

# 13 Summers

**Desire floods**

**Fear comes in waves**



**A couple using their summer holiday to fix their failing relationship find themselves drawn into a web of sexual intrigue with a dangerous stranger.**





### Short synopsis

Following the breakdown of their marriage, Ben and Vee arrive at a secluded beach house for an annual holiday with their best friends Kate and Patrick. However, this year Kate and Patrick don't arrive. Instead, they find Alex, a mysterious British backpacker who is reluctant to explain why he's staying in their house.

A palpable sexual tension develops between Alex and Vee fueling a deep antagonism between the men. It escalates when their dog turns up dead. When tension turns to violence in the sea, Alex vanishes and Ben fears he's gone a step too far and killed him.

Kate and Patrick arrive, and Ben and Vee must now cover their tracks, desperate to be the first to find the body. If there is one. As the hunt continues, lies and deceit begin to unravel and Vee discovers Kate was having an affair with Alex.

Just as Vee and Ben's deception threatens to be exposed, Kate discovers Alex's body in the dunes. But it's not the man Vee and Ben had met. Who is the Alex they knew, and is he still alive? With Ben and Patrick dealing with the police, the women are alone in the house as Alex makes a chilling re-appearance to claim what he'd been waiting for, and the race is on for ultimate survival.



## KEY DETAILS

*13 Summers* is a classic of the psychological thriller genre. It has an intended audience of female and male viewers of between 25 and 45. The run time is 97 minutes.

The film drives us deep into the isolated Australian coast, where the idyllic secluded seaside becomes a trap that conceals the danger lurking beyond the dunes.

The film was shot in Hervey Bay and the Sunshine coast in November/ December 2022. The film is now in post production with completion due in mid 2023.

<https://vimeo.com/812688150>

[www.frasercoastfilms.com.au](http://www.frasercoastfilms.com.au)



## **Tam Sainsbury – Director/ producer.**



Tam Sainsbury has produced and directed 3 feature films, one of them being romantic comedy Perfect Messy Love which is currently being distributed internationally by US sales agents Nicely Entertainment. Her most recent is psychological thriller 13 Summers currently in post production and due to be released mid 2023. She has written, directed and produced numerous short films which have screened at festivals around the world including the award winning short film Pinky Promise which received a silver award at Cinemafest in New York and runner up at the Canadian International Shorts Festival.

Tam has produced, written, created and directed 2 web series, one being Time & Place with Screen Australia as principal production investor, released in March 2023. Her previous was Perfect Messy Love which was funded by Screen Queensland's digital conversion grant and was released in December 2020.

In 2021 Tam was a mentor for the Sunshine Coast Showdown initiative and directed the runner up film Life In Two Words which screened at the 2022 Berlin International Arts Festival. Late 2021 Tam completed a shadow directing block for Channel 10's Neighbours through Film Victoria and was due to continue on to direct episodes in 2022 until the show was axed. Last year Tam was the first outsourced producer and director to be employed by the US company

Mind Valley as she produced and directed their latest quest to be released as their major launch for 2023. Tam is due to direct two feature films in 2023, one a comedy drama, filming in London and the other, a romantic comedy filming in Queensland of which she will also produce. Tam is currently a Queensland representative for the Australian Directors Guild.

## Jeremy Stanford – screenwriter/ producer.



Jeremy is a writer, director and actor. After an established career performing many lead roles in musicals, plays, and in most Australian TV staples, Jeremy retrained as a film maker at The Victorian College of the Arts School of Film and TV, graduating in 1999 with high honours. His subsequent award-winning short films have been screened at local and international film festivals. In 2009 he set up Storybox Films, which developed TV drama, light entertainment content, documentaries, and feature films.

In 2011, Storybox Films completed its first feature film, *The Sunset Six*, which Jeremy directed, co-wrote, co-produced, as well as composing and performing the underscore. It was released in 2013.

He then went on to direct, *Into The woods* and *Rent* for BAPA and two one act operas for Gertrude Opera: *First the Words, Then the Music*, and *Dr Miracle*.

He was assistant director on *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* at Arts Centre Melbourne, then the resident director for the national tour of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – The Musical*.

In 2018, he released his first novel, *Rapture* which has since been optioned for a television series by a major Australian production company. He continues to write in this platform. His second novel, *The Runner* is due for release in mid-2023.



## **Hannah Levien**

**Vee Trainor**

**(Reginald the Vampire, Brand New Cherry Flavor, Zoe's Extraordinary Playlist, Supernatural)**



## **Nathan Phillips.**

**Ben Trainor**

**(Wolf Creek, Snakes on a Plane, These Final Hours, Chernobyl Diaries)**



## **Bec Hewitt**

**Kate**

**(Home and Away)**



## **Ben Turland**

**Alex**

**(Neighbours, Home and Away, Love Child)**



## **Jeremy Stanford**

**Patrick**

**(Relic, Jack Irish, Wentworth)**



## **Georgie Parker**

**Debbie**

**(All Saints, Society Murders, Home and Away)**

## Tam Sainsbury - Director's Statement - 13 Summers

*13 Summers* is an authentic Australian psychological thriller, set in my home state of Queensland. It is a delight to have the opportunity to direct a feature film which is set locally but also has enormous appeal for a global audience.

I visualised *13 Summers* as a traditional psychological thriller along the lines of the classic films *Dead Calm* and *Knife in the Water* with minimal characters and locations. It has abundant twists and turns, lies, suspense and paranoia. Even though the psychological thriller format can be predictable, it's a tried and tested formula, and is ultimately filled with the elements viewers want to see when they choose to watch one. I have ensured that the audience of *13 Summers* will be delivered the suspense-filled, edge-of-the-seat experience they're after.

A personal motivation behind my passion to direct this film was the fact that the first feature film I directed was a psychological thriller. I have a taste for them. It's also my favourite genre as a viewer. What's more fascinating than the human mind? This genre offers so much: unexpected plot twists, familiar character archetypes that progressively shift motives as the story moves forward, and cleverly revealed information and backstories. When the balance is right, this genre produces some truly gripping films, and the way in which the script for *13 Summers* was crafted, the performances and the cinematography gives me full confidence it can join the ranks of these classic films.

The lead characters are Ben and Vee who are at a vulnerable stage of their marriage and are using the summer to try and mend their problems. The tension is palpable from the beginning, and this is immediately heightened when they meet Alex, the mysterious backpacker who takes an interest in Vee and an instant dislike to Ben. Having been in those brittle stages of relationships myself, I drew on my own experience to bring out the drama, conflict and emotion to create an experience the viewer can easily relate to and empathise with.

The overarching themes in *13 Summers* revolve around betrayal, obsession, guilt and desire, combined with the core themes of love and relationships. I used a collaborative process to develop the characters *with* the actors. We worked through how they evolved with the film's themes and discovered more about what they were playing and what the character's needed. We found the core meaning of the characters' true struggles to produce authenticity, and I worked with the actors to bring out the drama, tension and emotion, in order to truly engage viewers. The inner life and emotions of the characters is paramount to drawing the viewer in and keeping them inside the film. The tension and suspense are increased through gradually revealing Ben and Vee's inner life; an essential ingredient for success in this genre.

The story world of *13 Summers* is an important element in this film, as it is vital for the suspense, tension and mystery. The film is set in one location: a remote beach where the two couples are the only visitors. My vision for this world was one of beauty and mystery, combined with a cold isolation and remoteness.... *someone could die here and no one would find them*. In order to play into the genre, it was important that this world became increasingly mysterious and secluded as the plot moved forward. The cinematography creates the feel of remoteness. For example, I used wide framing of the landscape to create a sense of the characters' isolation. Combined with this, I also wanted to see the beauty and desire in this world in order to play into some of the themes. I achieved this through the use of cinematic shots of the beach, dunes, and the sweeping Queensland coastline. Combining beauty and isolation as one increased the eternal sense of foreboding and threat the characters experience throughout the film.

The wide shots play alongside tighter framing for the drama between the characters. I use camera movement with an unsteady camera and a gimbal to create a sense that the characters are continually being watched—not POVs, but more the sense that there could be someone out there; someone *might* be observing them. This style of camera movement works well in this genre to increase tension and suspense, and at times, creates a feeling of disorientation for the viewer.

Another important element to ensure this film stays true to the psychological thriller genre and engages viewers for the entire journey, is the sound design and score. I am currently working with a composer on a soundtrack that is mystical and haunting, with enchanting strings and slow piano in minor keys. At times the music is at a faster pace to increase the suspense and tension for the audience. Other times the music needs to gradually increase in pace during the build up to an event and then suddenly stop at the peak to help strike fear into the viewer that something could be about to happen.

*13 Summers* has the potential to reach a global audience as an exhilarating and compelling psychological thriller set in a majestic and beautiful location with intriguing and relatable characters.