	Wodonga / Albury Camera Club
	Audio/Visual Competition June 2025
WACC Contact	**David Willis** *0417233388* *davidtwillis@bigpond.com*
	Bob Thomas
Judge:	**Audio / Visual**

Audio / Visual Competition

General Comments:

I probably won't make any friends with some of my comments, which may become repetitive. However, the Audio Visual world is now a very different beast to when I first got involved, and the competition today is often much stronger. It's also true to say that the AVs of ten years ago, which took hours of preparation, can now be produced with a couple of mouse clicks. In the judging fraternity we refer to those as "slide shows", and they seldom do well.

Times have changed, and we AV producers need to change as well. Back in the day, success relied on the quality of your images, but this is no longer the case. Today, we need to provide much more, and we need to embrace not only the imagery, but the story behind the images. We do this by consciously *avoiding* making slide shows and becoming story tellers instead. We also need to recognize AVs as a multi-faceted production with attention being given to the sound-track and overall presentation. Given that we all come from a camera club background we tend to see AVs as a means of showcasing our photographs rather than something a lot bigger. That approach needs to change if you want to remain competitive.

A few tips. Telling your story with text is **not** a good idea. A 3.21 AV simply does not allow time for your audience to both read text and absorb images. The answer lies in narration rather than text, and although most of us hate the sound of our own voice, it is now possible to add AI voices at no cost and with voices almost indistinguishable to a human voice. I say "almost" because some AI voices are little better than asking your dog to narrate. Some are awful, but most are pretty good. Of course the narration also relies on a good script.

Before creating an AV, ask yourself what it's going to be about but also ask yourself how much the audience already knows. If you have a fabulous trip to some exotic location, every time you look at your own images it brings back memories of when you were there. However, it brings back nothing for those who weren't there, so you have to try and fill in those blanks by informing them of where you went, what's so special and what it felt like. I once made an AV which inspired one of my audience to book a holiday to that same destination simply on the strength of my AV. That's what your AVs need to do with your own audiences. Assume that they know nothing, and make it your job to teach and engage them.

Finally, don't assume that what interests you will also interest an audience. Often they will be enthused by a new idea that you introduce to them, but not if your passion is too obscure or too boring. Above all, be creative. Judges see an awful lot of similar AVs, so make sure yours is interesting, creative and stands out from the pack.

	Points (40)	Place
01. Birds of the Great Southern Ocean		
Some very nice images of a variety of birds, all shown to us with good detail and mostly photographically sound. The main issue here lies with the actual production. Almost any AV benefits from good production so as to turn a slideshow into a visually animated story, rather than simply a display of images. This applies no matter how good the images, which are only a part of the whole presentation. In order to lift this AV it's worth considering introducing more variety into the transitions and providing more information to the audience about which birds they are seeing, and perhaps a little about their habits, numbers or any interesting facts about them. Birds can easily be given movement by using appropriate transitions and panning, and a voiceover would also lift this AV by engaging with the subject. I personally don't find the checkerboard transitions between slides all that suitable here and a smoother option might work a lot better. Good potential for a more instructive AV which would be more engaging.	25	
02. Masters Of The Skies		
An impressive selection of action images, well taken and sharp. The use of movement was good and the overall presentation an excellent insight into the world of aviation and airshows. I would have perhaps liked a little information to have expanded our knowledge of what we were looking at, where, when and what the overall story was. None of that information was provided, leaving the audience totally uninformed. In order to enjoy the images while simultaneously gaining an understanding of the event, a voiceover would explain and educate your audience. Most of us recoil from the prospect of using our own voices, but AI is now so good, and often free, and is increasingly providing a new level of professionalism which is making them not only more professional, but more competitive.	32	
03. North East Silo Trail		
A good look at the silo art to be found in Victoria, and although this might perhaps be viewed as simply showing someone else's art, there is sufficient "value added" to legitimize that aspect. The images are really good, and I especially liked the "before" and "after" shots so that the viewer can see the work in progress as well as the finished work. The transitions were good, and including information about the artists added depth to the whole concept. The animated maps contributed to the overall educational aspect, and overall the AV was well thought out and presented.	37	**1st Place**

04. Temora Warbirds		
This is a good vignette of the air show, with a lot of mixed imagery rather than simply showing the aircraft. Including crowd images gave the AV context and the use of movement in the transitions and images lifted the AV from being a static slide show. I particularly liked the image which shows the juxtaposition of the plane and bird in flight – an excellent image. Use of sound effects helps to build an atmosphere, and the AV gives the viewer a good idea of the overall occasion. It would have been better to have moved the information in the closing credits to the start so that we knew exactly what we were watching.	**34**	
05. Wonga Wetlands		
The images in this are excellent, and any one of them would make a great screen saver or wall hanging. The main problem here as a competition AV is that it is a slide show rather than an educational or informative production. Unfortunately, almost any software package is capable of producing a similar result to this simply by pointing the program at a folder full of images. Your aim is to produce something stronger and more detailed. In order to be really competitive in the AV arena, we all need to be aiming to produce something which educates, or informs or leads us into a new direction with a story of some sort. In this AV you have a great foundation for such an AV but you need to develop more of a story, so that the audience can embrace where you are and what the area has to offer. As it stands we don't know where the Wonga Wetlands are located or what its history is. When presenting the images, using a few techniques such as panning or zooming can also bring more life to the presentation.	**25**	
06. Australian Adventures		
Some interesting images from around Australia, although without any connecting theme or story to tie them together. In this case a narration might have injected life into the Australian experience by telling us a little about the locations and explaining the unique characteristics of each place. A map showing where each place was located might have helped, or perhaps some other detail giving us a more "in depth" understanding of the various locations. You have the ingredients for a good AV but the recipe needs something to tie it all together. The one thing to avoid in any AV is a static slide show which leaves questions in the mind of your audience. They should exit the auditorium with more knowledge than they started with, and that's what's missing here.	**26**	

07. Balloons over Cappadocia		
This AV has something in common with many of the AVs in this competition in that it takes a great idea but doesn't develop it. The images are astounding in the sheer number of balloons in the sky, and the scenery is breathtaking. It is a story that cries out to be told, but it's a little like inviting a guest speaker and finding out you've engaged Marcel Marceau! As your audience I am firstly impressed by the balloon event, and by your images – but I am left wondering where Cappadocia actually is, what the occasion is, how often it happens, when this event happened and how many collisions there were. Basically, all AV makers need to remember that their job is to either entertain or inform and in order to convey that message you need to employ multiple aspects which include such things as imagery, sound, creativity, new information and a story.	**26**	
08. A Winter Garden		
The images in this AV are excellent, some of the best in the competition. The use of software has introduced a variety of transitions and taken the AV up a notch from the basic slide show. The flowers are identified and the text is both understated yet left on screen long enough to absorb. Like many AVs in this competition it could do with some extra clarifying comments or information. Perhaps these flowers are related in some way, or perhaps they were photographed in one location. Presumably there is a general theme other than Winter which could be used to tell a story or provide the viewer with more information. Whatever the back story, it would lift the AV if your audience were provided with some sort of framework to view your excellent images.	**33**	
09. Yanga Homestead		
This is a very informative AV, with a story to tell and lots of images to support that story. The producer has told us where the station is, what its history is and everything we need to know. The script is both comprehensive and well written. The actual narration however, is awful, and obviously an artificially created voice. I am always encouraging makers to lean on AI for their voiceovers, but in this case the maker might have been better to use their own voice instead. An easy fix – just choose another voiceover service – almost any would do, or another voice. Otherwise, the maker has understood the fundamental underlying principles of AV production and has created an interesting, well thought out story.	**35**	**3rd Place**

10. Faces of Nepal		
What a fascinating collection of images, and what a diverse population. I may start to sound like a broken record, but this one has a lot of unrealized potential. Each image wants to tell us a story, but we are trapped behind a soundproof window wishing that we had a tour guide to tell us what those stories are. Your audience wants to learn more, to understand what we're looking at and to perhaps connect with those faces on some level. A narrator could bring us those stories, even if only at a superficial level, but that's what's needed here to bridge the gap between those faces and our relatively affluent way of life. If nothing else, I would suggest choosing a more relevant sound track, one that reflects their society rather than music from an entirely different era and a largely irrelevant western world.	**27**	
11. Hobbiton		
What a fabulous place, and what great images. As someone who has never been there these were impressive visuals which made me want to go there on the next plane. As your target audience I should have been more engaged than I actually was, simply because you forgot to explain what Hobbiton was, why it is famous and what an entrancing place it would be to visit. I am impressed with your images and I can see this AV working well with a little more information provided for the audience, but as it stands it just lacks that narrative to bind it all together. I would also suggest a happier soundtrack rather than the one you have selected.	**30**	
12. RIAT 2019		
Great photos here and a good music track. I certainly envy you the experience which you have captured well. You have fallen for two of the most common traps that we see regularly when judging AVs. The first is having too many images for the chosen AV length. There is often a battle between available time and the number of images, and if you're not careful you end up stuffing so many into that limited container that the time per image is simply too short. The second related trap is to then try and add words to that tiny timeframe with the result that your audience simply doesn't have time to both read your text and look at your image, so they miss out on both. These are hard traps to avoid, because the more we juggle time, the less our capacity to look at each time space objectively and in the same way as your audience. As the AV author, you have seen those words and images so often you simply lose the ability to view things for the first time. Ideally you need someone with fresh eyes to "proof read" your AV before submitting it. One small but important tip, and this applies to many AVs. Starting an AV with a title such as "RIAT 2019" is rather pointless given that your audience has no idea what that means. Instead of telling us in the closing credits, make sure your audience knows what they are looking at right at the very start. An enjoyable AV nonetheless with excellent photos.	**34**	

13. Penguins of the Antarctica		
Some great shots went into the making of this AV, and the music was lively. The AV lacked much in the way of transitions such as panning and zooming, and the choice of varying image dimensions made the AV a little disjointed. As a general rule images should be the same ratio throughout rather than jumping around randomly. Unfortunately, there was no attempt to convey any sort of story or narrative, so the audience was left none the wiser about the actual habitat, behavioral aspects or indeed anything to add to their knowledge of penguins. As a slide show of your visit it worked well, but it needed more by way of a voiceover or descriptions to bring the AV more meaning. I would also suggest using a more creative introduction with a more interesting font.	**26**	
14. Leneva Steam Rally		
This is a step forward from many of the entries. It makes a real effort to tell a story and to illustrate that narrative with both still and video content. The maker has let the audience know what the occasion is, where it is and a bit of the back story. The variety of images gives us a good insight into the occasion and we are left better informed at the end. The closing credits are displayed too briefly, so that we cannot read everything easily. I love the fact that the maker has used a narration, which is always preferable to text, although the voice appears to be AI and does not flow as freely as one would wish. The quality of the narration is important, and when using AI the choice of voice is important.	**36**	**2nd Place**