

France recommendations (ECS ID-800)

The Republic of France made a partial submission in the areas of French Guiana and New Caledonia

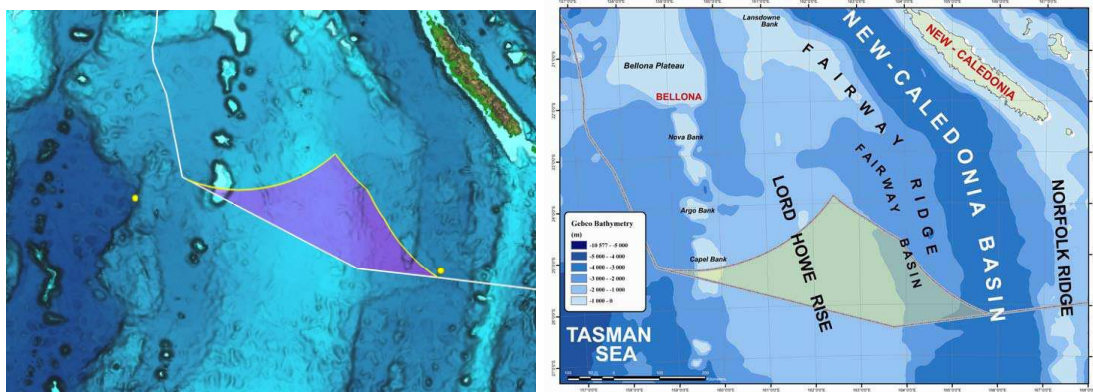
New Caledonia Region

New Caledonia lies between the Fiji Basin and Tasmania Sea at the northern extension of the Norfolk Ridge. New Caledonia includes the landmasses of the main island of New Caledonia, the Chesterfield Islands and the Bellona Reefs. The area is a complex region of tectonic ridges. The main island of New Caledonia is situated in the northern extension of the Norfolk Ridge underlain by rifted continental crust.

The submission delineates two areas - the western area comprises the northern extension of the Lord Howe Rise and the south-east area relates to the continental slope between the Loyalty Ridge, the South Fiji Basin and the Cook Fracture Zone. Following a note from Vanuatu, France instructed the Commission to only examine the western area.

The area of continental shelf beyond 200M in the western area is located on the northern part of Lord Howe Rise south of the Fairway Ridge. In contrast to the view of France, which indicated that the elevated area between the South Fiji basin in the east and the Tasman Sea in the west constitutes the submerged landmass of the island of New Caledonia, the sub-commission suggested that the Lord Howe Rise should be viewed as one entity not connected to the ridges further east. In this case the Lord Howe Rise could be considered as the submerged promulgation of the Bellona and Chesterfield islands. France while maintaining its original view, agreed to this recommendation.

After adjustments to the FOS points (FOS East and FOS West) the sub-commission agreed with their location, stating the base of the continental slopes of Lord Howe Rise is distinct and easily identified on a morphological basis.



The continental shelf of New Caledonia beyond 200 M coloured in purple (left hand side) and delineated by the 200 M limits of New Caledonia (shown in yellow) and the treaty line between France and Australia (shown in white). The two relevant foot of the continental slope points (FOS West and FOS East) are shown as yellow spheres.

Issues

1. Note verbal from Vanuatu resulted in the submission relating to the the south-east area between the Loyalty Ridge, the South Fiji Basin and the Cook Fracture Zone, being set aside.
2. The original submission interpreted the area between New Caledonia and the Tasmanian Sea as a natural prolongation of the state. However, the sub-commission determined that there was not enough evidence to support this and recommended that the Lord Howe Rise be treated as a separate feature not connected with the ridges to the east. The state was able to consider the Lord Howe Rise as the natural prolongation of the Bellona Islands, rather than the main island of New Caledonia. This change in natural prolongation resulted in changes to the FOS positions originally proposed.
3. After review of the data the sub-commission agreed that the Lord Howe Rise is a submarine elevation, due to the fact that its northern extension is of continental origin (well evidenced by deep sea drilling data, bottom sampling data, seismic reflection/refraction studies, and gravity modelling.)
4. The original submission invoked the distance constraint of 350 M only, based on the base- points of all the land territories of New Caledonia. The sub-commission, however, suggested that the constraint line should be based only on base-points relevant to the Chesterfield and Bellona Reef Islands. This resulted in the application of a combination of the distance and the depth constraints.