

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF FILM SOCIETIES  
**ACOFS BULLETIN**

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**ACOFS 2008 AGM and CONFERENCE**  
**Will take place March 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>**

**AT THE NFSA CANBERRA**

- ❖ This will be a very important meeting (see article below).
- ❖ Make sure your views and opinions are raised at the meeting.

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**FILM STUDY COLLECTION STILL IN LIMBO**

I reported in the July Bulletin the steps being taken by the executive to facilitate the transfer of the FILM STUDY COLLECTION from the National Library of Australia to the National Film and Sound Archive and to have funds made available for the purchase of new titles until this transfer took place.

After another five frustrating months we are no nearer to achieving either of these objectives.

Apart from letters already mentioned in the Bulletin we have also had meetings with Paolo Cherchi Usai, Meg Labrum, David Boden and Graham Shirley.

The position at the moment is that change of ownership is unlikely to take place before July 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. I reported previously that \$100,000 has been spent on the renewal of rights to existing titles and this will mean that all titles will be licensed until at least 2009. Also Graham Shirley (Senior Curator, Moving Image) at a meeting last month supported many of our proposals (see transcript in this Bulletin). We had high hopes that the balance of our questions would have received an early response (see transcript) but I have now been informed that there will be no answers until after the transfer of ownership.

We now appear to have reached a stalemate on this issue as it is now likely that no new acquisitions or initiatives will take place before 2009 at the earliest, and so we must consider our options.

We have two options:

1. Accept all that we are told by the NFSA, which means that we will have to operate with the collection as it now stands, with its inevitable lack of

maintenance. This is likely to be the situation for at least 12 months and probably longer, with no guarantee that the future will meet the needs of film societies. The larger societies, of course, can move to DVD screenings from commercial sources.

2. Our second option is to become more active and try and force an early solution to what has become a bureaucratic nightmare.

If we take up option one I fear that many film societies, especially the smaller ones in isolated communities, will disappear.

Option two requires all film societies using the Film Study or General Collections, or hoping to do so in the future, to become active in ensuring that the Film Study Collection in particular regains its position as a world leader. This country needs a collection of the best in current and classical world cinema, licensed for non-theatrical screenings.

This, it would appear, will only be achieved by making our position clear to all the bodies involved. The way to do this is to contact your state Federation in order that your views are aired at the March AGM and Conference. Turn up in person where at all possible, but make sure your Federation representative is ready to speak on your behalf.

Secondly, contact your local member in the new parliament with questions to put to the new Minister for the Arts.

Thirdly write directly to the NFSA and state your position.

If the lack of new material and deterioration of existing films is having a direct influence on the health of your society, do something about it; don't wind up the society without a fight.

The future is to some extent in your hands. We have letters prepared for you to send out to the minister or your local member. Only the weight of an active film society movement will generate any early action to bring the collection back to its former level as a world class resource.

John Turner.

**Ask yourself the question “How important is the national collection to my society? Will my society be able to keep going if the current situation of minimal maintenance and no new additions in either 16mm or DVD continues?”**

**Make your views known to your state delegates to the ACOFS Conference in March or direct to John Turner or Richard Purdy.**

**DO IT NOW, LATER WILL BE TOO LATE.**