

WHO CAN JOIN THE FEDERATION OF VICTORIAN FILM SOCIETIES?

To join The Federation of Victorian Film Societies (FVFS) an organisation must have an appropriate constitution or rules and aims that focus on film (in any form) and must be a not-for-profit organisation. Appropriate constitutions, rules and aims are developed further in Information Sheets 03 and 04.

1 FILM SOCIETIES

Film societies are organisations formed by groups of enthusiastic people who generally like to select their own films for screening to their members.

Their objectives may be to learn more about the on-going art, history and technique of cinema or simply to ensure the best quality films are screened to their members in the best possible environment.

The films they screen may come from commercial film distributors, government libraries, embassies or private collections and some may not have enjoyed general release at cinemas or on TV. Film distributors and DVD rights holders have different rates of hire or rights payments depending on whether the film society operates in a non-theatrical mode (members only) or in a commercial manner (ie charging for individual admission).

Films screened may be on any medium - 35mm, 16mm or 8mm film, video, DVD or even hard drive.

Despite the various cinema, television, video and DVD outlets available for individuals to see or hire films today, film societies continue to thrive. This is due to the atmosphere, social interaction, flexibility of programming, member participation, quality of presentation and the informative and pleasant nature of the screenings. In many cases the film society has an important role to play in bringing a community together.

Film societies:-

- Are not-for profit.
- Have people join as members.
- Are devoted to film screening activities.
- Are usually voluntary bodies with no paid staff.
- Provide an economical means of bringing films to their members.
- Present films on a large screen in a cinematic quality, with a sound system to match.

- Often screen lesser known yet critically acclaimed films.
- Generally provide program notes for their films.
- Provide a warm, friendly atmosphere which can be conducive to discussion.
- Often arrange special and social events which involve the community.
- Can provide unlimited programming possibilities, depending on members' wishes.
- Keep their members informed about film festivals and other events of interest to them.

An organisation does not have to use the term "film society" in its name to be considered a valid film society and to be accepted as a member of the FVFS. For example, a Film Club may still be interested in screening films for their members but choose to emphasise the social aspect of the organisation in the community. The term "film society" is used throughout the FVFS documents for membership based organisations however, for simplicity.

Most film societies run in a "members only" mode with no individual charged admission to single screenings, and thus they pay the cheaper "non-theatrical" rates for their films and DVD rights. This is not the only way a society can operate however. Below are alternative operating modes for film societies.

In all cases the film society must run as a not-for-profit organisation under its own rules and aims, have a list of registered members and be run by a committee which is usually elected by members at an AGM.

1.1 FILM SOCIETIES WITH MEMBERS ONLY

The screenings are run by the film society for the film society members.

It is acceptable that a commercial cinema run the screening for the society and bill them for theatre hire, projectionist etc. and the society pays for the film hire. It may be 35mm, 16mm or DVD projection.

Admission to the screening is by membership and usually involves no additional payment. Some visitors may "come and try it", but their visits should be limited.

If individual films are promoted it may imply that single admission is allowed. Promotion should emphasise membership of the society although film titles may be quoted as a means of attracting membership of the society.

The society where admission is by membership only (non-theatrical), pays cheaper hire rates for the films and DVD rights charges from commercial distributors, and has access to the NTLC library of 16mm films and DVDs. The NTLC (Non-Theatrical Loans Catalogue) is operated by the NFSA (National Film and Sound Archive) in Canberra. It was previously operated by ACMI

(Australian Centre for the Moving Image) where it was known as the NFVLS (National Film and Video Lending Service).

Should a film society operate by charging admission they may be required by the distributor to pay higher rates for their films and DVD screening rights. As long as they have members and appropriate aims and rules, an organisation may be called a film society and join the FVFS as such.

Films and DVDs borrowed from the NTLC have the tighter restriction in that no paid admission is permitted.

1.2 FILM SOCIETIES OPERATING IN PRIVATE HOMES

Film societies operating in private homes should operate in the same manner as above but they are not subject to the copyright requirement that screenings require approval by the rights owners.

1.3 FILM SOCIETIES WHICH SELL SINGLE ADMISSION TICKETS

Film societies could sell single admission tickets as well as allowing members free or reduced charge access. In this case however, they should pay a “commercial” rate for the film - a flat rate minimum guarantee or percentage of the take depending on the arrangement with the distributor. The public would be allowed access at a rate chosen by the society and all proceeds would go to the society. Conditions specified for film societies above would apply except that the film society would not have access to the NTLC library of films and DVDs nor the non-theatrical rate of film hire or DVD rights.

1.4 FILM SOCIETIES WITH ACCESS TO A NORMAL CINEMA

In this model, the film society members would be offered a reduced price admission to a regular cinema screening while the public would be admitted at normal cinema rates, all payable to the cinema. All screening costs, hall hire, projectionist and film cost would be borne by the cinema operator who would pay the “commercial” rate for hiring the film. The film society in turn might be asked to guarantee a minimum attendance of film society members at each film. The film society would be given the opportunity to select which films are screened and when, as part of the film society “annual program”. The film society and cinema are free to promote any film widely but they would not have access to the NTLC films and DVDs, which are available to “non-theatrical” borrowers only, unless they operate separate “members only” screenings for the NTLC films and DVDs.

To be accepted as a member film society the organisation must meet the normal rules of not-for-profit and acceptable rules and aims and have a list of members of the society.

2 COMMUNITY CINEMAS

Community, or volunteer-run cinemas are not-for-profit organisations, usually run on a volunteer basis by local community members. These cinemas generally hold screenings on a regular basis (eg a weekly or monthly screening) often in a venue that is not purpose built as a cinema. This is a cost effective approach to providing film screenings in a small town.

The community cinema should meet all the requirements of a film society except they do not have defined members unless for promotional reasons. All admissions are by single session or multiple session tickets. For this reason the community cinema can expect to pay commercial or flat-rates for their films and/or DVD rights, and not have access to the NTLC library except by special arrangement.

The community cinema may be a dependent organisation, set up and operated under the guidance of a parent group such as a film society or an independent organisation which is not-for-profit and have aims and rules which do not conflict with those of the community cinema.

The community cinemas would normally be run by committees which are self-appointed or nominated by another organisation which is not a member of the FVFS. In either case the community cinemas must have approved rules and aims and run as non-profit organisations.

3 COMMUNITY FILM FESTIVALS

These organisations operate in exactly the same way as community cinemas except that all screenings are held over a short period (eg a weekend) rather than throughout the year.

Community film festivals, as with community cinemas, may operate as dependent or independent organisations.

4 COMMERCIAL CINEMAS

Cinemas operating as part of a chain or as independent commercial cinemas are not eligible to join the FVFS as they do not comply with the essential non-profit conditions of membership.

5 DEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS

5.1 A dependent organisation is one that operates as a sub-committee of and usually under the rules and aims of a parent organisation. The parent may be another member of the FVFS or an independent Arts organisation such as an Arts Council, U3A, School etc. It may be a government or council organisation.

5.2 The dependent organisation must have acceptable aims and rules in itself although these rules need not be as extensive as an independent organisation.

5.3 The member organisation must operate as a non-profit organisation.

5.4 The operating committee may include one or more representatives of the parent organisation.

5.5 Rules and aims of the parent organisation must not conflict in any way with those of the member organisation.

5.6 The parent organisation may be a member of the FVFS in which case a combined membership is acceptable in which the “effective members” of both are added together for the combined “effective members”.

6 WHY JOIN THE FVFS?

Services provided to member organisations include:-

- Registration, which provides status and credibility.
- Advice and help to new groups wishing to start up.
- Emergency support for member organisations struggling to survive.
- Under some circumstances, financial assistance.
- Access to the NTLC managed by the NFSA.
- Non-theatrical film hire rates and DVD rights charges to qualifying organisations.
- Management of film loss and damage insurance for member groups.
- Provision of the means to swap information and skills between member groups.
- Management of public liability and general insurance for member groups at special rates.

- Publication of a regular film newsletter.
- DVD library.
- Film appraisal sessions.
- Support and expansion of technical advice to member groups.
- Arrangement of film festivals, film viewing weekends, appraisal sessions and other film events.
- Provision of general, legal and operational advice on running film organisations.
- Management of DVD screening rights agreements.
- A voice at state and national level with film distributors, government and semi-government bodies.

7 HOW TO JOIN THE FVFS

When you have formed your organisation you should consider joining the FVFS.

1. Complete the appropriate FVFS membership application form.
2. Provide a copy of your rules and aims.
3. Provide a copy of the constitution of your parent organisation if relevant.
4. Forward the above, with appropriate payment, to the FVFS treasurer – as indicated on the application form.

8 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DELEGATES

All member organisations are represented at the FVFS by Delegates appointed by the organisation. The number of delegates depends on the size of the organisation. Their rights and responsibilities are contained in the FVFS Rules in Information Sheet 20.

9 FURTHER INFORMATION

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

See also “The Regional Cinema Guide” published by the NSW Film and TV Office (FTO)

Contact the FVFS on (03) 9873 1369 or write to the FVFS at PO Box 125 Mitcham 3132, or email to admin@fvfs.org.au

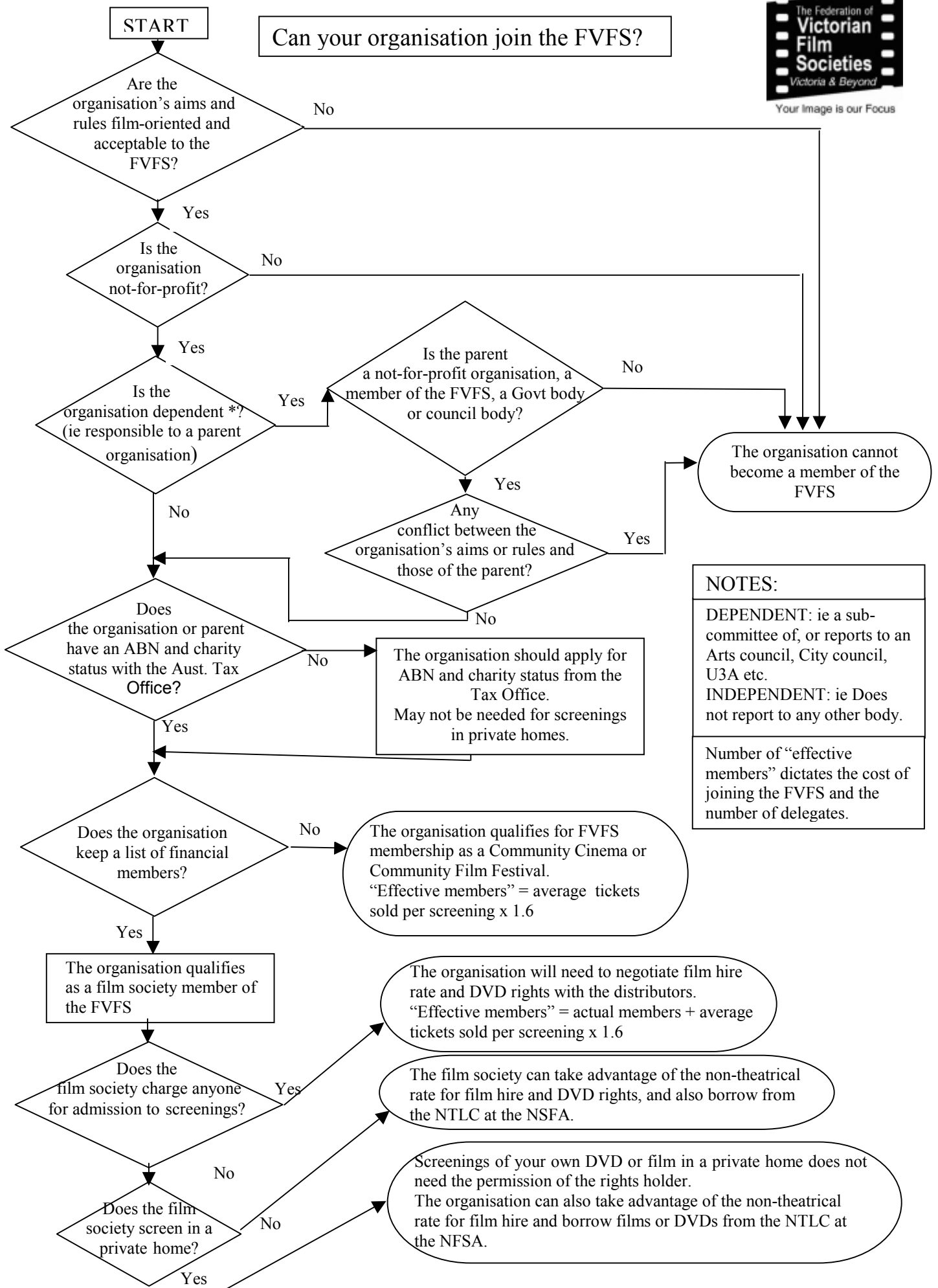
Check out our web page at www.fvfs.org.au .

(See Paragraph)	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2, 3	5	5	4
Type of Organisation	Traditional Film society screening in a public venue	Film society screening in a private home	Film society with some door sales.	Film Society with cheaper access to normal cinema program.	Independent community Film Fest or Community Cinema	Dependent community Film Fest or Community Cinema	Dependent Community cinema run by council or arts council	Commercial cinema (Independent or chain) **NOT CFS**
Members or not	Members only	Members only	Members plus single sales by FS	Members combined with cinema sales	Admission by sale of tickets only			No
Run by:-	Cinema or members	Members	Cinema or members	Cinema	Self	Member Film Soc	Council or arts council	Private
Not-for-profit	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Parent is NFP	Yes, by definition.	No
Has ABN & Charity status	Y	Probably not	Y	Y	Y	Parent has ABN	Not usually	Y
Acceptable aims	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	No
Acceptable rules	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	No
Committee of management	Usually	Usual	Usually	Usually	Usually	Usually	Usually	No
Democratic /AGM	Usually	Usual	Usually	Usually	No	No	No	No
Single tickets sold by org. *	No	No	Y	No, but Cinema does	Y	Y	Y	Y
No. of "Effective members"	Members	Members	Members + 1.6 x sales.	Members	1.6 x ave sales per screening	1.6 x ave sales per screening	1.6 x ave sales per screening	NA

If admission to the screening is by membership only (no sales) then the screening is "non-theatrical" and a lower film and DVD rental applies. Film society can also access the NTLC. Otherwise a flat rate or % applies for film and DVD hire.

Possible Modes of Operation.

NOTE: A commercial cinema cannot become an FVFS member.



NOTES:

DEPENDENT: ie a sub-committee of, or reports to an Arts council, City council, U3A etc.
INDEPENDENT: ie Does not report to any other body.

Number of "effective members" dictates the cost of joining the FVFS and the number of delegates.