

**ACOFS BULLETIN****JANUARY 2004****NUMBER 5****National Library Film and Video Lending Collection**

This collection, as most of you know, has been the mainstay of Film society programmes for many years. Almost six years ago, the collection left the Library and was sent to Melbourne to be curated and administered by CINEMEDIA.

All went well until last year, when first Elizabeth Barnard (Administrator) and then Amree Hewitt and Donna Mann (Acquisitions) resigned from ACMI (previously CINEMEDIA). These resignations preceded a total reorganization at ACMI, which came to fruition late in the year when the entire Collections division was closed down, many people lost their jobs, and others resigned. Only Cataloguing and the technical staff escaped unscathed. This loss of staff also affected the ACMI lending collection as well as the NFVLC. The reason behind all this was a serious over budget loss by ACMI of some 2 Million Dollars. The policy was to close down the collections area and keep spending on Federation Square and its futuristic presentations. At this point, of the people generally known to Film Societies, only Gaye Naismith (Cataloguing), Michael Fairley (Technical) and Sarah Wallace (Admin) are remaining.

In June the government, in its wisdom, gave custodianship of the Film and Sound Archive (ScreenSound) to the Australian Film Commission. We were assured that the integrity of the Archive would be maintained. In November the AFC announced sweeping changes to the Archive, arbitrarily dismissing six of the senior staff along with all managers in Sydney and Melbourne. The proposals for the 'new' Archive reduced it to a mere department of the AFC. In the Review, which announced these changes, the AFC mentioned that its new screening programme would take into account possession of the National Collection. This use of the Collection was not stated but only hinted at in its Stage Two Directions Paper.

Also in November the National Library let it be known to only a very few people that it intended to divest itself of the Collection by the end of June 2004. ACMI, at this time in the midst of its reorganization, had neither the resources nor the will to talk to the Library, and more or less forfeited its claim to keeping the films. Since then, in the last few weeks, ACMI has changed its stance and has started a campaign to hang on to the Collection. However, the Library is well on the way to handing everything over to the Archive.

The Archive of course has no infrastructure capable of running a lending service which caters for at least 700 loans per month. The Cultural Branch of the AFC is in an even worse position to handle a lending service.

I am writing a submission to the AFC (the second) regarding this matter. I am also in touch with the Board and senior managers at ACMI, senior managers at ScreenSound and the National Library. You can be assured that everything that can be done is in hand. In the meantime ACMI will not confirm bookings beyond the end of May but will in fact take these bookings without guarantee to the end of the year. Speak to Sarah Wallace when you ring bookings through. Come to the ACOFS AGM and Conference 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of March to hear the latest in this saga.

John Turner

Whilst all this was happening Leanne Hall has been manfully trying to obtain new titles. I am pleased to announce that four of these are purchased and should arrive during February. They are;

Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN 2002 MEXICO 105MIN

BEIJING BICYCLE 2001 CHINA 113MIN

TOGETHER 2001 SWEDEN 106MIN

ATANARJUAT THE FAST RUNNER 2000 CAN 172MIN

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**ACOFS AGM & CONFERENCE**

**19<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> March**

**ACMI Federation Square**

**MELBOURNE VICTORIA.**

COME ALONG AS AN OBSERVER FOR SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> WHEN WE WILL HAVE PEOPLE TO SPEAK ABOUT THE NATIONAL COLLECTION. EVERYONE WELCOME.

THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PRESENT WHEN MATTERS CRUCIAL TO OUR WAY OF OPERATING WILL BE DISCUSSED.

Use of DVD by film societies will also be discussed.