

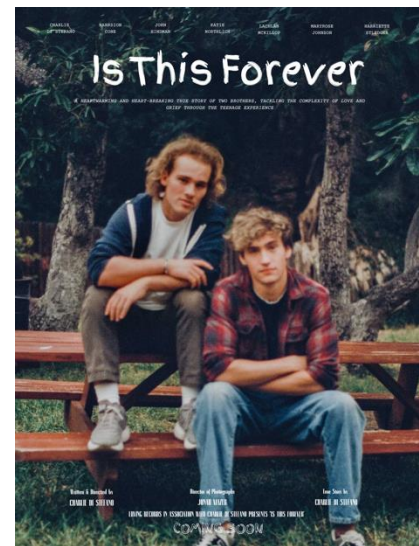
Is This Forever. A new film by Charlie Di Stefano **A portrayal of love, mental health and grief**

Melbourne born actor Charlie Di Stefano recently completed filming in Los Angeles for his new lead role in *Is This Forever*. The film was inspired by the unexpected death of Charlie's older brother Lucca Di Stefano who struggled with personal mental health issues.

The film follows a teenage boy, Billy confronting his brother's struggles with mental illness and the grief that comes with his death. Memories filled with love and joy as well as pain and anger help him understand the bond they shared.

Charlie has used his personal experience to reflect more generally on teenage grief and the lack of acknowledgement for the pain endured. He hopes his brother's story will help others struggling with grief, broken relationships, difficult family dynamics and mental health issues to realise they aren't alone.

Through the character Billy, Charlie explores the issues around young men's mental health by reflecting on his own battles. Billy continually asks the question 'Will this last forever? Will the pain of grief never cease?'. This question is often asked but never fully addressed especially from the perspective of a teenage boy. The conversation around death and loss is often seen as too uncomfortable or inappropriate.



Charlie wants to use his personal experience and those of his older brother Lucca to raise awareness of the silent pain many men suffer, and to remind men and women to properly check in with their dad, brother, husband, boyfriend, cousin, nephew, uncle. We live under the false stigma that being open as a man is a sign of weakness. In reality, being vulnerable is far braver than lying about your true mental health state.

Jonah Mazer is the director of photography and co-director with Charlie of *Is this Forever*. The cast includes Harrison

Cone playing Gabe (older brother) and John Hindman as the father of the boys.

Charlie has raised over \$US12 750, mainly from Melbourne communities. Some of greatest supporters include Never Mind Bar just off Glenferrie Road in Hawthorn, who donated \$US1000. Susie Montague-Delaney, producer of *Ride Like A Girl* (2019) and *Little Tornadoes* (2021) also contributed over \$US1000 to the making of the film.

The biggest donation came from the Richmond community around Bendigo Street Milk Bar across the road from the original Channel Nine Studios, and run by Charlie's parents Diane Di Stefano and Mario Di Stefano. They had a fundraiser

night for the film in mid-September, where many from all walks of Charlie's life and the Richmond community came together to raise over \$A6300.

Charlie has set up a fundraising campaign to finance his film. Please follow the links below to find out more about Charlie's project.

[Go fund Me Link](#)

[Instagram Page](#)

[Is this Forever - Film Fundraiser](#)

Charlie Di Stefano lives in Hawthorn and graduated from Trinity Grammar School in 2021. He is currently in Los Angeles and asked Eastsider News to publish this article about his film *Is This Forever* as part of his campaign to raise awareness of the film