

## **Rapport de la Présidente d'Alliance Française de Christchurch Annual General Meeting – le 4 mai, 2019**

It is a pleasure to present my report for Alliance Française de Christchurch (AFC). This report spans a period of 15 months, from 1st October 2017 to 31st December 2018, because at our last AGM we changed our financial year end to the 31st December, to align with the academic year. This period includes the first full calendar year in our new premises, following our move from Colombo Street in December 2016.

It has been a period of consolidation, further adapting to life in our new premises, whilst continuing to pursue our growth ambition to be the centre of excellence for French language and culture, inspiring learning, exchange and conviviality.

We have adapted well delivering a solid performance. We grew our income from lessons and the number of members, and generated a small surplus. We also continued to host a full calendar of cultural events, with several highlights. I am also extremely proud to say that AFC is now the second biggest<sup>1</sup> Alliance Française in New Zealand, having surpassed Auckland.

Achieving this performance would not have been possible without the boundless energy and hard work from the AFC team and the dedication from the Executive Committee. We are also very thankful to the many organisations, members and friends of AFC who have provided their support and generosity during the past year.

Looking ahead, we have three key priorities. The first priority is to grow our income from lessons to cover all of our expenses. Our second priority is to develop stability in the AFC team and recruit more permanent members of staff. Our third priority is to complete our refurbishment projects and upgrade our teaching facilities.

### **Our Financial Performance**

Overall we generated a small surplus for the period. From a revenue perspective a significant driver of this was the 32% growth in lesson income from 2017<sup>2</sup>. This represents roughly 80% of our income with the remainder from other sources, mainly grants and donations which was a similar amount to 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> As measured by number of hours taught and sold.

<sup>2</sup> Like for Like 12 month basis

Morgane Jaffry, our Office Manager, has organised several fundraising activities, such as raffles, book fairs and silent auctions, which has helped to generate additional income. We also have a counsellor, who regularly rents one of our rooms during the day providing further income. Our rooms, when not in use, are available for hire for private functions. I would like to thank Morgane and the AFC team, and the Executive Committee for their resourcefulness to find additional routes for income generation.

From a cost perspective, our new premises are much larger than previously and consequently our operating expenses have increased. After a full year of operations at our new premises we now have a much greater understanding of the main cost drivers. Whilst we continually seek to manage these, it is clear why our first priority is to grow income from lessons to cover all of our expenses, so that revenue from other sources mainly grants and donations can be invested in improving our facilities so that we can continue to achieve our growth ambition sustainably.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support we received from the Embassy of France, the Rata Foundation, Pub Charity, the Southern Trust and Kelly Tonkin for which we are extremely grateful. We have used most of these funds to develop our Learning Resource Centre or médiathèque, to install new vinyl flooring and to contribute towards the kitchen installation in the multipurpose function room.

As we are a not-for-profit charitable society, income from grants and donations remains an important source of income for AFC, and with grants becoming more difficult to obtain, another way members could donate is through charitable bequests in their wills. If this is something you would like to consider I would be more than happy to have a confidential, no obligation chat with you on how your bequest can make a difference to AFC.

### **Our AFC Team**

Our new organisational structure with Morgane leading the team and having full operational responsibility is working well as our results show.

Léa Tarride, our Volontaire International (V.I.), decided to leave for personal reasons after one year and we thank her for her time at AFC. We have recently welcomed Margaux Provost, our new V.I., and we wish her well in her role. We continue to be tremendously grateful to the Embassy of France, who funds this post.

At end of 2018, we saw the departure of Nans Drivière, our senior teacher, who has been with AFC for five years. We thank Nans for his service to the organisation and wish him well in his future endeavours.

In order to provide high quality teaching, we pride ourselves in that all our teachers are native French speakers with a qualification to teach French to foreigners. However, with this criteria, at times it

can be difficult to find suitable teachers, as we mostly rely on interns from French universities and teachers on working holiday visas who can only stay for a maximum of one year, thereby leading to a high staff turnover. This has emphasised the importance of having a solid recruitment process and a comprehensive induction programme for new recruits. These processes were embedded during the past year. To reduce staff turnover, it has become a priority to find more permanent staff who are New Zealand residents to provide additional stability and continuity to the AFC team.

I particularly would like to give a big thank you to Morgane and the team, who continuously work hard to deliver lessons and workshops of a high standard to our students and members.

### **Our Premises**

In our new professional environment, our class sizes have grown and we have been able to offer new services. The AFC team has been innovative in their ideas for workshops and last year we offered yoga classes, Polynesian dance for children, everyday French, creative writing and French art, to name a few.

The Learning Resource Centre has been made possible from a grant from the Rata Foundation for which we are enormously grateful for. We have been able to create a welcoming environment where our students and members can come along and use the new and updated resources. It has made a big difference to AFC and I encourage you all to use it.

The refurbishment of the multipurpose function room is slowly taking shape. We are extremely thankful for funding from the Southern Trust and Pub Charity. With a grant from the Southern Trust we were able to replace the flooring with new vinyl. Another grant from Pub Charity has contributed to the kitchen, which we are planning on installing in 2019.

I would also like to give a special thanks to Sarah and Neil Armstrong for their efforts and generosity in creating a lovely garden along the side of the building.

We continue to seek and raise funding to improve our premises and upgrade our teaching facilities which includes the purchase of new classroom projectors and laptops for the teachers.

### **Our Activities**

Providing French language tuition to a high standard for all ages and levels is our core activity. In our last student survey, 98% of respondents found the quality of the teaching as very satisfactory or satisfactory, which is a superb result and testament to the expertise of our teachers. Our teachers often have other skills and interests, which has enabled us to offer a variety of workshops to supplement the tuition, which are open to everyone.

We started a new programme 'la Petite Ecole' which is a French immersion programme for children from ages 3-5 years. The programme has begun well with positive feedback from the parents and guardians of the pupils.

We continue to work well with the schools in Christchurch. We offered the DELF scolaire, and organised several activities with the High Schools such as Concours Cuisine, Pétanque tournament and an event at Rugby Park with the Crusaders. Expanding our network of schools that we work with is an area of focus for us.

Our cultural calendar throughout the year, continued to be full. Highlights included the AF French Film Festival, the French Music Festival at Fat Eddies and the Beaujolais Nouveau event featuring Vanuella Watt, a singer from New Caledonia.

The Embassy of France is very supportive in sponsoring French writers and artists to New Zealand, who we have hosted at AFC and/or in partnership with the French Department at the University of Canterbury and local businesses. The artists included Amélie Lucas-Gary (the Randall Cottage resident writer), Julia Paul (singer from New Caledonia), Nico et Sosthène (comic book illustrator and author), Etienne Mineur (a graphic designer and programmer), We are very grateful for this support from the Embassy which has enabled us to strengthen our cultural programme and relationships with our partners.

We continue to develop relationships with like-minded organisations to bring French themed cultural activities and events to further enrich the cultural diversity of the Christchurch community.

### **The Executive Committee**

My heartfelt thanks go to the Executive Committee who have given their expertise and energy generously to AFC. I personally would like to acknowledge the quality and commitment of the committee members.

### **Looking ahead**

For the coming year we have three key priorities. Firstly, to grow our income from lessons to a level which at least covers all of AFC's expenses. Doing so will allow donations and grants to be entirely invested in improving our facilities.

Secondly, to recruit more permanent members of staff, to provide stability and continuity in the AFC team, thereby reducing staff turnover.

Thirdly, to complete the refurbishment of the multipurpose function room with the installation of a kitchen and to upgrade teaching facilities. We continue to actively fundraise to do this.



The past year was one of consolidation and further adapting to our new premises. We have a great team and I am confident that we now have the foundations in place to meet our priorities and growth ambition of being the centre of excellence for French language and culture.

Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank our members for their ongoing support. It is truly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Sew Hoy', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Stephanie Sew Hoy

Présidente Alliance Française Christchurch