



Alliance Française
Sydney - Australie
Cultural Foundation

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Alliance Française de Sydney Cultural Foundation Limited

History

Alliance Française de Sydney was founded in 1895, opening its doors first as a humble library consisting of 600 books offered by the Paris Committee Donation. Under the leadership of its first president, Georges Briard D'Aunet, Alliance Française de Sydney launched as a French language school four years later.

Around this time, Alliance Française de Sydney shared a building at 2 Bond Street with other local French organisations, including FACCI (French-Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), the French language newspaper Le Courrier Australien, the French Consulate General of France in Sydney and the French Benevolent Society, representing the rapid expansion and consolidation of the French community in Australia.

Alliance Française de Sydney's first social event was organised on 6 October 1903; a benefit ball which, according to reports by Le Courrier Australien, was a hugely successful evening and attended by « le tout-Sydney » (everyone in Sydney). This would mark the beginning of a long history of cultural events to come, culminating in the largest and most important French Film Festival outside of France which Alliance Française de Sydney currently hosts annually.

1907 ushered in some particularly outstanding years for Alliance Française de Sydney. Social gatherings were organised, in addition to lectures, concerts and dances. For the first time, this involved Australians as not only beneficiaries of these events, but as equal participants.

This momentum came to a sharp halt when World War One was declared. Alliance Française de Sydney was impacted by the absence of many members of Sydney's French families, and was subsequently forced into a hibernation period, returning to its original incarnation solely as a lending library.

This downsizing played a part in Alliance Française de Sydney no longer being able to pay rent and stay in independent premises. Following this, it became a war refugee in Mlle Boggio's 'Modern School of Languages' in Moore Street (which would later become part of Martin Place), before relocating again to Castlereagh Street, then Bridge Street before finally setting at its current location on Clarence Street.

Thereafter, Alliance Française de Sydney enjoyed a period of stability and steady growth, as it continued to strengthen its presence within the Sydney community through its courses, cultural events and partnerships.

In 1989, Alliance Française de Sydney held its first Alliance Française French Film Festival. This prestigious festival has since become a very important event in Australia's cultural calendar, welcoming an exponentially increasing number of attendees every year.

Between 2005 and 2009, famed Austrian-born Australian architect Harry Seidler was commissioned to design the now iconic spiralling staircase which elegantly cascades from the first floor through to the entrance foyer of the Alliance Française de Sydney Centre, representing his last commercial and public design.

In 2020, Alliance Française de Sydney's educational model was transformed in response to mandatory lockdowns and restrictions. The swift transition to distance learning and digital events became part of the Alliance Française de Sydney legacy, as efforts were made to unite Francophiles and Francophones from across the state during a period of isolation.

For now, the remote learning model remains the preferred delivery model for a majority of students, though traditional face-to-face classes continue to rebound. As a result, we have our most comprehensive range of services ever on offer at AFS in 2021 going into 2022.



HISTORY OF THE FONDATION ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

The Fondation Alliance Française was founded in Paris on 21 July 1883 by a group of pioneering individuals including scientist Louis Pasteur, authors Jules Verne and Ernest Renan, diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps and publisher Armand Colin. It was to be a national association for the promotion of French language around the world. Today, there are over 800 Alliance Françaises in 135 countries. Alliance Française has set the benchmark for teaching French as a foreign language, with over 500,000 students globally. It is recognised by the French Ministry for Education and European organisations such as ALTE (the Association of Language Testers in Europe), and is known for bringing together French language and culture through high-quality programmes.

Alliance Française de Sydney Cultural Foundation

The Alliance Française de Sydney Cultural Foundation ("Cultural Foundation") is a not-for-profit cultural organisation established in 2019 with a mission to promote French cultural events and Franco-Australian cultural exchanges.

Throughout the year, events relating to film and cinema, literature, performing arts, visual arts and other art forms are organised. This long list of events includes film festivals, exhibitions, masterclasses, book signings, talks, design, television, radio, community arts and much more.

Nestled in the heart of Sydney, the centre is also home to a comprehensive media centre.

The Cultural Foundation supports the Alliance Française French Film Festival and in the past, the Alliance Française Classic Film Festival. The annual Alliance Française French Film Festival is organised by Alliance Française de Sydney in collaboration with Alliance Française branches across Australia's capital cities, with the Embassy of France in Australia, and in association with Palace Cinemas.

The Cultural Foundation was established to provide DGR (tax donation) status to donors who provide donations for cultural purposes. The Alliance Française de Sydney is the sole owner of the Cultural Foundation.

Objectives and Activities



ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

It was with trepidation that the 32nd edition of the Alliance Française French Film Festival (AFFFF) was launched in Sydney on 2 March 2021, after the major disruption and challenges of 2020.

Both AFS and sponsors were very pleased with the results: despite enduring bans on international travel, the Festival welcomed over 50,000 Francophile patrons in cinemas across Sydney to view the 38-film line-up assembled by Karine Mauris, Artistic Director and Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of France in Australia.

In May, at the end of Philippe Ostermann's tenure as General Manager, we faced the prospect of COVID-related restrictions depriving us of a new General Manager for the six month lead-up period critical to Festival sponsorship. Hence the board appointed Philippe Ostermann to the newly created position of Business Development Management Consultant, to manage all aspects of the work undertaken by AFS for the Festival, to manage fundraising and look after arrangements for the Festival. Without Philippe's efforts, the success of the 2022 edition of the Festival would not have been possible. Philippe continued in a dual role to manage AFS as General Manager until the arrival of Valerie Nicolas in mid-November and as a matter of urgency, source sponsors for the Festival and make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the Festival took place in 2022.

AFS invested in this new role to ensure the continuity of the Festival and to take the opportunity to build the sponsorship portfolio at both national and Sydney levels. Without Philippe's efforts, the 2022 edition of the AFFFF would not have been possible.

AFS thanks Anais Leloup for her work contributing to the resounding success of the Festival during her first year as the National Festival Manager. She is supported in this role by Festival staff in each capital branch of Alliance Française in Australia, the Embassy of France in Australia, Palace Cinemas, the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace, and staff at AFS.

AFS is particularly grateful for the support of sponsors at both national and Sydney levels through these challenging times.

The AFFFF in 2021 attracted sponsorship of \$265,000 at a national level and \$16,000 at a Sydney level, which is an increase of \$39,000 and \$3,500 respectively on 2020 levels. The team is to be commended for this result as raising funds during a pandemic is very challenging.

The AFFFF, travelling to nine cities around Australia, celebrates the best of contemporary French cinema. It is the leading festival of French film outside of France and a major event in Australia's annual cultural calendar.



EVENTS

A vibrant cultural calendar is the hallmark of community life at Alliance Française de Sydney. Members, students and visitors are invited to partake in the rich programme of activities, ranging from presentations to round table discussions, soirees to workshops and conferences, and beyond.

Typically, over 300 guests per month attend these cultural events, contributing to the hive of activity at the Alliance Française de Sydney centre. This year, again, lockdowns and restrictions limited on-site activity, prompting innovation and creativity from Cultural Event Manager and Marketing Coordinator, Chloe Gunn.

A new, highly successful variety of cultural event was developed in 2021: the French cooking workshop. During these events run in partnership with Magimix and Four Frogs, guests were first introduced to the cultural and linguistic origins of the selected dish, before participating in a live chef-led demonstration.

Also among the highlights of this year were the online conversation with Australian contemporary artist Jasper Knight about his re-interpretations of Toulouse Lautrec's most iconic art prints, the online event "Matisse and Le Décoratif" with Professor Roger Benjamin, the interview with author and former French intelligence operative Jack Beaumont, and the inaugural Inter-Alliance Competition.

The company had hoped to activate our partnership with New Caledonia through a series of talks and events, although restrictions and lockdowns forced the postponement of these plans.

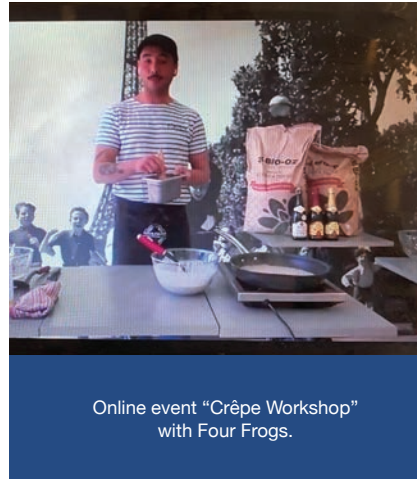
AFS would also like to thank Marie Chrétien for her involvement in the cultural events programming and presentations in 2021.



Jasper Knight Exhibition adorning the facade of AFS centre during renovation works.

LIST OF EVENTS

- Presentation: "Women in French & Australian Cinema" with Michelle Royer, Greer Simkin and Rachel Okine
- Online event: "Crêpe Workshop" with Four Frogs
- Online event: "French Pastry Workshop" with Magimix
- Online conference: "Australian Artist Jasper Knight on Toulouse Lautrec" with Jasper Knight and Marie Chrétien
- Members-only online event: "Interview with the Frenchman" with Jack Beaumont
- Online conference: "Interview with the writer of Astérix and Obélix" with Jean-Yves Ferri
- Event: "Matisse and Le Décoratif" with Professor Roger Benjamin and hosted by Marie Chrétien
- Event: "Exclusive Preview Screening of Delicious" with Palace Cinemas
- Event: "Inter-Alliance Local Competition"
- Event: "Hors Concours"



Online event "Crêpe Workshop" with Four Frogs.



Online conference "Australian Artist Jasper Knight on Toulouse Lautrec" with Jasper Knight and Marie Chrétien.



Board Member Marie Varnier-Gittard (front left), President of AFS Lyn Tuit (back centre) and General Manager of AFS Philippe Ostermann (back centre) at the Veteran's Luncheon.