

Exclusive Books readies for next court fight to keep airport stores

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The usual airport book fare of easy reading thrillers or romances with glitzy covers are not necessarily top of the list for tourists who frequent Exclusive Books' airport stores.



Book stacked for distribution at an Exclusive Books holding warehouse in Cape Town. Exclusive is fighting to hold on to its stores in the OR Tambo and Cape Town airports.

Picture: [BDive](#)

They are more likely to buy Justice Malala's *We Have Now Begun our Descent*, or RW Johnson's *How Long Will SA Survive*, both among the bestsellers at Exclusive's stores in the OR Tambo, Cape Town and Durban international airports.

"We sell a lot of South African nonfiction and fiction in our airport shops, though about 50% of their sales are magazines," says Exclusive's Benjamin Trisk.

He said the stock profile of the airport stores differed from the group's other stores, with travellers keen to read "a lot of African politics and policy".

But Exclusive is fighting to hold on to its stores in the OR Tambo and Cape Town airports, as it prepares for another round of litigation with the Airports Company SA (Acsa).

In June 2014, Acsa awarded the tender for the Exclusive store at OR Tambo International to a company, Amger Retailing, which had been set up just two days before Acsa issued its request for bids in December 2013.

Exclusive lodged an application to review Acsa's decision, and successfully challenged Acsa when it sent notices to vacate the store in July. Then, the High Court in Johannesburg found this to have been an illegal eviction.

The Airports Company took the judgment on appeal and the appeal is due to be heard by the Supreme Court of Appeal in mid-September.

Meanwhile, Exclusive is pressing ahead with applications to review Acsa's decisions to award the stores at the OR Tambo international terminal, and Cape Town's international and domestic terminals, to the rival bidder, Amger Retailing.

Exclusive still has the contract for the Durban airport stores, and the one in OR Tambo's domestic terminal.

It derives about 15% of its turnover from its airport stores.

Trisk said the Exclusive chain had returned solidly to profitability after Global Capital, Trisk, and Mark Barnes — CE of the Post Office and Business Day columnist — bought the business from Times Media in 2013.

The number of stores in SA has been reduced from 52 to 41, and Trisk said the new owners benefited from having "the best staff in retailing".

Source: Business Day

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