

ACTIVITY REPORT 2023

Overview

NOTE: The figures in this report are drawn from the Dot Advisory reports (an external accounting and bookkeeping firm) and the Auditor's audit report RSM of December 2023 EOFY. There may be some minor discrepancy in figures as given in these reports.

The year 2023 saw the appointment of a new General Manager in February, tasked with taking over the management of operations from the previous CEO, Ms. Nancy Gilles (formerly Ford-Waites), after a period of extreme difficulty navigating the Alliance Française through the COVID era. The previous three months without a director and full handover presented challenges to the new General Manager and to both our teaching and cultural operations. While we generated high enrolments in Terms 1 and 2 (see Educational Activities below), there were still a few challenges due to the restructure of the Administration area recommended by an external review of administration processes. The review recommended the outsourcing of accounting and bookkeeping services. The Committee accepted these recommendations, which led to two existing administrative roles being made redundant. The restructure and bedding down of new systems was a challenging time for the Alliance.

Other changes to staffing further contributed to the fluid context of 2023, with one administration staff member (Clemence Billiot) moving on in the second quarter of the year. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure another new staff member to bring the much-needed renewed energy and greater professionalisation to the administration area. The International Volunteer (I.V.) appointed by the French Embassy, Ms. Hortense de Pelleport, also left at the end of October, though fortunately she was replaced with the appointment of another I.V., Ms. Maureen Simon-Ledou.

Despite this fluctuating context, we thrived during the remaining nine months of 2023 thanks to the great loyalty of our members, the influx of new members, the generosity of our volunteers and Committee members, the dedication of existing staff, and especially the teaching management team (Floriane Henneaux and Graziella Vergain), and the new energy and motivation of newly appointed staff (Maureen Simon-Ledou, Karelle Duchesne, and Yorick Betfort). We continued to offer a full program of teaching activities and cultural events and achieved a good outcome for the year 2023 in terms of financial performance compared to the previous year (2022).

Operating Result

The Auditor's reported result for the Incorporated Association for the year ended 31 December 2023 was a net operating loss as \$36,338, compared with a loss of \$55,537 in the 2022 calendar year (results based on the audit's required accounting standard).

2023 was the year in which the change of management occurred within a very critical period of the business, when all efforts should be geared towards ensuring that Term 1, as the most important term of the year, produced excellent results. Usually, Term 1 sets the trend for the year, and early in the year budget projections and education sales targets are monitored and followed accordingly. The late starting date of the new General Manager and the necessary period of adjustment needed to understand the business drivers and to motivate the teams had an impact on the operational and financial performance for the year (with an overall accounting loss of around \$36,000). Nevertheless, the collective efforts in the remaining 9 months by the entire team have produced a result that has surpassed our 2022 sales figures. We could confidently claim that, in the absence of all the events noted above and with lower staff turnover, the budget outcome would have recorded a surplus. This is a testament to the strong business fundamentals of the Alliance.

Business trend

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Teaching Income (\$)	644,213	791,728	714,866	741,708	678,686	742,210	658,606	618,403	773,175	806,299	890,595
Cultural income	118,958	119,927	161,671	154,682	161,246	152,777	156,141	80,057	154,714	139,366	198,532
Govt subsidy								309,768	82,104	40,000	
Total Income	820,246	1,017,608	991,536	1,001,480	937,497	983,125	920,510	1,089,368	1,086,628	1,060,901	1,184,229
Total Expenditure	830,734	942,382	951,347	1,075,735	993,509	885,811	914,353	968,247	1,099,856	1,117,640	1,184,430
Total Salaries	510,209	588,123	599,721	696,645	682,155	557,787	592,263	697,668	818,463	728,856	728,415
End of year Outcome*	-10,488	40,189	-74,255	-56,012	56,012	97,314	6,157	121,121	-13,228	-56,739	-201.82

* Net operating outcome as recorded in the Xero system.

Educational activities

Our result for 2023 sales was \$674,334 (without Tax). We have surpassed our 2022 sales figures of \$625,810, our given target, by about \$50,000 AUD. We can say for all intents and purposes that we have over-achieved our target. This is a good result, particularly when we consider that some teaching activities (those at Canberra Grammar) were not conducted during November and December and cooking classes were paused since September.

We achieved higher enrolments than in 2022, as demonstrated in the table below. It is also interesting to note the high number of hours per student, indicating the higher than usual enrolment in our semi-intensive option of 4 hours per week and during breaks. Enrolments for children's courses experienced slower growth than adults; however, the increased frequency of our holiday camp offer for children proved successful in encouraging more enrolments across the year, slightly offsetting the reduction in children's course revenue in Terms 3 and 4.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of Enrolments	2032	2501	2270	2195	1917	2129	1807	1478	1805	2017	1825
Number of Students	656	896	877	855	892	943	823	714	773	909	865
Number of hours sold	36,388	42,652	35,951	36,326	32,067	37,005	30,974	30,410	39,663	39,224	36,242
Average number of hours sold per student	55.5	47.5	41	42.5	36	39	37.5	44.24	51.31	45.41	48.61
Teaching income (\$)	644,213	791,728	714,866	741,708	678,686	742,210	694,769	661,565	660,644	866,132	881,527

Cultural events and French Film Festival 2023

31 events were organized and held during 2023. The stand-out success was the Alliance Française French Film Festival (AF FFF), which attracted about 15,000 participants, an increase of just about 2,000 from the previous year's high turnout, generating income of \$227,719. The French Market in December also stood out, attracting about 3,500 participants, an increase of just over 500 from the previous year's high turnout. Both events are a testament to resilience and set Alliance Française apart as an established and recognised landmark cultural institution within the ACT. We have continued to build on the potential of the AF FFF event in 2024, achieving sales of over \$275,000 with about 18,000 admissions. This result also reflects the significant increase in prices during the 2024 French Film Festival to align with the Alliance Française branches in major cities such as Sydney and Melbourne.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of cultural events	20	26	53	80	43	39	42	32	31	20	31
AF French Film Festival	8,735	10,351	13,121	16,703	18,063	17,092	18,394	16,313	16,301	13,153	14,939
AF Classic French Film Festival	-	-	-	308	495	0	0	0	0	-	-
Cultural Income	118,958	119,927	161,671	154,682	161,246	152,777	186,917	111,552	160,179	83,329	153,411

Miscellaneous

- The AFdC Building Fund Trustees have written to the association's President regarding the wind-down of the Building Fund proposing transfer of the remaining funds to the Alliance for the purpose of the bathroom refurbishment project, on condition that the funds will be used for that purpose or for a similar purpose that meets the ATO requirements. The total amount to be transferred to the Alliance Française account is about \$19,000.
- To enhance the image of the building and operations, investment projects within the premises will be undertaken during 2024. This includes the renovation of the two toilet facilities in the northside of the building, the refurbishment of the rear car park, and upgrading the IT system by transitioning from Google Gmail accounts to Microsoft Outlook 365. Teaching equipment will also be replaced, including the replacement of projectors and the acquisition of new TVs and sound systems for all classes.

Acknowledgements

I would like to officially thank the team of the Alliance Française de Canberra for their extraordinary efforts in 2023, a year that demanded a lot of effort due to the late arrival of the newly appointed General Manager and a very high staff turnover. I was consistently impressed by their unwavering focus and dedication to ensuring our students and members continued to receive high-quality teaching and cultural experiences.

I also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Committee members whose contributions – from setting strategy to serving clients at the French Market, packing chairs after late hours, and even washing dishes at cultural events – has been invaluable.

My final thanks go to all our members, supporters, and sponsors for helping us grow our activities and to remain the small corner of France in Canberra.

The staff of the Alliance Française de Canberra in 2023

Osman BOUBAKARI, General Manager
Floriane HENNEAUX, Director of studies
Graziella VERGAIN, Teacher, national Coordinator of DELF DALF exams
Stéphanie POULIQUIN, Permanent Teacher
Franck LEONHARDT, Permanent Teacher
Karelle DUCHESNE, Office Manager (until October 2023)
Kirstie HERMAN, Office Manager (until December 2023)
Yorick BETFORT, Administrative Assistant
Maureen SIMON -DOU – VI Manager of Culture and Communication
Juliette CHARLE – Stagiaire Communication Assistant
Naili CHEBALLAH - Stagiaire - Culture Assistant
Titua TEIHOTAATA, Casual Teacher
Helena SEGUER, Casual Teacher
Françoise PARSONS, Casual Teacher
Alix de TOURNADE, Casual Teacher
Celine HEITIARE FAIVRE, Casual Teacher
Cécile MAROT, Casual Teacher
Cécile MICHELS, Casual Teacher
Lorane BLUTEAU, Casual Teacher
Marine BIZET, Casual Teacher