



# México Down Under



Embassy of Mexico in Australia

| Bulletin No. 17

## Letter from the Ambassador

### Transparency and Anti-Corruption: Two important elements in Mexico's bid for modernity.

Continuing with the outstanding series of reforms aimed at making Mexico a more modern, safe, prosperous, and fair country, during the month of May, President Enrique Peña Nieto enacted two more transcendental reforms: a constitutional amendment to fight corruption, and a General Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information. Both bills shall give way to the construction of the National Transparency System and the National Anti-Corruption System, two formidable instruments to advance towards a culture of legality and consolidate the rule of law in the country. This letter focuses in the former, while another article of this bulletin explains the latter.



As it has been informed in previous issues of this bulletin, Mexico is currently experiencing one of the most important processes of institutional transformation in its modern history. Using President Peña Nieto's words, for the first time in decades, the main political forces have thoroughly reviewed and reorganized our political, economic and social system on the basis of 11 major reforms. We have adapted the structure of the state to turn Mexico into the country we all want. Achieving this will undoubtedly depend on everyone, society and authorities—the three branches and different levels of government—acting with professionalism, integrity and honesty.

In this context, on May 28<sup>th</sup>, President Peña Nieto enacted the constitutional reform to fight corruption. He explained that this is a vital change, resulting from an unprecedented exercise of discussion and construction of agreements, in which all the political forces and, above all, civil society itself, participated, enhancing the initiative with its ideas and proposals.



Mexico will now have a National Anti-Corruption System. This agency, as explained by President Peña, will coordinate the authorities on the task of preventing, investigating and punishing possible acts of corruption, as well as those responsible for overseeing public resources. The system includes a Public Participation Committee comprising five distinguished Mexicans, whom, together with the authorities, will ensure society's interests.

The Superior Audit of the Federation (ASF) will be established as the highest body of control and, therefore, the cornerstone of this new scheme. Its new responsibilities will allow real-time auditing, when possible crimes are being committed. Now, it will also be able to monitor the performance of federal contributions and the trusts that use public resources.

This amendment means that the Public Account will be able to be overseen from the first day of the year onwards rather than in April, as has been the case so far. Moreover, with a full commitment towards legality, the statute of limitations for administrative negligence will be extended to seven years, meaning that administrative justice will be applicable beyond a single presidential term.

Another new provision of this transformative reform—number twelve—is that the next Secretaries of Public Administration must be ratified by the Senate. The aim is to create schemes of joint responsibility between the branches of government and ensure impartiality in the performance of their duties.

However, the most significant change in this new paradigm is that, for the first time, our Constitution recognizes that both citizens and public servants share the responsibility of combating corruption. In fact, officials and private individuals, as well as companies who have participated in such acts will be responsible before justice. Government officials from all spheres of government may be sanctioned with prison sentences, while firms may be dissolved. This type of decisions will be made by independent courts, such as the Federal Court of Administrative Justice, which includes the new legal framework, or its equivalent in the states.

Through this reform, Mexico is advancing in its own transformation, by promoting integrity in public life. No legal project can or should be considered a finished product. From now onwards, it will be necessary to create new consensuses to shape the institutions and secondary legislation comprising the new National Anti-Corruption System.

Once enacted, the proper implementation of the constitutional reform to combat corruption will involve us all; citizens and entrepreneurs; and the authorities at the three levels of government.

Building a nation of stronger institutions, with honest and more participatory authorities, is a shared responsibility. Mexico belongs to us all -President Peña concluded- let us embrace this challenge with courage and determination.



## Mexican organizations win quality award

Madrid.- A clinical laboratory and a nursery school from Mexico were awarded the Ibero-American Prize for Quality 2014 in the silver category.

The award was granted by the Ibero-American Secretary-General's Office to Medical Services International SA de CV-Certus Laboratorio Clínico, a medium-sized company, and to the Dr. Enrique Rébsamen small public-sector Dr. Enrique Rébsamen Nursery School.

The prize is given to companies that contribute to the esteem of the Ibero-American community as a place where the best suppliers, associated and investment opportunities are to be found.

# Global Mexico

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## MEXICO AND AUSTRALIA: NEW ERA FOR NATURAL PARTNERS (\*)

Chris Rodwell, Austrade trade commissioner for Mexico, Central America and The Caribbean

The Australian business community is just starting to recognise the increasingly significant role Mexico will play in the global economy in the next few decades.

Few if any countries are executing as ambitious a reform program as Mexico right now. The program will prompt a transformation in international trade and investment for the country.

OECD secretary general Jose Angel Gurría commented in January that Mexico's reform program is the most extensive and ambitious that had been seen in the OECD in recent times and possibly the most extensive and ambitious in the world. The OECD forecasts Mexico will average an additional one per cent growth per year for the next ten years. Should it implement other reforms it could arrive at an additional two per cent growth per year.

The program encompasses energy, telecommunications, finance, tax, infrastructure, education and more. Add the prospect of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Mexico's existing tranche of trade agreements, covering 45 different countries and including NAFTA and the Pacific Alliance, an enhanced commercial relationship between Australia and Mexico is almost certain.



For instance, BHP Billiton has entered the market in search of opportunities in the deepwater of Mexico following the overhaul of 76-year old legislation that had previously closed the energy sector to international investment. WorleyParsons has entered with similar intentions and a view to developing business downstream.

Macquarie Group manages the largest fund for commercial and industrial property in the country and also has a lead interest in a US\$1 billion greenfields wind farm project. More

recently, Melbourne-headquartered IFM made its first investment, a US\$600 million stake in a major toll road.

The fundamentals of the Mexican economy are strong. Goldman Sachs forecasts Mexico will be a top 5 economy by 2050 and few dispute it will enter the top 10 by 2030. One reason is Mexico's central bank has been an astute manager. In early 2014 Moody's lifted Mexico to an A-credit rating. With international reserves nearing US\$200 billion and low debt-to-GDP ratios, Mexico's economy is solid.

It is determined to deal with productivity issues. Mexico is challenged by significant infrastructure gaps. But it plans to invest north of US\$550 billion in the next five years to fast-track the delivery of roads, rail and pipelines.



There has also been significant education reform but much more needs to be done. In response, Mexico is creating mega-programs to combat skills deficits. Recently announced 60,000 scholarships in the energy sector is an example of the country's commitment to break the 20-year bind of stagnant productivity.

There are pressures to manage in funding new programs. The tax base is narrow and small compared to other OECD nations. While the government has hedged its oil price for 2015, should it remain deflated until 2016 budget cuts will likely be made and a second round of fiscal reform may be needed.

On the upside Mexico is a huge manufacturer. It is the engine room of the Mexican economy and accounts for 80 per cent of all advanced manufactured exports in Latin America. It is the number one producer of flat screens and refrigerators in the world and the fourth largest exporter of

motor vehicles. Having the US as a neighbour has advantages, especially as the US economy is trending back to four per cent GDP growth a year. Announcements of new car production plants are as common in Mexico as taco street vendors. Just before Christmas General Motors announced it would invest a further \$5 billion in Mexico. This comes on top of recent announcements from Kia, VW and Mercedes.

The opportunities produced by such investment are apparent for Australian companies looking to new markets as a result of the structural overhaul of the local industry. Austrade is working with companies to determine how to penetrate some of the global value chains in Mexico.

Mining is also a sector of interest for Australia. While deeply embedded in other parts of Latin America, Australian companies are underrepresented in Mexico, despite the country being the fifth most popular destination for mining investment in the world. In September last year, Rio Tinto, announced a joint venture with mining exploration company Azure Minerals to explore for copper in Mexico.

The other strategic opportunity for Australia is in agriculture. Mexico and Australia share similar ambitions in improving the productivity of their land. We also produce many of the same commodities and face the challenges of flood and drought. Yet it is unlikely we will ever be great competitors. The margins and demand from Asia are too enticing for Australia to contemplate anything but niche plays into Mexico. The greater opportunity exists for shared investment plans in both countries, recognising Australia's privileged position as a gateway to Asia and Mexico's similarly held status in the Americas.



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In the medium term, expect greater commerce in consumer goods and health. It surprises most to learn Mexico is the fifth largest market for luxury brands in the world. That's a clear marker for sectors such as our wine industry. While Mexico has traditionally been the land of tequila and cerveza, the red wine segment is growing at 14 per cent per annum in value terms. That's why 10 Australian wine producers visited Mexico for Australia Day this year to develop the market.

In terms of health, Mexico's population is 120 million and it has a fast rising middle class. Those numbers, coupled with a zeal for better health and an addiction for sugar that recently led to the introduction of a sugar tax, is evidence of the scale of the opportunity.

While Australia fosters an ever-more expansive view of global commerce, Mexico represents a compelling opportunity, both in its diversity and scale. It is, by any standard, a much underdone relationship. But it's also a pivot for Australian companies keen to manage risk in Asia and develop new markets. If ever Australia was looking to recruit a 'natural partner' Mexico would surely be on the shortlist.

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## Mexico's Scholarship Program for Foreigners 2016

The Mexican Government offers up to two scholarships to Australian citizens to study in a Mexican Institution. From May 20 to August 31 the interested candidates can obtain the terms and conditions, the complete list of institutions and programs, along with the application forms for the 2016 scholarship in the following website <http://amexcid.gob.mx/index.php/oferta-de-becas-para-extranjeros>

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## FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN MEXICO (\*)

*The large global companies look at Mexico as a trustful destination for investment.*

The government is implementing actions to reduce investment barriers and inhibitors in order to capture growing amounts of FDI in strategic sectors in line with the country's potential.

The strategies to achieve this are:

- Eliminate or reduce restrictions on FDI participation
- Provide greater legal certainty for investors to strengthen the investment climate.
- Apply common standards that include parameters that must be met by the states to attract investment.
- Promote investment projects based on regional vocations and strategic sectors.



The government will continue to promote investments that will lead to more and better jobs, higher productivity and an increase in the actual income of Mexican families.

During this administration, foreign direct investment (FDI) in our country has increased. It is worth noting that between 2013 and 2014, Mexico received FDI of over \$66 billion USD; a significantly higher amount than the \$24 billion USD in the two previous years.

This is consistent with the positive figures that have been reported of the dynamics of the economy of our country such as the following:

According to figures from the National Association of Supermarkets and Department Stores (AN-TAD), during the first three months of this year, affiliated establishments have reported a growth of sales of almost five percent.

Another indicator of the confidence Mexico elicits in the world today is the record-breaking bond that was placed in the Euro market. This ultra-long, 100-year bond, had a high demand in this market.

As a result everyday more and more global companies find in Mexico the ideal platform to successfully grow and project themselves to the world.

The global consultancy firm A.T. Kearney informed that Mexico is back in the top ten most attractive destinations to invest in the world. The Structural Reforms and investment allows Mexico to be positioning itself as a viable destination to attract more productive investment and generate jobs for Mexicans.

According to this firm's Foreign Direct Investment Index 2015, the country climbed three places compared to the last edition, due to the improvement of business climate with the implementation brought about by the structural reforms, which placed Mexico in the ninth position. Moreover, it is expected that Mexico will have positive impacts in the energetic and telecommunications sectors.



A few weeks ago, the company *Goodyear* announced an investment of 550 million dollars in the construction of a tyre production plant in the state of San Luis Potosí, which will generate more than a thousand direct jobs and more than five thousand indirect openings.

Another example of this improvement is the announcement by *Ford Motor Company* to invest of 2,500 million dollars to build a new plant in the state of Chihuahua and a plant to produce shafts and a third one to produce the new ge-



neration of engines. This will generate almost four thousand jobs in the states of Chihuahua and Guanajuato.

*Toyota* also announced a new plant in Guanajuato that represents an investment of approximately one billion dollars, the company's biggest in Mexico to date. It will create about two thousand new jobs, and will have the capacity to produce over 200,000 vehicles a year.



These recent investments announced by global companies, accredit and guarantee the great confidence in Mexico, regardless of the current high volatility of the global environment. Mexico is a country with a privileged geographical and trade location and a network of Free Trade Agreements that give its producers immediate access to excellent consumer markets.

*Note: the Foreign Direct Investment Index 2015 is based on data from a survey performed by A.T. Kearney, to high profile executives of the 500 global leading firms during January 2015.*

(\*) With information from [www.presidencia.gob.mx](http://www.presidencia.gob.mx)

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## INVESTING IN MEXICO

### Part I



Throughout the next three editions of *Mexico Down Under* we will share similarities between Mexico and Australia, as well as specific information about doing business in Mexico, afterwards we will oversee practical procedures and benefits. Let's begin with *Investing in Mexico Part I!!!*

Both, Mexico and Australia, share a leading role in the G20. In fact, we ran our presidency with a year of difference: in 2012 and in 2014, respectively. We are living in a new economic order, where the gravity of the global economy changed. Centuries ago, the Mediterranean Sea ruled commerce. In the XX Century, the Atlantic Ocean led our economic ties. In this century, the Pacific Ocean has a pivotal importance for our future. In this new geopolitical era, the Asia-Pacific region is going to lead the way. In order to increase our competitiveness, we have to foster our bilateral relations and the best way to achieved it is by strengthening trade and investment between our countries. In the center of this economic openness, we shall all focus our efforts in achieving growth, prosperity and greater integration for all.

Many Australian companies already operate successfully in Mexico. In fact, we want to support Australian companies in developing their partnerships in Mexico even more and to encourage more companies to explore the Mexican market. In fact, in the global value chain paradigm, our economies should foster our interactions even more. We see enormous potential in the economic relationship between us. There are facts about Mexico's competitive advantages, that can support Australian businesses to succeed in our region and our bilateral trade, some of those are:

- Mexico has access to 45 countries through its free trade agreements.
- Our FTAs give privileged access to 1.2 billion consumers around the world.
- The strategic value of belonging to the TPP lies in taking advantage of Mexico's role as a significant player in the global supply chain, both for the U.S. market and for the markets of the Asia – Pacific region. Mexico will increase its presence in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in countries without a previous FTA, such as Australia, Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam.
- Mexico is an inviting investment destination, as part of the largest economic region in the world, NAFTA, which represents 19 trillion dollars, which is equivalent to adding the economies of China, Germany and Japan.

Both Mexico and Australia have young, flexible, multilingual workforce; one of the best business environments of our region; a strategic location in our hemispheres and competitive costs. In addition to our network of free trade agreements, Mexico has a strategic location, close to the world's major regional ports; in fact, our infrastructure makes Mexico a strategic trading platform between North America and Latin America. Our main strength is our human capital, the percentage of engineering graduates in Mexico is higher than in Brazil, Spain, United Kingdom and United States. Mexico has an attractive domestic market, the average revenue per PPP is 15,000 USD annually. All this facts makes Mexico an outstanding investment destination.

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Mexico is one of the most competitive countries due to the number of days and procedures needed to start a company.

In Mexico only 6 procedures are required to start a business, which is similar to the United States and ahead of countries like Germany and China. The Expedite Business Start-Up System (SARE) is a scheme that promotes the opening of all kinds of companies in one business day through the identification of the minimum federal procedures necessary to complete the set up and start operations, simplification of procedures and the expeditious processing by the federal authorities.

In addition, companies performing one of the 685 business activities (agribusiness, industrial, trade and services) deemed of low public risk and that are described in the Exhibit to the Decree establishing SARE, issued in the Official Gazette on January 28, 2002, will have up to 3 months to meet other federal mandatory requirements after obtaining the Taxpayer's Registry Number. During that period, the federal authorities may not request information or perform visits to verify compliance with such procedures.

As regards low risk activities and their benefits, the scheme was based on the 1999 Mexican Classification of Goods and Businesses (CMAP) by INEGI. Such activities account for 80% of the most frequent businesses in our country and are susceptible to be developed by micro, small and medium enterprises.

In the next edition of *Mexico Down Under* we will talk about other benefits to establish an investment in Mexico as well as different programs that can suit to your activities. For more information, please contact us at [asia@promexico.gob.mx](mailto:asia@promexico.gob.mx)

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<http://www.cgci.udg.mx/pepe2015>

# Mexican Landscape

## GENERAL LAW OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC



President Enrique Peña Nieto signed the decree promulgating the General Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information before the commissioners of the Federal Institute of Access to Information and Data Protection (IFAI), representatives of the three branches of government, federal civil servants and officials of the oversight bodies of the states, in a ceremony held at the National Palace.

IFAI's President, Ximena Puente, said that this is a state-of-the-art law, which reflects the spirit of the constitutional reform, and which will mark a before and after in the way of transparency for Mexico. She also noted that this law is an achievement of society and its entry into force will allow IFAI to consolidate its position as an autonomous and independent public institution with new powers, a larger catalogue of obligors and the ability to monitor the proper fulfilment of the constitutional mandate stipulating all individuals and corporations that receive public resources should be accountable.

Ximena Puente also pointed out that the new transparency law will lay the groundwork to ensure that the right of access to information is exercised throughout the country on equal terms, without restrictions, incorporating gender perspective and without discrimination, underlying that the right of access to information is a key to promoting the participation of citizens in public affairs.

She explained that this law will give way to the construction of the National Transparency System (SNT), which, in coordination with the National Anticorruption System, will help boost the democratization of Mexico, making the right of access to information available to all people, turning it into an essential tool for transparency in the fight against corruption.

President Enrique Peña Nieto said that with this new law, Mexico strengthens and extends the mechanisms of access to information, closing spaces for corruption, and giving birth to a new era of transparency and accountability in the country. The President highlighted that transparency will promote honesty and integrity within the Public Service, will deepen the fight against corruption, promote accountability and effectiveness of the public administration, and empower citizens to assess their authorities and hold them accountable; however, transparency is only one element of an even broader paradigm: Open Government, which is the new frontier of democracy and the new collaborative model that is transforming the way people and authorities interact.



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## MEXICO AND ITS DIVERSITY- PAST AND PRESENT



At the invitation of "Blue Star" Intercultural Centre and the Government of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), the Ambassador Armando G. Alvarez made a presentation on the premises of the Legislative Assembly of the Canberra Government. There, legislators and public servants of the ACT and the Australian Foreign Ministry attended, as well as members of the diplomatic corps and members of "Blue Star", headed by its Executive Director, Fethullah Erdogan.

Mr Chris Bourke, a member of the Labour Party in the Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory, was present at the event. Mr Bourke represents the electorate of Ginninderra, and is the first Aboriginal Australian elected to the Assembly.

During the above mentioned presentation titled "Mexico and Its Diversity: Past and Present", referring to Mexico as: i) a country with a rich ethnic and cultural diversity; ii) Mexico today, politically diverse with a democratic regime where the government of the Republic, the various political parties and Congress reach agreements that allow the political, economic and social transformation of the country; and iii) a country opened to the world.

Also, the videos "What is Mexico" and video on Tourism in Mexico were presented. These audio-visual materials caused a positive impression among the attendees.

Finally, during the question and answer session, Ambassador Alvarez had the opportunity to highlight the main achievements and progress of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and Australia.



# Visit Mexico

## WINDOWS TO THE WORLD: VISIT MEXICO WITHOUT LEAVING AUSTRALIA



In 2013, 35 Embassies in Canberra (Mexico included) opened their doors to the public and as part of the “Windows to the World” Program, a first of its kind event that offered a unique opportunity to learn more about the many cultures that are represented in the Australian Capital. During its first edition, more than 35 thousand people had the chance to experience food, art and culture from all over the world.

This year, Windows to the World is back during the month of September, and this edition will be bigger, brighter and tastier, with dozens of Embassies offering guided tours through their premises and showcasing their cultures. The official announcement of the second edition of Windows to the World was made on May 29<sup>th</sup> at the Mexican Embassy, and we had the honour to host three distinguished guests: ACT Chief Minister, Mr Andrew Barr; Icon Water’s Managing Director, John Knox, and Mr. Pedro Villagra, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Canberra.

During the announcement, our guests had the opportunity to preview what we will offer to our visitors during September. Food, dance, and a guided tour through some of our landmark sites - such as the natural size replica of the Aztec calendar that dominates our entry gate- were in store, including a marvellous presentation by Mexican Folkloric Dance Group “México Lindo”, filled with rhythm and colour.

Ambassador Armando Álvarez hailed the return of Windows to the World as an “opportunity for us to show our architecture, our culture, our music, our cuisine, and to get acquainted with the people of Canberra, and the many visitors of this beautiful city”. The program will run simultaneously with Canberra’s Floriade, another major event in the city which every year attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors. Hence, it is the best time to experience so many different cultures in a single day.



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Windows to the World is an initiative of the ACT Government in conjunction with the Embassies represented in Canberra and the Australian Institute of International Affairs, and is sponsored by Icon Water. To learn more about the event, we recommend visiting the following websites:

[http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/barr/2015/windows-to-the-world-to-return-in-2015](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/barr/2015/windows-to-the-world-to-return-in-2015)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-29/windows-to-the-world-to-make-a-return-in-2015/6508242>

<https://plus.google.com/+IconWater/posts/gdGC6pFwC3P>

<http://hercanberra.com.au/cpnews/windows-to-the-world-to-return-in-2015/>

We invite all our friends to keep posted on the development of the program, as official dates and bookings will be announced in the months to come. Don't miss this opportunity to join us during the month of September in a marvellous showcasing of the beautiful things that Mexico has to offer.

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**EMBAMEX AUSTRALIA** @EmbaMexAus · 29 de may.

Hon. Andrew Carr, Chief Minister of the ACT, launching the program "Windows to the World 2015", at the Emb. of Mexico



**EMBAMEX AUSTRALIA** @EmbaMexAus · 28 de may.

#DidYouKnow newplant NorthAmericanLighting #Mexico will create 500 jobs and manufacture headlights for @Honda @GM @Nissan @Mazda @Toyota



**EMBAMEX AUSTRALIA** @EmbaMexAus · 25 de may.

#DidYouKnow passengers by plane increased 9.9% in Jan-Mar 2015; 5 million of them were international. @QantasAirways @VirginAustralia

# Mexicans Down Under

## MARYCARMEN/MARYDIAS: FIREWORKS



I moved to Australia in the year 2000 just after my boyfriend (now husband) was relocated back to Australia. It was a very nice time as the Sydney Olympics were a few months away. We both met in Mexico when working in the same multinational telecommunications company.

In 2004, during the first 3 months of my maternity leave, I was made redundant. It was at this time that I decided to start the Mexican Food Business. At the time, there were not too many quality Mexican food products available and commencing a Mexican food business was always in my thoughts. However it was also a

stressful decision as the business was created from zero and I had a young family to look after.

The business started with the tortilla manufacturing line and various products which we imported. I took a risk in importing several products which back then were not very popular, but were important to Mexican cuisine and culture. Products like chipotle in adobo, dried chillis, tomatillo, cactus, achiote and of course fresh tortillas. We were the first to manufacture authentic tortillas and there were many quiet times in the first few years. It was during these periods that we questioned our decision to commence a new business. Thankfully we preserved and survived. Now many Mexican food products have become part of main streamline food options.



Australians with their close proximity to Asia have always been adventurous with their spicy food. As such there is a natural affinity with the Mexican spices and flavours, which can be easily, enjoyed with beer, wine, Tequila, together with family and friends.

Since then we have built our website [www.fireworksfoods.com.au](http://www.fireworksfoods.com.au) and have been able to supply Mexican food to everyone in Australia. We have exported food to Singapore, Bali, New Zealand and Fiji. I have tried to change the myth that Mexican Food was blend and cheesy, as this was a common misconception I met when I first arrived to Australia. Now people are enjoying Mexican food for what it is, one of the most varied, fresh and colourful cuisines of the world.

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Dear friends,

If you have any question or comments regarding this publication please feel free to contact us at [embaaustralia@sre.gob.mx](mailto:embaaustralia@sre.gob.mx)

Se invita a los mexicanos a compartir sus historias de éxito en Australia, mandándolas en no más de una cuartilla arial 12 y con fotografías a [vtrevino@sre.gob.mx](mailto:vtrevino@sre.gob.mx).

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