

GETTING PUBLISHED

To think about first

- Do you really **want** to be published?
- Who do you hope will read your article, poem, short story, or book?
- Do you want to self-publish, 'partnership publish' or seek out a traditional publisher?

Editing your manuscript

- If your manuscript is accepted for publishing, it will be edited further in house. However, usually a prospective publisher will ask you to state what editing has already been done on your manuscript eg see submission guidelines at <http://acornpress.net.au/> and <http://rhizapress.com.au/>. So you will probably need to pay for a professional edit before you send your manuscript off anywhere. Check out the list of manuscript editors/assessors in *The Australian Writers' Marketplace*, on the NSW Writers' Centre website (www.nswwc.org.au/), NSW Society of Editors (<http://www.editorsnsw.com/>) or elsewhere online.
- There are also editors available to edit specifically Christian books. Check these out with Omega Writers, based in Brisbane (<http://www.omegawriters.org/hone-your-craft/manuscript-assessments/>).
- **Make sure you know what you are paying for, however** – assessment only (where the editor just gives his or her overall opinion and general comments to help you improve your book) or actual structural and line editing.

Finding a publisher

- Look at your favourite books on your shelves and make a list of who published them. Then check out their websites to see if they are accepting non-fiction manuscript submissions, whether they accept submissions from first time authors at all and whether you can approach them directly or only through a literary agent. (A literary agent's job is to find a publisher for you and negotiate the contract etc – they do charge a fee, but usually only after your book is published.)
- If you feel a secular publisher would look at your book, go through the list of publishers in such publications as *The Australian Writers' Marketplace* (available online at www.awmonline.com.au or in hard copy from writers' centres or bookstores such as Borders) and see which you can approach.
- If you decide to aim for a secular publisher but would prefer to work through an agent, look online at such sites as Australian Literary Agents' Association (<https://austlitagentsassoc.com/>) or go through the list in *The Australian Writers' Marketplace*. However, many of these will not represent first time writers and even if they do, you will have to submit your work in a similar way as you do to a publisher.
- There are very few Christian publishers in Australia and they are quite small, especially in comparison to those in the US. Some currently accepting manuscripts are Rhiza Press (<http://rhizapress.com.au/>), along with their Rhiza Edge imprint for young adult books (<http://www.rhizaedge.com.au/>) and their children's imprint, Wombat Books (<https://www.wombatbooks.com.au/>), Ark House Press (although they are more a subsidy publisher these days, it seems—see www.arkhousepress.com.au) and Acorn Press (<http://acornpress.net.au/>). Others I am also aware of are Openbook, John Garratt Publishing, Salt and Light Publishing, Elephant House Press and Matthias Media – just

Google their names and check out the submissions section on their websites to see what type of books they publish and if they are open to new submissions.

- There are no Christian literary agents that I know of in Australia, but for Christian literary agents in the States, look online or check out the list in Sally Stuart's Market Guide, either online (www.stuartmarket.com) or in book form (available from Koorong Books).
- Almost all Christian publishers in the States can be approached only through a literary agent. However, for a fee, you can submit your manuscript to a kind of 'one stop shop' that publishers check out and contact you if they are interested. These are Christian Manuscript Submissions (www.ChristianManuscriptSubmissions.com) and Writer's Edge Manuscript Service (www.writersedgeservice.com).
- **Keep trying – don't let rejection stop you!**

Preparing a book proposal/manuscript submission

- Take time to write a good, impressive submission.
- When you find a publisher you can approach yourself as a first time writer, **make sure** you read **exactly** what they ask you to send in to them. For example, depending on the publishers, apart from a one page synopsis of the plot of your book and three sample chapters, they often ask for information such as why you wrote your book, your qualifications for doing so, a list of your previous publications, the target audience, what other similar books are already in the market, how well they have done, what other markets are open to you apart from bookstores etc.
- Also, make sure you send the publisher exactly how much of your manuscript they ask for and send it as they want it set out eg double-spaced, author's name and title of book on running heading on each page etc.

Negotiating a contract

- Read every clause – don't be afraid to ask questions. The experts at the NSW Writers' Centre will answer a simple question or two free of charge, if you are a member. The Arts Law Centre of Australia (www.artslaw.com.au) can also provide free legal advice. Otherwise, you will need to pay someone to check out your contract – you can do this via the NSW Writers' Centre or the Australian Society of Authors (www.asauthors.org), or through a solicitor who works in this specific area.
- Don't be afraid to ask if something can be changed in it.

Seeing the editing/publishing process through

- Be patient! Sometimes even after your book has been accepted for publication, it might take a year or more before it is released.
- Again, read your contract carefully to see how much say you are given in how the cover of your book will look and also how much say you have in the actual 'in house' editing process. You will probably have to give and take a little in all of this.

Self-publishing

- There are many courses/seminars available on this topic – see NSW Writers' Centre website or search the net.
- **Be very careful!** Some 'vanity publishers' are unscrupulous and/or produce inferior books. Before you take the plunge, check out the publisher with the NSW Writers'

Centre. Overseas publishers can be checked on the 'Writer Beware' website (www.sfw.org/beware).

- Most partnership or subsidy publishers offer a range of 'deals' eg some will promote your book at extra cost or at least list you on their website. Others will arrange for your book to be edited or do it themselves, but of course again for a fee. Also, check also how many copies of your book you get for your money and how much discount they give you if you purchase further copies from them.
- If you choose a 'self-publisher' who does not offer editing as part of the process, you owe it to yourself to make sure the book is well edited and as polished as possible. See suggestions in previous section re engaging a professional editor. If you decide to self-
- **Be realistic** with the number of copies you pay to be produced. True, the more you order, the cheaper per book, but work out how many you have to sell to break even and be realistic as to whether you could sell that number.
- Self-publishing is becoming more acceptable, particularly given the difficulty of getting published in Australia at least. However, it still has a bit of a 'stigma' attached to it in some circles, so weigh things up carefully before you take the plunge. However, remember that this is how some writers who are now well known started off eg Matthew Reilly – then as they began to sell well, publishers took notice.
- There are also relatively easy ways available now for you to create your own e-book and/or print on demand hard copy edition. Check out Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing, Smashwords, Ingram Spark (www.ingramspark.com/), Lightning Source etc.