

# Australian Videocamera

March 2020

**FUJIFILM X-A7 Mirrorless**  
**VEGAS POST**

**GIGABYTE AERO 15 OLED**

**SandDisk Extreme Pro SSD 1TB**

**Aputure Amaran AL-M9 Video Light**

**Sennheiser HD660S Headphones**

**Vimeo Create**



**Plus: Plugin Corner, Drones Plus, Tutorials and more!**



# Australian Videocamera



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## EDITORIAL

### Hello and welcome!

I have purposely tried to make the content of this edition of Australian Videocamera as varied as possible, and this is the way I am planning to present future editions as well. This means the stories will be shorter and sharper, but still convey as much information. Examples in this edition include the SanDisk and Aputure reviews.

You may recall we did a survey in January as to whether you wanted to see more photography related information in the magazine? The result was a resounding yes, so we are ramping up this side of things as well, and the first cab off the rank is my review of the new Fujifilm X-A7 mirrorless camera.

If the vendors play ball, this means we will also be able to bring you reviews of models from not just Panasonic, Canon and Sony (although Sony has been hellish hard to get gear from lately), but also Pentax, Olympus, Ricoh and other top flight brands.

We are also going to expand the "action camera" genre beyond simple GoPro and other brand reviews by also exploring techniques, add-on accessories and other areas of "action interest" including 360° video and photography. The same applies to drones by the way.

Also about to get more exposure is the wonderful world of plugins for NLE's and this month we are looking at the fantastic BorisFX Continuum Complete system. BorisFX themselves have come to the party and given us a 12 month licence to give away, so if you use a video editing package that supports BorisFX such as Adobe Premiere or After Effects, Vegas Pro, AVID Media Composer, DaVinci Resolve or Final Cut Pro X for example, [please click here to register](#).

Speaking of which, over the years we have mainly concentrated on Windows based software, primarily as there seems little interest from the Mac community. If you feel this is unfair and want more Mac oriented content, please let me know via email.

Finally, due to space, I had to hold over two main stories this month, an interview with filmmaker Curtis Lambert and a First Look at the latest Corel VideoStudio 2020, but these will be in the next edition

Regards.

David Hague  
Publisher



## Contact Us

**Phone:**

+61 (0)456952227

**Email:**

david@auscamonline.com

**Web:**

australian-videocamera.com

**Facebook:**

AustralianVideocamera

**Twitter:**

@Auscamonline

**Instagram:**

Australian Videocamera

**Regular Contributors**

Dr David Smith

Stephen Turner

Denby Smith

Graeme Hague

Chris Oaten

**Social Media Manager**

Moirae Rae

**Cover:** Dunsborough Boat Ramp

Western Australia

*Here is a collection of news items over the last month or so that caught our attention.*



### Know Your Drone

Australians are flying drones in record numbers. More drones in the sky means it's important we all understand the rules that keep us safe.

See <https://www.casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone> for more info and to take a quick quiz on your drone knowledge



### New Da Vinci Resolve 16.2 released

This is a major update with new Fairlight audio features amongst other enhancements. And a bonus is Da Vinci Resolve (for Mac, Windows and LINUX) is free!

See <http://bit.ly/3cMkuac> for more information



### Adobe Lightroom Updates

If you are a Lightroom user, then these will be of interest. The new features created are dedicated to developing the best in class tools and experiences to help all photographers find and express their visions.

See <http://bit.ly/2Q0hjC0> for more information



### Corel launches VideoStudio 2020

New capabilities including Colour Grading, Custom Transitions, and Dynamic Split Screen Video with video editing shortcuts,

See <https://www.videostudiopro.com/en/products/videostudio/ultimate/> for more information.

*If you have a news item you'd like published, [get in touch with us!](#)*



### Sony Launches New Compact 4K Handycam Camcorder

A new 4K Handycam® featuring a in-built gimbal mechanism, Balanced Optical SteadyShot™ technology, for capturing smooth, natural and high-quality video footage.

The full list of features and pricing is at <http://bit.ly/3azckQy>



### Canon announces development of the EOS R5

Canon Inc. has announced that the company is currently developing the EOS R5 full-frame mirrorless camera—containing CMOS sensor, image processing, optical and other state-of-the-art technologies the company has cultivated through its long history of camera development

The full announcement and more detail is at <http://bit.ly/2xpGjfw>



### The Birth of the DJI MAVIC Mini

Arguably, the MAVIC Mini from drone experts DJI is the most important model they have made.

See the full story at <http://bit.ly/38PJMSi>



### fxHome Donates Proceeds of HitFilm Express to WWF

\$12K raised so far in "Pay-for-what-you-want" System

See <http://bit.ly/2IzjRml> to see what this is all about.



# Review: Fujifilm X-A7 Mirrorless

*Our first ever FUJIFILM camera review.*

**B**ack in September last year Fujifilm announced the X-A7.

Now released, it comes with a newly developed image sensor in addition to being equipped with an auto focus system said to be capable of tracking fast moving objects including faces and eyes. Importantly for video makers, it also supports 4K video with, and I quote, “a large bright LCD monitor for excellent operability”.

The X-A7 is a mirrorless digital camera that weighs in at 320g and gets its imagery via a 24.2MP APS-C sensor. The company says the utilisation of copper wiring enables high speed data which gives all sorts of clever technical advantages to enable the high speed AF capabilities

and make best use of the proprietary colour reproduction system.

For lovers of Vlogging (which my step daughter tells me is pronounced “Vlogging” as in “flogging” not “Vee-logging” as I used in a recent video), the X-A7 supports 4K / 30 fps video

Fujifilm suggests the X-A7 is the perfect choice for those who want to up the ante from their current smart-



phone usage for photography and video as it offers a “broad range of applications from casual snapshots of everyday scenes to travel photography and

fully fledged photographic creations”.

And now we have had one for a few weeks here is what we think.

## Physically

The physical controls on the X-A7 are minimal, with a single rotary on the top of the camera looking after many of the settings as you can see from the photo on the next page. This is allied with a pop up flash on the left and on the right a, shutter release (surrounded by a ring for the front command dial) and a **Fn1** button also surrounded by a ring, this time for the rear command dial. There is also an on/off button nestled between all three dials / rings.

There is a top centrally located hot shoe.

On the rear of the body are buttons for Drive that doubles up as a Delete button and a Playback button. On the top bottom right is a tiny focus stick, a Menu button (doubling as an OK button and a Display button (doubling as a Back button).

On the right hand side under a flap are a USB-C and mini-HDMI ports and on the left, a switch to pop up the flash plus a mic input port.

The 3.5" LCD touch-aware screen angles and rotates and is rated at approximately 1000 candelas – 1 candela is 1 NIT over a square meter if you were wondering. There are a number of smartphones rated this highly, but in the real world, I don't consider this high enough for outdoor use.

By way of example, the [OSEE field monitor](#) we reviewed a few months back, and designed for outdoor use is 3000 NITS.

Taking the X-A7 outside on a 32 degree bright and sunny day I could discern an image, but to see any



detail to apply a focus say was well-nigh impossible. Ditto using the on-screen command structure to make any changes. So, I am sorry Mr Fuji, despite your web site de-



# Fujifilm X-A7 Mirrorless

scription stating "Users can clearly check the subject on the screen even on a bright sunny day outside." I did not find that to be the case. Perhaps the sun is brighter in Australia than the location the unit was

Except the X-A7 doesn't have one.

Of course, it is unfair to single Fujifilm out on this; it is a recurring issue across many camera / camcorder manufacturers.

shop and not some dodgy online entity who grey markets from overseas. Cough.

So, let's imagine it is NOT a bright sunny day, and we can see the LCD screen.

The menu icons displayed on the touch screen are more than comprehensive. In fact, there are 47 indicators, mode switches and on screen buttons to keep even the most ardent gadget controller happy. Some of the display items are quite tiny having said that and if shooting bright subjects a little hard to see.

There is also a Menu structure system which is very easy to follow and again very comprehensive.

ers and why we suggest time and again, when buying one, test it under as many conditions as you can before laying down the hard earned shekels, even if it means just taking it outside the shop door – over-ho-vering and anxious shop assistant besides. It's also a damn good reason to buy from a, you know, REAL

tested on for that statement?

This proved to me yet again that a viewfinder is a necessity.



## Imagery

Fujifilm lenses are second to none, that is a given. We were sent an 18-55mm and it was a ripper. Not my personal best choice for video due to the nature of things I shoot (I'd prefer a 200m zoom say), but the footage I did shoot was clean and with a lovely saturation and luminance. But again, with Fujifilm lenses and the company's proven colour technology I would expect nothing less.

Especially good was the new "Bright" mode which automatically selects the optimum shooting settings using HDR. I also liked the "Light Trails" setting (*mainly as I have always been jealous of my good friend and [V8 Supercar shooter extraordinaire Ross Gibb's talent in this area!](#)*)

## Audio Drift and APP Issues

We did notice some drift between video and audio in 4K shooting, a fact that was collaborated by our colleague [Chris Oaten](#), so this might be something to watch for.

There is an APP available for transferring images etc and to operate the camera remotely, but looking at the reviews in the Google Play store, it suggests some work may be needed on this. A number of users are Not Happy to say the least.

## Conclusion

Concentrating on the X-A7 as a whole, it is a good camera there is absolutely no question. It comes as a kit with a 15-45mm lens at

between \$800 - \$900 depending where you shop.

The main drawback is that LCD in my book; it just doesn't stack up to Australian bright summer conditions in our testing. If Fujifilm can up the quality



of that to around the 2000 NITS level, this will be a camera to maybe start to get into the realms within that marketplace of between the high-end smartphone and something like the Panasonic GH5 or Sony A7 series

[For more info click here.](#)

# Review: GIGABYTE AERO 15 OLED



## HARDWARE

*How does it fare as a video editing beast? David Hague had a play to find out.*

*I have never built my own computer, and in all likelihood, I never will. It's just not my thing.*

But people in the know tell me that if I were to build my own computer. I should opt for a motherboard made by GIGABYTE.

### Gaming

Goodo then, so the laptop the nice PR person sent me to test, an AERO 15 OLED made by these very GIGABYTE folks, might just be a rip snorter then. It's primarily designed for gaming, but every time I am in a Facebook forum and there is a thread on "building your own PC for video editing", it seems to me the specifications gamers use to put together their dream machine is very similar to the ones suggested for a top of the range video editing machine.

Now to me a computer is com-

posed of four fundamental bits; screen, keyboard, hard drive space and memory. The rest I don't (technically) give a hoot about. As long as it is fast, reliable, easy on the eyes and after my recent hospital escapade to cater for carpal tunnel syndrome in the right wrist, have a damn good keyboard.

I might add here I also don't really worry too much about trackpads in laptops. Why? 'Cause I detest 'em and always plug in a proper wrist friendly mouse.

### The Screen is Brilliant

In these important areas, the GIGABYTE AERO 15 OLED shines – mostly. The 4K UHD screen is sublime and probably the best I have ever seen on a laptop. It is clear, bright and importantly for video editing, accurate and with a fast refresh allowing

previews of special effects to be seen accurately without ghosting or stuttering.

The video card employed is the very, very good NVIDIA® GeForce RTX™ 20 Series and video panel is a Samsung 4K UHD AMOLED if you were wondering.

The keyboard is a beauty. It even comes with its own built in disco light system.

### Disco In a Keyboard

I kid you not, in the default setup mode, the keys have a permanent wave of rainbow colours wash over them from the underlying backlit key LEDs. It is quite mesmerising initially just to sit and watch the colours keep changing as they roll from left to right.

I say initially, as after about 10 sec-



onds I was madly searching for how the hell to turn it off! (My 20 something step-daughter loved it conversely, so what would I know?)

Anyway, to type, the keys have a nice travel and feel and even after a 45 minute session, my wrist(s) felt fine, which is more than I can say for other laptops I have tested.

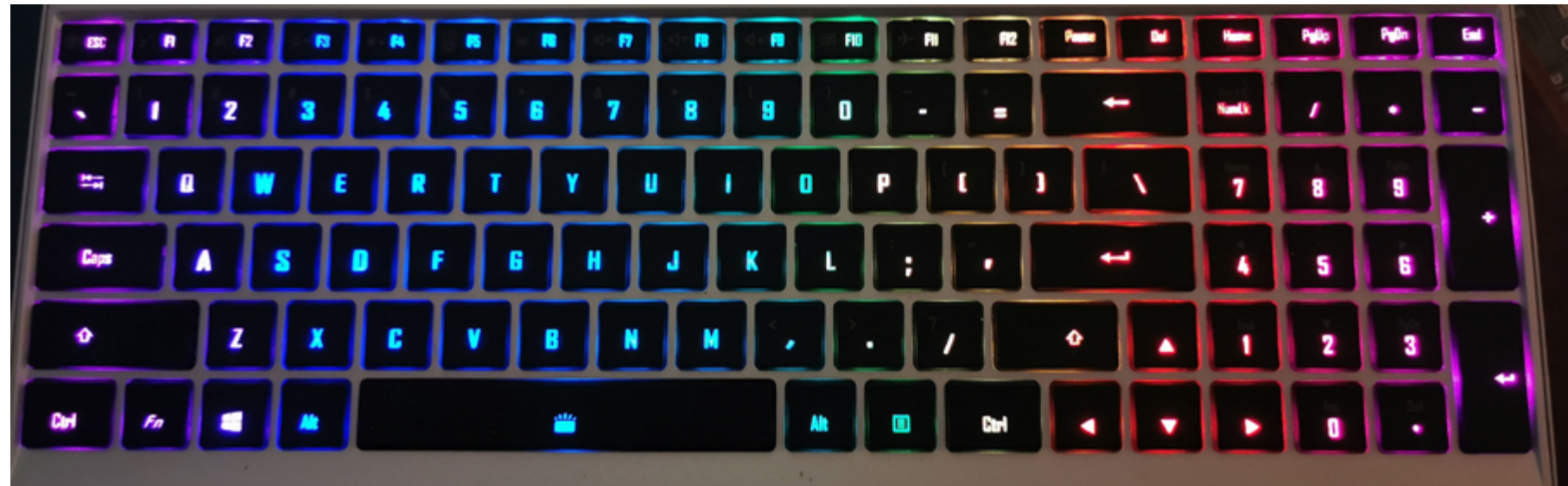
## Storage

Main storage is to a 500GB SSD drive and there is provision to plug in a second if you need. This makes it incredibly fast to read and write video files. Complementing this, the main engine is a brand new 9th gen Intel® Core™ i9, 8 core processor matched to 16GB RAM with an optional 32GB based machine available or of course you can upgrade the RAM later.

## Rendering

And at this point I became a little mystified. With all this horsepower, I would have envisaged the AERO 15 in a simple Vegas Pro render test of a 40 second video with some titling, effects and a bit of 3D space thrown in would sneer at me as ask if that was the best I had.

However, surprisingly it was a fair percentage slower than my 2 ½



year old i7 Dell desktop that also has 16GB RAM but no SSD drive. My own laptop, a 2 year old ASUS A541U (16GB RAM and i5 processor with a 512GB SATA drive) gave a time of 2:32.18 which made the Gigabyte look a bit better.

The render times (all files coming off a SanDisk Extreme Pro SSD 1TB drive and writing to each computer's own internal drive) were:

- **Dell – 1:17.21 mins**
- **Gigabyte Aero 15 – 1:30.81 mins**
- **ASUS A541U – 2:32.18 mins**

The story was a little better if the files were rendered off the AERO 15's hard drive as well as writing to it which in all honesty would probably be the norm. Under this circumstance, the AERO registered a time of 1:25.76 for the same test.

In short, it's not as fast at this task as I thought it would be, but in the real world the AERO 15 is no slouch either.

## Battery Life

As you'd expect, doing reasonably hefty video work, working on the battery alone minimizes what you'll get: I managed just over 5 hours before it ran out of puff. Even then, that is enough for say, a flight from Perth to Sydney without plugging in so no complaints there.

## Conclusion

Garish keyboard besides, I liked the GIGABYTE AERO 15 OLED. The speed difference between it and a dedicated desktop is a bit of a worry but I could offset this against that beautiful screen to a very large degree.

But the price to many might be a deal breaker. In this configuration you'll get a dollar back from \$3K which is a lot. The \$3K I mean not the \$1.

A dedicated top-of-the-range desktop can be built for less than this with a wide screen ASUS monitor on it (or twin "standard" monitors if you prefer).

But if you are a video editor who is also a so-called "road warrior" (ugh!) and spend more time on aircraft, on set or on site than chained to a desk then I couldn't think of a better laptop to use for the task.

As long as you turn those damn keyboard party lights off that is.

For more information, see [www.gigabyte.com/au/Laptop/AERO-15-OLED--Intel-9th-Gen#kf](http://www.gigabyte.com/au/Laptop/AERO-15-OLED--Intel-9th-Gen#kf)



# Review: SanDisk Extreme Pro SSD 1TB

*Tiny but packing a mighty storage punch...*

**N**ow this is just getting plain silly.

A 1TB capacity, portable hard disk that uses SSD technology, is less than the thickness of, oh I dunno, maybe half the depth of my Huawei P30 mobile and not much larger than a credit card. If you want exacts, it is 11cm x 5.5cm x 1cm approx.

No, none of THAT stuff is silly. Hard disk drives – although these days of course there is no actual “disk” – have evolved a long, long way since I dropped a 10MB one down a staircase at my old Tandy Computer Centre in Subiaco.

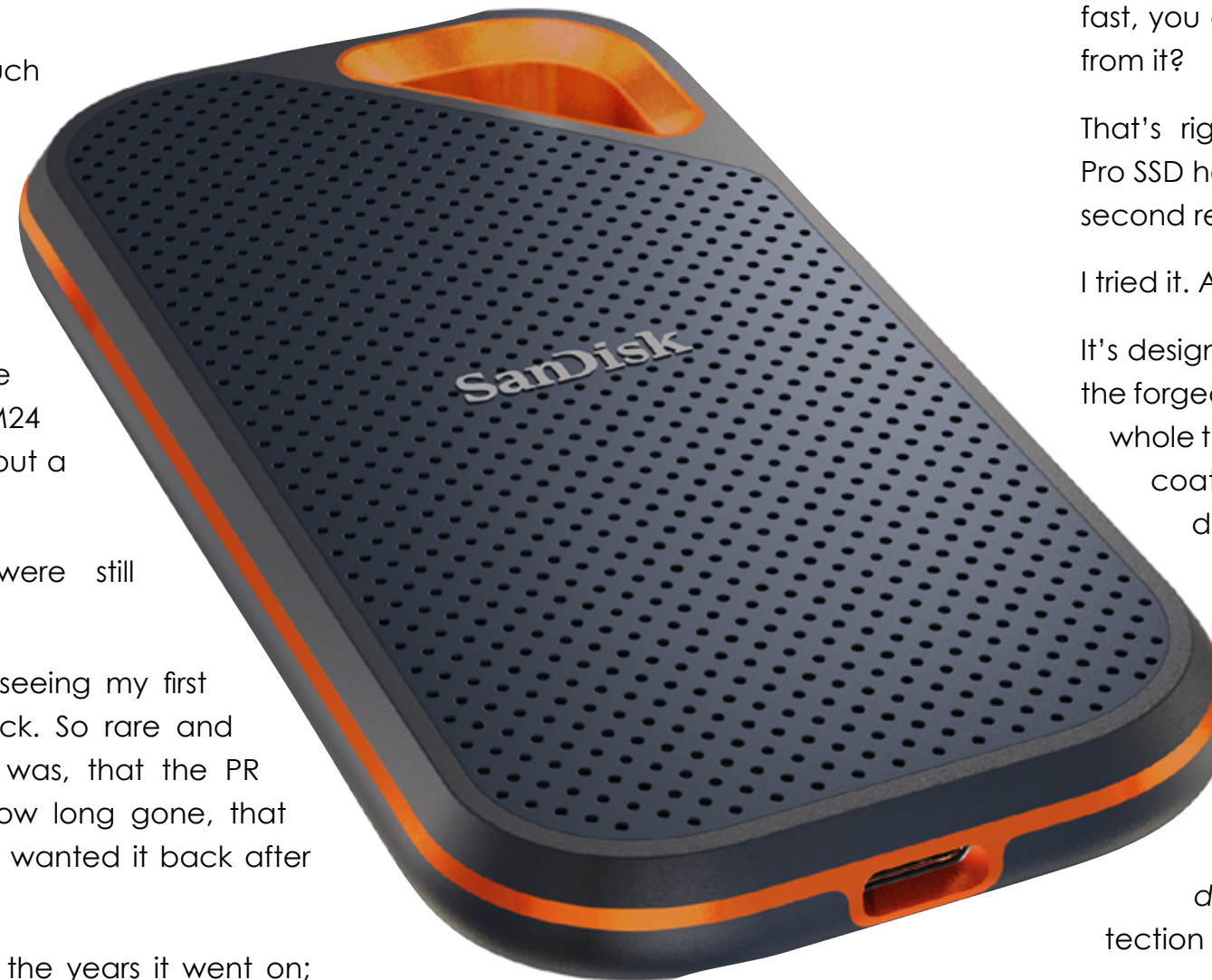
That's right, in 1982, a 10MB – not gigabyte, MEGABYTE – with just over 8MB usable was massive and cost around \$6 grand. A bit later, and

not that much either, a 10MB HDD was the standard size in the IBM PC and its clones like the Olivetti M24 and cost about a grand.

And they were still fragile too.

I remember seeing my first 16MB USB stick. So rare and expensive it was, that the PR company, now long gone, that sent it to me wanted it back after a week!

And so over the years it went on;



memory got cheaper and cheaper, drives got smaller and smaller and capacity got more and more.

But a 1TB USB based drive that is so fast, you can edit 4K video directly from it?

That's right. The SanDisk Extreme Pro SSD has a claimed 1 gigabyte / second read speed.

I tried it. And you can.

It's designed to dissipate heat from the forged aluminium body and the whole thing is covered in a rubber coating that is also apparently dust / water protected to IP55 standard.

*(The first 5 means: Protected against quantity of dust that could interfere with the normal operation of the product but not fully dust tight. Complete protection against solid objects.*

The second 5 means: Protection assured against water jets projected by a nozzle (6.3mm) from any angle.

Now you know).

It comes with a 5-year warranty too.

I reckon my mates that shoot motor sport on their dSLRs and mirrorless beasts as well as the video guys

knocking out 4K footage in the field like there is no tomorrow, will go nuts over this. With the Melbourne Grand Prix hour next weekend, I'd be getting down to wherever you buy your kit from and grab one guys.

The 500GB unit is AUD\$259 and the 1TB is AUD\$399. More info and to purchase, [click here](#).



*The size comparison*



# Review: Aputure Amaran AL-M9 Video

*Need an inexpensive on-camera light? Look no further.*

**R**ule Number 1 of any video or photography course is you must understand light to be successful at what you do.

If there is no or insufficient light, then the image or clip will not expose properly, that is, be dark.

It's a basic.

So, often we need to add light to be able to shoot the imagery we need and this is done by artificially adding light to a scene via some sort of lamp.

## Tutorial? Nope.

Now I do not intend this to be a lighting tutorial: there are dozens of those available and the techniques vary according to the specific circumstance - and it's fair to say this is a science all to itself hence the Very Important position on the set of "lighting director".

No, this is aimed at those on a budget who need some sort of light for their camera in order to get an acceptable shot. For example, when shooting an inter-



view, these need to be lit correctly to remove shadows, "bring out" the subject against the background and so on.

Video lights can cost a motza. Just Googling "Video Light Cost" shows a variance between top and bottom of

the first 5 found listed of over AUD\$1000.

Way back in the past - about 1997 if I recall - I found a basic video light in a duty free shop in Vanuatu for \$75 and a grabbed it. This little non branded light served me well for a few years, mainly on trips where I was shooting inside buildings, people at night around BBQs, night fishing and other holiday type stuff.

I eventually lost that light somewhere in Europe and didn't really have a use for a new one until recently when I had to shoot some private tutorials.

The on-camera light for my Panasonic HC-PV100 did a fair job, but the scene - a talking head - needed filling out and so I searched around for an inexpensive solution.

## Features

And found the Aputure Amaran AL-M9. At AUD\$80 it certainly didn't break the bank but has a bunch of features which I reckon make it excellent value.

In summary, stuff that won me over were:

- **Pocket-Sized LED Video Light**
- **5500K ± 200K Colour Temperature**
- **9 Smooth Dimmable Steps**
- **Removable Magnetic Diffuser**
- **CTO and CTB Gel Filters Included**
- **Built-In Rechargeable 1800mAh Li-Ion Battery**
- **Universal Mount Adapter Included**
- **Fits on Tripods, Cameras, and Cold Shoe Mounts**

## Conclusion

The Aputure Amaran AL-M9 comes in a dinky little carry case and can be installed and ready to run on a camera or stand in seconds.

If the AL-M9 is not what you are after, Aputure has a decent range of other lights (as well as other accessories). I bought mine from [Kayell](#) in Sydney.





**FUJIFILM**  
Value from Innovation

Blackmagicdesign



2/3" PROFESSIONAL LENS 4K

# LA16x8BRM

## MAIN FEATURES:

- Designed for Blackmagic URSA Broadcast: Provides the best lens performance for Blackmagic URSA Broadcast with 4K and HD resolution.
- Compact and lightweight with 4K resolution: The lens weighs approx. 1.6kg thanks in part due to its unique a rear focus mechanism design.
- Electronic flange back adjustment with macro switch function: This new function increase convenience when shooting.
- Compact/lightweight and 4K resolution.
- Electronic flange back adjustment function.
- Macro function.
- Handheld or EFP/Studio style.

Product specifications are subject to change without notice. NOVEMBER2019

**FUJINON**

For more information, please contact:

**Simon Becker** - National Sales Manager Optical, Fujinon Optical Devices  
FUJIFILM Australia Pty Ltd T: +61 2 9466 2790 M: +61 429 400 133 E: [simon.becker@fujifilm.com](mailto:simon.becker@fujifilm.com)  
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# FINAL DRAFT 11

Professional Screenwriting Software

It all starts with a script.



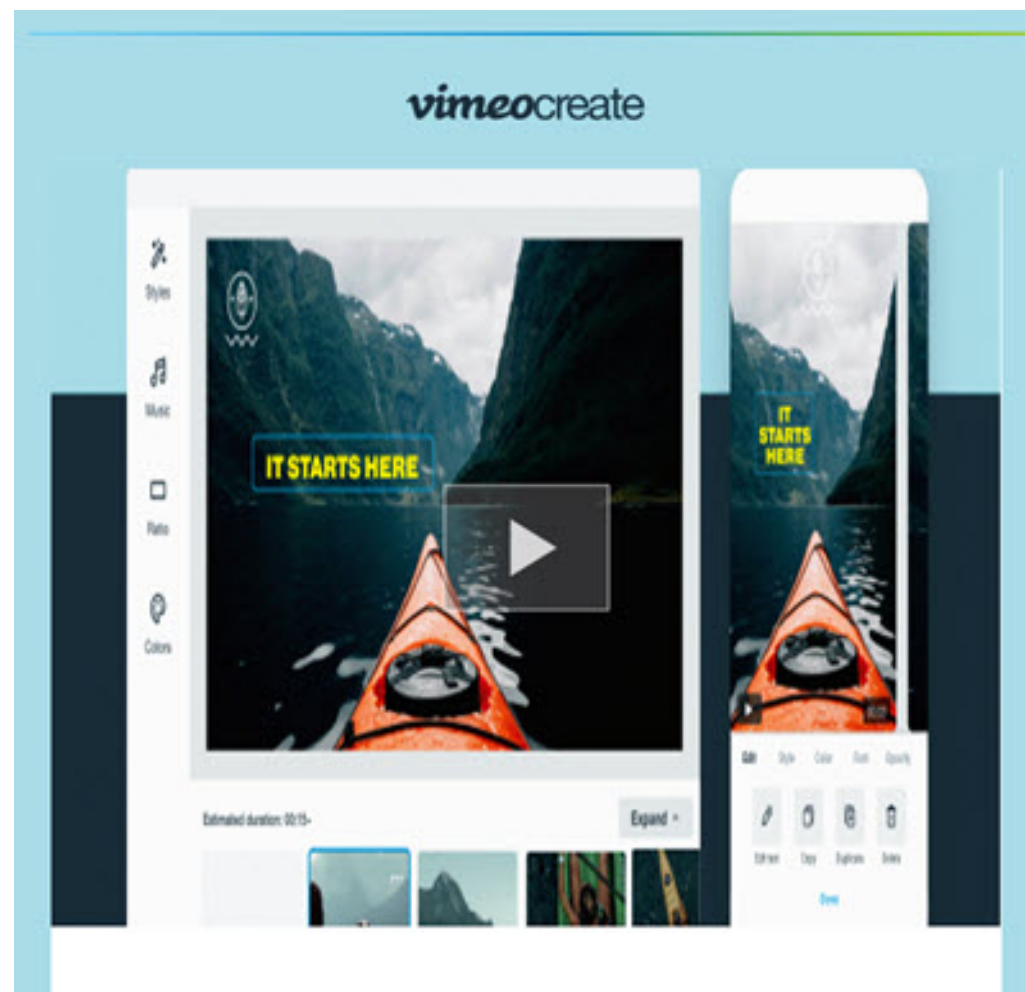
[finaldraft.com](http://finaldraft.com)





## Review: Vimeo Create

*Need an app to create video on your phone or tablet?*



*If you want to create video on your mobile phone or tablet, there is no shortage of apps available.*

These include FilmoraGo, Adobe Premiere Clip and Rush, Videoshow, Kinemaster, VivaVideo for Android and LumaFusion, VideoShop, Splice and Quik for iOS. And plenty more where they came from.

They all have pros and cons of course, and some are not compatible with certain phone models which is a pain (Rush does not work on my Samsung Galaxy 7 for example, but Clip does).

Now online video service Vimeo wants a piece of the action – presumably to lure users from YouTube – as it has announced Vimeo Create available for Android, iOS and the desktop inside a browser. On my PC it insists on loading inside Microsoft Edge for reasons unknown I must get to the bottom of.

It comes with a swag of templates, stock clips, photos and commercially licenced music is available plus you can tailor colours, fonts and layouts.

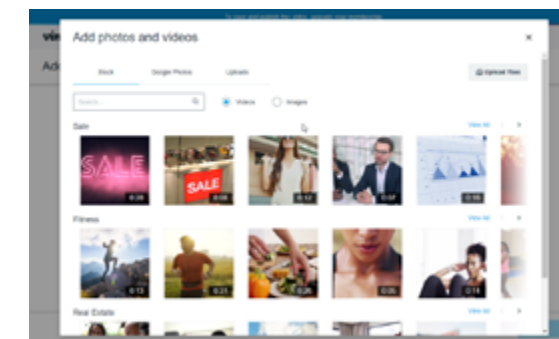
A so-called “smart editor” is claimed to turn your clips into a “polished video” in “minutes”.

But Vimeo have gone an extra step by also including the ability to get feedback and track performance statistics.

All sounds good, so we put it to the test in a quick trial. We used some footage of the new puppy, Dougie the Dog to try to create a quick video using Vimeo Create.

Instead of using a template, I opted to start from scratch. First you need to login to Vimeo (or create an account if you don't have one). Across the top of the screen, the workflow becomes evident with a step-by-step

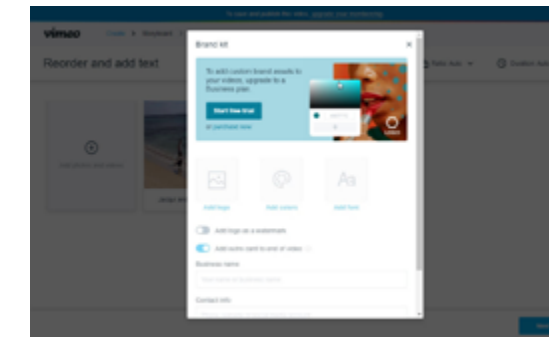
Create>Storyboard>Style>Music metaphor shown.



The first thing you are then asked is to add any photos and videos via either upload or from the online templates. This is the Create step.. Online templates also show their length in time.



Once done, clicking Add drops them into the storyboard and from here, you can reorder clips and add text.

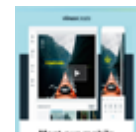


There are three options available here as well; Brand to add your own assets such as a logo (for which you need a business account), Ratio (to set the aspect ratio of your video) and Duration (auto or 15, 30, 60 secs or “custom”).

You click Next to continue. Next you can choose a “Style”.

And here I found the first annoy-

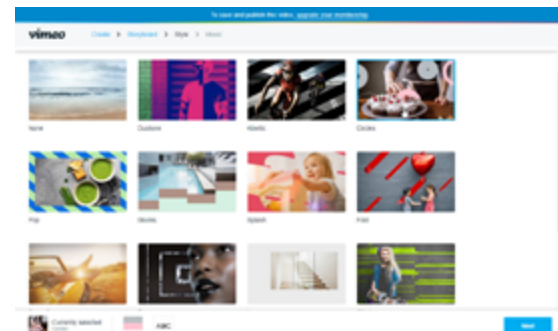




# Vimeo Create

ance. In this workflow metaphor it's not immediately evident you can step back to correct something, that is, there is no "Back" button. In fact what you do is click the step of the metaphor list at top (the Create>Storyboard>Style>Music text) to go back one step.

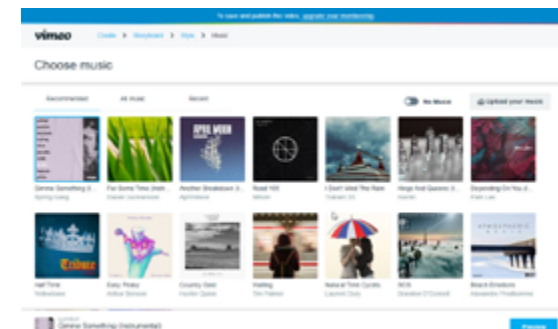
Moving on.



Clicking on a Style gives an animation thumbnail of what that style does. As you'd expect in this world of Instagram filter-y type things, they are all pretty cheesy and no

self-respecting video editor would use any of them.

However for the sake of the exercise I chose one called "Circles".



Next is your choice of music. Again, limited choice and cheesy, but what the hell, "Beach Emotions it was, for what it's worth.

Vimeo Create then goes off and does its thing. And I wish I could say it was grand and beautiful. But absolutely nothing happened!

So I tried again from scratch... and the same thing happened. Nothing.

Vimeo Create put up a splash

screen stating it was creating a preview, and then it vanished.

So quite simply, I stopped wasting my time. And anyway, if you want to use it seriously for ANYTHING, you have to pay, starting at AUD\$9 / month (billed annually of course) for 5GB / week to a max of 250GB / year right up to AUD\$95 / month, also billed annually for Premium with unlimited streaming. Without paying you cannot save or post a video.

Thanks but no thanks. YouTube has nothing to worry about here at least. You'd be better off getting a "lite" version of Vegas Pro or other major NLE, or the free version of HitFilm Xpress or even DaVinci Resolve if you are on either PC or Mac.

Vimeo Create is certainly not for this little black duck.

<https://vimeo.com/create/video-maker>



SENNHEISER

## XS Wireless Digital An instant connection.

Wireless means never missing the moment. It means powering on and getting straight to work. Be it a complication-free lavalier for the one-person video team, a wireless mic that's up and running right out of the bag, or something entirely different—it's a quick sync and you're good to go. Enter the world of wireless without the burden of a complex setup.

An all new way to capture audio.  
An instant connection.

[www.sennheiser.com/xsw-d](http://www.sennheiser.com/xsw-d)





# New Vegas Post. An Overview

*The game has just changed. And for the better.*

*As many know, I have been using Vegas Pro as my NLE of choice for many years now.*

I came across it by accident originally and had a play out of curiosity. Fate then sort of stepped in and I was introduced to Douglas Spotted Eagle at a user seminar in Sydney.

For those not aware, at the time – and to this day for that matter – Douglas (DSE or Spot to his mates) is the acknowledged expert in all things Vegas and via various forums and websites has helped countless numbers of people to master the various releases of the product.

Later, he was kind enough to ask me if I would assist in the writing of one of the books he has authored (along with many training DVDs) on using Vegas.

In August last year, MAGIX, the new own-

ers of Vegas Pro, released version 17 of the package and also announced a surprising addition, Vegas Post, designed to fill the void of an image editor and specialist compositing program.

Vegas Post actually consists of a bundle of three programs; Vegas Pro 17, Vegas Image and Vegas Effects.

I have spoken of Vegas Pro many times and a quick search of our website will unearth a number of stories and reviews relating to the application, so I am going to concentrate here on Vegas Image and Vegas Effects.

## Vegas Image

Vegas Image can be likened to Photoshop, PaintShop Pro and other similar image editing applications.

Just add a few steroids!

It has a swathe of correction tools, effects, compositing options, masking types, blurs, colouring options and much, much more.

While the interface is different from competing programs in that there isn't a 'tool-box' metaphor, this in a way is a strength as it is easier to relate to how the different commands and options available are symbiotic in the way they are used.

This also means that what can take many steps in another program can be achieved much more easily in Vegas Image.

## Vegas Effects

Whilst Vegas Pro has many options to composite video and create special effects using inbuilt tools as well as 3rd party plug-ins, Vegas Effects take this to the next level.

It can be used as a standalone program or is integrated into Vegas Pro itself. From inside Vegas Pro, Vegas Effects is immedi-

ately accessible from a single right mouse click in order to modify, colour correct, add effects to or otherwise manipulate imagery.

There are over 800 effects and presets built right into Vegas Effects. No matter you want to colour correct your full-length Hollywood movie, add titles to a made for TV documentary or add 'Star Wars' like explosions or laser blasts to a home movie, Vegas Effects has all this capability and lots more besides.

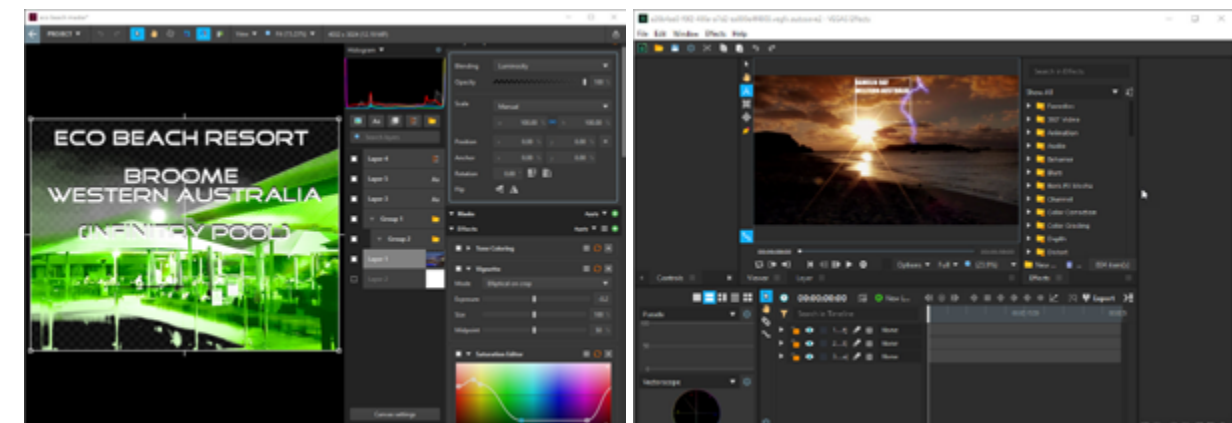
Rather than write many words about what Vegas Image and Effects can do, and what is available in each, here is a short video I put together showing some of the major features and functions of the two programs.

## Trial Version

If you want to try Vegas Post, it is available now from <https://www.vegasc creativ esoftware.com/us/vegas-post/>. (You'll need to scroll to the bottom of the page).



[Click here to play video.](#)



Vegas Image

Vegas Effects

# Overview: BorisFX Continuum Complete

*Our first in the new series “Plugins for popular NLEs.*

*Plugins are a major part of the modern NLE (non-linear editing package or “video editing program” for the uninitiated).*

They and are used to supplement the existing inbuilt functions of the NLE in areas such as titling, transitions or colour correction, or to perform tasks that the NLE was never intended to do such as heavy special effects compositing and masking.

Consequently there are many, many plugins available and they generally come as either dedicated to your NLE (they won't work on another package) or more likely these days, as OFX compliant packages that will work across a number

of different NLEs.

Some common ones you may have come across are from companies such as Red Giant, NewBlue, Pixelan and Digital Anarchy.

## BorisFX

[BorisFX](#) has been around making plugins for as long as I have been involved in digital video – and THAT goes back to Premiere 4.2 (for which coincidentally, Michael Ferrer the principle of Pixelan, makers of Spicemaster, wrote the major 3rd party tutorial / manual) so let's say around 1996.

Today the company has a major suite of plugins and applications under its wing such as Mocha, Sap-

phire, Particle Illusion and Title Studio. But the one we are looking at today is Continuum Complete.

## 2020 Version

Just released in its 2020 clothing, Continuum is a whole bunch of different plugins that work across all the major NLEs (Adobe Premiere / After Effects, Vegas Pro, AVID Media Composer, Da Vinci Resolve and Final Cut Pro X etc.

The nice thing with Continuum is that you can either buy the package as a whole suite, or just get the modules – [BorisFX](#) call them “units” – you need for the current job at hand.

The Complete package contains

17 plugins to streamline workflow, offer creative titling, creative effects and quick fix plugins with over 250 effects and over 4000 presets.

New additions in the 2020 version include Corner Pin Studio, Reflection, Cast Shadow, Curl, 6 new transitions, Mocha Area Brush, Particle Illusion and Title Studio.

These alone add another 100 presets plus effects and transitions.

Some samples of what these do are in the videos at right. Click to play.

## Trial Version

You can get a time limited trial version of BorisFX Continuum Complete from the Borisfx website (and also check out Sapphire and the other plugins while there) at [www.borisfx.com](http://www.borisfx.com)



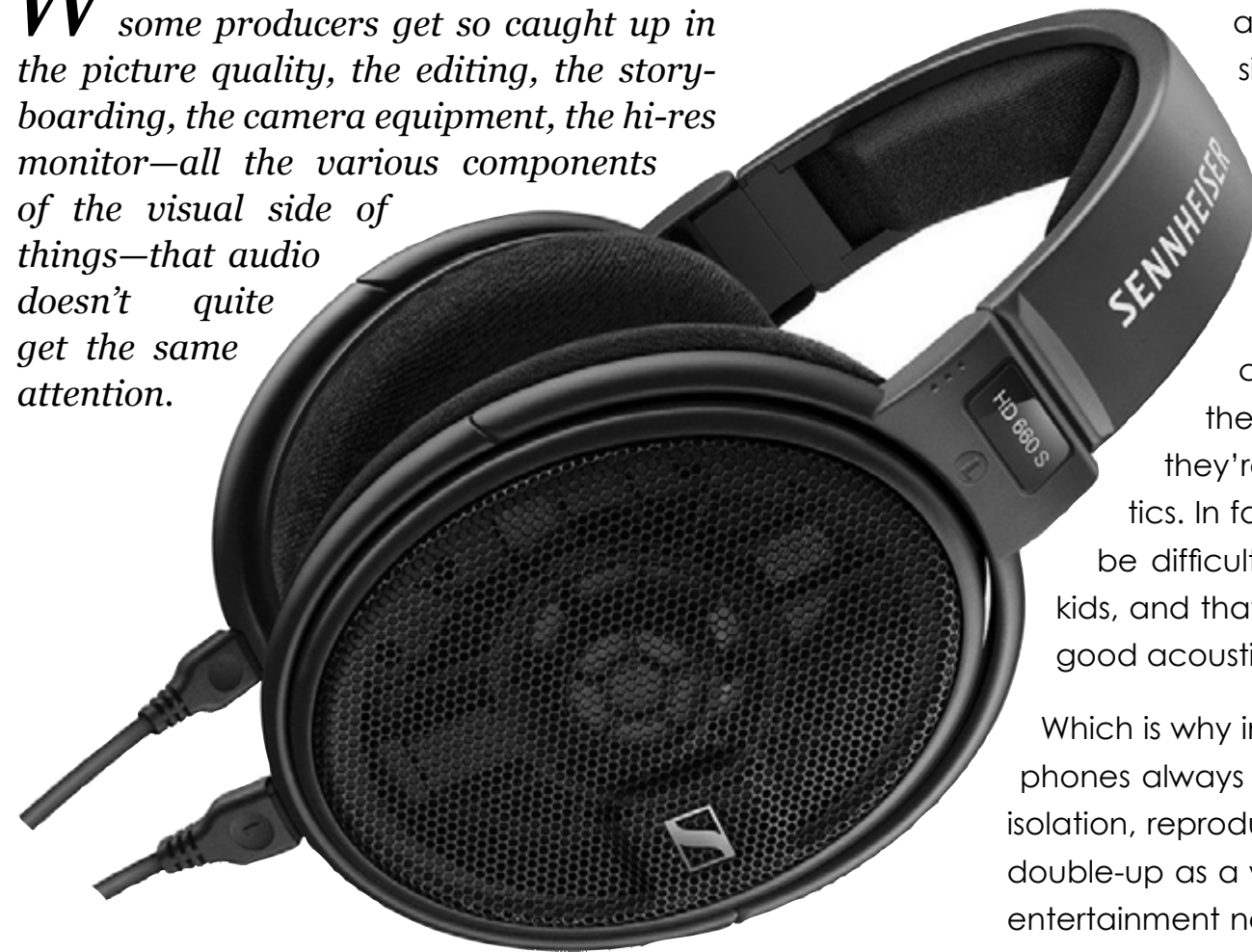


# Review: Sennheiser HD660S Headphones

Audio engineer Graeme Hague road tested these Sennheiser headphones.

And listened to AMBEO too ...

*When it comes creating great videos some producers get so caught up in the picture quality, the editing, the storyboarding, the camera equipment, the hi-res monitor—all the various components of the visual side of things—that audio doesn't quite get the same attention.*



Or perhaps audio isn't really your thing, and you don't have the same enthusiasm for getting the audio absolutely perfect. As such, the audio gear in your production suite maybe doesn't match your video stuff dollar-for-dollar.

Good monitor speakers in particular can be expensive, and to be honest they're a bit of a waste of money when they're not coupled with good room acoustics. In fact, just getting somewhere quiet can be difficult enough, away from the family and kids, and that damned television, let alone having good acoustics.

Which is why investing in a professional set of headphones always makes good sense. They provide the isolation, reproduce the necessary audio quality, and double-up as a worthwhile addition to your everyday entertainment needs. It doesn't get better than listening to high quality music and DVDs than through great

headphones.

The term "professional" is crucial here, because it translates into "accurate". The vast majority of headphones available, including the very high-priced and boutique brands with signature designers, are tailored to shape the music according to personal and popular preferences.

I'm talking about things like "extended bass" and enhancements that pretty much try to mimic standing in the middle of a really loud nightclub, but without the overpriced beer. And that's okay—if that's what you want.

But it's not what you want when it comes to mixing and balancing audio for a video. You want the sound to be accurate, a faithful reproduction of exactly what you've recorded, so you can make adjustments accordingly.

The \$799.95 [Sennheiser HD 660S headphones](#) are the latest member of the

much-vaunted 600 Series of headphones. Forever, the industry benchmarks for accuracy in headphones have been the Sennheiser HD600 and HD650, the 600s for over twenty years, so many people might think that, "If ain't broke, don't fix it," adage should apply. What Sennheiser has cleverly done with the 660S is recognise the growing need to cater for lower output devices such as smartphones, tablets, and—yes, prosumer video cameras—while still providing that professional audio accuracy and not messing with a successful design. So while the drop in impedance for the [660S](#) to 150 Ohms (compared to 300 Ohms) isn't much of a tweak, it's an important one.

These cans are comfortably driven by all manner of portable devices and compact video equipment.

The sound of the [HD660S](#) is a really good balance of tone, clarity and volume. Some accurate headphones are simply too much of a good thing—a sort of "flat" reproduction that takes all the fun out of audio. The [660S](#) aren't coloured, not at all, but offer a good compromise that will properly preview the various listening parameters in today's devices. In other words, if things sound good in the [HD660S](#), they should sound good everywhere else. The HD600 legacy lives on.

The [HD660S](#) are an over-ear design, completely covering your ear and giving good isolation from the outside world, and open-



backed. I found the cans a little tight on my head, but I'm sure that's in anticipation of the foam cups and headband adjusting and adapting slightly over time. The open-back is a catch-22 for some, because—good news—it means you won't be growing any spuds in your ears during long sessions. However, the greater “bleed” from the headphones might be problematic during recording sessions.

That clarity and audio detail is impressive. They're the kind of headphones that, if you haven't experienced it before, make you think, “So that's what good headphones are all about.” You'll discover sounds never heard before and, more important from a production point of view, be revealed all the things you don't want to hear. Time to get busy with that audio editing.

The [HD660S](#) comes with two interchangeable 3-metre cables. One has a standard 6.5mm headphone jack, while the other a 3.5mm TRRRS “balanced” jack—something you'll never use unless you're into serious hi-fi gear. There's also a short 6.5mm to 3.5mm adapter for plugging into those portable devices and cameras.

Build quality is fantastic. You'll own and be using these headphones for a very long time.

Good, professional headphones are worthwhile investment if you're keen (or not) on mixing the audio of your videos to per-

fection, but circumstances prevent Abbey Road Studios-like equipment. The [HD660S](#) will fit the bill and provide great entertainment too.

## AMBEO

Along with the HD660S I got to test out the Sennheiser AMBEO Smart Headset, a set of combined headphones and microphones designed to work with any device equipped with an Apple Lightning Connector and, via a recording app, create “3D” sound recordings along with any inbuilt or installed video recorder.

Simply put, the recordings are a kind of superior reproduction of the world



around—or any environment you want to record. Imagine walking through a symphony orchestra and recording in 3D the sounds as you move between the different instruments.

It's an intriguing concept that's been around a while, the results are pretty impressive, and it's being translated into AMBEO soundbars and home stereo equipment as an alternative to surround sound.

It's technology that's advancing as fast as I can write this info.

## Sennheiser AMBEO Headset

What's really happening is still a stereo recording, but using DSP and software the left/right sound field you're record-

ing is cleaned up, isolated a little more, cross-talk between channels is eliminated ...

I could go on and still not scratch the surface, but suffice to say a lot of processing is going on to improve the audio into a sort enhanced reality—not in a false way, but adding clarity and separation to the stereo spectrum. The applications of sound fields like these are only limited by your imagination.

For mine, a downside to the AMBEO headphones is that Lightning connector and associated app/hardware (an iPhone for example).

If you want to use a high-quality camera, you'll need to sync both vision—iPhone and video camera—and the AMBEO recording into your editing software.

## Sennheiser AMBEO Soundbar

It wouldn't be the first time someone's gaffered a Smart phone to their hat. And if I have one criticism, the somewhat short and stiff connector cable got a bit annoying.

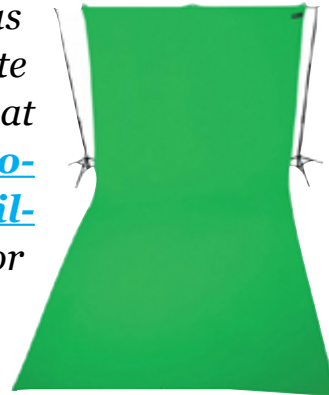
Plenty of interesting videos and information on the [Sennheiser website](#).



# A Green Screen for <\$20? Really?

*A quick trip to Bunnings and Spotlight is the starting point.*

*If I wanted a green screen that was portable and designed to be on site or in a studio, then I'd seriously look at something like the [Westcott Chromakey Green Background available from Kayell in Sydney](#) for around \$300.*



But if I only had \$20 or so, and wasn't too concerned about what it looked like, if it got torn or dirty was easily replaced and was for only the occasional use, then I might build one.

Like this.

You see, for around that \$20 along with a trip to Bunnings and another to Spotlight, you can get the timber and woodscrews to make a frame and the green material to stretch over it. As long as you then have a staple gun and staples (another \$15) and ideally a power drill to drill the holes and screw the screws into (borrow a neighbours if you don't have one), you can make like I have here.

This took Jacqui about an hour to build on Saturday afternoon (whilst I finished off a tutorial).

And it works like a charm...

If you want the specifics, the materials take off is:

- 3 pieces dressed pine 1.8 metres long – choice your width to suit the strength you need.
- 2 metres approx. of Apple Green Plain Top Pop 112 cm Poplin Fabric Apple
- 8 wood screws (length to match your timber



# You've unpacked your new drone. What's next ...

## Preparation for shooting aerial footage with your drone

No matter whether you have just unboxed your drone or have already done some laps through the air with it – you can start shooting the perfect video at any time. For the most important points around the ascent we have compiled a checklist for you with questions you should answer before every drone flight:

- Is the ascent allowed?
- Have you checked the airspace on site?
- Are the weather conditions right?
- Is the battery charged?
- Is the remote control charged?

- Is the memory card empty?
- Is the ND filter screwed on?
- Have you carried out the calibration?
- Is the drone – remote control connection established?
- Is GPS signal available?

Adjust all settings for the video before you start the drone, so that you don't have to waste any of the short flight time:

- Set the ISO value as low as possible, preferably to 100. This will prevent the image material from becoming too grainy.
- Screw an ND filter onto the lens. This is essential for video recordings. It acts like a pair of sunglasses for the camera and prevents the images from being overexposed.

- Now adjust the frame rate in the menu. As a rule, 25 frames per second is sufficient.
- Then you can set different image profiles or simply use the automatic mode. Depending on the model of your drone, you will have different options. You simply select a picture profile according to the planned picture material. If your video should showcase a landscape, select the landscape mode. Here there are no fundamental differences to the settings of a SLR camera.

**Our tip:** You should always have two people for a drone video shoot. This allows one person to fully concentrate on the controls and display on the remote or tablet and make sure the shots are good. Meanwhile, the second person follows the drone in the air and alerts the drone pilot in good time to possible dangers,

# Drone Flying - Getting Top Footage

such as trees or power lines. Some drones can also be controlled using a two-man remote control one for the camera, one for the drone itself.

## How easy it is to film with the drone

**1. Take Off:** place your drone on level ground and walk about five metres (safety distance) away from it together with your co-pilot. Most drones have this buffer programmed in and would automatically move away from you immediately after take-off. However, this can lead to problems as you cannot steer your drone in this moment, and it may fly against an obstacle.

**2. Your Own Location:** Decide whether you want to be in the picture yourself or not. The camera is attached to the drone with a ball joint and can be rotated in almost all directions. However, this can also cause you to become the subject unintentionally. The only thing that helps is to

change the camera angle and place yourself somewhere else. Plan this point in advance.

**3. Fly A Drone:** If the launch is successful, steer your drone to the recording location. Attention: On average, the battery has only enough power for 20 minutes flight time. The flight over a lake or tree tops should therefore take place at the beginning. Consider the position of the sun for your flight path. The sun may come from the front but should not do so for the entire flight time. Fly your drone on the quietest flightpath possible. Avoid a jerky course and rapid changes of direction. Instead, fly in wide curves.

**4. The Safe Landing:** If the video is taken or if your remote has already warned you of a low battery, it's time to land your drone again. The best place to do this is on an open and level surface, such as a meadow or an empty parking lot.

**A Drone on holidays:** Since the most

*impressive landscapes are rarely on our doorstep, it makes sense to take the drone with you to your holiday destination. Some models are even so handy that they can simply be strapped on your back. Don't just think of enough spare batteries, but also check whether you need a flight permit before you start your vacation and organize it directly before you start your trip. If you are in the United States and interested in flying outdoors, you are legally required to register your drone with the FAA. The same applies to other countries.*

## The best video techniques for your drone flight

Aerial videos are not all the same. We have compiled the best flight and recording techniques for you and reveal what you have to pay attention to:



1. **Panoramic Aerial Shots:** You will get the most breathtaking result if you take a panorama to the left or right while moving the drone forwards or backwards.
2. **Tracking Shots:** Moving the drone parallel to the subject requires some practice. You must be able to adjust the airspeed while keeping the focus on your subject. The easiest way is: Don't vary the altitude, just the speed. The focal length also remains the same.
3. **Pedestal Shots:** Flying up and down without moving the camera is a good way to show statues or monuments and take a look over the clouds. Simple technique: Adjust your elevation control and go straight up or down without worrying about camera movement or focal length.
4. **Fly Overs:** Select a subject while the drone is flying continuously and covers the distance until it passes the object from above.
5. **Reveal Shots:** A perfect tech-

nique to reveal something the audience should concentrate on. Start the drone at a point where the motif is not visible. Then slowly move your drone until the motif is visible. Stanley Kubrick uses this technique in "The Shining" to present the Overlook Hotel.

6. **Slow Motion:** Wonderful landscape shots look especially beautiful when they can be played back later in slow motion. For this to work, you should increase the frame rate. The frame rate determines how many pictures your camera takes per second. So that a video does not jerk later in slow motion, the frame rate should be 50 frames per second or higher. Adjust the shutter speed to the frame rate. The shutter speed must be twice as high as the frame rate. If you have 50 frames per second, the shutter speed must be 1/100 second.

## ADDENDUM:

If you have no knowledge of the rules of drone flying as set down by CASA – and the penalties for transgression can be VERY harsh – you can find them at <https://www.casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone/drone-rules>.

By the way, the original Can I Fly There app from CASA for both Android and iPhone / iPad has been discontinued. The replacement approved by CASA is from Wing Aviation LLC and is called OpenSky-Drone Flyer.

