MU

Building Murdoch University's Information Assets Register

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing (PRIS) legislation led by the Western Australian State Government's Office of Digital Government will reform personal privacy protections and the accountability of information sharing within government.

Discover how Murdoch University developed and implemented an Information Asset Register to protect their information and organisational reputation.

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Supporting Murdoch University with Information Risk Management

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing (PRIS) legislation led by the Western Australian State Government's Office of Digital Government will reform personal privacy protections and the accountability of information sharing within government.

The PRIS **'Agency Guidance: PRIS Readiness Checklist'** required Murdoch University to conduct a survey of its information asset holdings and have it listed in an Information Asset Register.

When Murdoch University (MU) needed to develop their Information Asset Register (IAR), they turned to Votar Partners with their many years of experience in building successful outcomes in this space. This project aimed to ensure that MU could comply with the new Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing (PRIS) legislation, directed by the Western Australian State Government's Office of Digital Government.

In today's data-driven world, an asset encompasses more than just physical items. It includes valuable information and personnel assets that support an organisation's objectives. Understanding and managing these assets effectively is crucial, particularly in light of stringent new regulations in all areas of organisational governance.

This initiative was driven by MU's PRIS Champion, the University Secretary, and the PRIS Officer, the Manager of Records and Archives. They needed a clear understanding of MU's information assets, their value, and the risks associated with their current handling and storage.

Given the complexity and the necessity for extensive stakeholder consultation across various business areas, MU sought the expertise of Votar Partners. With a proven track record in developing IARs for diverse organisations, Votar Partners was the perfect choice to lead MU's IAR Project.

What is an Information Asset?

An Information asset is any item (whether tangible or intangible) that has a **useful** or **valuable** quality for an organisation.

This includes **information**, physical and personnel assets to support that organisation's purposes.

An **information asset** is any valuable information obtained, generated, received or held by or for your organisation, in both hardcopy and digital formats. Value can be subjective or objective.

Often organisations don't have a clear view of what these assets are, how they are being managed and which would have the greatest impact on the organisation if they were compromised.

Information Asset Examples

✓ Plans and strategies
✓ Registers
✓ Websites
✓ Staff and client forms
✓ Client/Student files

✓ Contracts and agreements
✓ Project files
✓ Database of contacts
✓ Engineering Drawings
✓ Image libraries

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Implementation Supported Each Step of the Way

The Information Asset Register (IAR) Project at Murdoch University (MU) followed a structured three-stage process to ensure comprehensive and effective implementation. This approach was designed to engage stakeholders, leverage existing resources, and foster staff buy-in.

STAGE ONE

Drafting IAR Template

- **IAR Template Creation**: Votar drafted an IAR template, recommending the data elements needed for capturing information assets.
- **Risk Matrix Recommendation**: MU's corporate risk matrix was used for the Business Impact Level (BIL) Table rather than the Office of Digital Government's template, which enhanced staff familiarity and accuracy.
- **Information Classification Labels**: Guidance from Votar was provided in the selection of classification labels and sublabels for the IAR template.

STAGE TWO

Pre-Populate IAR Template

- **High Value and High Risk Focus**: Votar pre-populated the IAR with only high value and high risk information assets in the first iteration of the IAR to raise awareness with staff.
- **Awareness and Buy-In**: This approach increased staff buy-in by simplifying the initial process and avoiding the burden of starting from a blank template.

STAGE THREE

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Briefing Session**: Votar conducted a briefing session for all relevant Information Stewards and Custodians.
- **Scheduled Workshops:** MS Teams invitations were sent to all Information Stewards and Custodians.
- **Review Period**: Staff were given 20 working days to review and add input for their respective information assets.
- **Workshops:** Seventeen workshops were conducted with Information Stewards and Custodians to verify data inputs, address questions, and discuss security ratings.

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A successful project with organisation-wide value and team specific benefits

The IAR Project significantly increased staff awareness of their business area's information assets, including storage locations, media formats, and user interactions. Staff discovered asset duplication across various information systems like network drives, OneDrive, MS Outlook, and SharePoint. They also recognised the information security risks associated with their assets, understanding that compromised confidentiality could harm MU's reputation and affect student enrolments.

Additionally, staff gained a clear understanding of what constitutes personal sensitive information and which assets contained sensitive metadata that needed protection to comply with privacy and PRIS legislation.

The IAR Project provided comprehensive training on information risks, security, and privacy (PRIS) for MU's Information Stewards and Custodians. Staff were engaged with the upcoming PRIS reforms and understood the importance of assigning privacy classification labels and sub-labels to their assets. They felt confident in meeting the responsible information sharing provisions of the PRIS legislation.

Organisation Outcomes

Protective Data Security

√ Identifies and assesses security risks to information assets
√ Assigns Information Stewards and Custodians
√ Assigns Information Classification
√ PrioritiseS information security controls
√ Complies with PRIS legislation

Information Management

√ Identifies where information is being kept
√ Sentences records against SROWA's Disposal Authorities
√ Supports legal discovery
√ Supports public release of open data
√ Supports delivery of privacy reform awareness training for staff

Team Specific Outcomes

√ **Risk Management Teams** can identify corporate information risk areas for inclusion in Murdoch University's risk register.

√ **IT Teams** can identify duplicate business systems in use, where to focus cyber security penetration testing exercises, review updates to Murdoch University's Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan.

√ **HR Team** can identify staff working with high-risk information assets for training and recruiting initiatives.

√ **IM Team** can identify weaknesses and improvements for records management practices at MU and implement awareness training programs. More importantly, IT can use the IAR to implement the PRIS legislation by implementing the use of protective markers to manage information privacy requirements.

√ **Governance Team** can understand who the responsible Information Stewards and Information Custodians for MU's information assets are. Also, use the IAR to assist in privacy and FOI queries, and to related services when knowing who to contact.

√ **Procurement** can understand what systems, programs and Apps are already in use at MU.

√ **Student Services** can understand how to direct student queries to the right teams.

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Project Feedback from Organisation-Wide Stakeholders

"Having just started at MU, the IAR Project enabled me to meet the various Information Stewards and Information Custodians which provided an opportunity to introduce myself and my role to them. It also enabled me to have good understanding of current information practices and systems used by the various business areas at MU." **By PRIS Officer (Manager Records and Archives)**

"This exercise was invaluable to capture all critical information assets across Murdoch, attributing business ownership to each of them. This crucial first step created the foundations for every business area to ensure they are classifying their information appropriately based on sensitivity, and then capturing it, handling it, retaining and ultimately disposing of it in a manner appropriate to the classification."
Director, Information Technology Services

"Engaging with Manager Records and Archives on the IAR project was an enlightening experience. His readiness to conduct personalised small group sessions at short notice streamlined our task completion process, while his tailored approach efficiently addressed our specific questions. Notably, his guidance on reviewing document ownership and understanding diverse risk factors was invaluable. Moreover, the project served as a platform to raise awareness about the impending PRIS legislation, introducing key concepts and empowering us with practical tools to navigate forthcoming regulatory changes confidently. I commend Manager Records and Archives and the IAR team for their expertise, flexibility and support."
Associate Director, Student Administration

"The IAR Project will help Murdoch in more than just the PRIS Legislation but give us time to think on what we hold, the value and sensitivity of it. It was a very collegial and efficient process that will create value for the years to come."
Director Research and Innovation.

"The IAR Project has been well planned, applying risk management principles and practices, and being undertaken in an efficient manner engaging with appropriate stakeholders."
Director Audit Risk and Compliance Management

"I was pleasantly surprised at how staff willingly onboarded with this IAR Project after the initial project briefing session by Votar.

I liked how the IAR Project provided an opportunity to create awareness about the upcoming PRIS legislation and prepare Information Stewards and Information Custodians for the implementation of the legislation. It introduced the key concepts underlying the PRIS legislation such as what comprises personal information, introduced terminology like information protective markers, and about information security risk assessments using MU's corporate risk matrix."
By PRIS Champion (University Secretary, Governance)

"I found the process of completing the IAR well structured, and the guidance offered in the workshops was helpful in completing our sections. In addition, using the WAUSDA categories as a starting point was a useful entry into the process, although I would note that they don't deal well with Library information categories. I was pleased to know that the IAR would be used not only for the PRIS implementation, but also for future work in mapping and understanding the University's information structures."
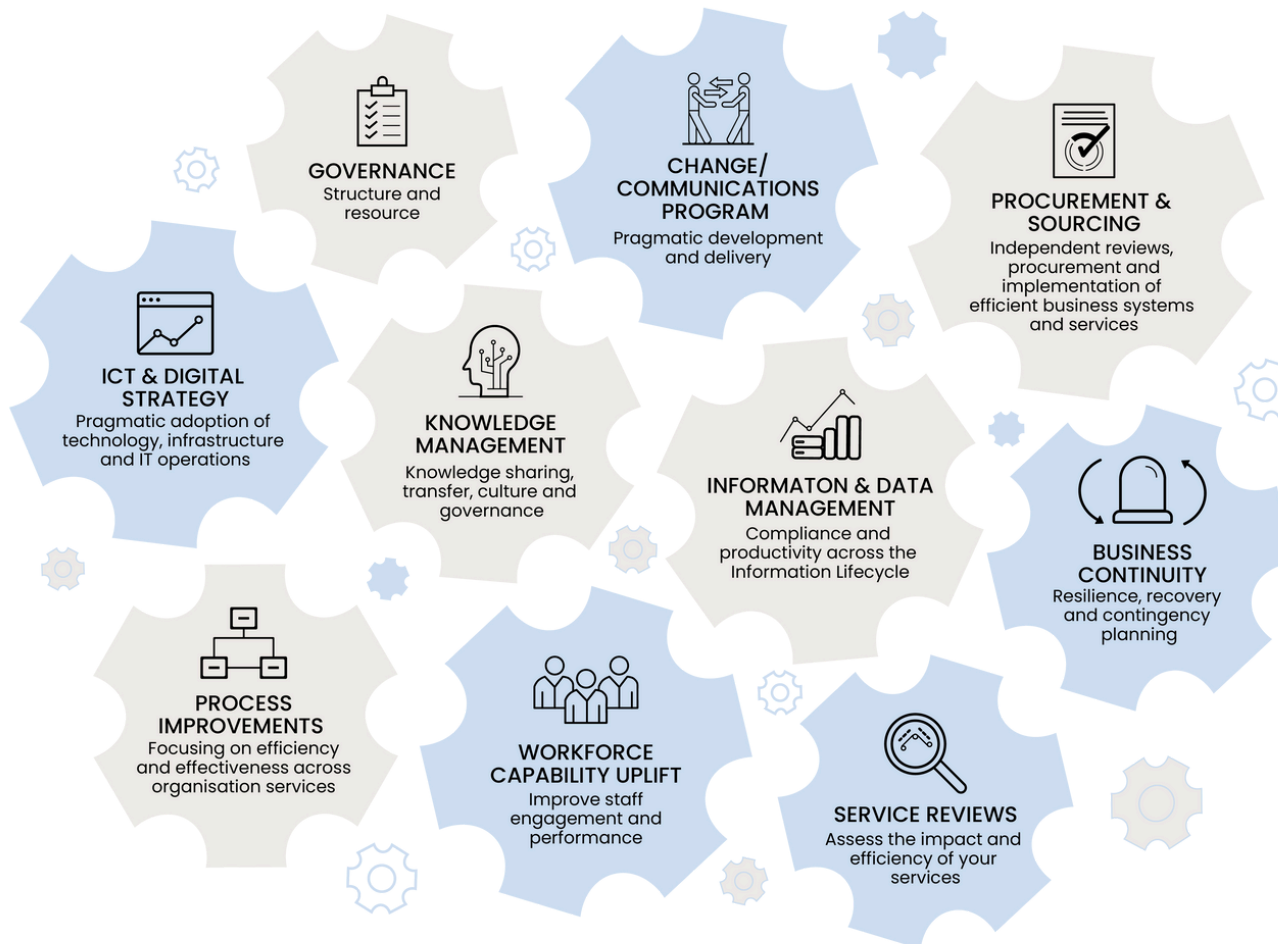**Manager, Resources and Collections, SLS - Library and Knowledge Services**

MU Murdoch University

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Services to Match Your Needs

Our core business product at Votar Partners is delivering business consulting services to our clients through consultation, analysis and reporting using best practice standards and methodologies.

We focus on helping organisations navigate complexity in a reliable, evidence-based manner and this is especially critical during periods of significant change or disruption to service delivery models, be this due to technology, regulatory or funding changes.

Our longevity is based on maintaining a constant understanding and application of current and emerging trends and systems with a specific focus on the following key areas:

GOVERNANCE
Structure and resource

CHANGE/ COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM
Pragmatic development and delivery

PROCUREMENT & SOURCING
Independent reviews, procurement and implementation of efficient business systems and services

ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY
Pragmatic adoption of technology, infrastructure and IT operations

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
Knowledge sharing, transfer, culture and governance

INFORMATON & DATA MANAGEMENT
Compliance and productivity across the Information Lifecycle

BUSINESS CONTINUITY
Resilience, recovery and contingency planning

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS
Focusing on efficiency and effectiveness across organisation services

WORKFORCE CAPABILITY UPLIFT
Improve staff engagement and performance

SERVICE REVIEWS
Assess the impact and efficiency of your services

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Our Team

Delivering these services are a multi-disciplinary consulting team who are client-focused, **experienced and well qualified** technologists, business analysts, accountants and information management professionals.

Votar Partners recruits its consultants not only on their **deep subject matter knowledge** but on their ability to deal with people at all levels throughout an organisation and their advanced levels of communication skills.

Proven Track Record of Success

A distinctive feature of Votar Partners is our aim to **quietly empower our clients** and, rather than steal the limelight, act in a support role to help our clients achieve their own success. For this reason, we don't advertise engagements.

To date we have **successfully delivered practical outcomes** on 1400+ assignments for a growing list of more than 300 clients including local, state and federal government, utilities, health, education and organisations in the not-for-profit and private sectors.

We strive to deliver measurable outcomes to our clients by providing impartial, evidence-based guidance through depth and rigour of analysis.

Turn to Votar

Independent advice you can trust from a client focused, multidisciplinary team.

We have a track record of unquestioned success through the provision of our independent and competitively priced professional consulting services.

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