

## ISFAR @ 35

### Australia and France in a Regional and Global Context: Past Engagements and Future Research Directions

#### 35th Anniversary Symposium of the Institute for the Study of French- Australian Relations (ISFAR) in Honour of Professor Colin Nettelbeck

8-9 April 2021, online

## ABSTRACTS

### Keynote Presentation

#### *From the French East Indies Company to the French in the 'Indo-Pacific'*

**Robert Aldrich, Professor of European History, The University of Sydney**

A French concept of the Indo-Pacific, in an embryonic form, dates to the seventeenth century. French missionaries arrived in Vietnam in 1624 and a more concerted French move into the 'Far East'—in this sense, the Indian Ocean, Asia and the Pacific—can be traced to 1664, the establishment of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, and soon the acquisition of colonies in the Mascarene Islands and India. By 1680, French traders and diplomats had pushed further eastwards to Siam, which exchanged embassies with Louis XIV. Finding commercial, political and missionary opportunities, and contesting the power of Britain and the Netherlands, stimulated French action. France's fortunes in the Indian Ocean waxed and waned during the 1600s and 1700s, though by the mid-1700s, France was also reconnoitring the South Pacific. A second chapter in France's history in the Indo-Pacific began in the mid-1800s with the conquest of colonies in Oceania and Southeast Asia, where France had until then failed to establish a beachhead. The objectives of the 'new' colonialism now guided the French. Yet policy-makers retained a notion of connectedness between France's colonies in the Indian Ocean, East Asia and the South Pacific, as seen by migration from La Réunion to New Caledonia and from the French *comptoirs* in India to Vietnam, the hope for *entr'aide coloniale* of funding and labour between Indochina and the South Pacific territories, and the extension of French interests from Indochina to China. Though decolonisation brought an end to French rule in Asia, France retains a sovereign presence in the Indian Ocean (through La Réunion and Mayotte) and its three territories of the South Pacific (as well as Clipperton), and also claims a vast maritime zone. In the 1980s, there was much talk about a Pacific proclaimed the 'new centre of the world', defined capaciously to reach from Asia and Australasia to the Americas (though that idea had originated a century earlier). More recently, an idea of the 'Indo-Pacific' has emerged in France and elsewhere. These more recent visions form new chapters in the history of France in the 'East'. But in important ways they hark back to much older notions, from the colonial age, about developing broad patterns of international manoeuvre, linking together outposts, challenging the hegemonic power of old and new rival powers, using sovereign island territories as stepping-stones to gain traction in larger continental polities, and maintaining a globalised big-power status. This paper seeks to identify how French objectives of the past have evolved, but also foreshadow contemporary perspectives.

*Robert Aldrich is Professor of European History at the University of Sydney and the author of a two-volume study of France in the Pacific, as well as studies of the French overseas territories and various other aspects of colonial history, including Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories. His latest publication, with John Connell, is The Ends of Empire: The Last Colonies Revisited (London, 2020). He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and has been decorated with the Ordre des Palmes Académiques for 'services to French culture'.*

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## *A French Australia: What Were the Chances?*

**Matthew Allanby**

The Australian coastline is littered with French names: La Perouse in Sydney, D'Entrecasteaux Channel in Tasmania, Bougainville Reef in Queensland. Every Australian state indicates French influence in the European discovery of Terra Australis. Conquest, conversion or curiosity: why were the French so keen to explore Australia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? How did the upheaval of events in the metropole impact the French exploration of Australia? Could Australia have been claimed by the French? There was nothing inevitable about colonisation by the British. This paper shows how Australia nearly became part of the French empire.

**Bio:** Matthew Allanby teaches History and French at Geelong Grammar School. He studied the French exploration of Australia while completing his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Australian National University and Monash University. He grew up in Tasmania, surrounded by places with French names. Ever since, he has been fascinated by the French motivations for exploration of Australia's coastline.

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## *French-Australian Relations in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean*

**Alessandro Antonello**

Australia and France have a history of both connection and conflict in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. France and Australia both claim territory over significant wedges of the Antarctic continent, both currently operate scientific programs in the region, and both have sub-Antarctic island possessions with significant ocean territories surrounding them. As Antarctic and sub-Antarctic neighbours, how has the French-Australian relationship there affected larger geopolitics and knowledge cultures in the region? This paper will investigate the changing contours and intensities of French-Australian relations in the Antarctic. It will query why this relationship has had moments of intensity, rather than being a relationship characterised by consistent high-level attention and collaboration. Five moments punctuate this history: the diplomatic tensions arising from the French proclamation of Terre Adélie in 1924; closer scientific relations in the late 1940s and early 1950s related to nation-building expansion in Antarctica; French intransigence during treaty negotiations over marine living resources in the late 1970s; French-Australian cooperation to ban mining in the late 1980s; and recent French-Australian efforts to institute marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean. While not as geopolitically 'hot' as the Indo-Pacific, the Southern Ocean nevertheless is enfolded within larger contemporary geopolitical developments. As such, French-Australian relations in the South into the future will be significant in geopolitical and environmental terms.

**Bio:** Alessandro Antonello is a senior research fellow in history at Flinders University, Adelaide. He is the author of *The Greening of Antarctica: Assembling an International Environment* (Oxford University Press, 2019) and numerous other articles and book chapters on the environmental and international history of the Antarctic and other global environmental themes. He currently holds an Australian Research Council DECRA Fellowship for a project on the international environmental history of the world ocean since 1945.

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## *Australian Perceptions of New Caledonia During the Convict Era*

**Alexis Bergantz**

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the French penal colony in New Caledonia and the unwanted migration of its convicts to Australia weighed heavily on colonial minds. These convicts disrupted the forgetting of Australia's 'convict stain', heightened sensitivity to Australia's geopolitical vulnerability in the Pacific, and helped define Australia's relationship to a British empire aloof to its needs.

This paper considers a small corpus of invasion novels and serialised stories published in Australia in the late nineteenth century that portrayed French convicts from New Caledonia as villains. These stories intersected with long-established British stereotypes about the French and more recent theories of biological determinism to create a hierarchy of villainy at the juncture of criminality and race. Read as prescriptive texts, these stories legitimised Australian jingoism and imperialism in the region by positing the take-over of New Caledonia from France as a remedy to the psychic trauma of Australia's colonial foundations.

**Bio:** Alexis Bergantz is a Lecturer in Global & Language Studies at RMIT University. He completed his PhD at the Australian National University in 2016 for which he was awarded the John Molony Prize in History and the ANU Crawford Prize for academic excellence. His research focuses on Franco-Australian history, the French Pacific and New Caledonia. Alexis co-Chairs the Research Committee of ISFAR, and his first book, *French Connection*, is forthcoming with NewSouth Publishing in 2021.

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## *'New' Gender Wars: The Feminization and Neutralization of the French Language*

**Chantal Crozet**

Unlike in Australia, any attempt at changing the language in France is met with uproars across social-cultural and political/activist divides. Not surprisingly, formal and informal proposals on how far French should change to be more inclusive of the feminine, as well as of new neutral gender forms, are polarizing the country between cultural conservatives and progressives. They are fuelling fierce but nuanced public debates across countries in the francophone world. Based on a critical review of the current literature, on institutional as well as public responses as represented in the media, this paper explores those debates from both a linguistic and feminist perspective, highlighting and questioning the complexity involved in the feminization and neutralization of the French language compared with English. Are there more efficient ways of achieving more gender inclusivity and equality? Are the new gender wars in France a marker of the unique power dynamics the French entertain with their language?

**Bio:** Chantal Crozet is an applied linguist, senior lecturer in French Studies and Intercultural Communication in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, at RMIT University in Australia. Her research interests include Language & Culture Education, Intercultural Communication, French Language & Gender, and Religion & Secularism in Contemporary France.

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## *Travel Writing by Francophone Female Writers in Australia*

**Natalie Edwards**

It is all the more ironic amid the current fluctuations in international travel that travel writing has become so popular. In the French context, Charles Forsdick pinpoints the late 1980s as the beginning of the rise in its popularity among both readers and critics. Forsdick points to twenty-nine series devoted to *le travel-writing* by 1992 and highlights two strands within French publishing practices in this genre: the dissemination of new work by contemporary authors and the publication of reeditions of earlier works. Observing a resonance between the travel writing of the 1890s and 1990s, Forsdick suggests a *fin de siècle* aesthetic. This aesthetic is predicated upon an uncertain present, a sense of ill-ease, a questioning of home and identity, and an exclusion of the elsewhere. Forsdick argues that such instability provokes, for some, a desire for escape and, for others, a fear of the foreign, and that renewed understandings of exoticism and cultural diversity are common tropes in this writing.

In this presentation, I examine these tropes in the work of Francophone female travel writers from the 1980s to the late 2010s. Jacqueline Dutton noted in 2003, ‘a notable increase in the number of French texts written on Australia in recent years’ (193). This increase has since become a boom. While Dutton was referring to works such as Michèle Decoust’s *L’inversion des saisons* and Patricia Gotlib’s *Australiades*, newer works range from consciously literary texts, such as Catherine Rey’s *Une femme en voyage*, to works about exotic ‘country’ Australia in Emmanuelle Ferrieux’s *Tour de chant: Voyage en Australie* to journalistic texts such as Sophie Libion’s *Une année en Australie* to adventure travel writing in Sarah Marquis’s *Instincts*. This presentation compares the way in which these texts, about solo female journeys through urban and rural Australia during a period of heightened interest in travel writing, represent the Australian exoticism.

**Bio:** Natalie Edwards is Professor of French at the University of Adelaide. She specialises in contemporary literature in French, especially transnational and multilingual writing. Her most recent book is *Multilingual Life Writing by French and Francophone Women Writers: Translingual Selves* (Routledge 2020). She holds an ARC DP with Chris Hogarth entitled *Transnational Selves: French Narratives of Migration to Australia*.

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## *The Visits of French Soldiers from the South Pacific to Australia during the First World War*

**Pauline Georgelin**

During the First World War, French soldiers from France’s South Pacific colonies made many visits to Australia. They transited in the main Australian ports during their voyages from New Caledonia to the front, and on their return journey as injured soldiers or when granted leave. French speaking Australians took an active role in welcoming and entertaining the visitors, and acted as intermediaries and interpreters. In this paper I will explore how the visits of the French South Pacific soldiers provided a context in which ideas about French identity were articulated in Australia. Positive images of France and Frenchness were an important part of pro-war rhetoric: the French were commonly described as noble, courageous and stoic, as well as artistic, while France was the birthplace of enlightened intellectualism and of modern democracy. However, within an Australian society characterised by the White Australia policy, the French colonial soldiers presented an image of racial diversity which challenged stereotypes. Australians either reconciled or reframed their views to accommodate this

diversity. The Australians' reception of the French South Pacific soldiers reveals the complexity and contradictions of the relationship.

**Bio:** Pauline Georgelin has recently completed her PhD at the University of Melbourne and is enrolled in a cotutelle (jointly awarded PhD program) with Université Paris Nanterre. Her research focuses on French-Australian relations during the First World War, particularly the role of French Australians in shaping perceptions and representations of French identity in Australia in the context of the war. She has published articles on French-Australian soldiers, and co-authored an article with Colin Nettelbeck about French World War I fundraising: Melbourne's 'Busy Bees' and their links to French soldiers. Pauline is also the secretary of ISFAR.

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### *The Cross Cultural Eye. The Photography of Allan Hughan - New Caledonia 1871-1883*

#### **Angela Giovanangeli**

The close relationship that exists between Australia and New Caledonia is historically defined by narratives of fear and invasion. From the moment France annexed New Caledonia in 1853, the Australian colonies were alert to the fear that the French would invade the region and use the South Pacific islands as a penal colony. Observers in the Australian colonies regularly characterised French colonisation as inhumane, often using the penal colony in New Caledonia as evidence. Numerous Australian media articles and political commentators fuelled this tension between the two colonies (Rechniewski 2015). What is less well known is how visual imagery created meta-narratives parallel to the dominant discourse of fear and invasion. This paper draws on a case study of the Anglo-Australian photographer Allan Hughan, who lived in New Caledonia from 1871 to 1883, to explore the meta-narratives of his visual images and how these images may offer alternative discourses to those in the media of the time.

**Bio:** Angela Giovanangeli is a senior lecturer in the School of International Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney where she teaches courses in French Studies. Her research interests include intercultural education and cultural practices.

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### *Moral Nationalism and Neo-Colonialism: Revisiting Australian Outrage at French Nuclear Testing in the Pacific in the Context of Contemporary Orders of Threat*

#### **Damian Grenfell**

This paper begins by examining the Australian response to French Nuclear Testing in the Pacific in the mid 1990s. While the resumed testing typified the abhorrent nature of European colonialism, the focus is the indignation in Australia which will be characterised here as a kind of 'moral nationalism'. An outrage fraught with tension, both the form and temper of the Australian response was fuelled by an unsettled sense of national identity. This paper then rethinks this expression of moral nationalism in the context of two contemporary forms of threat. Firstly, the increasing assertion of the Chinese state into the Pacific poses a vastly different political order to respond to than that of a continuing French colonial presence. Secondly, the impact of non-militarised threats in the form of climate change and health pandemics both create the possibility for Australia to be seen as exacting a new form of ecological destruction (akin to French Nuclear testing), a simultaneously diminished capacity to materially intervene, and Pacific Island states more immune to antipodean influence. Interwoven, these twin threats may neuter the possibility for the kinds of domestically focused assertions of moral nationalism as seen in the 1990s in response to nuclear testing in the Pacific.

**Bio:** Damian Grenfell is an Associate Professor in the Global Studies Discipline at RMIT University. Over his career he has worked as a researcher and lecturer in different capacities, is the incoming Program Manager for the Masters of International Development Program and previously was Director of the Centre for Global Research. His research concentrates on conflict and its consequences, with focus areas including gender (particularly gender based violence), justice and reconciliation, development and humanitarianism, as well as security. Timor-Leste has been a particular focus for his research and he has managed the Timor-Leste Research Program (Timor-research.org) since 2003.

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***Wenz Reinvented: The Making and Remaking of a French-Australian Transnational Writer***

**Christopher Hogarth**

This paper analyses the work of Paul Wenz (1869-1939). Born in Reims, France, Wenz moved to Australia in the 1890s, settling in New South Wales and establishing himself as a grazier. Beginning in 1900, he published several short stories and novels set in Australia. He wrote nearly all of his texts in the French language. Although he was part of literary circles in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s, his writing was little known there and his few works in English garnered little attention. Interestingly, however, his writing has recently found a new audience. First in the mid-1980s to 1990s, then in the 2000s and 2010s, Wenz's work has been recouped: retranslated, republished and redisseminated – both for a French audience (by Jean-Paul Delamotte) and especially for a contemporary Australian audience (often by ISFAR and The French-Australian Review stalwarts). In this presentation, I examine the different ways in which Wenz's work has been repackaged, focusing on the paratextual elements in each stage: from Wenz's initial writing in the early twentieth-century, to its reedition in the mid-1980s and 1990s, through to its retranslation in the early twenty-first century. I chart the stages of the reception of Wenz's work and its successive translations in order to understand the changing profile of Australian literary studies and of French-Australian cultural connections. I hint that the "reinvention" of Wenz is a quite unique phenomenon but can be linked to growth in interest in multicultural literature, translation studies and, paradoxically, life writing.

**Bio:** Christopher Hogarth is Senior Lecturer of Comparative Literature and French at the University of South Australia. His research has focused on Francophone African intellectuals, the literature of African migrants and its reception in France and Italy, and the depiction of migration in Sub-Saharan Francophone literature. He has edited 8 volumes on these areas. He has published numerous articles that have appeared in journals such as *French Cultural Studies*, *The Australian Journal of French Studies*, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, *Australian Literary Studies* and *A/b: Autobiography Studies*. Along with Professor Natalie Edwards, he was awarded an Australian Research Council-funded Discovery Project grant in 2019 to work on a history of Francophone life writing in and about Australia.

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***Australia's 1940 Nickel Coup: Securing the Resources of New Caledonia***

**Alexander Lee**

During the Second World War Australia risked conflict with Vichy France to secure New Caledonia's nickel and thus preserve the Allies' monopoly control of that strategic metal. Nickel was a key wartime resource that the Axis powers had no easy way to produce or purchase at scale. After the fall of France, the island of New Caledonia in the South Pacific was theoretically available to Japanese economic interests. Such an outcome was unacceptable for the Allies in general and Australia in particular. Australia attempted to use economic coercion to secure the territory for the Allies, which failed. Examining how and why this happened reveals the context for later intervention.

**Bio:** Alexander Lee is a PhD candidate studying history at the Australian National University. He is based in the Crawford School of Public Policy's National Security College. The focus of his thesis is Yugoslavian diaspora nationalism in Australia, specifically, the relationship between the Liberal-Country party Australian government and violent Croatian nationalists from 1952-1972. He has also researched a variety of additional topics ranging from Australia's home defence during the Second World War to Australian relations with Southern Africa and Portugal during the Cold War. He is currently working on a number of projects concerning Australia's relationship with France in the Antarctic in the early twentieth century and Australia's interaction with the French Pacific.

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*Decolonising the Gaze: Using the Semiotic Landscape as an Opportunity for Learning in New Caledonia*

**Kerry Mullan and Diane de Saint Léger**

Despite being one of our closest neighbours in the South Pacific, New Caledonia remains relatively unknown in Australia. The parallels between the two countries, however, make it an especially interesting destination for students. Since 2015, the researchers have led biennial intensive study tours to New Caledonia for groups of undergraduate students of French enrolled in our respective universities and have been exploring ways to enhance learning in this rich, complex and often culturally unfamiliar environment.

We see fostering critical awareness as a central dimension of language learning and of the development of the skills required to prepare learners for the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of contemporary societies. Language learning is construed as an exercise in meaning making (Kramsch & Hua 2016), i.e. an activity which involves the deciphering of people and place, the noticing of what they do, say, how they live, and why and where self-reflexion is central. New Caledonia offers numerous opportunities for critical reflection on self and other, on la Francophonie, on decolonisation and on more global phenomena.

Using the framework of geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon 2003), we demonstrate how the semiotic landscape can be used as a pedagogical tool to foster *noticing* in students; that is, to make learners more aware of the way in which the urban landscape interacts with people and place, and shapes their ways of doing and being. We argue that this approach creates opportunities for students to critically reflect on their role as participant-observers, and to enhance their understanding of the historical and socio-political context of this complex neighbouring Pacific territory.

Kramsch, C. and Z. Hua. 2016. Language, Culture and Language Teaching. In G. Hall (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp.38-50). London: Routledge.

Scollon, Ron and Scollon, Suzanne Wong. 2003. *Discourse in Place: Language in the material world*. London/NY: Routledge.

**Bio:** Diane de Saint Léger is Lecturer in French Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her research interests focus on the perception of self and others in the language classroom as well as on the circulation of discourse about self and others in public spaces. Her research is informed by discourse analysis techniques as well as corpus linguistics.

Kerry Mullan is Convenor of Languages at RMIT University. She teaches French language and culture, and sociolinguistics. Her main research interests are cross-cultural communication and differing interactional styles, particularly those of French and Australian English speakers. She also researches in the areas of intercultural pragmatics, discourse analysis, language teaching and conversational humour.

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## *Convict Affinities: History and Heritage of the Bagne in New Caledonia*

### **Briony Neilson**

2020 was to be a big year for advocates of the history of the New Caledonian *bagne*, with the creation of the new Musée du Bagne in Nouville. Then the global pandemic intervened, slowing progress on essential building works and compromising the museum's capacity (in the short-term, at least) to reach international visitors. Interest in the history and heritage of the *bagne* in New Caledonia has intensified in recent decades, though it is still largely restricted to inhabitants of the archipelago itself, and even more narrowly yet to the administrative area of Province Sud. Yet recognition and valorisation of this aspect of New Caledonia's history has the potential to bind the territory more closely to the country in whose image it was founded by the French in 1853: Australia. This paper will trace the history of engagement in the history of the *bagne* in New Caledonia and consider the stakes for New Caledonian-Australian relations in acknowledging and highlighting a shared history.

**Bio:** Briony Neilson is a specialist in the history of nineteenth-century criminal justice in France and in the history of the New Caledonian *bagne*. She is Honorary Associate in the Department of History at the University of Sydney and her work has appeared in various journals, including the *International Review of Social History* and *Crime, History & Societies*. She has lectured in courses in History and Criminology at the University of Sydney, UNSW and ACU. She has been an invited researcher at the CNRS's Centre pour les humanités numériques et l'histoire de la justice (Clamor) in Paris and is Editor of *French History & Civilization*, journal of the George Rudé Society.

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## *Educational Trip to Australia, Mirrored History*

### **Fanny Pascual**

As part of a course on heritage institutions, 3rd year undergraduate students analyze the museums of a city in the Pacific area since 2012. The program takes place in two stages and includes three objectives. First, a period of research on the organization and history of the selected museums. Then a week of immersion where the student becomes a guide for the site visited. The students have three levels of apprehension of museums:

- the organizational chart and networks that underpin the mission of museums,
- an analysis of the discourse regarding historical research,
- experience in mediation and didactic.

In this way, the Caledonian students (mostly new electors) put in perspective their own history and its re-appropriations (educational programs and cultural offers). The trip is meant to be initiatory and help in constructing their identity in the context of self-determination that New Caledonia has been facing since 1988 (The preamble to the 1998 Noumea Accord is a historical preliminary accepted by all stakeholders in the process). The method and the results will be presented here regarding two trips organized in 2015 in Sydney and 2016 in Melbourne.

**Bio:** Senior Lecturer in contemporary history at the University of New Caledonia since 2011, Fanny Pascual served as Head of International Affairs after having been Vice-director of the Department of Literature, Languages and Social Sciences. She works on the *museo-history* in the Pacific (a new field of study comparing the historical discourse of a museum with the history of this institution). Attempting

to compare the perspective the museum places on themes as broad as the convict history in the Australian /New Caledonian museums, as much as the representation of the First World War, the interest then lies in the different appropriations and renditions of the story to the public. She specializes in the Second World War and was the scientific coordinator for the Museum of the Second World War in New Caledonia opened in 2013.

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### *Australian Attitudes Towards the New Caledonian Independence Movement*

#### **Elizabeth Rechniewski**

In a statement responding to the result of the October 2020 referendum on independence for New Caledonia, won by an unexpectedly narrow margin by the Loyalist pro-French movement, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said ‘we recognise the choice made by New Caledonians to remain a part of France’, and declared that ‘Australia values its close relationship with France as a likeminded partner in the Indo-Pacific region. We welcome France’s ongoing commitment to the Pacific, and its significant contribution to regional security and prosperity.’ Australia’s official policy thus arrived at probably its closest alignment of the past half-century with France’s aim to remain a major presence in the Pacific through its ongoing control of its Pacific territories, notably French Polynesia and New Caledonia. This paper examines the evolution of Australian attitudes towards the independence of New Caledonia, including both official government policy and the role of civil society and political pressure groups.

*Bio:* Elizabeth Rechniewski is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney in the School of Languages and Cultures. She has a long-standing research interest in the political uses of the national past and has published widely on remembrance of twentieth century war in Australia, France and New Caledonia, including on the commemoration of the role of Indigenous soldiers in these countries. She was Chief Investigator on the ARC project ‘Seeking Meaning, Seeking Justice in a Post-Cold War World’, 2013-2016 (Brill 2018). Her current projects include research into the tensions between France and Australia over control of the South Pacific in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century and on the early period of the Anglo-French condominium in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu).

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### *The ‘Wine Project’*

#### **Barbara Santich**

British colonists very quickly saw the potential in Australia for growing grapes and making wine, and naturally looked to France as their model. Early vigneron, such as Gregory Blaxland and William Macarthur, visited France to study vineyards and winemaking practices, and often returned with cuttings of French vines. In the second half of the century French vigneron, such as Camille Réau and Jean-Pierre Trouette, established vineyards in Australia. French viticultural techniques were adapted for Australian conditions and Ludovic Marie translated Jules Guyot’s *Culture de la vigne et vinification* as *Culture of the Vine and Wine Making* (Melbourne, 1865).

These cultural exchanges continued in the twentieth century, with Australian winemakers studying in French institutions and French migrants promoting wine appreciation in Australia. France adopted the Australian invention of the bag-in-the-box; Australians exhibit at Vinexpo in Bordeaux; Australian and French winemakers work vintages in both countries.

In view of their significance, ISFAR has initiated the ‘Wine Project’ to produce entries for the French Australian Dictionary of Biography and a book and website highlighting the significance of these exchanges. This presentation gives an outline of the aims and scope of the project, together with potted biographies of several of the more influential individuals to be included in the book.

**Bio:** Barbara Santich is a food historian and Professor Emeritus at the University of Adelaide, where she initiated the Graduate Program in Gastronomy and its successor, Graduate Program in Food Studies, as well as postgraduate courses in Food Writing. Her research into food history and culture focuses on both France and Australia, her publications including *The Original Mediterranean Cuisine* (Wakefield Press, 1995; new revised edition Equinox, 2018) and *Bold Palates: Australia’s Gastronomic Heritage* (Wakefield Press, 2012), which was shortlisted in the non-fiction category of the 2013 Prime Minister’s Literary Awards. In addition to the French Wine Project, she is currently researching food, cooking and eating in eighteenth-century Provence.

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***‘A thankless job for a thankless people’? French-Australian Relations and the Invasion of Lebanon and Syria, 1941***

**Nicole Townsend**

In 1941, the French mandates of Syria and Lebanon were invaded by the Allies as they sought to wrest control from the Vichy French and secure the region against a possible German attack following the fall of mainland Greece and Crete. 18,000 Australians were involved in the campaign. Unlike any other in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, this operation was particularly significant as it raised questions among the Australian soldiers as they found themselves in an awkward position that saw them fight alongside Free French troops, but against the Vichy French. At the same time, at the diplomatic level, the Australian government continued to maintain relations with both Free and Vichy France until well into 1942.

One of only a few studies that examine French-Australian relations during the Second World War, this paper explores French-Australian relations within the context of this operation, both at a front line and government level. It assesses the experiences of the Australian soldiers involved to reveal how they perceived their Free French comrades and compared them to their Vichy French opponents, and vice versa. Likewise, it analyses the Australian government’s support for the invasion and how Australian involvement affected French-Australian relations.

**Bio:** Nicole Townsend is a PhD candidate at UNSW Canberra, where she is researching Australian involvement in the Mediterranean and the Middle East during the Second World War. Her thesis takes a multi-focal approach, assessing that theatre of war’s significance to Australia from a diplomatic, military, political and economic perspective. Nicole currently works as a researcher on the Official History of Australian Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and she is a Director of the Second World War Research Group, Asia Pacific. She has presented her work widely in both the Australian and international spheres, and her work has been published in various mediums, including a forthcoming chapter due to be published by the University of Kentucky Press in 2021.

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## *Japanese in New Caledonia and Australia during World War Two*

### **Rowena Ward**

The presence of a growing Japanese population in New Caledonia in the early part of the twentieth century led to concerns in Australia about Japan's interests in the French territory and the Pacific region overall. As an example, one of the issues addressed by the Australian Military Mission to New Caledonia in March 1941 was that territory's preparations for the potential internment of Japanese in the event of war. At the time, the New Caledonian authorities did not anticipate the need to send the Japanese to Australia for internment. Yet, as the potential for war became more likely, the New Caledonian authorities requested permission to send 300 Japanese internees to Australia. Once war broke out, it asked permission to send Japanese to Australia on three more occasions. This presentation focuses on some of the preparations which the New Caledonian authorities pursued in the event of war and the negotiations with Australia. In doing so, it shows that, not unlike Australia, the New Caledonian authorities made quite extensive preparations for the internment of the Japanese residents there.

**Bio:** Dr Rowena Ward is a Senior Lecturer in Japanese at the University of Wollongong. She graduated with a PhD in Politics and International Relations from the University of New South Wales. Dr Ward has published on the internment and repatriation of Japanese residents of New Caledonia as well the return of Japanese from the former Manchukuo. Forthcoming publications include the evacuation and repatriation of *British-Indians* from Japan and the ramifications of the lack of a protecting power for the Japanese interned in New Caledonia.