

# French Connection

Open High School is located within Randwick City Council (a municipality), situated in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney between the Pacific Ocean and Botany Bay to the south, with Sydney's CBD 7 km to the north.



The local aboriginals were called the **Muru-oradial** (a subgroup band and part of the Dharug-Eora language group) and they were the first eyewitnesses to the Europeans arriving in the late 18th century.

Australia's first and original "**French Connection**" took place on the 26 January, 1788 with the arrival of the French navigator and explorer Lapérouse when he sailed into Botany Bay and anchored his two ships the **Astrolabe** and the **Boussole** in what is today appropriately called **Frenchmans Bay**. Lapérouse had a crew of over 200 men – most of them scientists and botanists from the European Age of Enlightenment.

We, at Open High School in Randwick, are very proud to be located in the area which saw both the English and French arrive in the same year (1788) and in the same month (January) – they arrived six days apart – first the English and then the French. The former to establish the first penal settlement in the Southern Hemisphere and the latter to further explore the Pacific after James Cook's 1770 trail blazing Pacific voyages. Lapérouse's brief from Louis XVI (French King before the 1789 French Revolution) was to conduct scientific related experiments and observations, consistent with the 18th century's scientific and philosophical outlook.

The First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay between the 18th and 20th January but soon transferred to Sydney Cove. The impeccable timing of the two French ships (the **Astrolabe** and the **Boussole**) anchoring in Botany Bay on the very day the English flag (the Union Jack) was first raised by Captain Arthur Phillip RN at Sydney Cove, on 26 January, 1788 has not been widely appreciated, nor acknowledged even to this day.

226 years later in 2014, Open High School and the French language department wishes to formally acknowledge the area's historical and geographical links with France.

- **Frenchmans Road**, Randwick (located next door to Open High School). Named after French explorer and navigator Lapérouse and his crew. Originally included what is now known as Avoca Street (Open High School is at 78 Avoca St) and incidentally one of the oldest European roads in Australia dating to 1788.
- **Albi Place**, Randwick - Town in south-west France and birthplace of French navigator-explorer, Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse.
- **Sister Cities: Albi, France and Randwick** were declared sister cities in 1988 in the Bi-Centennial year - coinciding with the 200th anniversary visit of Lapérouse and his crew to Botany Bay. The plaque next door to Open High School in front of the old Randwick Town Hall, Avoca Street attesting to this fact.
- **Laperouse Museum at La Perouse** – celebrating the life and Pacific voyages of Laperouse and his crew. First opened in February, 1988 and funded in large part by the French government.
- **La Perouse** - suburb of Sydney and within Randwick City council area and named after Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse.
- **La Perouse Point** - the tip point between Bare Island and Frenchmans Bay at La Perouse.
- **Perouse Road** - located on the eastern side of Avoca Street between Randwick Girls High School and Randwick Ritz cinema and named after the French explorer, Jean-François de Galaup Comte de la Pérouse.

- **Frenchmans Bay at La Perouse** – a small bay and swimming beach within Botany Bay where the two French ships anchored until mid-March, 1788, some two hundred metres from the Laperouse Museum.
- **Abbe Receveur Place, Little Bay** – named after Louis Receveur, a Franciscan friar and scientist who sailed with Lapérouse, on his expedition to the Pacific 1785-1788. He died aged 31 in February, 1788 at La Perouse and is buried there. He is the first European to be formally buried at an identifiable site on Australian soil.
- **Lycée Condorcet** – Australia's only International French School, following the French educational system whereby students sit for the French Baccalauréat (HSC). Located on Anzac Parade, Maroubra and just 3 km from Open High School.
- **Astrolabe and Boussole Roads**, at Daceyville (City of Botany Bay) – named after the two French ships under Lapérouse's command (1785-1788) and less than 4 km from Open High School.
- **Astrolabe Park** - located at the end of Astrolabe Street, Daceyville in the City of Botany Bay Council.
- **Astrolabe Cove** - located at La Perouse between La Perouse Point and Bare Island.

## Open High School's French Connection

### Randwick to La Perouse (10 km)

