

TUPOU TERTIARY INSTITUTE

Research & Training Centre Poll

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KINGDOM OF TONGA



Understanding Tongan Attitudes to the World



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PREFACE

The Pacific is currently in a globally contested foreign policy space.

Earlier in March of 2022, the Solomon Islands announced a drafting of a new security deal with China, which sparked off some heated debates between leaders of Australian government with Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Manasseh Sogavare.

On the 26th of May, 2022, only four days in her new role, Australia's Foreign Minister in the newly elected Labour-led Australian government, Penny Wong, visited Fiji and on the 03rd of June visited Tonga, as part of her tour to reassure the Pacific countries that the new Labour government will remain a critical development partner for the Pacific family and will "stand shoulder to shoulder with you, our Pacific family" (Hurst, D., Lyons, K. & Movono, L., 2022), referring specifically to the climate change crisis.

On the 30th of May 2022, Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, headed a Chinese diplomatic 10-day tour and visited eight South Pacific Island countries including the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and East Timor. The purpose of this visit was for a regional economic and security deal, which the Pacific countries declined to sign but each Pacific country had varying agreements with China (Aljazeera, 2022).

The U.S. Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman travelled to Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand, from the 03rd - 9th of August, 2022, in the spirit of partnership and friendship.

In September 28th and 29th, United States President Biden hosted the first U.S. - Pacific Island Country Summit in Washington, D.C., with the U.S. Department of State website stating that the "United States is a Pacific nation...and have deep and longstanding ties to the countries of the Pacific... and we will remain a committed partner in the region".

As a result of these visits, new U.S. Embassies were established in Tonga and Kiribati in 2023.

In addition, Tonga, as with the rest of the Pacific Island Countries, is keenly aware of the war in Russia and Ukraine, albeit in a distant way, especially when increasing inflation, increase in price of goods and rising living costs, are often referred to by social media as consequences of this war.

Therefore, it was very timely and fortunate for Tupou Tertiary Institute's Research and Training Centre, to have the financial support of the Australian High Commission's Office in Tonga, as well as Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs, for this poll to be conducted in 2023, to capture Tongans opinions about the world, during this interesting period of time.

This is the first time such a national poll has been conducted in Tonga, to gauge Tongan people's attitudes towards the world. The Lowy Institute in Australia was instrumental in providing technical support for TTI Research and Training Centre, to be able to conduct this poll (refer to Methodology, p. 44).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trust in global powers

In 2023, six out of ten Tongans (63%) trust New Zealand the most, slightly over half (54%) trust Australia and nearly half (49%) trust the United States to act responsibly in the world. The three countries which Tongans mostly distrust are Russia (79%), Indonesia (61%) and China (53%).

Confidence in world leaders

Tongans have the most confidence in New Zealand's then Prime Minister, Chris Hipkins (41%), followed by Australia's Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese (36%) and the US President, Joe Biden (28%), to do the right thing regarding world affairs. Two out of every ten Tongans do not know the French President, Emmanuel Macron. In relation with countries outside of the Pacific, three out of ten Tongans (30%) believe that New Zealand is Tonga's best friend, followed by China (25%) and Australia (19%) in third place. A majority of Tongans (83%) state that Fiji is Tonga's best friend amongst the South Pacific countries.

Safety and Threats to Tonga's interest

62% of Tongans feel "unsafe" and "very unsafe". A majority of Tongans (79%) still see Covid-19 as the most critical threat to Tonga's safety, followed by International Terrorism (76%) and they also see Climate Change and a military conflict between the US and China (75%) as equal threats to Tonga's safety. Many Tongans (87%) are concerned about China's influence on Tonga's political processes, followed by their concern about the US's influence (70%) and the influence of Australia (65%) on Tonga's political processes.

Security and Defence Policy

Five out of ten Tongans (56%) believe that a military partnership with New Zealand, Australia and the US will make Tonga more safe while a similar amount of Tongans (54%) believe that it will be less safe for Tonga if it has a military partnership with China. Three out of ten Tongans (34%) state that if Australia acquired nuclear powered submarines that it

will make it more safe for the Pacific Region. Four out of ten Tongans (42%) "strongly favour" the United States to have a military base in Tonga, while 56% of Tongans were "strongly against" China setting up a military base in Tonga.

In regards to tension between Solomons and Australia about a China-Solomons security deal earlier this year, three out of ten Tongans (28%) believed China was to mostly blame for the cause of this tension. Tongans express their strongest support (80%) for the use of the Tongan military to support Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order in a Pacific region. On the other hand, 44% of Tongans believe that the Tongan military should not be involved if Russia invaded one of her neighbouring countries.

Relationship with Superpowers: China and the United States

A greater number of Tongans (78%) state that China will become a military threat to Tonga in the next twenty years and three out of ten Tongans (32%) express that China is more of an economic partner to Tonga.

A majority of Tongans (80%) state that Tonga's alliance with the US is very important and 69% believe that the US will come to Tonga's defence if Tonga was under threat. Seven out of ten Tongans believe that Tonga's partnership with the United States makes Tonga safer from external threats. However, 74% of Tongans believe that if there is a military conflict between China and the United States, Tonga should remain neutral.

Democracy at home and abroad

A great many Tongans (76%) believe the US is a democratic country, as well as New Zealand (75%) and Australia (71%). More Tongans disagree that China is a democratic country (35%) than they do agree (27%). Six out of ten Tongans (63%) express that they do not know about the democratic status of Indonesia, Hong Kong (61%) and Papua New Guinea (56%).

Slightly more than half of Tongans (52%) prefer the current political system, a blend of the monarchical and democratic system.

Economic Outlook, Globalisation and Trade

Four out of ten (43%) Tongans state that Tonga's economic performance in the world is "mostly bad", while only a slightly lesser number of Tongans (40%) believe that Tonga's economic performance in the world is "mostly good". Eight out of ten Tongans (81%) state that seasonal work is mostly good for Tongan families and 89% of Tongans believe that seasonal work is mostly good for Tongan businesses.

Only 52% of Tongans are optimistic about Tonga's economic performance in the international scene. A majority of Tongans (71%) believe that free trade will be good for Tongans standard of living as well as good for the Tongan economy.

Covid 19 Pandemic and Immigration

Five out of ten Tongans (48%) rank New Zealand as the top country which handled Covid-19 very well, followed by Tonga (42%) and then Australia (40%) in third place. Four out of ten Tongans (43%) believe that China handled Covid-19 very badly, followed by Singapore (15%) and the US (10%) in third place of having handled Covid-19 badly.

Nearly half of Tongans (47%) feel that New Zealand is the country which will most willingly accept Tongan immigrants into their country, followed by Australia (23%) and the US (22%). Three out of every ten Tongans (30%) state that Australia should accept a higher number of immigrants than in pre-Covid levels.

Climate Change and Energy

Four out of ten Tongans (40%) express that Global warming is a serious and pressing problem and that Tongans should take active involvement in combating it, even if it is costly. A majority of Tongans (79%) believe that sea levels to rise due to climate change, it will be very important for countries outside Tonga to give climate change migration visas and one third of Tongans (32%) rank Australia and the US as the number one country that should be most willing to offer climate change migration visas, with New Zealand (30%) following Australia and the US.

Tongan Foreign Policy and Foreign Aid

Nine out of ten Tongans (93%) state that Budgetary support from donors is mostly good for Tonga and two out of ten Tongans believe that Tonga needs budgetary support from donor countries firstly, for long term economic development (21%), secondly for education (20%) and thirdly for health (17%).

69% of Tongans state that they are "very concerned" about the possibility of China opening a military base in a Pacific Island country, while only a third (33%) of Tongans feel that they are not too concerned about the US opening more military bases in Pacific Island countries.

Tongans feel that the Tongan government's top foreign policy item should be to focus on cooperation with traditional partners, such as Australia and New Zealand, and other western countries such as the US and the European Union (34%). The second highest foreign policy item for Tongans is to focus on reducing national debt (22%) and the third highest foreign policy item is for the Tongan government to focus on global cooperation with multilateral institutions, including the United Nations (15%).

Feelings Thermometer

Tongans feel very warmly towards Australia and New Zealand (95 DC) and Fiji (93). They are warm towards Samoa (50) and feel quite coldly towards the rest of the Pacific Island Countries.

GLOBAL POWERS AND WORLD LEADERS

Trust in global powers

New Zealand is the top-ranked country which most Tongans (63%) trust a “great deal” to act responsibly in the world, with Australia coming in second place with 54%, the United States gaining the third place with 49% and the United Kingdom in the fourth place with 42%. Only 21% feel that they trust Fiji “a great deal” to act responsibly in the world and 16% trust Japan to act responsibly. Correspondingly, the top four countries for which Tongans had high levels of trust to act responsibly, were ranked very low as countries they felt would not at all act responsibly, with single-digit scoring, with only 8% for the US, 4% for Australia and 3% for New Zealand.

When we combine Tongans who believe that they “somewhat” trust the countries to act responsibly with those who trust these

countries “a great deal”, a majority (89%) of Tongans, believe that New Zealand is the most

trusted country, followed by Australia (83%), the US (77%) as the third most trusted country and then the UK with 68%. Fiji (56%), Japan (44%), France (31%), China (22%), follow behind with decreasing levels of trust. The countries which Tongans rank lowest in the trust level were India (12%), Indonesia (9%) and Russia (6%).

Eight out of ten Tongans (79%) feel they do not trust Russia at all to act responsibly in the world, followed by Indonesia (61%), then China (53%) and India (52%). About one third of Tongans feel that they do not trust France (34%) and Japan (33%) to act responsibly in the world.

FIGURE 1

Trust in Global Powers

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

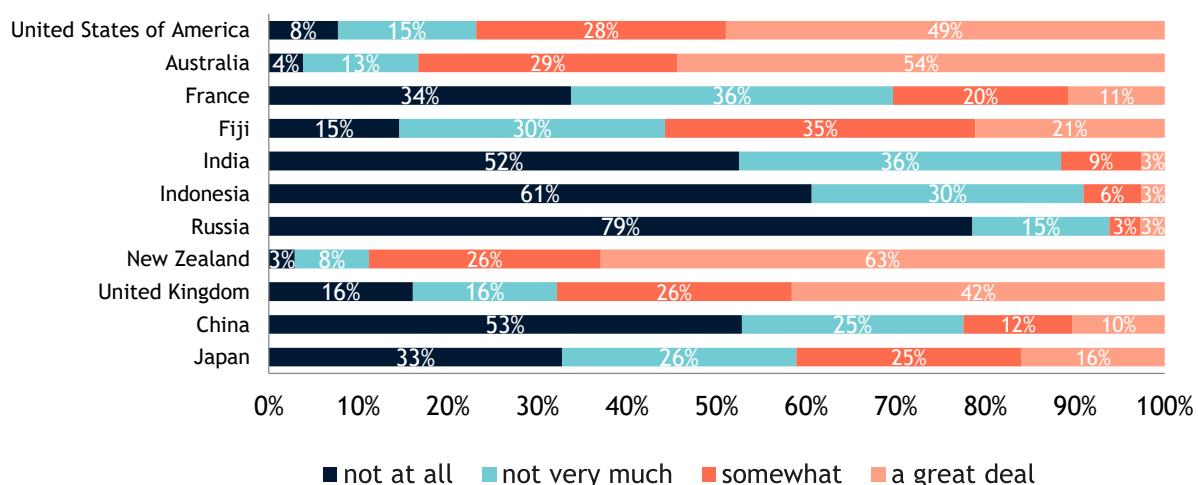


Figure 1-Trust in Global Powers

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, some confidence, not too much confidence or no confidence at all.

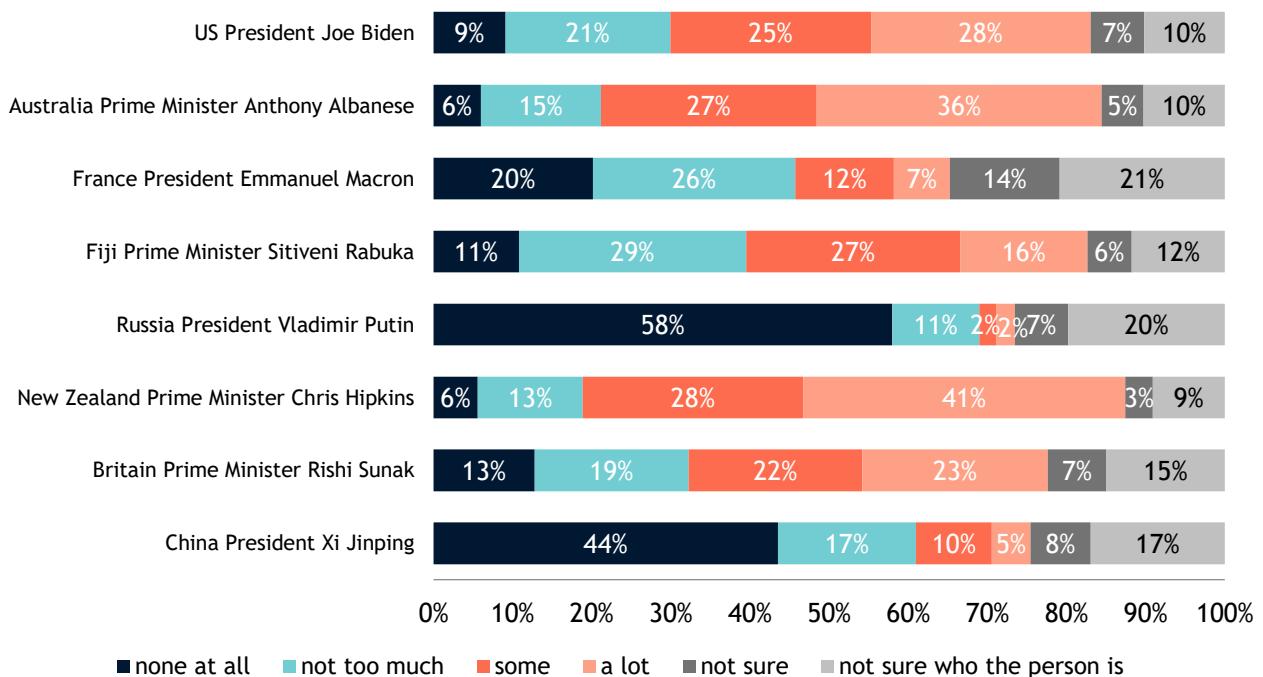


Figure 2- Confidence in world leaders

Confidence in world leaders

Four out of ten Tongans, feel that New Zealand's Prime Minister, Chris Hipkins (41%), is the most trusted global leader regarding world affairs. The second most trusted global leader in relation to world affairs is the Australian's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (36%). Three out of ten Tongans (28%), believe that the US President, Joe Biden is a trusted global leader, followed by the UK Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak (23%) and Fiji's Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka was ranked behind Mr. Sunak with 16%. The lowest ranked trusted leaders are France's Emmanuel Macron (7%), China's Xi Jinping (5%) and Russia's President Vladimir Putin with a low 2%.

When the number of Tongans who do not trust global leaders "at all" were combined with those who stated that they trusted leaders "not too much", the Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, is the least trusted global leader (69%), followed by the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping (61%),

and Emmanuel Macron (46%), is the leader least trusted following Jinping. Four out of ten (40%) of the Tongans think Sitiveni Rabuka of Fiji is not be trusted, followed by Joe Biden, President of the US (30%), and Australian leader, Anthony Albanese (21%) and Chris Hipkins, New Zealand leader, with 20%.

Emmanuel Macron, the French President is ranked by Tongans with (21%), as the international leader they are unsure of his identity. The second leader who they are unsure of, is Vlimir Putin (20%), then Xi Jinping (17%), the Chinese President, followed by Rishi Sunak (15%), Prime Minister of the UK, then Sitiveni Rabuka (12%), US President Biden and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese both have the same 10% of uncertainty of them as leaders, while New Zealand Prime Minister, Chris Hipkins, scored last in Tongans being least unsure of him as an international leader.

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?

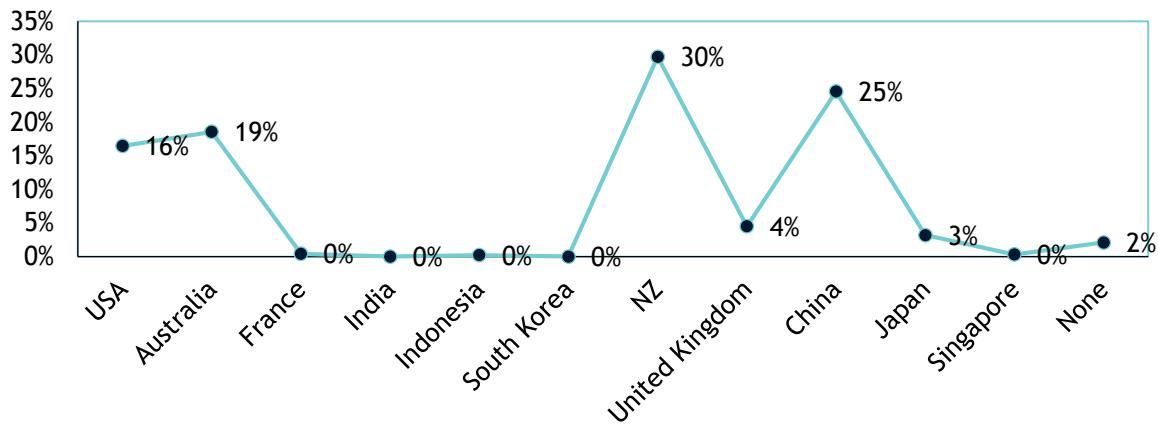


Figure 3-Tonga's best friends in the world

Tonga's best friends

A third of Tongans (30%) agree that New Zealand is Tonga's best friend. China (25%) is ranked second as Tonga's best friend with Australia (19%) and the US (16%) placed third and forth as best friends of Tonga. In regards to high number of Tongans perceiving that China is Tonga's best friend, which may seem contradictory to Tongans opinions in Figure 1 and Figure 2, however this question is asking Tongans which country they perceive as the Tongan government's best friend. Visibility and activities of China's aid in connection to Tongan government activities may be a reason for this statistic. Only 4% of Tongans feel that that the UK is their best friend and 3% percent indicate that Japan is Tonga's best friend. No one felt that France, India, Indonesia, North Korea and Singapore are best friends of Tonga.

FIGURE 4

Tonga's best friends in the Pacific

Eight out of ten Tongans (83%) chose Fiji as Tonga's best friend amongst the South Pacific Island countries. The only other three Pacific Island countries which Tongans believe as best friends in the Pacific, had single digits only, and they were Western Samoa (6%) American Samoa (5%), Hawaii (3%) and Northern Marianas (1%).

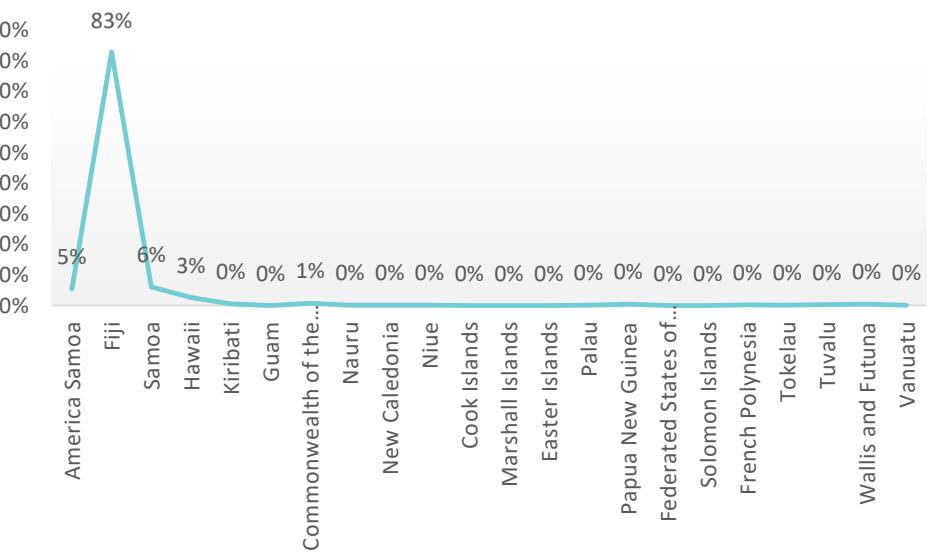


Figure 4-Tonga's best friends in the Pacific

SAFETY AND THREATS TO TONGA'S INTERESTS

Feelings of safety

In 2023, four out of ten (38%) Tongans feel “very safe” and “safe”. Six out of ten Tongans (62%) feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe”. Tonga has experienced four major natural disasters in the last ten years. In 2014, Tonga experienced Cyclone Ian and again in 2018, Tonga was hit by category 5 Cyclone Gita. In January of 2022, Tonga went through a huge volcanic eruption which caused a Tsunami which devastated many communities in the Western and Nuku’alofa coastline villages in Tongatapu as well as neighbouring islands of ‘Atataa, outer islands of Mango and Nomuka and the village of ‘Ohonua in the outer island of ‘Eua. Two weeks after the Tsunami, Covid-19 pandemic hit Tonga. It is not surprising that Tongans feel quite unsafe at these times.

Threats to Tonga's vital interests

Most Tongans (79%) continue to view COVID-19 as the most critical threat to Tonga. International Terrorism (76%) is second in Tongans ranking of most critical threats and the third most critical threats are a tie between Climate change (75%) and a military conflict between the US and China (75%). Cyberattacks (71%) is seen by Tongans as fourth most critical threat, followed by the rise of authoritarian systems of government around the world (69%). Tongans also see foreign interference in Tonga's politics (67%) and a severe downturn in the global economy (67%) as critical threats to Tonga, as well as Russian's foreign policy (66%) and China's foreign policy (66%), with Political Stability in the United States (49%) as a final reason perceived by Tongans as a critical threat.

There were very low, single-digit percentages of Tongans who feel that the issues were not important threats at all, with the figures between 2% to 7%.

FIGURE 5

Feelings of safety

Now thinking about world events, how safe do you feel?

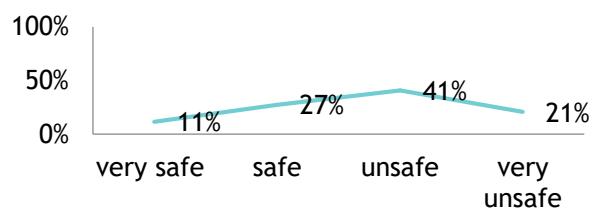


Figure 5-Feelings of safety

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 or don't know/no view.

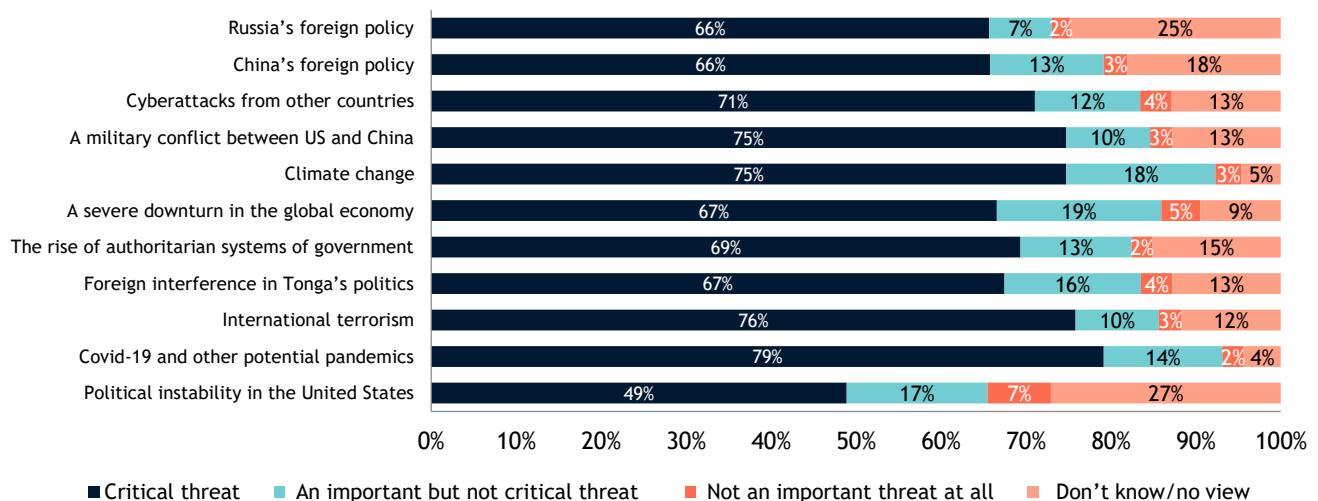


Figure 6-Threats to Tonga's vital interests

Foreign influence in Tonga's political processes

Many Tongans express concern about foreign influence on the country's political processes. Nine in ten Tongans (87%) say they are concerned about China's influence on Tonga's political processes. 70% of Tongans express concern about the US's influence on Tonga's political processes, 65% on Australia's influence and 65% on Fiji's influence and 63% express concern on New Zealand's influence on Tonga's political processes.

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 processes?

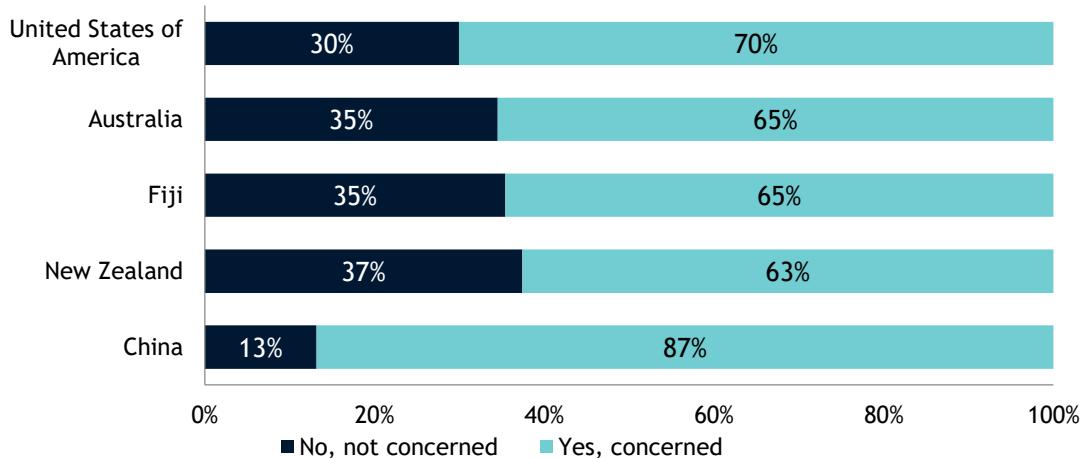


Figure 7-Foreign influence in Tonga's political processes

SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Tonga's military partnership with New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America

Only a slim margin of majority (56%) of Tongans state that Tonga's military partnership with New Zealand and Australia and the US will make Tonga more safe. 17% stated they don't know if this alliance will make any difference, 13% thought this military alliance will make no difference and 13% think a military alliance with NZ, Australia & the US will actually make it less safe for Tonga.

FIGURE 8

Tonga's military partnership with New Zealand, Australia, 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?

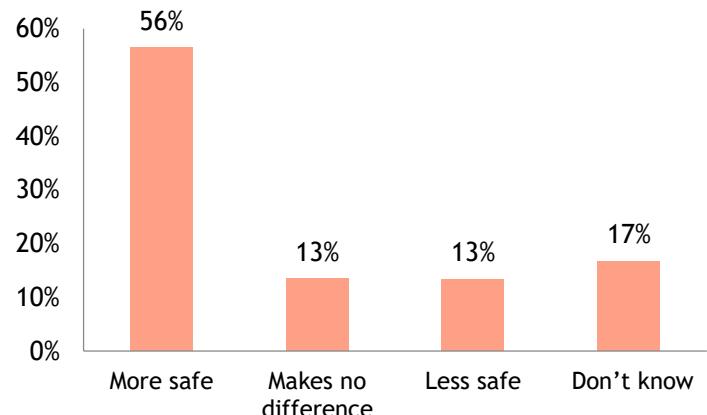


Figure 8-Tonga's military partnership with New Zealand, Australia, United States of America

Tonga-Chinese partnership

Slightly more than half (54%) of Tongans feel less safe if Tonga has a partnership with China. 17% state they don't know if Tonga will be more safe if there is a Tonga-Chinese partnership, 15% say that they will feel more safe and 14% indicate that a Tonga-Chinese partnership will make no difference.

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 dont know?

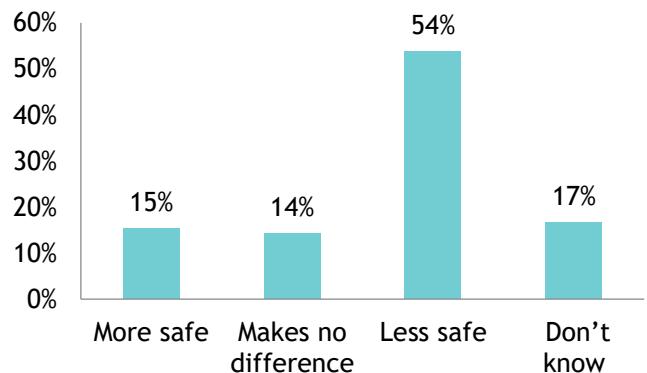


Figure 9-Tonga-Chinese partnership

Australia acquiring a nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear weapons

Slightly over one third of Tongans (34%) say that if Australia acquire a nuclear-powered submarine, it would make the Pacific Island region more safe. 28% say that they feel that Australia's acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine will make the Pacific Region less safe and a quarter of Tongans (26%) say they don't know if this acquisition will make it more safe for the Pacific Region. 12% of Tongans say that it will make no difference to the Pacific's safety if Australia acquires a nuclear-powered submarine.

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?

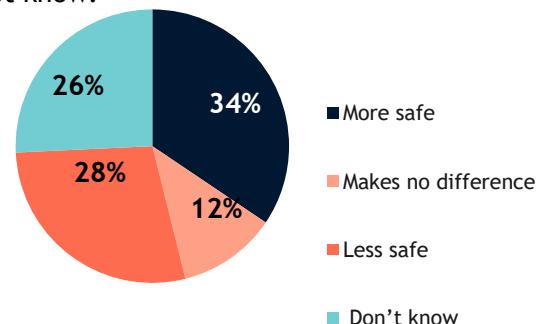


Figure 10-Australia acquiring a nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear weapons

Foreign military in Tonga

42% of Tongans "strongly favour" and 17% "somewhat in favour", with an overall 59% generally favouring the United States to be allowed to base a military force here in Tonga. Similarly, an overall 61% (39% "strongly favour" and 22% "somewhat favour"), of Tongans favour Australia to have a military base here in Tonga. A third of Tongans "strongly favoured" (35%) and "somewhat in favour" (19%), saying that that they generally favoured (54%) the United Kingdom to have a military base here. Only 15% overall (8%, strongly in favour and 7% somewhat in favour) believe that China should set up a military base here in Tonga.

Correspondingly, seven out of every ten Tongans (72%) are generally against China ("strongly against" - 56% and "somewhat against" - 16%) setting up a military base here in Tonga. Four out of ten Tongans (37%) were generally ("strongly against"- 20% and "somewhat against" - 17%) against the United Kingdom setting up a military base in Tonga, followed by 33% generally against Australia and 34% generally against the US setting up a military base in Tonga.

There are only single digit percentages of Tongans who are neither in favour or don't know about this issue, with 5% each for China and the UK and 4% each for Australia and the United States.

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?

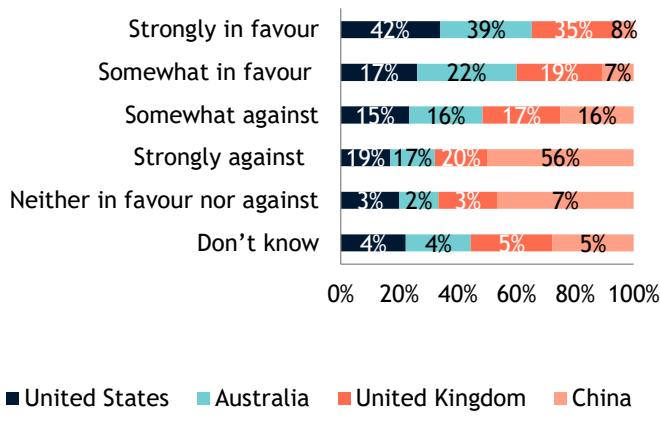


Figure 11-Foreign military in Tonga

Australia-Solomon-Chinese relations

FIGURE 12

Australia-Solomons-Chinese relations

Thinking about the tension between Solomon Islands and Australia, over Solomon signing of a security pact with China, earlier this year. Which country do you think is more to blame for the tensions in the Australia-Solomons relationship?

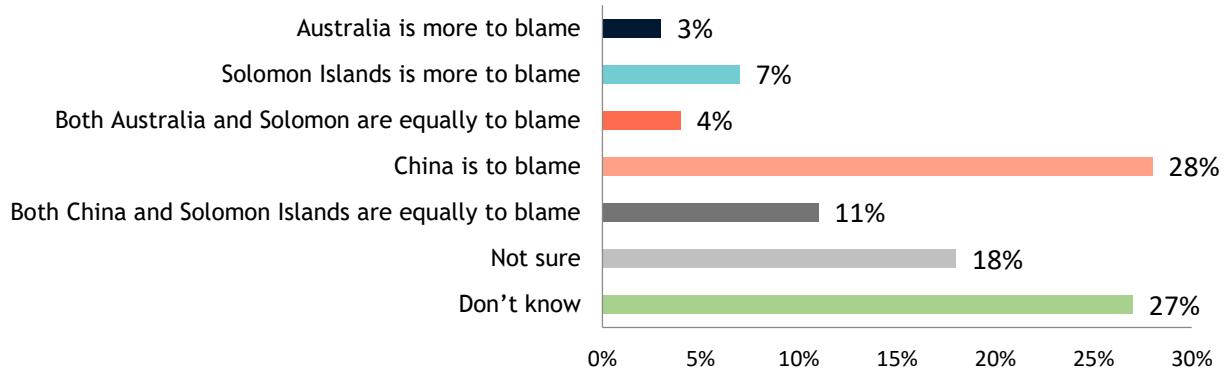


Figure 12-Australia-Solomon-Chinese relations

In March 2022, a deal between China and the Solomon Islands referencing a policing implementation plan caused concern to Australia, who wanted this plan published. An ensuing exchange between government leaders of Australia and Solomons led to a strained relationship during this time. When asked about their opinion of this regional event, three out of ten Tongans (28%) say that China is to blame for this strained relationship between Australia and the Solomon Islands. Almost

an equivalent percentage (27%) say that they don't know anything about this issue and 18% Tongans say that they are not sure who to blame for this tension between the two countries. 11% believe that both countries are equally to blame for the tensions in the Solomons-Australia relationship. A small percentage (7%) say Solomon Islands is more to blame, and a smaller number (4%) of Tongans believe both Australia and the Solomon Islands are equally to blame for this tension.

Use of Tongan military forces

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?

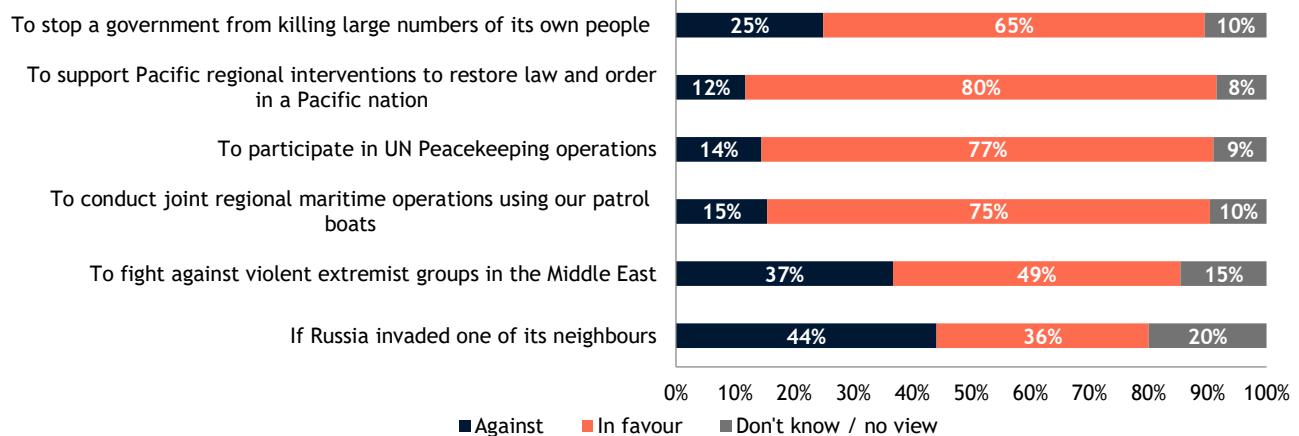


Figure 13-Use of Tongan military forces

Tongans are strongly in favour (80%) of the Tongan military to support Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order in a Pacific nation. Slightly over three quarters of Tongans (77%) are strongly in favour of using the Tongan military to participate in UN Peacekeeping force and 75% of Tongans support the Tongan military to conduct joint regional maritime operations using patrol boats. Nearly two thirds (65%) of Tongans are in favour of having the Tongan military support the stopping of a government from killing large numbers of its own people, with 49% in favour of using Tongan military forces to fight against violent extremist groups in the Middle East and 36% are in favour of also using Tongan military forces if Russia invaded a neighbouring country.

Correspondingly, four in every ten (44%) Tongans are against the Tongan military to take part in any action if Russia invaded one of her neighbouring countries and one-third (37%) are against the Tongan military to join any military actions against violent extremist groups in the Middle East. One quarter of Tongans (25%) are against Tonga military stop a

government from killing its own people and lesser numbers against for Tongan military to conduct joint regional maritime operations using Tongan patrol boats (15%), to participate in UN Peacekeeping operations (14%) and to support Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order in a Pacific nation (12%).

The highest number of Tongans who don't know and had no opinion, is 20% on this issue of Russia invading one of her neighbouring countries, 15% don't know or have no views about allowing Tongan military to fight against violent extremist groups in the Middle East and 10% don't know or have no views about conducting a joint regional maritime operations using the Tongan navy patrol boats, and the same number of Tongans (10%) don't know or have no opinions on the issue of genocide. On the issue of the Tongan military to participate in the UN Peacekeeping forces, 9% say that they don't know this issue or have no opinion and 8% had similar views on the issue of supporting Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order in a Pacific nation.

RELATIONS WITH SUPERPOWERS: CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

China

In 2023, approximately eight out of every ten Tongans (78%) believe that China will become a military threat to Tonga in the next twenty years (62% of Tongans stating that China will “very likely” and 16% “likely”). 9% of Tongans say that it’s only “somewhat likely” that China will become a military threat and 12% say they don’t know.

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?

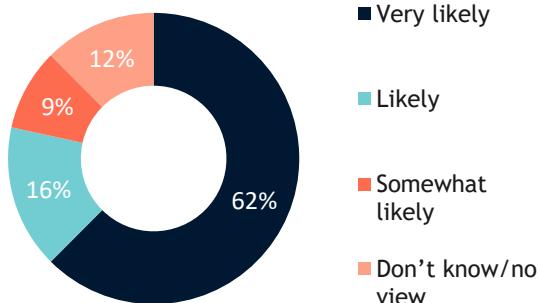


Figure 14-China

One third of Tongans (32%) believe that China is more of an economic partner, two out of every ten Tongans (26%) state that China is more of a security threat, while an equal number of Tongans (26%) think that China is both an economic partner and a security threat to Tonga. 16% of Tongans do not know or have no views on this issue.

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?

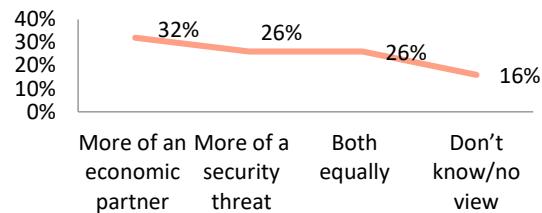


Figure 15-China: economic partner or security threat

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?

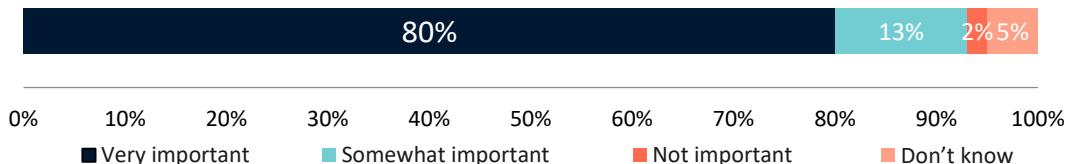


Figure 16-The United States of America

Nearly seven in every ten Tongans (69%) agree with the statement that the United States will come to Tonga's defence if Tonga was under threat. Nevertheless, 12% disagree with this statement and 19% state that they don't know and have no views on this matter. A majority of Tongans (67%) believe that Tonga's partnership with the United States makes Tonga safer from external threats, while 12% disagree with this statement and 21% of Tongans do

not know nor have any views on this issue. Slightly more than half of Tongans (54%) disagree with the statement that Tonga's alliance with the United States will make it more likely that Tonga will be drawn into a war that would not be in Tonga's interests, while 27% agreed with the statement that Tonga's alliance with the United States will make it more likely that Tonga will be drawn into a war and 19% have no views on this matter.

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, disagree or do not know/no view.

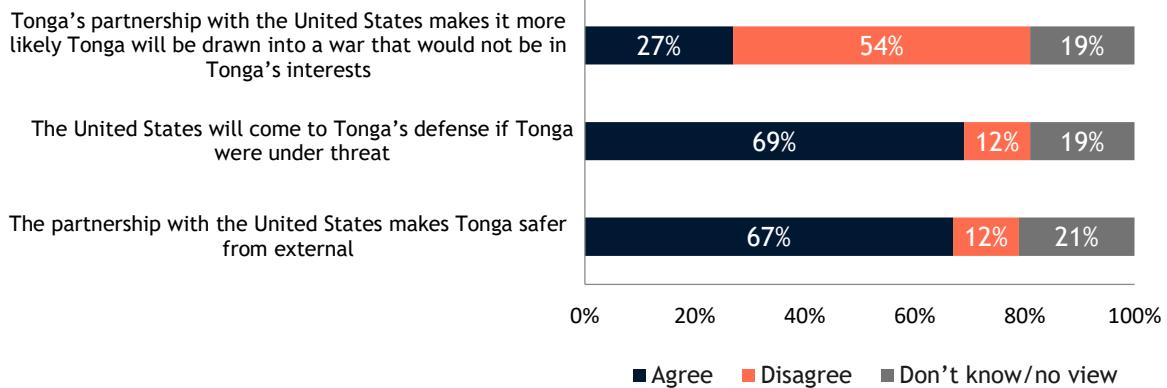


Figure 17-The United States alliance

Military conflict between the United States and China

In an event of a military conflict between China and the United States, seven out of every ten Tongans (74%) believe that Tonga should remain neutral, a quarter of Tongans (25%) believe that Tonga should support the United States and only 1% believe that Tonga should support China.

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.

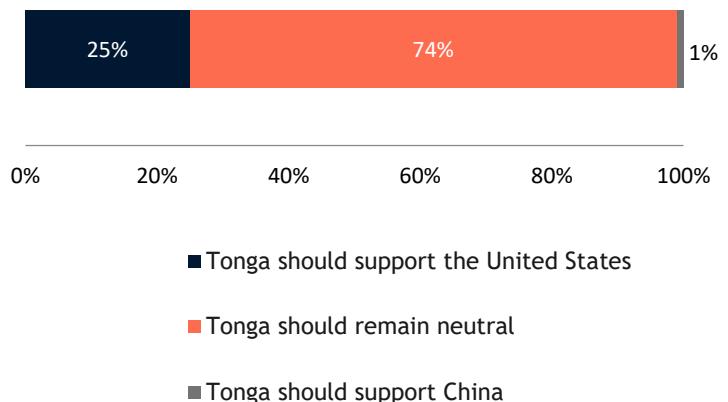


Figure 18-Military conflict between the United States and China

DEMOCRACY AT HOME AND ABROAD

Democracies around the world

Seven out of ten Tongans agree that the United States (76%), New Zealand (75%) and Australia (71%) are democratic countries. Slightly over half of Tongans (54%) believe both Fiji and the United Kingdom are democratic countries. Four out of ten Tongans (40%) agree that Samoa is a democratic country, while only a third of Tongans (33%) believe Japan is a democracy and slightly over a quarter of Tongans (27%) agree that China is a democratic country, while 35% disagree that China is a democratic country and this is the highest percentage of disagreement for all countries. 20% of Tongans and less believe Papua New Guinea is a democratic country, 19% for Hong Kong, 18% for

Taiwan, 17% for Indonesia. A majority of Tongans (63%) express that they do not know about the democratic status of Indonesia, 61% do not know about Taiwan and Hong Kong and 56% do not know about Papua New Guinea. Nearly half of Tongans (46%) do not know about the democratic status of Japan, Samoa (45%), and slightly more than a third of Tongans do not know about whether China (38%), United Kingdom and Fiji (31%) are democratic countries. 22% of the Tongans do not know whether Australia is a democratic country, 19% state they do not know if New Zealand is a democratic country and the lowest number of Tongans (18%) express that they do not know whether the United States is a democratic country.

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.

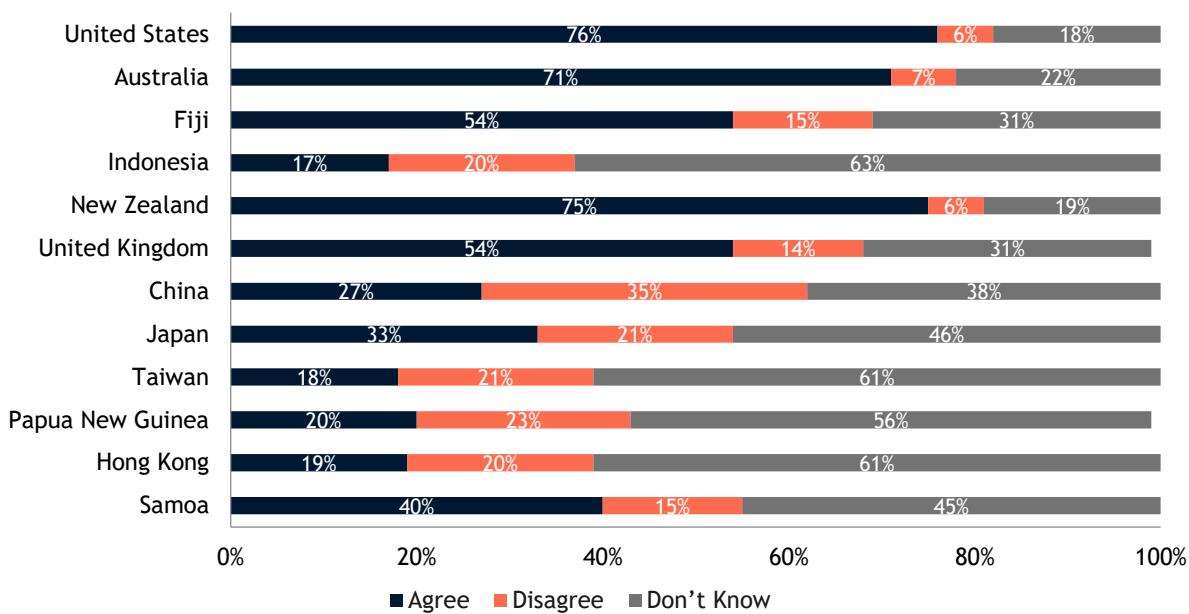


Figure 19-Democracies around the world

Attitudes to democracy

In 2023, a majority of Tongans (52%) prefer the current political system which is blend of the monarchical and democratic system. 19% of Tongans do not think that it mattered to them what kind of government Tonga has, while 16% of Tongans believed that in some circumstances a non-democratic government can be preferable and 13% of Tongans believed that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government

FIGURE 20

Attitudes to democracy

Now a question about democracy. Below are some statements about democracy. Please indicate which one of the three statements comes closest to your personal views about democracy:

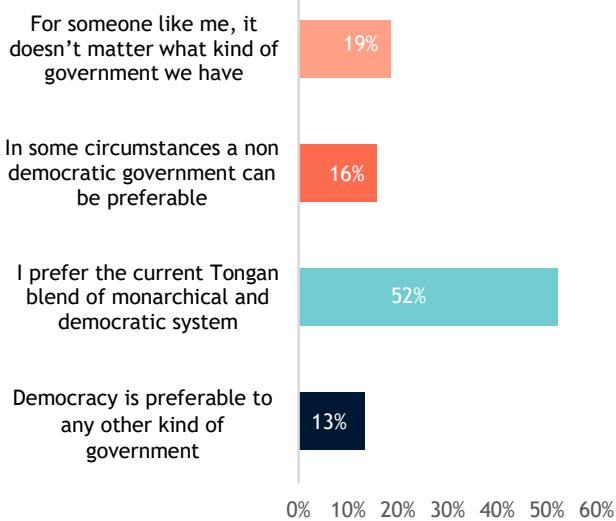


Figure 20-Attitudes to democracy

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK, GLOBALISATION AND TRADE

Economic optimism

In thinking about Tonga's economic performance in the world, four out of ten Tongans (43%) say that Tonga's economic performance is "mostly bad" and slightly less number (40%) say that Tonga's economic performance is "mostly good" and 17% of Tongans say that they do not know and have no views on this issue.

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?

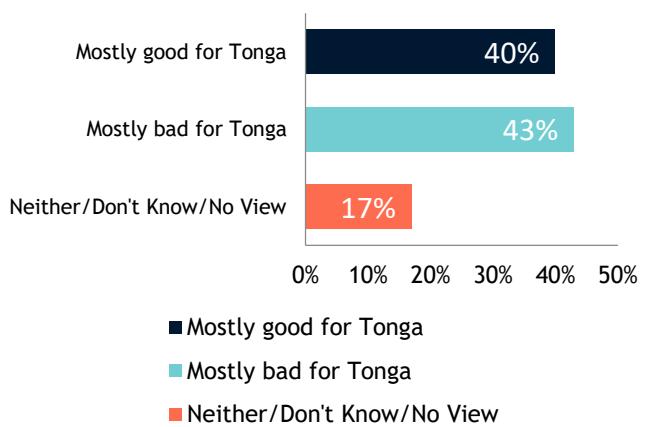


Figure 21-Tonga's economic performance

A majority of Tongans (81%) think that seasonal work is mostly good for Tongan families, while 16% think it is mostly bad for Tongan families and only 2% do not know or do not have any views on this issue. A majority of Tongans (89%) think that seasonal work is mostly good for Tonga's economy, only 7% thought it is mostly bad for Tonga's economy and 4% of Tongans express that they do not know or have no views on this issue. Similarly, a majority (76%) of Tongans believe that seasonal work is mostly good for Tongan businesses while one out every ten Tongans (12%) think that seasonal work is mostly bad for Tongan businesses and 11% do not know or have no views about this matter.

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:

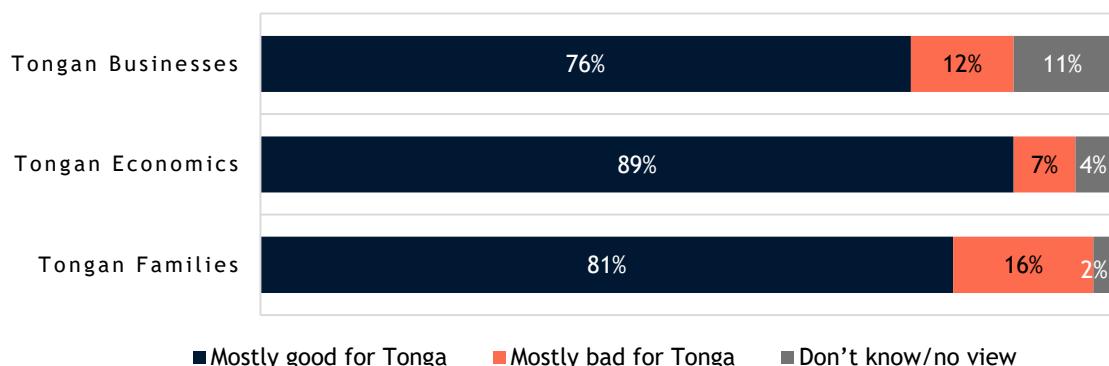


Figure 22-Economic optimism

FIGURE 23

In term of Tongans optimism about Tonga's economic performance in the world over the next five years, slightly more than half (52%) of Tongans are "optimistic" with only 26% who are "very optimistic". 13% were not optimistic at all and 9% have no views on this issue.

Economic optimism

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

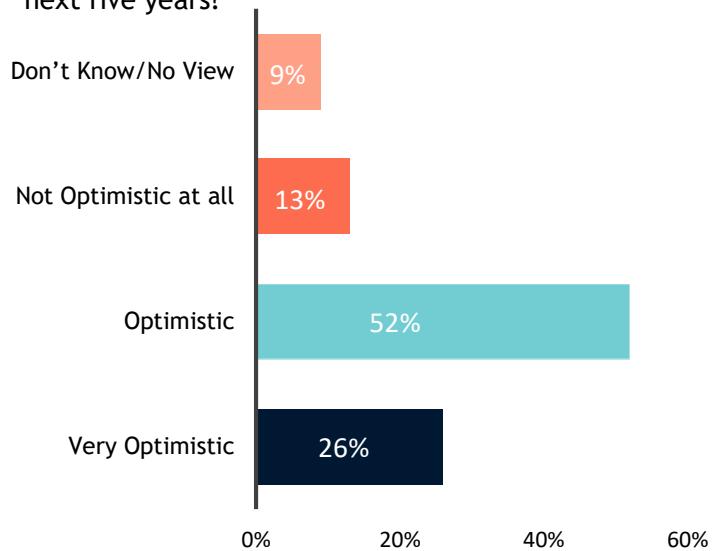


Figure 23-Tonga's Economic optimism

Globalisation

FIGURE 24

Globalisation

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

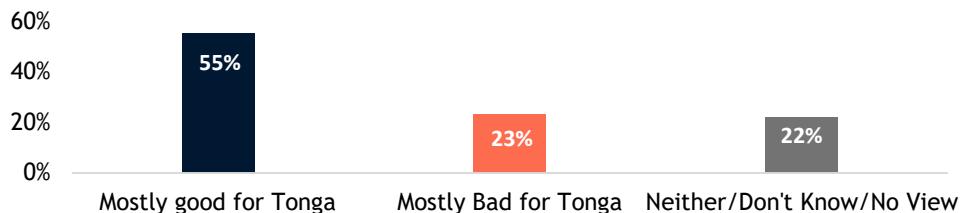


Figure 24-Globalisation

Five out of every ten Tongans (55%) believe that globalization, especially the increasing connections of Tonga's economy with other economies around the world, is mostly good for Tonga. Two out of every ten Tongans (23%) believe that globalization is mostly bad for Tonga and 22% have no views on this issue.

Free Trade

Seven out of ten Tongans (71%) believe that free trade will be good for Tongans own standard of living and the same number of Tongans (71%) believe that free trade will be good for the Tongan economy. 67% say that free trade is good for creating jobs in Tonga and a similar number, 66%, say that free trade is good for Tongan businesses. 20% of Tongans believe that free trade will be bad for Tongan businesses, 18% say that free trade will be bad for their own standard of living, 17% for the Tongan economy and 11% believe that free trade will be bad for creating of jobs in Tonga.

FIGURE 25

Free Trade

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

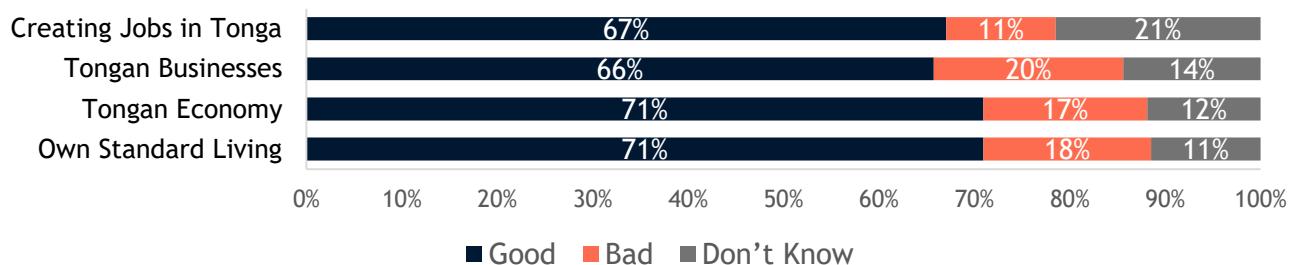


Figure 25-Free Trade

21% of Tongans say that they do not know the impact of free trade on creating jobs in Tonga, 14% do not know the impact of free trade on Tongan businesses, 12% do not know the impact of free trade on the Tongan economy and 11% say that they do not know the impact of free trade on their own standards of living.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND IMMIGRATION

COVID-19 HANDLING

Nearly half (48%) of the Tongans rank New Zealand as the top country which handled Covid-19 very well, with Tonga ranked second (42%) and Australia gaining third place (40%) in countries handling Covid-19 very well. The USA holds fourth place (35%) and the United Kingdom fifth (30%) in Tongans ranking of countries handling Covid-19.

The country which gained the top position in doing “very badly” in handling Covid-19, was China with 43% and Singapore second (15%) and the USA third (10%) while the rest of the countries had single digits in being seen as handling Covid-19 very badly.

Four out of ten Tongans (44%) stated that they do not know the state in which PNG or Singapore handled Covid-19, 27% do not know also about how the UK handled Covid-19, 22% do not know how Samoa handled Covid-19 and 17% do not know how China handled Covid-19.

FIGURE 26

Covid-19 handling

Overall, how well or badly do you think each of the following countries has handled the covid-19 pandemic so far?

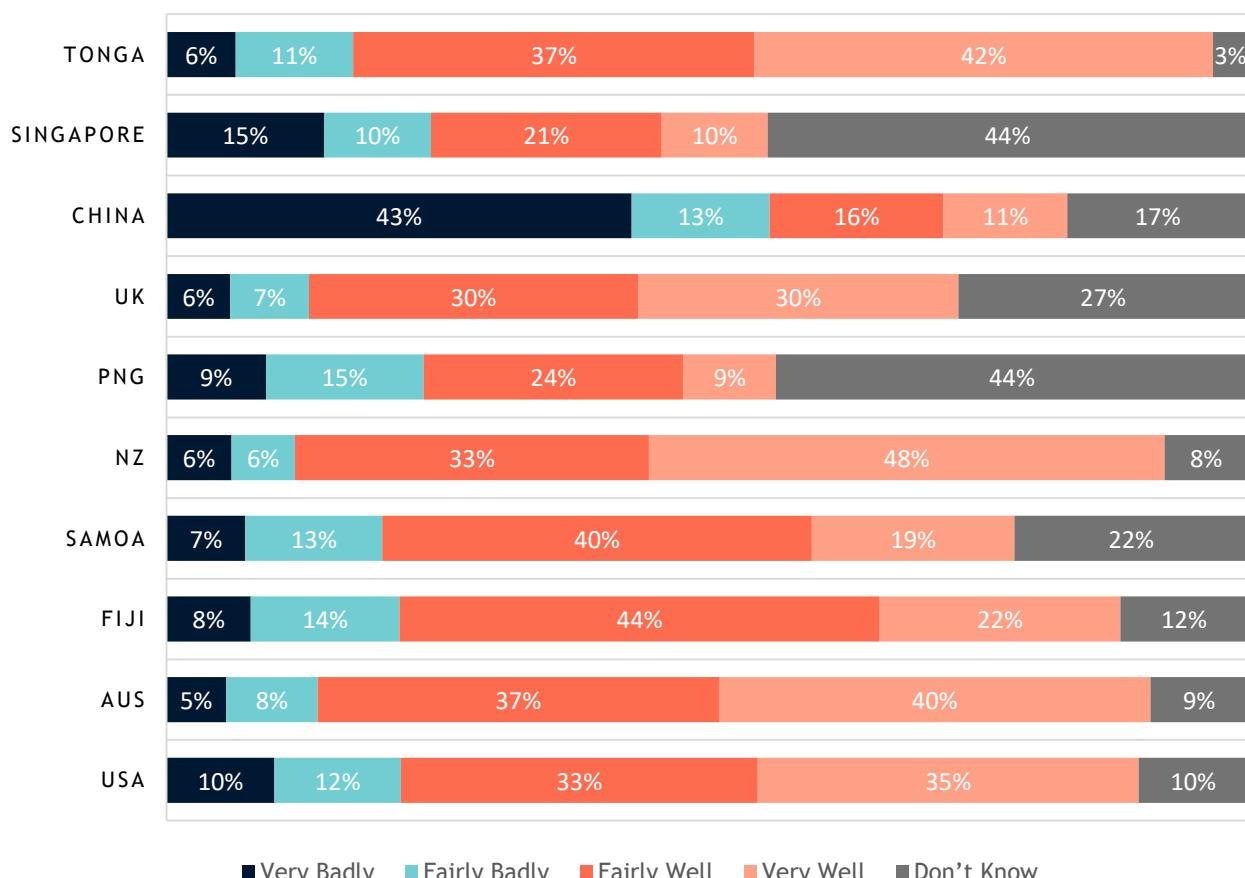


Figure 26-Covid-19 handling

IMMIGRATION AND OPENNESS

New Zealand is the top-ranked country (47%) which Tongans feel is most willing to accept Tongan immigrants into their country. Australia is second (23%) and the US (22%) is the third-ranked country which Tongans feel as most willing to accept immigrants into their country. Tongans rank Fiji quite lowly in their openness to accept immigrants with 4%, as well as the United Kingdom with 3% and the China is the lowest ranked country (1%) in their willingness to accept Tongans into their country.

FIGURE 27

Immigration and openness

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

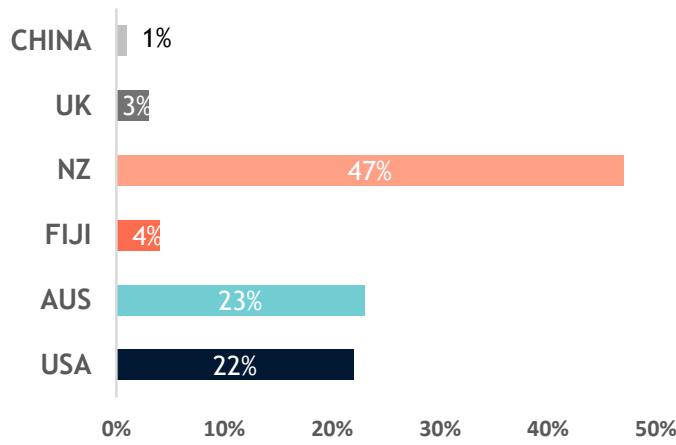


Figure 27-Immigration and openness

POST-PANDEMIC IMMIGRATION

A third of Tongans (30%) believe that now that the borders have reopened, after the pause in Tongans traveling to other countries during the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of immigrants that Australia should accept should be higher than the pre-Covid levels. 27% of Tongans believe that Australia should accept around the same number as pre-Covid levels and a quarter of Tongans (25%) state they do not know anything about this issue and 18% believe that Australia should accept a lower number of immigrants than pre-Covid levels.

FIGURE 28

Post-pandemic immigration

Thinking now about the pause in Tonga's traveling 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:

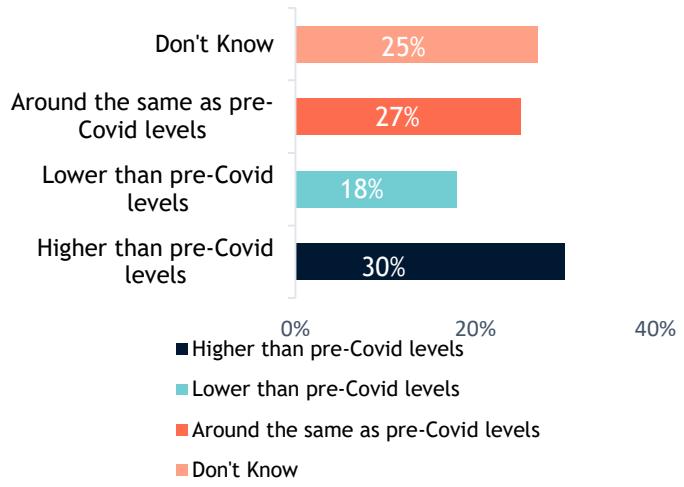


Figure 28-Post-pandemic immigration

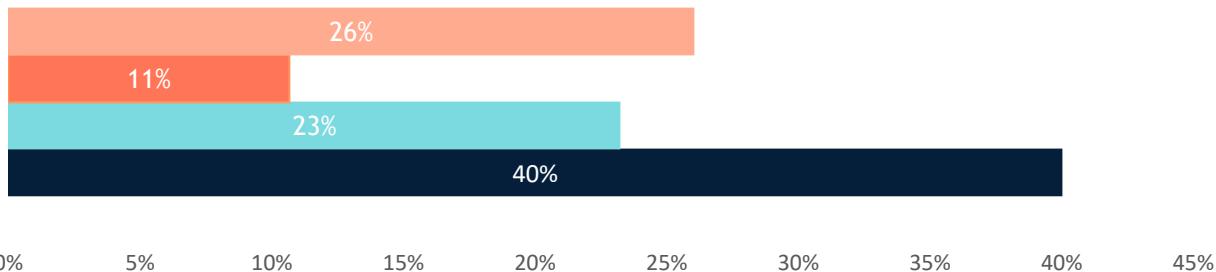
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

Global warming

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

Four out of ten Tongans (40%) believe that Global warming is a serious and pressing problem and that we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs. A quarter of Tongans (26%) state that others who contributed most to climate change should take strong action, not Tonga. 23% expressed that 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. 11% of Tongans express that until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs.

Eight out of every ten Tongans (79%) feel that it is very important for people to be given a climate change migration visa because they need to relocate due to sea level rises from climate change. Only 10% feel that it was somewhat important and 4% stated that it was not important with 7% saying that they do not know and have no opinion on the matter.

FIGURE 30

Climate Change migration visa

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?

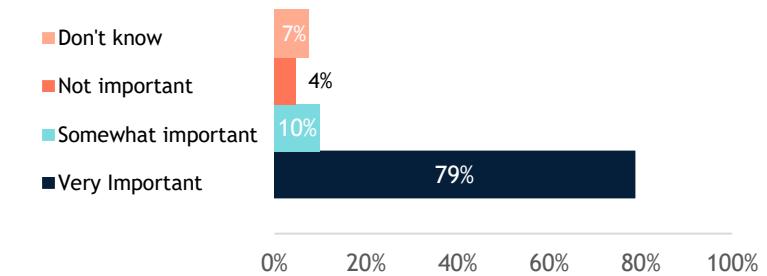


Figure 30-Climate Change migration visa

One third of Tongans (32% each) feel that Australia is the country that should be most willing to offer a climate change migration visa and an equal number (32%) feel that the US should do the same. New Zealand is the third ranked country that Tongans (30%) feel should be most willing to offer climate change migration. Tongans rate the rest of the countries quite low in anticipating that they should offer any climate change migration visas, with Fiji 3%, United Kingdom 2%, China with 1%.

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?

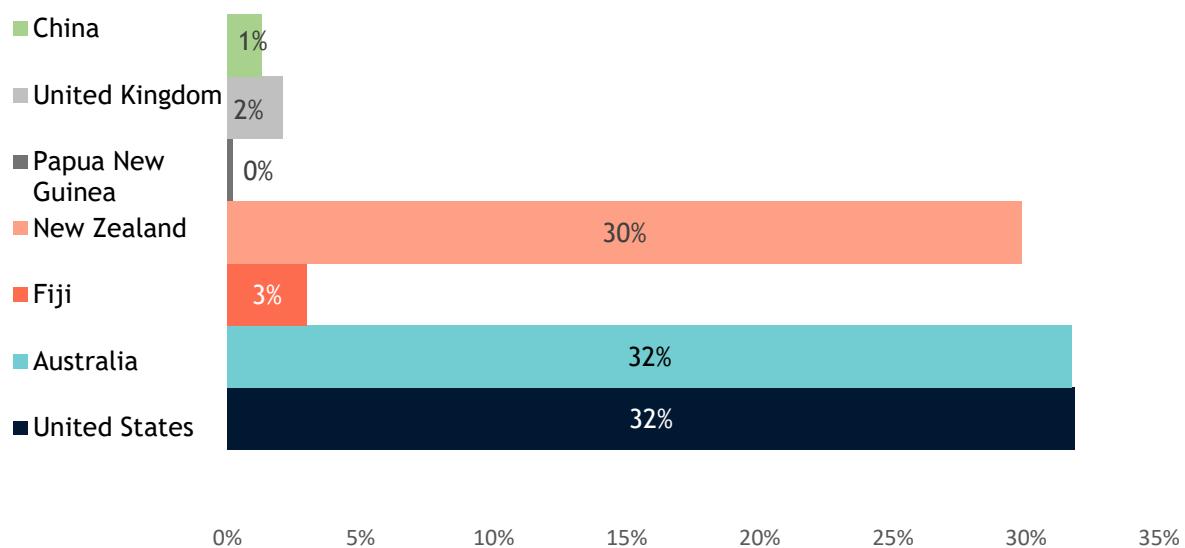


Figure 31-Country that should offer migration visa due to climate change

TONGAN FOREIGN POLICY AND FOREIGN AID

BUDGET SUPPORT

An overwhelming majority of Tongans (93%) believe that Budgetary support from donors is mostly good for Tonga and only 3% state that it is mostly bad for Tonga and an equally low 3% state they do not know nor have no views on this issue.

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.

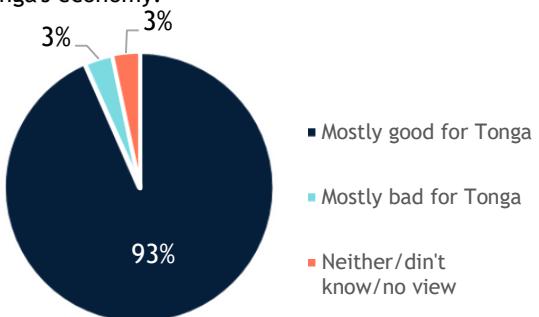


Figure 32-Budgetary support from donors good or bad

Two out of ten Tongans (21%) feel that the most pressing need for Tonga for budgetary support from donor countries is “long term economic development”. Tongans rate education (20%) as the second pressing need for budgetary support from donor countries, with health as the third item (17%), disaster relief as the fourth item (14%) and the fifth most pressing need for budgetary support from donor was climate change (13%). The last three items which Tongans identify as least pressing needs have single digits, with infrastructure with 7%, defence with 5%, and Covid-19 vaccines was ranked last, with only 3%.

FIGURE 33

Budget priorities

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

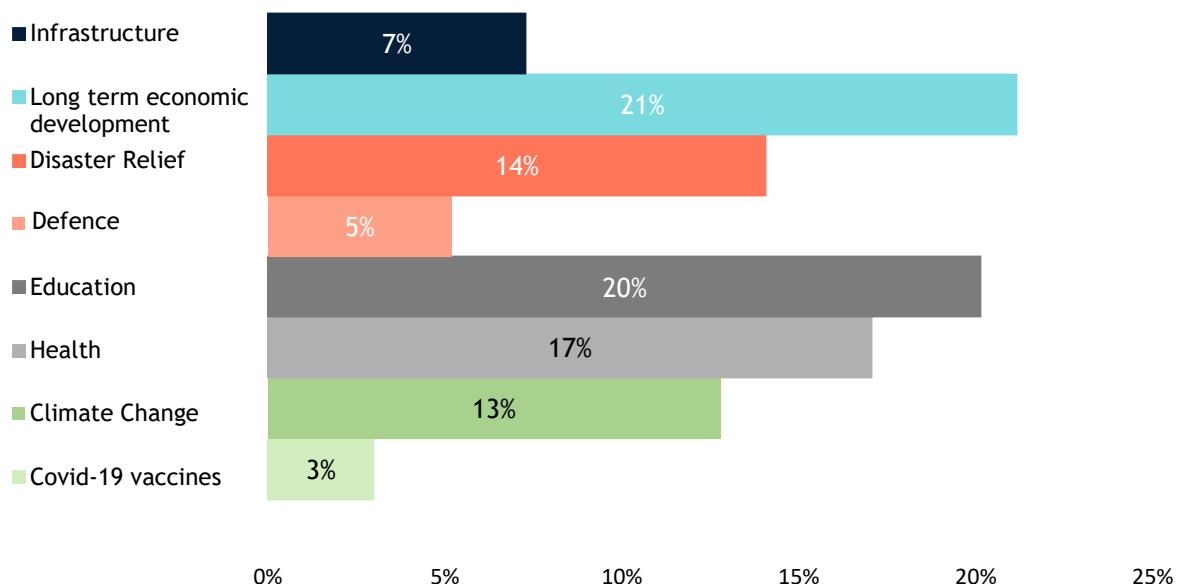


Figure 33- Budget priorities

POTENTIAL CHINESE MILITARY BASE IN A PACIFIC ISLAND

In regards to world events, seven out of ten Tongans (69%) are “very concerned” about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country. 21% are somewhat concerned, 6% are not too concerned and 4% of Tongans are not at all concerned about China potentially opening a military base in a Pacific Island country.

FIGURE 34

Potential Chinese military base in the Pacific

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?

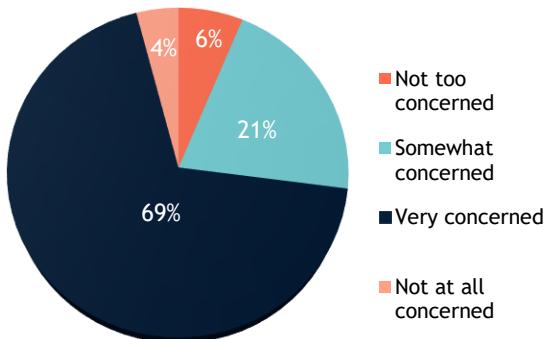


Figure 34-Potential Chinese military base in the Pacific

POTENTIAL US MILITARY BASE IN THE PACIFIC

A third of Tongans (33%) are not too concerned about the US opening up more military bases in the Pacific Islands, while a third (32%) are somewhat concerned. Two in every ten Tongans (24%) are very concerned about this and 11% are not at all concerned about the US opening up more military bases in the Pacific Islands.

FIGURE 35

US Military base in the Pacific

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

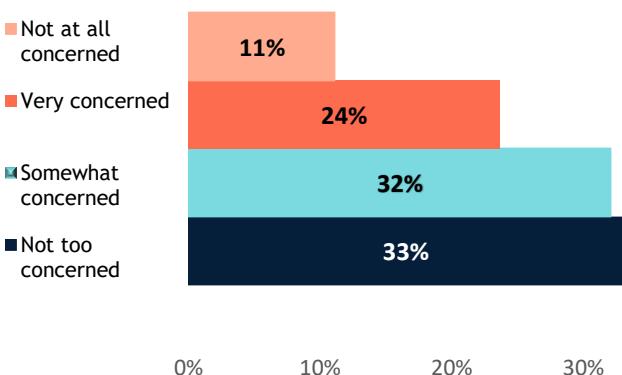


Figure 35-US Military base in the Pacific

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES

The highest number of Tongans (34%) feel that the Tongan government's foreign policy priority is to focus on cooperation with traditional partners (Australia, New Zealand) and Western countries including the United States and the European Union. The second highest priority is to focus on reducing national debt (22%) and third foreign policy priority is to focus on global cooperation through multilateral institutions, including the United Nations (15%). The next item of priority with 13% is for the Tongan government to focus on diversifying cooperation to more partners. The other priorities scored with single digits, such as focusing cooperation on the Pacific Island Forum and other regional agencies (8%), focusing on co-operations with China (5%) and focusing on the Pacific region (4%).

FIGURE 36

Government foreign policy priority

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

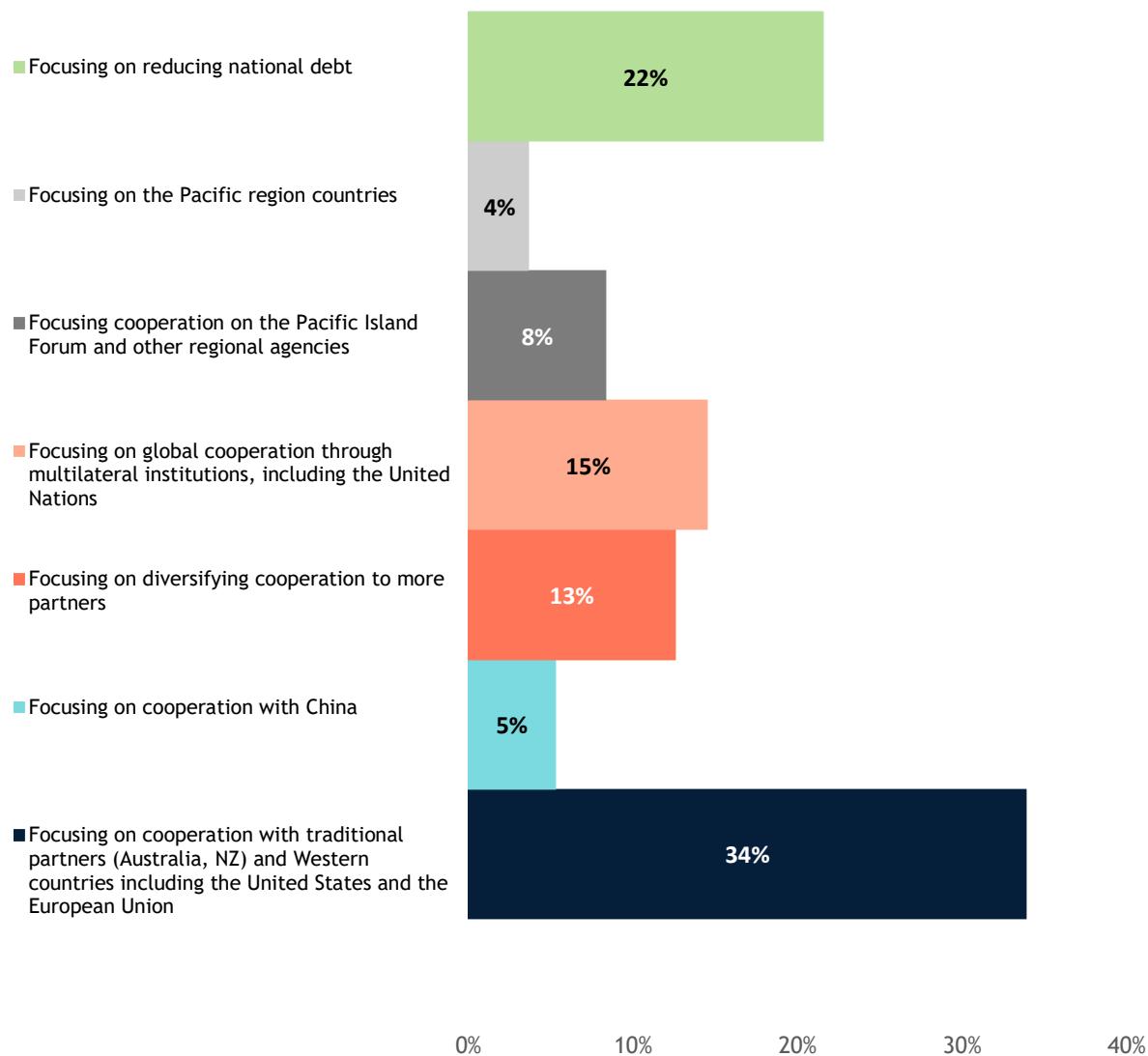


Figure 36-Government foreign policy priority

FEELINGS THERMOMETER

A majority of Tongans feel very warmly towards Australia and New Zealand with an average of 95 degrees each and they also feel very warmly to Fiji with 93 degree Celsius. They feel relatively warm to Samoa (50 DC) and then feel quite coolly towards the rest of the Pacific countries, with ten and less degrees towards the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Marshall Island, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tokelau, Niue, Cook Islands and Tahiti and Tuvalu at the bottom of the 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.

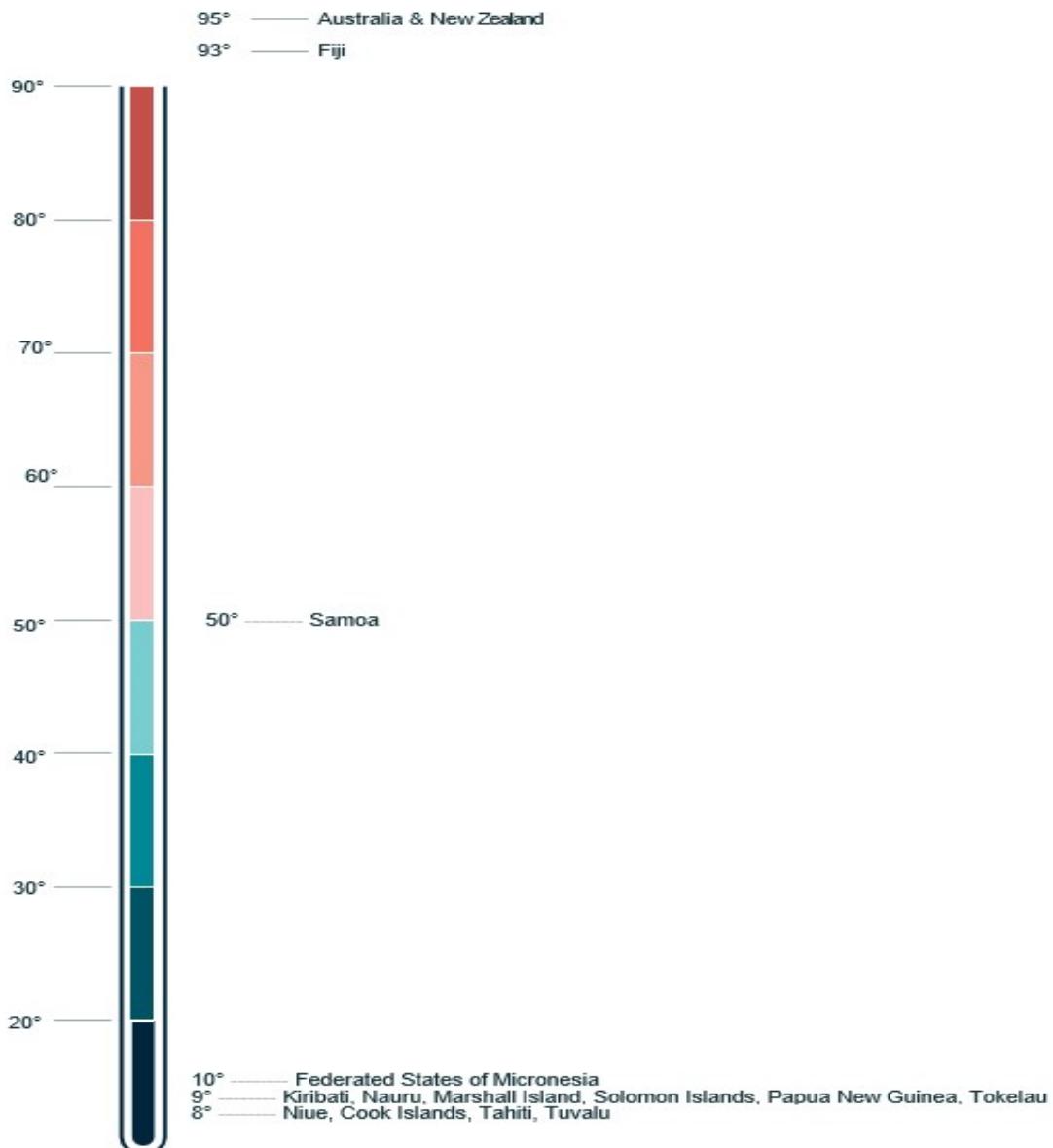


Figure 37- Feelings thermometer

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	49	28	15	8
Australia	54	29	13	4
France	11	20	36	34
\ Fiji	21	35	30	15
India	3	9	36	52
Indonesia	3	6	30	61
Russia	3	3	15	79
New Zealand	63	26	8	3
United Kingdom	42	26	16	16
China	10	12	25	53
Japan	16	25	26	33

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 Joe Biden	28	25	21	9	10	7
Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese	36	27	15	6	10	5
France President Emmanuel Macron	7	12	26	20	21	14
Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka	16	27	29	11	12	6
Russia President Vladimir Putin	2	2	11	58	20	7
New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins	41	28	13	6	9	3
Britain Prime Minister Rishi Sunak	23	22	19	13	15	7
Chinese President Xi Jinping	5	10	17	44	17	8

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?

	2023
United States	16
Australia	19
France	0
India	0
Indonesia	0
South Korea	0
New Zealand	30
United Kingdom	4
China	25
Japan	3
Singapore	0
None	2

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?

	2023
America Samoa	5
Fiji	83
Samoa	6
Hawaii	3
Kiribati	0
Guam	0
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	1
Nauru	0
New Caledonia	0
Niue	0
Cook Islands	0
Marshalls Islands	0
Easter Island	0
Palau	0
Papua New Guinea	0
Federated States of Micronesia	0
Solomon Islands	0
French Polynesia	0
Tuvalu	0
Wallis and Futuna	0
Vanuatu	0

TABLE 5**Feelings of safety**

Now thinking about world events, how safe do you feel?

2023	
Very safe	11
Safe	27
Unsafe	41
Very unsafe	21

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	66	7	2	25
China's foreign policy	66	13	3	18
Cyberattacks from other countries	71	12	4	13
A military conflict between US and China	75	10	3	13
Climate change	75	18	3	5
A severe downtown in the global economy	67	19	5	9
The rise of authoritarian systems of government around the world	69	13	2	15
Foreign interference in Tonga's politics	67	16	4	13
International terrorism	76	10	3	12
Covid-19 and other potential pandemics	79	14	2	4
Political instability in the United States	49	17	7	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	70	65	65	63	87
No, not concerned	30	35	35	37	13

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	56	13	13	17

TABLE 9

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

	More safe	Makes no difference	Less safe	Don't know
Tonga	15	14	54	17

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	Don't know
Tonga	34	12	28	26

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	42	17	15	19	3	4
Australia	39	22	16	17	2	4
United Kingdom	35	19	17	20	3	5
China	8	7	16	56	7	5

TABLE 12**Australia-Solomon-Chinese relations**

Thinking about the tension between Solomon Islands and Australia, over Solomon signing of a security pact with China, earlier this year. Which country do you think is more to blame for the tensions in the Australia-Solomon relationship?

Australia is more to blame	Solomon Islands is more to blame	Both Australia and Solomon are equally to blame	China is to blame	Both China and Solomon Islands are equally to blame	Not sure	Don't know
3	7	4	28	11	18	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, against or don't know/no view at all for 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	25	65	10
To support Pacific regional interventions to restore law and order in a Pacific nation	12	80	8
To participate in UN Peacekeeping operations	14	77	9
To conduct joint regional maritime operations using our patrol boats	15	75	10
To fight against violent extremist groups in the Middle East	37	49	15
If Russia invaded one of its neighbours	44	36	20

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	62
Likely	16
Somewhat likely	9
Don't know/no view	12

TABLE 15**China**

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

More of an economic partner	32
More of a security threat	26
Both equally	26
Don't know/no view	16

TABLE 16**The United States**

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

Very Important	80
Somewhat important	13
Not important	2
Don't know	5

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, disagree or don't know/no view.

	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	27	54	19
The United States will come to Tonga's defense if Tonga were under threat	69	12	19
The partnership with the United States makes Tonga safer from external	67	12	21

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
25	74	1

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	76	6	18
Australia	71	7	22
Fiji	54	15	31
Indonesia	17	20	63
New Zealand	75	6	19
United Kingdom	54	14	31
China	27	35	38
Japan	33	21	46
Taiwan	18	21	61
Papua New Guinea	20	23	56
Hong Kong	19	20	61
Samoa	40	15	45

TABLE 20
Democracy
Attitudes to democracy

Now a question about democracy. Below are some statements about democracy. Please indicate which one of the three statements comes closest to your own personal views about democracy.

2023	
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	13
I prefer the current Tongan blend of monarchical and democratic system	52
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	16
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	19

TABLE 21
Optimism about Tonga economic performance

Thinking about Tongan economic performance in the world. Is Tongan's economic performance mostly good, mostly bad or don't know/no view?

2023	
Mostly good for Tonga	40
Mostly bad for Tonga	43
Neither/don't know/no view	17

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	81	89	76
Mostly Bad For Tonga	16	7	12
Don't know/no view	2	4	11

TABLE 23

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

Very Optimistic	26
Optimistic	52
Not Optimistic At All	13
Don't Know/No View	9

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?

2023	
Mostly good for Tonga	55
Mostly bad for Tonga	23
Neither/don't know/no view	22

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	71	71	66	67
Bad	18	17	20	11
Don't Know	11	12	14	21

TABLE 26**Global responses to Covid-19**

Overall, how well or badly do you think each of the following countries has handled the Covid-19 pandemic so far?

	USA	AUS	FIJI	SAMOA	NZ	PNG	UK	CHINA	SINGAPORE	TONGA
Very Badly	10	5	8	7	6	9	6	43	15	6
Fairly Badly	12	8	14	13	6	15	7	13	10	11
Fairly Well	33	37	44	40	33	24	30	16	21	37
Very Well	35	40	22	19	48	9	30	11	10	42
Don't Know	10	9	12	22	8	44	27	17	44	32

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	22
AUS	23
FIJI	4
NZ	47
UK	3
CHINA	1

TABLE 28**Post-pandemic immigration**

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

Higher than pre-Covid levels	Lower than pre-Covid levels	Around the same as pre-covid levels	Don't know
30	18	27	25

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
40	23	11	26

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
79	10	4	7

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	32
China	1
Fiji	3
New Zealand	30
Papua New Guinea	0
United Kingdom	2
United States	32

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
93	3	3

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

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

Covid-19 vaccines	3
Climate change	13
Health	17
Education	20
Defence	5
Disaster Relief	14
Long term economic development	21
Infrastructure	7

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
6	21	69	4

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
33	32	24	11

TABLE 36

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	34
Focusing on cooperation with China	5
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	8
Focusing on the Pacific region countries	4
Focusing on reducing national debt	22

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	93°
Samoa	50°
Kiribati	9°
Nauru	9°
Niue	8°
New Zealand	95°
Cook Islands	8°
Marshall Islands	9°
Solomon Islands	9°
Papua New Guinea	9°
Federated States of Micronesia	10°
Tahiti	8°
Tokelau	9°
Tuvalu	8°

ABOUT THE POLL

METHODOLOGY

The 2023 “Understanding of Tongans Attitude to the world” poll was commissioned by the Australian High Commissioner’s Office in Tonga and conducted by Tupou Tertiary Institute Research & Training Centre.

The research was conducted according to TTI’s Research framework which was to ensure that research involved TTI staff and students, as a way of building their research capacity as well as exposing the research team to the focus issues of the research.

The research began on the 25th of April, 2023 with one-week training of researchers which included conducting two pilot surveys. Data Collection began in May, 2023, in the main island of Tongatapu for four weeks. In June and July, researchers were split into three groups and each group traveled to one of the outer islands, which were ‘Eua, Ha’apai and Vava’u, to conduct the survey. The ten surveys from the isolated islands of Niua Fo’ou and Niua Toputapu were conducted with Niua islanders who were in Tongatapu for different reasons, during the period of time the poll was conducted.

Each outer island research group had a team leader and team leaders were trained before they left for the outer islands, in regards to quality control and safety of data collection processes. Researchers picked up and returned completed surveys at the end of each week, where they were quality checked by team leaders followed by a debrief weekly meeting. Supervisors had their own weekly debrief meetings with team leaders, a day before researchers debrief meetings. Data entry was completed by the end of August and in October data analysis was completed and the final submission of this report to the Australian High Commission’s office is due for the 1st of December, 2023.

In this survey, 1002 face to face surveys were conducted and were conducted in all the main island groups of Tonga, namely Tongatapu, Vava’u, Ha’apai, ‘Eua, Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo’ou. Tonga has a total population of 100,179 and in discussion with Tonga’s Statistics, a target of 1000 surveys was seen as a representative figure and adequate for the survey to be accepted as a national survey. The number of participants were chosen according to the demographic trend of Tonga’s latest 2021 Census, with 740 surveys conducted in the main island of Tongatapu, 142 surveys in Vava’u the second most populated outer islands, 60 surveys

in the outer island of Ha’apai, 50 surveys in the outer island of ‘Eua and five each from the isolated and lease populated islands of Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo’ou, as shown Population distribution table:

Population distribution per main islands

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

Total # of respondents | 1002

Source: Tonga Statistics Department (2021)

Within each island group, there were districts (consisting of villages) which were more densely populated than others and the percentage of the number of people surveyed in each district reflects the population trend for these districts, as recorded in the 2021 census data. For example, in Tongatapu, there are five main districts and this is how the numbers of surveys for surveys were distributed for Tongatapu as in the table below:

Tongatapu Population per main districts

	Total Population	74%	Sample
Vahe Kolo (Urban settlements)	34142	25265	378
Vahe Hahake (Eastern District)	14501	10731	135
Vahe Loto (Central District)	13199	9767	110
Vahe Hihifo (Western District)	12478	9233	117

Total # of surveys | 740

Source: Tonga Statistics Department (2021)

It is acknowledged that the number for central district was slightly lower than western district, which is slightly different from the demographic trends of those two districts. The same process was applied for the calculation of the number of participants in the outer islands.

The researchers were asked to randomly select people in the villages they were allocated to, but to use only participants who were 18 years old or older and aim to have participants with a range of ages and balanced gender.

Each researcher conducted fifty surveys, in which included surveys conducted in Tongatapu and additional surveys from one of the outer island.

Four researchers conducted all their surveys in Tongatapu because they could not travel to the outer islands because of some family commitments.

The leading research team consisted of two research supervisors and two research leaders and a research assistant. There were twenty enumerators or

researchers. Each research leader led a team of ten researchers, working with their teams in training, data collection, logistics in traveling to outer islands. Research supervisors oversaw the planning of research implementation plan, the logistics and ensured outcomes outlined by the research plan were achieved according to time schedules, as well as conducting the quality control of the research. The research assistant assisted the research leading team in ensuring organization of data collection process when surveys were physically collected into the research centre went through a quality control process. Four of the leading research team were actively involved in the data entry, data analysis and write-up process.

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