

## NEW CALEDONIA

- + LANDSCAPE
- + BIODIVERSITY
- + POPULATION
- + HISTORY
- + FOUNDING TEXTS
- + ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION
- + ECONOMY
- + CULTURE
- + MAISON DE LA NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE  
IN PARIS

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# NEW CALEDONIA



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# NEW CALEDONIA

At the centre of Melanesia, the New Caledonia archipelago is enchantingly unique, thanks to its geography, history and culture.

Often noted for its exceptional biodiversity or underground wealth, the archipelago also contains other treasures, less visible perhaps, but just as important.

In its deepest valleys, in the secret of its forests, the myths and legends of the first humans live on. The presence of deceased ancestors, the Elders, endlessly repeated, is at the heart of the land's soul.

The ancestral memory of origins, for so long only a part of Kanak culture, has today become an essential fact for all the communities that make up the archipelago's population.

Founding political action has built the basis of a modern, peaceful Caledonia, which is now writing a new page in its history. After coming to terms with its complicated past of colonization, penal colonies and suffering, New Caledonia has now accepted its multiple roots and shared Oceanian identity.

This booklet offers the keys to unlocking a new understanding of New Caledonia, its wealth, its unique journey and the originality of its exceptional destiny.

**Joël Viratelle**

Director of the Maison de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, Paris

**COVER**

© Destination Îles Logauté (DIL)



















# LANDSCAPE

Now isolated in the immense Pacific Ocean, New Caledonia was once part of Gondwana, the southern supercontinent made up of what became Australia, Antarctica, India, Africa and South America. When New Caledonia separated from Australia around 180 million years ago, it took with it a sample of this supercontinent's vegetation and continued its evolution alone.



## ✦ GRANDE TERRE

The slender body of this “island lizard” is 450 km long and 50 km wide. When reefs and small islands are included the archipelago stretches 800 km to just above the Tropic of Capricorn. This means that New Caledonia benefits from a temperate tropical climate with a cooler season from April to September and rainy months from December to March during the warm, cyclone season.

South of Grande Terre.  
© M. Dosdane / Province Sud

**PREVIOUS DOUBLE PAGES**  
Atoll off Ouvéa. © DIL

Rocks near Lindéralique  
on the east coast. © P. Nord

Mining hills in North  
Province. © Xstrata / SMSP

Cattle farm in South  
Province. © M. Dosdane / P. Sud

**LEFT**  
Yedjele Beach in Maré. © DIL

## IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC

New Caledonia is situated 1,500 km east of the Australian coast and 1,700 km northeast of New Zealand. Its closest neighbour, Vanuatu, is 600 km away, while metropolitan France is 20,000 km away. It has a surface area of 18,564 km<sup>2</sup>, while its 24,000 km<sup>2</sup> lagoon is surrounded by a 1,600 km-long barrier coral reef. When outlying islands and uninhabited islands are included New Caledonia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) stretches over 1.4 million km<sup>2</sup>.

**The central mountain chain**, which rises along the entire length of Grande Terre, is a permanent sight on the landscape. This chain of sharply sloped mountains, with jagged, steep ridges, rises to 1,618 m in the south (Mount Humboldt) and 1,628 m in the north (Mount Panié). Scarlet



channels rise here and there, bearing witness to past and present mining on the island.

**The island's western side** is lined with vast plains, grassy savannah landscapes, where stockmen — Pacific cowboys— farm livestock. This is interspersed with market gardening, which has developed on land fertilized by rivers.

Marked by deep, narrow and winding valleys that follow rivers and waterfalls, **the eastern side of Grande Terre** falls directly into the sea.

Here the year plays out to the cycles of yams and tubers grown in market gardens. The low valley's impenetrable forests are replaced on the summits by tree-like ferns and native pines.

**In the north**, the landscape is dominated by ochre and rust-coloured earth, on which scrubland vegetation has developed, made up for the most part of exceptional plants. Offshore, the Belep Islands are around a dozen uninhabited small islands and two inhabited islands: Aar, with the village of Waala, and Phwoc.

They are found in one of six marine clusters classified as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

**In the extreme south**, the slopes of the Isle of Pines fall gently into a unique turquoise lagoon: a seashell-shaped stretch of water 18 km long and 14 km wide. Kunié, as the island is known in Kanak, also shelters a number of archaeological remains. Lined by a beach of fine white sand, Kuto Bay was chosen in the nineteenth century as the site of a penal colony, but is today enjoyed by tourists.

## ❖ LOYALTY ISLANDS

The Loyalty Islands are ancient atolls, limestone islands around 125 km off the east coast of Grande Terre, filled in during the Quaternary era by land rising out of the sea. Lifou, Maré, Tige and Ouvéa are often compared to large gourds with slightly raised sides: the highest point on Maré is 129 m, Lifou 39 m, and Ouvéa 38 m.



Horses are used as cattle are raised over vast areas.  
© South Province

Inland the islands contain caves, some more like chasms, hidden by thick forest vegetation. The impressive cliffs that line the coast give way to series of berms that form steps down to the sea and the pleasure of wide beaches of bright white sand that provide an astonishing contrast with the emerald-coloured sea.



New Caledonia has many idyllic small islands.  
© M. Dosdane / P. Sud  
Cape Pine on Lifou. © DIL

## THE LAGOON, UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

New Caledonia's coral reefs are part of six marine clusters — representing 60% of Grande Terre and the Loyalty Islands' lagoons— that became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. They contain an exceptional diversity of species of corals and fish, as well as a continuum of habitats from mangroves to seagrasses, with the world's most diverse concentration of reef structures. They shelter ecosystems of exceptional marine biodiversity, made up of healthy populations of large predators, as well as a large number and diversity of big fish. The lagoons provide habitats for a number of iconic or endangered marine species, such as turtles, whales and dugongs.

[whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org); [www.ifremer.nc](http://www.ifremer.nc)



# BIODIVERSITY

## ✦ HIGHLY ENDEMIC BIODIVERSITY

New Caledonia has a wide variety of endemic species, whether plant or animal, on land or in the sea. In fact, no other region in the world can claim to have as many specific living creatures on such a small landmass, which places it in third place for the size and originality of its biodiversity, after Hawaii and New Zealand. The characteristics of the archipelago's flora result largely from its isolation and eventful geological history. The rate of species endemism is around 75%, while five families of Caledonian plants do not exist anywhere else.

**Dense, humid forest** —which contains the richest collection of plant species— stretches in fragments from the south to the north along the central chain, spilling over on the east coast and the two ends of Grande Terre. The Loyalty Islands also have areas of forest.

**Mining scrubland**, sitting on ultrabasic rocks, makes up the majority of the Grand Sud of the island and in patches heading north. Here the plants are 90% endemic.

**Dry forest** now makes up only 1% of the island's forests and remains extremely threatened by human activity (clearing and fire) and by introduced animal species such as deer and rats.

## MANGROVE SWAMPS

Mangrove swamps stretch between plains and reefs. This ecosystem, the product of land meeting sea, acts as a nursery for the lagoon. It is also a natural shield, protecting the coast from marine erosion, filtering river water, and reducing the impact of land erosion on marine environments. The biggest mangrove swamps are along the west coast.

*Captaincookia  
margaretae.*  
© IAC

Coastline mangrove  
swamp, west coast.  
© IRD / J. Pattissou

**LEFT**  
Tortoises can be admired  
in the transparent waters  
of Easo Bay, near Lifou.  
© DIL



## ❖ EXCEPTIONAL FAUNA

Land-based fauna originally included no mammals. The only current representatives of that class, *Chiroptera* (New Caledonia flying fox and bats), came by air. New Caledonia does shelter, however, the world's biggest species of gecko. The New Caledonian giant gecko can reach 35 cm in length and lives in forests, feeding nocturnally on fruit, nectar and insects.

The New Caledonian crow is internationally renowned for its intelligence and dexterity in using tools to forage for food. The white-bellied goshawk (also called the New Caledonian goshawk) is the only bird of prey endemic to New Caledonia. The New Caledonian imperial pigeon, the world's biggest arboreal pigeon, is also endemic to the *Caillou*. The Uvea parakeet, with its instantly recognizable dark blue wing and tail feathers, yellow neck and red head, is threatened by extinction due to the clearing of its natural habitat in the forests in the north of the island, as well as illegal hunting. Of the 3,500 species of insects found in New Caledonia, more than 2,400 are endemic to the archipelago. These include the coconut grasshopper, the second biggest grasshopper in the world, *vers de bancoule* (a longhorn beetle larva), and the *Papilio montrouzieri* butterfly, recognizable by its metallic blue wings. The extremely wide variety of reefs and aquatic habitats—such as seagrass and seaweed beds and mangrove swamps—harbours a remarkably



Bellybutton nautilus, *Nautilus macromphalus*.  
© J. Thomazo

Sea fan in the east-coast lagoon. © Province Nord



biodiverse underwater environment: 350 different types of coral, 1,700 species of fish, and close to 5,500 species of molluscs have been identified. The rivers and lakes contain 80 species of fish. The rate of endemic species among aquatic life is, on the other hand, far lower than that of land-based species. Among the most remarkable animals is the bellybutton nautilus, a cephalopod mollusc that first appeared at the end of the Palaeozoic era, whose shell is wrapped in a spiral or stripes. There are also the only truly amphibious snakes, which live both on land and in the sea, whose venom



New Caledonia flying fox.  
© IAC

### NEW CALEDONIA FLYING FOX

The New Caledonia flying fox, which first appeared 65 million years ago, is a fruit bat that feeds on fruit juice and flower nectar. It plays a fundamental role in the forest by spreading seeds and pollen. It roosts in large trees in the wet evergreen forests, and rests upside down using its powerful talons to hold onto branches.

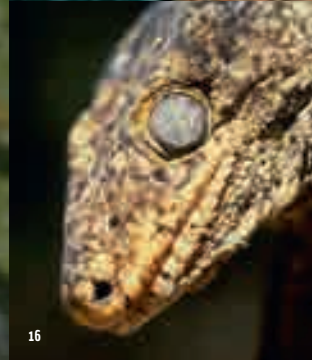
is ten times more poisonous than that of a cobra, but which are neither aggressive nor inquisitive. Small, brightly coloured fish add much to the beauty of the coral reefs. The list is long, including particularly bright butterfly fish, often yellow and black, clown fish, and blue-banded surgeonfish. Green parrotfish graze on algae on the coral, while the dark green-blue humphead wrasse is easily recognizable thanks to the large hump on its head.



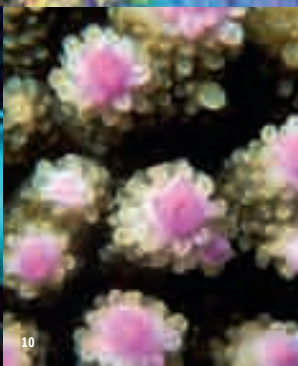
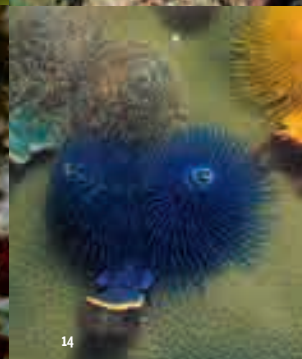
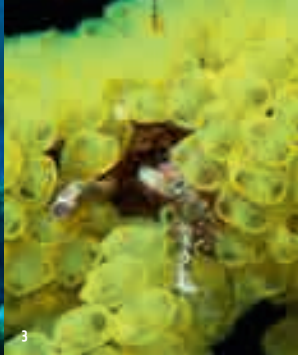
Kagu, *Rhynochetos jubatus*. © M. Dosdane / P. Sud

### KAGU

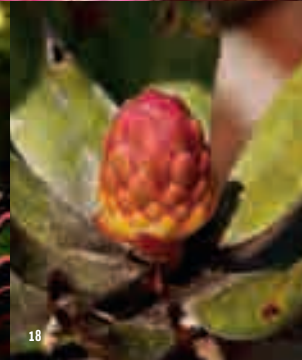
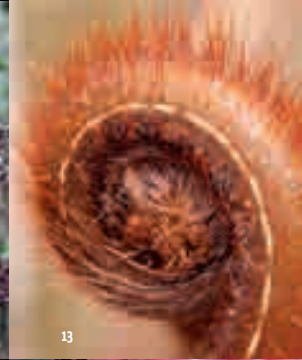
The kagu is a bird endemic to Grande Terre. Flightless as it had no predators before the arrival of humans, this unique bird's numbers have stabilized thanks to a conservation programme.













## PAGES 20–21 TERRESTRIAL FAUNA

1. Red-footed booby. © R. Aublin
2. Sooty tern. © R. Aublin
3. Kagu. © DR; All Rights Reserved
4. Puffins. © C. Grondin
5. Giant imperial pigeon. © DR
6. Miner bird. © A. Wulff
7. Brown booby. © R. Aublin
8. Giant imperial pigeon.  
© J.-M. Mériot
9. Deer. © P.-A. Pantz
10. *Papilio montrouzieri*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
11. New Caledonian crow, *Corvus moneduloides*. © DR
12. Mangrove crab. © IRD / P. Dumas
13. Uvea parakeet. © DIL
14. Crested gecko, *Rhacodactylus ciliatus*. © DR
15. Gould's petrel. © N.B.
16. New Caledonia giant gecko, *Rhacodactylus leachianus*. © DR

## PAGES 22–23 AQUATIC FAUNA AND FLORA

1. Branched soft coral, *Siphonogorgia sp.*  
© IRD / Pierre Laboute
2. Humphead wrasse, *Cheilinus undulatus*. © Julien Thomazo / MNC
3. Sea squirts, *Perophora modificata*. © IRD / Pierre Laboute
4. Octocorallia. © IRD / Pierre Laboute
5. Red firefish. © LMNC / Julien Thomazo
6. Nudibranch mollusc.  
© IRD / Pierre Laboute
7. Spirobranchus giganteus.  
© IRD / Pierre Laboute
8. Underwater seascape. © DIL
9. Fluorescent coral. © DR
10. Coral, *Acropora*.  
© IRD / Pierre Laboute
11. Gorgonian octocorallia. © IRD
12. Turtle. © NCTPS
13. Humpback whale.  
© M. Dosdane / P. Sud
14. *Spirobranchus giganteus*.  
© IRD / Pierre Laboute
15. *Dugong dugon*. © P. Larue
16. Moorish idol. © LMNC / J. Thomazo
17. Gorgonian, *Acabaria baladea*.  
© IRD
18. Parasite on a gorgonian, *Euplexaura amerea*.  
© IRD / Pierre Laboute
19. Anemone shrimp, *Periclimenes brevicarpalis*. © IRD
20. Flatworm, mollusc. © IRD

## PAGES 24–25 TERRESTRIAL FLORA

1. *Xanthostemon laurinum*.  
© IRD / T. Jaffé
2. *Dubouzetia sp.* © P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
3. *Bikkia campanulata*. © IRD
4. Orchid, *Spathoglottis vieillardii*. © P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
5. *Parasitaxus ustus*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
6. Orchid, *Phaius tankervilleae*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
7. *Cunonia*. © IRD
8. *Oxera palmatinervia*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
9. Fern, *Schizaea*. © IRD
10. *Xanthostemon aurantiacus*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
11. Scarlet honeyeater, *Myzomela caledonica*, on a *Storkiella*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
12. Houp-tree flower, *Montrouzeria gabriellae*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot
13. Unfurling fern, *Dicksonia sp.*  
© IRD
14. *Pancheria*. © IRD
15. *Syzygium acris*. © IRD / T. Jaffré
16. *Deplanchea speciosa*.  
© IRD / T. Jaffré
17. Fern, *Blechnum*. © IRD
18. *Malaleuca*. © IRD
19. *Xeronema moorei*.  
© P. Sud / J.-M. Mériot



# POPULATION



Half the population is under 30. © É. Aubry



## ✦ A YOUNG POPULATION

In 2012, the population of New Caledonia was estimated at 256,000. Since the 1980s and 1990s population growth has slowed, but remains at 1.7% a year of which 85% is natural growth and 15% migration.

Life expectancy is rising rapidly and is now at 74.4 for men and 80.7 for women, even if this remains lower than metropolitan France (78.4 and 84.6 respectively). **Half of New Caledonia's population is under 30**, but the relative number of the elderly is growing. In 13 years, the percentage of under-20s has dropped by more than 5% to 34.4%, while that of the over-60s has grown 4% to 11.2%.

## ✦ PERSISTENT DISPARITIES

Despite substantial investment since the 1988 Matignon Accords, which aimed to establish a better balance between the different provinces, South Province continues to undergo strong demographic growth (+2.3% a year on average between 1996 and 2009), while North Province has stabilized at 2.7% and the Loyalty Islands province continues its inexorable decline (-1.3%). South Province now makes up 75% of the total population, North Province 18% and the Loyalty Islands 7%.

**Population density in and around Nouméa** has also been accelerating. Two Caledonians in three now live in the conurbation of Greater Nouméa (Nouméa, Mont-Dore, Dumbéa and Païta). Thanks to record levels of annual growth, Païta (+5.7%) and Dumbéa (+4.7%) have seen their populations double in 13 years.

LEFT  
On Anse Vata beach in  
Nouméa. © A. Lucas



In North Province, the Voh-Koné-Pouembout (VKP) zone, on the west coast, has seen strong growth linked to construction and the opening of the nickel plant in Koniambo. The Loyalty Islands have lost 3,500 inhabitants in 13 years, one resident in seven, and the migratory flow towards Nouméa continues to grow. According to demographic projections from the territory's Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (ISEE), by 2030 the Caledonian population will be older and further concentrated around Nouméa: approximately 312,000 people, of whom one in five will be over 60.

[www.isee.nc](http://www.isee.nc)

### SHANTYTOWNS IN NOUMÉA

The increasing urbanization of the Caledonian population has been accompanied by wide social inequality, in particular in terms of housing. The first shantytowns appeared in Nouméa during the 1970s on publicly owned land.

These groupings of temporary homes, dominated by Kanak from tribes in North Province and Loyalty Islands, are extremely well organized and today house 10,000 people.



Temporary home.  
© J.-F. Marin / MNC

Bush farmer. © DR

### ❖ A MULTIETHNIC MOSAIC

New Caledonia is not a simple mirror with two faces, black or white, Kanak or European. It is a kaleidoscope modelled by history, whose colours have evolved over the years and with the needs of the local economy.

During the pre-colonial era, different Kanak groups had links with other archipelagos of the Melanesian Arc and Polynesia. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, a number of families from Wallis moved to Ouvéa. From the beginning of colonization, the territory was touched by many other migratory movements. Before the annexation by France in 1853, most of the Europeans present in the archipelago were British, drawn by whaling, the sandalwood trade and trading posts.

Established as a penal colony in 1863, New Caledonia received a flow of French convicts, as well as political Kabyle deportees from Algeria. The nickel rush, which began in 1876, then the unfettered colonization of the archipelago (encouraged from 1895) pushed the authorities to look for labour in the Pacific region. New Hebrideans (now Vanuatu), Japanese, Indians from Malabar, Javanese, and Tonkinese arrived. From 1969, during a new mining boom, Algerian *pieds-noirs*, as well as West Indians and Réunion islanders also moved to the territory. Today, New Caledonia is home to people from five continents.



Nouméa market offers a wide range of fruit and vegetables. © A. Lucas

In the centre of Nouméa, a large, brightly coloured arch marks the entrance to Chinatown. © A. Lucas

On the bus in Nouméa.  
© A. Lucas / MNC



### 40% KANAK

According to a 2009 census, Kanak make up 40.34% of the population, Europeans 29.2%, Wallis and Futuna islanders 8.66%, people who define themselves as mixed-race 8.3%, Caledonians 4.96%, Asians 3.34% and Tahitians 2.03%. The remainder is made up of people of diverse backgrounds, Ni-Vanuatu and residents who did not wish to specify their ethnic group.

**FOLLOWING PAGE**  
Baie des Citrons in  
Nouméa. © A. Lucas







# HISTORY

The first Austronesians, navigators from Southeast Asia, moved to Oceania between 1100 BCE and 1000 CE, as the burial mounds on Païta and the plateau of the Isle of Pines suggest.

Magnificent decorated pottery and walls built from monumental stones, such as those at Maré, characterize their culture, known as Lapita. Traditional Kanak society was structured from 1000 to 1774.

The native New Caledonian population first discovered the existence of white men with the arrival of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European scientific expeditions.

**On September 4, 1774**, British explorer Captain James Cook landed in the north of Grand Terre—in Balade—and named it New Caledonia.

He was followed by numerous French and British explorers who reconnoitred and mapped the archipelago's coastline. From 1841 to 1858, whale hunters established bases in the Loyalty Islands and on the north coast of Grand Terre where they would rest, stock up on water and food, and extract oil from whales. In the Loyalty Islands, Isle of Pines and the south of Grand Terre, sandalwood dealers traded for bottles, pipes, pearls, iron, fabric, matches, alcohol and weapons.

## PETROGLYPHS

Petroglyphs, whose origin and meaning remain unknown, are present throughout Grande Terre. Some are linked to ancient myths, reminders of legends and clan genealogy.









LEFT  
Petroglyph.

© Musée de la Nouvelle-Calédonie

# NEW CALEDONIA FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS TO TODAY



Timeline, to scale

LAPITA PERIOD			KONÉ & NAÏA PERIOD	KANAK CIVILIZATION	FIRST CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS		COLONIAL ERA	CONTEMPORARY PERIOD	
- 1100			- 800	0	1774		1827	1853	1946
gradual settling of the interior of Grande Terre					Captain Cook names New Caledonia		first whalers	France takes formal possession	abolition of the <i>Régime de l'Indigénat</i>
first evidence of human presence on the coasts across the archipelago				terracing and ridge-and-furrow farming			1840-43	1864	1897
							first Protestant, then Catholic, missionaries	first convict transport	final convict transport
								1868	1897-1903
								first native reserve	large-scale reserves for native people
								1874	
								beginning of nickel work	
								1878	
								uprising led by Ataï	
									1942-46
									presence of Allied forces
									1984-88
									the "Events"
									1988
									Matignon-Oudinot Accords
									1998
									Nouméa Accord
Lapita pottery fragment				Kanak door frame	Captain James Cook		Nouméa Cathedral	Ataï, uprising leader	American camp in Nouméa
									
								Taking formal possession in 1853	
									
									



## ♣ COLONIZATION AND CONFINEMENT

After having evangelized the Polynesian archipelagos from 1840 onwards, British missionaries from the London Missionary Society (LMS) continued their work in Melanesia. Samoan and Rarotongan catechists and British pastors were welcomed by chiefs on the Isle of Pines and the south of Grande Terre, then at Maré and Lifou. They ended cannibalism and polygamy, and certain interclan conflicts, even if they created others. In late 1843, four Catholic missionaries led by **Mgr. Guillaume Douarre** disembarked from a French warship in Balade.

In September 1853 and January 1854, the chiefs of Balade and the Isle of Pines signed an act recognizing French sovereignty with Rear-Admiral Febvrier-Despointes. In Nouméa and various locations around the new colony, large and small forts were built. Some were designed to counter any possible exterior threats, but most were built to maintain the colony's internal defence and protect colonists from Kanak attacks.

Beginning in 1868, on Grande Terre, the colonial administration regrouped the clans in restricted areas called **reserves**, which were inalienable and non-transferable. Grande Terre's first native reserve, known as Manangoës, was created in Païta. From 1887 until the end of the Second World War, the *Régime de l'Indigénat*—the administration for French colonial policy—placed the Kanak under the protection of France, and confined the clans in reserves led by chiefs chosen and paid by the administration.

This long period of forced cultural separation led to a number of **ethnic uprisings**. In 1878 and 1917, two in central Grande Terre lasted nearly a year. In 1879, the punishment affected entire tribes as hundreds of Kanak from insurgent tribes were moved to the Isle of Pines and the Belep Islands, while others found refuge on the east coast in Houaïlou and Canala. In 1917, the sometimes-excessive recruitment of infantrymen as reinforcements for French troops added to these troubles.



Guillaume Douarre (1810–1853).  
© Collection Estival

### FOLLOWING PAGES

1. *Le Tago*, a prison ship that transported five loads of convicts.

© A. Hughan / Archives de la Nouvelle-Calédonie

2. Pirogues belonging to Chief Samuel of the Isle of Pines. © ANC

3. Lindéralique, Hienghène. © Vintage photo – ANC, M. G. R. Leenhardt album

4. Traditional hut, central Grande Terre. © A. Hughan / ANC

Paddon Station in Païta.  
© DR

Pastor John Jones (1829–1908). © ANC



Atai, uprising leader.  
© Musée de la Ville du Nouméa

Ceremony for the return of Chief Atai's relics. Paris, August 2014.  
© J.-F. Marin / MNC



### JAMES PADDON (1812–1861)

Born in 1812 and considered the first Caledonian colonist, ex-Royal Navy sailor James Paddon had a number of occupations, including sandalwood trader, before founding a trading post on Nou Island, just before French annexation. James Paddon was given the task of attracting new colonists from Australia. These first families, of British and German origin, still have many descendants in the archipelago.

### PASTOR JOHN JONES (1829–1908)

Pastor John Jones arrived in Maré in 1853 after the first wave of missionaries, accompanied by his colleague Stephen Creagh. They converted the west of the island and began to translate the Gospel into Maréan. Pastor Jones was the first to train Kanak and Natas pastors.

### MONSIGNOR GUILLAUME DOUARRE (1810–1853)

To combat an almost exclusively Protestant evangelism in Oceania, seven missionaries from the Society of Mary, led by Guillaume Douarre, arrived in Balade in 1843. After a difficult beginning, they were forced to abandon their mission in 1847. Upon their return in 1851, they began converting the population with the help of tribal chief Hippolyte Bonou de Pouébo.

### ATAÏ

In 1878, the great chief Atai led a rebellion in the La Foa region to protest against the colonial administration's annexation of land. At the feet of the governor, Léopold de Pritzbuhr, Atai emptied two bags, one filled with earth, the other with stones, and told him, "Here is what we had; this is what you have left us." He was killed on September 1, 1878. His head was placed in a jar of formaldehyde and sent to the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris. It was officially returned to the Kanak clans by the French state on August 28, 2014.











#### PREVIOUS PAGES

5. Pupils of the indigenous school in Yahoué (Mont-Dore commune).  
© ANC

6. Colonial family.  
© Vintage photo – Éd. de l'Orge, A. Thévenet, Savigny

7. Tonkinese miner at the Mine Chagrin, July 1944.  
© Vintage photo – ANC

8. In the heart of a mine.  
© Vintage photo – ANC, M. & R. Leenhardt album

Louise Michel  
(1830–1905). © DR

Henri Rochefort  
(1831–1913).  
© Collection Estival

## ✦ PENAL COLONIZATION

A decree of September 2, 1863, turned the newborn colony into a destination for transportation. From 1864, Nou Island became the first penal colony and the depot through which all convicts passed through upon their arrival from metropolitan France. Criminals sentenced to hard labour and exile worked on infrastructure projects (such as buildings, roads and bridges) necessary for the growing colony.

A **double-jeopardy law** forced freed convicts to remain in New Caledonia for a time equal to their original sentence, so once released, many convicts moved into agricultural concessions in the villages of Bourail, Farino, La Foa, Le Diahot and Pouembout. Despite the misery and social segregation, they often began families by marrying Kanak women. A large part of the current population is descended from these men. In 1922, the penal administration definitively closed its last colonies and nine years later, by decree, *Nouvelle* ceased to be a penal colony.



### HENRI ROCHEFORT & LOUISE MICHEL

Upon their arrival in New Caledonia revolutionary intellectuals who had taken part in the 1871 Paris Commune, such as Henri Rochefort and Louise Michel, were placed on the Ducos peninsula, home to political deportees. While imprisoned, Michel—“the Red Virgin”—became interested in Kanak traditions, which her book *Kanak Legends and Chants de Gestes*, published on her return to France, made more widely known.

### ENGRAVED SHELLS

In the late 1860s, convicts began engraving shells picked up on the shores of Nou Island's penal colony. Often of an extreme finesse and precision, many of the drawings show scenes of Kanak tribes' daily lives or tropical landscapes, sometimes accompanied by religious or pagan stories about separation and prison life.



Restored penal colony in Nouville. © A. Lucas

Monument to deported convicts, Isle of Pines.  
© A. Lucas

#### LEFT, TOP AND BOTTOM

Penal-colony ruins and abandoned convict cells. Isle of Pines. © A. Lucas / MNC





Mother-of-pearl etched  
by a convict. © DR



Comb sculpted  
by a convict. © DR

## KABYLES

In 1872, Algerian men, whether civil-law prisoners or political prisoners of the 1871 Kabyle Revolt, were sent to *Caledoune*. As they only received an amnesty in 1895, some moved to the Nessadiou Valley where they married female convicts. Today, an “Arab cemetery” can be found near Bourail.

## GOVERNOR PAUL FEILLET (1857–1903)

Paul Feillet, governor from 1894 to 1903, was given the mission of closing the penal colonies and replacing them with free colonization. At his instigation, some 1,500 people emigrated to grow coffee, then considered the “nickel of agriculture,” on land seized from the Kanak, who were sent to live on reserves.

This dream did not survive the fall in coffee prices, the mediocrity of the assigned land or the lack of experience of the colonists, who were often from cities. By 1915, coffee exports had fallen back to the same low level as at the time of Governor Feillet’s arrival.



Arab men deported to New Caledonia.

© Bray, ANC

Stamp commemorating Governor Paul Feillet.

© Muséé de la Ville de Nouméa.

## ✦ MINING PROSPECTION

Since the late nineteenth century, mining prospection has revealed the presence of numerous ores under the Caledonian ground: nickel, chrome, cobalt, iron, copper, manganese and others abound, particularly on Grande Terre. Often accompanied by (sometimes) temporary villages, mining always created jobs, firstly for convicts, then contracted workers. It also demanded the creation of infrastructure such as wharves or trails, now sometimes abandoned or transformed into ports or roads.

## TIÉBAGHI

Opencast mining at Tiébaghi, situated at the northern tip of Grande Terre, began in 1902 when chrome became a raw material used in special steels. Workers and their families lived close to the crater, while the material was moved in pieces using pack donkeys.

The 1929 depression and the World War II saw a collapse in production, the Caledonian chrome industry saw its productivity drop and the mine closed in 1964. In 1995, mining company Société Le Nickel (SLN) bought the mine and reopened it to extract nickel.



## ✦ THE TWO WORLD WARS

French citizens in New Caledonia were mobilized on August 5, 1914. Assigned to the colonial regiments, they fought at the Somme, Verdun, Chemin des Dames and in the Army of the Orient. When France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, French citizens in New Caledonia and the New Hebrides were again mobilized. During the night of 18–19 September 1940, hundreds of *broussards* came to Nouméa to demand that the colony join the Free French, and this came into effect on September 19, 1940.



Baie des Citrons, 1943.  
© Muséé de la Ville de Nouméa.

The Second World War  
Museum in Nouméa. © DR

When the Japanese **attacked Pearl Harbor** on December 11, 1941, and the USA joined the war, New Caledonia was chosen as joint command centre for the Pacific. On March 12, 1942, 17,000 GIs led by Brigadier General Alexander M. Patch —the Poppy Force— landed in Nouméa. The island became a landing port, rear base and transit area for the US Army.

## ✦ NEW CALEDONIA AND THE MODERN WORLD

The cultural shock was huge. Caledonians benefited from the American health system, discovered Jeeps, bulldozers and agricultural machinery, and quickly adopted Coca-Cola, whisky and chewing gum. The country modernized. The Kanak, Javanese and Indochinese were now earning the same salary as whites. The tribes provided fruit and vegetables, which the soldiers loved, and witnessed the arrival



of cigarettes and food in abundance. The 1945 French constitution made colonies disappear with “New Caledonia and its dependencies” becoming an overseas territory with greater autonomy. Its inhabitants were now represented by Roger Gervolino, their own *député* or member of the French parliament. The *Régime de l’Indigénat* was abolished and Kanak became French citizens, able to move freely, choose their employer and live where they wanted.

In 1957, the application of the 1956 Defferre governing law created greater autonomy and saw the appointment of a local government with Caledonian ministers. For the first time, Kanak had responsibility within government institutions.



**TWO IMAGES ABOVE**  
From 1984 to 1988, loyalists and separatists clashed violently, leading the territory to the edge of civil war.  
© ADCK-CTT / P. Boisserand

Monument commemorating the 19 Kanak killed during the assault on the cave in Ouvéa on May 5, 1988.  
© J.-F. Marin / MNC



## ✦ SEPARATIST DEMANDS

The end of the nickel boom (1969–1972), the profits of which had not been evenly shared, set off political protests marked by cultural and political demands by the young. The first Kanak students returning from France and young Caledonians founded the *foulards rouges* (red scarves) and reclaimed the word Kanak, which until then had been pejorative.

The Mélanésia 2000 festival organized in Nouméa from September 3-15, 1975, by separatist leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, mobilized all the tribes in the territory. The clans rediscovered their dignity and

their place within other communities. The “events” of 1984 to 1988 were a sort of quasi-civil war as bombings, abuse, violent confrontations and murders followed one after the other. In May 1988, militants from the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) killed four *gendarmes* and held others hostage in Gossanah cave on Ouvéa, in the hope of obtaining immediate independence. The assault by government forces to free the hostages, which began on May 5, 1988, left 21 dead: 19 Kanak and 2 *gendarmes*. This provoked a commitment to peace negotiations under the auspices of the French state.

## ✦ NEGOTIATED PEACE TOWARDS A “COMMON DESTINY”: 1988–2018

In 1988, the handshake between the two political leaders, loyalist Jacques Lafleur of the RCPR party and separatist Jean-Marie Tjibaou (FLNKS) accompanied the Matignon-Oudinot accords, signed for the French state by Prime Minister Michel Rocard. Despite Jean-Marie Tjibaou’s 1989 assassination, the march towards peace continued until the 1998 Nouméa Accord.



Jean-Marie Tjibaou. © ADCK  
Jacques Lafleur. © LNC

### JEAN-MARIE TJIBAOU (1936–1989)

A member of the Tiendanite tribe, Jean-Marie Tjibaou was ordained as a priest in 1965. Ten years later, he left the Church and organized the Mélanésia 2000 festival, to assert Kanak cultural identity. Entering politics in 1977, he gave a new direction to political party Union Calédonnienne: independence. After the events on Ouvéa in 1988, he agreed to negotiations. He was assassinated on May 4, 1989, in Ouvéa by a separatist extremist.

### JACQUES LAFLEUR (1932–2010)

A fervent believer in New Caledonia remaining part of France, Jacques Lafleur signed the Matignon accords with Jean-Marie Tjibaou because, he said, “we had to reconcile the antagonisms.” In 1990, he sold his mining company, SMSP, to North Province, which was run by Kanak separatists and, on May 5, 1998, he signed the Nouméa Accord, which set New Caledonia on the road to decolonization.

# FOUNDING TEXTS

## ✦ THE MATIGNON ACCORDS

The Matignon Accords, signed on June 26, 1988, and approved in a national referendum on November 7, allowed civil peace to be re-established and New Caledonia to engage in a new phase of development characterized by power sharing between separatists and loyalists.

These accords relaunched regionalization, a tool of a policy of economic rebalancing and development. The territory was divided into three provinces, North, South and Loyalty Islands, freely controlled by assemblies elected by universal suffrage and responsible for economic, social and environmental policy. **Among the measures** put in place during the decade of the Matignon accords were:

- training senior managers to take up specific positions, a policy that has seen 1,000 people, for the most part Kanak, achieve higher-education degrees;
- the development of infrastructure, dispensaries and educational establishments;
- the creation of the Agence de Développement Rural et d'Aménagement Foncier (ADRAF), responsible for rural development and land reform;
- the setting up of the Agence de Développement de la Culture Kanak (ADCK) and the creation of the Tjibaou Cultural Centre.



Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Michel Rocard in 1988.  
© ADCK - CCT

### LEFT

On the front steps of the Matignon Palace in Paris, Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Jacques Lafleur shake hands to seal the return of civil peace.

© Archives NC1<sup>re</sup> - France Ô

### SMSP

In 1990, the North Province purchased mining company Société Minière du Pacifique Sud (SMSP) from owner Jacques Lafleur. Since 1995 it has been one of the world's biggest exporters of nickel and retains significant mining assets. The construction of the metallurgy plant in North Province, a prerequisite for the Nouméa Accord, was approved in 1998.



## THE NOUMÉA ACCORD

To delay the “for or against independence” referendum planned in the Matignon-Oudinot Accords, separatists, loyalists and the French state negotiated a consensual solution: the Nouméa Accord. Signed on May 5, 1998, it became part of the constitution and was ratified in a referendum by 72% of the Caledonian population. The Nouméa Accord promises that between 2014 and 2018 a **referendum** on a move towards full sovereignty will be organized. A freeze of the electoral rolls means only people who arrived before 1998 and can justify twenty years of residence in New Caledonia will be allowed to vote.



### A FRATERNAL ANTHEM

“Be united,  
become brothers,  
No more violence,  
no more war,  
Let us march on  
confidently together,  
For our country.”

*Chorus of the New  
Caledonia national anthem*

Roch Wamytan, Lionel Jospin and Jacques Lafleur sign the Nouméa Accord, engaging the territory on the path of a common destiny. © LNC

### CONSTRUCTING A COMMON DESTINY

*“A new process needs to commence, entailing full recognition of the Kanak identity, as a prerequisite for rebuilding a social contract between all the communities living in New Caledonia, and entailing shared sovereignty with France, in preparation for full sovereignty.”*

*“The past was the time of colonisation. The present is the time of sharing, through the achievement of a new balance. The future must be the time of an identity, as part of a common destiny.”*

Extract from the preamble to the Nouméa Accord.

## THE STATE

**FRENCH HIGH COMMISSIONER  
IN NEW CALEDONIA  
+ A REPRESENTATIVE COMMISSIONER IN EACH PROVINCE**

### NEW CALEDONIA

**NEW CALEDONIA'S  
CABINET GOVERNMENT**

5 to 11 members

→ *consults*  
Customary Senate  
16 members  
Economic and  
Social Council  
39 members

↑  
*elects*

**NEW CALEDONIA CONGRESS**

54 elected  
members

32 seats

15 seats

7 seats

### THE PROVINCES

↑

↑

↑

**SOUTH  
PROVINCE  
ASSEMBLY**

**NORTH  
PROVINCE  
ASSEMBLY**

**LOYALTY  
ISLANDS  
ASSEMBLY**



40 elected members



22 elected members



14 elected members

↑

↑

↑

**ELECTORATE: CALEDONIAN CITIZENS**  
*vote every 5 years*

Court hearing in Koné,  
North Province. © B. Sevenet



### ✦ CIVIL LAW AND CUSTOMARY LAW

In New Caledonia two forms of civil status coexist: civil law for Europeans and other communities, and customary law for Kanak. Like nationality, **being subject to customary-law status is acquired through filiation**. As soon as a child is registered under customary law, all the acts of his or her life, concerning family, personal relationships, contracts and property are governed by custom.

Many Kanak are attached to the customary status because it underlines their specificity, but also because it protects land reserves and allows certain disputes to escape European judicial process. Now, disagreements settled amicably by customary authorities are referred to a particular jurisdiction where customary assessors are seated next to professional judges on an equal footing. **The “customary court”** decides on conflicts that affect the daily life of clans and villages, such as child custody in the case of divorce.

### CHANGING STATUS

The Nouméa Accord allows any person subject to civil law to return to customary law. Individuals only have to prove that they live, in a sustainable way, in conformity with the rules of Kanak customs. A judge must then decide whether a person is living in an ongoing and ancient way, even if the civil status says the opposite.

### ✦ TRANSFERRING COMPETENCIES

The Nouméa Accord organizes New Caledonia’s emancipation through a system of shared sovereignty with France. Within this framework, France devolves major powers to New Caledonia, in a progressive, but irreversible manner. According to the accord, France will retain control of currency, law and order, defence and foreign affairs.

### SYMBOLS OF IDENTITY

According to Article 1 of the Nouméa Accord, symbols of identity – name, flag, national anthem, motto and banknote design – “conveying the essential place of the Kanak identity in the accepted common destiny” should be adopted. By January 1, 2014, only three symbols had been written into law: the national anthem (*Soyons Unis, Devenons Frères*), the motto (*Terre de parole, terre de partage*), and the design of new banknotes.



The new New Caledonian banknotes entered into circulation in January 2014.



# ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

## ✦ CONGRESS

The Congress, New Caledonia's deliberative assembly, is formed by gathering elected officials from the three provincial assemblies.

Of its 54 members, 32 members come from South Province, 15 from North Province, and seven from Loyalty Islands.

Congress votes on national resolutions and laws concerning affairs common to the entire country. Its powers include taxation, price regulation, general planning law, civil procedures, the organization of territorial services, and rules on public health, hygiene and social protection.

[www.congres.nc](http://www.congres.nc)

## ✦ GOVERNMENT

The multiparty Caledonian government is picked by proportional representation from the political parties elected to Congress. It works by consensus or, failing that, by a democratic majority. In the case of a political crisis, the minority cannot impose itself on the majority and in case of fault, the French state arbitrates. The government remains in power until the end of the mandate of the Congress from which it was formed, except if it resigns or is impeached by Congress.

[www.gouv.nc](http://www.gouv.nc)

### LEFT

The French tricolour and the Kanak flag hoisted side by side, symbolizing official recognition of the territory's shared legitimacy. © A. Lucas / MNC



New Caledonian Congress.  
© A. Lucas



Façade of the seat of government. © A. Lucas





Hut marking the entrance to the North Province's government headquarters in Koné. © B. Lutz

The Loyalty Islands' provincial-government headquarters. © B. Lutz

The seat of the South Province in Nouméa. © A. Lucas

Customary Senate. © A. Lucas

## PROVINCES

New Caledonia is organized into three provinces: North, South and Loyalty Islands. All have civil-law authority, which they administer freely. The provincial assemblies are elected for five years by direct universal suffrage. Like all French decentralized authorities, they have two means of expression: an elected deliberative assembly and an executive represented by the president of the assembly.

[www.province-nord.nc](http://www.province-nord.nc); [www.province-sud.nc](http://www.province-sud.nc); [www.province-iles.nc](http://www.province-iles.nc)

## IMPORTANT FINANCIAL MEANS

The New Caledonian government transfers to the provinces grants for operating budgets and capital expenditure. In line with the rebalancing aims fixed by the political agreements, the operating budget is shared out 50% to North Province, 32% to South Province, and 18% to Loyalty Islands. South Province and North Province each receive 40% of capital expenditure, Loyalty Islands 20%.

Each year, the French state gives the provinces grants for their operating budgets and general grants for building and equipping schools. The provinces also receive general taxes and provincial taxes.

## CUSTOMARY SENATE

The Matignon Accords created a consultative customary council, which, with the Nouméa Accord, became the Customary Senate. Composed of **sixteen members** from eight customary areas of New Caledonia (two representatives per area), its members are chosen by areas' customary councils according to custom. Each senate's mandate is five years, with its president being re-elected every year.

The Customary Senate, whose role is purely consultative, must be consulted on projects or propositions related to Kanak identity.

## THE KANAK PEOPLE'S CHARTER

The Kanak People's Charter, solemnly proclaimed on April 25, 2014, by clan chiefs and customary senators, brings together the fundamental values and principles of Kanak culture in the context of the archipelago's decolonization. It explains the principles of the relationship to the land, customary pardon, the central role of yams, as well as the founding values of hospitality, solidarity and sharing.

## CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL (CES)

The 39-member Economic and Social Council's main mission is to advise and formulate proposals for politicians about economic, social and environmental issues.

[www.ces.nc](http://www.ces.nc)

## COMMUNES

There are 33 communes: 18 in North Province, 12 in South Province and 3 in Loyalty Islands. Only a third of communes have more than 3,500 inhabitants. Yaté, the geographically biggest commune at 1,338 km<sup>2</sup>, is a fifteenth the size of France. Nouméa, the capital, concentrates three-quarters of the population and economic activity.



Saint Joseph's Cathedral in Nouméa. © A. Lucas / MNC

## THE FRENCH STATE

The French State is represented by a High Commissioner, named by the council of ministers. He ensures that government rules and decisions are executed, guarantees the implementation of laws and decrees, and controls organizations benefitting from state aid. He also guarantees administrative control of institutions, provinces, communes and public institutions.

[www.nouvelle-caledonie.gouv.fr](http://www.nouvelle-caledonie.gouv.fr)

## THE STATE'S MISSIONS

- State civil service
- immigration control
- foreign relations
- public order
- currency
- fiscal policy
- defence
- judicial system



# ECONOMY



Partial view of Goro mine.  
© M. Dosdane / P. Sud

With a per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) of around 3.4 million Pacific francs (€28,500) in 2011, New Caledonia sits between Australia and New Zealand and at an average level seen in European countries. With the exception of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, New Caledonia is the overseas collectivity with the strongest wealth production per inhabitant (37% more than Martinique; 61% more than Reunion). This gap has even widened in the past few years as New Caledonia has experienced fewer effects from the global financial crisis than other overseas collectivities.

In the Pacific region, New Caledonia is far ahead of other island economies whose GDPs are comparable to those of developing nations. **The Human Development Index (HDI)** places New Caledonia in 51st place, behind France (20th), but ahead of French Polynesia (77th). New Caledonia still suffers from long-standing developmental imbalances between the dynamic South Province, dominated by Greater Nouméa, and the rest of the territory. To this has recently been added an imbalance between the west coast of Grande Terre with its economy based on



The Grand Sud refinery, run by Brazilian company Vale.  
© Vale Inco NC

**LEFT**  
Thio regional mine.  
© M. Dosdane / P. Sud

mining and metallurgy, and the more sparsely populated and agricultural east coast. The Loyalty Islands with their more traditional way of life are suffering from strong falls in population due to migration.

Often presented as **a metallic island** thanks to size of its mineral deposits, the New Caledonian economy is dominated by services (68% of GDP), while the manufacturing sector makes up 25%, and the primary sector 7%. Consumer goods are essentially imported products. The small size of the internal market and its distance from large world markets make local production of substitutes difficult. To get around this problem, the local government has maintained a system of market protection, controversial due to its effect on prices.



Kanak, including women, are increasingly involved in nickel mining. © A. Lucas

Mining remnants in Tiébaghi. © P. Nord



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

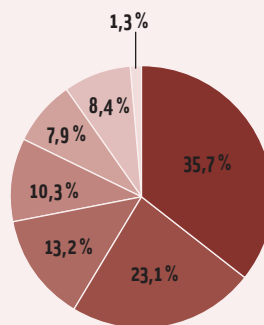
The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) has created a website where studies by institutions including IEOM, Medef, ISEE and IDC-NC can be found.

[www.nc-eco.nc](http://www.nc-eco.nc)

## SHARE OF ADDED VALUE IN 2010



(Source: IEOM, 2012 Annual Report)



## REAL POTENTIAL

Nickel makes up the principal productive activity on New Caledonia and is a driving force for all other activities. It represents more than 90% of exports and helps the country through tax receipts, as well as dividends on the 34% share in the capital of SLN, held by the Société territoriale calédonnienne de participations industrielles (STCPI). The country is extremely exposed to fluctuations in nickel prices. Its importance also tends to overshadow the evolution of other sectors of the economy.

## NICKEL

Over and above its impact in terms of jobs and wealth creation, the nickel sector has been one of the principle motors of economic growth over the past few years thanks to the large investments made in the construction of metallurgy plants. The territory's leading export sector, nickel has a major impact on the balance of trade.

Nickel ore is extracted by **around ten companies**.

The leading ones are Société Le Nickel (SLN), 56% owned by French group ERAMET, and Société Minière du Sud Pacifique (SMSP), 87.27% owned by North Province's financial arm, the Sofinor conglomerate and Vale New Caledonia, a subsidiary of Brazilian corporation Vale. Smaller companies, such as MKM, SMGM and Groupe Ballande's SMT mine sites for export or as subcontractors for SLM or SMSP.



Garnierite. © É. Dell'Erba

## A LONG, SHARED HISTORY

Since the second half of the 19th century, the history of New Caledonia has been inseparable from nickel mining. From the discovery of the first deposits by French engineer Jules Garnier in 1863 and the excavation of the first veins with pickaxes up to the cutting-edge technology of the North and Grand South plants, the territory has experienced the booms and crises of nickel's changing market price. And by linking up with powerful multinationals, New Caledonia has become part of globalization.

### FOLLOWING PAGES

The Koniambo plant at dusk. © DR

Doniambo plant in Nouméa. © A. Lucas

Molten nickel leaving the blast furnaces. © É. Dell'Erba











### ❖ THREE METALLURGY PLANTS ON GRANDE TERRE

For a long time, the only company with the capacity to treat nickel ore was SLN, thanks to its Doniambo pyrometallurgy plant in Nouméa's large harbour, which employs 1,300 people. This industrial complex has a capacity of 60,000 tonnes and produces ferronickel for stainless-steel producers and nickel matte, which is sent to ERAMET's Sandouville factory in Le Havre, France. SLN generates **2,200 direct jobs** and 6,600 indirect jobs.

#### SLN, 130 YEARS ON THE CAILLOU

On **May 18, 1880**, Jules Garnier, John Higginson and Henry Marbeau joined forces to build a plant at Thio, on the east coast. In 1909, Armand-Louis Ballande founded the Société des Hauts Fourneaux, which, three years later, opened a foundry in Nouméa. In **1931**, the two metallurgy groups merged and in **1985**, the assets were regrouped in the Société Métallurgique Le Nickel-SLN, today a subsidiary of French group ERAMET.



Inauguration of the blast furnaces on July 10, 1910.  
© Musée de la Ville de Nouméa



Doniambo plant.  
© M. Dosdane / P. Sud

In the extreme south of Grande Terre, close to the spectacular bay of Prony, Brazilian company Vale has built a hydrometallurgy plant to refine laterite (ore with a low nickel content) from the Goro deposit. This investment of \$6 billion will eventually produce 60,000 tonnes of nickel and 5,000 tonnes of cobalt a year.

In North Province, SMSP has joined up with Swiss giant Glencore to invest \$6.3 billion in a pyrometallurgy facility with an annual nominal capacity of 60,000 tonnes of nickel. In production since April 2013, the complex is seen as a symbol of the kind of economic and geographic rebalancing envisaged by the Matignon and Nouméa Accords.

### ❖ PYROMETALLURGY OR HYDROMETALLURGY?

The thermal pyrometallurgical process used to refine ore with high nickel content at SLN's Doniambo facility (pre-drying, calcining, then smelting at 1,400°C) produces ferronickel and matte, the latter later transformed into extremely pure metal at the Sandouville plant in Le Havre, France.

At the Vale NC plant a hydrometallurgical process is used to refine laterite with low metal content from southern New Caledonia. This refining process sees the raw material put into a solution (pressurized leaching) and dissolved with sulphuric acid. It produces nickel oxide and cobalt carbonate.

### ❖ A PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH KOREA

In 2005, SMSP signed a joint agreement with South Korean corporation Posco, the world's second-biggest steel company, to build a metallurgy facility with an annual capacity of 30,000 tonnes at Gwangyang, South Korea. In exchange for its 51% share, SMSP gave up 49% of its mining titles (except at Koniambo) to Posco. The construction of a second production line to double capacity at the plant should be completed during 2015.

With three Caledonian facilities and one at Gwangyang, New Caledonia hopes that in the long term it will produce nearly 240,000 tonnes of nickel a year and become the second largest producer in the world.



Koniambo plant,  
managed by SMSP  
and Glencore. © DR

### NEW CALEDONIA, FACTORY SHAREHOLDER

New Caledonia owns shares in all three of the metallurgy facilities present on its territory, but at different levels.

- Through the Société Territoriale des Participations Industrielles (STCPI), the three provinces own 34% of SLN's capital.
- SMSP (therefore North Province) owns 51% of the Koniambo plant.
- Through the Société de Participation Minière du Sud Calédonien (SPMNC), the three provinces hold 5% of the capital of the Grand Sud plant. This share can be increased to 10%, even 20%.



**RIGHT, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM**  
Freshwater-shrimp  
fishing. © P. Nord

Fisherman at Touho on  
the North Province's east  
coast. © P. Nord

Shrimp are one of New  
Caledonia's main exports.  
© J.-F. Marin / MNC



## GOLDEN BLUE

Apart from some fishing in the lagoon, New Caledonia has relatively little interaction with the sea. Yet it possesses a vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which offers genuine prospects for economic development. The sea's current 1% contribution to GDP is limited to shrimp, tuna and sea cucumbers. Certain activities such as marine biodiversity

### VALUABLE REEFS

According to French government body IFRECOR, New Caledonia's coral reefs could generate €80–100 million a year in revenue. Income sources linked to the reef include fishing, tourism and the use of new molecules. Additionally, the protection of the coasts from tides provided by coral reefs saves €170 million a year.

### 1.47 MILLION KM<sup>2</sup>

That's the size of New Caledonia's EEZ, which is more than 13% of France's entire EEZ. Yet more than 75% of that is currently totally unexplored.

### BLUE SHRIMP

Their unique colour is a reflection of the pure, crystal-clear water in which they are raised. The only French shrimp recognized by the Japanese as good enough to be used for sashimi, Caledonian blue shrimp are considered by chefs as "ocean caviar."

#### FOLLOWING PAGES

1. Vanilla drying in Lifou.  
© DIL

2. Kanak gardens are  
generally cultivated  
by women. © DIL

3. Pineapple plantation.  
© J.-F. Marin / MNC

4. Market gardener. © P. Sud

with the development of micro-seaweeds or the diversification of aquatic production (spinefoot, emperor red snapper and humpback grouper farming) have still-unexplored potential. Micro-seaweed is beginning to be cultivated in laboratories to produce biomass and proteins that could be used in animal feed.

It is probable that the EEZ also contains **undersea mineral reserves**, such as oil, gas and deposits of sulphur ores. A large exploratory mission will be launched in 2015 to determine the zone's potential. Another long-term possibility is renewable energy: tidal, offshore wind and thermal energy techniques to harness the difference in sea temperature (4°C at a depth of 1,000m versus 24°–26°C on the surface).









Stockmen round up their cattle. © M. Dosdane / P. Sud



## MANY ARTISANS

In New Caledonia, the density of skilled tradespeople is nearly twice that of France: 20% of the active population against 11% in metropolitan France.  
[www.isee.nc](http://www.isee.nc)

## ✦ AGRICULTURE

The agricultural sector is extremely diversified, with on one side, Kanak traditional farming, home-grown production and customary gifts, and, on the other, professional farmers, mainly Europeans, working on modern farms growing produce for sale. Despite the modernization and professionalization of the sector, agriculture remains unable to meet consumer demand. Cattle farming, on pastures on the west coast, is in steady decline, while milk production is minimal. Poultry farming manages to cover the demand for eggs, but satisfies only 5% of the demand for meat.

**Shrimp farming** in New Caledonia first began in 1970 with the creation of a production centre at Saint-Vincent in South Province. Today a dozen producers, working on Grand Terre's west coast, raise blue shrimp (*Litopenaeus stylirostris*) in small farms—whose density is half that seen in intensive farming—on the edge of the lagoon.

Collège d'Auteuil school, Nouméa. © P. Sud



## EDUCATION, A MAJOR ECONOMIC CONCERN

Thanks to its ability to act as a catalyst for socioeconomic development, education is a major concern. Teaching and professional training represent nearly 12% of GDP, with education spending at €10,000 per student. Between 2005 and 2010, it grew by 34%.

## ✦ STATE FINANCIAL AID

Annual French state aid, estimated at around €1.35 billion, is an important economic buffer. The French state intervenes through targeted development contracts, such as those for 2011–2015 that concentrated on sanitary infrastructure. The fiscal aid to overseas investment package —“**tax exemption**”— pushes aid towards priority sectors such as social housing and research and development. It has also helped with the construction of two metallurgy plants: SMSP-Glencore in North Province and Vale in South Province.

## ✦ TOURISM, A SECTOR FOR THE FUTURE

With around 100,000 visitors a year, 6% of all salaried employees (around 5,000 people) and 3.8% of GDP, tourism is an attractive sector, even if it is faced with recurrent difficulties: the high cost of air service, thanks to New Caledonia's insularity and its distance from other markets; unsuitable hotel stock, even if there have been some important new ventures over the past few years; and competition from island neighbours such as Fiji, which in 2013, attracted more than 600,000 visitors.

Traditional hut in the Loyalty Islands. © DIL

Hôtel Oure Tera, Isle of Pines. © DR



## GOUARO DEVA

Sheraton's new hotel complex sits close to Bourail, on the 8,000-hectare Domaine de Deva and its richly impressive biodiversity, next to 13 kilometres of reef and lagoon classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and with a long history of human habitation stretching back 3,000 years. The complex includes a high-quality hotel (370 three- and five-star rooms), bungalows, a freely accessible campground, an 18-hole golf course, and a historic cultural village.

# CULTURE



Ceremonial axe from Ouégoa, Hans Nevermann Collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin.

© J.-F. Marin / MNC

## LEFT

Wall hanging, 1899, Collection Cdt. Gauthier, Muséum d'histoire naturelle, La Rochelle.

© J.-F. Marin / MNC

## FOLLOWING PAGES

Late 19th-century statue, Dct Ponty Collection, Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, Nouméa.

© J.-F. Marin / MNC

Money with sculpted head, northeastern New Caledonia, Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, Nouméa. © É. Dell'Erba



The cultural and artistic life of New Caledonia reflects the extreme diversity of its population's origins. The emergence of Kanak nationalism in the 1970s forced each community to rediscover its fundamental identity and reclaim its cultural heritage. Today, the approach of important institutional deadlines—a referendum on self-determination will take place between 2014 and 2018—has accelerated this process and generated an increased number of interventions that aim to show the specificities of each group, as well as promote those of the archipelago overall.

## ✚ KANAK CULTURE

In the 1970s the Kanak set about bringing their culture back to life after the forced silence of colonization and evangelization. So in 1975 in Nouméa, on the site where the Centre Culturel Tjibaou now stands, the *Mélanésie 2000* festival was staged. “We wanted this festival because we believe in the possibility of deeper and more widely adopted exchanges between European and Kanak culture,” declared the festival’s founder, Jean-Marie Tjibaou. By recognizing that “colonization has harmed the dignity of the Kanak people, who were deprived of their identity,” the Nouméa Accord increased the visibility of Melanesian culture in society. This was seen internationally during the exhibition *Kanak: Art Is a Word*, which was held at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris from October 2013–January 2014. This included 300 works of art and documents from the collections of large European and New Caledonian museums.





## ✦ CUSTOMS

Kanak society is an oral tradition: languages and legends passed down through generations are at the heart of its identity. Knowledge is a collective, not an individual, idea, meaning an individual can know about history without having the right to talk about it.

Custom sheds light on the individual's relationship with the world, his or her ancestors, **collective and personal destiny**, the link to the earth and those who work it. It shows a way to be, to see the self and the social and legal norms that flow from it. It lives and is reborn. Far from being locked in the past, custom today has a new sense: it sees itself as a way of affirming and proudly continuing an identity.

The main expressions of custom are marriage and mourning ceremonies and the yam festival—the tuber that denotes the passage of time on a social level and determines the dates of big events, such as the crowning of a chief, marriage, mourning and alliances.



Women cooking coconut-milk-based dishes. © DIL

In the customary area, relations between clans are symbolized by strips of fabric.

© ADCK-CCT / H. Wedoye

Traditional money in a case. © P. Nord



## CLAN AND LAND

Customary rules organize society around a chief with whom highly hierarchical clans identify and who are represented by the council of elders. The clan—families that share a legend and land—is the founding element. Each clan has a specific function that is expressed during customary ceremonies. The term “tribe” was invented by the colonial administration to designate the reserves, protected spaces in which Kanak were grouped.

## ✦ LANGUAGES

As well as French and certain Polynesian languages, **28 Kanak languages** are spoken in New Caledonia. Part of the Austronesian family of languages, they remain relatively alive, despite evangelization, colonization, education in French and a recent reduction in intergenerational transmission. Drehu and Ajië, used as evangelical languages, had a writing system and were studied early on. On the other hand, knowledge of the other languages is extremely uneven. Of the languages still spoken, UNESCO has declared **18 in danger**, of which 5 have almost disappeared.

Kanak languages are, since the Nouméa Accord, recognized as “languages of teaching and culture.” Four among them—Drehu, Nengone, Paicî and Ajië—have been on the *baccalauréat* syllabus since 1992 and taught at universities since 1999. They are also taught as an optional subject at preschool.



Mwata, traditional dish made with manioc and banana. © A. Lucas

## ✦ CALDOCHE OR CALEDONIAN?

The word *Caldoche*, used to describe New Caledonian's Europeans, was popularized in the 1970s, but has not always been accepted by all, with some preferring the term Caledonian. *Caldoche* from rural areas, more often known as *Broussards*, live on the west coast of Grande Terre where they raise livestock. Descendants of free colonialists or convicts, the *Caldoches* have recently begun looking into the collective memory and rehabilitating their past: convict ancestors are no longer shameful for families. A museum dedicated to the Pacific convicts in Nouméa is in the planning stages.

*Caldoche* customs have characteristics linked to the territory's proximity to Australia, particularly rural characteristics. The expression of these customs popularize the *Caldoche* experience and bear witness to their roots in land and its rites, which, with a rural exodus emptying the countryside, are now taking on a mythic dimension.

### FOLLOWING PAGES

1. Numerous agricultural shows offer the occasion to discover local products.

© A. Lucas

2. A stand showcasing traditional and local products. © M. Dosdane / P. Sud

3. Cricket is the favourite sport for local women.

© CTOS

4. Rodeo at Païta's livestock show. © S. Méron





## ♣ FESTIVALS AND SHOWS

Celebrations and agricultural shows organized throughout the year in the different communes aim to highlight different ethnicities identities and cultures. *Broussard* shows feature rodeos, country music, dances, majorette shows, stock-car races, horse-riding competitions, cattle and horse competitions, as well as the preparation and tasting of traditional dishes.

The Koumac and North Show and the Bourail Show, famous for their rodeos, are the territory's two most important **agricultural and artisanal shows**. The Païta Livestock Show has beef tasting, with a speciality of marinated and grilled testicles. The Farino show offers tasting of *vers de bancoule*, either raw or cooked in coconut milk. The commune of Boulouparis specializes in deer and shrimp.

For two decades, the Loyalty Islands have organized “**event shows**” around their agricultural production and the discovery of tribal life. The Maré Avocado Show is the oldest Loyalty Islands event.



The Yaté show.  
© M. Dosdane / P. Sud

Rodeo is an extremely popular pastime in New Caledonia.  
© A. Lucas

### TJIBAOU CULTURAL CENTRE

A major work by architect Renzo Piano, the Tjibaou Cultural Centre sits at the heart of a vast landscaped park and houses an art centre, a museum, indoor and outdoor performance spaces and a specialized library. Its mission is to research, collect, enhance, and promote Kanak cultural heritage; implement and develop Kanak artistic creation; support the emergence of cultural practices and references common to all New Caledonians; and be a hub of influence and regional and international exchanges.  
[www.adck.nc](http://www.adck.nc)

### FOLLOWING PAGES

1. Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Nouméa.

© J.-F. Marin / MNC

2. Château Hagen in Nouméa. © A. Lucas / MNC

3. Bernheim Library in Nouméa. © A. Lucas / MNC

4. Musée de la Ville de Nouméa.  
© Musée de la Ville de Nouméa

5. Teremba Fort in La Foa.  
© DR

6. Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie in Nouméa.  
© A. Lucas

## ♣ CALEDONIAN FRENCH

New Caledonian French, known as Caledonian or *Caldоче*, differs from metropolitan French by its accent and borrowed words that reflect the ethnic mosaic of society. It has absorbed the influences of the French of colonists, civil servants and the military, and convicts—often full of imagery—as well as English words.

So in New Caledonia, streams are *creeks* not *ruisseaux*; a friend is *vieille couille* not a *copain*; a metropolitan Frenchman a *Zoreil*; a bottle of beer a *topette*; a whisky bottle a *bouteille carrée* (square bottle); and *être bétail* (literally, to be cattle) means to be brutal.  
[croixdusud.info/dico/dic\\_lettre.php](http://croixdusud.info/dico/dic_lettre.php)

## ♣ MUSEUMS THAT SPEAK HISTORY

Nouméa has four museums: the New Caledonia Museum, which has an extremely beautiful collection of Kanak and Oceanian objects; the City of Nouméa Museum, which tells the story of the capital and its inhabitants; the Maritime Museum of New Caledonia, which has a collection of archaeological objects found on different shipwrecks around New Caledonia, as well as from the celebrated 1788 *La Prouse* wreck off the Solomon Islands; and the **Second World War Museum**, where, in a hangar built by the US Army in 1943, 500 objects from soldiers and civilians' daily lives during the conflict are on display. In North Province, there is a mining museum in Tiébaghi, a coffee ecomuseum in Voh, and a Kanak traditional art museum in Hienghène; while in South Province, there is a mining museum in Thio, a history and folk-art museum in Bourail, Térémba Fort in Moindou, and the Villa Museum in Païta.



Lucien Bernheim  
(1856–1917). © DR

### BERNHEIM LIBRARY

In the heart of Nouméa, right beside the Place des Cocotiers, the Bernheim Library opened its doors in 1905. A gift from mine owner Lucien Bernheim before he left New Caledonia, the colonial-era building today holds nearly 100,000 works, including a beautiful collection dedicated to New Caledonia, as well as DVDs and music. Activities are also organized regularly.  
[www.bernheim.nc](http://www.bernheim.nc)













## ❖ COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Other communities have different meeting places to continue their traditions, pass them down the generations, and commemorate important cultural events. For example, on April 28, Wallis and Futuna islanders on celebrate Saint Pierre Chanel, martyr and patron of Oceania. Tahitians give Polynesian dance lessons, while Indonesians offer beginners classes in Javanese culture, as well as performances to celebrate Indonesians in New Caledonia Day (February 16) or the joint Indonesian Independence and Indonesian Children's Day (August 17). The Vietnamese community has a pagoda where each year it celebrates Tet.



Dancers from Wallis.

© A. Lucas

Traditional Kanak dancing.

© J.-F. Marin / MNC

*Le Berceau des Esprits*, a ballet by the contemporary dance company of New Caledonia.

© J. Collomb

## ❖ A RICH AND DIVERSIFIED CULTURAL LIFE

Caledonian cultural life has developed considerably over the past ten years and now covers the entire cultural spectrum: music, dance, theatre, readings, cinema and visual arts.

Kaneka, an emblematic musical style born in the 1980s, has its roots in Kanak ancestral rhythms, which it mixes with sounds from reggae, jazz and blues. Sung in either French or local languages, it uses traditional instruments such as shells or skin drums, as well as electric guitars and synths.

### POEMART

Le Pôle export de la musique et des arts de Nouvelle-Calédonie (The Pole Exports Music and Arts of New Caledonia, or Poemart) is an association founded in 2007 to build and put into practice a long-term policy of supporting local creation. It accompanies artistic projects, organizes training, and helps artists internationally.

[www.poemart.nc](http://www.poemart.nc)

The Théâtre de l'Île, the biggest in New Caledonia, is based in a 19th-century penal-colony building.

© A. Lucas



The theatrical scene is also extremely varied thanks to the dynamism of local companies that produce shows based on traditional themes, current events or the classics. The Pikiniki festival, which takes place mid-year, is aimed at a young audience and takes place around the archipelago. Pierre Gope is the best-known Kanak playwright, and uses his work to cast a merciless eye on his people.

Le Chapitô, a travelling structure, roams New Caledonia, reaching even the territory's most remote corners. It plays the role of a mobile cultural centre with shows of dance, theatre and films. Inside the big top, you can also hear storytelling, music and slam poetry.

Tonton Marcel, a much-loved character in *La Brousse en Folie*.

© A. Lucas



### LA BROUSSE EN FOLIE

For more than thirty years, Bernard Berger has humorously immortalized the characters of the Caledonian *brousse* and their colourful way of speaking. His comic books are best sellers in New Caledonia.

## ❖ LITERATURE

New Caledonian literature has emerged out of Kanak mythology and its legends, an important number of which have now been written down. The best-known Kanak author is Déwé Gorodé, while emblematic Caledonian authors including Francis Carco, Georges Baudoux and Jean Mariotti. These witnesses to the past have been succeeded by Frédéric Ohlen, Claudine Jacques and Nicolas Kurtovitch.

Established in the Maison Célières, an iconic colonial house in Faubourg-Blanchot, Nouméa, the Maison du Livre organizes events, highlights written and oral literature, and supports authors.

[www.maisondulivre.nc](http://www.maisondulivre.nc)



## ❖ VISUAL ARTS

In galleries and cultural centres, the visual arts create links in the image of the territories' ethnic diversity. The season begins every year at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre with *Ko Neva* ("spirit of the country"), a collective exhibition that brings together a selection of works by around thirty local artists.

As **sculpture** has traditionally been reserved for men, painting became an important means of expression for Kanak women from the late 1970s. Under the umbrella of the Djinu Owa association, Yvette Bouquet, Micheline Néporon, Paula Boi and Denise Tiavouane have acquired an international reputation and exhibited their work in Europe and Oceania. Micheline Néporon paints the iconic patterns found on traditional engraved bamboo, while Yvette Bouquet uses petroglyph patterns to evoke the friction at the heart of a rapidly changing Kanak society.



Engraved bamboo.  
© J.-F. Marin / MNC

### FILM SHOOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICE

South Province's Film Shooting Assistance Office offers a free service of preparation, advice, and technical and logistical assistance to help local, French and international productions bring their film projects to life.  
[www.bat.province-sud.nc](http://www.bat.province-sud.nc)

## ❖ CINEMA

Nouméa has only one multiplex, but there are plenty of festivals throughout the year, including:

- the annual La Foa Film Festival, held in June, offering international feature films and competitions for short-film, music videos and local trailers;
- in October, Ânûrû ârboro ("in man's shadow," in Paicî), an international festival of traditional peoples, featuring documentaries, shorts and features, from the four corners of the globe.

## ❖ OCEANIAN FESTIVALS

New Caledonia takes part in diverse regional festivals that highlight traditional arts and inspire creativity, allowing contemporary creation to join up with original traditional culture.

**The Festival of Pacific Arts**, organized by the Council of Pacific Arts with the support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, is held every four years in one of the 27 member states. The Festival of Melanesian Arts, organized by the Melanesian Spearhead Group, is also organized every four years in one of its five member states (New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji).

The Country Arts Festival, held each year in New Caledonia, creates a space for the exchange of practice and knowledge, as well as helping cultural and intergenerational exchanges.



Poet and slammer  
Paul Wamo. © E. Lauri

### PAUL WAMO, THE CLAMOUR OF WORDS

Originally from the Nang tribe in Lifou on the Loyalty Islands, Paul Wamo grew up in the Rivière-Salée neighbourhood of Nouméa. His first writing dealt with his situation, that of society and the world in general. Declaiming his texts in the style of American slam poets, he calls out to his elders, from whom he collects information to help stage his performances. Since 2011, he has been mixing rhythm and dance, the traditional and contemporary, the spoken and written word.

### CONCRETE BY PAUL WAMO

This concrete that  
gobbles up  
Gobbles up the earth  
Gobbles up the green  
Gobbles up even the sea  
Ladies and gentleman  
Disarm it before  
it's too late  
This grey, white and  
black concrete.

Excerpted from *J'aime les mots*, published by Éditions Grain de sable.



# MAISON DE LA NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE IN PARIS

Founded in 1989, after the Matignon Accords, the Maison de la Nouvelle-Calédonie (MNC) has the double mission of promoting the territory to the outside world and helping Caledonians in France. Located since November 2008 near Opéra in Paris, it offers a wonderful window onto the archipelago and an immersive trip into the territory's spirit. The eight poles, the results of residences by local artists, symbolize the large hut that unites the eight customary areas and bring to mind origin myths.

## ✦ PROMOTION AND ASSISTANCE

MNC's mission is to promote the territory in metropolitan France and, more widely, across Europe. It represents the interests of public institutions (government, Congress and the provinces) and welcomes the general public looking for tourist and other information. It also houses the offices of Air Calédonie International and New Caledonia Tourism, and participates in international events, such as trade shows and festivals. Its resource centre has an important number of works about Oceania. The MNC also accompanies and supports Caledonians whether temporary or permanent residents in France. After signing a number of social-security conventions, the MNC's social services, in the capital's seventh *arrondissement*, can offer individualized assistance (medical transport, social security-approved housing, regular visits and financial aid) to those who need it.

LEFT  
Sculpture from the Hoot  
ma Waap area. © P. Gries / MNC



## STUDENTS

The MNC offers a multitude of services for Caledonian students, often unsettled upon their arrival in metropolitan France. Two thousand Caledonians are currently studying in France and throughout the year the team at student services replies to their needs and those of their parents.

A veritable bridgehead for Caledonian elected officials in the capital, the MNC provides them with numerous facilities such as offices, meeting rooms and secretarial services. It also acts as a go-between for ministers and the Conseil d'État concerning laws in the territory.

## CULTURAL PROMOTION

To contribute to the promotion of New Caledonian culture, the MNC's Parisian home includes a small theatre where different events are staged: dance, concerts, readings, art and photography exhibitions, and film projections. These are all part of the efforts to export Caledonian artists to France and Europe.

Conventions signed with museums also allow for exchanges and facilitate the lending of works and exhibitions. For example, the MNC was a partner of the exposition *Kanak, Art is a Word*, held at the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, from October 2013–January 2014.

[www.mcnparis.fr](http://www.mcnparis.fr)

Show by the company  
Les Kidams. © MNC

Presenting radio show  
*Nouméa Ville Monde* for  
France Culture. © MNC



### OPPOSITE

Sculpted poles  
representing the  
different customary  
areas, in the Maison  
de la Nouvelle-  
Calédonie in Paris.

© P. Gries / MNC

The Broussard salon.

© P. Gries / MNC





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