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INTRODUCTION

Because of the special part D W Thorpe plays in the Australian publishing industry, we are in the unique position of being able to fill the information gap surrounding the seemingly mysterious area of self-publishing. We have been publishing information about the Australian book industry since 1921; including the trade journals *Australian Bookseller & Publisher* and the *Weekly Book Newsletter*. Our other well-known titles *Australian Books in Print* and *Guide to New Australian Books*, are taken from one of the largest bibliographies of Australian titles.

Since D W Thorpe acquired the ISBN Agency, we have been inundated with inquiries from self-publishers seeking further information on how to go about publishing their titles 'professionally'. To meet this demand and assist self-publishers in making production and distribution decisions, we have put together this pamphlet. It aims to answer your questions, clarify the steps usually taken when producing publications, and point you in the right direction for answers to any problems or queries you might have along the way.

The ISBN Agency was passed to D W Thorpe from the National Library of Australia in July 1997. Since then, we have assigned many thousands of ISBNs to Australian publishers, enabling their publications to be precisely identified across the world.

ISBNs are used to specifically identify a title with a particular format, edition and content; usually for information accession (libraries) or ordering purposes (libraries and bookshops). They are internationally applied and recognised, and as such make it much easier for people all over the world to find your works. They can also be incorporated into the EAN and barcode of a book, facilitating electronic sales in bookshops.

The ISBN Agency provides 'blocks' of numbers to publishers, which range in size from 5 to 100,000, with an administration fee calculated on a sliding scale. Publishers need to supply title details with their application, and can expect to receive notification of their ISBN within two working days. At any time, publishers can update their title details with us, should the title details change between the ISBN application and publication.

The allocation of an ISBN to a work automatically ensures its inclusion in the *Australian Books in Print* directory, along with the title details supplied by the publisher. This information is then reproduced in international bibliographies (such as *Global Books in Print*), which our sister companies in the United Kingdom and the United States produce. Subscribers to this service, anywhere in the world, can thus locate the exact version or format of a title (or author, or subject, etc), and easily contact the publisher/distributor.

All this
from one 10-digit number ...

CHAPTER 1 — Producing your book

Despite the saying that ‘you can’t judge a book by its cover’, what your book looks like is important. A book that looks professional is more likely to appeal to readers than one which is poorly designed or produced. It also stands a better chance of being supported by retailers – the easier your book is for booksellers to order and sell, the better.

As a self-publisher, you have three options for producing your book. You can pay a professional to manage the entire process for you; manage part of the process yourself and pay a professional to manage other aspects; or manage each step of the production process yourself – dealing directly with editors, designers, printers and others. Which option you choose will depend on your own skills, and your finances.

Paying a professional to manage the production of your book might sound expensive, but companies that do this kind of work will often be able to get better rates from designers and printers than you will as an individual. You will, however, have to pay for their experience and expertise, so be sure to shop around – get at least three quotes, and ask as many questions as you need to. Even if you do choose this option, it is still important that you understand each step of the production process, so that you can be comfortable with handing your book over to somebody else. Even though somebody else might handle the production, you are still the publisher of the book.

While it may appear that handling all aspects of the production process yourself offers a cost advantage, think carefully about taking on the task. Consider how much time you can commit to the project, and what that time ‘costs’ you, and whether you will need to spend money on equipment to do the job effectively. However, if you do have the time and resources, have good computer skills and are confident about your abilities, the greatest advantage of ‘doing it yourself’ is having complete control over the production of your book.

The production process

Planning is the key to making the publication of your book an enjoyable process! Read as much information as you can to familiarise yourself with each step of the production process before embarking on the process itself. Set out a schedule that is realistic and allows a margin for unforeseen circumstances. It is better to take a little longer to produce a good-quality product than make costly mistakes as a result of rushing the project.

In very general terms, the main stages in the production process are writing, editing, design and printing, and there are various steps within each of these stages.

Writing

To make editing easier, your manuscript – the text of your book – should be typed (on an electric typewriter but preferably on a computer), with double spacing between each line, on one side of the paper only, and with 3–5cm margins either side of the text. Use white, A4-size paper and include a page number on every page (although these will not be your book’s actual page numbers, this allows the pages to be kept in order during the editing stage). If a professional is managing the production of your book, ideally you should provide the text on disk, as retyping the manuscript will incur additional costs.

Editing

Whether you are managing your book’s production yourself, or using a professional to manage design and printing, you should pay an experienced editor to at least copyedit your manuscript. The level of editing that you pay for depends on you: if you only want an editor to check for basic grammar, spelling, typographical errors and inconsistencies in style – copyediting – stress that that is all you want. If you want the editor to make more detailed suggestions as to how you can improve your text and ensure that you are making your message clear for your readers – structural editing – tell them.

Editing costs will vary depending on the size of your manuscript and the level of editing required. Use a professional editor – ideally, one with experience or interest in the subject of your book. There is a Society of Editors in most states in Australia (refer to our list of contacts at the back of this pamphlet or our web site for local contact

details – www.thorpe.com.au) many of them publish a ‘freelance register’ which provides contact details for editors and lists their areas of expertise.

The editor will provide a ‘marked-up’ copy of your manuscript for you to look at before any changes are made. If you are unfamiliar with proofreading marks, the editor can also be asked to make the changes that you agree with. If you make the changes yourself, you can ask the editor to proofread the corrections against their original marked-up copy.

Design

If you are managing the production of your book yourself, you will need a designer to design either the cover or the text, or both. Again, use a professional designer; check your local newspaper, the Yellow Pages, or contact the Galley Club of NSW or Victoria. (Printers may also be able to recommend a good designer, and vice versa.)

To create a cover design, the designer will need to know whether the cover will be printed in one, two or four colours; what size book you want; what the book is about; what wording and other elements there will be on the cover; and what sort of ‘look’ you want for the book. Show examples of what you like and don’t like about other books, but try to allow the designer some creative freedom.

When deciding whether to print your book in one, two or four (full) colour, remember that black is regarded as a colour (white is not a colour). If using one or two colours you might use a PMS (Pantone Matching System) colour; a good designer should suggest colours, show you examples of PMS colours and explain that colours can look different according to the type of paper they are printed on.

For the inside of your book, the designer will need to know the extent of the book – how many pages it will be; whether it contains colour, illustrations, photographs, tables and charts, or an index; and, again, what sort of ‘look’ you want. (To work out the extent of your book, you need to ‘cast off’ – that is, to calculate how many words will fit on a page of a particular size, and using a particular typeface. A good designer should be able to do this for you, but you should have an idea of what physical size you want the book to be.)

If you have desktop publishing software and choose to design your book yourself, there are a number of publications that go into great

detail about design and typography. Most importantly, your design should be easy to read, and take into account any special needs of your book's audience.

Printing

The most important decisions you must make with regard to printing are what sort of paper and binding will be used for your book, and how many copies will be printed. The quality of the paper used will depend on what sort of book it is – you need a 'coated', glossy, 'art' paper for a full-colour photographic book, but inexpensive 'uncoated' paper for a novel. A good printer will make suggestions as to the most suitable paper and binding (there are many different types within the paperback and hardback options) for your book, and will be able to provide you with paper samples to choose from. To provide a quote, the printer will need to know the size of your book; the extent of your book; stock – what sort of paper; quantity – the number of copies required; use of colour – whether one, two or four; whether any scanning (reproduction) of photographs or illustrations is required and if so, how many pictures there will be; whether the text will be provided in a printed form (camera-ready artwork) or on disk; and where to deliver the printed books (one delivery point only is most economical). You should ask the printer what the job 'turnaround' will be – how long it will take.

Get several quotes from printers of different sizes. Check the Yellow Pages, or contact the Galley Club of NSW or Victoria. Generally, the more copies you print, the cheaper 'per unit'. However, it is not economical to print more copies of your book than you will be able to sell!

Structure of a book

Generally, a book can contain the following elements, although not always all of them, in this standard order:

- half-title page
- title page
- imprint page
- dedication
- acknowledgments
- contents
- list of illustrations
- introduction
- body text (chapters)
- epilogue
- glossary
- appendixes
- list of abbreviations
- notes
- bibliography
- index

Page numbers are odd on right-hand (recto) pages, and even on left-hand (verso) pages. Pages up to and including the introduction are paginated with lower-case Roman numerals; the following pages with Arabic numerals. For example, in the case of a book containing all of the above elements, the first page of the body text would be page 1. However, not all pages will be printed with a page number, or folio. For detailed guidelines on page numbers and planning the order of your book, refer to AusInfo's (formerly the Australian Government Publishing Service) latest edition of the *Style Manual for Writers, Editors and Printers*.

The imprint page

The information contained on the imprint page (verso of the title page) varies from publisher to publisher, but you should at least consider obtaining a CiP entry containing your book's ISBN and a copyright line (see Chapter Two – Your Rights & Responsibilities). You may also wish to include the name of the editor, designer and printer on your book's imprint page.

Further reading

There are many books which go into great detail about every aspect of the production process; your local library or writers' centre should be able to suggest a number of titles to you. Again, AusInfo's *Style Manual for Writers, Editors and Printers* provides comprehensive but accessible information on every aspect of producing a book.

Chapter 2 – Your Rights and Responsibilities

The goal of all publishers is to ensure that their book reaches as many people as possible. There are a number of standard procedures and systems which guarantee that all publications can be located and used by a wide audience, and which protect your rights as a publisher. There are also certain legal requirements that you must meet as a publisher, no matter how large or small you are.

Copyright

Copyright is an internationally recognised system of protecting the rights of creators of written, performed or artistic works such as books, plays, paintings, computer programs or sound recordings. There are a number of aspects of copyright that you as a self-publisher should be aware of.

Copyright does not protect ideas or titles (although a title may be registered as a trademark), but it does protect the written or published form of your book. There is no procedure necessary to protect copyright in your book – it is an automatic right. Generally, as soon as an original work is written down, saved to disk, or recorded in some way, it is protected. And although it does not cost you anything to ‘own’ copyright of your book, copyright can be bought and sold (for example, a magazine may pay to reproduce part of your book, or a film company may pay for the right to produce a film version of your book). Although the duration of copyright protection can vary, in the case of books it generally lasts for the lifetime of the creator or author of the book, plus 50 years.

Under international convention, Australian copyright works are protected in most other countries, and copyright works from most other countries are protected in Australia.

Although there is no legal requirement to do so, most copyright owners – in the case of books, usually the author or publisher – include the international copyright symbol ©, the copyright owner’s name, and the year of publication on the printed book. This merely serves the function of indicating who the owner of the copyright on that work is. Remember that as a publisher you are legally obliged to obtain permission to use others’ copyright-protected material in your book.

The Copyright Council of Australia is an independent non-profit organisation that freely provides a large number of information sheets on this topic from its web site – www.copyright.org.au – or you can contact them directly:

Copyright Council of Australia

245 Chalmers Street
Redfern NSW 2016
Tel (02) 9318-1788, Fax (02) 9698-3536
Email info@copyright.org.au

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) distributes moneys collected from institutions and organisations for the copying of CAL members’ copyright material. An information brochure outlining this function, as well as general information brochures about various aspects of copyright, can be obtained by contacting:

Copyright Agency Limited

Level 19, 157 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel (02) 9394-7600, Fax (02) 9394-7601
Email info@copyright.com.au
Web site www.copyright.com.au

Moral Rights

Moral rights relate to a creator’s reputation in connection to their work. These rights now exist automatically in Australia. The three moral rights for authors are:

1. The right of an author to be identified as the author of a work (‘the right of attribution’);
2. The right of an author not to have their work altered in a prejudicial way (‘the right of integrity’); and
3. The right not to have authorship falsely attributed (‘the right against false attribution’).

Basically, this means that your work cannot be altered without your consultation and written consent, it cannot be intentionally destroyed or defaced, and you must be credited for your work.

The Copyright Council of Australia can provide you with more detailed information on this topic. You can contact them directly on the numbers provided above, or you can log on to their web site www.copyright.com.au.

ISBN – International Standard Book Number

An International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a unique, 10-digit number that ensures that your book can be identified throughout the world.

The various elements of the ISBN comprise the country, language or other ‘group identifier’ of your book; your ‘publisher prefix’; the ‘title identifier’; and a ‘check digit’. The ISBN enables libraries, booksellers and others to identify books in orders, stock control and library systems; it simplifies processing of book orders; and can be part of the EAN number (formerly known as Australian Product Number) used on barcodes for books. The allocation of ISBNs in Australia since July 1997 has been managed by Thorpe Information Services. Costs vary according to the number of ISBNs issued. You will require a separate ISBN for each different title that you publish, and each new edition of a title. More information, a list of frequently asked questions and application forms are available from Thorpe’s web site www.thorpe.com.au – alternatively, contact:

ISBN Agency

D W Thorpe
Locked Bag 20
Port Melbourne VIC 3207
Tel (03) 9245-7385, Fax (03) 9245-7393
Email isbn.agency@thorpe.com.au
Web site www.thorpe.com.au

ISSN – International Standard Serial Number

An ISSN is an eight-digit number used for serial publications. Unlike the ISBN, an ISSN only identifies the title – there is no ‘group’ or ‘publisher identifier’ making up part of the eight-digit number. A ‘serial’ publication is allocated an ISSN to the title – this number does not change until the title does. The allocation of ISSN in Australia is managed by the National Library of Australia.

Information brochures or application forms can be obtained by contacting:

ISSN Agency

National Library of Australia
Canberra ACT 2600
Tel (02) 6262-1213, Fax (02) 6273-4492
Email issn@nla.gov.au
Web site www.nla.gov.au/services/ISSN.html

CiP – Cataloguing-in-Publication

The National Library of Australia (NLA) manages Cataloguing-in-Publication (CiP) data, which is used by libraries in Australia and around the world to catalogue books. A CiP entry includes the name of the authors, the book's title and subjects, and the book's ISBN (you must have an ISBN in order to obtain CiP). While CiP data is not a legal requirement, CiP entries are listed on Kinetica, the NLA's database of material held in Australian libraries, ensuring that books can be used by a wide audience. As CiP information should be included on the printed version of your book, the NLA will prepare a CiP entry for your book before it is published, from a form completed by you. The CiP information should be printed in your book according to the guidelines provided by the NLA. An information brochure and application forms can be obtained online at the NLA's web site, or by contacting:

Cataloguing-in-Publication Unit

National Library of Australia
Canberra ACT 2600
Tel (02) 6262-1458, Fax (02) 6273-4492
Email cip@nla.gov.au
Web site www.nla.gov.au/services/CIP.html

Legal deposit

As the name suggests, legal deposit is a legal requirement to ensure that copies of publications are deposited in libraries in the country in which they are published. In Australia, the Copyright Act 1968 and a number of State Acts require publishers to provide one copy of any work they publish to the National Library of Australia and to the relevant library/ies in the state in which it is published. Legal deposit ensures that your book can be identified and used by as many people as possible, now and in the future.

You should provide copies of your book for legal deposit as soon as possible after publication, although legal deposit libraries will contact publishers when they find that they have not received a publication required for legal deposit. The time frame within which your book must be lodged with the appropriate libraries varies from state to state, but, generally, it must be deposited within one to two months of publication. There is no charge for legal deposit. An

information brochure listing requirements and contact details for each state can be obtained by contacting:

Legal Deposit Unit

National Library of Australia
Canberra ACT 2600
Tel (02) 6262-1312, Fax (02) 6273-4322
Email legaldep@nla.gov.au
Web site www.nla.gov.au/services/ldeposit.html

EAN

EAN Australia (formerly the Australian Product Number) administers the standard worldwide numbering and barcoding system used to identify products, goods, services, locations and shipments, in many different industry sectors. In the book sector, the EAN can be calculated from the ISBN/ISSN. EAN Australia provides this service and encourages publishers to join in order to receive many other benefits like newsletters, barcode testing, and the software to calculate check digits from your ISBNs/ISSNs.

The EAN number is then represented by an EAN 13 digit barcode – see barcode section below. For EAN information, contact:

EAN Australia

2 Kingston Town Close
(Locked Bag 10)
Oakleigh VIC 3166
National Tel Number 1300-366-033, Fax (03) 9569-1525
Web site www.ean.com.au

Barcode

The barcode, representing a product's number in a form which can be read by an electronic barcode scanner, is used by publishers, booksellers and libraries to order, sell and manage books using computerised inventory and cataloguing systems. Including a barcode on your book will make it easier for a bookseller or library to sell or lend your book. The barcode should be included on the back cover of the book, for ease of use.

Barcodes can be generated without an ISBN/ISSN, however if you have either of these numbers, it makes more sense to generate the barcode from them, as they are complementary systems. If you don't have an ISBN/ISSN, you will need to contact EAN (see address above), who administer barcodes in Australia.

Thorpe Information Services offers publishers the option of obtaining barcodes in a ready-to-use format with their ISBNs. Contact Thorpe (contact details are listed in the 'ISBN' section, above) for an application form to have a barcode produced with your ISBN. Alternatively, barcode suppliers are listed in the Yellow Pages of major cities, under the heading 'Identification Systems'.

Chapter 3 – Australian Books in Print & GNAB

All books published in Australia are eligible for free inclusion in D W Thorpe's *Australian Books in Print* (*AusBiP*), which is used by libraries and bookshops to identify and order titles for their customers. It is currently produced in two different formats: an annual bound edition, and a monthly edition on microfiche; and it will soon be available on-line. *Australian Books in Print* includes lists of Australian titles and authors, as well as contact details for Australian publishers and distributors.

As *Australian Books in Print* is an excellent form of free advertising for your book, it is important that you provide up-to-date details for inclusion in each edition. To ensure that libraries and bookshops are able to locate and order your books easily, it is essential that you provide as much information as possible, and as early as possible prior to the publication of your book. Should any details change during the production process, your entry in *Australian Books in Print* will be updated free of charge, as soon as you notify D W Thorpe in writing, quoting the relevant ISBN.

Thorpe's free entry forms allow you to add new titles, and Thorpe will assist you in completing them if necessary.

Guide to New Australian Books is a unique listing and description of newly published Australian books. Each entry includes an annotation (a description of the work's contents), full bibliographic details, author, editor, illustrator and subject index.

To be eligible for entry into *GNAB*, you need to send a copy of your work to Thorpe Information Services as soon as possible after publication. When submitting, please include a notification of its GST-inclusive recommended retail price and the month and year of its publication.

For more information, or for application forms for *Australian Books in Print*, contact:

Thorpe Information Services

18 Salmon Street

(Locked Bag 20)

Port Melbourne VIC 3207

Tel (03) 9245-7576, Fax (03) 9245-7393

Email infoservices@thorpe.com.au

Web site www.thorpe.com.au

Chapter 4 – Selling your book

When publishing a book, you must consider whether or not you want to sell it, or whether you'd rather just supply it to certain people (say your family, friends, local library, people within your writing group). If you decide to make it available outside of this 'circle' – to retail outlets for example – you must invest time and energy into promoting and selling your book.

You may wish to pay a professional to handle either the promotion or distribution, or both, but even if you do, be aware of the options available to you. You will want to be confident that the person you are paying is doing a good job, and you may wish to do additional promotion yourself.

Promoting your book

There are two aspects of 'promotion': publicity and advertising. The difference between the two is that publicity is free, whilst advertising is paid for. However, good publicity can result in 'free advertising'.

Publicity

When promoting your book, keep in mind that it needs to stand out from the thousands of other books that are published each year. Booksellers and book reviewers receive literally hundreds of catalogues, information sheets and review copies of 'bestsellers' each month, and will need more than your personal guarantee to be convinced that the book has something to offer them. Emphasise your book's unique qualities clearly and interestingly, and provide all the necessary information about your book (keeping in mind that sometimes less is more).

There are many avenues for publicising your book, and you should plan your publicity strategy even before the book has been printed.

Press releases If you believe that your book is unique in its subject matter or takes a new approach to a subject, or if there is an interesting story behind your decision to self-publish your book, newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs may wish to interview you about it. Send a press release about your book to a range of publications and programs, and be sure to address them to the appropriate person.

Pay as much attention to writing your press release as you did to writing your book. Remember that you need to grab the attention of the editor or producer who makes decisions. Offer them something timely, new or quirky, but make sure you approach the relevant industry contacts for the type of book you are publishing: if your book is light-hearted, don't approach a serious, current affairs magazine or program.

(If you are not confident about speaking on radio or appearing on television, don't approach them. Also, don't expect to be paid for any of these appearances; this is 'free advertising' for your book.)

One of the best resources for deciding where to promote your book is Margaret Gee's *Media Guide* (published by Information Australia), which lists contact details for media outlets all over Australia.

Review copies You will need to set aside a number of copies of your book for promotional purposes. Sending out review copies can prove to be an expensive exercise if you don't achieve your goal, so before you send out finished copies, plan your strategy. You may decide to send written material only, stating that a review copy is available on request.

Be sure to establish the reviewing policy of the publication in question. There may be particular guidelines that you should follow to increase the chances of your book being reviewed; a magazine may

commission books for review, rather than accept unsolicited material. (For example, D W Thorpe's book industry journal *Australian Bookseller & Publisher* does not review books in every issue, and reviews books two to three months ahead of their publication.)

As well as general publications, target any specialist publications that might be interested in your book. Many clubs and associations have their own member newsletters and are always keen to review a new product that relates to their special interest.

You might also choose to send a review (or 'reading') copy to any bookshops that you think may be interested in your book. Many bookshops like to support self-publishers, particularly local authors. If you have a good relationship with your local bookseller, talk to them about the possibility of promoting your book with them. You may find that they will support a reading and signing session in their store if your book will be of interest to their local market.

When sending review copies, include an information sheet providing details about the book's subject, some information about the author, the price and format (hardback or paperback), the book's ISBN and your contact details.

Word-of-mouth While you can't control word-of-mouth publicity for your book, you can tell as many people as you can about it, and be proud of your achievement. Word-of-mouth publicity can also come about as the result of booksellers recommending it to their customers, or readers recommending it to others. It's one of the best forms of publicity you can hope to get.

'AusBiP'/'GNAB' Be sure to complete the forms and provide a copy of your book for listing in D W Thorpe's *Australian Books in Print* and consideration for inclusion in *Guide to New Australian Books* (see Chapter Three – *Australian Books in Print*). This is free publicity which 'advertises' your book to booksellers and librarians.

Advertising

If you are going to pay to advertise your book, you want to be sure that you are spending your money effectively. You can pay to advertise your book to both booksellers and consumers, but if you have limited funds, you should concentrate on letting booksellers know about your book through advertising.

Don't advertise your book until you have finished copies to supply to booksellers. Customers want to be able to buy something when they want it, and booksellers need to be able to have your book on their shelves in anticipation of customer demand. Trade publications such as *Australian Bookseller & Publisher* and the *Weekly Book Newsletter* are ideal places to advertise your book to booksellers.

If you do decide to pay to advertise your book directly to customers, you should consider advertising in special-interest publications and bookshop newsletters as well as newspapers and magazines, as they may be less expensive options. You may also be able to purchase mailing lists from special-interest groups, so that you can 'direct mail' advertising material and order forms to those

who may have a particular interest in your book. (Be sure to include an order form if you choose to direct mail.)

Distributing your book

All the promotion in the world will come to naught if you cannot follow through and provide copies of your book quickly and efficiently. You can choose to distribute your book yourself, or employ a distributor or agent to supply your book to booksellers for you.

Doing it yourself

The biggest disadvantage of managing distribution yourself is that it takes time and is an ongoing job. You need to be easily contactable (by phone, fax, and, increasingly, email), and able to provide quick turnaround of orders. You will also need to be vigilant in your accounting and offer standard terms of trade to booksellers.

Terms of trade

'Terms of trade' are the terms under which you supply your book to booksellers. If you complete your form for free listing of your publisher details in *Australian Books in Print* (see Chapter Three), you will be asked for details such as what discount you offer, whether you charge for freight, whether you have a 'small order surcharge', and what your 'returns' policy is. These are your 'terms of trade', and if you choose to supply your book yourself, you need to understand these terms and think carefully about them. Your terms of trade are very important decisions, and should be based on sensible business principles.

Freight – 'FIS' stands for 'Free Into Store', which means you bear all the costs of getting copies of your book (regardless of quantity) to the bookshop. 'FIS + service charge' means that you apply a set charge for supplying any quantity of your books. 'Freight charged' means that you charge the bookshop for the actual cost of sending the books to them. As a self-publisher without the distribution facilities of a large publisher, you will probably want to charge freight at cost.

Small order surcharge (SOS) – As the name suggests, this is a charge for supplying a small quantity of books, usually based on the number of copies ordered or the net value of an order. For example, a publisher may impose a SOS of '\$5 on single copies', or '\$5 on invoices under \$50 net'.

Returns – 'All orders firm sale' (FS) means that booksellers must pay for all copies ordered and cannot return them. 'Sale or return' (SOR) means that a bookseller can return unsold copies, usually within a time frame specified by the publisher. You might also wish to offer your books 'on consignment', which means the bookseller takes a certain number of copies of your book, pays you as they are

sold, and can return unsold copies within a certain time frame. If you choose to sell your books at firm sale, booksellers will expect a higher discount for 'taking the risk' on your book.

Discount – You need to offer a discount to booksellers to sell your book for you. When planning to self-publish your book, you need to include this discount in your costing; if the GST-inclusive retail price of your book is \$14.95, you will not, of course, receive that amount for each copy! Discounts may range from 10% up to 60%, but 'standard' discount is 33-40%. You may wish to offer a range of discounts based on the quantity of books ordered – see SOS above.

GST – You should ensure that the GST inclusive recommended retail price is quoted on all your promotional and other material.

Faulty copies – If your book is faulty in any way – for example, misbound, or damaged in transit to a bookshop – booksellers will expect to be able to return copies to you and receive either a credit or a replacement copy. As the publisher usually bears the cost of returning faulty copies, you may wish to specify that the bookseller can 'return title page' rather than 'return whole book'.

Using a distributor

The biggest advantage of using a distributor or commissioned agent to sell your book for you, is that they have the expertise and resources to do the job effectively. The biggest drawback is that you will need to supply your book to a distributor at a high discount, as they are bearing the costs of supplying your book to bookshops (including discount to booksellers). Also consider that if you are distributing your book yourself, you can focus all of your resources on it, whereas a distributor or agent is handling many titles at once.

You need to be confident that a distributor will do justice to your book. Be sure to ask all the questions you need to feel confident that the distributor will promote your book as effectively as possible; ask about their publicity policy, the strength of their sales representative force, what they require in terms of discount, and their accounting procedures (that is, when you receive payment for sales of your book), and compare them with others. You will also want to establish whether you are also able to promote and sell your book yourself, as some distributors may prefer an 'exclusive' arrangement.

Some distributors are known for specialising in particular types of books, and are able to market your book effectively to outlets that will have a particular interest in your book.

Both the Australian Publishers Association (APA) and the Australian Booksellers Association (ABA) sell lists of Australian book distributors, which will help you establish which distributors might be interested in selling your book.

Good luck with your publishing endeavours, and maybe some time soon we'll see your name on the bestseller's list!

Glossary – of Acronyms & Terms

AB&P	<i>Australian Bookseller & Publisher.</i>	Folio	Page number.
ABA	Australian Booksellers Association.	Full-colour	Printing using the four-colour process, which uses the ‘process colours’ cyan (blue), magenta (red), yellow and black (CMYB) to make any colour needed.
Agent	May be somebody commissioned by a publisher or distributor to sell books to retail outlets, or somebody who represents the interests of an author.	GNAB	<i>Guide to New Australian Books.</i>
APA	Australian Publishers Association (formerly ABPA – Australian Book Publishers Association).	Hard copy	A printed version of a manuscript or other text, as opposed to an electronic copy of the text (on computer or disk).
ARP	Australian Recommended Price. Now RRP (see below).	Imprint page	Usually the reverse page of a book’s title page. Carries information such as CiP data, including a book’s ISBN, copyright line, publication date, and information about the publisher and printer.
AusBiP	<i>Australian Books in Print.</i>	ISBN	International Standard Book Number. (It is incorrect to say ‘ISBN number’ – use simply ‘ISBN’.)
Barcode	A code printed on a product which can be read by an electronic barcode scanner. Used by publishers, booksellers and libraries to identify, order, sell and manage books using computerised inventory systems.	ISSN	International Standard Serial Number.
Binding	The type of cover of a book – generally expressed as either hardback or paperback, but sometimes as cased (hardback) or limp/softback (paperback).	Legal Deposit	Statutory provision to ensure that copies of all publications in Australia are lodged with the National Library of Australia and State Libraries.
©	Copyright.	Manuscript (MS)	The copy of a book.
CAL	Copyright Agency Limited.	NLA	National Library of Australia.
CiP	Cataloguing-in-Publication.	Returns	Unsold books returned to the publisher or distributor.
Copyediting	Checking a manuscript for grammar, spelling and typographical errors, and inconsistencies in style.	RRP	Recommended Retail Price. The GST-inclusive price at which the publisher recommends that retail outlets sell the book.
CRA	Camera-ready artwork/art. Final film or bromide version of a manuscript, ready for printing, as opposed to providing the version on a disk.	SOR	Sale Or Return. Term of trade under which a retail outlet may return unsold books to a publisher or distributor, usually within a specified time frame.
Discount	A percentage of the RRP of a book subtracted by the publisher when supplying the book to a retailer.	Supplier	Somebody who supplies books to retail outlets. May be a publisher or a distributor.
Distributor	Somebody who supplies other publishers’ books to retailers.	Terms of trade	The terms, including discount and returns policy, under which a publisher or distributor supplies books to retail outlets.
Extent	The number of pages in a book.	WBN	<i>Weekly Book Newsletter.</i>
FIS	Free Into Store. The publisher bears the freight costs of supplying books to retail outlets.		
FS	Firm Sale. A term of trade under which a retail outlet cannot return unsold books to the publisher or distributor.		

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