



## Rewriting the book on libraries

Ipswich Libraries has rewritten the book with an innovative self-service Library Pod at Karalee Shopping Village.

In an Australian first for public libraries, the pod allows members to use a mobile phone or library card to browse, borrow, return and reserve books. The pod opened in October 2019 with 163 books borrowed in its first week of operation. Interest has grown significantly since then and a total of 26,264 books have been loaned between opening and 7 April 2021.

Since its opening, the pod has handled more than 56,586 customer transactions including 9,821 book reservations and 20,501 book returns.

The children's book *Dog Man: Grime and Punishment* by Dav Pilkey was the most borrowed book from the Karalee pod in March 2021. The most borrowed adult book for the same period was *The Searcher* by Tana French.

Mayor Teresa Harding said council was delighted the library's state-of-the-art library facilities are improving access for the community. "System innovation, enhanced service consideration and meaningful community outreach; this is the 21st century approach behind the Karalee Library Pod," Mayor Harding said.

"It's wonderful to see this innovative approach translate to more books and media for residents. The self-service library pod at Karalee is a first of its kind and an extension of Ipswich Libraries' successful Marketplace collection model."

The Marketplace model includes presenting a curated collection of books in a retail-style display – front cover out instead of spine-out – and has been a big success at the city's libraries. The Karalee pod offers various popular and trending books in self-serve cabinets. It also has a large touchscreen where customers can browse e-books, e-magazines and downloadable audio content and borrow immediately.

The pod can also be used to collect library items reserved online and to return pod books.

"It is our priority to meet changing community expectations and deliver more opportunities for residents to borrow library items when they want and how they want," Mayor Harding said.

The pod is at Karalee Shopping Village, outside the Coles supermarket, and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The self-service pod is a contender in the Queensland Local Government Awards for Excellence as an exemplar of innovation.