

30 June 2019 - President's Report

Alliance française de la Sunshine Coast

Tabled at the AGM on 23 November 2019

It gives me great pleasure to present the President's Report for the Financial Year 2018/2019

1. General:

2019 is my first year as President of the AFSC and it marks the twelfth year of the Alliance française de la Sunshine Coast as an organisation within the Alliance française international network.

I am pleased to report that our Alliance continued its steady membership growth and maintained a range of cultural activities. At the end of June 2019, our membership registered 224 financial members, an increase of 17 members from the previous financial year (207). The automatic renewal letter sent to members directly from our website one month prior to renewing their memberships is proving a good tool.

This financial year has been another very busy year, with committee members and members engaging in a vast range of activities.

1.1 2019 Brisbane French Association Round Table, April 8 2019.

The annual French Association Round Table met in Brisbane, chaired by the Honorary Consul for France in Queensland, Lady Jane Edwards. The Round Table brings together all French groups from Brisbane, the Gold Coast, and the Sunshine Coast. I, as the newly elected President of the AFSC, attended this Round Table and provided a brief summary of our association, its mission and its calendar for 2019.

Some interesting facts were mentioned such as the French Registered Population in Queensland reaching 15% of the national French registered population in Australia (4235 French people registered with the Consulate in Queensland, compared to 5558 in Victoria for example).

One mission given by the Consul was to reach out as much as possible to the French who are not registered with the consulate and provide help to the elderlies who might not know about the Consulate in Brisbane. French Assist an association present at the round table has shared their concern finding older French who might be in a lonely position and do not know that an important network is available. We as an Alliance française are an important actor in helping Francophones in our area and will help the consulate and French Assist in their mission.

2. Our Committee of Volunteers:

Our organisation is very fortunate to have a wonderful committee, comprised of dedicated, hardworking members.

In total, there are 5 official members, including myself as President, Valerie Lewis as Vice-President, Barbara Doherty as Secretary, Nicky Hallahan as Treasurer and Gabrielle Deschamps as a general committee member. We also have 6 ex-officio members - our teachers: Cécile Couper, Émilie Matyja, Verity Newett and Eva Simonet.

To our VP, Valerie, I express my sincere thanks for all that she has done on behalf of our AF, particularly organising and been present at our café-conversations in Twin Waters. She is the one that will make sure that you register and grab your name. Thank you for being so organised and for giving your Saturday mornings to be with us. My deepest thanks also to our lovely Secretary Barbara, always willing to lend a hand with events, and ensuring regular record keeping of committee minutes and agendas. Your “Bonne humeur” is a real treasure, thank you for always been up-beat and meet us at the café conversation in Meridan plains. Un grand merci to our ever-smiling Treasurer Nicky for overseeing the finances this year and going through the financial year-end report with Cécile. Thank you also to Gabrielle for attending some of our meetings and for providing useful feed-back.

Finally, to our hard working and dedicated teachers: Cecile (Skype), Emilie (Mountain Creek), Eva (Mountain Creek & Maroochydore) and Verity (Noosa & Mountain Creek). They deliver quality teaching in respect of the quality control guidelines of the Alliance française charter (la démarche-qualité). The Alliance would not exist without your work and your expertise. You are the soul of the Alliance française de la Sunshine Coast and we could never have had such a good year without you.

I would like to give a special thank you to Cecile. You are amazing and you give your heart and soul to the Alliance. I usually say that I am the face of the Alliance, but you are the heart and brain. Thank you for all your work and your help. From taking the time to go to meetings, travel to Canberra or Brisbane, hours on skype for further meeting, all the emails you simplified, and questions answered at the last minute and many more things... the Alliance could not exist without your hard-work and dedication to give the best. Thank you for being a true Fairy and being you.

3. Teaching and Our Teachers

3.1 Student Enrolments

Student enrolments in formal classes both at Noosa and Mountain Creek this past financial year have performed quite well, with total of 238 enrolments (term 3 & 4 of 2018 and Term 1 & 2 of 2019). This is consistent with the previous financial year to 2018 (there were 244 enrolments in 2018). Students tend to return to their classes from one term to the other, which is a credit to our wonderful teachers Eva, Emilie and Verity. Beginners classes, popular at the beginning of the year (New Year Resolutions) tend to dwindle down through the year but this is a natural trend.

A huge thank you to Verity and Cécile for supervising enrolments and responding to student queries and merci à Verity for organising the hire of the classrooms and taking over the task of course coordinator.

3.2 Our SKYPE Teaching Program

The Skype program is going strong with 6 Adults and 16 children enrolled throughout the year. The Zoom platform was also successfully used as an alternative to Skype. Thank you to Cecile for her work to promote and give the classes.

3.3 Conversation Workshops

The **Maroochydore** Active Conversation Workshops take place in Maroochydore Support Library and are professionally led by Eva. The attendance varies from one term to the other with an average of 4 students per class per level (there are 2 levels).

This year saw the launch of our **Noosa** Conversation Workshops, which take place at the Noosa Parks Association Environment Centre. These workshops are hosted by Verity, here again offering 2 levels of French. These workshops, thanks Verity's dedication, are proving more and more popular.

Last year, nearly 60 students participated in the Conversation Workshops. The original pay-as-you-go approach has continued but more recently, students have been encouraged to register their attendance online, with students paying \$25 for a 90-minute session. Very many thanks are extended to Eva and Verity for the effort they put into preparing and presenting these workshops and for the wonderful rapport they build with our students.

4 – Events & Cultural Activities (From July 2018 to June 2019)

As part of our AF Mission Statement, we have a responsibility to encourage French-Australian cultural exchange and friendship in our local community and we do this through our café-conversations and our events on the Coast.

4.1 Café Conversations

Our Café-Conversations have been very popular this year once again. They take place at the Loose Goose in Twin Waters (1st Saturday of the month) and at la Maison du Pâtissier in Meridan Plains (3rd Saturday of the month). This year saw an average of 30 participants per café-conversations where participants have enjoyed the various themes and activities offered at these events organised by our volunteers on the Committee.

4.2 The 2018 Bastille Day Lunch took place at the Buderim Tavern Saturday 14th of July. Guests enjoyed a fabulous 2 course French menu (alternate drop main course), dessert and a glass of wine upon arrival; vegetarian and vegan options were also available. **This was** followed by a game of Pétanque on the Buderim Green. There were 31 participants.

Interesting presentations were given by two French speakers Bertrand and Laurent. A small profit was raised.

4.3 **The 2018 MLTAQ** (Modern Language Teachers' Association of Queensland) held its annual LOTE (Languages other than English) **Speaking Competition** at the Sunshine Coast University on Sunday, 26 August. Cecile coached and entered 8 students under the AFSC banner and 6 received diplomas, which is an excellent outcome. We donated pens and rulers for the French students' MLTAQ bags. We also fielded judges from amongst our teachers and members. Special thanks are due to all for a great team effort.

4.4 **The 2018 Beaujolais Nouveau Luncheon Celebration** was held on Saturday 24 November at The Bison Bar in Nambour. There were 47 participants who enjoyed the 2018 Beaujolais Cru and the entertainment.

4.5 **The Galette des Rois Event** took place at la Maison du Pâtissier on the 16th of February. We had an overwhelming response with nearly 60 guests attending. However, we encountered some logistic issues with the booking time and people turning up without having booked but Françoise from la Maison du Pâtissier was most helpful in sorting things out.

4.4 **The 2019 Sunshine Coast French Film Festival** took place from the 3rd to the 7th of May in 3 cinemas: Noosa, Nambour and Caloundra. It marked the 12th edition of our French Film Festival on the Sunshine Coast. We were very fortunate to have the support of fantastic sponsors such as Noosa Film Society (Diamond Sponsor), France @ Leisure, A Cullen & Sons, Living Inspired, Complete Automotive Car Care, Multihull Solutions and CanalSat (all Silver Sponsors). Grants secured from Noosa Council and Sunshine Coast Council allowed for a smooth organisation of this event.

The festival was launched in Noosa as it had been the previous 3 years with the comedy "The trouble with her" followed by 2 movies in Noosa on the Saturday: "Non-Fiction" and "Girl", both very engaging movies. The Festival then moved to Nambour on the Sunday where we screened 3 movies: a movie for children in the morning (Astérix) followed by the very moving "The Ideal Palace" in the afternoon and "Who you think I am" in the evening. The Wine and Tapas interlude between the last 2 movies at the Bison Bar was enjoyed by all. The Festival was planned to end in Caloundra on the 7th of May but due to a technical problem at the cinema, was rescheduled to the 22nd of May with the hilarious comedy "Sink or Swim" which was enjoyed by all. This event allowed us to raise just under \$3,000.

5. Our Website and Social Media:

The new website hosted by Synergy8 Website reflects a standardised approach for several AFs including Cairns, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney etc. The visuals are very attractive, and our website continues to act as our portal to the community and the world, keeping everyone well informed of our events and classes. It is a great tool enabling us to organise/manage classes, workshops, events, send email campaigns and newsletters.

Our Facebook page continues to play a prominent role in the communication of our organisation. Many of our members interact on our page.

6. Conclusion:

To conclude, what a year!!! Many successful events, classes and incredible moments shared with all. I would like to thank our teachers and their hard work. Cecile for everything you do. The members of the committee, who dedicated their time, patience and followed my strange way of conducting a meeting.

But most importantly, a huge thank to all of you for helping us, coming to our events, participating in many ways! You are all incredible and thank you for everything. The Alliance française de la Sunshine Coast could, of course, not be without you. Thank you so much, I was a proud President in Canberra because I knew that we have a wonderful team and wonderful members that are with us to learn, share our culture and speak our beautiful language.

Merci infiniment,
Clementine

(Fière) Présidente de l'Alliance française de la Sunshine Coast.