



# Migration from Mexico and the dynamics of integration

## Summary

- > The Mexican-born population is the ninth largest migrant group from Latin America resident in Australia. During the mid-2000s Mexicans were the eighth largest migrant group from Latin America.
- > In 2018 there were an estimated 6,770 Mexican-born residents of Australia, representing an increase of 412.9% since 2001.
- > In 2019 there are 3,419 Mexican migrants on temporary visas in Australia.
- > 34.6% of Australia’s Mexican-born population resides in New South Wales, followed by 30.6% in Victoria.

## Dynamics of migration

### History of migration to Australia

The Mexican presence in Australia can be traced back to the 1891 Colonial Census, which recorded 45 Mexican migrants in Australia. In 1971 there were 212 Mexican-born residents in Australia. By 1986 there were 678 Mexican-born residents in Australia, representing the ninth largest migrant group from Latin America at that time. The largest period of net Mexican migration was between 2010 and 2016, with settlement arrivals peaking in 2015 at 462 arrivals.

The 2016 Census asked people who were born overseas what year they first arrived in Australia. It did not measure all migrant arrivals, as the overseas-born population recorded in the Census excluded migrants who resided in Australia for less than a year, re-migrated or those who died. Almost the majority (44.9%) of Mexicans living in Australia arrived after 2010. More than a third (35.8%) of

Figure 1. Mexican-born population of Australia by year of arrival, 2016

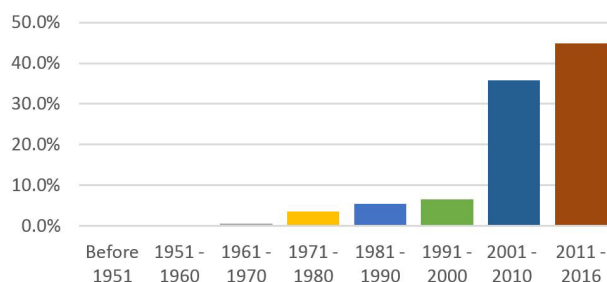
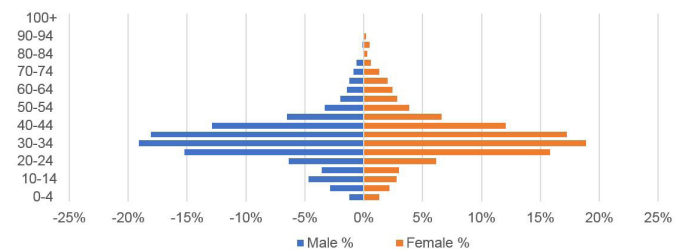


Figure 2. Mexican-born population of Australia by age and sex, 2016



the Mexican-born population had migrated to Australia between 2001 and 2010. Less than a tenth (9.9%) of the Mexican population had arrived in Australia before 1991.

### Demographic composition

The median age of the Mexican-born population of Australia was 34, whereas the median age of the Australian population was 38 in 2016. Over a third (34.6%) of the Mexican-born population was between the ages of 25 and 34 years. The largest age group for both Mexican men and women in Australia was the 30 to 34 years age group. Almost two-thirds (64.5%) of Mexican migrants in Australia were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Among the Mexican-born population, 3.9% were over 65 years old and 7.6% were under 15 years old.

Of the total Mexican-born population of Australia, 47.8% were men and 52.9% were women. The sex ratio was 91.6 males per 100 females, which compared to a sex ratio of 97.2 for the total Australian population.



## Geography of settlement

In 2016, 35.1% of Mexican migrants lived in New South Wales (NSW). Of these, 88.13% resided in greater Sydney. The second leading state of residence was Victoria, where 30.4% of Mexicans lived. Of these, 94.73% were located in greater Melbourne.

Australia-wide, the most popular areas for residence were Melbourne and Southbank in Victoria, and Waterloo and Beaconsfield in NSW.

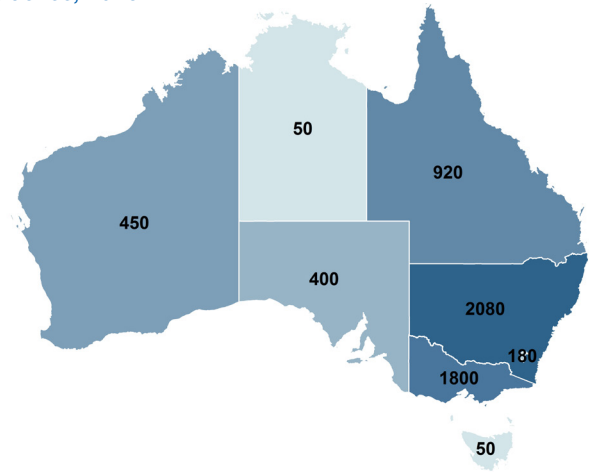
The distribution of Mexican migrants across Australia has changed over time. NSW hosts the greatest proportion of Mexican migrants, however its share of Australia's Mexican-born population has declined from 47% in 2001 to 35.1% in 2016. Victoria has seen an increase in its proportion of Mexican migrants, rising from 20.5% in 2001 to 30.4% to 2016.

## Pathways to integration

### Economic impact

The 2016 Census recorded that the accommodation and food services industry was the largest employer of Mexican migrants, employing 16% of all Mexican workers. Of these workers, 53.7% were male. The industry was the biggest employer of both Mexican males and females in 2016.

Figure 3. Mexican-born population of Australia by state of residence, 2016



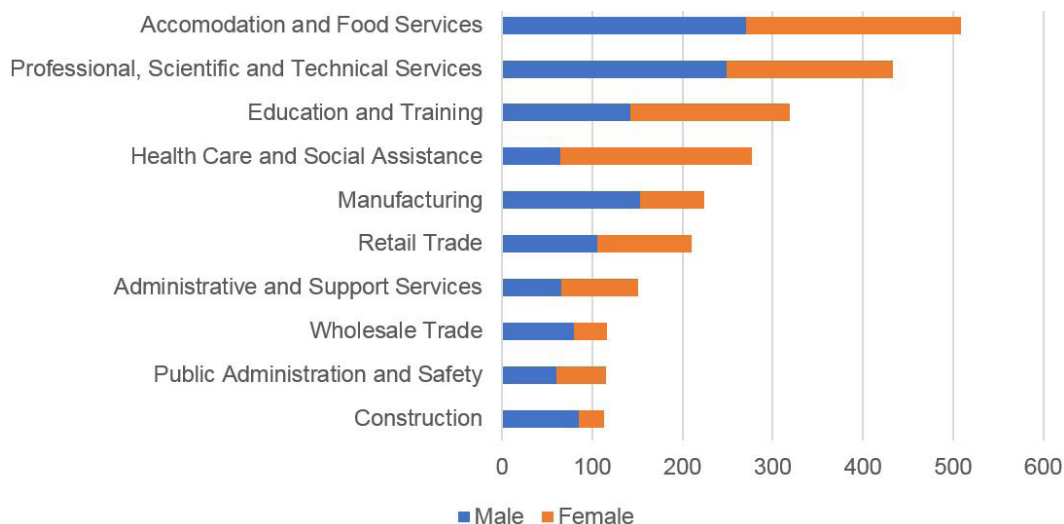
The professional, scientific and technical services industry (13.9%) and the education and training industry (10.2%) were the second and third largest employers of Mexican migrants.

In 2011, the largest employer-industry was the professional, scientific and technical services industry, followed closely by the accommodation and food services industry and the education and training industry.

### Education

Two-thirds (65.9%) of Australia's Mexican-born population aged 15 and over had completed a university Bachelor degree level qualification or above. This compares to

Figure 4. Mexican-born population of Australia by industry of employment, 2016



20.4% for the Australian-born population. A growing share of the Mexican migrant population is university educated—the 2011 Census recorded that 61% of Australia’s Mexican-born population had a Bachelor degree qualification or above.

### Contemporary migration

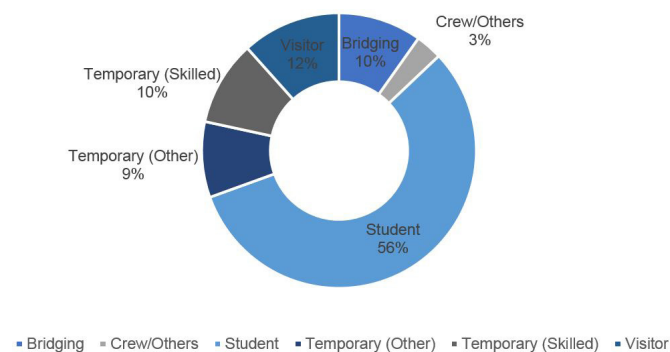
The number of Mexican migrants in Australia on temporary visas has increased in the last five years from 1,799 in 2014 to 3,419 in 2019. The main types of temporary visas are bridging visas, student visas and temporary resident visas. Of these categories, the change in the numbers of bridging visas has been significant, increasing by more than three times. In 2014, the number of Mexicans on bridging visas was 81—this grew to 336 to 2019.

### Identity and community

The Australian Census captures data from both people born in Mexico who have migrated to Australia (known as the First Generation) and those who have one or both parents born in Mexico (Second Generation). In the 2016 Census, 45.1% of Australia’s Mexican-born population were Australian citizens. As a bilingual population, 96% of First Generation Mexicans speak English well or very well, while 84.4% also speak Spanish at home.

In 2016, the total size of the Second Generation Mexican population in Australia was 2,152 persons.

Figure 5. Types of temporary visas held by Mexicans in Australia, March 2019



The largest group was those aged zero to four years, totalling 766 persons. There were 1,641 Second Generation persons aged under 20, and 353 persons aged from 20 to 39 years.

The Australian Census asks respondents to self-identify their ancestry to provide further detail on their ethnic or cultural identity beyond their place of birth or citizenship. Latin American migrants may identify their ancestry with one or two specific countries, an indigenous identity (such as Mayan), a regional identity (South or Central American) or other types of ancestry (for example European, Asian, African or American). There were 7,412 persons who identified in the 2016 Census as having Mexican ancestry, of whom 3.5% had both parents born in Australia and 16.6% had one parent born in Australia.

Figure 6. Age profile of First and Second Generation Mexicans in Australia, 2016

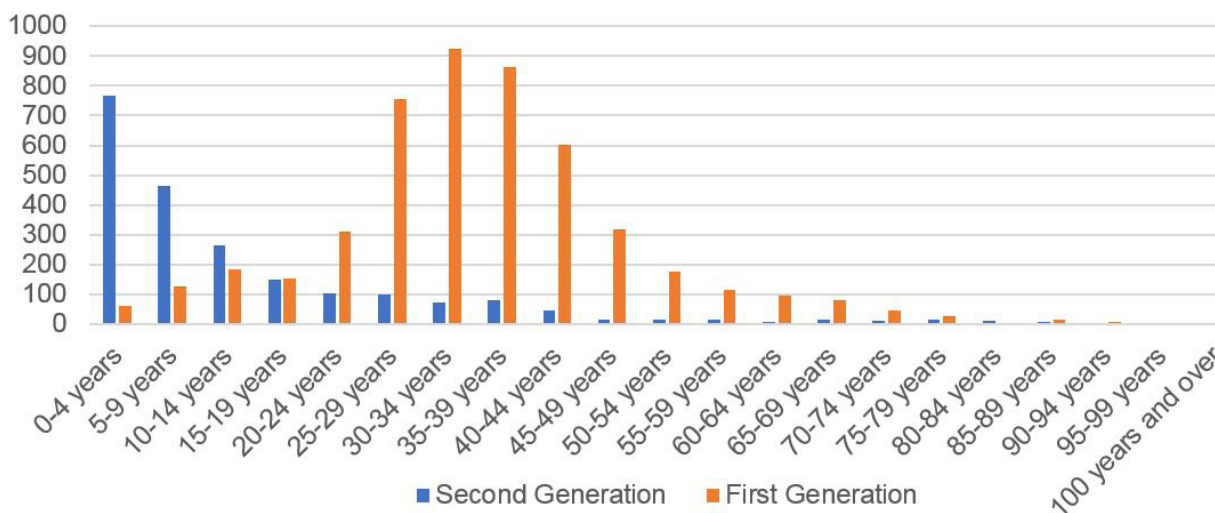
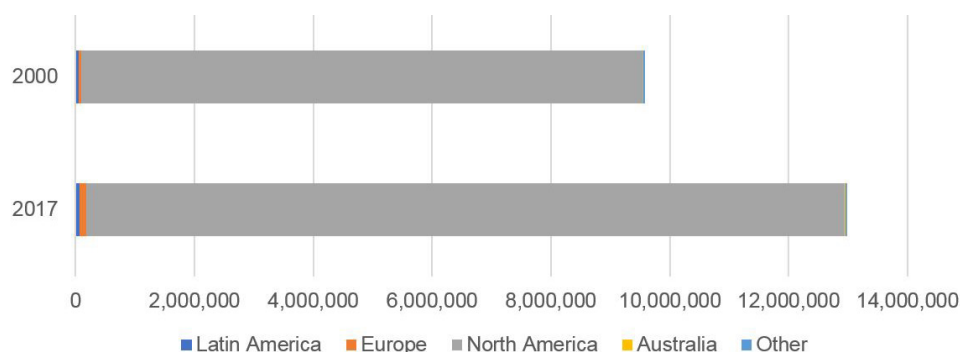


Figure 7. Global distribution of Mexican migrants in 2000 and 2017



## Global connections

Recent migration to Australia from Mexico has been affected by broader changes to the internal economies of Latin America and to their external migration flows, caused by globalisation. The population of Mexico in 2017 was 129.1 million persons. Another 12,964,882 Mexicans are estimated to have migrated overseas. Of this diaspora:

- > 63,821 Mexican-born migrants were resident in Latin America
- > 120,787 Mexican-born migrants were resident in Europe
- > 12,764,099 Mexican-born migrants were resident in North America

The number of Mexican migrants has increased by 35.6% between 2000 and 2017. The geographic distribution of the Mexican diaspora has remained relatively unchanged, with a significant majority of Mexican migrants moving to North America (98.5% in 2017). Europe saw an increase of around 70,000 migrants in 2017 compared to 2000, but this did not significantly change its share of the Mexican diaspora.

According to the World Bank, remittances to Mexico totalled US\$30.6 billion in 2017, with US\$8 million of these funds being sent from Australia.

**Data sources:** Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019) *Migration, Australia 2017–18*; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) *Census*; Department of Home Affairs (2019) *Temporary Visa Holders in Australia Dataset*; Department of Home Affairs (2018) *Historical Migration Statistics*; United Nations (2017) *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision*; World Bank (2018) *Bilateral Remittance Estimates for 2017*.

### This briefing is one in a series: Latin America in Australia

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