

Micronesian Exodus

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Figure 1 Net air passenger movements FSM 1991 to 2009

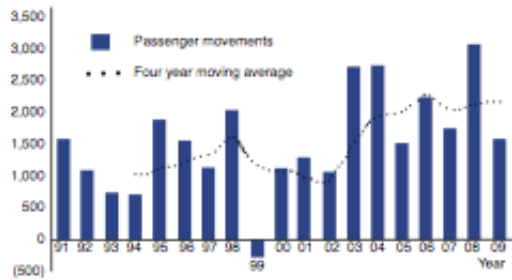
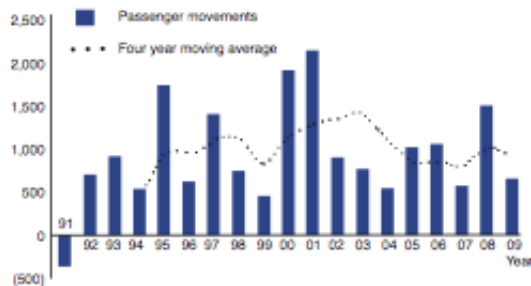


Figure 2 Net air passenger movements RMI 1991 to 2009



The [Pacific Institute of Public Policy](#) (PiPP) has released its latest discussion paper, as Micronesian leaders attend their bi-annual summit in Palau this week.

Micronesia has the highest per capita net emigration rates in the world.

A new discussion paper from the Pacific Institute of Public policy provides an overview of the Micronesian migration experience, focusing on the most recent trends in RMI and FSM. It shows that a range of public policies can shape a country's experience with migration.

Over 50,000 citizens from the Federated States of Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau and Marshall Islands live abroad - that represents about 20 per cent of the current combined resident populations of these islands.

In recent times approximately 2 per cent of the populations of FSM and RMI were emigrating each year in search of education and employment opportunities or for health purposes.

Migration is nothing new to Micronesians. Movement within the islands and, for the past few decades, to the US has become just a part of who we are. But the emigration levels have intensified and many people are growing concerned about the demographic, development, and other impacts that this might have. It's a good time for policymakers in FSM and RMI to re-visit this issue.

Although such high rates of emigration have in some ways impacted negatively on the development of these small island states, the alternative would likely be worse. On balance, the ability of Micronesians to migrate (mainly to the US under Compact of Free Association agreements) has been of benefit to both Micronesians and the US. However, Micronesian policy makers need to think of ways to retain qualified locals and better develop the economy at home.

A copy of the discussion paper can be downloaded from the PiPP website - www.pacificpolicy.org

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