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## The Border Mail [\(1\)](#)

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# Worthington makes waves in home state

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For actors Sam Worthington and Myles Pollard, making the surfing movie *Drift* was all about showcasing their home state of Western Australia.

Worthington, best-known for his leading role as Jake Sully in *Avatar*, attended the Perth premiere of the film with Pollard (*Wolverine*, *McLeod's Daughters*), who also produced the film, and Adelaide-born Xavier Samuels (*The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*).

"We're both WA boys and it's nice to actually showcase the state that you've lived in," Worthington told the packed cinema following its screening.

"We were nervous as hell because when you make a movie like this and you bring it back to your hometown, you just hope that you didn't screw it up.

"Miles wanted to showcase WA, he wanted to showcase his passion for surfing and not make it about a bunch of clichéd dudes walking around going 'cowabunga'. The tenacity this man had to put together, I'm humbled to be a part of it."

Worthington plays a hippie surf photographer who helps the Kelly brothers (Pollard and Samuel) succeed in launching their surf brand, *Drift*, in a town nearby Margaret River in the 70s.

Filming in the South West was vital to Pollard, who said he wouldn't have made the movie anywhere else, despite the cost.

"For me it really is quite an emotional moment to be here, having spent most of my life here," Pollard said.

"It was a very big lobby to bring it here to be honest, it was expensive.

"It probably would have been a million dollars cheaper to do it over on the east coast but we knew that region was so special, in the South West, it hadn't been done cinematically before."

Returning home to make and premiere the movie brought on a sense of nostalgia for both actors, especially for Pollard who was emotional at the screening.

"If you're going to do something for seven years, you've got to have a good reason to do it and we were connected to that place so it was an easy sell for us," said Pollard, who worked on a mine in Kalgoorlie and completed a teaching degree before becoming an actor.

"In the south-west of WA, I remember walking down Bunker Bay, it used to be called The Farm, we used to park our Ford Escort called Bessie at the top of the hill and tell our parents we were driving to Australind but we were actually going to Margaret River.

"And then walk down The Farm and there would be a bull there and we'd have to run really quickly to get past the bull. We'd surf all day."

Worthington's favourite childhood memory was less romantic.

"[My favourite memory] was hanging out at Rockingham shopping centre," he laughed.

"I met Miles when I was 19... We crashed at Prevelly Park and did some real dodgy stuff, but that was something that really sold me – I really believed in my mate."

The film is a testament to the friendship between Worthington and Pollard, who auditioned together for NIDA and then studied together.

"I knew at drama school I loved working with this bloke, I was twenty years old, and I hope I get the opportunity to do it again in the future," Worthington said.

"He wanted to make a movie that his son would pick up the DVD in ten years time and go 'My dad f..king did this'.

"And I thought at least his heart is in the right place to make a movie and I'd love to work with him. So he asked me, well he didn't ask me, I said 'May I be in the movie, please'."

The awe-inspiring cinematography of enormous waves off Gracetown, near to where two surfers were killed by sharks, was helped along by a little bit of luck, Pollard said.

"Cow Bongie only breaks twice a year and it just so happened that it broke on the very first day of shooting so we had to scramble a helicopter, get it down here shoot all the seals, everything that needed a helicopter that day," Pollard said.

Worthington added: "All I remember was Miles going 'Look mate, we've gotta get this'... I think the wave you see that Xav goes on is the biggest wave that's been recorded on a dramatic fiction. That's pretty cool, Blue Crush didn't have that."

While Worthington and Pollard "grew up in the surf", it was a new experience for Samuel; one that brought a few near-misses and rescues with it.

"I think in some ways my naivety saved me because if I had have known what I was getting myself into I might have stayed on the shore," he said.

"I did get held under a little longer than I usually would have liked."

The Innaloo screening was met with enthusiastic applause from audience members, many of whom took the Q&A opportunity to thank Pollard for making the film that they said was a "gift to WA".

The film has already won the 'Best Narrative Feature' award at Puerto Rico's Rincon International Film Festival, and the WA pair are hopeful of seeing more world-class films produced in the state.

"The movies here and the people you work with are of a level, on a global scale, work like Red Dog says it all and hopefully this," Worthington said.

"Hopefully there's a lot more movies... Miles is doing some movies later this year in WA.

"It's no longer seen as a backwater state anymore, we're seen in our industry as a player on the global market and that's an awesome thing."

Drift is in cinemas from May 2.

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