



Alliance Française
Palmerston North

CONCOURS ORAL

Every year, the *Alliances Françaises of New Zealand* organise the National High School Oral French Competition, the "Concours Oral". Thanks to the work of dozens of volunteers and staff from each of the ten *Alliances Françaises* in the country, the "Concours Oral" is open to all year 10 to 13 high school students. This competition started back in the 1940s and is very well known in New Zealand. It is supported by the NZAFT (New Zealand Association of French Teachers) and by the French Embassy.

Students go through a selection process that involves a regional competition in July and August, after which the best students from each region take part in the national oral examination in September.

Five trips to New Caledonia are offered to one Year 13 student and five Year 12 students, each staying with a family as an exchange student, for two weeks in December. These trips have been made possible thanks to Angela Hallett and AirCalin's support which provides five return tickets Auckland-Nouméa. The five students are hosted in families selected by MASCOP in Poindimié. MASCOP also organises an extensive programme of activities and excursions, including a few days in Nouméa so that they can discover various aspects of New Caledonia.



Laureates 2013 (Jonathan Hart, Albert Nisbet, Danielle Schreiber, Megan Lawton, Astrid Knaggs) with their homestay families in Poindimié

French books, DVDs and CDs are also offered as other prizes. The number of high school students from all over the country taking part in this competition is growing every year as more students become aware of it. It is a pleasure to see so many students learning a second language, and the French Oral Competition is a formal way of acknowledging and recognising their great efforts in French, especially in New Zealand where foreign language classes are optional. It is hard work to get the grasp of a foreign language and it takes many years to become fluent. These students have achieved the highest standards in French language, and there is no doubt about the importance of French in their lives and careers.

French as a second language is offered in most high schools and also through the Correspondence School, and is a lively and rich school subject thanks to the numerous school exchanges now existing between New Zealand and the French territories in the South Pacific.

The French Oral Competition plays an essential role in the promotion of the French language by the *Alliances Françaises* of New Zealand.