreme scenario.

### FIGURE 18 Military conflict between the United States and China

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, please say which one of the following statements comes closest to your personal view.

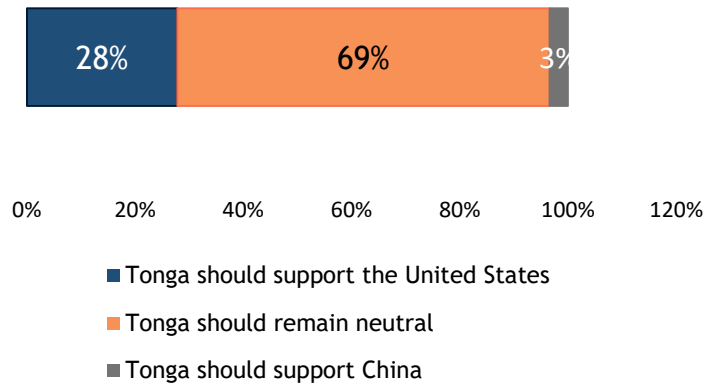


Figure 18-Military conflict between the United States and China

# DEMOCRACY AT HOME AND ABROAD

## Democracies around the world

Tongans clearly recognise Western countries as democracies, while uncertainty remains high for others, though awareness is increasing

**FIGURE 19**

Democracies around the world

Here is a list of countries and territories. For each one, please indicate whether you agree or disagree that the country or territory is a democracy.

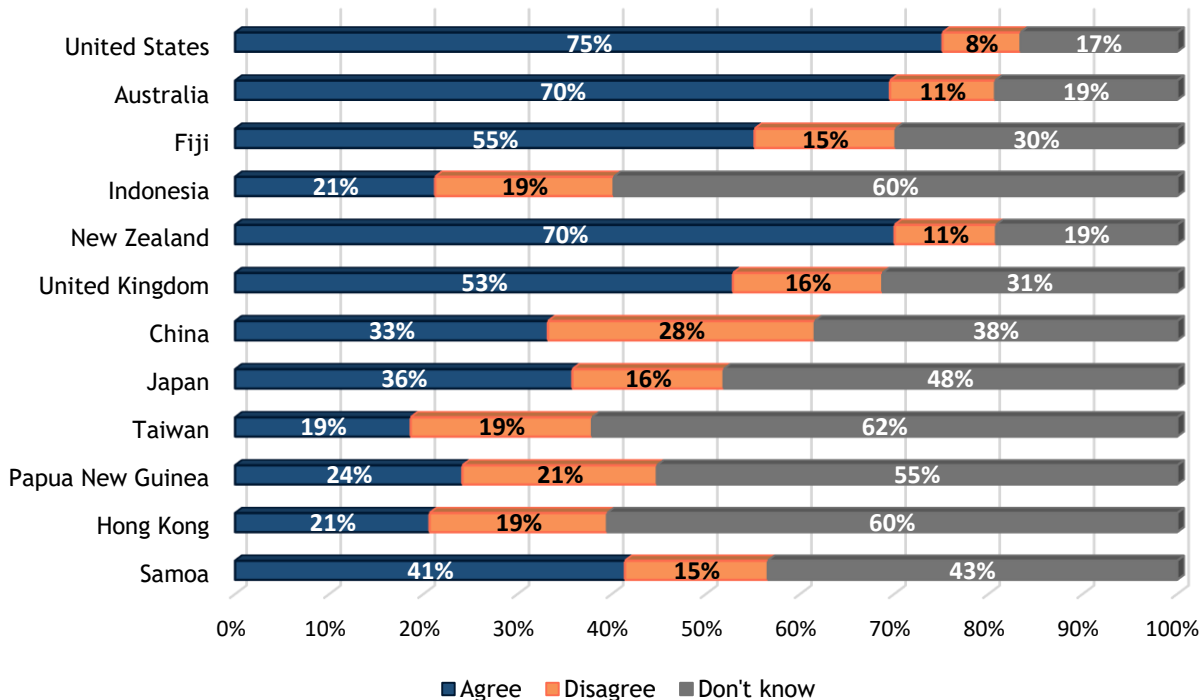


Figure 19-Democracies around the world

Tongans are most confident in identifying Western and traditional partner countries as democracies. In 2025, 76% identify the United States as a democracy, followed by New Zealand (75%) and Australia (71%). A smaller majority also recognise Fiji (54%) and the United Kingdom (54%) as democratic countries. Recognition is considerably lower for other countries. Only 40% identify Samoa as a democracy, while fewer recognise Japan (33%) and China (27%). Very small proportions identify Papua New Guinea (20%), Hong Kong (19%), Taiwan (18%), and Indonesia (17%) as democracies.

A defining feature of the results is the high level of uncertainty. Large proportions of Tongans say they do not know whether several countries are democratic, including Indonesia (63%), Taiwan (61%), Hong Kong (61%), Papua New Guinea (56%), and Japan (46%). The overall pattern remains similar to 2023, but with several notable shifts. Recognition of the United States, New Zealand, and Australia as democracies has increased slightly, suggesting growing confidence in identifying the political systems of key partners.

The most significant change is for Fiji, where recognition has risen sharply from 21% in 2023 to 54% in 2025, indicating increased awareness of political developments in the Pacific. Perceptions of China have also become more defined. Disagreement that China is a democracy has increased substantially (from around 16% in 2023 to 35% in 2025), while uncertainty has declined, suggesting a shift from uncertainty toward more settled views.

The findings suggest that Tongans are most confident in identifying the political systems of countries with which they have strong ties, particularly Western partners and Pacific neighbours. At the same time, knowledge of political systems in less familiar countries remains limited, reflected in consistently high “don’t know” responses. While there are clear signs of increasing awareness—especially regarding Fiji and China—Tongan understanding of global democracy remains uneven and strongly shaped by proximity, familiarity, and engagement.

## Attitudes to democracy

Tongans show a strong and increasing preference for their current hybrid political system, while support for democracy as an abstract principle remains limited

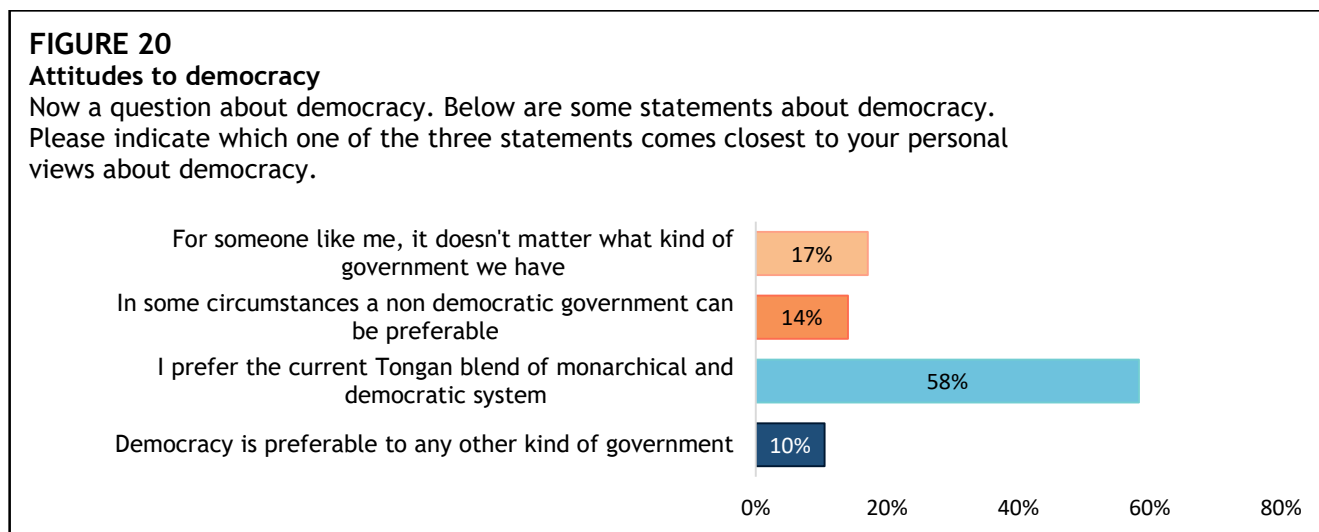


Figure 40-Attitudes to democracy

Tongans clearly favour their existing political system over alternative models. In 2025, a majority (58%) say they prefer Tonga’s current system, which combines elements of monarchy and democracy. This is by far the most widely supported option.

By contrast, smaller proportions express alternative views. Seventeen per cent (17%) say it does not matter what kind of government Tonga has, while 14% believe that in some circumstances a non-democratic government can be preferable. Only 10% say that democracy is preferable to any other form of government.

A key feature of the findings is the relatively low level of support for democracy as an abstract ideal, compared with the strong endorsement of Tonga’s existing system.

The 2023 results show a similar overall pattern, but with some important shifts toward stronger support for the current system. Preference for Tonga’s hybrid system has increased from 52% in 2023 to 58% in 2025, indicating growing confidence in the existing political structure. At the same time, support for democracy as a general principle has declined, with those saying democracy is always preferable falling from 13% in 2023 to 10% in 2025.

Tongans public attitudes seem to reflect a pragmatic and context-specific understanding of governance, with a clear preference for stability and familiarity over somewhat abstract political models.

# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK, GLOBALISATION AND TRADE

## Economic optimism

Tongans are divided on current economic conditions but remain strongly optimistic about the future

Tongans hold mixed views about the current state of the economy. In 2025, a plurality (44%) say the economy is “mostly bad”, while 34% say it is “mostly good”. A further 22% say they do not know or have no view, indicating a significant level of uncertainty.

Despite these mixed assessments of current conditions, Tongans are overwhelmingly optimistic about the future. A large majority (71%) say they are optimistic about the economic outlook over the next five years, compared with 19% who are pessimistic and 10% who do not know.

This contrast highlights a clear gap between perceptions of present challenges and expectations for future improvement.

Perceptions of the current economy have deteriorated slightly since 2023. The proportion of Tongans who say the economy is “mostly bad” has increased from 40% in 2023 to 44% in 2025, while those who say it is “mostly good” has declined from 38% to 34%.

Despite this, optimism about the future has remained consistently high. In 2023, 72% of Tongans were optimistic about the economy,

compared with 71% in 2025, indicating very little change. Pessimism has also remained relatively stable (18% in 2023 to 19% in 2025).

These results suggest that while current conditions are viewed more negatively, expectations for the future remain resilient. The findings indicate a resilient economic outlook, with hope for the future outweighing concerns about the present.

**FIGURE 21**  
**Tonga's Economic Performance**

Thinking about Tonga's economic performance in the world. Is Tonga's economic performance mostly good or mostly bad or neither/don't know/no view?

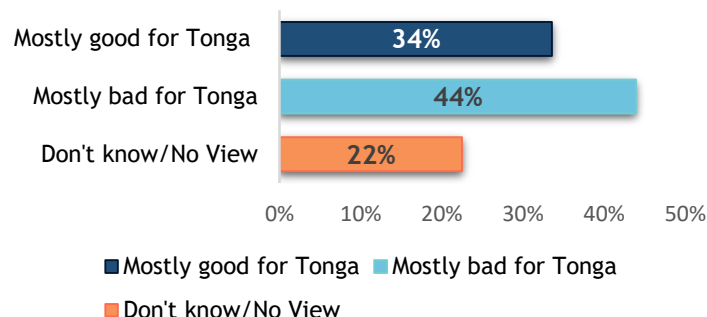


Figure 21-Tonga's economic performance

## Economic optimism for seasonal work

**FIGURE 22**

### Economic optimism for seasonal work

Do you personally think that seasonal work is mostly good or mostly bad for each of the following:

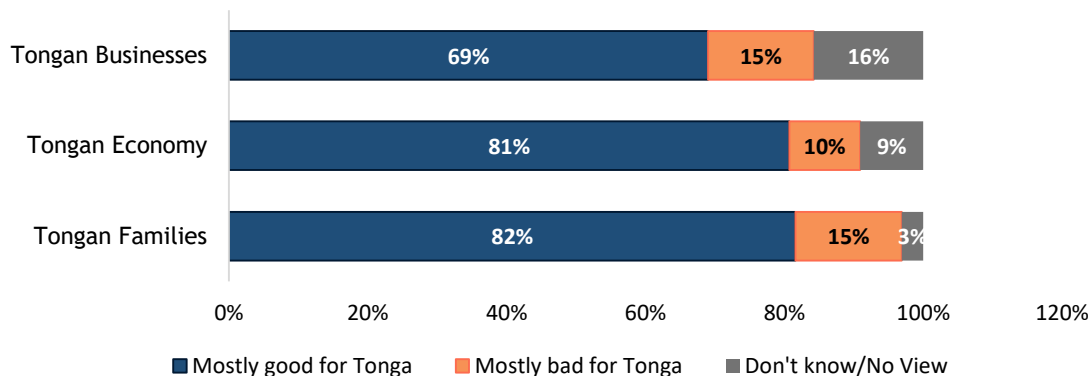


Figure 22-Economic optimism

Tongans overwhelmingly believe seasonal work is beneficial across families, the economy, and businesses.

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that strong majorities of Tongans believe seasonal work is mostly good across all areas measured.

Perceptions are most positive in relation to Tongan families, with 82% of respondents saying seasonal work is mostly good, compared with 15% who say it is mostly bad and only 3% who say they do not know or have no view. Similarly, 81% believe seasonal work is mostly good for Tonga’s economy, while 10% say it is mostly bad and 9% are unsure.

Views are slightly more mixed in relation to Tongan businesses. While a clear majority (69%) say seasonal work is mostly good, 15% say it is mostly bad and a higher proportion (16%) say they do not know or have no view. This indicates comparatively greater uncertainty about its impact on businesses.

Overall, the findings show very strong and consistent support for seasonal work, with particularly high confidence in its benefits for families and the national economy.

The 2023 results show similarly strong support, though with some notable shifts in emphasis.

Perceptions of benefits for families have strengthened slightly, rising from 81% in 2023 to 82% in 2025. Positive views of the economy remain very high and broadly stable (80% in 2023 compared with 81% in 2025).

The most notable change is in relation to businesses. In 2023, 76% said seasonal work was mostly good for businesses, compared with 69% in 2025, indicating a decline in perceived benefits. At the same time, uncertainty has increased (from 11% to 16%), suggesting less certainty about how seasonal work affects the business sector.

Tongans continue to view seasonal work as an important source of economic and social benefit, with particularly strong support for its impact on families and the broader economy.

However, the decline in perceived benefits for businesses, alongside higher uncertainty, suggests a more nuanced assessment in 2025. While seasonal work remains widely valued, there is growing recognition that its impacts may not be evenly distributed across all sectors.

Overall, seasonal work continues to be seen as overwhelmingly positive, but attitudes in 2025 reflect a more differentiated understanding of its effects across families, the economy, and businesses.

## Future economic outlook

Tongans remain strongly optimistic about the economic future despite current concerns

Tongans are overwhelmingly optimistic about the future of the economy. In 2025, 71% say they are optimistic about economic conditions over the next five years, including 21% who are very optimistic. By contrast, 16% say they are pessimistic, while 12% say they do not know or have no view.

This strong optimism stands in contrast to more negative perceptions of current economic conditions, highlighting a forward-looking outlook among Tongans.

Levels of optimism have declined since 2023. In that year, 78% of Tongans said they were optimistic about the future of the economy, compared with 71% in 2025. Pessimism has increased slightly, rising from 13% in 2023 to 16% in 2025. Uncertainty has also grown, with those reporting no view increasing from 9% to 12%.

The findings indicate that while Tongans remain strongly optimistic about the future, confidence has moderated since 2023.

The decline in optimism, alongside increases in pessimism and uncertainty, suggests a more cautious outlook. However, the overall picture remains one of resilience, with a clear majority continuing to expect economic improvement in the years ahead.

**FIGURE 23**  
**Economic Optimism**

Overall, how optimistic are you about Tonga's economic performance in the world over the next five years?

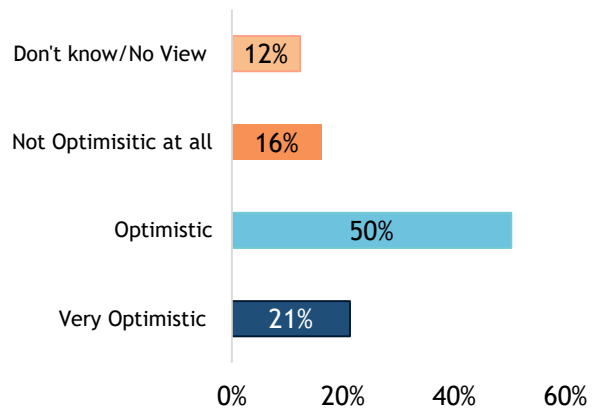


Figure 23-Tonga's Economic optimism

## Globalisation

**FIGURE 24**  
**Globalisation**

Now on globalisation. Do you believe that globalisation, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad or have no view for Tonga?

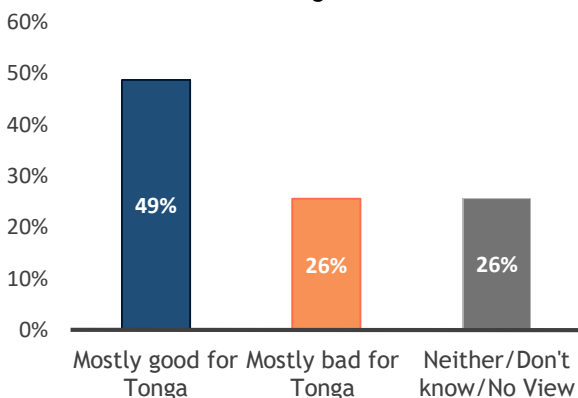


Figure 24-Globalisation

**Tongans continue to view globalisation positively, though support has softened and uncertainty has increased**

A plurality of Tongans view globalisation as beneficial. In 2025, 49% say globalisation is “mostly good” for Tonga, while a smaller proportion view it as “mostly bad”. A significant share (26%) say they do not know or have no view, indicating notable uncertainty.

These results suggest that while positive perceptions remain dominant, they are not overwhelming, and uncertainty plays a meaningful role.

Support for globalisation has declined since 2023. The proportion of Tongans who say globalisation is “mostly good” has fallen from 55% in 2023 to 49% in 2025. At the same time, those who view it as “mostly bad” has increased slightly (from 23% to 26%), while uncertainty has also increased only slightly from around 22% to 23%.

These changes indicate a gradual shift toward more cautious and less certain views of globalisation. Tongans continue to recognise the benefits of globalisation, but growing uncertainty suggests a

more cautious outlook. The decline in strong positive views, combined with rising uncertainty, indicates that globalisation is being evaluated more critically than in the past.

## Free Trade

### Tongans continue to see free trade as beneficial, though support has softened since 2023

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that a majority of Tongans continue to view free trade positively across all areas measured, though support is less strong than in 2023. Free trade is seen as most beneficial for creating jobs in Tonga, with 65% saying it is good, compared with 22% who say it is bad and 13% who do not know or have no view. Similarly, 64% believe free trade is good for the Tongan economy, while 21% say it is bad and 15% are unsure.

Perceptions are slightly lower in relation to Tongan businesses, where 63% say free trade is good, 22% say it is bad, and 14% do not know. A similar pattern is seen for personal impact, with 64% saying free trade is good for their own standard of living, 14% saying it is bad, and 21% expressing uncertainty.

**FIGURE 25**  
**Free Trade**

Overall, do you personally think free trade is good or bad for each of the following:

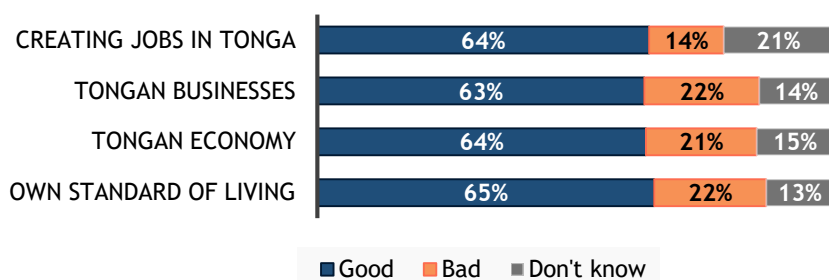


Figure 25-Free Trade

Support for free trade has declined across all measures since 2023. In 2023, 67% said free trade was good for creating jobs, compared with 65% in 2025. More substantial declines are seen in perceptions of its impact on the Tongan economy (down from 71% to 64%) and on personal living standards (down from 71% to 64%). Views of its impact on businesses have also softened, declining from 66% in 2023 to 63% in 2025. At the same time, negative views have increased across most categories, particularly for businesses (up from 20% to 22%) and job creation (up from 11% to 22%).

Uncertainty has also risen, especially in relation to personal living standards (from 11% to 21%) and the economy (from 12% to 15%), indicating that more Tongans are unsure about the effects of free trade.

Tongans continue to view free trade as beneficial, particularly for employment and the broader economy. However, compared with 2023, attitudes have become more cautious and less emphatic. The decline in positive perceptions, combined with rising concern and uncertainty, suggests that while free trade remains widely supported, Tongans are increasingly weighing both its advantages and potential drawbacks.

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND IMMIGRATION

## Social Media and Democracy

Figure 26

### Social Media

Now a question about the impact of social media on democracy. Do you think social media has a more of a positive or negative impact on democracy or no impact at all?

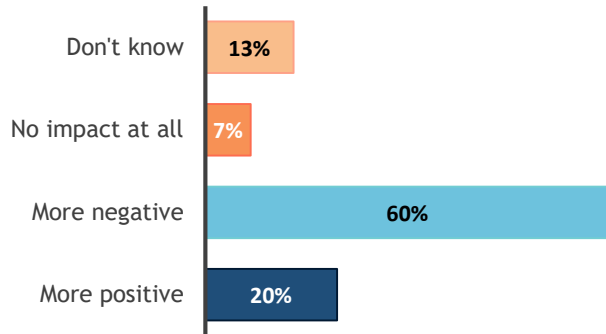


Figure 26-Social Media and Democracy

### Most Tongans believe social media has a negative impact on democracy

A clear majority of Tongans view social media as harmful to democracy. In 2025, **six in ten Tongans (60%)** say social media has a **more negative impact** on democracy, making this the dominant view by a wide margin. Only **one in five (20%)** believe social media has a **more positive impact**, while a small proportion (7%) say it has **no impact at all**. A further **13%** say they **do not know or have no view**.

These results indicate that negative perceptions of social media's role in democracy significantly outweigh positive views.

This question was only asked in this 2025 survey.

The strong majority identifying a negative impact likely reflects concerns about misinformation, social division, and the influence of digital platforms on political processes. At the same time, the presence of a smaller group who see positive impacts indicates recognition of the benefits of access to information and communication.

The findings suggest that Tongans are broadly sceptical about the role of social media in democratic life

## Immigration and Openness

New Zealand is still seen as the country most willing to accept Tongan immigrants

**Figure 27**

### Immigration and Openness

Which of these countries do you think is the most willing to accept Tongan immigrants into to their countries?

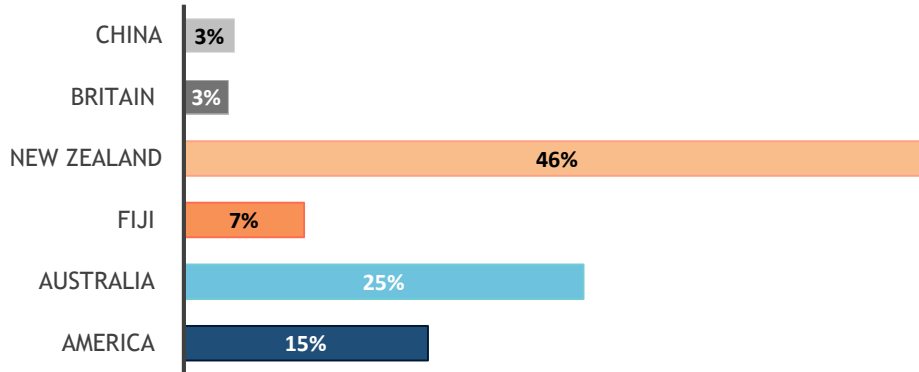


Figure 27-Immigration and openness

Tongans continue to see New Zealand as the country most willing to accept Tongan immigrants. In 2025, 46% identify New Zealand as the most open destination, well ahead of all other countries. Australia ranks second at 25%, followed by the United States at 15%. Much smaller proportions identify Fiji (7%), Britain (3%), and China (3%) as the most willing to accept Tongan immigrants.

These results show that perceptions of openness remain concentrated on a small group of traditional migration destinations, especially New Zealand and Australia.

The overall pattern remains largely unchanged from 2023. New Zealand was also ranked first in 2023 at 47%, compared with 46% in 2025, indicating a very stable perception of its openness to Tongan migrants.

Australia’s standing has improved slightly, rising from 23% in 2023 to 25% in 2025. By contrast, the

United States has declined noticeably, from 22% to 15%, suggesting that Tongans now see it as less open than they did two years earlier.

Fiji has increased modestly from 4% to 7%, while Britain remains unchanged at 3%. China has risen slightly from 1% in 2023 to 3% in 2025, though it remains among the least frequently selected countries.

The findings suggest that Tongans’ perceptions of immigration openness remain strongly shaped by long-standing migration relationships.

New Zealand continues to dominate as the country seen as most willing to accept Tongans, while Australia has strengthened its position slightly. The decline in the United States points to a modest shift in perceptions away from America and toward the more familiar regional destinations.

## Post Pandemic Immigration

Tongans are divided on post-pandemic migration levels to Australia

### FIGURE 28

#### Post-pandemic immigration

Thinking now about the pause in Tonga's travelling to other countries during the pandemic. Now that the borders have reopened, over the next 12 months, do you think the number of migrants accepted by Australia should be:

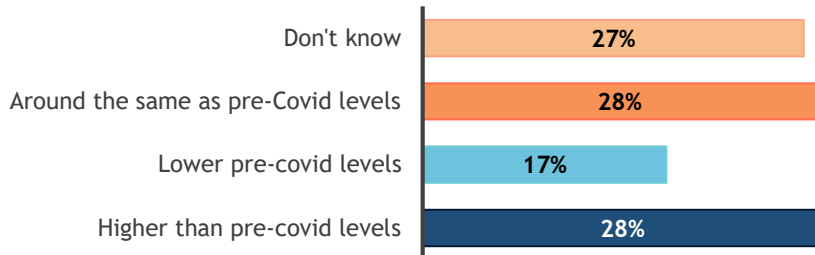


Figure 28-Post-pandemic immigration

Tongans hold mixed views on migration levels to Australia in the post-Covid period, with no single dominant position emerging.

In 2025, the largest group of Tongans (28%) believe that Australia should accept **higher numbers of migrants than pre-Covid levels**. An identical proportion (28%) say migration levels should remain **about the same**. A smaller share (17%) believe Australia should accept **fewer migrants**, while a substantial proportion (27%) say they **do not know or have no view**.

These results indicate a spread of opinion across all options, with support for increased migration only narrowly exceeding other positions.

The 2023 results show a **very similar distribution of views**, indicating that attitudes toward post-pandemic migration have remained largely stable.

Support for **higher migration levels remains around the same level (approximately 28%)**, while the proportion favouring **no change also remains steady at around 28%**. Views supporting **lower migration (around the high teens)** show little movement.

Levels of uncertainty are also consistent, with **around a quarter (approximately 27%)** continuing to report that they **do not know or have no view**.

While there is some support for expanding migration opportunities, this is offset by those who prefer maintaining current levels or reducing migration, as well as a sizeable group who remain uncertain.

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

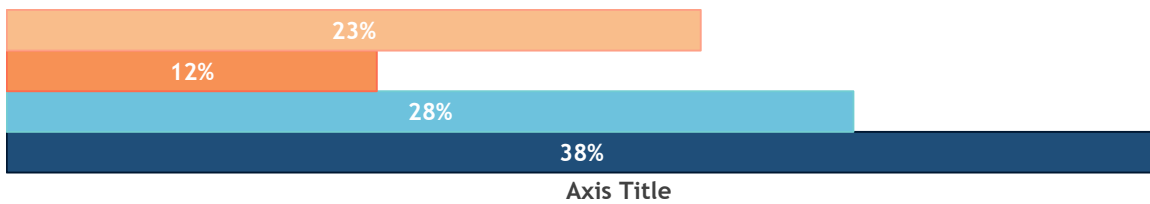
## Global warming

Tongans continue to view climate change as a serious issue, while showing a shift toward more measured responses

Figure 29

### Climate Change and Energy

Now about global warming. There is a controversy over what the countries of the world should do about the problem of global warming. Please indicate which of the following four statements come closest to your own point of view.



- Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs.
- The problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost.
- Until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs.
- Others who contributed most to climate change should take strong action, not Tonga.

Figure 29-Climate Change and Energy

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that the largest group of Tongans (**38%**) believe that global warming is a serious and pressing problem and that **action should be taken now even if this involves significant costs**. A further **28%** support a more gradual approach, agreeing that climate change should be addressed but managed over time through **lower-cost measures**. Nearly a quarter (**23%**) believe that **countries that contributed most to climate change should take the lead**, rather than Tonga, reflecting a strong sense of global responsibility. Only **12%** take a more cautious position, saying that **action should be delayed until there is greater certainty** about the problem.

The 2023 results show a very similar overall distribution of views, with strong support for action on climate change remaining the dominant position. Support for **immediate action** has declined slightly, from **40% in 2023 to 38% in 2025**, indicating a modest softening in urgency. At the same time, support for a **gradual, lower-cost approach** has increased from **23% to 28%**, suggesting a shift toward more economically cautious responses.

The proportion who believe that **other countries should take primary responsibility** has decreased slightly from **26% in 2023 to 23% in 2025**, while views favouring **delaying action** remain low and broadly unchanged (**11% to 12%**).

The findings indicate that Tongans continue to regard climate change as a serious issue requiring action, with most supporting either immediate or gradual responses.

## Climate change migration visa

Strong support for climate migration visas remains, though intensity has softened

**FIGURE 30**

### Sea Level Rises

If the sea level rises because of climate change and people living in Tonga have to be relocated, how important do you think countries outside Tonga, should give climate change migration visa?

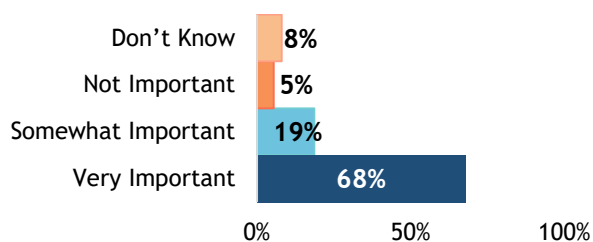


Figure 30-Climate Change migration visa

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that a large majority of Tongans believe it is important that countries outside Tonga should offer climate change migration visas if sea-level rise forces Tongans to relocate.

More than two-thirds (68%) say this is very important, while a further 19% say it is somewhat

important, giving a combined 87% who view climate migration visas as important. Only small proportions say this is not important (5%) or indicate that they do not know (8%).

The 2023 results show even stronger intensity of support for climate migration visas.

In 2023, 79% of Tongans said it was very important, compared with 68% in 2025, representing a notable decline in the strength of opinion. At the same time, the proportion saying it is somewhat important has increased from 10% in 2023 to 19% in 2025, indicating a shift from strong to more moderate support. The proportions who say this is not important (4% to 5%) and do not know (7% to 8%) remain low and largely unchanged.

Tongans support for climate migration visas remains overwhelmingly high, but views in 2025 are less emphatic and more measured than in 2023.

## Country that should offer migration visa due to climate change

**FIGURE 31:**

### Country that should offer migration visa due to climate change

Which of these countries do you think should be most willing to offer the climate change migration visa?

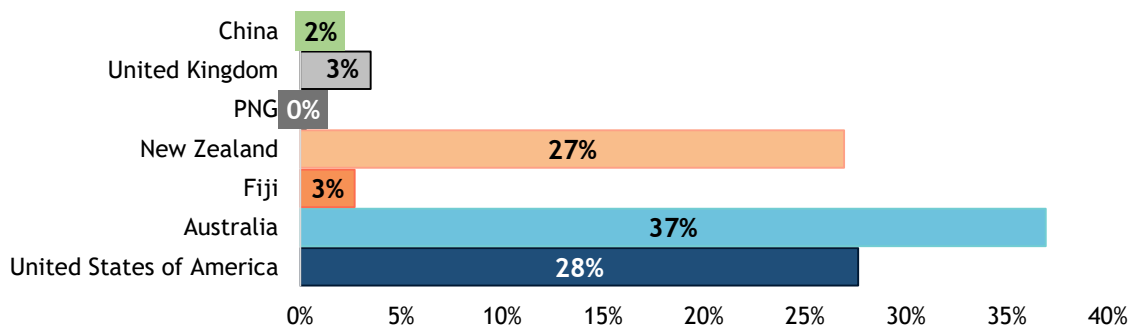


Figure 31-Country that should offer migration visa due to climate change

Tongans continue to prioritize Australia, the United States, and New Zealand as the countries most responsible for offering climate migration visas

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans overwhelmingly identify Australia and the United States as the countries that should be most willing to offer climate change migration visas, with 37% selecting Australia and 28% the United States. New Zealand is the next most frequently identified

country at 27%. All other countries are seen as far less responsible. Only small proportions select Fiji (3%), the United Kingdom (3%), and China (2%), while no respondents identify Papua New Guinea (0%).

Overall, the findings indicate that Tongans place primary responsibility on traditional partners—particularly Australia, the United States, and New Zealand—to respond to climate-driven migration.

The 2023 results show a similar pattern, with Australia and the United States jointly ranked as the top choices (32% each), followed closely by New Zealand (30%). Compared with 2023, support has increased for Australia (from 32% to 37%), while support for the United States has declined slightly (from 32% to 28%) and New Zealand has also decreased modestly (from 30% to 27%).

Perceptions of other countries remain consistently low across both surveys, with Fiji, the United Kingdom, and China continuing to attract minimal support.

The findings confirm that Tongans continue to look primarily to their traditional partners to provide pathways for climate-related migration. While the overall pattern remains stable, the increased emphasis on Australia in 2025 suggests a strengthening expectation of its role, alongside slightly reduced expectations of the United States and New Zealand.

Overall, Tongans maintain a clear and consistent view that responsibility for climate migration visas rests with a small group of key partner countries, reflecting both historical ties and expectations of capacity and support.

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# TONGAN FOREIGN POLICY AND FOREIGN AID

## Budgetary support

Tongans overwhelmingly view donor budget support as beneficial for the economy

**FIGURE 32**

Budgetary support from donors good or bad

Do you think budgetary support from donors is good, mostly good, or mostly bad for Tonga's economy?

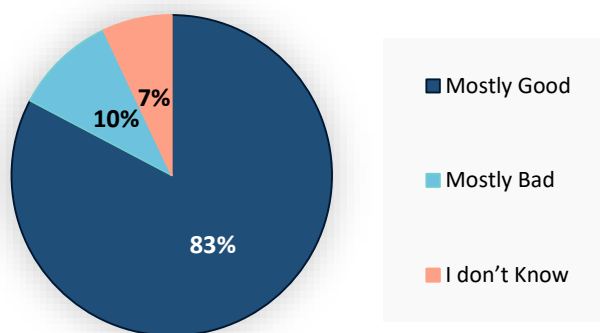


Figure 32-Budgetary support from donors good or bad

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that an overwhelming majority of Tongans believe that budgetary support from donors is mostly good for Tonga's economy. A total of 83% of respondents say it is mostly good, compared with 10% who say it is mostly bad and 7% who say they do not know or have no view.

These results indicate a very high level of public support for donor assistance, with only a small minority expressing negative views or uncertainty.

Support for donor budget assistance remains very strong, though it has declined since 2023. In that year, 93% of Tongans said budgetary support was mostly good for Tonga, compared with 83% in 2025.

At the same time, negative perceptions have increased, rising from 3% in 2023 to 10% in 2025. Uncertainty has also grown slightly, from 3% to 7%.

The findings show that Tongans continue to strongly value donor budget support as an important

contributor to the national economy. However, the decline in positive views, alongside increases in negative perceptions and uncertainty, suggests a modest shift toward a more cautious and questioning perspective.

### Budget priorities for donor support

#### Tongans prioritise health, education, and long-term economic development for donor support

**FIGURE 33**  
**Budgetary Support**  
 Now thinking about Tonga's budget. Which is in the most in need of more budgetary support from donor countries?

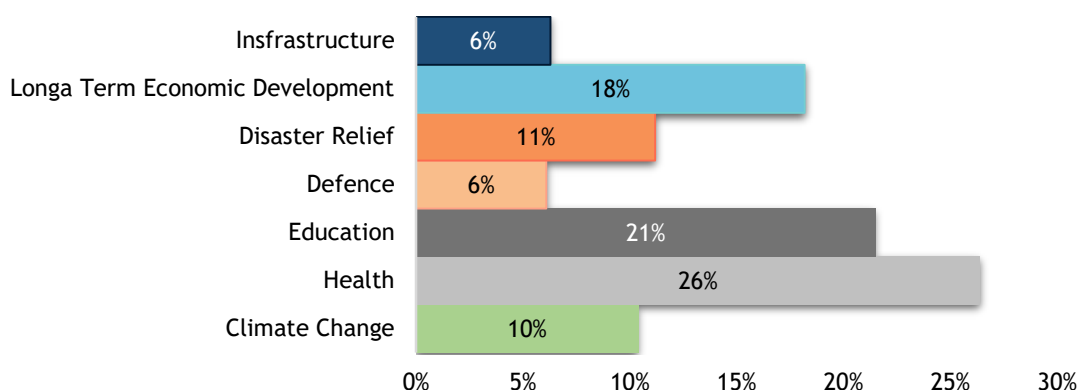


Figure 33-Budget priorities

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans identify health as the most pressing area in need of additional budgetary support from donor countries, with 26% selecting it as the top priority. Education is the second most frequently identified area at 21%, followed by long-term economic development at 18%. Disaster relief (11%) and climate change (10%) form a second tier of priorities, indicating continued concern for resilience and environmental challenges. The least prioritised areas are infrastructure (6%) and defence (6%), suggesting that Tongans place comparatively lower urgency on these sectors.

Overall, the findings highlight a clear focus on social services and long-term economic growth, alongside continued attention to disaster preparedness and climate-related risks.

The 2023 results show a different ordering of priorities, indicating a shift in emphasis in 2025. In 2023, long-term economic development ranked as

the top priority (21%), followed closely by education (20%) and health (17%). In contrast, in 2025 health has moved to first place (26%), with education remaining consistently high (21%), while long-term economic development has declined to third (18%). Disaster relief (14% in 2023 to 11% in 2025) and climate change (13% to 10%) have both declined slightly, though they remain mid-level priorities.

Lower-ranked areas show only modest changes. Infrastructure has decreased slightly (from 7% to 6%), while defence has increased marginally (from 5% to 6%). Covid-19 vaccines, which were included in 2023 (3%), no longer appear as a priority in 2025.

The findings suggest a shift in public priorities from long-term economic development toward more immediate social needs, particularly health. While education remains a consistently high priority across both surveys, the rise of health to the top position in 2025 indicates increased concern for wellbeing and public services.

## Potential Chinese Military base in a Pacific Island

Tongans express high levels of concern about a potential Chinese military base in the Pacific

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that a large majority of Tongans are concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country. More than half of respondents (55%) say they are very concerned, while a further 27% say they are somewhat concerned. Together, this indicates that over eight in ten Tongans (82%) express some level of concern.

By contrast, only small proportions express low levels of concern, with 11% saying they are not too concerned and 7% saying they are not at all concerned.

Overall, the findings indicate strong and widespread public concern about the potential expansion of China’s military presence in the Pacific.

Concern remains high but has moderated since 2023. In 2023, 69% of Tongans said they were very concerned, compared with 55% in 2025, representing a notable decline in the intensity of concern. At the same time, the proportion who are somewhat concerned has increased (from 21% to 27%), suggesting a shift from very strong concern to more moderate concern.

Lower levels of concern have also increased slightly. Those who are not too concerned have risen from 6% to 11%, while those not at all concerned have increased from 4% to 7%.

The findings suggest that while concern about a potential Chinese military base remains widespread, the intensity of that concern has softened since 2023. Rather than a reduction in overall concern, the results point to a shift toward more moderate views, with fewer Tongans expressing the highest level of concern and more expressing cautious or mixed positions.

**FIGURE 34**  
Chinese Military Based in Tonga  
Now thinking about world events. To what extent are you concerned or not concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country?

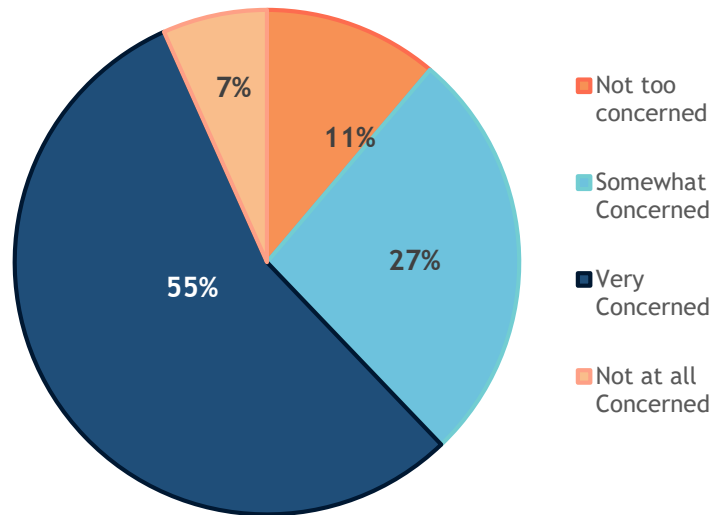


Figure 34-Potential Chinese military base in the Pacific

## Potential US Military base in the Pacific

Tongans are divided in their concern about the United States opening more military bases in the Pacific

**FIGURE 35**  
US Opening Bases in Pacific Islands  
Are you concerned about the US opening up more bases in the Pacific Islands?

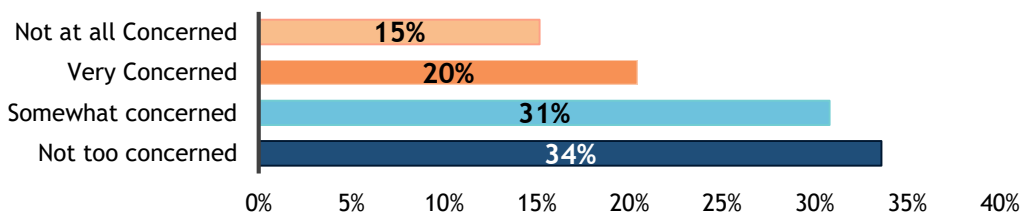


Figure 35-US Military base in the Pacific

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans hold mixed views about the United States opening additional military bases in the Pacific Islands. Around one-third of respondents (34%) say they are not too concerned, while a similar proportion (31%) say they are somewhat concerned. A smaller group (20%) report being very concerned, and 15% say they are not at all concerned.

Overall, the results indicate that concern is present but less intense and more evenly distributed compared with attitudes toward other military developments in the region.

Concern about US military bases has declined slightly since 2023, with a shift toward lower levels of concern. In 2023, 24% of Tongans said they were

very concerned, compared with 20% in 2025. At the same time, those who are somewhat concerned has remained relatively stable (32% in 2023 to 31% in 2025). Lower levels of concern have increased modestly. The proportion who are not too concerned has risen slightly (from 33% to 34%), while those not at all concerned has increased more noticeably (from 11% to 15%).

The findings suggest that while some Tongans remain concerned about increased US military presence in the Pacific, overall concern is moderate and has softened slightly since 2023. Compared with concerns about other powers, attitudes toward US military expansion appear more measured and less intense.

## Foreign policy priorities

Tongans prioritise traditional partnerships and economic stability in foreign policy.

**FIGURE 36**

### Highest Priority for the Tongan Government's

Which of the following should be the highest priority for the Tongan government's foreign policy?

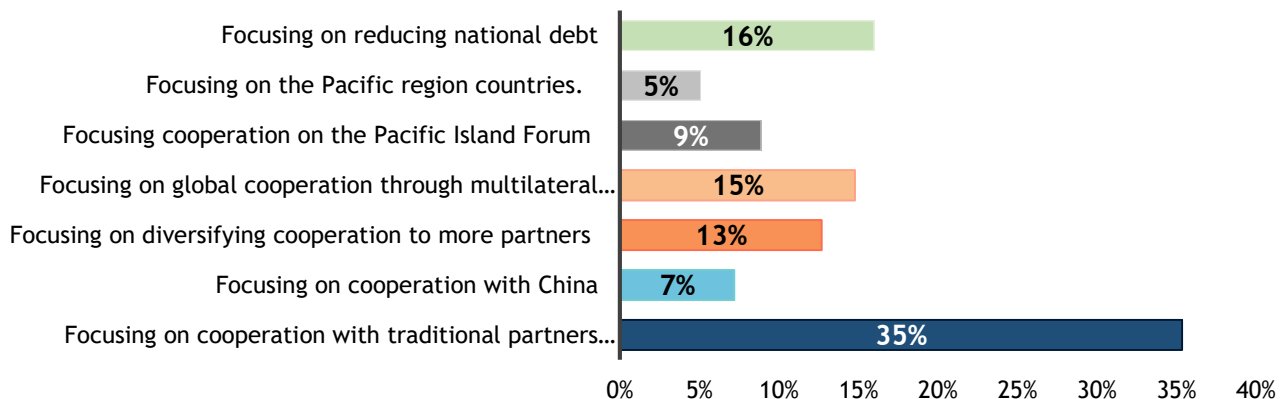


Figure 36-Government foreign policy priority

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans place the highest priority on maintaining cooperation with traditional partners, including Australia and New Zealand, as well as Western countries such as the United States and the European Union. Around one-third of respondents (35%) identify this as the most important foreign policy priority. The second most frequently identified priority is reducing national debt (16%), followed closely by strengthening global cooperation through multilateral institutions, including the United Nations (15%). A further 13% of Tongans prioritise diversifying cooperation to include a wider range of international partners.

Lower-ranked priorities include cooperation through the Pacific Islands Forum and other regional agencies (9%), focusing on cooperation with China (7%), and focusing on the Pacific region more broadly (5%).

Overall, the findings indicate that Tongans favour a foreign policy anchored in established partnerships, while also recognising the importance of economic stability and multilateral engagement.

The 2023 results show a similar overall structure of priorities, though with some differences in emphasis. In 2023, cooperation with traditional partners also ranked as the top priority (34%), indicating strong continuity in Tonga’s foreign policy orientation. However, reducing national debt was more prominent in 2023 (22%) compared with 16% in 2025, suggesting a decline in its relative importance. Support for global cooperation through multilateral institutions remains stable (15% in both years), while diversifying partnerships (13%) also shows consistency.

Lower-tier priorities remain broadly similar, with cooperation through regional organisations (8% to 9%) and cooperation with China (5% to 7%) showing only minor changes. Focus on the Pacific region remains low (4% to 5%).

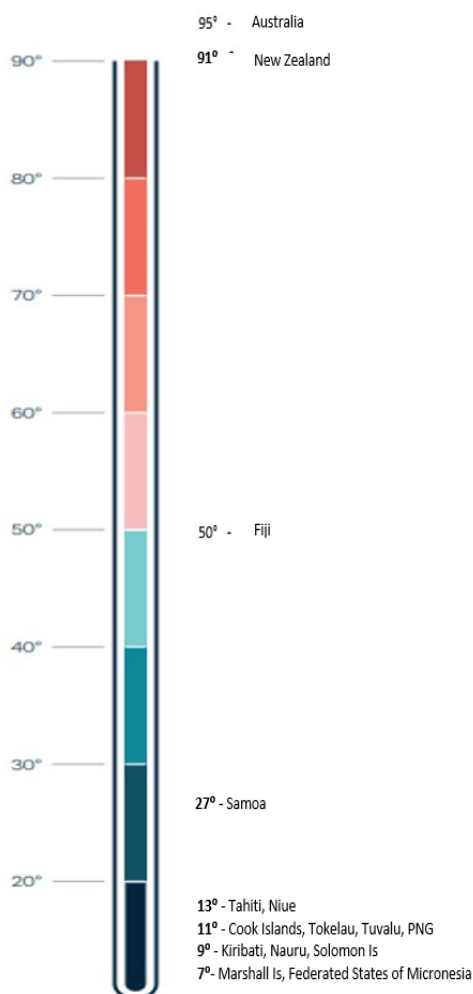
There is strong and continued support for traditional partnerships, alongside steady backing for multilateral engagement and diversification of relationships. At the same time, the reduced emphasis on national debt indicates a slight shift away from economic concerns toward broader strategic priorities.

## Feelings Thermometer

FIGURE 37:

### Feelings thermometer

Please rate your feelings towards these countries and territories, with one hundred meaning very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings are toward that country or territory. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country or territory, please say so.



Tongans continue to feel strongest towards Australia and New Zealand, while sentiment towards other Pacific countries remains comparatively low

The 2025 Tonga Poll shows that Tongans continue to hold very warm feelings toward Australia (95°) and New Zealand (91°), reinforcing their position as the most positively viewed countries. Fiji ranks a distant third at 50°, followed by Samoa at 27°, indicating moderate warmth toward these regional neighbours.

Feelings toward other Pacific Island countries remain relatively low. Tahiti and Niue are rated at 13°, while the Cook Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Papua New Guinea receive 11%. Kiribati, Nauru and the Solomon Islands are rated at 9%, and the lowest scores are recorded for the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia at 7°.

The overall pattern of sentiment remains broadly consistent with 2023. Tongans continue to feel overwhelmingly positive toward Australia and New Zealand, with both countries maintaining very high ratings and a clear lead over all others.

Fiji and Samoa also remain in the middle tier of countries, with moderate levels of warmth that distinguish them from the rest of the Pacific.

Figure 37-Feelings thermometer

Across both years, other Pacific Island countries consistently receive much lower ratings, indicating limited change in perceptions. The lowest-ranked countries in 2023 remain at the bottom in 2025, suggesting that these attitudes are relatively stable over time.

toward traditional partners, moderate warmth toward nearby Polynesian neighbours, and comparatively low sentiment toward more distant Pacific Island states. This stability over time reflects enduring historical, social and geopolitical ties shaping Tongan public opinion.

The findings confirm a persistent hierarchy in Tonga’s regional relationships: very strong affinity

## Impact of Engagement with the outside world

**FIGURE 38**

### Impact of engagement with the outside world

In regards with Tonga’s engagement with the outside world, do you think it impacts Tongans.

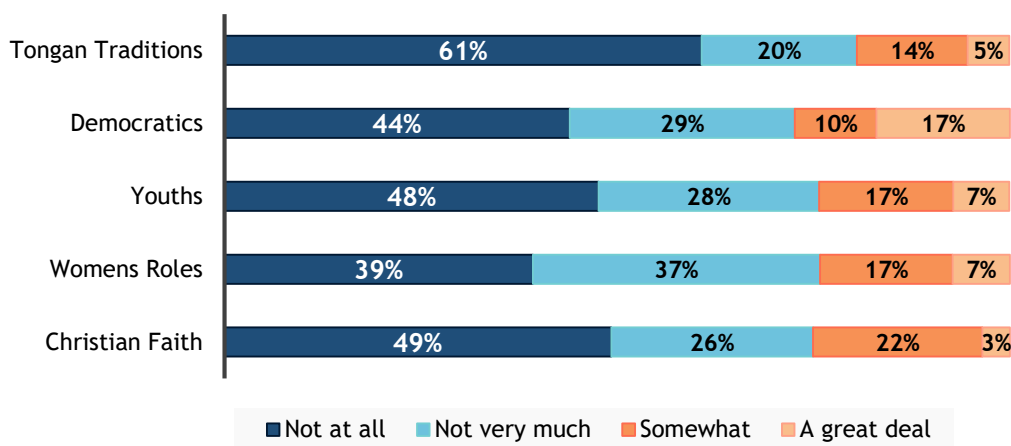


Figure 38-Impact of engagement with the outside world

Tongans generally believe that engagement with the outside world has limited impact on core cultural values, but somewhat greater influence on social and political areas

The 2025 Tonga Poll indicates that most Tongans feel that engagement with the outside world does not strongly affect key aspects of Tongan society, particularly cultural and traditional values. A clear majority (61%) say it does not impact the Tongan way of life at all, with a further 20% saying it has little impact. Similarly, nearly half (49%) report that Christian values are not affected at all, and 26% believe the impact is minimal.

Perceptions shift somewhat when considering social and political dimensions. While 48% say youth engagement is not affected at all, a notable share

(28%) believe there is some impact. Views on the role of women are more divided, with 39% saying there is no impact and 37% saying there is little impact, but 17% indicating some influence. Commitment to democracy is seen as comparatively more affected, with 44% saying no impact and 29% little impact, but a higher proportion (10%) reporting some impact and 17% indicating a significant impact.

Overall, the findings suggest that Tongans see external engagement as having limited influence on deeply rooted cultural and religious values, while recognising a somewhat greater, though still moderate, impact on social change and democratic development.

# TABLES OF RESULTS

Please note that totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 1**

## Trust in global powers

How much do you trust the following countries to act responsibly in the world?

	A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all
United States	40	28	24	8
Australia	47	31	17	5
France	11	19	39	31
Fiji	21	32	34	13
India	4	11	36	49
Indonesia	4	9	31	57
Russia	5	6	23	66
New Zealand	54	30	12	4
United Kingdom	37	28	22	14
China	14	17	29	40
Japan	21	27	30	21

**TABLE 2**

## Confidence in world leaders

Here is a list of political leaders. For each, please indicate how much confidence you have in the leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs – a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence, no confidence at all, not sure or not sure who the person is.

	A lot	Some	Not too much	None at all	Not sure who the person is	Not sure
US President Donald Trump	31	26	24	10	3	6
Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese	30	33	18	6	7	6
French President Emmanuel Macron	7	17	26	18	19	13
Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka	16	29	29	10	9	7
Russia President Vladimir Putin	4	6	19	41	17	12
New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon	36	29	18	5	7	5
Britain Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer	23	25	19	10	13	10
Chinese President Xi Jinping	9	14	22	29	16	10

---

**TABLE 3****Tonga's best friend in the world**

Now about Tonga's relations with other countries outside of the Pacific Islands region. In your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Tonga's best friend in the world?

	2025
United States	16
Australia	21
France	1
India	0
Indonesia	0
South Korea	1
New Zealand	28
United Kingdom	3
China	22
Japan	4
Singapore	0
None	4

**TABLE 4****Tonga's best friend in the Pacific**

Thinking about Tonga's relations in the Pacific. In your personal opinion, which one of the following countries is Tonga's best friend in the Pacific?

	2025
America Samoa	7
Fiji	76
Samoa	8
Hawaii	4
Kiribati	0
Guam	-
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is	0
Nauru	0
New Caledonia	0
Niue	0
Cook Islands	0
Marshalls Is	0
Easter Is	0
Palau	0
Papua New Guinea	0
Federated States of Micronesia	0
Solomon Is	0
French Polynesia	0
Tuvalu	0
Wallis and Futuna	0
Vanuatu	0

**TABLE 5****Feelings of safety**

Now about world events, how safe do you feel?

	2025
Very safe	14
Safe	28
Unsafe	42
Very unsafe	16

**TABLE 6****Threats to Tonga's vital interests**

Here is a list of possible threats to the vital interests of Tonga in the next ten years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, not an important threat at all or don't know/no view.

	Critical Threat	An important but not critical threat	Not an important threat at all	Don't know / no view
Russia's foreign policy	67	13	5	15
China's foreign policy	53	18	7	22
Cyberattacks from other countries	60	18	6	15
A military conflict between US and China	53	19	7	21
Climate change	65	21	7	7
A severe downturn in the global economy	58	23	7	12
The rise of authoritarian systems of government around the world	59	17	6	17
Foreign interference in Tonga's politics	61	16	8	15
International terrorism	63	16	6	15
Covid-19 and other potential pandemics	77	11	4	8
Political instability in the United States	42	22	9	27

**TABLE 7****Foreign influence in Tonga's political processes**

Now about the issue of foreign influence in Tonga's political processes. Are you personally concerned or not concerned about the influence of each of the following countries on Tonga's political processes?

	United States	Australia	Fiji	New Zealand	China
Yes, concerned	76	70	65	69	80
No, not concerned	24	30	35	31	20

**TABLE 8****Tonga's partnerships**

Thinking now about Tonga's partnerships in the world. Do you think the security partnership between Tonga, New Zealand, Australia and the United States will make the Pacific Islands more safe, less safe, make no difference or don't know?

	More safe	Make no difference	Less safe	Don't know
Tonga	50	20	14	15

**TABLE 9****Tonga - Chinese partnership**

Do you think the partnership between Tonga and China, will make Tonga more safe, less safe, make no difference or not sure?

	More safe	Make no difference	Less safe	Not sure
Tonga	15	18	49	18

**TABLE 10****Acquiring nuclear-powered submarines**

Thinking now about Tonga's defence. If Australia acquired nuclear submarines, would it make the Pacific Island region more safe, less safe, make no difference or not sure?

	More safe	Make no difference	Less safe	Not sure
Tonga	27	14	32	27

**TABLE 11****Foreign military in Tonga**

Are you personally in favour of or against Tonga allowing the following countries to base military forces here in Tonga?

	Strongly in favour	Somewhat in favour	Somewhat against	Strongly against	Neither in favor nor against	Don't know
United States	39	25	13	17	25	13
Australia	37	29	13	15	29	13
United Kingdom	32	26	17	16	26	17
China	7	12	20	45	12	20

**TABLE 12****Expectations for America under Donald Trump**

Now thinking about Presidency of Donald Trump. Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the next four years with Donald Trump as US president?

Optimistic	Pessimistic	Neither Optimistic nor Pessimistic	Don't know
31	22	20	27

**TABLE 13****Use of Tongan military forces**

Now about the Tongan military forces. There may be situations in which the Tongan military forces are asked to be used in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about the following situations. Would you be in favour or against the use of Tongan military forces:

	Against	In favour	Don't know/no view
To stop a government from committing killing large numbers of its own people	29	59	11
To support Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order in a Pacific nation	17	72	11
To participate in UN Peacekeeping operations	20	67	13
To conduct joint regional maritime operations using our patrol boats	21	65	13
To fight against violent extremist groups in the Middle East	38	43	19
If Russia invaded one of its neighbours	48	29	23

---

**TABLE 14****China**

Do you think it is likely or unlikely that China will become a military threat to Australia in the next 20 years?

Very likely	49
Likely	20
Somewhat likely	13
Don't know/no view	17

---

**TABLE 15****China: economic partner or security threat**

In your own view, is China more of an economic partner or more of a security threat to Tonga?

More of an economic partner	35
More of a security threat	26
Both equally	21
Don't know/no view	18

---

**TABLE 16****The United States**

How important is our partnership with the United States for Tonga?

Very Important	64
Somewhat important	22
Not important	5
Don't know	9

**TABLE 17**  
**The United States**

I am now going to read you some different arguments about partnership with the United States. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know/no view
Tonga's partnership with the United states makes it more likely Tonga will be drawn into a war that would not be in Tonga's interest	32	47	21
The United States will come to Tonga's defense if Tonga were under threat	58	20	22
The partnership with the United States makes Tonga safer from external	57	19	24

**TABLE 18**  
**Military conflict between the United States and China**

In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States, please say which one of the following statements comes closest to your personal view.

Tonga should support the United States	Tonga should remain neutral	Tonga should support China
28	69	3

**TABLE 19**  
**Democracies around the world**

Here is a list of countries and territories. For each one, please indicate whether you agree or disagree that the country or territory is a democracy.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
United States	70	11	19
Australia	55	15	30
Fiji	21	19	60
Indonesia	70	11	19
New Zealand	53	16	31
United Kingdom	33	28	38
China	36	16	48
Japan	19	19	62
Taiwan	24	21	55
Papua New Guinea	21	19	60
Hong Kong	41	15	43
Samoa	70	11	19

**TABLE 20****Attitudes to democracy**

Now a question about democracy. I am going to read you three statements about democracy. Please say which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy.

	2025
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	10
I prefer the current Tongan blend of monarchical and democratic system	58
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	14
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	17

**TABLE 21****Optimism about Tonga economic performance**

Thinking about Tongan economic performance in the world. Is Tonga's economic performance mostly good or mostly bad?

	2025
Mostly good for Tonga	34
Mostly bad for Tonga	44
Neither/don't know/no view	22

**TABLE 22****Seasonal Work**

Do you personally think that seasonal work is mostly good or mostly bad for Tonga's Families, Tonga's Economy, Tonga Businesses?

	Tongan Families	Tongan Economics	Tongan Businesses
Mostly Good For Tonga	82	81	69
Mostly Bad For Tonga	15	10	15
Don't Know	3	9	16

**TABLE 23**  
**Economic Optimism**

Overall, how optimistic are you about Tongan's economic performance in the world over the next five years?

Very Optimistic	21
Optimistic	50
Not Optimistic At All	16
Don't Know/No View	12

**TABLE 24**  
**Globalisation**

Now on globalisation. Do you believe that globalisation, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for Tonga?

	2025
Mostly good for Tonga	49
Mostly bad for Tonga	26
Neither/don't know/no view	26

**TABLE 25**  
**Attitudes to free trade**

Overall, do you personally think free trade is good or bad for each of the following:

	Own Standard Living	Tongan Economy	Tongan Businesses	Creating Jobs in Tonga
Good	65	64	63	64
Bad	22	21	22	14
Don't Know	13	15	14	21

**TABLE 26**  
**Social Media & Democracy**

Now a question about the impact of social media on democracy. Do you think social media has a more of a positive or negative impact on democracy or no impact at all?

	2025
Positive Impact	20
Negative impact	60
No Impact	7
Don't know	13

---

**TABLE 27****Immigration and national identity**

Which of these countries do you think is the most willing to accept Tongan immigrants into their countries?

USA	15
AUS	25
FIJI	7
NZ	46
UK	3
CHINA	3

---

**TABLE 28****Post-pandemic immigration**

Thinking now about the pause in Tonga's immigration during the pandemic. Now that borders have reopened, over the next 12 months, do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia should be:

Higher than pre-Covid levels	Lower than pre-Covid levels	Around the same as pre-Covid levels	Don't know
28	17	28	27

---

---

**TABLE 29****Climate Change and Energy**

Now about global warming. There is a controversy over what the countries of the world should do about the problem of global warming. Please indicate which of the following four statements come closest to your own point of view.

Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs	The problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost.	Until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs.	Others who contributed most to climate change should take strong action, not Tonga
38	28	12	23

---

---

**TABLE 30****Climate Change and Energy**

If the sea level rises because of climate change and people living in Tonga have to be relocated, how important do you think countries outside Tonga, should give climate change migration visa?

---

Very Important	Somewhat important	Not important	Don't know
68	19	5	8

---

---

**TABLE 31****Climate Change and Energy**

Which of these countries do you think should be most willing to offer the climate change migration visa?

---

Australia	28
China	37
Fiji	3
New Zealand	27
Papua New Guinea	0
United Kingdom	3
United States	2

---

---

**TABLE 32****Budget Support**

Do you think budgetary support from donors is good, mostly good, or mostly bad for Tonga's economy?

---

Mostly good for Tonga	Mostly bad for Tonga	Neither/don't know/no view
83	10	7

---

---

**TABLE 33****Tongan foreign policy and foreign aid**

Now thinking about Tonga's budget. Which is the most in need of more budgetary support from donor countries?

---

Covid-19 vaccines	10
Climate change	26
Health	21
Education	6
Defence	11
Disaster Relief	18
Long term economic development	6
Infrastructure	10

---

---

**TABLE 34****Potential Chinese military base in a Pacific Islands**

Now thinking about world events. To what extent are you concerned or not concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country?

---

Not too concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned	Not at all concerned
11	27	55	7

---

---

**TABLE 35****Potential US military base in the Pacific**

Are you concerned about the US opening up more bases in the Pacific Islands?

---

Not too concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned	Not at all concerned
34	31	20	15

---

---

**TABLE 36****Foreign Policy Priorities**

Which of the following should be the highest priority for the Tongan government's foreign policy?

---

Focusing on cooperation with traditional partners (Australia, NZ) and Western countries including the United States and the European Union	35
Focusing on cooperation with China	7
Focusing on diversifying cooperation to more partners	13
Focusing on global cooperation through multilateral institutions, including the United Nations	15
Focusing cooperation on the Pacific Island Forum and other regional agencies	9
Focusing on the Pacific region countries	5
Focusing on reducing national debt	16

---

**TABLE 37****Feelings thermometer**

Please rate your feelings towards these countries and territories, with one hundred meaning very warm, favourable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings are toward that country or territory. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country or territory, please say so.

Australia	95°
Fiji	91°
Samoa	50°
Kiribati	27°
Nauru	13°
Niue	13°
New Zealand	11°
Cook Islands	11°
Marshall Islands	11°
Solomon Islands	11°
Papua New Guinea	9°
Federated States of Micronesia	9°
Tahiti	9°
Tokelau	7°
Tuvalu	7°

**TABLE 38****Impacts of Tonga's engagement with the outside world.**

Overall, in regards with Tonga's engagement with the outside world, do you think it impacts Tongans?

	Not at all	Not very much	Somewhat	A great deal
Christian Faith	49	26	22	3
Womens Roles	39	37	17	7
Youths	48	28	17	7
Democratic	44	29	10	17
Tongan Traditions	61	20	14	5

# ABOUT THE POLL

## METHODOLOGY

The 2025 *Tongan Attitudes to the World* poll was commissioned by the Australian High Commission in Tonga and conducted by the Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI) Research & Training Centre.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 24 November and 19 December 2025, following a preparatory phase that began on 3 November, including researcher training and pilot testing. As in 2023, the survey was implemented using face-to-face interviews across all major island groups – Tongatapu, Vava’u, Ha’apai, ‘Eua, Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo’ou – ensuring national coverage. Consistent with the earlier survey, responses from the Niuas were collected through residents temporarily in Tongatapu.

A total of 1002 interviews were completed, maintaining the same sample size as the 2023 poll to ensure comparability over time. The sample was nationally representative and aligned with population distributions from the 2021 Tonga Census, in collaboration with the Tonga Statistics Department. Sample allocation across island groups followed the same proportional approach used in 2023 as shown Population distribution table:

### Population distribution per main island

ISLAND GROUP	TOTAL POPULATION	%	1000 SAMPLE
TONGATAPU	74,320	74	740
VAVA’U	14,182	14	142
HA’APAI	5,665	5.6	60
‘EUA	4,864	4.8	50
NIUA TOPUTAPU	1,148	1.1	5
NIUA FO’OU			5
<i>Total # of respondents</i>			1002

*Source: Tonga Statistics Department (2021)*

Within Tongatapu, sampling was distributed across districts in line with population shares. Minor adjustments were made to better reflect census data, while maintaining consistency with the overall sampling framework used in the previous survey.

### Tongatapu Population per main districts

		Total Population	74%	Sample
Vahe Kolo (Urban settlements)		34142	25265	348*
Vahe Hahake (Eastern District)		14501	10731	135
Vahe Loto (Central District)		13199	9767	140*
Vahe Hihifo (Western District)		12478	9233	117
<i>Total # of surveys</i>				740

*Source: Tonga Statistics Department (2021)*

\* The number of surveys in 2025 for urban settlements decreased from 378 in 2023, to 348 so that the number for Vahe Loto can increase from 110 (in 2023) to 140 to be more reflective of greater numbers in that district, according to the 2021 Census.

Participant selection followed the same procedures as in 2023. Respondents were randomly selected within assigned locations, limited to those aged 18 years and over, with efforts made to ensure a balance of age groups and gender.

The research team structure also mirrored the 2023 approach. Two supervisors, two team leaders and a research assistant oversaw 20 enumerators. Team leaders managed training, field coordination and quality control, while supervisors oversaw implementation and logistics. Surveys were collected and checked weekly, supported by regular debrief meetings – consistent with the quality assurance processes used in the earlier survey.

Data entry, analysis and reporting followed the same workflow as in 2023, enabling direct comparison between the two datasets. Data processing was completed by February 2026, with the final report submitted in April 2026.

Overall, the 2025 survey closely replicates the methodology of the 2023 poll, ensuring a high degree of continuity and allowing for reliable comparison of trends in Tongan public opinion over time.

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As in 2023, Professor Keen's expertise has played an important role in ensuring the quality, consistency and comparability of the research. Her continued engagement has helped strengthen the methodological continuity between the two surveys

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