

## **Booktopia and Welbeck Partnership to Ramp Up Expansion In Growing ANZ Market**

Thousands of titles will be directly published in the Australian and New Zealand market through an innovative new partnership between Australia's leading online book retailer Booktopia Group Limited (ASX: BKG) and UK-based Welbeck Publishing Group (WPG).

Booktopia has entered into a non-binding agreement to secure a 25% stake in the London-based publisher's new standalone Australian subsidiary (Welbeck ANZ). The deal is expected to be finalised by 30 September 2021 and Welbeck ANZ is expected to be fully operational in January 2022. Booktopia will invest approximately \$3 million in the new business.

Under the new partnership Booktopia's distribution arm, Booktopia Publisher Services (BPS), will distribute Welbeck ANZ's catalogue of approximately 250 new titles each year and backlist of 5,000 titles directly in the ANZ market.

The strategic partnership with WPG extends Booktopia's investment in publishing and follows the integration of Brio Books earlier this year as well as the creation of its own imprint – Booktopia Editions – in 2019.

WPG Founder and Director Mark Smith will relocate to Australia in early 2022 to assist with the establishment of the business and the recruitment of key publishing and operations staff. Fellow WPG Executive Director Marcus Leaver will also base himself in Sydney for parts of each year.

**Booktopia Founder and Chief Executive Tony Nash** said the investment was part of Booktopia's strategy to be at the core of the Australian and New Zealand book industries.

"The big winners from this partnership are the readers, who will now have better access to Welbeck's huge catalogue of the very best and most commercial books. In bringing together two well-known businesses with strong track records, we're excited to deliver positive outcomes for authors, our customers and the industry in Australia and New Zealand."

"We have known Mark Smith and Marcus Leaver for many years and have always been impressed with their publishing prowess. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to invest in their publishing program moving forward. The Welbeck Publishing Group is on a fast track to becoming a major player in the global independent publishing world."

"As a shareholder in Welbeck ANZ we will be able to champion their international and local titles into the Australian market. They have 4,500 titles on their list already and it continues to grow."

"Booktopia's mission is to be at the central core of the ANZ book industry and investing in publishing companies like the Welbeck Publishing Group takes us one step closer to our goal."

WPG has also announced the formation of a local ANZ publishing program with the aim of publishing 50 titles a year across fiction, narrative non-fiction, children's books, and a small range of illustrated and gift titles.

**Mark Smith, Executive Director, WPG** said:

“Marcus and I have long harbored ambitions for Welbeck to establish its own operations in Australia and New Zealand and we are delighted that we have agreed this partnership with Tony Nash and the team at Booktopia.”

“Having published key Australian and New Zealand authors such as Peter Temple, Isla Fisher, Heather Morris, Monica McInerney, Robert Ingpen, Bernard Beckett and Withi Ihimaera in international markets and successfully connected international authors such as Stieg Larsson, Stef Penney, Lisa Hilton, Lynda la Plante and Wilbur Smith with Australian readers, we are very excited to now be in a position to discover new authors and work with established writers through our new Sydney based publishing operation.”

**Marcus Leaver, Executive Director, WPG** said:

“Within a short period of time, we plan to be a significant independent publisher in the ANZ market with a fresh, innovative, and entrepreneurial approach that connects as many authors with readers as possible all around the world. Tony Nash and the Booktopia team are the perfect partners for Welbeck as their entire focus mirrors ours – putting great books in customers’ hands.”

The management team of the new Sydney business will be announced shortly.

**Authorised for lodgment by Chris Beare, Chairman on behalf of the Board.**

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#### **About Booktopia**

Booktopia Group is the largest Australian-owned online book retailer by market share. Since FY2012 Booktopia Group has sold more than 32.6 million items to its growing customer base. While approximately 85% of the items the Company sold in FY2020 were books, Booktopia Group also sells eBooks, DVDs, audiobooks, magazines, maps, calendars, puzzles, stationery and cards. The Company sold one item approximately every 4.7 seconds and shipped approximately 6.5 million items in the 12 months to 30th June 2020, averaging 25,000 items per business day. The company listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) in December 2020 after completing a \$43.1 million capital initial public offering.

#### **About Welbeck Publishing Group**

Welbeck Publishing Group is an exciting, fast-growing independent publisher based in London, dedicated to publishing only the very best and most commercial books spanning a number of genres and categories, from leading authors and well-known brands to debut talent. We live for books that entertain, excite and enhance the lives of readers around the world.

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# booktopia

 An e-commerce leader

Our publishing is diverse yet underpinned with independent thought; indeed, we are renowned for innovative ideas, creativity and our commercial nous. Our talented, experienced team is drawn from right across publishing and media, combining the ambition and scale of a large publishing house with the passion and creativity of an independent. Bringing a uniquely focused approach to everything we do and being ambitious and forward-thinking, we are fast becoming a publisher of choice for authors and agents.

From building our boutique fiction and narrative non-fiction lists to shaping our world-renowned illustrated reference, gift and children's titles, our aim is to be a market-leader in every category in which we publish. Our books and products come to life for adults, children, and families in 30 languages in more than 60 countries around the world, selling through a variety of traditional and non-traditional channels. We are constantly looking for new ways to deliver our exceptional content and new ideas to inspire readers and listeners everywhere.