

Federation of Victorian Film Societies Inc



INFORMATION SHEET 00 - (30th March 2026)

ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF VICTORIAN FILM SOCIETIES

Who Are We?

The Federation of Victorian Film Societies (FVFS) is a non-political and non-sectarian support organisation for film societies, NPV film festivals and NPV cinemas, primarily in Victoria. An NPV organisation is a Not-for-Profit, Volunteer-run organisation, hence the abbreviation NPV. For a brief period in 2010 we were also known as Community Film Societies (CFS).

The FVFS is a member of ACOFS (The Australian Council of Film Societies) who in turn is a member of the IFFS (International Federation of Film Societies)

The FVFS was established in 1949 and quickly grew to over 50 affiliated organisations. It has seen many changes in technology and regulation since then, and grew to a peak in 2020 of 88 affiliated organisations in several States, primarily Victoria, and includes some NPV cinemas and NPV film festivals.

Our Vision

We are a forward thinking and helpful organisation which operates to meet present and future needs of affiliated organisations.

Our Mission

We are responsible for the development, support and representation of affiliated organisations in Victoria and, where appropriate, other States of Australia.

Tag Line

Your Image is Our Focus

What Do We Do?

1. Provide status and credibility to affiliated organisations through registration.
2. Ensure ready availability of reasonable film, DCP and DVD rentals, screening rights, equipment and insurance.
3. Supply up-to-date information and advice on films, DCP and DVDs and their presentation in an atmosphere of shared enjoyment.
4. Encourage and facilitate cross fertilization between film societies.
5. Represent the interests of film societies at ACOFS, business and all levels of government.
6. Support the interests of all organisations engaged in the delivery of NPV festivals or NPV cinemas.
7. Ensure the FVFS is sufficiently resourced and appropriately structured to meet its objectives.

Activities

1. Provide hands-on support and advice to groups wishing to form a film society, NPV cinema or NPV film festival.
2. Provide advice and support covering all aspects of film society, NPV cinema and NPV film festival operation.
3. Provide emergency support for affiliated organisations struggling to survive.
4. Offer a one-to-one help and advice service.
5. Maintain a visible presence by regular visits to affiliated organisations.
6. Work with other organisations as appropriate on behalf of affiliated organisations.
7. Provide training, conference and networking opportunities.
8. Publish informational and educational material.
9. Develop and maintain links with film, DCP and DVD supply organisations to enhance film, DCP and DVD availability and rights agreements to benefit affiliated organisations.
10. Publish a regular newsletter of material relevant to the running of film societies, NPV cinemas and NPV film festivals.
11. Maintain an up-to-date website with relevant information.
12. Ensure affiliated organisations have access to reasonably priced public liability and general insurance policies.
13. Under some circumstances, provide financial assistance to affiliated organisations.
14. Develop and provide technical, legal and operational advice to affiliated organisations
15. Manage DVD screening rights agreements for affiliated organisations.

Our Customers

Our customers are organisers of film societies, NPV cinemas and NPV film festivals particularly in Victoria, and those wanting to start or join such groups.

What Is Our Image?

We are a responsive and knowledgeable organisation willing and able to help affiliated organisations with advice and support.

What Do Our Customers Need, Want and Expect?

Our customers expect to see a one-stop shop for all matters relating to the running of a film society, NPV cinema or an NPV film festival.

History of the FVFS

The FVFS was started in 1949 by the Melbourne Film Society, MUFS (Melbourne University Film Society) and the Realist Film Group. They were quickly joined in the same year, when the FVFS became a legal entity, by The Australian Religious Film Society, Surrey Hills Film Society and The Balwyn-Deepdene Film Society.

The Olinda Film Festival, which took place in 1952, later grew to become the FVFS-owned Melbourne Film Festival and was wholly organised by the film society movement. This festival became independent in 1982 and changed its name to the Melbourne International Film Festival.

The Australian Film Institute (AFI) is another body which had its genesis in the FVFS and then became an influential body in its own right.

The peak number of FVFS affiliated societies up to the year 2000 was around 70 in the mid 70's when "Art-house" films were rarely screened in the cinemas, but by 2006 this number had dropped to 45 societies, possibly due to the fact that many cinemas began to screen quality films, and perhaps also due to the increasing difficulty of getting suitable movies on

16mm film – the mainstay of the film society until that time. Since 2006, when video projection became technically and economically feasible, more and more societies began to screen their films from DVD, and these societies began to expand as their programs improved because virtually any movie is available on DVD, BluRay and 4K Ultra discs. By 2020 the members of the FVFS numbered 88, and included six NPV film festivals and one NPV Cinema.

FVFS Governance

Affiliated organisations of the FVFS are represented by their delegates at FVFS meetings. There are approximately 100 delegates in total from the 77 affiliated organisations (at the time of writing), catering for almost 4,900 film society members.

An executive committee of up to 9 members is drawn from eligible delegates to control the business of the FVFS for the year of their nomination.

The FVFS and its executive is fully voluntary with no physical office. The mail address is usually the home address of the secretary, and the phone directed to the private number of an executive member. The generic email addresses are likewise, redirected to relevant committee members.

The executive committee operates in the manner of any normal committee. It comprises:-

- President,
- Secretary,
- Treasurer,
- Vice-President, and
- Up to 5 committee members at the time of writing.

Portfolios are allocated according to current needs and interests and may include:-

- Film Festivals
- Programming
- ReelNews (our regular newsletter)
- Society and Industry Liaison
- Web Site
- Film appraisals
- Marketing
- Technical Development and Support
- Delegates to ACOFS (Australian Council of Film Societies)
- DVD/Film Library
- Independent film (DVD) library.

Any person who would like to become involved, whether from a member group or not, would be most welcome. The work is interesting and new skills can be learned.

Film Societies Affiliated with the FVFS

Any not-for-profit organisation with defined members and which has appropriate aims and rules (or constitution) may join the FVFS as an affiliated member group. (For details of requirements for membership, see Information sheets 01 to 03).

NPV Cinema Affiliates of the FVFS

An NPV Cinema may become an affiliated member of the FVFS in its own right provided it is a not-for-profit organisation and has appropriate aims and rules acceptable to the FVFS. The size of an NPV cinema for membership purposes, is determined by average attendances throughout the year rather than a count of membership.

Film Festival Affiliates of the FVFS

Many NPV Film Festivals are run as a dependent sub-committee of a member film society. An independent NPV Film Festival may become an affiliated member of the FVFS in its own right provided it is a not-for-profit organisation and has appropriate aims and rules acceptable to the FVFS.

The size of a film festival for membership purposes, is determined by average attendances rather than annual membership.

The other crucial difference is that film festivals are active for only a few consecutive days each year rather than the 10 or 11 months that film societies usually operate.

Why affiliate with the FVFS?

Of course there is the philosophical reason, to be part of the very strong Film Society movement in Australia.

Then there are the more tangible benefits which are expanded in Information Sheet 01.

Further Information

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

Call (03) 9874 5270 or write to:

Secretary, Federation of Victorian Film Societies c/o Susan Davidson, 17 Bruce St. Mitcham 3132, Australia.

or email to admin@fvfs.org.au.

Check out our web page at www.fvfs.org.au.

Or QR code



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