

Tonga loses out on NZ tourism aid in plane row

by Ashlee Betteridge
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The New Zealand government is reportedly suspending millions of dollars in tourism aid to Tonga after **concerns** about the safety of planes gifted to the country by China.

The safety record of the Xian MA60 has recently been in the spotlight after a number of **incidents** in Indonesia and Myanmar.

“Until all of the safety certification has been undertaken to a high standard we’ve got things on hold, it’s as simple as that,” New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully **told** Islands Business.

Meanwhile, Tonga’s opposition leader has said this week that the kingdom is **too reliant** on aid and remittances, thereby sapping the country’s sense of initiative. He called for more democratic reform to promote accountability. (Tonga’s Legislative Assembly is composed of a mix of representatives of the people, and of Nobles.)

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now has her own consultancy, Better Things Consulting, and works across several large projects with managing contractors.

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