

New Caledonia

(overseas territory of France)

Geography

Location: Oceania, islands in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Australia

Area:

total area: 19,060 sq km

land area: 18,760 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 2,254 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; modified by southeast trade winds; hot, humid

Terrain: coastal plains with interior mountains

Natural resources: nickel, chrome, iron, cobalt, manganese, silver, gold, lead, copper

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 14%

forest and woodland: 51%

other: 35%

Environment:

natural hazards: typhoons most frequent from November to March

People

Population: 184,552 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 31% (female 27,712; male 28,677)
15-64 years: 64% (female 58,462; male 60,169)
65 years and over: 5% (female 4,997; male 4,535) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.75% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 22.04 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 4.9 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 14.4 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 74.02 years
male: 70.73 years
female: 77.48 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.57 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: New Caledonian(s)
adjective: New Caledonian

Ethnic divisions: Melanesian 42.5%, European 37.1%, Wallisian 8.4%, Polynesian 3.8%, Indonesian 3.6%, Vietnamese 1.6%, other 3%

Religions: Roman Catholic 60%, Protestant 30%, other 10%

Languages: French, 28 Melanesian-Polynesian dialects

Literacy:

total population: 91%

male: 92%

female: 90%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Territory of New Caledonia and Dependencies

conventional short form: New Caledonia

local long form: Territoire des Nouvelle-Caledonie et Dependances

local short form: Nouvelle-Caledonie

Type: overseas territory of France since 1956

Capital: Noumea

Independence: none (overseas territory of France; a referendum on independence will be held in 1998)

National holiday: National Day, Taking of the Bastille, 14 July (1789)

Constitution: 28 September 1958 (French Constitution)

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: the flag of France is used

Economy

Industries: nickel mining and smelting

Agriculture: large areas devoted to cattle grazing; coffee, corn, wheat, vegetables; 60% self-sufficient in beef

Illicit drugs: illicit cannabis cultivation is becoming a principal source of income for some families

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 6,340 km

Ports: Mueo, Noumea, Thio

Airports:
total: 36

Defence Forces

Branches: French Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Gendarmerie); Police Force

Note: defence is the responsibility of France