

**ISFAR Research Committee Report**

**ISFAR @ 35 Symposium**

**Australia and France in a Regional and Global  
Context**

**Past Engagements and Future Research  
Directions**

**8 –9 April 2021**

*35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium of the Institute for the Study of  
French Australian Relations (ISFAR)  
in honour of Professor Colin Nettelbeck*

The biennial ISFAR Symposium held in April 2021 was opened by the recently-appointed French Ambassador S. E. Jean-Pierre Thébault, while the Melbourne-based Honorary Consul-General, Mme Myriam Boisbouvier-Wylie closed the proceedings. It thus provided the opportunity both to welcome the new Ambassador and to hear of his priorities and to thank Mme Boisbouvier-Wylie for her strong support of ISFAR's activities.

Although the Symposium had to be held on zoom, it was widely considered to have been a warm, inclusive and collegial event, with animated discussion at the end of each paper. It attracted attendances of between twenty-five and forty-five for the various sessions and brought a dozen new members to ISFAR, including several higher degree students, two of whom presented papers. The papers covered a broad range of political, cultural and historical topics, from the early history of French-Australian relations to the contemporary diplomatic *rapprochement* in the Pacific in the context of an encroaching China; photography and viticulture; student educational tours and language enrichment; and aspects of the history of World Wars One and Two in Europe and the Pacific.

The Symposium afforded the occasion to pay tribute to Professor Colin Nettelbeck, one of the founders of ISFAR, and to announce a Travel Scholarship in his honour that will finance the attendance of Postgraduate and Honours students at future ISFAR conferences. Details of the Scholarship are set out on the next page.

There are plans to publish an edited volume based on papers given at the Symposium on the relationship between Australia and New Caledonia, the focus of the majority of the papers. Such a volume will chime well with the contemporary preoccupation with the Pacific region and the third referendum on independence for New Caledonia likely to take place in 2022. The keynote presentation by Professor Robert Aldrich, ‘From the French East Indies Company to the French in the “Indo-Pacific”’, was widely praised for its clear and comprehensive overview of four centuries of French presence in the Indo-Pacific region—an adapted version of Professor Aldrich’s speech may be read in this issue of *The French-Australian Review*.

The aim of the Research Committee co-chairs is to continue the practice of holding biennial conferences, with the hope that in 2023 we will be able to meet in person. The full program of the Symposium can be viewed at: [www.isfar.org.au/previous-isfar-events/](http://www.isfar.org.au/previous-isfar-events/).

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