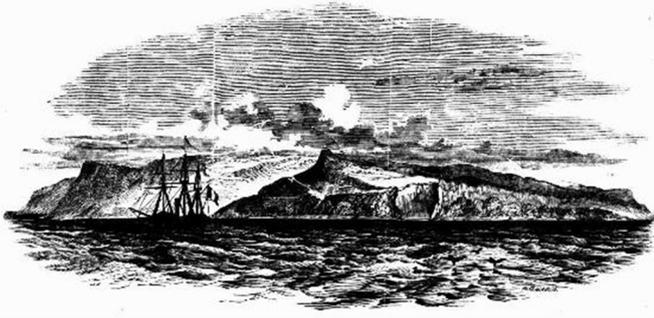


# French & Australian Dialogues

*You are invited to the French & Australian Dialogue to be presented by the Institute for the Study of French Australian Relations in association with the Alliance Française de Sydney*

Date: Thurs. November 2, 6.30pm - 8.30pm Venue: 257 Clarence St, Sydney

## ***Fraught or Friendly Relations: New Perspectives on Australia and New Caledonia***



THE ISLAND OF NEW CALEDONIA

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries New Caledonia loomed large in Australian preoccupations. There was a web of interdependent commercial and personal ties which underpinned a complex relationship that oscillated between rivalry, suspicion and the recognition of interests held in common by European settlers who were each other's nearest neighbours in far-flung outposts of European empire. This roundtable presents recent research on this close if sometimes

fraught relationship, focussing on some larger-than-life personalities.

Jill Donohoo will talk about **Australian Reactions to the French Penal Colony in New Caledonia**. New South Wales had recently rid itself of its 'bad reputation consequent on being a penal colony' after transportation had been stopped. What 'dangers' were posed by escaped or pardoned prisoners arriving on Australian shores from New Caledonia? How did attitudes towards the penal colony help to shape Australia's fledgling foreign policy, its evolving relationship with Britain and, indeed, the push towards Federation?

Elizabeth Rechniewski will examine the reports of the ***Sydney Morning Herald's* Special Correspondent to New Caledonia**, who was sent to New Caledonia in June 1878 when revolts against French rule broke out. Julian Thomas, whose pen name was 'The Vagabond', wrote reports characterised by vivid detail and by an occasionally mocking tone adopted towards the 'war'. Thomas's australo-centric perspective on the war is seen in the context of Franco-British rivalry in the Pacific and the persistent claims by Australians that New Caledonia was a 'failed colony' which should be returned to their governance.

Briony Neilson will explore the **Life and Writing of the French Convict-poet Julien de Sanary** who was transported for life to New Caledonia in 1881; he was eventually given permission to leave the colony and settle in Australia in the 1920s, on the petition of an Australian woman. A new chapter of his life opened—a decade of tranquility during which he dedicated himself to writing poetry, as he had done while incarcerated in New Caledonia. After his death, many of his poems were collected and published by the woman who had rescued him from the French colony. What can we learn from the convict-poet's writing and his relationship with this Australian woman about the dynamics of French and British settler colonialism?

The talks will be followed by wine and cheese. Bookings please at: <http://www.afsydney.com.au/cultural-events/isfar/>

