

## **President's Report - Alliance Francaise Albury Wodonga**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**12 April 2022**

#### **Classes**

Although we attempted to recommence regular classes in Term 2 of 2021 these had to be abandoned again due to Covid lockdowns and border closures. Thankfully we have been able to start classes in 2022 and everything seems to be going very well. Our only real issue is the difficulty of finding teachers for all the classes we would like to be able to run.

In Term 1 of 2021 we have been able to hold Intermediate and Advanced classes on Monday evenings and Conversation, Beginners and Continuing Beginners on Wednesday evenings. However, we have a waiting list for Beginners, won't have a teacher for Conversation classes for Terms 2 and 3 and the teacher of our Advanced class may not be able to commit for Term 2 either.

Our teachers Paule (now retired), Heather, Leigh, Leonie and Jean-Gabriel are to be commended for persevering through the classes starting, pausing, stopping and starting again. The Covid rules at LiveBetter also still require our teachers to clean (wiping down all surfaces) after each class. We have continued to pay our teachers an extra half-hour per class to ensure all Covid protocols are followed.

#### **Social and Cultural Events**

We were very fortunate that the various Covid restrictions didn't impact greatly on our social and cultural events. Café Bavard was mostly able to continue (thanks to Clare). Café Bavard is held on the second and last Saturdays of each month at La Maison on The Causeway and provides a wonderful opportunity for people to speak French with other Francophiles in an informal setting.

The French Film Festival was a roaring success (thanks largely to Vivienne) with the Cinema Centre even adding an extra cinema for our opening night to cater for the numbers. Preparations for this year's film festival have already commenced with Vivienne liaising with the Cinema Centre and Clare and Consuelo again assisting with the selection of films.

We were also able to hold an afternoon tea for Bastille Day and a Christmas lunch – both at La Maison – thanks to the work of Clare and Phil. We received very positive feedback about both of these events.

Clare has also done a lot of preparatory work organising a performance by Miko Foucault to be held later this year probably at The Cube in Wodonga.

Although Kathy Aplin was looking into the possibility of an outdoor film screening to be held last spring this wasn't able to be progressed due to the difficulties posed by the ongoing border closures. We now have the Miko performance to look forward to this year but an outdoor film screening is something we might want to consider again in the future.

#### **DELF**

We were all disappointed last year to learn that a decision had been made that we would no longer be allowed to continue as a DELF test 'centre'. It was proposed that we could be a test 'location' and partner with Melbourne Alliance Francaise as our test centre. This proved to be unviable due to the late notice we (and Melbourne) received about the change, the border closures situation and capacity issues for our volunteer committee to determine what was now required and put the

necessary arrangements in place. Consequently we didn't offer DELF to our members in 2021 but did offer to subsidise the travel for any of our members who wished to travel to undertake the exam elsewhere. Nobody took us up on this offer. It should be noted that Canberra Alliance Francaise were very apologetic about how the change had been communicated and assured us that the change was not in any way a reflection on our Alliance Francaise or how we had conducted DELF in the past. It was a decision that had been made to streamline the administrative work associated with DELF.

Negotiations about how we could offer DELF locally to our members this year have continued with Canberra Alliance Francaise. It appears our best option is to partner with them as our test centre while we will be a test location. Canberra Alliance Francaise is aware that we need another accredited DELF examiner locally and a couple of different options are being considered to address this issue.

### **Culturetheque**

We became aware last year that all Alliance Francaise members should be able to access the Culturetheque website free of charge. Culturetheque is French eLibrary with access to magazines, ability to view concerts and shows, listen to lectures, borrow 'eBooks' and more. However, it has been difficult to determine what is our administrator account and how to access it. Our most recent past President was able to send us the instructions for how to operate the administrator account so that we can provide all our members with access to their own Culturetheque account. Again, with the assistance of Alliance Francaise Canberra we believe we now have all the details we need to get this up and running and should be in a position to offer this extra product to our members and students by Term 2 this year.

### **Thank you**

We are a small but very active committee who - despite the challenges of the last year - have provided our members with the opportunity to enrol for French classes, to attend casual social gatherings twice each month to speak French, to see a number of entertaining French films over our festival weekend, and to enjoy great company and excellent food at our Bastille Day and Christmas celebrations.

Thanks must go to Vivienne, Phil, Clare and Consuelo for the work they do as volunteers to not only keep Alliance Francaise Albury Wodonga alive but in always striving to improve the products and services we can offer our members.

*Tracy Robertson*

*President, Alliance Francaise Albury Wodonga*