

# LES FLÈCHES FAÎTIÈRES

## The symbolism of the flèches faîtières :

FLÈCHE, because the shape is elongated

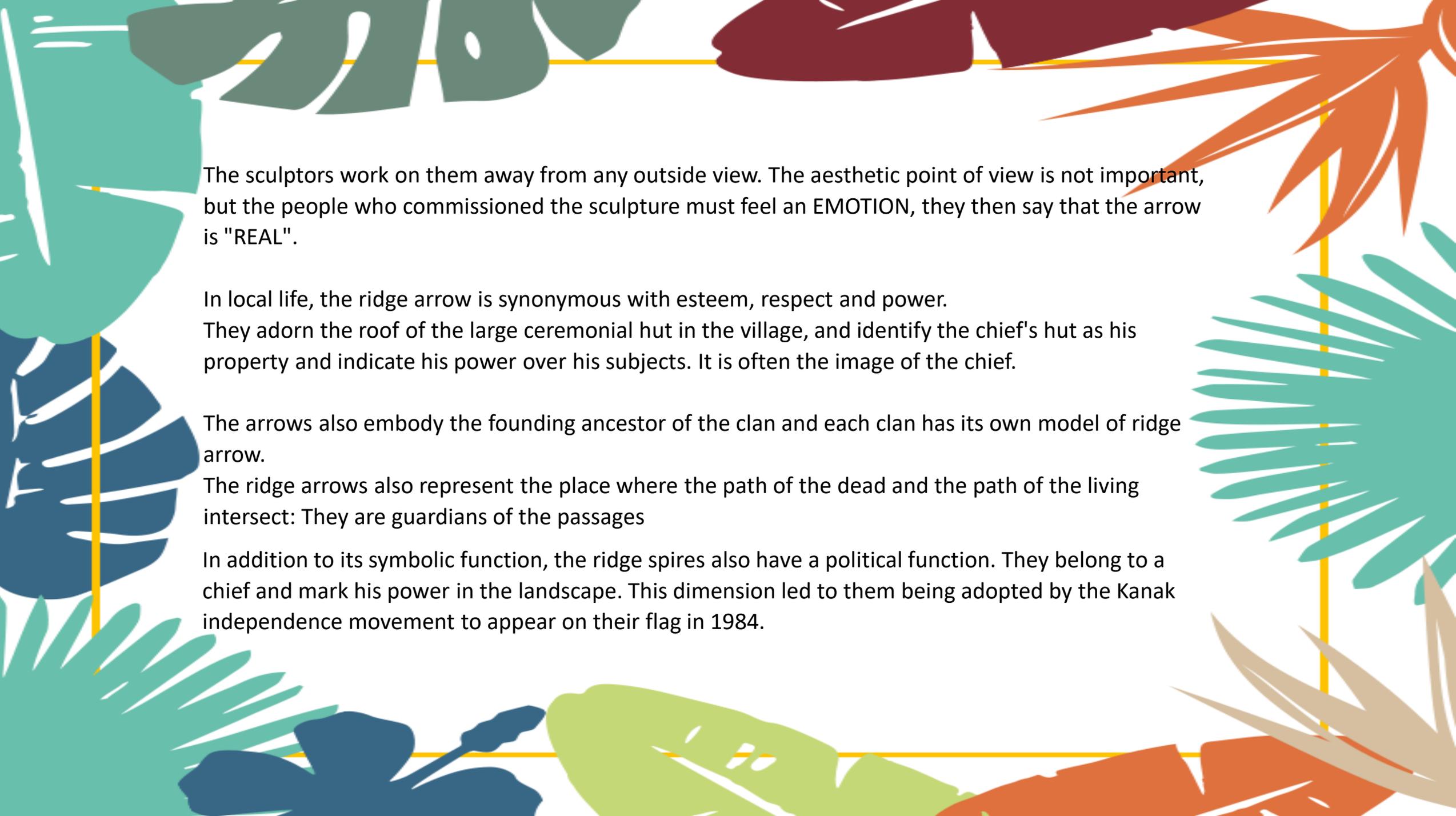
FAÎTIÈRE, because it is planted at the top of the hut

La flèche faîtière is carved from houp wood, a rare, rot-proof wood from the high altitude forests.

She is often treated as a living person and revered as a great leader (Grand Chef).

It is composed of three parts:

- a foot by which it is attached to the central pillar of the hut
- an oval, the body with a human face in the centre, the image of the founding ancestor of the clan, surmounted by this oval shape symbolising the back of the skull
- a fine point for threading shells: the tritons.

A decorative border of stylized tropical leaves in various colors (teal, blue, green, orange, red) surrounds the text. A thin yellow horizontal line runs across the top of the page, and a thin yellow vertical line runs down the right side.

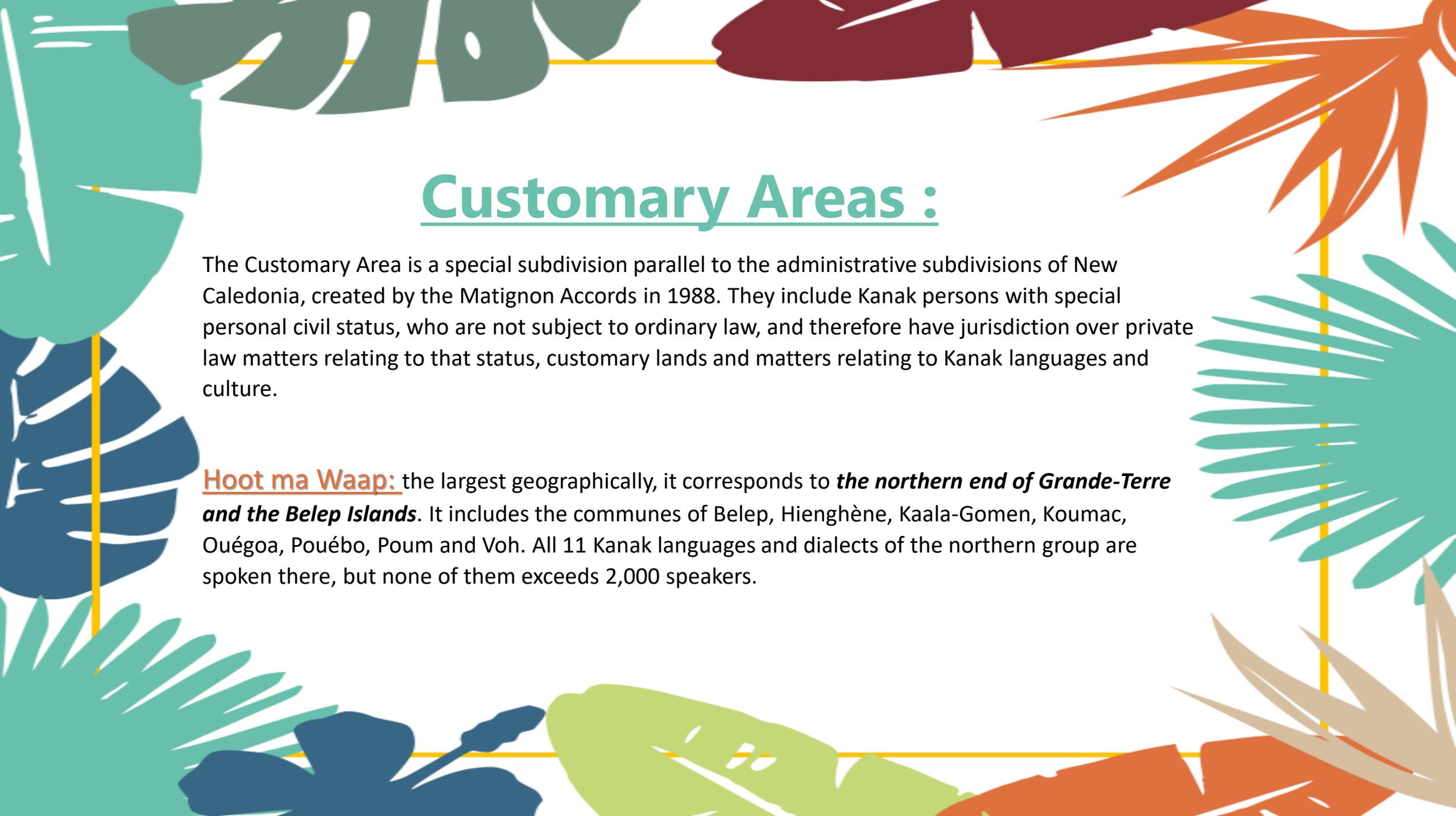
The sculptors work on them away from any outside view. The aesthetic point of view is not important, but the people who commissioned the sculpture must feel an EMOTION, they then say that the arrow is "REAL".

In local life, the ridge arrow is synonymous with esteem, respect and power. They adorn the roof of the large ceremonial hut in the village, and identify the chief's hut as his property and indicate his power over his subjects. It is often the image of the chief.

The arrows also embody the founding ancestor of the clan and each clan has its own model of ridge arrow.

The ridge arrows also represent the place where the path of the dead and the path of the living intersect: They are guardians of the passages

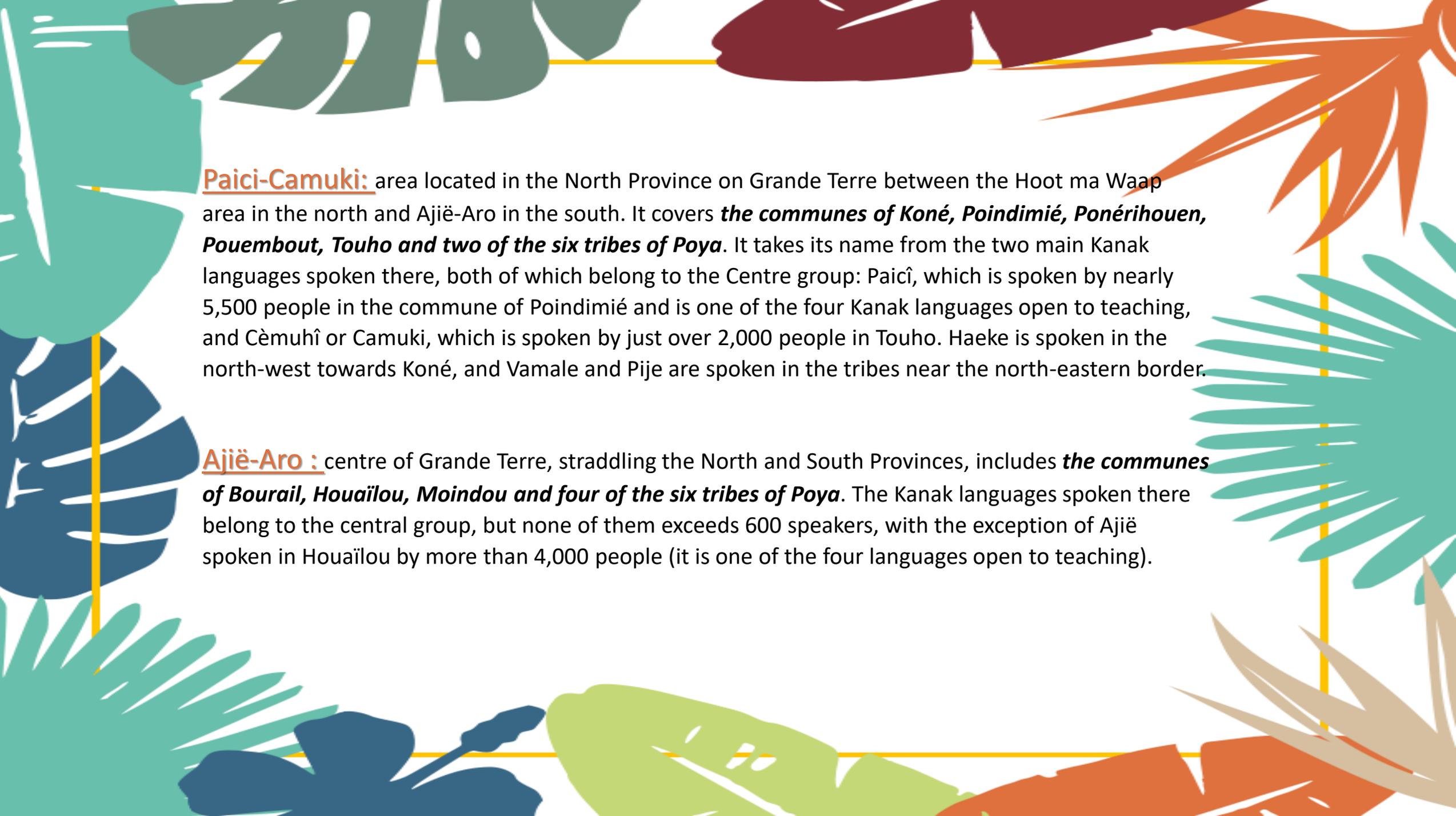
In addition to its symbolic function, the ridge spires also have a political function. They belong to a chief and mark his power in the landscape. This dimension led to them being adopted by the Kanak independence movement to appear on their flag in 1984.



## Customary Areas :

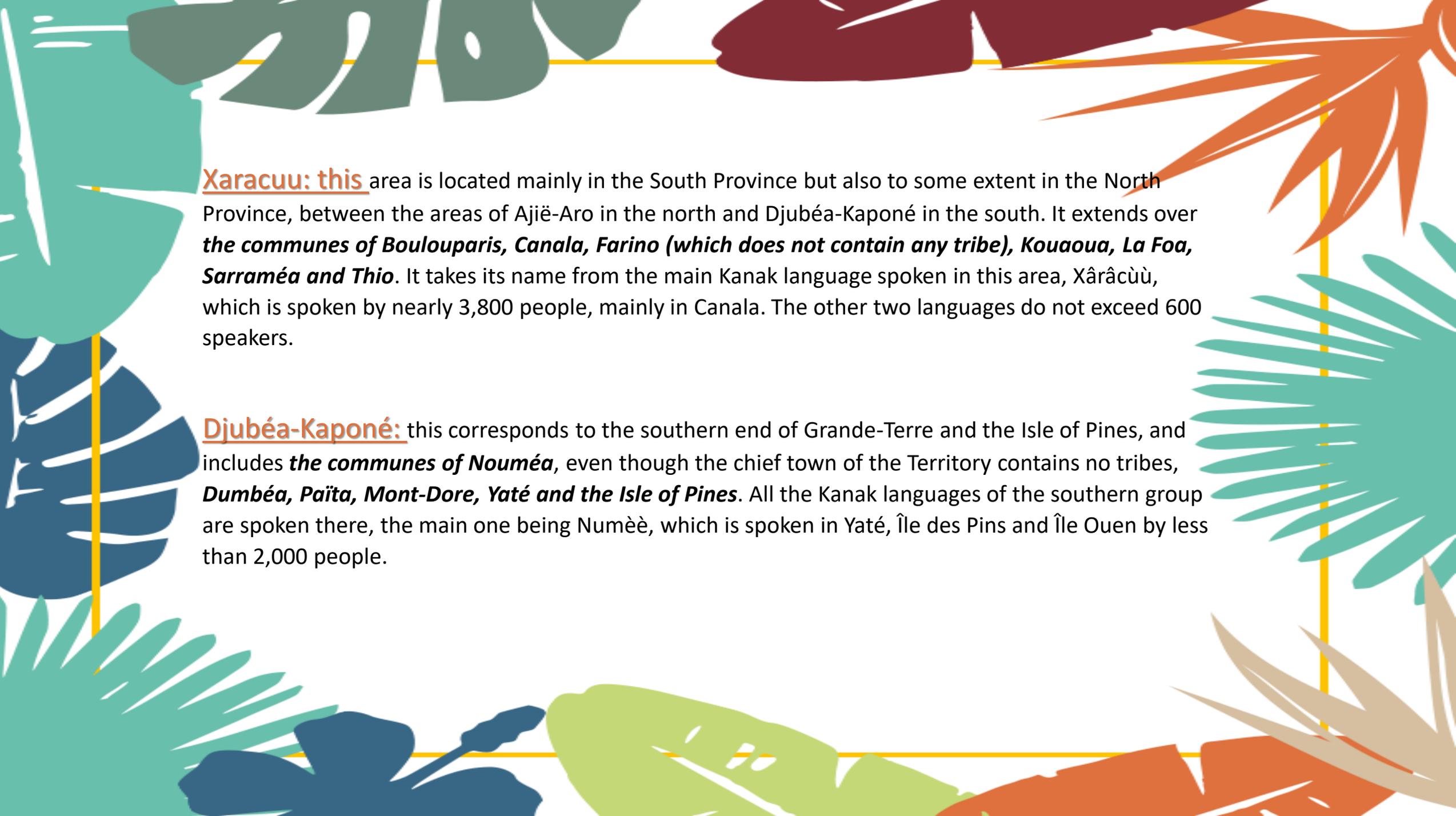
The Customary Area is a special subdivision parallel to the administrative subdivisions of New Caledonia, created by the Matignon Accords in 1988. They include Kanak persons with special personal civil status, who are not subject to ordinary law, and therefore have jurisdiction over private law matters relating to that status, customary lands and matters relating to Kanak languages and culture.

**Hoot ma Waap:** the largest geographically, it corresponds to *the northern end of Grande-Terre and the Belep Islands*. It includes the communes of Belep, Hienghène, Kaala-Gomen, Koumac, Ouégoa, Pouébo, Poum and Voh. All 11 Kanak languages and dialects of the northern group are spoken there, but none of them exceeds 2,000 speakers.



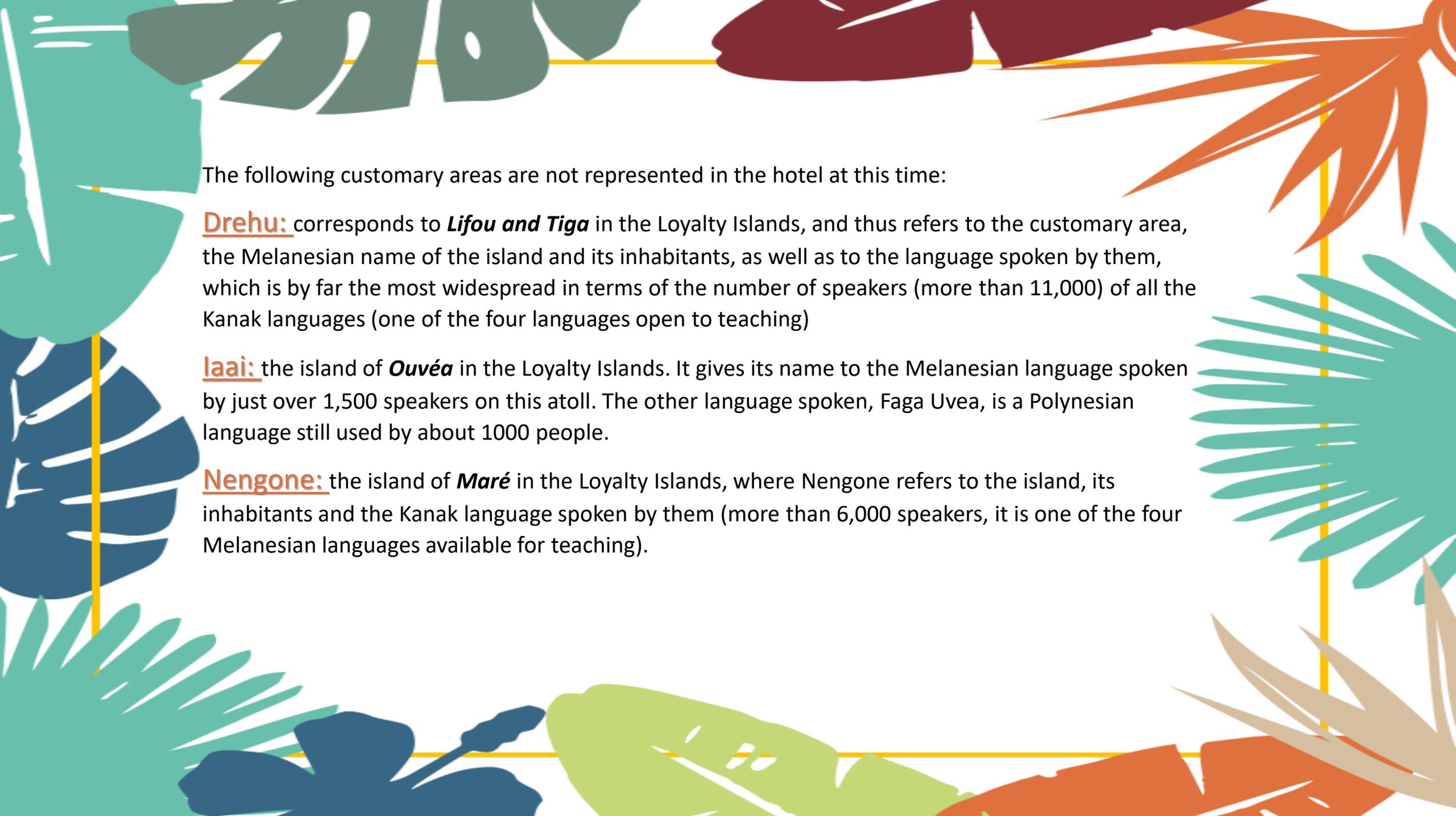
**Paici-Camuki:** area located in the North Province on Grande Terre between the Hoot ma Waap area in the north and Ajië-Aro in the south. It covers ***the communes of Koné, Poindimié, Ponérihouen, Pouembout, Touho and two of the six tribes of Poya***. It takes its name from the two main Kanak languages spoken there, both of which belong to the Centre group: Paicî, which is spoken by nearly 5,500 people in the commune of Poindimié and is one of the four Kanak languages open to teaching, and Cèmuhî or Camuki, which is spoken by just over 2,000 people in Touho. Haeke is spoken in the north-west towards Koné, and Vamale and Pije are spoken in the tribes near the north-eastern border.

**Ajië-Aro :** centre of Grande Terre, straddling the North and South Provinces, includes ***the communes of Bourail, Houailou, Moindou and four of the six tribes of Poya***. The Kanak languages spoken there belong to the central group, but none of them exceeds 600 speakers, with the exception of Ajië spoken in Houailou by more than 4,000 people (it is one of the four languages open to teaching).



**Xaracuu: this** area is located mainly in the South Province but also to some extent in the North Province, between the areas of Ajië-Aro in the north and Djubéa-Kaponé in the south. It extends over ***the communes of Boulouparis, Canala, Farino (which does not contain any tribe), Kouaoua, La Foa, Sarraméa and Thio.*** It takes its name from the main Kanak language spoken in this area, Xârâcùù, which is spoken by nearly 3,800 people, mainly in Canala. The other two languages do not exceed 600 speakers.

**Djubéa-Kaponé:** this corresponds to the southern end of Grande-Terre and the Isle of Pines, and includes ***the communes of Nouméa,*** even though the chief town of the Territory contains no tribes, ***Dumbéa, Païta, Mont-Dore, Yaté and the Isle of Pines.*** All the Kanak languages of the southern group are spoken there, the main one being Numèè, which is spoken in Yaté, Île des Pins and Île Ouen by less than 2,000 people.



The following customary areas are not represented in the hotel at this time:

**Drehu:** corresponds to ***Lifou and Tiga*** in the Loyalty Islands, and thus refers to the customary area, the Melanesian name of the island and its inhabitants, as well as to the language spoken by them, which is by far the most widespread in terms of the number of speakers (more than 11,000) of all the Kanak languages (one of the four languages open to teaching)

**Iaai:** the island of ***Ouvéa*** in the Loyalty Islands. It gives its name to the Melanesian language spoken by just over 1,500 speakers on this atoll. The other language spoken, Faga Uvea, is a Polynesian language still used by about 1000 people.

**Nengone:** the island of ***Maré*** in the Loyalty Islands, where Nengone refers to the island, its inhabitants and the Kanak language spoken by them (more than 6,000 speakers, it is one of the four Melanesian languages available for teaching).

# Les aires coutumières et les langues kanak en Nouvelle-Calédonie

