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Higher Education Review: Bringing “Place” back in

Professor Sandra Harding
Vice-Chancellor and President

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The Discussion Paper: Place is important

- Different outlooks for different universities across the nation (p.18)
- Some regions experiencing population growth (p.18)
- Poor engagement by low SES and indigenous students, and regionally-based disadvantaged students being worst off (p.30)
- The particular challenges faced by non-metro institutions; poorer economies of scale and capacity to diversify revenue (p.44)
- Support for excellence in research and T&L wherever it is found (p.50)
- The very significant impact of regionally based institutions (p.55)
- Potential for sharing resources within regions (p.55)

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The Discussion Paper

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- Expresses a top level view – a broad sweep.
- Challenge for the Review to:
 - acknowledge the diversity of populations and circumstances across a vast continent
 - balance conformity with distinctiveness
 - avoid 'on average' assumptions, analysis and solutions

Bringing place back in brings people and communities back in – essential to avoiding the “on average”, and to growing economic, social and cultural capital - and building a nation

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Presentation plan

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- “Place” in historical context – here and abroad
- Nation building, higher education and place
 - The way the world works – external forces
 - Building vibrancy and enterprise
 - The role of higher education – outside the capital cities
- What might this look like?
- Conclusion: Bringing place back in

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Some history

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A petition from the citizens of Ferrara to Prince Leonello in 1442 seeking the establishment of a university there:

“For to begin with its utility, strangers will flock hither from various remote regions, and many scholars will stay here, live upon our bread and wine, and purchase of us clothing and other necessities for human existence, will leave their money in the city, and will not depart hence without great gain to all of us. Moreover our citizens who go else where to acquire an education and take their money there, will have an academy at home where they can learn without expense, and our money will not fly away.”

(quoted from Thorndike, “University records and life in the Middle Ages”,
Columbia University Press, New York 1944)

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“Place” in the US

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- Place was important to locating some US universities and colleges outside of major cities:
 - Originally, to avoid distraction
 - Whole local economies built on these enterprises
 - These universities and colleges are integral to their communities – and industry, eg North Carolina Research Triangle
 - Some are seriously world class

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"Place" in Australia

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- Universities first established in 'capital' cities
- Place emerged as an issue – some universities stewarded regional off-shoots:
 - University of New England (1938, 1954)
 - University of Newcastle (1951, 1965)
 - James Cook University (1961, 1970)
 - The merged Australian National University (1930/1946, 1960)
- CAEs/Institutes of Technology, regional campuses of some metro unis
- Motivated by a mix of vigorous local advocacy and commitment to nation building across a vast continent

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Current context: global yet local

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- Place is important in new and unexpected ways.
- The effect of globalisation (p.1) – competition; connectedness; transport; information and financial flows
- Geographic location is less important for business than ever before, yet more important for people, communities and Governments
- Australia 2020: vast nation, desire to grow regional vibrancy and to diminish disadvantage, requires pursuit of broad based nation building

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Building vibrancy and enterprise

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- Necessary conditions:
 - Physical attributes: location, geography, resources, accessibility, size
- Sufficient conditions:
 - Good governance – stability, tolerance, openness, policy settings that drive appropriate behaviour
 - Cultural capital – the arts and entertainment, good food, coffee, equally classy retail, quality local destinations – for locals as well as visitors, education, innovation, ideas hub
 - Connectedness – locally, within and across industry groups regionally, statewide, nationally, internationally

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Role of Higher Education – in regional Australian context

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- People and place - growing human capital through
 - Programs that are:
 - available to local populations (recognising extreme disadvantage of some regional populations)
 - distinctive and high quality
 - globally relevant – connecting students to the world
 - informed by labour market need
 - Encouraging students to stay in the region – and encouraging others to move to the region

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Role of Higher Education – in regional Australian context

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- Site and catalyst for innovation through:
 - Generating new knowledge
 - Forging connections to the world through high quality scholars, visitors
 - Developing infrastructure (physical and virtual)
 - Being a hub for interaction – transaction zone
 - Working on problems relevant to the region
 - Commercialisation potentials, an attractor for enterprise
 - Working with other scientific and educational assets in the region to increase the vigour of the local economy (and beyond)

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Role of Higher Education – in regional Australian context

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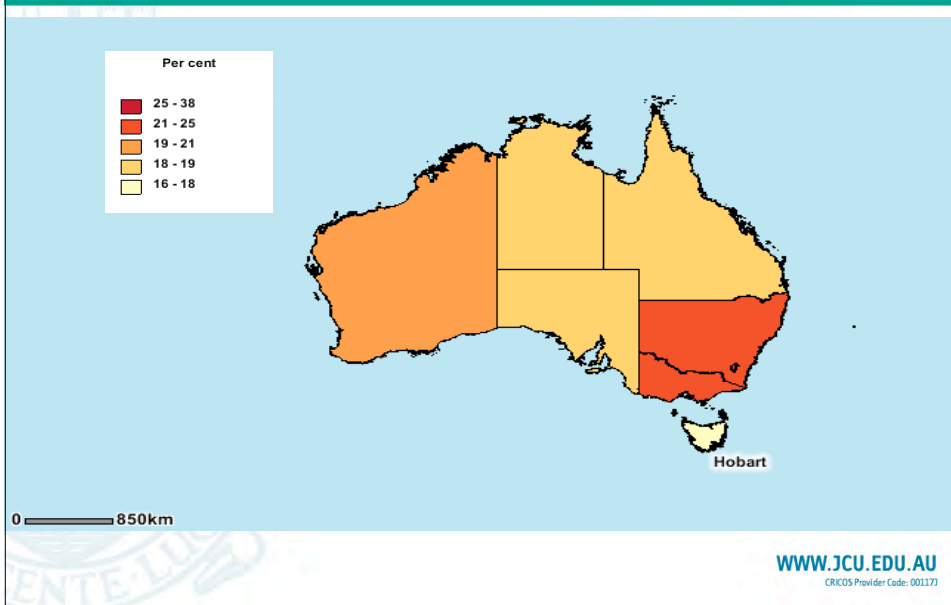


- Institutional impact: communities and place
 - Providers of infrastructure
 - Major employers
 - Supporters of, partners in and advocates for their communities
- Very much institutions in the sociological sense

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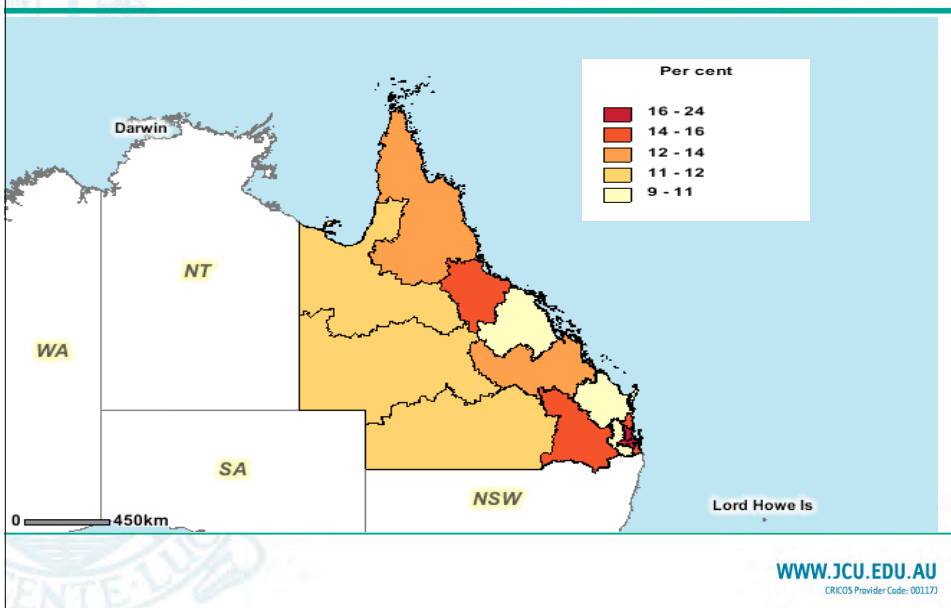
People in labour force with University qualifications 2006

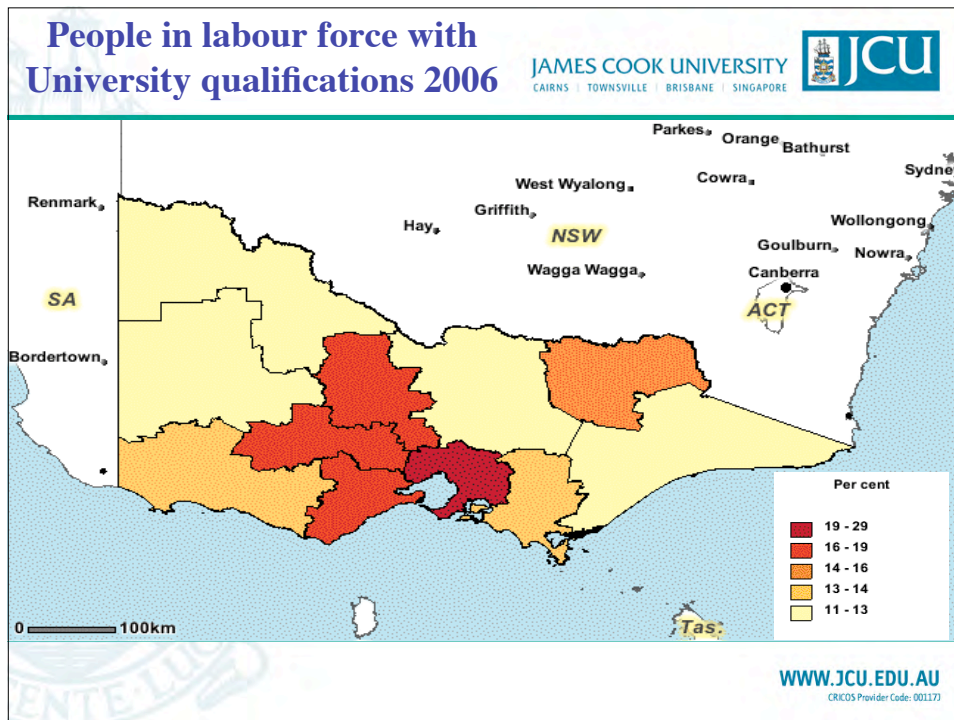
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People in labour force with University qualifications 2006

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What would HE-place informed nation building look like?

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JCU

- **A distinctive mission:** A brighter future for life in the tropics worldwide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference
 - Assets around \$660m; annual revenue around \$280m; approx 1450 staff; 16000 students – program breadth
 - A member of Innovative Research Universities Australia
- **Research intensive:** SJUT top 500; Taiwan HEEAC top 500, 2 Federation Fellows; 2 Rhodes; 11 Fulbrights;
- **Joint ventures** with CSIRO, AIMS, GBRMPA, State and Federal agencies, Foundations, NGOs – our location is our home and our laboratory
- A broad focus on under-served populations – indigenous and engaging with the tropical world

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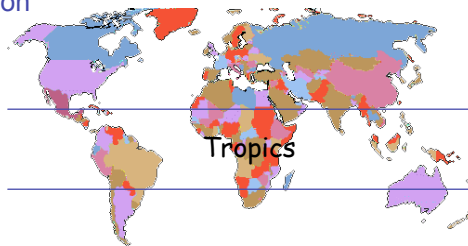
Regional, national and international

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- Approaching one-half of world's landmass
- Approximately 2/3 of world's population
- 50-80% of plant and animal species
- 90% of coral reefs
- 20% of Gross World Product
- Economic, social, environmental and political challenges
- Infant mortality 11-times higher than Australia

The World's Tropics



Australia is the **ONLY** developed country with significant tropical landmass

Australia is **WORLD LEADER** in tropical science, knowledge and innovation

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Bringing place back in: the power of place

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- Place mattered in the past - and it matters now.
- Economic and social vibrancy exists across Australia; broad based nation building is possible
- Higher education has a critical role to play
- A university or simply a campus, (TAFE, ATC, strong schools) are powerful instruments for nation building in regional Australia

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