

President meets with Ambassador of Mexico

In January, I was privileged to host the First Official visit to Western Australia by Her Excellency, Mrs Beatriz Lopez Gargallo, Ambassador of Mexico.

Ambassador Gargallo is a career diplomat who joined the Ministry of Foreign affairs in 1976. In 2008, she was promoted to the rank of Ambassador. Since May 2005, she has had postings in Arizona, Houston, San Diego, El Paso, Denver (in the United States), and San Pedro Sula, (Honduras).

It was interesting to hear about Ambassador Gargallo's involvement as coordinator of the Voluntary Repatriation Programs of Mexican Migrant Workers from the United States (2005-09). As a result of her hard work, Ambassador Gargallo received an Integrity Award from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for having successfully implemented the program in Nogales, Arizona.

Ambassador Gargallo highlighted a synergy between Australia and Mexico where both countries are middle powers with medium sized economies, strategically close to major markets - Asia in the case of Australia, and the US and Latin America for Mexico.

Mexico is Australia's second largest trading partner in Latin America. Mexico is ranked number 43 as Western Australia's largest trading partner comprising exports valued at \$53.3 million and imports at \$47.2 million in 2009/10.

Both myself and Ambassador Gargallo believe there is substantial potential for growth in the areas of mining, agriculture, education and training, along with an opportunity for Mexico to increase its export of industrial goods to Australia, especially automotive products, telecommunications equipment and computers.

Ambassador Gargallo also met with the Chief Justice of Western Australia, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, had an economic briefing on Western Australia conducted by the Department of State Development, and visited the Deputy Premier, representing the Premier of Western Australia.



Picture: *The President, Hon. Barry House with the Ambassador from Mexico, Her Excellency Mrs Beatriz Lopez Gargallo.*