

## When the Maitland Floods came to Narrabeen

The area has seen many films and television series produced on the Peninsula, originally brought about by the presence of Artransa Studios at Frenchs Forest and the fact that many people in the film industry lived at or near the Northern Beaches.

Indeed there are the remnants of a bush township in Belrose, which provided the outdoor setting for many colonial TV series, including *Rush and Cobb & Co.*

If people were asked to nominate their top 10 favourite Australian films, many would include “*Newsfront*”, the 1978 drama, which focussed on the rivalry between two newsreel companies in the early 1950s. The film appropriately enough was produced by Palm Beach Pictures and was scripted by Phillip Noyce and also involving Bob Ellis, who lives locally. David Elfick, the producer, lived at Palm Beach as does Bryan Brown, who had a role in the film as Geoff the Editor.

Much of “*Newsfront*” involved the newsreel cameramen endeavouring to capture the drama of the Maitland floods of the early 1950s and this is where the Northern Beaches came in, as Middle Creek flowing into Narrabeen Lagoon was used to represent the setting.

The water was briefly dammed to recreate the torrent and the film had the actor Chris Haywood, playing an assistant cameraman, being washed away and perishing in the flooded Hunter River.

So when you drive up Wakehurst Parkway, remember that part of Australian film history, lies close by.