

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF FILM SOCIETIES

ACOFS BULLETIN

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LAST CHANCE FOR THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

As anticipated in the May Bulletin, on July 1st the NFSA became an independent body corporate. A board, responsible for ensuring the proper and efficient functions of the National Film and Sound Archive, was also announced.

It has seven members, several of which were members of either the Archive Forum or Friends of the NFSA, which means most appointees are aware of the National (Film Study/NFVLS) collection's importance in the operation of community groups, especially film societies.

One of the major points in Arts Minister Peter Garrett's announcement was that public access and an extended program of outreach activity is a prime consideration for the Board.

I have had private consultations with Board members and at this stage my impression is that our concerns are being listened to and are in line with the Board's thinking.

A CEO has now been appointed and Dr Darryl McIntyre will commence in November. From our point of view it is heartening that he comes to this position from managing the Museum of London's public programmes. He can be expected to focus on strengthening the archive's public access activities.

The future role of former executive director Dr Paolo Cherchi Usai, who has one year remaining on his contract, is unclear.

I will be in contact with Dr McIntyre immediately he takes up his position, requesting the opportunity to clarify, in person, our position and concerns regarding the collection.

RESURRECTING THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

I am convinced the first six months of 2009 will decide the former NFVLS' future as a viable licensed film collection, suitable for community and film society use.

We need to advise Dr McIntyre and everyone at the NFSA how important the NFVLS collection is, as the titles have non-theatrical screening rights attached, enabling easy public access. Individual film societies do not have the capacity or finances to clear rights for prints that do not have this clearance. The collection needs to be maintained, extended and supported to be available to even the very smallest community groups in regional Australia.

The *licensed collection* requires a separate budget to maintain and replace items in the current collection. An acquisition program is also needed to restore the collection to its former eminence. Support staff should be appointed to achieve this outcome.

The advisory committee of stakeholders and curatorial staff, which was discontinued by the NFSA, should be reinstated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1. Every Federation and film society should write to Dr McIntyre, outlining the value of the NFVLS collection to its operation and *continued existence*, reiterating the requirements in the above section. You should make the point that community groups and film societies need a collection licensed for non-theatrical screenings.
2. Without such a lending collection, film societies will be limited to commercially available DVDs, only available if screening rights can be obtained, or prints from a deteriorating 16mm archive.
3. Your submission should be forwarded before the end of November either direct to Dr Darryl McIntyre or forwarded to me at JOHNTURNER10@bigpond.com and I will submit it for you. For any assistance please contact me on (03) 9876 1128 or by email.
4. Although I will continue to lobby the Board and Dr McIntyre, the united voice of our societies is the most powerful tool at our disposal to effect change.
5. You could also consider contacting a Board member to reinforce our case: Prof. Chris Puplick (Chair), Dr Deb Verhoeven (Deputy Chair), Prof. Jill Matthews, Grace Koch, Catherine Robinson, Andrew Pike and Philip Mortlock.

SCREENING REPORTS ON FILMS BORROWED FROM THE NFSA.

One sure way of keeping a sharp profile is to fill in the screening reports sent out with every item loaned from the collection. The more we show an active interest in the condition of the collection, the more our voice will be heard on other matters.

YAHOO GROUP FORUM

Only a few groups are using this extremely valuable asset. Societies are requested to alert other users of any problems with recently screened titles by posting on this website: OzMovieBuffs@yahogroups.com.au

The 2009 ACOFS AGM will be held in Melbourne probably at ACMI in late March.

John Turner September 2008