



**ABORIGINAL
STUDIES PRESS**

**Information kit for
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander authors**

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601
aiatsis.gov.au/asp

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This kit has been produced for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. It aims to give general introductory information about how to go about getting published. It is based on how Aboriginal Studies Press publishes books in 2020. As circumstances change, so might the information in this kit, so please check regularly for updates.

As the information in the kit is a guide only, you shouldn't rely on it alone in seeking to become a published writer. ASP takes no responsibility for any writer's success or otherwise in achieving publication.

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Aboriginal Studies Press is the publishing arm of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

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Aboriginal Studies Press acknowledges the early work and inspiration of Sandra Phillips and Ann Jackson-Nakano as well as the help of Sam Laughton, Leise Guthridge and Kerstin Stitch. We welcome feedback and ideas for future editions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors who use the kit.

Note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this kit may contain images of deceased people. Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) publishes material by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have chosen to use the words Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in this kit, we know that other terms are used, such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, First Nations Australians and First Australians. To refer to authors with who are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders we have used the term non-Indigenous.

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I want to publish my story

If you're reading this kit then you probably have a story to tell and you want it to be published. You may have written your story, or at least begun to research it and gather information. You're on the road to becoming a **published** author.

This information kit is aimed at people who have already taken several steps along the writer's road, or who are ready to begin. It explains a little of the publishing process, especially:

- the way that we at Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) choose which books to publish and on what basis
- the reason why it can sometimes take a long time to turn a manuscript into a published book
- a little on how contracts, rights and royalties work
- other useful details.

However, it is a *basic* information kit and so, if possible, you should read some of the other guides and articles available for authors. You could start with these:

- The Aboriginal Studies Press website at aiatsis.gov.au/asp. The information under 'For Authors' and the 'FAQs' is particularly useful for new authors.
- The ASP Style Guide. This can be downloaded from the website, or we can mail you a hard copy if you don't have access to the internet.
- *Guidelines for the ethical publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and research from those communities*, published by AIATSIS. This can be accessed and downloaded from the following link www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press/getting-published/ethical-publishing-guidelines

We've tried to answer all the main queries in a way that's simple and direct, yet brief and factual. We deal with a range of authors, so please allow for that if you feel the language is sometimes too simple or too complex.

If you have any queries, call us on 02 6246 1183.

Note that some words are written in **bold**. These words are explained in the margin.

Publish

To publish something means to make it available to the public. This can mean printing and selling a book, releasing a CD, or broadcasting a story on a website. It usually means that the author or creator earns money, but you can publish and make your story available for free.

About Aboriginal Studies Press

Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) is the publishing arm of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

You might have seen the statement that says ASP contributes to AIATSIS's goals by 'publishing and promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies' by creating 'a limited but diverse and quality list of academic and general publications'. This is part of our business plan and the AIATSIS Corporate Plan.

ASP is one of a small number of publishers in Australia that specialises in publishing works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors play a major role in the publishing program and we strongly encourage the development and publication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. We do publish books by non-Indigenous authors and some staff at ASP are non-Indigenous people who are experienced in publishing. Bear in mind that we do not publish something by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander just because of who they are, all manuscripts have to fit into our publishing list at the time. The section called 'How we choose what to publish' (see page 5) details exactly how we choose the manuscripts we accept for publication.

What does it mean to be published?

There are thousands of stories to be written and told and thousands of people who want to read them. Publishing is the process of taking those stories and making them available to those readers. Our job is to gather the stories and present them in the best way possible to the most appropriate audience. In doing that, we offer editorial advice and pay for all the editorial and production costs, as well as marketing, sales and publicity.

This can be a much more complicated process than you might imagine. A lot of work goes into making a book happen and the easiest way to explain it is to take you on the journey of three different ways a manuscript can get published.

This first way is with an **unsolicited manuscript**. The word 'unsolicited' means that we didn't ask for, or 'solicit', the manuscript. The word 'manuscript' just means the written words, either printed on paper, digital, CD/DVD, USB drive, or written in longhand.

Unsolicited manuscripts

An unsolicited manuscript is an original, written document, which is sent to a publisher by an author without having been requested by the publisher.

'Unsolicited' simply means 'not asked for'; in publishing it refers to manuscripts sent to a publisher by a hopeful author.

Some publishers don't even look at unsolicited manuscripts. Here at ASP we review all the manuscripts that are sent to us. Apart from it being a matter of courtesy, we sometimes offer editorial advice to people submitting manuscripts if we think they might have a better chance of being published if they presented their manuscript differently. As well, we know that several bestsellers started out as unsolicited manuscripts: Sally Morgan's *My Place*, for example.

However, if you're going to send us your work you must complete a manuscript proposal form. These forms (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/aboriginal-studies-press/publish-us> under the heading *Publish with us*) ask for information about your proposal, including who you think the audience is for your manuscript. You probably have a very good idea about who'd be interested in your book. This information about why you think the project is important and who you think the audience might be for the book is very valuable.

We assess all manuscripts against a standard set of criteria. The proposal form is extremely important so you should give it as much thought as you do the manuscript itself (see 'Marketing' later). If you have any queries, call us on 02 6246 1183.

The second way a manuscript can be published is as a **commissioned manuscript**. That means that we at ASP, sometimes taking advice from specialists, come up with an idea for a book and pay an author to write it for us.

Why do publishers commission books? The main reason is to fill a need. For example, the Board of Studies might require all Year 10 students to study an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language, but if there aren't any suitable textbooks available for those students then a publisher might commission an author to write such a book. Alternatively, at ASP we might believe a high-profile sports star, politician or elder should have their story told.

The third type of manuscript we publish is **a mixture of unsolicited and commissioned** work. For example, an author might let us know what they're working on — say, a thesis in anthropology, or a biography of a community elder or a well-known Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander painter or writer. In that case, ASP might work with the author to suggest the best way to develop the thesis, or the biography, into a publishable manuscript.

Manuscript

The word 'manuscript' is from the Latin word for 'handwritten'. These days, most writing is generated by computer, but 'manuscript' (often shortened to 'ms') is still used in publishing to describe an unpublished work.

Commission

When publishers commission a manuscript, they instruct an author to produce a work to its specifications. The author doesn't decide the subject or the scope, but produces what is required — commissioned — by the publisher.

How we choose what to publish

Whether a manuscript is commissioned, unsolicited or a mixture of the two, one thing remains the same: to go any further along its journey towards publication the manuscript must be assessed. The first level of assessment is by ASP itself (under advice); the next level is by specialist assessors, about 50% of whom are Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders; the final level is by our Publishing Advisory Committee (PAC). This committee advises the Director of ASP and the AIATSIS CEO. The PAC members come from a range of backgrounds. The majority are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and they all have cultural, academic and writing knowledge.

Not all manuscripts make it to the PAC. We receive more manuscripts than our resources (both financial and staff) allow us to publish. That means we can put forward only those manuscripts that meet the needs of our publishing list at the time. We use an assessment grid when making judgments about manuscripts. This grid includes evaluations about things like the content, the scholarship (if relevant), the writing, how it fits with other books we've published and how much of our staff and financial resources it would require. All of this allows us to make an equitable judgment.

So what are we looking for in a manuscript?

If it's a general book it's got to be both a good story and well told. If it's an academic book then the scholarship has to be sound and provide a valuable addition to the literature in the relevant discipline.

Some manuscripts are not accepted for publication because they're not sufficiently well written. You might have read high-school teacher Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*. Lots of people had written similar stories, but the world only took notice because he told his story so well. In a similar way, the stories of the survivors of the Stolen Generation are gradually being told and deservedly so. Writing their stories makes sense of these authors' lives for themselves while reminding other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who read them about their history. These stories are eventful, gripping and often traumatic. They're stories that the wider community needs to hear too. But this doesn't in itself make a good book: we need an author with the passion, skill and ability to make that happen.

When we receive a manuscript that has lots of potential but hasn't been sufficiently well written we make a choice about what to do. This will depend on the manuscript and whether the writer wants to keep working on it. Sometimes we offer advice to the writer about how they might rewrite the manuscript. If a writer is pretty close to

Please remember that if ASP doesn't choose to publish your manuscript you shouldn't take it to mean we don't think your story — or your life, if it's an autobiography — is not important. As you'll see below, we have a range of suggestions for authors whose manuscripts we don't publish in book form.

having a publishable manuscript we might issue a contract to publish and then offer editorial support. For example, the first time that you write your story down it may be a bit rough and ready. This first effort is called the first **draft** and it may contain spelling mistakes, bad grammar, structural inconsistencies (things told in the wrong order) and other errors. Each time you go over your manuscript, making corrections and improvements, you are creating a new draft. Thus you'll hear **editors** refer to 'third draft', 'fourth draft', 'final draft' and so on.

Unfortunately, we rarely have money to pay an author while they do the rewriting or to pay someone else to do it for them.

We sometimes receive theses from academics seeking publication. Our usual response is that a thesis must be rewritten for a wider audience. By definition, a thesis is written for examiners: just a handful of people. In contrast, a book needs to reach a much wider audience. ASP provides information about rewriting a thesis for publication on its website; go to <https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/reworking-your-thesis-book-publication.pdf>

Whatever kind of manuscript you've written, if we don't accept your manuscript for publication and you don't take up one of the options mentioned above, you're free to offer it to another publisher.

A second judgment we make is how interesting the manuscript would be to a large audience and whether it would sell. That decision is shaped by whether we think we can market, publicise and sell the book. Although you may have written your manuscript especially for other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, that audience may not be large enough on its own for us to publish. ASP markets and sells its books to non-Indigenous Australians as well as to libraries and overseas.

That doesn't necessarily mean you have to change the structure of your manuscript or the writing style. Even in the recent past Aboriginal people wanting to be published found they were pressured by publishers to change Aboriginal English into standard English. Ruby Langford-Ginibi is one published author who's written about this experience. Your writing doesn't have to be standard English, but it does have to match the kind of manuscript you've written. If you've written an academic piece of writing it'll probably be in standard English, although quotations of people speaking might be in language, Kriol or Aboriginal English. However, if you've written a community history or are quoting other people's words in a biography, you should write in whatever style matches the way those people speak. If you're writing an autobiography you might choose to write in Aboriginal English, much the way you speak, although some authors prefer their life story, in book form, to be in standard English. Although they sometimes find it a bit confronting, non-Indigenous Australians and others reading in English, have now become used to reading novels written by people writing in non-standard English. You too might have

Draft

An early version of a piece of writing that is not yet the final version.

Editor

A person who makes something ready for publication. There are different types of editors: a copy editor might suggest quite large changes to the way a story is told ('structural' changes) while at the same time correcting a story's spelling, grammar and consistency.

read books by people writing in their own style of English, people from places like Ireland and India, or African-Americans from the USA.

Importantly, each book we publish needs to have something special about it; it has to be different in some way from all the other books already published. An academic manuscript usually differs from others because of its subject matter, so it's obvious what's special about it. However, if you're writing a more general book — say a community story — then it needs to be one that records your history or your language and culture so that others — people who don't know your mob — can read it and understand it. On the other hand you might be writing the biography of someone whose life was similar to others and so in that way it represents the lives of lots of people, but perhaps it's the story of someone who provided leadership to their community. Whatever story it is, it has to be written well enough so that it reaches out to a wider audience.

If you haven't already looked in a library, community or language centre or checked out a few bookshops to see what's already been published and where a book like yours might fit, now's the time to do so. If you don't have easy access to a bookshop you might be able to search on the internet instead. Read as much as you can, especially other books that are similar in style to yours. Learn from them what works well. If it's a general book, you can try reading your story to others. If they lose interest it might mean that you have to cut some bits out that are getting in the way of your main story. Writing well is hard work, so be prepared to put in some time.

At ASP, while we understand that not every book we publish will make a lot of money and we can't become a financial burden on AIATSIS. We must strike a balance between writers whose writing reflects different aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and society with what we believe we can sell. After all, if only a few people buy our books then we haven't achieved AIATSIS's aim of promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

We aim to publish culturally significant and influential books. We often seek endorsements (comments) from well-known people and place these on the back cover and in our books. Increasingly we receive positive reviews of our books in newspapers and journals and some of our authors are interviewed on radio and television.

Sometimes our books have been researched over a period of years and that research has been supported by an AIATSIS research grant. That and our desire to work in an ethical and culturally sensitive way with our authors, is what marks out Aboriginal Studies Press from other publishers.



Mary Duroux (R) author of *The Rain Flower* and Karen Briggs, illustrator, signing copies of the book at the launch. Photo: AIATSIS.

Issuing a contract

If a book is recommended by the PAC and accepted by the CEO for publication then the next step is for both parties — the author and ASP — to agree how they'll go about it. ASP's offer to publish a manuscript may depend on the author rewriting sections based on the assessors' comments, or perhaps making the manuscript shorter or longer. The author will also agree to provide the finished manuscript at a certain time and sign a warranty, or a set of promises. (See more about this in 'Important Notes for Authors'.) For its part, ASP will agree to publish, promote and sell the book. These things are written down in a legally binding document called a **contract**.

A good contract describes exactly what each party will do and what they can expect in return. Your contract will spell out the things you will need to do before submitting the final manuscript. This means ASP will expect you to have done the basics: checked the spelling as much as possible, sought cultural permission to tell a community's story, sought permission to use quotations (other people's words) or photographs and approached archives or libraries to reproduce images you want in your book. This can be an overwhelming task for new writers but at ASP we offer support to all our authors, especially new ones.

The *ASP Style Guide* contains vital information on preparing your manuscript and it contains all the details you'll need in order to make it as clean as possible. However, it's quite complex as it needs to cover lots of different kinds of manuscripts. You might prefer to read the brief notes about how to present your manuscript at the end of this guide (see 'How to Present Your Manuscript'). For a copy of our *Style Guide*, visit the website at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/aboriginal-studies-press/publish-us>.

Contracts also describe things like the publishing schedule, payments, **royalties and rights**. We've avoided legal-speak as much as possible in our contracts but, even so, many of these words can sound intimidating. What do they all mean?

The schedule is the timeline for publication. You'll agree with ASP a date for delivering your final manuscript. ASP will then advise you of the expected publication date. You might be surprised at first at the time difference between the two dates, usually several months. To understand why this happens, go to the section titled 'The Publishing Process'.

Contract

A legally binding agreement between an author and a publisher setting out the details of what each party promises to deliver to the other.

ASP will indicate to you the anticipated print run. ASP doesn't print its own books, we get specialist printers to do that work. The number of copies we decide to print will depend on a range of factors: how many people we think we can sell the book to; how many other books there are on a similar subject or in a similar style; how easy the book will be to market and publicise, etc. One way to think about it is to remember that publishers — including ASP — sell the majority of their books through bookshops. This means your book will sit alongside other, similar books. You might think your story is unique, after all that's why you wrote it. But the bookseller will still categorise it under headings such as History, Aboriginal Studies and Biography. For further information on this, see the section titled 'The market'.

The selling price and the **royalty** are often closely linked. The author usually receives a percentage of the price that the book's sold for. It's important to remember that the price you pay for a book in a shop or via the internet isn't the amount the author or the publisher receives. Ten per cent of the recommended retail price (RRP) is GST. Distributors and booksellers will need their portion to cover the cost of freighting the book around the country and selling them in shops; this can be up to 60% or more of the RRP.

The **rights** of a book refer to what you agree to allow the publisher to do with your manuscript. This includes things like the place of publication or the parts of the book that can be sold on to others. For example, a magazine or newspaper might want to feature an extract from your book. If they're prepared to pay to use it you would be due part of that fee. There are other sources of income for authors like money from the photocopying of books by organisations and universities and the federal government's Public Lending Right (PLR) where small amounts are paid to authors and publishers for books borrowed from public libraries.

As mentioned above, the contracts offered by Aboriginal Studies Press are fair, but a contract is a legally binding document, so seek independent advice if you wish to. Contact us first on 02 6246 1183. If you want an independent opinion we recommend that you approach the Australian Society of Authors (the ASA, see 'Resources and Further Help') for advice.

Royalty

The part of the income generated from book sales that's paid to the author. Authors are paid royalties on books as they sell, not on all the copies printed. An alternative to a royalty is a fee where the author is paid an amount of money for their writing, usually before, or on publication sometimes called an advance.

Rights

'Rights' defines the limits the author allows the publisher to license, or sell your work on to other people. It can refer to territories (for example, are you just allowing the publisher to produce the book in Australia, or internationally?) or media (will you allow just a book, or a CD version too, or allow parts to be serialised in a magazine?) This is a tricky area that deserves your full attention.

Jimmy's story*

Planning to become an author? Don't give up your day job! That's the advice of three-times published Jimmy Heron, of Far North Queensland's Calbanya community. Jimmy works for the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service at Weipa and had his first book — *What's that funny fly?* — published in 1997. Written and illustrated by the author, *What's that funny fly?* aimed to raise awareness among FNQ's school children about the dangers of invasion of pest insects via trade in the Torres Strait. Published by the Queensland Government Printer, it sold a thousand copies; and earned Jimmy the princely sum of \$372.75. Not bad for a year's work!

Jimmy's second book, a novel for teenagers, was published by a well-known Queensland publisher in 2001. *Lost Cousins* sold well and was nominated for a major Literature Award: Young Adult Fiction section in 2002. This time Jimmy's royalty agreement was higher and the book sold over 2000 copies and so for the almost two years it took to write *Lost Cousins* Jimmy made just over \$1200. About \$50 a month.

His most recent book, *Leichhardt at Calbanya, 1841*, was published by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian publisher in 2005. This time, Jimmy decided to donate the royalties to the community development fund.

'What the hell; I'd never retire from it!' he laughs. 'I enjoy my writing and it's nice to get something back from it. But my best-selling book, *Lost Cousins*, made me less than my nephew's pension cheque: go figure!'

Some authors do make a handsome living from their writing, but the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that these writers are in the minority. The average income for writers in Australia is less than \$16,000. And that's income, not profit: don't forget the cost of your computer, your paper . . . oh and of course your tax!

*This story is an adaptation based on the experiences of several people.

The publishing process

Authors are often exasperated by the time it takes to turn their manuscript into a finished book. This is especially the case if it's a manuscript where the information might go out of date, or where the subject of a biography is elderly. ASP will take into account all these things when scheduling your manuscript for publication, but we're often scheduling books we've already agreed to publish 12 to 18 months ahead.

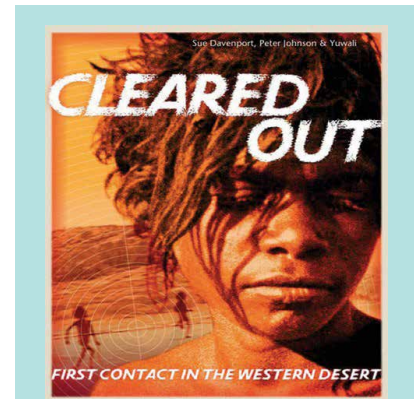
We'll do everything we can to let you know when your book is likely to be published. Using that information we'll let you know the best time for you to deliver your manuscript. Remember that you'll probably still be working on improving your manuscript even after you've been accepted for publication and before you have to submit the final manuscript. After that, your manuscript might be up to a year in production. Why so long?

There are lots of reasons, some that we can control and some that we can't. The first comes down to the quality of your manuscript. If you present a 'clean' manuscript — a draft you've gone over several times and have worked hard at to remove all the errors — then that means less work for us. However, the less you've done, the more we have to do. Once again, this is where you should look at our *Style Guide*. This contains all the information you'll need to prepare a clean manuscript.

It's important that you provide all the parts of the manuscript. Permissions must be sought for photographs, song lyrics, maps and when you're using other people's words. In fact, anything that you've used from somewhere else. Under the contract this is your responsibility, but ASP can help. Look at the information we provide on our website: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/aboriginal-studies-press/publish-us>. If you still have questions, call us on 02 6246 1183.

In addition, we need to know that you've checked and double-checked the facts. We simply can't afford to publish a book where the facts haven't been checked, permissions received and acknowledgments made. The reputation of AIATSIS is at stake; so too is yours, as an author. If readers find that you made a mistake about someone's name, or the spelling of a language group (and if you did get it wrong, you can be sure that someone will notice) then everything else you've written might become doubtful in their eyes.

We don't make any changes to a manuscript without the author's approval. But this checking and double-checking can take months. However, it's important to get this stage right; it's like the foundation of a house.



Some books feature dozens of photos, quotes (other people's words or writing) and references ('pointers' to the documents or people you sourced your information from). Gathering and acknowledging these sources requires a huge amount of work from both the author and the editorial team. Before it could be published the book *Cleared Out* was checked, rechecked and rechecked again to ensure that the facts were correct, sources correctly acknowledged and permissions received.

The last reason for the length of time it takes to create a book from a manuscript is one that might not be obvious to you. The publication dates we set are influenced by several things: our budgets; the other books we're publishing that month; and whether there's a special event that would make a particular month the best to publish in (perhaps a conference or a writers' festival). ASP will use all this information to set the most appropriate publishing date for your manuscript. We usually don't publish during December to January as, at that time, the media isn't operating normally, and your book may not get the coverage it deserves.

When the editorial process is close to completion the design team will begin. We sometimes design in-house, but usually we'll engage a freelance designer. ASP will ask you for ideas about what the cover might look like. We'll also show you the copy for the 'blurb' (the information on the back cover) and we may ask you for the names of notable people who might provide favourable comments to use on the cover. However, under the contract, ASP will have final say over how the cover looks. Naturally we work with our authors to ensure that any artwork or cover ideas are culturally appropriate to the story being told. We also use our experience as well as feedback from the sales and marketing people whose job it is to sell the books. Creating a good design is both an art and science and it takes time to get it right.

We'll consult with you throughout the process, so when you see the first set of **proofs** there shouldn't be too many surprises.

When your manuscript has been edited and checked, designed, laid out and proofed and an index created (if necessary), it will be ready to go to the printer. The process of printing, binding and delivery to a warehouse can itself take a few weeks and sometimes months if it is a full colour production, so when the editorial time, design time and printing time are added it can take up to six to nine months.

Proofs

A proof is usually a pdf, an electronic facsimile (or sometimes a hard copy print out), of the book in progress. There will be several stages of proofs. Authors usually see and are asked to check the first page proofs and the cover proofs.

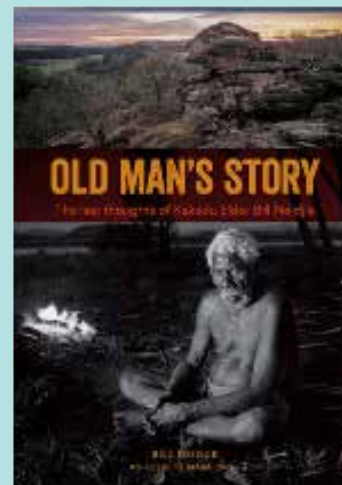
The market

ASP works hard to promote its books, but the market for new books in Australia is very crowded. Each year more than 5000 Australian books are published. That's in addition to all the ones that are imported from overseas (mainly the UK and the USA). On the day that your book is published about 13 other Australian books will be published too. The day before, 14 other books will have been published and the day after 14 other books will be published (as well as all the overseas titles). And so on.

Making your book stand out from this crowd isn't easy. But this is where your hard work at the very beginning — when you filled in the proposal form — comes into play. This was the form that asked you for information about who you thought was the audience for the book and how you thought we might be able to sell it.

If your book has a national focus then this will offer the largest audience. Books with a regional focus will do best in that region, but how you focus and structure your story will help it translate to other regions and communities. For example, the ASP book *Old Man's story: The last thoughts of Kakadu Elder Bill Neidjie* is the story of the last remaining speaker of Gagudju language in the Kakadu region in the Top End. However, Bill Neidjie is perhaps best known for being central to the establishment of the world-heritage listed Kakadu National Park: now a resource for all, so this story has national and international relevance.

The key is in the preparation. In the same way that the *ASP Style Guide* will help you to produce a clean manuscript, the proposal form will help you to focus your thoughts on the book's market. It's this work that makes the difference and will help your book to stand out from the crowd. If you compare your manuscript to the proposal form it will help you keep focused on what's important about your manuscript.



Old Man's story is a regional story that speaks to a national and an international audience due to its creative storytelling techniques and quality photographs. It's vital to think about the book's final audience early on; this is where the proposal form is a useful tool.

Important notes for authors

Author's warranties (promises)

When you sign a contract with a publisher, part of that contract will include an 'author's warranty'. Authors' warranties are a set of promises. In this part of the contract authors state that they have the right to enter into the contract, that their manuscript is original (that is, it hasn't been copied from someone else), that it doesn't to your knowledge contain anything defamatory, that is, say anything about another person that you would not be able to substantiate and defend in a court of law.

Read this warranty carefully. If there are any parts of your work that you have copied from elsewhere then the source must be acknowledged (the quotes and references we mentioned earlier). You can't pass off other people's work as your own; any work from outside your control is not yours to sell and so it must be properly credited. You may even have to pay someone to use their material.

Similarly, be extremely careful when writing about real people, places and events. It simply isn't enough to change Bill Smith's name to Bert Brown if the real, living Bill Smith, his friends, family and community, will instantly recognise himself. If you tell a story that shows 'Bert Brown' doing something that would affect his reputation and Bill Smith realises that you're probably talking about him, he may choose to take legal action against you and us, the publisher. These are the laws of defamation.

We at ASP will ask you to tell us if you've written about anyone who's alive and whether you've used their real name or not. That way, we can choose to take legal advice about whether changes to the manuscript are necessary. Even if you believe what you've said to be true, you may need to change parts of your manuscript.

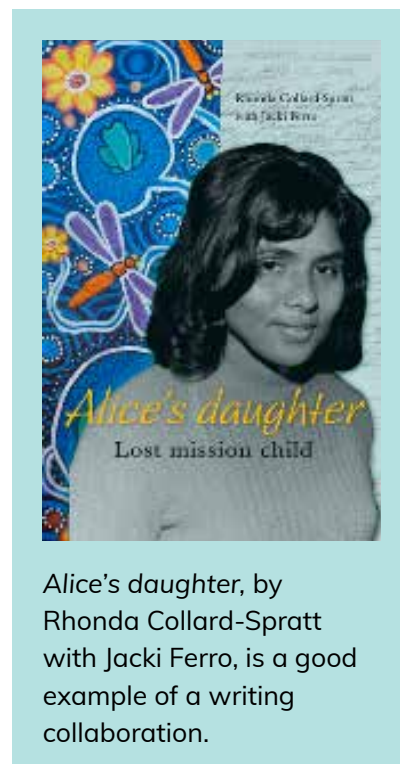
Writing other people's stories

A number of the manuscripts we receive are from people who've written other people's stories. This is where two people, or several people, have worked together, in collaboration. The collaboration might be between non-Indigenous authors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors, sometimes people who wouldn't feel able to write their story without help. Some very successful examples published by ASP are *Alice's daughter*, *Country of the Heart* and *Cleared Out*. A lot of work went into creating *Cleared Out* but it was worthwhile: in June 2006 it won the Western Australian History Award and the Western Australian Premier's Book Award for 2005. Sometimes both the author (the person writing the story) and the subject of the biography (the storyteller) are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Kim Scott's successful and collaborative *Kayang & Me* is a book he wrote with his Aunt Hazel Brown (Fremantle Arts Centre Press).

These can be very powerful books and many of the stories wouldn't be told without this collaboration. That said, it can be a long and sometimes challenging journey for everyone involved. You'll need to think about how you go about it, who is acknowledged as the author and who earns royalties (see 'Copyright, moral rights and cultural and intellectual property' page 16). You also need to consider the warranties or promises you make when signing your contract, especially the law of defamation.

If you're writing a community story you need to work closely with the community on every step, checking and rechecking. You have to make sure all cultural protocols are followed and that you have the permission of the cultural custodians as well as other community members. Everyone's views need to be listened to and respected and then you will have to find a way of bringing it all together in a readable manuscript.

If you're writing a biography you should remember that one person's story is also a family and community's story and these other people's views need to be taken into account. Sometimes the process can be tricky, depending on your relationship with the person you're writing about. If they're an elder and part of your family, you might find they don't talk to you as freely as you'd like. Some older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want their stories told and will be happy to work with you, but in remembering their lives they'll be drawing on what might be painful memories they haven't talked about before. You'll need to allow lots of time and be patient. Fiona Doyle, who wrote *Whispers of this Wik Woman* (University of Queensland Press), has talked about the collaborative process in writing her book.



Alice's daughter, by Rhonda Collard-Spratt with Jacki Ferro, is a good example of a writing collaboration.

Even if you're writing your own life (an autobiography), you're writing about other people's lives too — your friends, family and community — and they might not all remember things the way you do. Allowing people to read your manuscript as you're working on it will give you the chance to take into account the way other people feel. Some people writing their own life story find that the process of writing is a healing process for them, as well as others who may have had some of the same experiences. Depending on the story, it might also be one that's important for non-Indigenous Australians to learn about.

Copyright, moral rights and cultural and intellectual property

Copyright does not apply to ideas but to the words used to write them down. There is no copyright on ideas, so if you have a great idea for a story, keep it to yourself! Book titles aren't copyrightable either, so the same applies until the book is about to be published. Once you write a story down then your particular, individual expression of that idea is copyright. You don't need to do anything to ensure copyright, you just need to be able to show you wrote the words. You might like to put the copyright symbol ©, along with your name and the year you published it, on every page (© Jake Johnson 2006) of your manuscript.

Copyright is seen as an 'economic' right as it can be bought, sold and traded. ASP's contract won't ask you to sell your copyright to us or anyone else. You'll keep your copyright in the manuscript, but through the contract you'll allow ASP to produce it as a book and sell it. (If you sell your copyright it's called an 'assignment'; if you lease it, or allow someone to use it, with conditions, it's called a 'licence'.) ASP will then pay you a fee or royalties each time someone buys a copy of the book. It happens in a similar way with music. For example, when you buy a music CD you don't own the music itself; you own the disc and the plastic case and paper sleeve. What you've done in buying the CD is to pay a small fee allowing (licensing) you to listen to that music. Parts of that fee go to the artist and the publisher.

Moral rights and cultural and intellectual property (sometimes called ICIP) are complex but important ideas, well beyond what we can include in this basic guide. A quick introduction follows but you should refer to *Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts* by Terri Janke for more information.

If copyright is seen as an economic right, then moral rights are seen as 'non-economic' rights. That is, they protect the right of a creator to be acknowledged as the creator of the work and they protect the work from derogatory treatment. They don't offer a financial return to the creator and they cannot be sold, traded or passed on to anyone else.



Yijarni tells the story of about 200 Gurindji stockmen and their families who walked off Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory in 1966, protesting against poor working conditions and the taking of their land by pastoralists.

Intellectual property has several forms: copyright (mentioned above), which relates to the expression of ideas (writing, music, painting); patents (covering inventions); and trademarks (symbols associated with a company or a service). Most discussion around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and intellectual property relates to the visual arts and the creators' efforts to defend their work from fakes and imitation or to artistic expression that falls outside traditional Western copyright laws (such as body painting and rock art).

However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural intellectual property relates to literature too. As mentioned above, some stories can 'belong' to a group of people rather than an individual. This needs to be recognised, especially when a third person is involved in the expression of that group story.

How to present your manuscript

The closer that your manuscript is in its presentation to recognised industry standards then the easier it will be for us to make a fair and equitable comparison with other manuscripts.

The instructions that follow are for setting up a document in Microsoft Word. Other programs vary a little, but most are similar. Your manuscript might not have all these features; just use what's relevant to you.

Page setup	<p>Before you begin writing, set up your master page to A4 size, portrait format (i.e. tall and thin). Give your page wide margins: 3 cm top and bottom, 4 cm each side. This might seem like a lot of 'white space', but it makes reading the manuscript much easier. To make these settings, go to:</p> <p>File > Page Setup > Paper Size > Orientation</p> <p>File > Page Setup > Margins</p>
Typeface	<p>Use an easy-to-read typeface like Palatino or Times New Roman. Don't use lots of different fonts as this can make your manuscript harder to read. Use 12 point except for headings (see 'Headings' below).</p> <p>Use bold only for headings.</p> <p>Use <i>italics</i> for the names of books.</p> <p>You can also use <i>italics</i> for emphasis, but don't overdo it.</p> <p>Format > Font > Font Style</p>
Paragraph settings (line spacing, paragraph and word spacing)	<p>Set your line spacing to 'Double space'. As with the wide margins, this might look like a lot of wasted space, but will give the editor or assessor room to make comments on your manuscript.</p> <p>Don't use the Enter key except when you want a new paragraph.</p> <p>Don't add an extra space between paragraphs.</p> <p>Format > Paragraph > Spacing > Line Spacing</p> <p>Use only one space between words and after all punctuation.</p>
Justification	<p>Don't justify your text, that is, don't have the right-hand side of sentences 'pulled' across to form a straight, vertical line. Use left alignment, like this table.</p> <p>Format > Paragraph > Alignment</p>
Headings	<p>Headings and subheadings help give your manuscript shape. Use no more than three levels of headings, e.g. a chapter head and then two levels of subheadings.</p> <p>Set them this way:</p> <p>Chapter 1 (14pt bold)</p> <p>First level subheading (12pt bold)</p> <p><i>Second level subheading (12pt italics)</i></p> <p>Format > Font > Font Style</p>

Capitalisation	<p>Set headings with Initial Capital Letters.</p> <p>Proper nouns always take initial capital letters, e.g. Sydney, Larrakia.</p> <p>Avoid using ALL CAPITAL LETTERS or all lower case.</p> <p>Format > Font > Font Style</p>
Page numbering	<p>Number all the pages of the manuscript throughout (not chapter by chapter) in the lower right-hand corner.</p> <p>Start each chapter on a new page.</p> <p>Insert > Page Numbers > Position > Alignment</p>
Headers	<p>Establish a header to appear on every page of your manuscript. Include the name of the manuscript and your name.</p> <p>You could include a copyright symbol, your name and the year (© Jake Johnson 2006).</p> <p>View > Header and Footer</p>
Spelling	<p>Use UK English, not American or Australian.</p> <p>Tools > Language > Set language > UK English</p> <p>Use Spellcheck, but make sure Spellcheck's suggestions make sense to you. Aboriginal language names and place names won't be in the dictionary, so check them carefully.</p> <p>Tools > Spelling and Grammar</p>
Photographs	<p>When submitting your proposal please only include low resolution copies of images. Otherwise your document will become large and unwieldy. Insert images into your Word document approximately where you think they should appear in the story, number them figure 1, 2 etc. and include the full caption including and credits.</p> <p>To make sure images are low resolution, do the following: insert into Word document, click on the image and go to Picture Tools > Format > Compress pictures > and select "Email 96ppi". Also make sure you have checked the box to apply this setting to all images in the document.</p> <p>If images are an important part of your proposal, then ASP will need high resolution copies of images at a later stage. Even if your images look good on screen they may not be big enough to print from. For an image to reproduce clearly on a printed page, it needs to have about 4 to 5 times more pixels than the same size viewed on screen. So do make sure you are able to eventually supply any images at at least 2000 px wide.</p> <p>Read about 'Permissions' on the ASP website: https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/aboriginal-studies-press/publish-us</p>
Tables	<p>Include these in the main text.</p> <p>Number them by chapter, e.g., Table 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2.</p> <p>Table > Draw Table</p>
Word count	<p>Check the number of words in your manuscript matches your contract.</p> <p>Tools > Word Count</p>

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

I've just written my life story and I think lots of people will want to read it. If I send it to you to be printed why can't I say what it'll look like?

ASP is a publisher, not a printer. We make the choices about what to publish by looking at a lot of factors, especially taking into account our budgets and the number of staff we have working with us. We also take into account the number of other books we're working on at the time, what other books we (and other people) have published, how good the story is and how well written it is. Even though we publish some books which have a regional focus, as a national publisher we need to work out whether we think it will appeal to a large enough number of people and whether we can sell the book to those people. ASP pays all the costs of publishing — which can be a lot of money — and we use our experience in publishing to help make the right decisions in the editing, design and marketing. See <https://aiatsis.gov.au/about/what-we-do/aboriginal-studies-press/publish-us> to find out more.

I want all my mob to be able to afford my book and some of them don't have a lot of money. Can you make sure my book sells for no more than \$20?

We understand that you want your mob to be able to afford your book but we have substantial costs to recover on all books. If you provide your manuscript having checked it carefully, it'll probably take us less time and money to produce it. But one of the largest costs is the printing, so if your manuscript is a large one it'll cost more to print than a smaller one. Talk to us early on about your concerns. We offer authors a discount on their own books (40% off the retail price) so you might want to buy books for your mob using your discount and then give them away. You might find there are grants you can apply for to help cover the costs of distributing copies to community.

I know exactly what I want on the cover — I've even done the painting. Why does ASP want to have control over it?

We always ask authors what they'd like to have on a cover. But good design and selling books in bookshops and through catalogues is a specialised business. Your idea for the cover might really suit the content of the book but it might not be the best image to sell the book and bookshops are very competitive places.

Resources and further help

Australian Society of Authors

www.asauthors.org

This is the professional association for Australia's literary creators, with almost 3000 members across Australia. It lobbies for authors' rights, produces the journal *Australian Author*, offers a contract advisory service, runs mentorships for new and emerging writers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and offers advice about writing, copyright and publishing. It also runs excellent workshops on a range of topics across the whole publishing process.

Australia Council for the Arts

www.australiacouncil.gov.au

The Australia Council for the Arts is the Commonwealth Government's arts funding and advisory body. It provides grants in (among other things) literature and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts to artists and arts organisations.

Australian Copyright Council

www.copyright.org.au

The Australian Copyright Council is an independent not-for-profit organisation. It provides information, advice and training about copyright in Australia. You can download very helpful information sheets from their website, or purchase publications.

AustLit

www.austlit.edu.au/help

AustLit is a non-profit collaboration between 10 Australian universities and the National Library of Australia. It provides information on hundreds of thousands of creative and critical Australian literature works relating to more than 75,000 Australian authors and literary organisations, from 1780 to the present day.

First Nations Australia Writers Network (FNAWN)

www.fnawn.com.au

FNAWN fosters the development of skills in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, poets and storytellers, advocating and lobbying on their behalf. Contact them via email, Facebook or Twitter.

Writers' centres in your area

Some cities and regions in Australia have writers' centres which offer courses, support groups and other resources for new and established writers.



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