

Media Release



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Most Illawarra residents would use a Council Tool Library if offered

A recent IRIS Research survey of Illawarra residents found that most (72%) of respondents would use a Tool Library if their council offered the service.

Tool libraries are places where residents can borrow and donate household and gardening tools, as well as receive training on tool use and maintenance. Councils like Inner West in Sydney and Brisbane City Council have recently opened new Tool Libraries attached to traditional libraries in response to changing lifestyles of residents.

The IRIS Research online survey found the Tool Library was popular among all age groups, especially the 50-64 year old cohort (at 75%) and both sexes, with women (77%) even more enthusiastic than men (66%).

Potential usage was found to be highest among Shellharbour LGA residents, at 85% followed by Wollongong LGA at 71%. However, the responses were consistently high for all the LGAs of the region.

There was strong support across the board to use the service for borrowing, learning (maintenance training) and donating tools. The main potential use of a Tool Library among both males and female respondents is to borrow tools, at 83%. Potential users would also use the Tool Library as an opportunity to learn how to use and maintain tools (67%) and donate tools (48%).

Peter Watts, Chief Executive, IRIS Research said: "The Tool Library has really inspired the residents we surveyed. In addition to donating tools, some respondents also indicated that they would be willing to volunteer their time to a Tool Library to share their knowledge through providing tool usage and maintenance training."

While we know that innovative services are often welcomed by the community, they are generally less enthusiastic about paying for it – but not this time! 69% of respondents said they would be willing to pay for a Tool Library services, with a pay as you borrow method, the most popular payment method at 78%.

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The IRIS Research Tool Library found two other interesting outcomes from this survey. First, that it was enthusiastically supported even among the 28% of residents that said they would not use it; and secondly of that 48% of respondents who would use a Council Tool Library do not currently use any service provided by a Public Library in the Illawarra.

Peter Watts said: “A Tool Library could offer significant community capacity building and connection benefits as well as deliver economic efficiencies as the way we live changes. We look forward to hearing councils’ response to this possible innovation in due course.”

The #IRISVoxpop Tool Library Survey was conducted 12-15 November 2018. 166 respondents completed the on-line questionnaire over two days. The survey was conducted with IRIS Research’s exclusive On-line Community Panel which comprises almost 2,000 Illawarra residents over 18 years of age.

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