



# Telling a History Story Using Lego Stop-Motion Filmmaking

**A high school student describes the process of using apps and everyday items to tell the iconic story of the Great Ocean Road in a prize-winning Lego film.**

*Patrick Ryan, student, Mercy Regional College*

Filmmaking is a compelling way of storytelling and it was this avenue that I wanted to pursue in my submission for the 2018 Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize.

Using the stop-motion style of filming, I wanted to highlight a relatively unknown aspect of a major Australian landmark – the construction and enduring legacy of the Great Ocean Road. After the end of World War I, the road was built over a period that spanned three decades, from 1919 to 1934. It was entirely constructed by hand by returned servicemen and it is dedicated to them and their fallen colleagues, making the Great Ocean Road the world's largest war memorial. The road is also one of Australia's most iconic sites and related tourism contributed an estimated \$1.3 billion to the local economy in the past year.<sup>1</sup>

The construction of the road and its effects on the men who built it is explored in my stop-motion Lego brickfilm. The film is available online on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/-19FqCYWiWk>.

Stop-motion animation (also called stop-frame animation) is animation that is captured one frame

at time, using physical objects that are moved between frames. When you rapidly play back the sequence of images, it creates the illusion of movement. In brickfilm stop-motion, the objects used are Lego pieces.

Stop-motion is a simple and accessible form of film making. It is easy and cheap to create stop-motion films but they are *very* time-consuming to make. My brickfilm, a short clip of just over two minutes, took about thirty hours to build, film and edit. This time constraint means that the content has to be carefully curated.

To make a brickfilm you will need:

- lots of Lego
- *lots* of time
- a stable filming platform (even the slightest movement will make the clip jump)
- a steady light source (small changes in the lighting make the clip flicker).

My film was created entirely on my iPad using three free or inexpensive apps from the AppStore.



OPPOSITE: Screenshot from Patrick Ryan's film.

ABOVE: The Great Ocean Road Memorial.

(Photograph by robdowndunder. Used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

- 1 Victorian State Government, 'Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Summary,' (TEVE Research Unit, 2012), [http://www.business.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/1611942/Great-Ocean-Road-Regional-Summary\\_YEJune17\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1611942/Great-Ocean-Road-Regional-Summary_YEJune17_FINAL.pdf).

### **iMotion Pro**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/imotion-pro/id526652140?mt=8>

Photos are taken using this app, and the app then stitches them together as a video file.

### **Photoshop Express**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/adobe-photoshop-express-editor/id331975235?mt=8>

This app is used to edit-in explosions and speech scenes.

### **VideoShop**

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/videoshop-video-editor/id615563599?mt=8>

This app is used to create a final form that is compatible with YouTube and applies filters for colour and movement blur.

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Stop-motion is a relatively simple and easy tool for visual story telling. With a tablet, a couple of apps and a story idea, anyone can be a filmmaker using everyday items found at home.