

that's fan-tastic!

The countdown is finally over. The latest *Star Wars* movie has arrived and for lifelong Aussie fan Tanya, it's time to celebrate!

Tanya Teumissen, 49, Adelaide, SA

# Love me, love my SABER!

**A** long time ago – 1977 to be precise – in a city far, far away – well, Adelaide – an 11-year-old me stood in line at the cinema for three hours to see *Star Wars*.

I remember it like it was yesterday. I'd made the journey with my best friend, Julie, and her mum Chris, but little did I know that day would begin a lifelong obsession.

From the moment I saw the *Star Destroyer* entering the screen, I was hooked.

I dreamt of space adventures and imagined myself out there with Luke, Princess Leia and the rest of the *Star Wars* gang.

During my teens I quickly realised that other girls my age didn't share my interest.

I wanted to wear *Star Wars* T-shirts and they wanted to wear pretty dresses.

I learnt to bury my enthusiasm and my bedroom became my *Star Wars* sanctuary, but as soon as I left school, my obsession was allowed to flourish.

I realised I didn't care what others thought and by the end of the '80s I was a full-blown fan – with computer games, posters, collectables

and T-shirts to boot. Around this time I met my husband, Justin, now 46, who discovered what he was getting himself in for when he visited my house for the first time.

'What is all of this?' he asked, gobsmacked when he saw my collection.

I explained, gave him time to take it in and said, 'If you want me, you've got to take this too. *Star Wars* and me are a package deal.' Luckily, he agreed.

We married in 1990 and on the big day Justin surprised me with the most amazing wedding present.

Before the ceremony he

kissed me, said 'I love you,' and then, from behind his back, he presented me with a wrapped gift.

I opened it and my eyes lit up. It was personalised car

Justin surprised me with the most amazing wedding present

numberplates that read **JEDI 01!**

'You're my own special Jedi,' Justin said, looking at me lovingly while tears welled in my eyes. Those plates are still

on my car to this day. Soon, Justin and I went on to start a family.

While pregnant with my daughter, I was desperate to call her Callista after Luke Skywalker's love interest in one of the *Star Wars*



Me, Luke, Justin and Cassandra

books, but my husband drew the line at that. She ended up with Cassandra, which is close!

When my son followed three years later, there was only one name on my mind – Luke, after Luke Skywalker!

As our brood expanded, so did my obsession – and my collection, which now

invades nearly every room of our house. I've got replica lightsabers, toys, posters...

You name it, I've got it.

Then there are my costumes. I've made everything from Jedi outfits to Princess Leia get-ups and over the years each costume has become more and more complicated with one hand-painted cape even taking 56 hours to make.

Right now, I love wearing my X-Wing pilot costume.

It took me three years to put together due to costs, but when I wore it for the first time at a *Star Wars* convention, I knew the expense was worthwhile.

A young guy at the door asked me: 'Where's your starfighter?' I laughed and replied: 'I left it in the car park.'



My X-Wing pilot costume took three years to make

People always ask me why I love *Star Wars* so much.

I'm not even sure myself. Maybe it's the idea of being part of a much bigger world out there.

I've never believed we are alone in the universe and this belief gives me hope for the future. It's about escapism and it's fun – what more could I want?

But a few years ago, Cassandra, now 19, said she had something serious to discuss.

I braced myself and sat down on the couch, waiting for bad news.

'Mum, don't get upset,' she began. 'But I don't really like *Star Wars* anymore.'

It was like a dagger in my

chest, but I got over it!

Luckily, Luke, who is now 16, is still a big fan, so I have him as a partner in crime for the new movie release.

In preparation, we've been sitting together at night, discussing the latest film.

'You are such a geek!' Justin tells me.

Luke and I look at each other and grin.

It's true! I'm a *Star Wars* geek and proud. ●

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Part of my *Star Wars* collection

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I love getting into costume



Cassandra and me



Me dressed as Padmé



My late friend Steve and me – he was a big fan too