

Sandbar Beach, Smiths Lake — On the Map

Sandbar Beach, on the shores of Smiths Lake on NSW's beautiful Mid-North Coast, holds a special place in Australian music history. It was here, in January 1991, that the iconic music video for Daryl Braithwaite's "The Horses" was filmed — one of the most beloved Australian songs of its era.

Here's what our research uncovered about the filming of the "The Horses" music video at Sandbar Beach, Smiths Lake, NSW:

The Filming

The production crew arrived at Sandbar Beach at 4:30am on a sweltering summer morning, capturing Braithwaite singing and strolling along the beach and running exuberantly through the shallow waters of Smiths Lake. The stunning natural setting of Sandbar provided the perfect backdrop for what would become one of the most recognisable music video images in Australian pop culture.

The Song

"The Horses" was originally written by Rickie Lee Jones and Walter Becker, and first performed by Jones on her 1989 album *Flying Cowboys*. Daryl Braithwaite covered the song on his 1990 album *Rise*, releasing it as a single on 28 January 1991. It reached No. 1 on the Australian Singles Chart in May of that year, and by 2022 had been certified decuple platinum — that is, ten times platinum — by ARIA.

Behind the Scenes

The female vocals on the recording were performed by Margaret Urlich, who chose not to appear in the video as she had recently released her own album *Safety in Numbers* and was focused on establishing herself as a solo artist. New Zealand model Gillian Mather stepped in, appearing on screen and lip-syncing Urlich's vocals.

After what must have been a long and sun-drenched morning on the beach, Braithwaite reportedly headed straight from Sandbar to a gig at St. George League Club — performing that evening with a full sunburn and the effects of heatstroke. Among the other memorable details of the clip is a young toddler who appears briefly on the beach; that child reportedly reached out to Braithwaite around 2018 to reconnect.