

Alice Mabin takes seat with truckies



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Dean Wilson Transport in WA, shot by Al Mabin while she was making *The Driver*. Al Mabin

FROM being rejected by 500 businesses to hitch-hiking her way across Western Australia, Alice Mabin has poured her whole heart and life into her newest book, *The Driver*. After finding success with her first book, *The Drover*, Alice was pushed by her readers and supporters to produce another book.

Alice was hesitant at first, but after a good long think she decided she had to do a second book and take advantage of the wonderful contact and distribution channels she had worked hard to establish.

The only problem was what to write about next.

Budding author Alice was trying to think of what she wanted her next book to be about when the idea hit her, literally.

"So I was trying to come up with ideas and then I got hit by a truck in my car," she said.

"A truck spun out of control and took me out and I went 'oh trucks, they're really important, what a good subject for a book'.

"I wasn't hurt but my car was a write-off and out of that I thought trucks get a really bad wrap."

Alice had somewhat of an epiphany, realising the general public lack understanding of how important trucks are, especially as nearly everything people deal with on a daily basis is delivered on the back of a truck.

"They've got no concept of that paddock to plate. People don't realise how many trucks are involved in the making of a bar of Cadburry chocolate, for example.

"You've got to cart the sugar and that's got to come from the farm first. The same with the milk, it's got to come from the dairy farm to the factory," Alice said.

"The average person, if they see bales of wool on the truck, don't associate that with the sheep in the paddock or the woollen jumper.

"They have no concept of how many times stuff has to go on the truck before it is the saleable item you have to buy."

Alice realised trucks and their drivers were taken for granted and wanted to write a book that made people stop to appreciate while educating people about the importance of them to their lives.

"As the general public, we're the first to complain about trucks on the road because they're slow or intimidating.

"But we'll also be the first ones to complain when they take trucks off the road because we won't have stuff."

The next step was to get businesses on board to get the wheels rolling for her book, which would be titled The Driver.

"Initially I approached 500 businesses to be in the book, to which almost all of them said no or just didn't respond."

"It was very, very hard to get going. From Brisbane to Darwin on the first leg of my trip I couldn't convince anyone to be in the book, no one wanted to know me."

Alice had hit somewhat of a wall and decided to take a more extreme approach.

"I got to Darwin and then headed across to Perth and from Perth I decided I was going to hitch-hike my way right around Western Australia, all the way through the Territory and back around to Perth - and I did," she explained.

"I hitch-hiked the whole way and it was a lot of fun and very challenging and you were putting your life in the hands of other people who you didn't know.

"But I lived the life of these truck drivers and learnt to understand the things they go through.

"I learnt to drive a road train and what they have to do in order to provide for the rest of us is incredible.

"This has taken 18 months to do so you have to be so passionate about it.

"You can't be half-hearted about it.

"Your life has to revolve around this subject."

The end result of Alice's months of hard work and knockbacks resulted in a 228-page self-published book documenting the reality of the daily grind for 110 different trucking companies and drivers, with photos featuring every state and territory in Australia and New Zealand.