



ECA welcomes Australia joining New Zealand with announcement of Pacific Alliance Free Trade agreement negotiations

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The Export Council of Australia (ECA) welcomes the announcement of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the Pacific Alliance, announced on Saturday by Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment the Hon Steven Ciobo MP.

“We are pleased that the government is seeking new opportunities for Australian companies in Latin America by enhancing and reinforcing Australia’s market access in Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Chile,” says ECA CEO Lisa McAuley.

This echoes the ECA’s 2017 Trade Policy Recommendations, which called on the government to seek new bilateral FTAs with Mexico and Peru— the two Latin American Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) parties with which Australia does not already have an FTA.

“As New Zealand has announced their negotiations with the Pacific Alliance, and given the opportunities for Australian companies in sectors like agriculture, we cannot afford to be behind the ball in securing our own market access,” Ms McAuley says.

“The ECA is particularly interested in the opportunities for Australian companies in Mexico. A couple of years ago we launched the Mexico: Gateway to the Americas report to highlight opportunity for Australian companies there. As the fourteenth largest economy in the world and home to 120 million people, Mexico is a significant market in its own right, as well as potential gateway to opportunity across the Americas for Australian companies.”

Whilst Australia already has an FTA with Chile, and is negotiating a bilateral FTA with Peru, the entire Pacific Alliance is a significant trade bloc. Collectively, the bloc’s GDP was worth more than USD \$1.8 trillion in 2016, and the four countries account for 38 per cent of Latin America’s population. Pacific Alliance Members imported goods and services worth more than USD \$600 billion in 2016, 57 per cent of Latin America’s total imports.

“The ECA is a strong advocate for Australian trade, and helping to build the capacity and capability of Australia businesses to take on the world. Securing enhancing access to the markets of the Pacific Alliance will be very beneficial to Australian companies.”

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