

# ACOFS Fact Sheet

## Australian Council of Film Societies

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### NUMBER 02

#### Borrowing from the NFSA

This document was updated in Aug 2025 by the Australian Council of Film Societies and includes minor changes made by the NFSA.

During 2014 and 2015 the NFSA undertook a complete review of their policies regarding the loan of visual material under their control, partly due to their budget constraints but also in recognition that the existing material is getting older and more fragile and much of it may be irreplaceable. The main outcomes as far as borrowing of material by member film societies are as follows:

**16mm:** 16mm prints are becoming rare and fragile, and need to be handled with care. Most 16mm films will still be available but only from the NFSA general catalogue. Many will have associated screening rights but if not, the film society will be responsible for seeking those rights from the rights owner.

Valuable or rare titles may become “Archival prints” and not available to borrow. Most of the 1300 titles which have life-of print licences will still be available to authentic users who have a confirmed record of “responsible handling” of 16mm prints. Those titles without a current screening licence will remain in the Archive but the borrower will be required to arrange the screening rights. The price for borrowing a 16mm feature will increase to \$60 including postage to you. You pay return postage.

**VHS:** Are not available for loan.

**DVD & Blu Ray:** The NFSA closed their DVD and Blu Ray loans arm (NTLC – Non-Theatrical Lending Collection) in December 2024, so none are available for loan.

The following are implications of the NFSA procedures.

1. The borrower (the film society) must agree to the conditions outlined by the NFSA in accordance with the conditions of use on the NFSA website.
2. To register to borrow from the NFSA a film society needs to complete a *Client Registration Form* and satisfy NFSA registration requirements.
3. 16mm films will only be available to registered operators who have a proven track record for caring for 16mm films.
4. Film societies are encouraged to become members of the relevant Federation of Film Societies, which should make it easier for them to register with the NFSA.
5. A film society should operate non-theatrically and the conditions of membership of a film society should be defined in the society’s constitution. A film society should offer an

annual membership, or at least a half-year or three-month membership. Individual admission is not permitted and should not be offered.

6. A film society must keep a register of its members. It is also recommended that names and addresses of guests be retained.
7. No charge may be made for admission to any screening at which an NFSA film loaned under a non-theatrical licence, is screened. This extends to any charge that could be construed as a charge for admission such as a donation or a compulsory charge for supper.
8. Any non-member should not be admitted more than three times in any year. It is in the society's interest that non-members be invited to become financial members of the society at the earliest opportunity. A film society may choose not to admit any non-members or to limit visits to fewer than three times.
9. Any publicity for a film society, where NFSA films are screened, should promote the program as a whole, rather than individual titles, and emphasise that admission to screenings is "by membership" and invite people to join the society. To encourage new members a society can also use the phrase "new members and guests welcome".
10. In any advertising, screening notes or printed matter connected with the showing of films from the NFSA, due acknowledgment should be given to the NFSA as the source of each film or DVD.
11. Film societies are required to comply with the legal requirements of classification regarding film and video ratings; e.g. the R18+ rating is legally restricted to adults 18 years and over.
12. If a film society wishes to hold a special public screening, e.g. a special film weekend (possibly away from its usual venue) or any other screening that is not part of its regular program, the film society should check whether a clearance is needed from the rights holder of the films. In the case of films from the NFSA always contact the NFSA as early as possible so that any necessary clearances may be obtained before the program is announced publicly.
13. Films may not be copied in whole or in part, as this is a breach of copyright – unless permission of the copyright owner is obtained.
14. Borrowers may not re-lend films to other persons or organisations.
15. If films are damaged or lost in transit to the NFSA, borrowers may be held responsible for part or all costs of repair or replacement, as determined by the NFSA. In the interests of other borrowers, any damage must be reported promptly to the NFSA and their State Federation.

To contact the responsible officer at the NFSA (Jedd Bishop as at Aug 2025) call on 02 6248 2175 or better still use the free call on 1800 012 175 (within Australia).  
Or by email to [nontheatric@nfsa.gov.au](mailto:nontheatric@nfsa.gov.au)