

PRESS KIT



A FILM BY
JACK SHEPHERD

YAKKA

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY JACK SHEPHERD PRODUCED BY MATTHEW TOON & LENA BUCHANAN
EDITOR LAURENCE VAN CAMP SOUND DESIGNER LUKE FULLER COLOURIST MATT FEZZ DOP JACK SHEPHERD
STARRING JIYA VANDER STRAATEN JAVI VANDER STRAATEN ANNI FINSTERER GRANT LYNDON



Title of Film **YAKKA**
Country of Production Australia
Date of Completion January 2024
Shooting Format ARRI Alexa Mini, Pro-res 4444, UHD
Screening Format DCP and Pro Res available
Ratio Standard 1:85:1 DCP
Sound Dolby Digital 5.1 Theatrical
Duration **14 minutes, 51 seconds**
Genre Drama
Language English



Log line

Set in a coastal Australian town, the story unfolds as two teenage brothers' innocent pastime of fishing and exploring vacant holiday homes takes an unexpected turn.

One liner

Yakka is a coming of age film that explores brotherhood, the loss of innocence, the cycles of violence and toxic masculinity within a family of only men and finding the courage to stand up for what you believe is right.

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www.jackshepherdfilm.com



SYNOPSIS

Inspired by the writer/director Jack Shepherd's own childhood around Pittwater, New South Wales, YAKKA is the story of two young brothers, Riley (15) and Luke (16), local kids being raised by an embittered alcoholic single father, who use their winter holidays to explore the waterways that surround their coastal town, left empty by the upper-class families who reside there through the summer.

Riley and Luke horse around in the boatyards near their house before stealing a pack of prawns from a local shop. Fishing at their local wharf, Riley asks Luke why he uses smaller live fish as bait for the bigger ones. Luke's never questioned it. With no success at the wharf, the boys ask their father to take them to a better fishing spot but he tells them to piss off. To spite him, Luke and Riley "borrow" his tinny and motor, with their bucket full of 'Yakka', to a secluded bay.

Luke and Riley approach one of the seemingly empty houses, as they have done many times before but this time, Luke forces Riley to take the lead. Riley breaks in and searches the house for something to eat but is caught by the homeowner, a bedraggled older woman, who at first is determined to call the police but then offers to cook a meal for the hungry boy. Luke, fearing for the trouble he and his brother might be in, pushes the woman into the nearby table.

As the woman lay bleeding on the ground, Luke grabs the shaken Riley and the two make a run for it back to the boat. But Riley refuses to leave, wanting to help the woman. Luke, struggling with his own guilt and fear, tries to intimidate Riley into going with him, then to physically force him. Riley fights back, pushing his brother who falls into the fishing hooks and skewers his hand. Riley finally sees his brother for what he is, just like their father, before returning to help the woman.

YAKKA is a resonant coming-of-age film that explores the complexities of brotherhood, unavoidable loss of innocence, the familial cycles of violence and toxic masculinity, and finding the courage to stand up for what you believe is right.

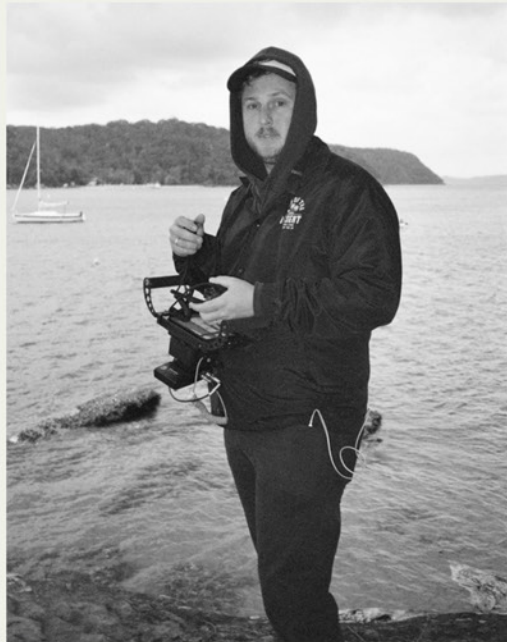


Jack Shepherd

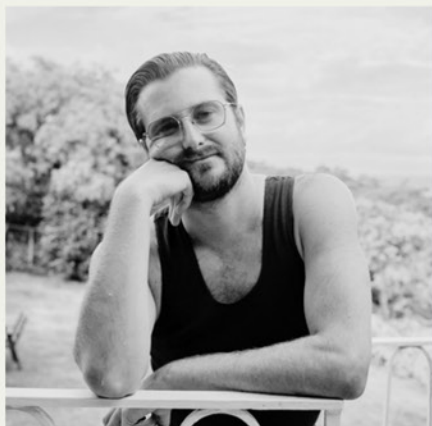
Directors Statement

The cycles of toxic masculinity are even more entrenched in families overrun with men and need to be addressed by the men caught inside them. It can be very difficult to find and follow your own moral compass when those around you, whom you love and admire and have always tried to emulate, seem to want to lead you elsewhere. It can be terrifying and terribly difficult to find the courage to make the choices that, while they may be right for you, could forever change your relationship with yourself and everyone around you.

Not only is this a love letter to my youth, it's also a coming of age story that will connect with people far and wide, young men and young women, encouraging independence and challenging audiences to stand up for what they believe in, no matter what the consequences may be.



Producers



Matthew Toon



Lena Buchanan

CASTING

Director Jack Shepherd - "From the start, I knew in my heart that the two teenage brothers should be discovered through street casting. Their love for fishing, boating, and each other had to be a part of their very being. The characters I had written were inspired by real people I had met during my formative years, and I knew their essence existed in the world around me. **I wanted the two actors to have an intimacy that only true brothers could have.**

With over 150 casting applications to sift through, we took on the challenging task of narrowing down potential candidates for the roles. After several rounds of deliberation, we held auditions at a local boat ramp. Over the course of three days, we saw a group of talented and unique teenage boys, but it wasn't until the very last audition on the final day that we met the real-life brothers who embodied the characters I had written - **Jiya & Javi Vander Straaten.**"



Jiya (Left) & Javi (Right) - Photo Cred. Aedan O'Donnell



Javi Vander Straaten

as RILEY (15)



Jiya Vander Straaten

as LUKE (16)



Anni Finsterer as MAGGIE

Agent : Sophie Jermyn Management

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0278354/>



Grant Lyndon as SIMON (Father)

Agent : Sophie Jermyn Management

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3375580/>

POST PROD.

EDITOR **LAURENCE VAN CAMP**

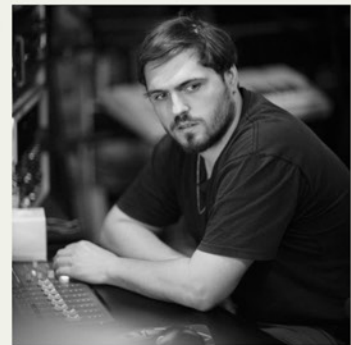
Laurence is a commercial and long-form editor based in Sydney, Australia who works across commercial and long-form projects.

Recent work includes the BINGE Series 'Strife', second season of Corona Free Range Humans, and TV Drama Cloudy River, which has made its way around the world on various platforms.



SOUND MIX & DESIGN **LUKE FULLER**

Luke is an adaptive and resourceful audio engineer with a diverse experience in sound recording, live sound, location sound, post-production, sound design and music production. He is thoroughly creative, passionate about authentic explorations of narrative through sound, and sonic aesthetic.



COMPOSER **MITCHELL SLOAN**

COLOURIST **MATT FEZZ**

Matt is an Australian Colourist & Online Editor with an impressive background in Commercials & Long-form Drama. Some of his most recent narrative projects are The Royal Hotel (2023), Mystery Road (2022), OneFour: Against All Odds, Mother & Son and many more.

