



## FROM THE COAST

### French Week in Esperance

French Week is a time of celebration in Esperance as we look at our French connections throughout history. French Week falls on 11th-17th July 2016, with July 14th being of particular significance in France. Bastille Day is the French National Day which commemorates the beginning of the French Revolution with the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. The Fête de la Fédération celebrates the unity of the French people on 14 July 1790. Celebrations are held throughout France, and are also being held throughout the week in Esperance.

In 1792 French explorers made the first European landing on our beaches while sheltering from a storm. The French are credited with naming the town after the ship, L'Espérance, which is French for 'hope', also naming Cape le Grand and other local landmarks. Our relationship with France continues to this day, with our French twin town Saint-Martin de Ré and a student exchange program with the Il de Ré region.

The Twin Town relationship between Saint -Martin de Ré and Esperance began in Australia's Bicentennial Year in 1988. A number of Australian towns have twin town relationships with towns in Europe that had a special significance to their early exploration or heritage. St Martin de Ré was selected as it is a coastal resort town in France similar in many ways to Esperance. On the 2nd of April 1988 we officially exchanged and signed an "Agreement of Privileged Relations and Friendship" with delegates from St Martin de Re.

The purpose of the Esperance Twin Town Committee is to make recommendations to Council on developing and fostering the relationship with St Martin de Ré in France. The relationship helps to promote economic, social, cultural and educational links and a student exchange program to encourage an understanding of the French culture and the involvement of France in the early history of Esperance. Three French exchange students arrived on the weekend and will be enjoying time with their host families over the school holidays before attending school for a couple of weeks with their host students. The Shire will celebrate the exchange program at a reception for the students, their host families, Councillors and the Twin Towns Committee on the 19th July.

If you're in Esperance for French Week you are encouraged to celebrate with the Esperance community. On Thursday 14 July a special Bastille Day French Film Night will be held at the Bijou Theatre with the subtitled film "The Intouchables" showing at 6:30pm. Tickets are available at the library and also include a glass of wine and cheese tasters. On Sunday 17 July a very special French themed Esperance Markets will be held in the Museum Village from 10am to 12 noon. Local businesses often get in on the act by offering French cuisine, so if you're in the mood for a French experience without the plane fare, come and visit Esperance this French Week!