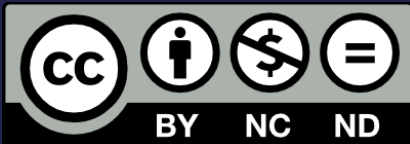JCU – Professional Programs Unit
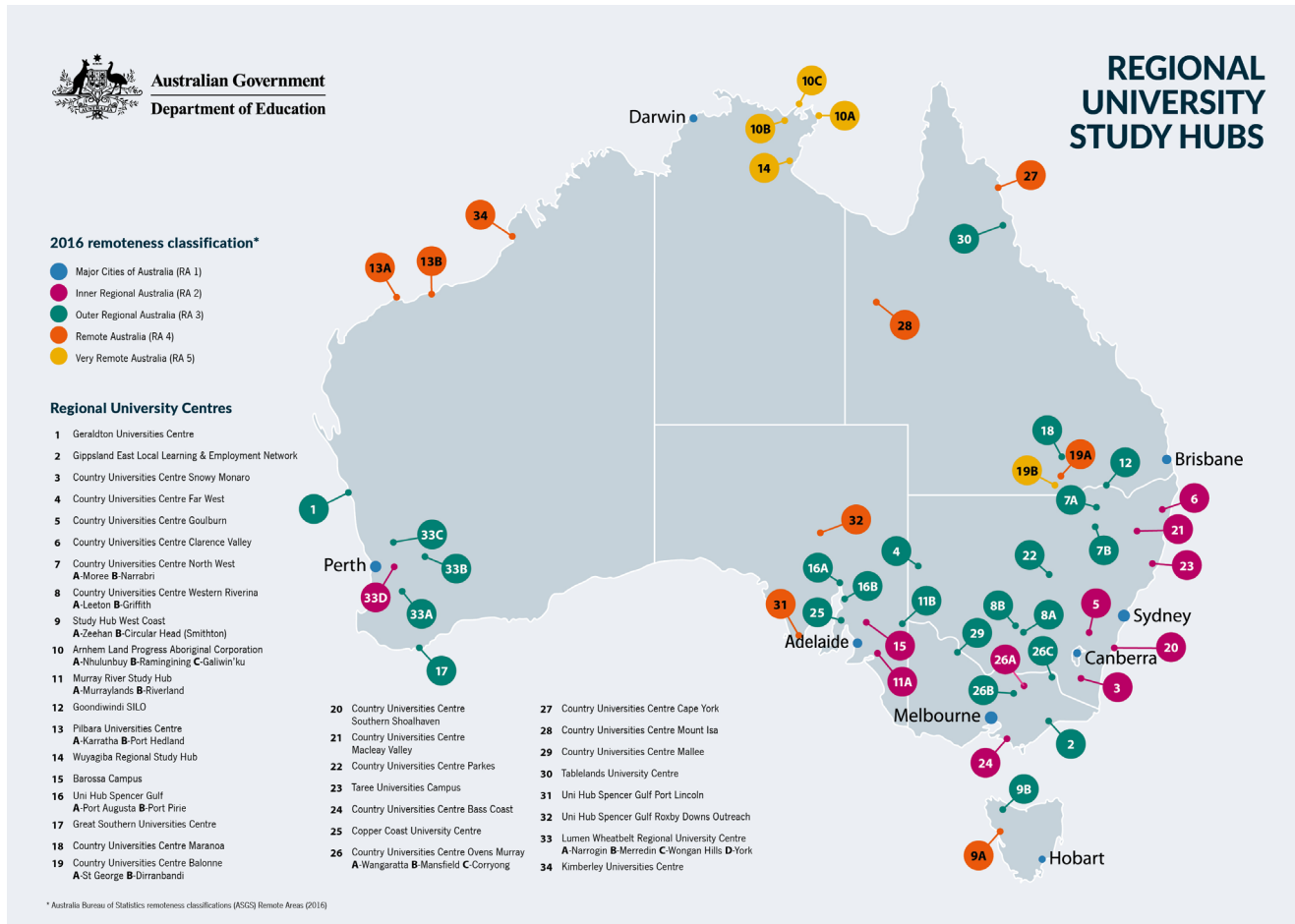
Communities Working Together

How Country and Regional University Centres are Changing Employability in Regional & Rural Australia

Ben Archer

jcu.edu.au

JCU

What are Regional University Centres?

- Not-for-Profit organisations that provide support for students completing university studies online.
  - Dedicated study space with I.T. support (wifi, printing)
  - Support services
    - Counselling
    - Career Support
    - Academic support
- Exist in communities that are geographically isolated.

Impact on Communities

- Regional University Centres exist to help keep students remain in their communities.
  - Provides an option for young people to study without moving to cities.
  - Enables people remaining in their community to have greater access to support when studying.
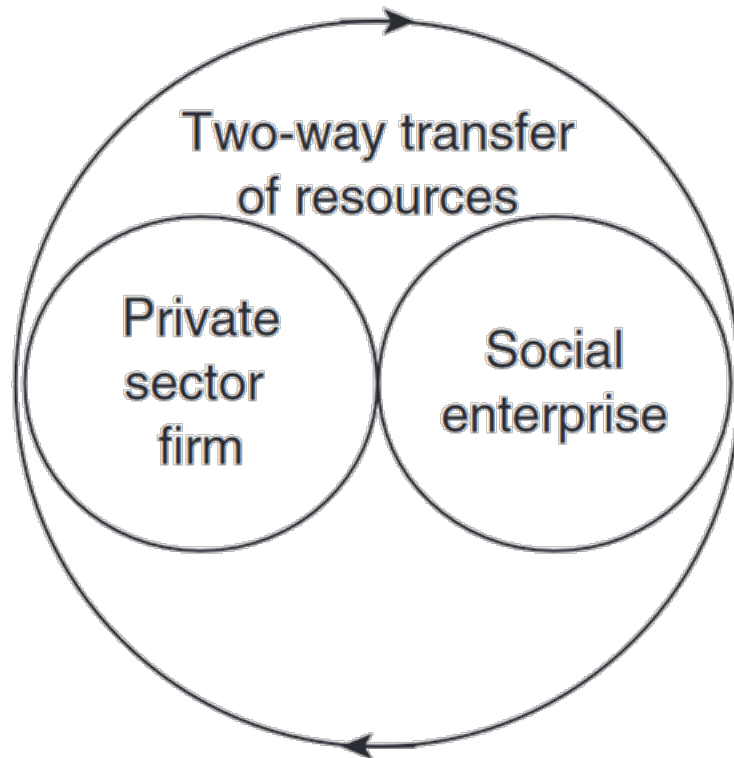   - Can assist in raising aspirations.

JCU

Research – Collaboration and Employment

RQ1: How do regional university centres collaborate with their broader communities?

RQ2: What influence does this collaboration have on the career outcomes of students within these centres?

The 'How' of Collaboration

Thesis

Two-way transfer of resources

Private sector firm

Social enterprise

Exchange value of partner identified/established

Di Domenico et. al. (2009) Dialectical Behavioural Theory

- Private Sector Firm has a skills shortage

- Social Enterprise (University Centre) can assist in filling need by providing additional training OR graduate.

Cadetship Programs

- Dialectical behavioural theory can be used to explain how this theory plays out in cadetship programs established by Regional University Centres.

The 'How' of Collaboration
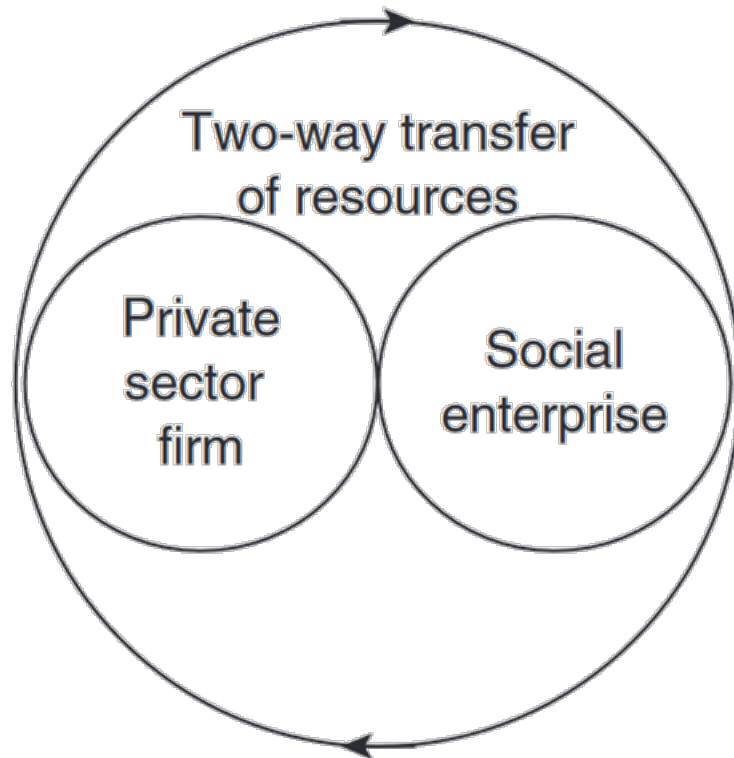
Two-way transfer
of resources

Private
sector
firm

Social
enterprise

Exchange value of partner identified/established

Di Domenico et. al. (2009) Dialectical Behavioural Theory

- Private Sector Firm has a skills shortage

- Social Enterprise (University Centre) can assist in filling need by providing additional training OR graduate.

The 'How' of Collaboration

- The values of the two organisations are different:
  - Private Sector Firm seeks to create value from their employees
    - Cadet and graduate employees are typically low value
  - Regional University Centres seek to increase the number of qualified people in the local region
    - Students may feel conflicted between completing their studies or providing more value to their employers.

Antithesis

Partnership dissonance

Private sector firm

Social enterprise

Collision of value exchange
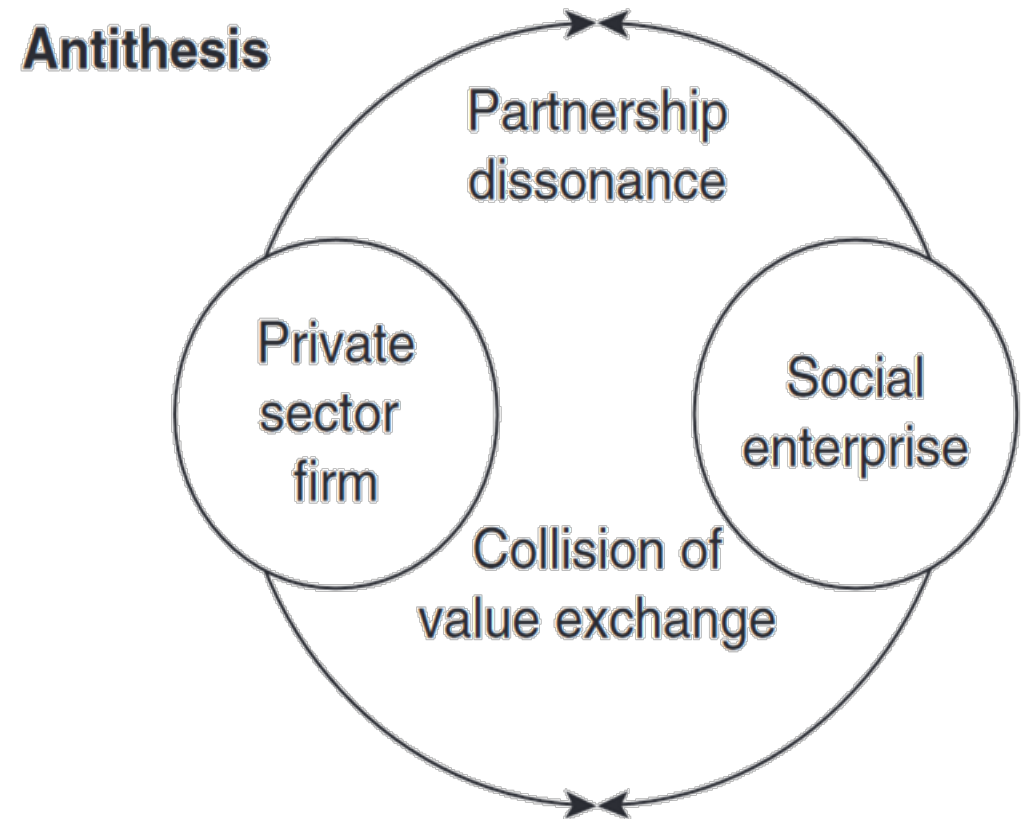
Resolving Dissonance and Values Clashes

Synthesis

Private sector firm

Social enterprise
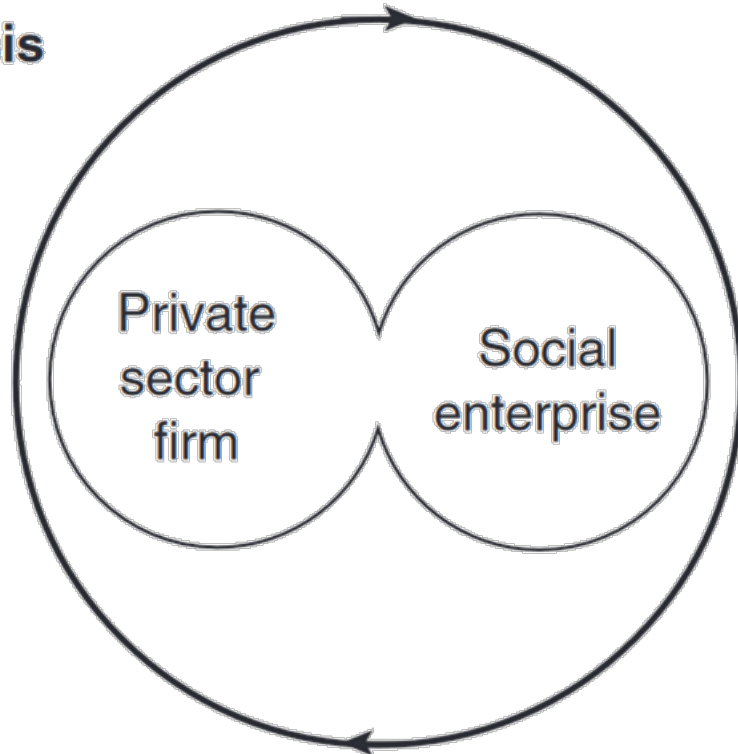
Emergence of new organization/collaborative state

- TUC anticipated these challenges by establishing cadetship agreements with each employer on a student-by-student basis.

- Current program is centred on Accounting, Finance and Human Resources

Key Metrics for Students

- Hours of work reflect the nature of study
  - e.g. A student completing full-time study is restricted to 2 days work per week during term time.

- Students must maintain a 100% pass rate for all their subjects

- Students are paid in accordance with national minimum wage for their industry

- An offer of full-time employment is made to the cadet for a minimum of one year following their graduation.

Impact on Employment

Number of Business/Finance/HR Vacancies: NSW North Coast (2023 – current)

Cadetship program commenced
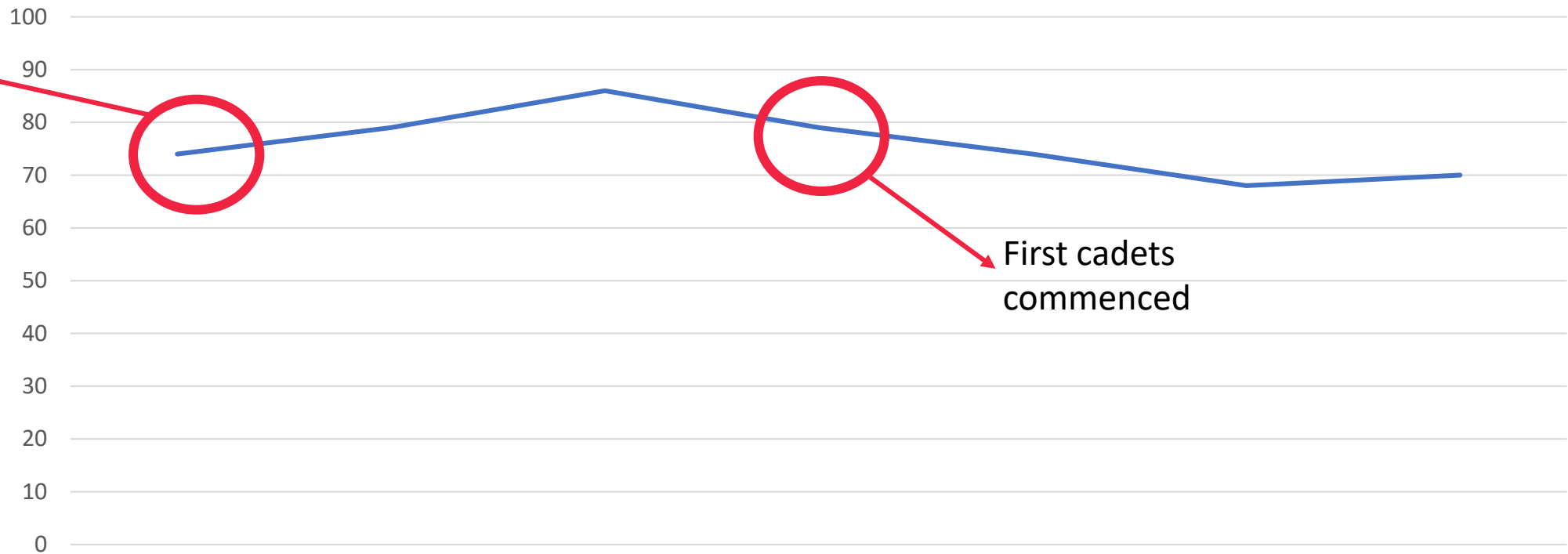
First cadets commenced

	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23
No. of Vacancies	74	79	86	79	74	68	70

No. of Vacancies

JCU

Future Research

- Examine student longevity in the program.
  - Currently students are completing part-time (1 to 2 units per study period).

- Examine whether students remain with their employer post-graduation

- Determine applicability for other industries.