

Ekka's dark secret back in Storage

By News Online's Gary Kemble

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Visitors to this year's Ekka in Brisbane will most likely be blissfully unaware of the dark deeds played out in the beef pavilion recently.

But all will be revealed at the Queensland premier of *Storage* at the Brisbane International Film Festival on Friday night.

Storage, shot in Brisbane, is a psychological thriller set in an underground storage facility.

While the RNA Showgrounds isn't the first place that come to mind as a likely filming location, writer/director Michael Craft says the beef and cattle pavilion was ideal.

"We needed somewhere where we could build a pretty big set," he said.

"We built the storage facility. We used the exterior of that building as the exterior of the facility but then we built a 40-metre square interior, which was the maze of corridors throughout the building."

Craft says they didn't really have the budget for such a large set, but production designer Michelle Sothern made it work, and the pay-off was worth the effort.

"It was very important for me as a film-maker to be able to create the space that I needed," he said.

"A lot of these rooms are quite small, two metres square for example, so there wasn't a lot of room to put the camera.

"Having the opportunity to build the set definitely made the environment much more accessible, but also much more controllable.

"We could have the creepy lighting that we wanted, we could have the walls finished in the way that implied deterioration and degradation."

Storage tells the story of 17-year-old Jimmy (Matt Scully), who goes to work in his uncle's underground storage facility after the brutal murder of his father.

"I love Hitchcock films and early Polanski thrillers, so I wanted to do a contained, pressure cooker kind of thriller in a scary location. And it's also loosely based on the Snowtown bodies-in-barrels murders," Craft said.

He says that while developing the film, many people shared their stories of strange experiences in storage facilities.



Saskia Burmeister and Matt Scully star in Australian thriller *Storage* (storagethemovie.com)

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"Putting stuff away in a room and maybe hearing strange noises or seeing a strange character further down the hallway, so I think a lot of people can relate to that experience," he said.

"Superficially it does seem mundane, it's just storage, but the possibility of evidence of mystery or crimes being stored in those spaces and then somebody having access to those rooms or that information is a really exciting premise for a thriller."

Storage premiered at the Dungog Film Festival earlier this year. While the response was 'sensational', Craft says he's looking forward to the home-town screening on Friday night.

"There will be some cast and crew, family and friends there, but mostly it's just going to be a Brisbane audience who want to come and see a great Brisbane film," he said.

"We're very passionate about the film industry here in Brisbane and the producers and I from an early point were very committed to making the film here, so we're really excited to play it to a home crowd, and hopefully it will go down really well."

Storage will have a limited theatrical release from August 13.

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