



# NEW CALEDONIA AT THE HEART OF OCEANIA





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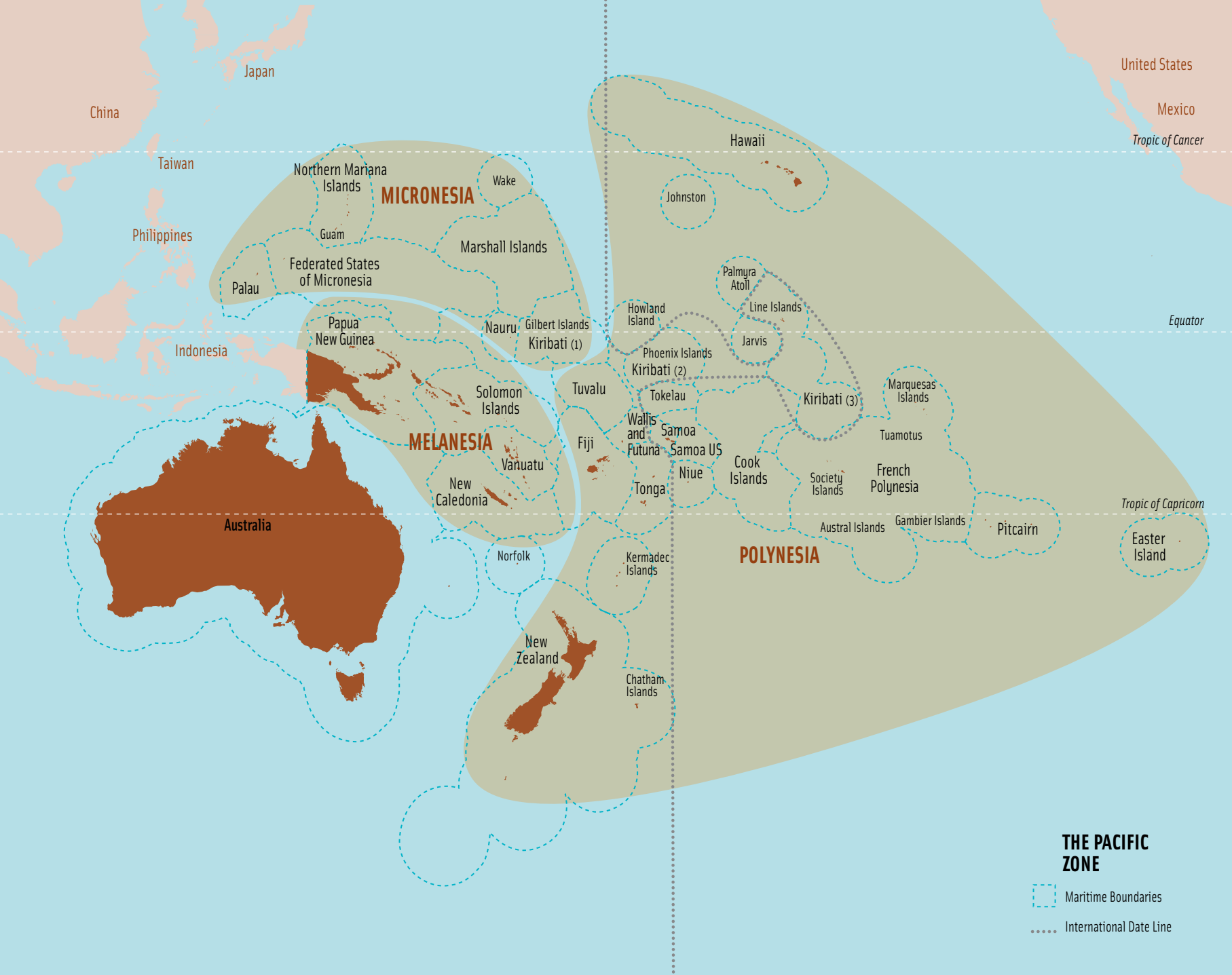
New Caledonia is an archipelago in Oceania, formed from a piece of land that detached from Australia millions of years ago. The ancestors of the Kanak, distant descendants of the great Austronesian migrations, settled here 2 500 years ago, when the Lapita civilisation spread throughout Melanesia. Over the years, New Caledonia formed enduring bonds with its Melanesian and Polynesian neighbours. The archipelago became French in 1853, adopted the status of a TOM (French overseas territory) in 1957 and played its role as a geo-strategic location for France. In an Anglo-Saxon ocean, New Caledonia stands out. Cooperation, training and research agreements, as well as political ties now link the island to the other countries of the zone.

With the signing of the Matignon Agreements (1988), followed by the Noumea Accord, New Caledonia is in the process of acquiring a very powerful autonomy, particularly with respect to regional cooperation: bilateral agreements can now be signed and New Caledonian delegations will be established in neighbouring embassies.

New Caledonia is home to the headquarters of the Pacific Community, the only international organisation uniting the 26 Pacific States. It lies at the heart of a populated ocean where traditional gestures and founding myths go hand in hand with the modernity of a new Oceania.


**FRONT COVER**  
Reefs,  
New Caledonia.  
© Pierre-Alain Pantz

**Joël Viratelle**  
Director of the Maison de la Nouvelle-Calédonie



### THE PACIFIC ZONE

 Maritime Boundaries

 International Date Line

# OCEANIA: A ZONE OF MIGRATIONS

TEXT BY SARAH MOHAMED-GAILLARD

Despite its specificity, the history of New Caledonia – a populated colony, a land of plantations and mines – is emblematic of that of the Oceanic islands since the arrival of Westerners in the Pacific Ocean. Far from being isolated within the immensity of the South Pacific, the archipelago maintains ancient ties with its regional environment.

## AN OCEAN CONTINENT

The Oceanic continent contains more than 10 000 islands and stretches from Hawaii in the north, to Easter Island in the east and to New Zealand and Australia in the southwest. Based on the observations of explorers, 19th century geographers differentiated between three cultural areas: Melanesia (black islands), Polynesia (many islands) and Micronesia (small islands). This ocean-continent is united by a common culture and constitutes a geopolitical space and a zone of regional cooperation. It is inhabited by some 32 million people, of whom approximately seven million live in island states and territories.



Ship represented  
on carved bamboo.

© From "Bambous kanak,  
une passion de Marguerite  
Lobsiger-Delenbach" Ed. Infolio,  
Ethnography Museum of Geneva

Whaling. Drawing  
by John William Huggins,  
circa 1825

© Alexander Turnbull Library

## OPPOSITE

Chief Samuel's pirogues  
from the Isle of Pines  
(New Caledonia).

© Archives de la Nouvelle-Calédonie



## ⊙ EARLY OCEANIC PEOPLES

Austronesian populations originating from Southeast Asia populated the Melanesian islands from 1500 BC. Using the outrigger canoes they had developed, the navigators confronted the high seas and arrived in New Caledonia in around 1100 BC. Settling on the coasts, they developed a specific culture, characterised by ceramics decorated with geometric patterns. This civilisation, known as Lapita, flourished between 1400 and 600 BC in a vast zone ranging from the Bismarck archipelago as far as Tonga.

The traditional Kanak society was established after the disappearance of the Lapita culture. Like other Oceanic communities, the Kanak were profoundly attached to the land of their ancestors and were integrated within vast networks of exchange.

“Customary paths” thus enabled connections between clans from Grande Terre, but also those from the Loyalty Islands or the southern islands of Vanuatu, such as Tanna or Anatom.

Over the course of the Oceanic migrations, Polynesian populations later settled in the islands of Melanesia and Micronesia. West Uvean, of Polynesian origin, is therefore one of the two languages spoken on the Island of Ouvéa. It attests to the settlement of populations originating from Wallis and Futuna, most probably in about the 18th century.

## ⊙ ADVENTURERS AND PIONEERS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE

James Cook had set foot on the island in 1774, but New Caledonia was barely frequented by Westerners prior to the 1830-1840s. The Melanesian islands were seldom visited at that time, owing to the bad reputation of their inhabitants, propagated by the navigators.

This was the advent of adventurers and beachcombers, who were attracted by the islands’ natural riches, but it was also the time of missionaries. The evangelisation project began in 1797, in Tahiti, at the initiative of the protestant pastors of the *London Missionary Society* (LMS) and from there, it spread to the rest of Oceania.

The first Europeans, who had come to exploit the islands’ natural resources, introduced paid work and new products such as iron, alcohol, firearms and fabrics – elements that were to radically change the traditional way of life of Oceanic peoples. They also brought diseases to these islands that were previously unknown to the native peoples. From their first periods of interaction, Oceanic societies experienced a sharp decline in population.

### BEACHCOMBERS

These “pirates of the shore” may have been shipwrecked Europeans – the first among them were reported in Palau in 1684 – former sailors who had sometimes deserted their crew, or fugitive convicts, who sought refuge on an island and were submitted to the authority of a chief. These men, well integrated into the local populations, often played an intermediary role between the Oceanic peoples and European merchants.



The riches of the Melanesian islands attracted a number of European adventurers and merchants.  
© New Caledonia Archives

Although New Caledonia became a French colony on 24 September 1853, the pioneers of colonisation were predominantly foreigners, often of Anglo-Saxon origin. At that time, the archipelago maintained close ties with the neighbouring Australian colonies and the first birth recorded was that of a child born to English parents. The Englishman James Paddon, who bought Nou Island from Chief Kuindo in 1845, is thus considered to be the first settler of the archipelago. He established sandalwood trading posts on the Loyalty Islands, in Anatom (Vanuatu), the Isle of Pines, then on Grande Terre and he initiated regular exchanges between these islands, Australia and China. He also developed the postal service between Noumea and Sydney.



The colonisation of the Pacific Islands was accompanied by the development of speculative agriculture, stimulated by the Western markets' need for tropical products, which firmly established the Pacific Islands in a globalised economy. The development of plantations required land and was often associated with land deprivation. Thus, in New Caledonia, measures for the spoliation of Kanak land were engaged as of 1855 on Grande Terre, then extended by the establishment of the reserves system and the application of the *Régime de l'Indigénat* (Indigenoussness Code) from 1887 to 1946.



*Messageries Maritimes* played an important role in connecting the islands with the rest of the world.

© J. C. Estival Collection

Young Papua New Guineans fishing at low tide.

© SPC



## ⊙ AN INDISPENSABLE FOREIGN WORKFORCE

The owners of large plantations in Oceania were faced with a lack of local workers and therefore had recourse to a foreign workforce. They thus employed Oceanic peoples, whose recruitment, known as “blackbirding”, was accompanied by kidnappings or underhand registration methods. From 1860 to 1906, the plantations of Queensland employed some 62 000 Melanesians, of whom approximately 40 000 came from Vanuatu, 18 000 from the Solomon Islands, 2 800 from New Guinea and 1 100 from the Loyalty Islands.

New Caledonia, which also had a need for plantation workers and miners in the 1890s, opened up in its turn to Asian workers: mainly Javanese, Tonkinese and Japanese. The establishment of white settlers and that of a (temporary or permanent) foreign workforce therefore laid the foundations for a multiethnic society.



Advertisement to promote the arrival of servants in New Zealand, 1912.

© Alexander Turnbull Library

**In 1919, New Caledonia had 4 055 foreign workers, consisting of:**

- 1 902 hired under Javanese contract
- 1 549 hired under Oceanian contract
- 431 hired under Tonkinese contract
- 173 Indians

**In 1929, there were 13 572:**

- 5 876 hired under Javanese contract
- 5 102 hired under Tonkinese contract
- 2 110 Oceanians
- plus 484 free residents surveyed, including: 384 Javanese, 19 Tonkinese, 81 Oceanians
- 5 575 Japanese hired, who arrived between 1892 and 1919

*sources: Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer, Fonds ministériel, 1 Affpol 746 Tadao Kobayashi, Les Japonais en Nouvelle-Calédonie.*

*Histoire des émigrés sous contrat, Nouméa, Publication de la société d'études historiques de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, n°48, 1992*



# OCEANIA: AN UNEXPLORED STRATEGIC SPACE

The two World Wars enlisted Oceania in the international struggle and the islands sent men to fight in the major battlefields. While the Pacific was not a zone of conflict during World War One, this war still had a strong impact on the region: Germany lost its colonies to Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand but also Japan, which imposed itself as a colonial power in Micronesia.



Poster encouraging Maori to enlist in World War One, drawing by William Blomfield published in the New Zealand Observer, December 1915.  
© nzhistory.net

## THE PACIFIC WAR

Unlike the Great War, the Pacific Ocean was a major theatre of the Second World War.

Since New Caledonia constituted the southernmost point of support on the route connecting Australia to the United States, it played a key role in the Allies' defensive system.

The strong progression of the Japanese army, present in the Solomon Islands since 1942, brought fears of a landing in New Caledonia and Australia, where the city of Darwin was bombed in February 1942. New Caledonia played an important role in the preparation of the Battle of Guadalcanal and the evacuation of many wounded. In the face of the Nippon offensive in the zone, the local authorities arrested the Japanese living in the colony and deported them to Australia.

During this whole period, New Caledonia had virtually no ties with Metropolitan France and turned to Australia for its food supply and exports. This close attachment was notably represented by the opening of an Australian delegation to Noumea in 1940.

**OPPOSITE**  
Main unloading dock  
of the Port of Noumea.  
© US ARMY



The substantial American presence – over a million GIs passed through the archipelago between 1942 and 1946 – highlighted the weak spots in relations between France and its Oceanic colonies. The shock of war encouraged the emergence of an awareness of native rights. Henri Naisseline, Great Chief of Nece, in Maré (Loyalty Islands), thus based his request for the abolition of the Indigenusness Code and Melanesian access to French citizenship on the engagement of the Kanak in the French army during both World Wars.



Haka by the Maori battalion, Egypt, June 1941.

© Alexander Turnbull Library

American troops landing in Noumea, 1942.

© ANC Album B. Hagen  
© Coll. Philippe Houdret



As in the rest of its empire, France was forced to rethink the institutional ties connecting it to New Caledonia, in order to maintain its influence. In 1946, the status of colony was abandoned in favour of that of a *Territoire d'Outre-mer* (TOM, or French Overseas Territory). Progressively, the Kanak gained access to French citizenship and participated in New Caledonian political life.

### ○ OCEANIA: A MILITARISED AND NUCLEARISED ZONE

In the post-war period, the defence of the Pacific Ocean was an essential strategic factor at a time when the Cold War was commencing in Asia. Australia, shaken by the threat that Japan had brought to bear, sought to guard against any new attacks from the Asian continent. In its concern for its security, Australia sought to make Oceania a protective buffer zone and considered New Caledonia to be of vital importance in this venture. Thenceforth, Australia sought to affirm itself as a fully-fledged player on the regional and international scene. In this context, it approached the United States and in 1951, Washington, Canberra and Wellington signed the ANZUS military pact. The South Pacific was used as an atomic testing site for the United States, Great Britain and France, and thus became a strategic region.



The Pentagon's headquarters in Noumea during World War Two became the head office of the Secretariat of the South Pacific Commission (SPC). Photo taken in 1951.

© SPC

**The ANZUS** (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty) is a military pact whereby the three States agree to mutual consultation regarding any questions pertaining to the security of the South Pacific. First directed against any potential renaissance of Japanese military power, it was soon transformed into a link in the chain of US policy to oppose Communism and maintain the Oceanic base within the Western block.

At a time when Australian and New Zealand public opinion was expressing hostility with respect to the atom, France, which had lost Algeria, where it had carried out its tests from 1960 to 1966, transferred its centre of nuclear experimentation to French Polynesia. From 1966 to 1996, the French tests provoked strong protests on the part of governments and public opinion in the region. The island states denounced Paris' militaristic and colonialist policy.



**From 1946 to 1996,  
321 nuclear tests  
took place in the  
South Pacific:**

193 French tests  
107 American tests  
21 English tests

—  
175 tests  
took place in  
the atmosphere  
147 tests were  
underground

source : [www.mururoa.org](http://www.mururoa.org)

The Rainbow Warrior  
after its sabotage  
in the New Zealand  
port of Auckland.  
© John Miller, Greenpeace



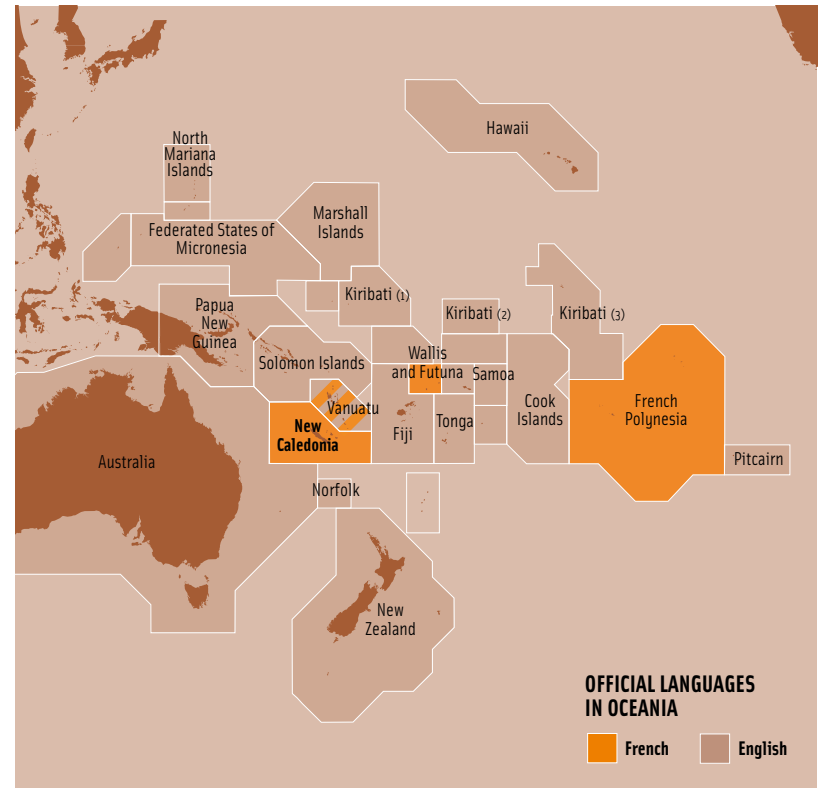
### © THE FRENCH BASE

Therefore, New Caledonia was perceived as France's base in the Pacific. In spite of its efforts to convince the public that its nuclear testing (underground since 1975) was innocuous, Paris did not succeed in improving its image, blighted by the sabotage of the Rainbow Warrior, a ship belonging to the environmental association, Greenpeace, in the port of Auckland on the night of 10 July 1985. This action by the secret services was perceived as an act of terrorism by Wellington, which had never experienced a third-party attack on its soil.

France became enemy number 1 to the islands and the Oceanic states, which were developing a strong sense of regional membership.

Within this very tense climate, the Oceanic States, assembled for the South Pacific Forum in the Cook Islands, signed the Rarotonga Treaty on 6 August 1985, making the region a nuclear-free zone. Nonetheless, Paris continued its tests until the moratorium of 1992, then engaged in a final campaign in 1995-96.

The end to French nuclear testing, combined with the establishment of the Matignon Agreements of 1988, contributed to restoring France's image in Oceania and to gradually integrating its territories within the regional scene.



### © A HIGHLY DIVERSIFIED LINGUISTIC AREA

**French and English are the two languages officially spoken in Oceania, inherited from the colonial period.** However, many languages from the Austronesian family – approximately 450 – are currently used in addition to the Aboriginal languages of Australia and the Papuan languages. Although they cover a particularly vast area, Oceanic languages are only spoken by two million speakers.



# EMERGENCE OF A REGIONAL SCENE IN OCEANIA

## ⊙ TOWARDS POLITICAL EMANCIPATION

Oceania was the last region on the globe to have been colonised, and also the last concerned with the decolonisation movement. The process began in 1962 with Western Samoa's independence, and took various routes. Oceania thus appears to be a veritable institutional laboratory.

### CHRONOLOGY OF INDEPENDENCE

<b>1962</b>	Western Samoa	(New Zealand)
<b>1968</b>	Nauru	(Australia)
<b>1970</b>	Fiji	(Great Britain)
	Tonga	(Great Britain)
<b>1974</b>	Niue	(New Zealand)
<b>1975</b>	Papua New Guinea	(Australia)
<b>1978</b>	Solomon Islands	(Great Britain)
	Tuvalu ex Ellice Islands	(Great Britain)
<b>1979</b>	Kiribati ex Gilbert Islands	(Great Britain)
<b>1980</b>	Vanuatu ex New Hebrides	(France / Great Britain)
<b>1990</b>	Republic of the Marshall Islands	(United States)
	Federated States of Micronesia	(United States)
	Northern Mariana Islands	(United States)
<b>1994</b>	Palau	(United States)

Since Great Britain had been bled dry by the Second World War, it disengaged from its Empire, which had become too costly. But in the French-British co-dominion of Vanuatu, London was confronted with France's wish to maintain its Pacific possessions. After New Caledonia and the *Etablissements Français d'Océanie* (French Settlements in Oceania), in 1946, Wallis and Futuna became a *Territoire d'Outre-mer* in 1961. Like the United States, France favoured

#### OPPOSITE

Tabou lighthouse, near the Amédée Lighthouse at the entrance to the Southern Lagoon (New Caledonia).

© Musée de l'histoire maritime de Nouvelle-Calédonie

the *status quo* with respect to its Oceanic territories, which contributed to its power politics and national independence.

While most of the Pacific Islands progressively recovered their sovereignty throughout the 1970s, autonomist, then independentist demands were asserted in New Caledonia. Paris attempted to thwart them by launching a succession of statutory reforms, from 1976 to 1988, which did not prevent the archipelago from sinking into a political, social and identity crisis that created strong rifts in the New Caledonian population based on ethnic origins.

Five of the 16 territories currently considered non-self-governing by the United Nations are located in Oceania.

Flags of the Oceanic countries erected at the headquarters of the SPC in Noumea.  
© SPC



#### DIVERSITY OF STATUS

- 1- Independent states:** Samoa, Nauru, Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu
- 2- Associated independent states:** Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Marshall Islands
- 3- Freely associated self-governing states:** Cook Islands, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands
- 4- Self-governing territories:** Guam, American Samoa, New Caledonia, French Polynesia
- 5- Dependent states:** Tokelau, Pitcairn, Norfolk, Wallis and Futuna

source: Fabrice Argounes, Sarah Mohamed-Gaillard, Luc Vacher, *Atlas de l'Océanie*, Paris, Autrement, 2011.

## © KANAK DEMANDS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Following the constitution of a *Front Indépendantiste* in 1979, then the *Front de Libération Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS, Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front) in 1984, the Oceanic States were concerned that France's desire to maintain its foothold in New Caledonia, might make the island a site of regional destabilisation.

#### WALLISIAN AND FUTUNIAN MIGRATIONS

According to the 2009 census, Wallisians and Futunians represent 8.7% (21 300 people) of the whole New Caledonian population, and there are only 13 500 remaining on their native archipelago. The migratory movement began in 1852, with the arrival of the first Polynesian workers, hired under contract to agricultural domains. It continued in the early 20th century with the exploitation of nickel mines. In the wake of World War Two, the abolition of the Indigenes Code rarefied the available workforce in New Caledonia. Recruiters therefore rushed to Wallis and Futuna to negotiate the migration of volunteers with the customary authorities, whose consent was indispensable. They were employed in agricultural domains, mines and later, in the construction of infrastructure, such as the Yaté dam – destined to supply electricity to the SLN's metallurgy factory. They were also hired for construction work at the time of the nickel boom in the late 1960s.



Traditional ceremony from Wallis and Futuna at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre.

Centre: Marie-Claude Tjibaou, widow of the Kanak independentist leader.

© Government of New Caledonia

They kept a close eye on evolutions in the area, supporting the struggle of Kanak independentists and relaying information at the international level. The South Pacific Forum thus obtained, in 1986, New Caledonia's inscription on the list of non-self-governing territories established by the General Assembly of the United Nations. New Caledonia still appears on this list, alongside American Samoa, Guam, Pitcairn and Tokelau. After the tragic massacre of Ouvéa, in May 1988, France opened up a dialogue that resulted in the Matignon-Oudinot Agreements, characterised by a social and economic readjustment between the various communities. The Noumea Accord, signed ten years later, deferred the question of self-determination until 2014-2018. The government thus began the irreversible transfer of responsibility of part of its non-regalian sectors to New Caledonia.



## ◎ STRUCTURING REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The political emancipation of Oceanic territories has been accompanied by the establishment of organisations of regional cooperation and the emergence of an Oceanic identity. During World War Two, Australia and New Zealand expressed the wish to develop cooperation between the colonial powers in order to instate long-term security for the region. Canberra and Wellington were thus the mainsprings of the **South Pacific Commission (SPC)**, created in 1947 with the participation of the United Kingdom, the United States, France and Holland. The SPC, whose jurisdiction stretches across “all of the non-self-governing territories of the Pacific situated south of the Equator and East of Dutch New Guinea,” was established in Noumea, in the premises left vacant by the US army.

Very soon, Oceanic representatives wanted their roles to be reinforced within the SPC and wished to debate the political issues Oceania faces on its path towards decolonisation. France was at that time subject to criticism by Oceanic peoples for its nuclear testing in French Polynesia and its colonialist policy in New Caledonia, and gave its veto.

Faced with this refusal, in 1971, Fiji, Nauru, Tonga, Western Samoa and the Cook Islands created **the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)** with the support of Australia and New Zealand. This organisation, based in Suva (Fiji) affirmed itself from the outset to be a political forum advocating the development of a Pacific Way and redefining regional membership: **it is not enough to simply be in the region, nations must be from the region.**

The Melanesian States express a more radical point of view than most of their Polynesian neighbours on questions relating to New Caledonia and Irian Jaya (the Indonesian part of Papua New Guinea, annexed in 1969). In 1986, they joined forces to form **The Melanesian Spearhead Group**, which develops a more pro-Third World and anticolonialist discourse than that of the Forum.



3<sup>rd</sup> France-Océanie summit, July 2009.  
© Government of New Caledonia

The main conference hall of the SPC.

The SPC building in Noumea.  
© SPC

## THE MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP

**The Melanesian Spearhead Group (GMFL)** is an alliance of Melanesian countries including the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Fiji, officially created in March 1988 in Port-Vila. This group represents nearly 7 million inhabitants: an immense majority of the island population of Oceania.

The FLNKS was welcomed in 1989 as a member of the group.

The GMFL, whose initial vocation was to demonstrate its solidarity with the independency movement in New Caledonia, broadened its sphere of action to include more economic and commercial issues. It notably provided a framework for the signing of a free trade agreement defining the lists of duty-free goods and services between members.



## THE SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)

**The Pacific Community (SPC)** is an international organisation providing technical, scientific and strategic advice, assistance, training and research to its Oceanic island members.

**Founded in 1947 in Australia**, it currently contains 26 Member States and Territories and was rebaptised as the “Pacific Community” in 1997 in order to better represent the various origins of its members.

**Its mission is to help manage the resources of the Oceanic peoples, with a view to sustainable economic and social development that does not harm the environment.**

The services provided by the SPC may take the form of technical assistance, training programs and research.

## THE SPREP

The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is an intergovernmental organisation in charge of promoting cooperation, helping Oceanic countries and territories to sustainably manage their island resources and marine ecosystems and to confront the threats and pressures that affect island and marine systems. The SPREP has 25 members, including 21 Pacific island countries and territories and four developed countries with direct interests in the region (Australia, New Zealand, the United States and France).



Towers  
in Sydney.  
© SPC

## THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), created on 5 August 1971 in Wellington (New Zealand), is an international political organisation of regional cooperation that assembles the 16 associated independent countries and territories of Oceania.

In 2006, New Caledonia and French Polynesia became member states of the Forum. Wallis and Futuna obtained observer status.

The PIF is the main political cooperative in the Pacific region.

No charter or international treaty underpins the creation of this organisation, and there are no written regulations pertaining to how its meetings are conducted.

In 1994, the PIF gained the status of observer at the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Its mission is defined as follows: "to work in support of the member-governments of the Forum, in order to improve the economic and social well-being of Pacific peoples, by promoting intergovernmental cooperation and representing the interests of member states as agreed by the Forum."

### OPPOSITE

On the banks  
of the Sepik River  
(Papua New Guinea).

Market in the  
Cook Islands.

© SPC

### FOLLOWING

#### DOUBLE PAGE

New Zealand.  
French Polynesia.

© SPC

New Caledonia.

© Pierre-Alain Pantz

Solomon Islands.

© David Becker









# NEW CALEDONIA'S INTEGRATION WITHIN OCEANIA

The Noumea Accord has opened up new perspectives for New Caledonia on its path to emancipation. Besides the gradual and irreversible transfer of governmental jurisdiction, it has broken new ground by accepting to share its prerogatives in the field of international and regional relations.

## A FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHED BY THE NOUMEA ACCORD

- New Caledonia will be entitled to become a member of certain international organisations
- New Caledonia will be entitled to have representation in countries of the Pacific region and with the above-mentioned organisations and in the European Union.
- It will be associated with the re-negotiation of the Europe-OCT Association Decision.
- Training will be initiated to prepare New Caledonians for exercising responsibilities in the sphere of international relations.

*source: The Noumea Accord, section 3.2, Shared Powers*

Aerial view  
of Noumea.

© P. Sud / Martial Dosdane

Section 3 of the agreement, signed on 5 May 1998, reaffirms that international relations remain the responsibility of the State, but specifies that “the latter will take New Caledonia’s specific interests into account in international negotiations conducted by France and will include it in these discussions.” New Caledonia’s awareness of international responsibility and its ability to express itself at the regional level constitute one of the primordial chapters of the Noumea Accord, alongside citizenship and the rebalancing of resources.

OPPOSITE

The west coast  
of Grande Terre.

© P. Sud / Martial Dosdane

It is based on three main axes:

- **Bilateral agreements.** The Noumea Accord gives New Caledonia the right to sign international agreements in its fields of expertise (commerce, technical cooperation, health and the environment), and those of its three provinces: North, South and the Loyalty Islands.

This legal capacity to sign autonomous bilateral agreements with the governments, territories or regional organisations of the Pacific, is the only example of its kind within the French Republic. The agreements shall only involve the government of New Caledonia and do not require ratification by the National Assembly. Two agreements are currently under consideration, with Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

Typical shop  
in Palau. © SPC

Customary exchanges  
on Tanna Island  
(Vanuatu).  
© David Becker



#### NEW CALEDONIA / VANUATU

Since 1993, the two archipelagos have been bound by a general agreement of friendship and cooperation, which reinforced a cooperation agreement in 2002. This framework allows New Caledonia to strengthen its ties with Vanuatu, namely in terms of financial investments and university exchanges.

- **Decentralised cooperation.** New Caledonia finally has the ability to sign cooperation agreements with local collectivities such as French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna.

- **Structuring an administration** to implement international projects. In close partnership with the *Quai d'Orsay* and the *Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris*, there are plans to train external representatives to be sent to the five French embassies in Oceania: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu. The mission of the "delegates for New Caledonia" will be to represent the country and ensure that bilateral relations run smoothly.



In Suva, the capital  
of Fiji, Melanesians  
and Indo-Fijians live  
side by side.  
© David Becker

#### LIMITED ECONOMIC EXCHANGES

While New Caledonia has shown a growing interest in its regional environment, it is still lacking in terms of its economic integration within Oceanic economic circuits and its degree of openness. A small territory in terms of population, it has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per inhabitant that is similar to that of Australia and New Zealand. Commercial trade is dominated by France and the European Union. There is very little trade with the small island economies (SIE) of the Pacific, which represents less than 1 % of exchange. Trade within the Pacific region mainly concerns Australia and New Zealand, its bigger, more developed neighbours.

The narrowness of most of the markets of the SIEs in the Pacific, combined with a level of development that is often relatively low, constitute a damper for trade, whereas the large size of the Australian and New Zealand markets and their high level of development offer significant trade potential.

#### RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

New Caledonia is one of the four *Pays et Territoires d'Outre-Mer* (PTOM) in the Pacific. The three others are French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna for France, and Pitcairn for the United Kingdom. The PTOM are collectivities associated with the EU by a *Décision d'Association Outre-Mer* (DAO). The current DAO, which dates from 27 November 2001, will end in 2013. The PTOM, their associated

Wind farm in  
New Caledonia.

© P. Sud / Martial Dosdane



**The TEP VERTES project** (*Tonne équivalent pétrole, Valorisation des énergies renouvelables et transmission des expériences et des savoir-faire*) is the result of a regional cooperation financed by the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna (10.3 million euros consisting of 5 million from the European Commission and 5 million from the PTOMs). Its objective is to accelerate use of environmentally friendly renewable energies (aeolian, photovoltaic) in order to improve the living conditions of rural or isolated populations in the Pacific PTOMs, then to communicate the experience acquired to the countries in the zone.

member states and the European Commission are currently in the process of examining ways to redefine and improve the future DAO.

As a PTOM, New Caledonia enjoys the support of financial instruments for its development, the most prominent of which is the European Development Fund (EDF). The territorial allocations from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> EDF funding rounds allowed the country to partly finance its lagoon aquariums, the Koné-Tiwaka road and replanting projects in mining areas, training programs for mining trades and so on. Since 2004, it has received nearly 30.2 million euros from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF and should receive around 19.87 million euros for the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, which will mainly be devoted to its professional training policy.

It also enjoys regional funding from the EDF, destined to strengthen its integration within the zone: thus the “TEP VERTES” programme dedicated to renewable energy receives 5 million euros in funding for the 3 French PTOM, the “SCIFISH” project receives 5 million for the sustainable management of fishery resources and a regional project of risk management in the Pacific (5 million euros for the 4 PTOM). For the future, 12 million euros have been allocated to the 4 PTOM in the Pacific within the framework of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF regional funding round, through the INTEGRE (Initiative des Territoires pour une Gestion Intégrée de l’Environnement) project, for the integrated management of coastal areas. Finally, New Caledonia may participate in the European Commission’s community programmes and register for its youth and training programmes (Erasmus, European Voluntary Service, Comenius, etc.) but also network projects by way of the PCRDT (Pace-Net, Net-Biome).

#### COMPARATIVE ECONOMIC DATA OF COUNTRIES IN THE PACIFIC REGION

Country	Land area (in km <sup>2</sup> )	Maritime area (in thousands of km <sup>2</sup> )	Population	Average Density	GDP/ inhabitant (in CFP)	(in euros)
New Caledonia	18 576	1 774	245 580	13	3 037	25
French Polynesia	3 521	5 030	268 767	76	2090	17,5
Australia	7 692 024	8 148	22 154 400	3	3 818	32
New Zealand	267 707	4 084	4 318 100	16	2 438	20,4
Fiji	18 272	1 290	847 793	46	287	2,4
Solomon Islands	28 370	1 340	549 574	18	83	0,6
Papua New Guinea	462 840	3 120	6 744 955	15	78	0,6
Vanuatu	12 190	680	245 036	20	194	1,6
Samoa	2935	120	183 123	66	219	1,8
Tonga	650	700	103 365	159	216	1,8
Wallis and Futuna	142	300	13 256	93	1 200	10



## ⊙ REGIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION

Regional military cooperation is an important element of New Caledonia's integration into its geographic zone. The "operative contract" of the French Armed Forces in New Caledonia (FANC) contains several missions to this end:

- The FANC must reinforce **the training and civilian/military cooperation actions** that support the development of the Pacific Island States and contribute to the surveillance of their exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

- It maintains **sustained relations with defence and security forces** of the Pacific Island States situated in its "zone of permanent responsibility": Australia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.

There are different types of cooperation actions: exercises, visits to authorities, humanitarian aid missions, surveillance of the EEZ, official ports of call, high-level staff talks, staff training etc. Apart from the surveillance of the EEZ and the assistance provided in the event of natural catastrophes, military cooperation only exists with states that have armed forces.

Military cooperation is carried out at two levels: on the one hand, with the States whose armies, through their number of personnel and level of equipment, are comparable to France's armies (Australia and New Zealand) and, on the other hand, with the security forces that must be supported in their development.

**The defence cooperation** in Oceania was considerably developed when the FANC participated in the multinational intervention in East Timor, in 1999 and 2000. Until then the French forces in New Caledonia were little known or ignored by their regional counterparts, suddenly, they appeared as a partner that could be depended upon and with whom it is beneficial to cooperate in the interests of global security and in favour of the small island states of the Pacific.

Every 2 years the FANC lead a major inter-army and multinational exercise entitled "*Croix du Sud*" to which all of the partner forces are invited. More recently, a series of security operations for



## IMPORTANT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The FRANZ agreement (France, Australia, New Zealand) is a "joint declaration regarding cooperation for relief operations in the event of natural disasters in the South Pacific."

It was signed in Wellington on 22 December 1992 by government representatives from the three States and provides for the coordination of actions.

the New Caledonian lagoon entitled "Lagoon Minex" were inaugurated. In 2009, considerable means in terms of manpower and equipment were engaged in this demining action, resulting in the removal of seventy mines from the lagoon dating from World War Two.

## ⊙ MEDICAL EVACUATIONS

In accordance with a deliberation dating from 1997, a doctor can request the medical evacuation of a New Caledonian patient to Australia, or to Metropolitan France, when the diagnostic, the treatment or the therapeutic monitoring are not able to be performed in New Caledonia, due to a lack of infrastructure, services or local skills adapted to the pathology. There are estimated to be 1 300 medical evacuations per year.



Meeting with the military cooperation leaders in Noumea.

© Gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie

A FANC Puma helicopter during a humanitarian operation.

© FANC

## ⊙ DIVERSIFIED CULTURAL COOPERATION

No institutionalised cooperation between New Caledonia and the Pacific countries exists, but spontaneous actions occasionally provide opportunities to promote New Caledonia's cultural diversity.

The major cultural event in the region was the organisation, from March 2007 to February 2008, of the cultural and sporting "Season of New Caledonia" in New Zealand. This event was part of a general desire



Festival of Melanesian Arts in Palau, 2004.

© Martial Dosdane

Kanak group "Celenod!"

© MNC

Delegates' parade at the Pacific Games.

© CTOS

for New Caledonia's integration within the Pacific region and for strengthening ties via actions of promotion, exchange, cooperation and showcasing of the respective heritages of both countries. On this occasion, creative residencies were made available to New Caledonian artists.

New Caledonian bands, such as Celenod, Edou or Dick and Hnatr are regularly programmed in the *World of Music* festivals in Australia and New Zealand and in November each year, artists participate in the *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibition, where monumental contemporary works are presented on the Bondi beaches, in Sydney. Furthermore, the State has signed a three-yearly agreement with the University of Canberra (ANU - French department) for a programme of translation and publication in English of New Caledonian authors.

*"In the past, Kanak culture was exclusively expressed by the Kanak. What is new today is that non-Kanak artists are expressing themselves quite uninhibitedly: using Kanak myths, Kanak thought, Kanak song. These elements no longer belong only to the Kanak; they contribute to a culture shared by all. Experiencing our culture only among ourselves would make no sense whatsoever."*

**MARIE-CLAUDE TJIBAOU**, widow of Jean-Marie Tjibaou  
source: *Mwa Vée*, n° 71 / 72, April-June 2011

Fijian group "Black Rose".

© Eric Dell'Erba



The first two books, published in 2004 and 2005, were dedicated to the work of Déwé Gorodé, two others, released in 2007, contained New Caledonian poetry and theatre.



### THE FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS

The CPS, feeling that Oceanic culture and arts had suffered under colonisation, thus organised in Fiji, in 1972, the first gathering of the Festival of Pacific Arts in order to fight against the progressive disappearance of customary and traditional practices. Leaders in the region saw this as a means of reuniting Oceanians of different cultures and of strengthening understanding and friendship between the countries. Since then, this festival has been held every four years in a State or territory of the Pacific. Despite political rifts, regional sentiments are expressed through the affirmation of an Oceanic culture whose tattoos, dances, body paintings or canoe races constitute strong emblems. The most recent edition took place in Pago Pago (American Samoa) in July 2008 and attracted over 2 000 participants, from 27 countries. The Festival is an internationally renowned cultural event and **is also the largest gathering of Pacific peoples in a spirit of mutual recognition**, within the heart of an Oceanic region that is currently traversing a period of great evolution.



Fijian tapa cloth.  
© SPC

Festival of the Arts  
in Palau in 2004,  
Bangou tribe,  
New Caledonia.  
© Martial Dosdane



### THE FESTIVAL OF MELANESIAN ARTS

For the first time in its history, New Caledonia hosted, in September 2010, the Festival of Melanesian Arts. This event was organised at the initiative of the Melanesian Spearhead Group and showcases the traditional and contemporary arts of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Under the theme "*Notre identité, elle est devant nous*" (Our identity lies ahead of us), taken from a speech by independentist leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou pronounced in 1985, the festival allowed numerous artists to express themselves and share their experience in Noumea but also in the North Province and the Loyalty Islands. The first festival was held in the Solomon Islands in 1998; the next one will take place in 2014 in Papua New Guinea.

Only the *Agence pour le Développement de la Culture Kanak* (ADCK) maintains regular relations with the museums of the region. Therefore, it also signed a museographic and cultural cooperation agreement with the Museum of Tahiti and the Islands.



#### OPPOSITE

Dancers from  
the Wapan tribe,  
Isle of Pines,  
New Caledonia.  
© NCTPS

Dancers from  
Papua New Guinea.  
© SPC



Hawaikinuiva'a Race, 2010, the Taha to Bora-Bora leg (French Polynesia).

© DR

Logo of the 14<sup>th</sup> Pacific Games, organised in New Caledonia.



### THE PACIFIC GAMES

The first Pacific Games, a sports competition reserved for Oceanic countries that do not participate in the Olympic Games, was organised at Fiji's initiative in 1963. They are held once every four years. In 2011, New Caledonia hosted the 14th edition of these Games. More than 3 500 athletes and leaders, from 22 countries and territories in the region, participate in the 28 disciplines of this major regional sporting event.

## ② DEVELOPING UNIVERSITY COOPERATION

The international relations office of the University of New Caledonia (UNC) organises semesters of student exchange with Anglophone universities of the Pacific zone and leads research actions in partnership, through programmes like the *Grand Observatoire de la Biodiversité marine et terrestre du Pacifique Sud* (GOPS) and the *Centre National de Recherche Technique* (CNRT).

In addition, research laboratories have signed co-tutelage thesis agreements, mainly with Australia and New Zealand, to provide a framework for fostering research with an international label. Other actions give rise to international conferences on subjects as diverse as Pacific populations, languages, cultures, institutions or their flora and fauna – particularly that of the lagoon and the Ocean.



In New Caledonia, cricket is one of the most popular sports among Melanesians.  
© CTOS

Suva, the capital of Fiji, hosts the USP.  
© David Becker



With the USP (University of the South Pacific), whose main campus is in Suva, in the Fiji Islands, the UNC implemented a co-qualification procedure for a continuing education diploma in French as a foreign language (FLE), and one or two French assistants are regularly sent to high schools in Suva, in association with the *Alliance Française*. Moreover, many New Caledonian students go to Australia and New Zealand to continue their studies. Agreements have been signed with higher education institutions, namely in Brisbane, and study scholarships are offered each year to young New Caledonians by the Australian and New Zealand consulates.

### FRANCOPHONIE

The *Institut de la Francophonie dans le Pacifique* was established in 2004 and relies on New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna to federate the Francophones of the region and promote French language and culture. Moreover, the New Caledonian government organises a yearly annual conference regarding the promotion of the French language in French-speaking communities.

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- ⦿ OCEANIA: AN UNEXPLORED STRATEGIC SPACE
- ⦿ EMERGENCE OF A REGIONAL SCENE IN OCEANIA
- ⦿ NEW CALEDONIA'S INTEGRATION WITHIN OCEANIA

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