

# ACOFS Bulletin

## Australian Council of Film Societies

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NUMBER 74

May 2023

*This Issue contains information important to your office bearers and film society programmers. Please also pass it on to all your committee and other interested people - including those who are not on email.*

**And please ensure your copy of The Bulletin does not get caught up in spam filters!**

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### 1. From the Editor – Ian Davidson [editor@acofs.org.au](mailto:editor@acofs.org.au)

I have just been sent an article by Zac Schonfield (The Bulletin) who has a few words to say about the future of streaming services, and how they haven't lived up to their initial promise of good movies for everyone all the time! It seems to reflect some of the misgivings I have about streaming services - I quote a few paragraphs.....

*"Netflix was once a boon for discovering classic films. It was a virtual video store with an enviably vast selection, but its transformation into Hollywood's leading manufacturer of mediocrity (with the occasional Roma or The Irishman thrown in for prestige points) is now complete.*

*By the mid-2010s, as streaming options such as Prime and Netflix supplanted physical media, I began to sense that the central promise of streaming – every movie or show ever, available at your fingertips – was false. Too many great films are inaccessible. In 2017, I wrote about Netflix's abysmal catalogue of classic films to stream. As of 2023, the US service offers just 35 movies released before 1980. Far more are available to rent on Amazon, but certainly not everything.*

*Meanwhile, streaming content seems increasingly disposable because the corporate powers treat it as such. In the US, HBO Max (soon to be Max) recently removed a handful of its own original films and shows, including The Witches (2020) and An American Pickle (2020), starring Seth Rogen. If HBO Max can't even be trusted to care for and preserve its own original movies, how can it be trusted to care about anyone else's?*

*Netflix likes to [be portrayed] as a home for film lovers, but it's a hollow claim. When you're lucky enough to stream a classic film, they vandalise the end credits with a pop-up ad. Compared with that indignity, watching a DVD feels weirdly luxurious these days: you don't need to worry about intrusive ads or the WIFI cutting out, no one's shouting at you about what to watch next.*



*We were told that “everything’s on streaming now”. We thought we’d have access to 120 years of cinema history. Instead, we have access only to the content that can be readily and easily monetised, trapped in garish and unreliable platforms. There’s no guarantee your favourite movie will still be streaming next month. It feels as if the internet’s vast early possibility has shrunk.”*

## 2. From the ACOFS President

### JUNE 24!

That’s the date of this year’s ACOFS AGM.

Seventy-four years earlier on that same date, the first episode of Hopalong Cassidy burst into action on millions of television sets! Only a few years after the gruelling horrors of WWII had ended, much of the world was ready to get back to the business of adventure, doing good, getting rich, and falling in love.

I’ve watched every episode of Hopalong about a dozen times on DVD. If you think it’s about shoot-ups you’d be totally wrong. It’s about work and it’s about the courage it takes to stay honest and True.

Good films and interesting films allow us to refuel our souls and explore different perspectives ... and test out or rehearse many of life’s possible journeys. Do you agree?

That’s why I feel so passionately that the Film Society Movement is such an astounding and unique force for good: Because it treats film – and what films offer – as both entertainment AND as a source of personal and cultural enrichment.

If you’re reading this, you’re either already part of it or know it’s time to now take the plunge – either to start your own Film Society (!) or join an existing Film Society. Go for it! My colleagues and I at ACOFS are here to help in any way we can.



## HAVE YOU CLICKED THE “LERRRV BUTTON” LATELY?



Every week I email the “Lerrrv Button” to my growing list of wonderful, positive people who Lerrrv ACOFS and the Film Society Movement and invite them to CLICK that button – click it! – and join me and my lovely wife, Barboo, at our WEEKLY VIDEO-CHAT. It’s “An hour of CHAOS with PRODOS of ACOFS!”

You don’t need to stay for the whole hour. You can just drop in for a moment just to say “Howdy!” and then head off. No problem.

Every Friday night from 10 PM until 11 PM (Melbourne time) I’m online, hyped, and available to meet with your fabulousness!

In between receiving visitors in the VIDEO-CHAT room, Barboo and I work our way through some pretty interesting “study topic” that I prepare.

Here are the four most recent topics we’ve studied:

- How the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany used film for propaganda.
- How music is integrated into movies.
- Discussing a 1969 article looking back at how the Film Society Movement began and how it has changed.
- Reading out loud and studying the first part of the film script of the movie, “Big” (which starred Tom Hanks).

Whether you’re the president of a Federation, the Treasurer of a Film Society, an independent Filmmaker or a Film Distributor, if you want to receive the weekly invite to the “Hour of CHAOS”, email me → [president@acofs.org.au](mailto:president@acofs.org.au)

## SO MUCH MORE!

In the weeks ahead, I'll have more news for you about:

- An interesting film-streaming experiment I'm working on and for which I'll be seeking guinea pigs.
- The ongoing development of FISMO™ -- a free app I've been building for Film Societies. It will help you locate the correct Film Distributor for any DVD you want to screen + do a lot more besides.
- Additional FISMO™ functions I'm developing that will, I hope, be of value to Federations.
- Some new connections, friends, and opportunities for the Film Society Movement that I'll talk about in the next ACOFS Bulletin.
- And lots, lots more that I won't mention here, but if you click the "Lerrrv Button" and visit me for a video-chat ... let's see what happens.

Let's talk soon!



At Your Service,  
Prodos S N Marinakis  
"Make it Awesome with ACOFS!"

## 3. Reports from State Federations

### 3.1 From Victoria – FVFS

This report was tabled at the FVFS AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

*"Another year flies by. Covid seems to be in the background and most if not all Societies are back to normal programming. This is a relief as I/we were wondering whether the impact of Covid would be a massive blow to the film society movement. We are resilient!"*

*2023 looks good for film society activity and FVFS membership is remaining strong, with 82 members at the end of 2022, 76 current members for 2023 and new ones joining soon.*

*The Federation is in good financial shape too as the Treasurer's report will testify.*

*In general, it's been 'steady as she goes' this year – a steady flow of enquiries about starting a film society and/or joining the Federation. Many of the general enquiries to the Federation relate to finding/obtaining rights for films; getting the disc seems the easy part!*

*Once again, we took pleasure in supporting the Deakin University's Film & Television Honours students with each of the two students receiving a \$1,500 award to assist them in further studies and film-making activities. The two 2022 Honours students are Aoife Hubbard with her film 'Faith' and Ethan Grahek with his film 'Pegasus Road'. Congratulations to both and we are pleased to show their films today.*

*We encourage societies to reach out to others in their 'neighbourhood' - arrange a visit – swap stories, talk films and learn from one another.*

*My thanks to Ian and Susan Davidson who do much of the Federation's 'heavy lifting' – day in, day out with dedication and efficiency.*

*I wish all members a successful and enjoyable year in 2023.*  
Henry Screen, President”



At the FVFS AGM the following positions on the executive committee were filled.

President: Henry Screen (Macedon Ranges FS).  
V President: John Turner (Croydon FS).  
Secretary: Susan Davidson (Whitehorse FS)  
Treasurer: Ian Davidson (Whitehorse FS)  
Committee: Jean Middleton (Croydon FS), Suzanne Nunn (Ballarat FS).

In the subsequent days the following people were selected to fill the remaining vacancies: John Shortridge (Whitehorse FS), Mike Tye (Southern Fleurieu FS), Graham Pitts (Malden FS).

#### **4. DVD Screening rights**

It is now just over 10 years ago that ACOFS negotiated the screening rights agreement with all the known DVD distributors in Australia. Or to be more accurate, we negotiated deals with Roadshow, Amalgamated Movies and Madman, and the other DVD distributors all agreed to go along with the agreement.

The agreement said that a film society that is registered with an ACOFS-linked State Federation, could approach the Australian distributor, or rights owner, of the DVDs they owned and wished to screen, and seek permission to screen that DVD in public. Permission to screen, if granted, would be at a price less than the going rate for non-theatrical screenings and was initially set at \$50 plus GST. To make this happen efficiently, ACOFS prepared a “how-to” document (Fact Sheet 3B) which instructs the user how to find the relevant rights holders, and provides the contact names and addresses. The ACOFS Bulletin is the final part of the agreement, in which ACOFS agreed to promote any new DVD acquisitions to all member film societies.

The agreement has worked well over these 10 years, with only a few DVD titles not having distributors in Australia or their distributors being hard to find,

The status of DVD rights ownership in Australia tends to fall in just a few categories, as follows:

- Most DVDs that film societies own and wish to screen have been listed on the Australian Government Classification index, where the company that sought censorship clearance is identified (and who is probably the rights owner). ACOFS Fact Sheet 3B provides a contact name and address of the dealership handling each of these rights owners.
- The Australian screening rights for many older movies/DVDs may have elapsed because many rights expire in as little as 5 years. Some distribution companies may focus on older DVDs, but generally the owner of the rights (even if expired) can be found by searching the classification index,
- When no company appears to own the rights for a particular DVD, or the rights have expired, you don't have free reign to screen that DVD. The legal position is that a society **MUST** obtain permission to screen a DVD in public, to their members, and if no company owns those rights in Australia, getting permission is almost impossible. Asking an overseas company for screening rights in Australia often results in a bill of up to \$400 per screening.

- Some DVDs are never released in Australia, and hence have no rights owners in Australia and no entry in the classification index. In these cases ACOFS suggest you try Park Circus in Glasgow, who hold many rights for foreign DVDs. Although they may be more expensive than we are used to, it will generally be a better rate than going straight to the international studio or company who produced the movie and DVD.
- Much has been said about the increasing number of films available from streaming companies in Australia. These seem to fall into several categories:
  - Films made by and for the streaming companies are controlled by them, and understandably, they don't want to undermine their streaming catalogue by a "competing" film society. In many cases their films are not even released on DVD. There is also an argument that a responsible film society may not wish to screen these movies anyway!
  - Most of the material made for streaming companies is in the form of multi-part series, so unsuitable for film societies.
  - Where a streaming company purchases a film from an outside company to stream to their members, the rights purchased would normally be for home viewing only, to friends and family. They would probably not have the rights for screening to an audience in public, so could not sell them to you. In many cases we have seen, the DVD company providing the material to the streaming service may also make non-theatrical screening rights available directly to film societies. This will be clear when you search the classification index, as a DVD that is not classified, cannot be approved for sale.
  - There are always exceptions, and here are some titles we have come across:
    - "Roma". Originally available only from Netflix, the rights are now available from Roadshow.
    - "La Belle Epoque" is listed as supplied through Rialto, and they can approve the rights, but to date (April 2023) it is only available as a DVD from overseas, and does not have English subtitles.
    - "Power of the Dog" is streaming from Netflix but apparently is not with any DVD distributor.

The situation regarding DVD screening rights is constantly changing and we endeavour to bring you the latest information through The Bulletin or Fact Sheet 3B. Those of you who search for screening rights for DVDs are in a perfect position to gather further information as it comes to hand. Please let us know of any changes to the companies handling DVD rights or their contact details.

If you are aware of any film in the catalogue of the streaming services, that you wish to screen, and which is not available elsewhere, or the rights are not available, please let us know. If there turns out to be a large number of films in this category then we will see if we can do something about it.

Three smaller streaming services are Kanopy, Beamafilm and Pivot Pictures. They may be able to accommodate the needs of film societies, or approve the screening rights of their DVDs. The managers of these services are approachable.

Please let us know how you get on.

## 5. News From the DVD Distributors

*These lists are compiled from information supplied by the companies that hold the screening rights for the films/DVDs, but these distributors can not necessarily supply the DVDs. Their contact details are included here only where they have changed recently.*

*These titles have been provided by the respective distributors as being either new acquisitions or titles of interest to film societies. Only distributors who have provided information are included here, but all distributor contacts are still listed in ACOFS Information Sheet 3B. This information sheet, which is updated regularly, can be downloaded from [www.acofs.org.au/resources](http://www.acofs.org.au/resources)*



The latest update of Fact Sheet 3B was on 1 May 2023, so if you don't have the latest, download it from [www.acofs.org.au/resources](http://www.acofs.org.au/resources).

*Note.* ACOFS receives regular emails on all released titles as well as emails in response to specific requests for Non-Theatrical titles, so the following list may include some titles which do not have non-theatrical rights. At least this list identifies the company who is most likely to hold the rights you are seeking!

### **Amalgamated Movies**

Whale, The  
Man Called Otto, A  
Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile  
I Wanna Dance With Somebody  
Emily  
My Old School  
Passengers of the Night, The  
Notre Dame on Fire  
Paris 13<sup>th</sup> District  
Close  
Mister Organ (BluRay)  
Broker  
Running Man Revengers



### **Beamafilm**

- SPOTLIGHT ON ASIAN CINEMA

Expand your cinematic horizons with a focus on Asian cinema. Our range of diverse, visually stunning and thought-provoking movies, from action-packed thrillers and heart-wrenching dramas to quirky comedies, will be sure to enrich and expand your streamed viewing experience.

### **Hi Gloss Entertainment**

Eo  
Hero, A



### **Limelight**

Country Cabaret (June 29<sup>th</sup> )  
Good Doctor, A (Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> )  
Great Friend, A (Aug 24<sup>th</sup> )  
Building Bridges: Bill Youren's Vision of Peace (Sep 7<sup>th</sup> )  
Jack Mimoun & the Secrets of Val Verde (Oct 19<sup>th</sup> )



### **Madman**

(DVD rights booked through Amalgamated Movies)

Giants, The  
2040  
Franklin  
Broker  
Decision to Leave  
Parasite



### **Norwegian Embassy**

Don't forget that this embassy has several good films available for film societies to borrow – for free! See the details in past ACOFS Bulletin in the ACOFS Fact Sheet 3B.

### Potential Films

[lisa@potentialfilms.com](mailto:lisa@potentialfilms.com)

Blue Caftan, The  
Origin of Evil



### Roadshow

According to Domenic Malsom, all up-coming film availabilities are listed on the Collections section of the Roadshow website at: <https://ppl.roadshow.com.au/collections>.

### Ronin Films

Running with Crutches (2002), 96 mins

For member prices refer to the "private purchase" price, but remember you then have to pay the appropriate screening rights fee. Ronin will accept the recommended \$50 plus GST for DVD screening rights. [www.roninfilms.com.au](http://www.roninfilms.com.au) for details and purchase prices. Many of their titles are now available from KANOPY STREAMING, but approach Ronin for the DVD or digital file and screening rights at a film society. Craig McConnell on [orders@roninfilms.com.au](mailto:orders@roninfilms.com.au)

### Screen inc (See also Pivot Pictures)

[dov@screeninc.com.au](mailto:dov@screeninc.com.au)

The Red Shoes: Next Step  
Olga  
Streets of Colour  
Sons of Colour

### Umbrella Entertainment

A Bittersweet Life (2005)  
A Tale of Two Sisters (2003)  
Audition (1999)  
Dead End Drive-In (1986)  
Final Cut (2022)  
I Saw the Devil (2010)  
Love and Other Catastrophes (1996)  
Mad Monster Party (1967)  
Metal Skin (1994)  
Sky Pirates (1986)  
Smoking Causes Coughing (2022)  
Survival of Kindness. (de Heer),  
The Last Emperor (1987)  
The Tunnel (2011)  
The Tunnel: The Other Side of Darkness (2021)  
Wake In Fright (1971)



Go to [www.umbrellaent.com.au/screenings](http://www.umbrellaent.com.au/screenings) to view their full catalogue and complete a booking enquiry. Bluray and DVD materials can also be purchased via their webstore directly. [www.Umbrellaent.com.au](http://www.Umbrellaent.com.au)

Or contact [nikita@umbrellaent.com.au](mailto:nikita@umbrellaent.com.au) or [theatrical@umbrellaent.com.au](mailto:theatrical@umbrellaent.com.au) or call on 03 9020 5136.

Contact Nikita to be added to the mailing list of new releases.

For Australian titles in the Umbrella catalogue (of which there many), Umbrella may be able to assist you to invite the director to attend your screening for a Q and A.

## 6. NFSA New Additions

*The following are listed on the National Film & Sound Archive website as having been added in the last 90 days.*

There is nothing listed on their website under recent additions.

## 7. Drop me a Line

Thank you to all the readers who have emailed me in the past. If you want to have your say, please send all comments, suggestions and articles to [ian24davidson@gmail.com](mailto:ian24davidson@gmail.com)

This newsletter is intended to reflect information and news from all societies, so please let us know about anything of interest at your society.

Please send me a brief email to say the information included in this Bulletin is valuable to you, and what other information you would like.

Ian Davidson, editor.

## 8. Competition

Potential Films are offering complimentary double passes and five Buy-one-get-one-free passes to see the Blue Caftan, from May 18.

View the [Teaser](#)

Simply sign on to their newsletter at [Newsletter](#) and to [Youtube](#) then email Lisa to indicate your interest [lisa@potentialfilms.com](mailto:lisa@potentialfilms.com).

Check out the Participating cinemas - [Cinemas](#).

## 9. Letters

### 9.1 Screening rights

The most common reason for film society committee members to contact ACOFS or the State Federations, is to ask "Where can I get the rights for such and such movie". The answer is always the same – If the DVD or movie has been released in Australia, then the company with the rights will have applied for classification with [classification.gov.au](http://classification.gov.au). They are the company to ask about screening rights for your DVD or movie. The classification listing may only mention 35mm or DCP versions of the movie, but that company would know all about the non-theatrical rights availability in Australia. To find out who represents that company and the best contact details go to the ACOFS Fact Sheet 3B (available for download from [www.acofs.org.au](http://www.acofs.org.au) )

### 9.2 Letter from Bill Biscoe, Barossa Film Club

#### YOUTH SHORT FILM COMPETITION LAUNCHED

The Barossa Film Club launched its second Youth Short Film Competition this week for aspiring young filmmakers from the Barossa Valley. Building on a successful competition held during 2022, young people are encouraged to 'tell us a story...' about their lives and the things that interest them, using the creative medium of film.

The competition contributes to the diversity of voices that is a signature of the Barossa. Young people between the ages of 9-25 years are eligible to apply. Workshops in film making for participants will be offered to help develop technical skills. Cash prizes will be awarded to winners at the public screening of the films in November this year.

Winner from last year's competition, Ekkia Evans said, 'The Youth Short Film Competition was a great opportunity. It gave me reason to make a film I'd been idly thinking about, but never had a reason to actually create. The written feedback from the judges was invaluable and I will say, the cash prize was a fun bonus.'



All young people are encouraged to apply. All that is needed to make a start is a good story and a dose of creativity. Beginning film makers can establish themselves simply with the use of their mobile phone.

Information about the competition is available at [barossafilclub@gmail.com](mailto:barossafilclub@gmail.com)

### 9.3 Letter from the NFSA

National Audiovisual Collection Reaches Four Million Items

In 2022, The NFSA acquired hundreds of thousands of Australian assets in film, video, digital, audio and physical formats for preservation for future generations.

The collection now stands at a total of four million items, and growing. They tell the national story in all its diversity and showcase Australia's peoples, cultures, ideas and beliefs, over time and across the land.

A supernatural barista, a sequined jumpsuit, an iconic anthem, two classic soaps, a new Instagram star, an AFL legend and some Top End adventures (Barrumbi Kids, above) were just some of the unique Australian items acquired for long-term preservation.

## 10. Future Deadlines

We aim to distribute The ACOFS Bulletin at the start of February, May, August and November and would be happy to receive articles for publication at any stage – but note our deadlines are the end of the month preceding publication.

Items we hope to receive include new acquisitions and special DVD announcements from distributors, and items of interest to our film society readers, especially from members of other film societies. Amusing anecdotes are always welcome.

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Incorporated in Victoria: A0057904W ABN: 69 667 887 179

**Secretary**, Email: [secretary@acofs.org.au](mailto:secretary@acofs.org.au)

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[editor@acofs.org.au](mailto:editor@acofs.org.au)

Our website is [www.acofs.org.au](http://www.acofs.org.au)

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#### NOTES:

1. *If clicking on a highlighted link in this newsletter does not take you to your Internet browser, try copying it and pasting it into your browser search bar.*
2. *Please ensure your spam filter is NOT set to capture our emails which include relevant material from ACOFS, such as this Bulletin.*

*ACOFS and the State federations do not necessarily endorse the statements or view contained in any personal statements in articles, letters to the editor or in the films mentioned in this Bulletin.*