INTRODUCTION TO DON’S PARTY

One of Australia’s best-known plays became one of the most enduring films of the local industry revival in the 1970s. Now that some of the more prestigious films of the period look and sound as if suffering from a debilitating tastefulness, Don’s Party (Bruce Beresford, 1976) retains its power to shock.

In preparing this account of the film, I am very grateful to the following for sharing recollections of the play and/or film with me: Phillip Adams, Bruce Beresford, Wilfred Last and David Williamson. Unattributed references to any of the four derive from my 2007 contacts (interview or email) with them. Their insights have enabled me to provide an ampler sense of the film’s production history than might otherwise have been possible. I am also indebted to Matthew Hancock, research and information officer in the Policy, Research and Communications Division of the AFC; Alex Gionfriddo, AFI Research Collection librarian; Siobhan Dee, National Film and Sound Archive; and my wife Geraldine and Andrew Spicer for their careful reading of the essay.

Brian McFarlane
Series Editor
“Don’s Party was made by a significant Australian director, it encapsulates significant ideas and debates in relation to ‘being’ Australian and has an important place in the renaissance of Australian filmmaking.”

DAVID NOAKES