

# Federation of Victorian Film Societies Inc



INFORMATION SHEET 01 Version 9

## WHO CAN JOIN THE FEDERATION OF VICTORIAN FILM SOCIETIES?

To join The Federation of Victorian Film Societies (FVFS) an organisation must have an appropriate constitution, rules or by-laws, and aims that focus on the moving image (in any form) and must be a not-for-profit organisation. Appropriate constitutions, rules and aims are developed further in Information Sheets 03, 04A and 04B.

### 1 FILM SOCIETIES

Film societies are organisations formed by groups of enthusiastic people who generally like to select their own films for screening to their members.

Their objectives may be to learn more about the on-going art, history and technique of cinema or simply to ensure the best quality films are screened to their members in the best possible environment.

The films they screen may come from commercial film distributors, government libraries, embassies or private collections and some may not have enjoyed general release at cinemas or on TV. Film distributors and DVD rights holders have different rates of hire or rights payments depending on whether an organisation operates in a non-theatrical mode (members only) or in a commercial manner (ie charging for individual admission).

Films screened may be on any medium - 35mm, 16mm or 8mm film, video, DVD, MP4 or DCP (Digital Cinema Package supplied on a hard drive).

Despite the various cinema, television, video and DVD outlets available for individuals to see or hire films today, film societies continue to thrive. This is due to the atmosphere, social interaction, flexibility of programming, member participation, quality of presentation and the informative and pleasant nature of the screenings. In many cases the film society has an important role to play in bringing a community together.

### **Requirements for becoming a certified film society**

[These mandatory requirements should be covered in the society constitution or rules].

The film society will:-

1. Abide by a constitution/rules/by-laws which are adopted by members and approved by the FVFS.

2. Operate as a non-profit association administered by a committee of volunteers (themselves members) and consisting of at least a President, Secretary and Treasurer, elected annually at an AGM
3. The society to maintain a list of current members which is available to any member on request.
4. Organise finances independent of any other organisation and report on them to members annually. This may require a unique film society bank account.
5. Dedicated to treating film as a serious artistic, cultural, and educational medium and have appropriate aims reflecting this.
6. Screen non-theatrically ie screen to members only, (except for the occasional come-and-try-it visitor), and not charge anyone for admission to any screening.

### Recommended, but optional.

1. Be devoted to screening critically acclaimed films with substance or with a worthwhile message.
2. Present films on a large screen in a cinematic environment with sound system to match.
3. Create an environment conducive to discussion
4. Conduct informative discussion sessions linked to the films screened.
5. Create a comfortable, friendly social atmosphere for members
6. Provide program notes for each film screened.
7. Provide an economical means of bringing films to members.
8. Include the term "Film Society" in the name.
9. Members participate in the selection of films to screen at the society.
10. Keep members informed about relevant film related activities in their local area, areas of interest and in other film societies.
11. Participate in the activities of the FVFS.
12. Apply for an ABN and register for charity status, based on the film society's support of the Arts.
13. The larger societies and any that screen in a public venue should consider incorporation.

### Other Possibilities

1. Conduct Film Festivals for members and/or the general public.
2. Arrange special social events based around screenings which help draw the community together. This may include the local community or any others who share their particular interests.
3. As an optional extra service to members, the society might negotiate special prices at nearby cafes, bookshops or cinemas for members on showing their membership card.

An organisation does not have to use the term "film society" in its name to be considered a valid film society and to be accepted as a member of the FVFS. For example, a Film Club may still be interested in screening films for their members but choose to emphasise the social aspect of the organisation in the community. The term "film society" is used throughout

the FVFS documents for membership based organisations however, for simplicity.

## **1.1 THE TRADITIONAL FILM SOCIETY**

The screenings are run by the film society for the film society members.

It is acceptable that a commercial cinema run the screening for the society and bill them for theatre hire, projectionist etc. and the society pays for the film hire. It may be 35mm, 16mm, DVD or DCP projection.

Admission to the screening is by membership and involves no additional payment. Some visitors may “come and try it”, but their visits should be limited. They might come for free or offer a nominal donation.

Promotion of any screening should emphasise a period membership of the society although film titles may be quoted as a means of attracting membership of the society.

Film societies, because they screen to members only, are classified non-theatrical and so pay cheaper hire rates for the films and DVD rights obtained from commercial distributors, and have access to the SLC library of 16mm films and DVDs. The SLC (Screen Lending Collection) is operated by the NFSA (National Film and Sound Archive) in Canberra.

Any group which charges admission will be required by the distributor to pay higher rates for their film and DVD screening rights. These organisations could still join the FVFS as an NPV Cinema or NPV film festival. (see below).

Films and DVDs borrowed from the SLC may never be screened in a situation where paid admission is permitted.

One impact of the above requirement is that when a film society screens in a public venue such as a pub, café or restaurant, it must be possible to isolate the screening. It must not be possible for non-members to participate in the screening except by special arrangement.

Some distributors regard any outdoor screening as a “commercial” rather than “non-theatrical” screening.

## **1.2 A FILM SOCIETY THAT SCREENS IN A PRIVATE HOME**

A Film society that screens in a private home should operate in the same manner as above but they are not subject to the copyright requirement that screenings require approval by the rights owners.

## **1.3 A FILM SOCIETY THAT SCREENS IN A NORMAL CINEMA**

To qualify as a film society an organisation must meet all the requirements listed in section 1, above.

The film society hires the Cinema for each screening at a flat rate and all screening costs, projectionist fee and film cost would be

borne by the cinema operator. The film would be booked by the cinema operator who would pay the “commercial” rate for hiring the film. The film society would select which films are screened and when, as part of the film society “annual program”. The film society would have access to the SLC films and DVDs, because the film society operates in a “non-theatrical” manner.

Neither the cinema nor the film society are permitted to admit the public by paid admission to screenings.

## **2 NPV CINEMAS**

NPV, or Not-for-Profit Volunteer-run cinemas, usually run on a volunteer basis by local community members. These cinemas generally hold screenings on a regular basis (eg a weekly or monthly screening) often in a venue that may not be purpose built as a cinema. This is a cost effective approach to providing film screenings in a small town.

The NPV Cinema should meet all the requirements of a film society except they do not have defined members except for promotional reasons. All admissions are by single session or multiple session tickets. For this reason the NPV cinema can expect to pay commercial (% of door sales) or flat-rates for their films and/or DVD rights, and not have access to the SLC library except by special arrangement.

The NPV Cinema may be a dependent organisation, set up and operated under the guidance of a parent group such as a film society or an independent organisation which is not-for-profit and have aims and rules which do not conflict with those of the NPV Cinema.

The NPV Cinema would normally be run by a committee which is self-appointed or nominated by another organisation which is not a member of the FVFS. In either case the NPV Cinemas must have approved rules and aims and run as a non-profit organisation.

## **3 NPV FILM FESTIVALS**

These organisations operate in exactly the same way as NPV Cinemas except that all screenings are held over a short period (eg a weekend) rather than throughout the year.

NPV Film Festivals, as with NPV Cinemas, may operate as dependent or independent organisations.

## **4 COMMERCIAL CINEMAS**

Cinemas operating as part of a chain or as independent commercial cinemas are not eligible to join the FVFS as they do not comply with the essential non-profit conditions of membership, nor do they screen non-theatrically.

## **5 DEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS**

5.1 A dependent organisation is one that operates as a sub-committee of and usually under the rules and aims of a parent organisation. The parent may be another member of the FVFS or an independent Arts organisation such as an Arts Council, U3A, School etc. It may be a government or council organisation.

5.2 The dependent organisation must have acceptable aims and rules in itself although these rules need not be as extensive as an independent organisation. They may be presented as a separate constitution, rules, by-laws or special resolutions.

5.3 The member organisation must operate as a non-profit organisation.

5.4 The operating committee may include one or more representatives of the parent organisation.

5.5 Rules and aims of the parent organisation must not conflict in any way with those of the member organisation.

5.6 The parent organisation may be a member of the FVFS in which case a combined membership is acceptable in which the “effective members” of both are added together for the combined “effective members”.

## **6 WHY JOIN THE FVFS?**

Services provided by the FVFS to member organisations include:-

- Registration, which provides status and credibility.
- Advice and help to new groups wishing to start up.
- Emergency support for member organisations struggling to survive.
- Under some circumstances, financial assistance.
- Access to the SLC managed by the NFSA.
- Non-theatrical film hire rates and DVD rights charges to qualifying organisations.
- Access to film loss and damage insurance for member groups.
- Provision of the means to swap information and skills between member groups.

- Access to public liability and general insurance for member groups at special rates.
- Publication of a regular film newsletter.
- DVD library.
- Library of independent films on DVD.
- Film appraisal sessions.
- Support and expansion of technical advice to member groups.
- Arrangement of film festivals, film viewing weekends, appraisal sessions and other film events.
- Provision of general, legal and operational advice on running film organisations.
- Management of DVD screening rights agreements.
- A voice at state and national level with film distributors, government and semi-government bodies.

And of course the film society may simply wish to be part of the growing Film Society movement of Australia.

## 7 HOW TO JOIN THE FVFS

When you have formed your organisation you should consider joining the FVFS.

1. Complete the appropriate FVFS membership application form (available from the FVFS website).
2. Provide a copy of your rules and aims.
3. Provide a copy of the constitution of your parent organisation if relevant.
4. Forward the above, with appropriate payment, to the FVFS treasurer – to the address indicated on the application form. (Cost depends on the size of the organisation and is indicated on the application form).

## 8 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DELEGATES

All member organisations are represented at the FVFS by Delegates appointed by the organisation. The number of delegates depends on the size of the organisation. Their rights and responsibilities are contained in the FVFS Rules in Information Sheet 20.

## 9 FURTHER INFORMATION

Other information sheets are available which expand on many of the items mentioned in this information sheet.

See also “The Regional Cinema Guide” published by the NSW Film and TV Office (FTO)

Contact the FVFS on (03) 9873 1369 or write to the FVFS at PO Box 125 Mitcham 3132, or email to [admin@fvfs.org.au](mailto:admin@fvfs.org.au)

Check out our web page at [www.fvfs.org.au](http://www.fvfs.org.au) .

21 Jan 2015

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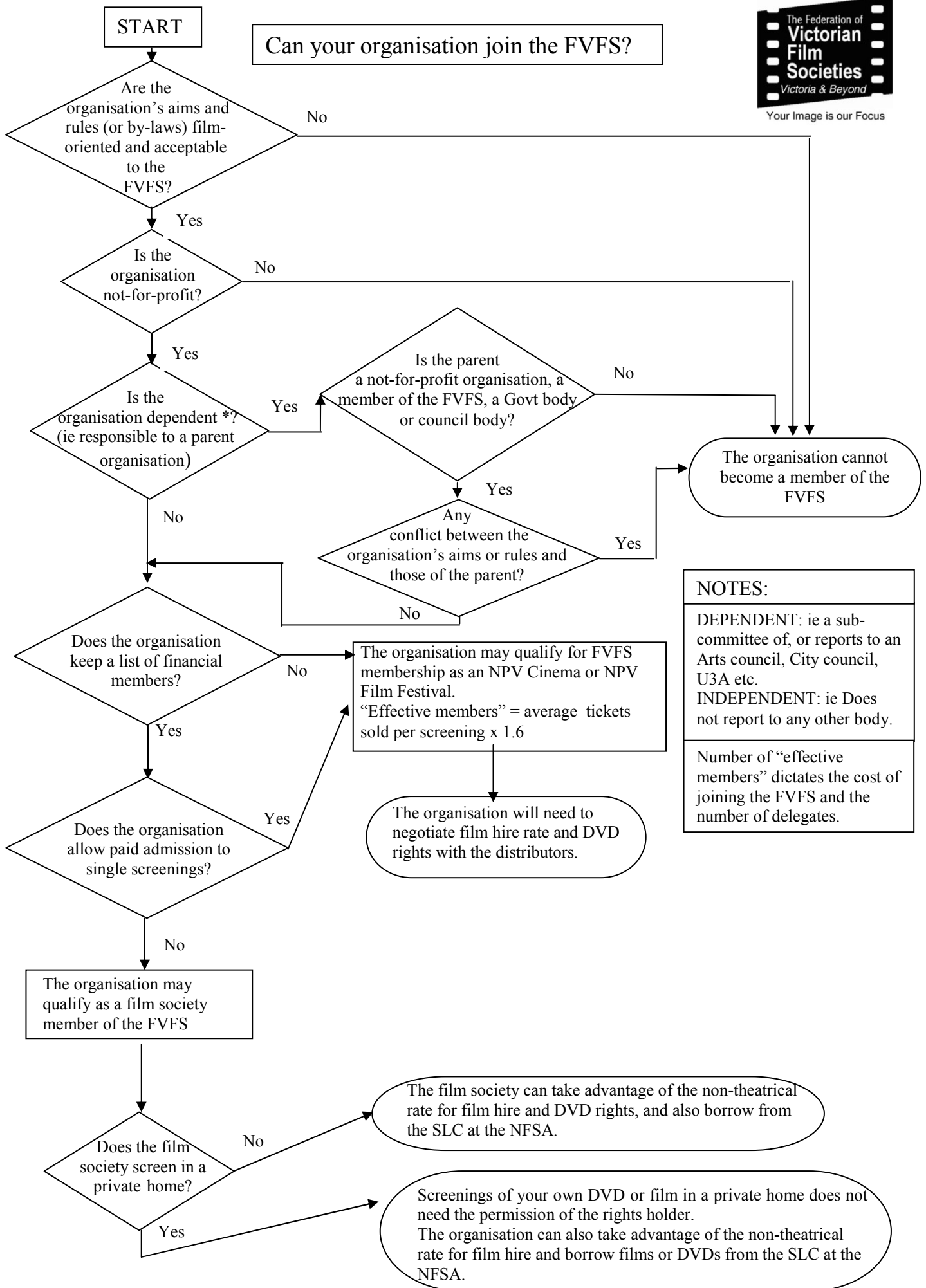
(See Paragraph)	1.1	1.2	1.3	2, 3	5	5	5	4
Type of Organisation	Traditional Film society that screens in a public venue	Film society that screens in a private home	Film Society that screens in a normal cinema.	Independent NPV Film Fest or NPV Cinema.	Dependent NPV Film Fest or NPV Cinema or council	Dependent Film Society run as separate sub-committee	Dependent Film Society run for all members of the parent	Commercial cinema (Independent or chain) **NOT An FVFS member**
Who attends	Members only	Members only	Members only.	Admission by sale of tickets only		Members of society sub-group	Members of the parent may attend	No
Run by:-	Members	Members	Members	Self	Member Film Soc or council	Sub-committee	Sub-committee	Private
Not-for-profit	Y	Y	Y	Y	Parent is not-for-profit.	Yes	Yes	No
Has ABN & Charity status	Usually	Probably not	Usually	Y	Parent has ABN	Parent may have ABN	Parent may have ABN	Y
Acceptable aims	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y (By laws)	No
Acceptable rules	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y (By laws)	No
Committee of management	Usually	Usually	Usually	Usually	Usually	Usually	Usually	No
Democratic /AGM	Usually	Usually	Usually	No	No	No	Yes	No
Single tickets sold by org. *	No	No	No	Y	Y	No	No	Y
No. of "Effective members"	Number of members	Number of members	Number of members	1.6 x avge sales per screening	1.6 x avge sales per screening	Members in sub-group	1.6 x avge attendance.	NA

If admission to the screening is by membership only (no sales) then the screening is "non-theatrical" and lower film and DVD rental applies. Film society can also access the SLC. For commercial screenings a flat rate or % applies for film and DVD hire.

NOTE: A commercial cinema cannot become an FVFS member.

### **Possible Modes of Operation.**

## Can your organisation join the FVFS?



**NOTES:**

**DEPENDENT:** ie a sub-committee of, or reports to an Arts council, City council, U3A etc.

**INDEPENDENT:** ie Does not report to any other body.

Number of "effective members" dictates the cost of joining the FVFS and the number of delegates.