

Higher education governance for the 21st century

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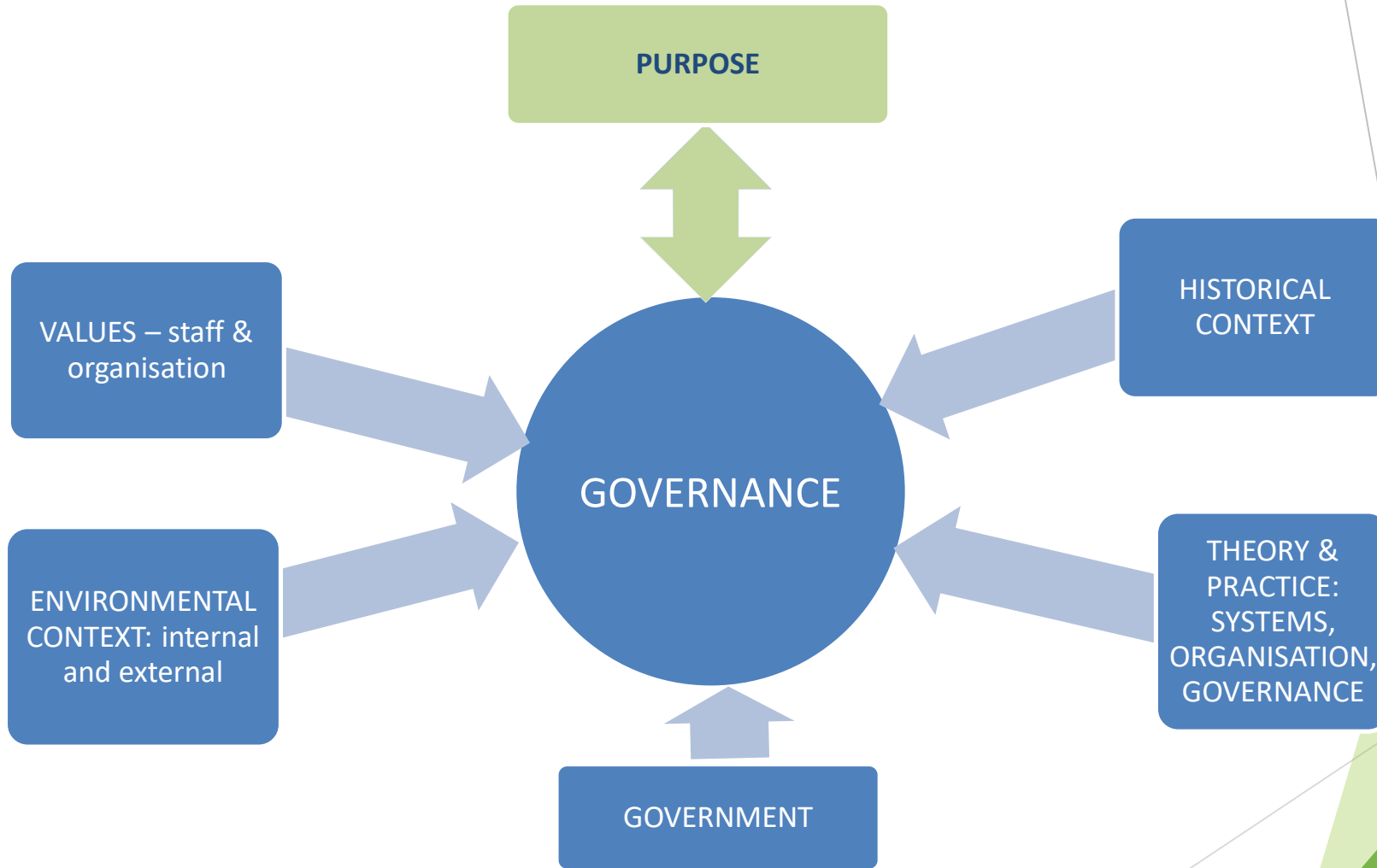
Structure

- ❖ Research pathway
- ❖ Governance - what factors influence governance
- ❖ Findings and Conclusions
- ❖ Proposals for change
- ❖ Questions

The research pathway

- ▶ Question: Are the current governance arrangements in Australia's higher education sector still "fit for purpose"?
- ▶ Evidence
 - ▶ Literature review
 - ▶ History and current environment of Australian higher ed
 - ▶ Theoretical concepts
 - ▶ governance - public sector , corporate, network
 - ▶ systems theory - open, complex adaptive
 - ▶ Organisation theory
 - ▶ Empirical - 45 formal Interviews

Factors influencing governance



What is governance?

- ▶ Governance is the structure of relationships that bring about organisational coherence, authorise policies, plans and decisions, and account for their probity, responsiveness and cost-effectiveness. (Gallagher, 2001, p. 49)
- ▶ Typologies seen in universities - public sector, corporate, network, shared, clinical and academic
- ▶ What does “Good governance” look like?

Good governance principles

United Nations Development Program	European Commission	Lord Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life
1. Legitimacy and Voice	Participation	Selflessness
2. Direction	Coherence	Integrity
3. Performance	Effectiveness	Objectivity
4. Accountability	Accountability	Accountability
5. Fairness	Openness	Openness
		Honesty
		Leadership

Governance of Australia's higher education system - barriers

1. Lacks agreed purpose and lack of trust
2. Policies (the levers of governance) reflect a 'one size fits all' approach;
3. Not fit for purpose - funding dominates; short-term thinking; no collaboration; no alignment
4. Too many unis doing the same thing, competing in the same pool for the same goals.
5. The regulatory definition of "university"
6. Regulator and regulatory arrangements and approach on the improve
7. Strong influence of rankings and accreditation on governance and strategy - both system and university level

University level governance - getting better but....

1. Business model not sustainable: presents a governance challenge
2. Government appointments - problematic; manageable; anachronism
3. Focus on funding, reputation and accountability
4. Homogenous organisations - diversified somewhat but all look the same.
5. Challenge in attracting the **right people** to council - demanding role (time)
6. Dependency on relationship with and information from VC / Executive
7. Sector has a defensive mindset
8. Shared governance - academics not engaged or disengaging
9. All good - it works!... but complicated

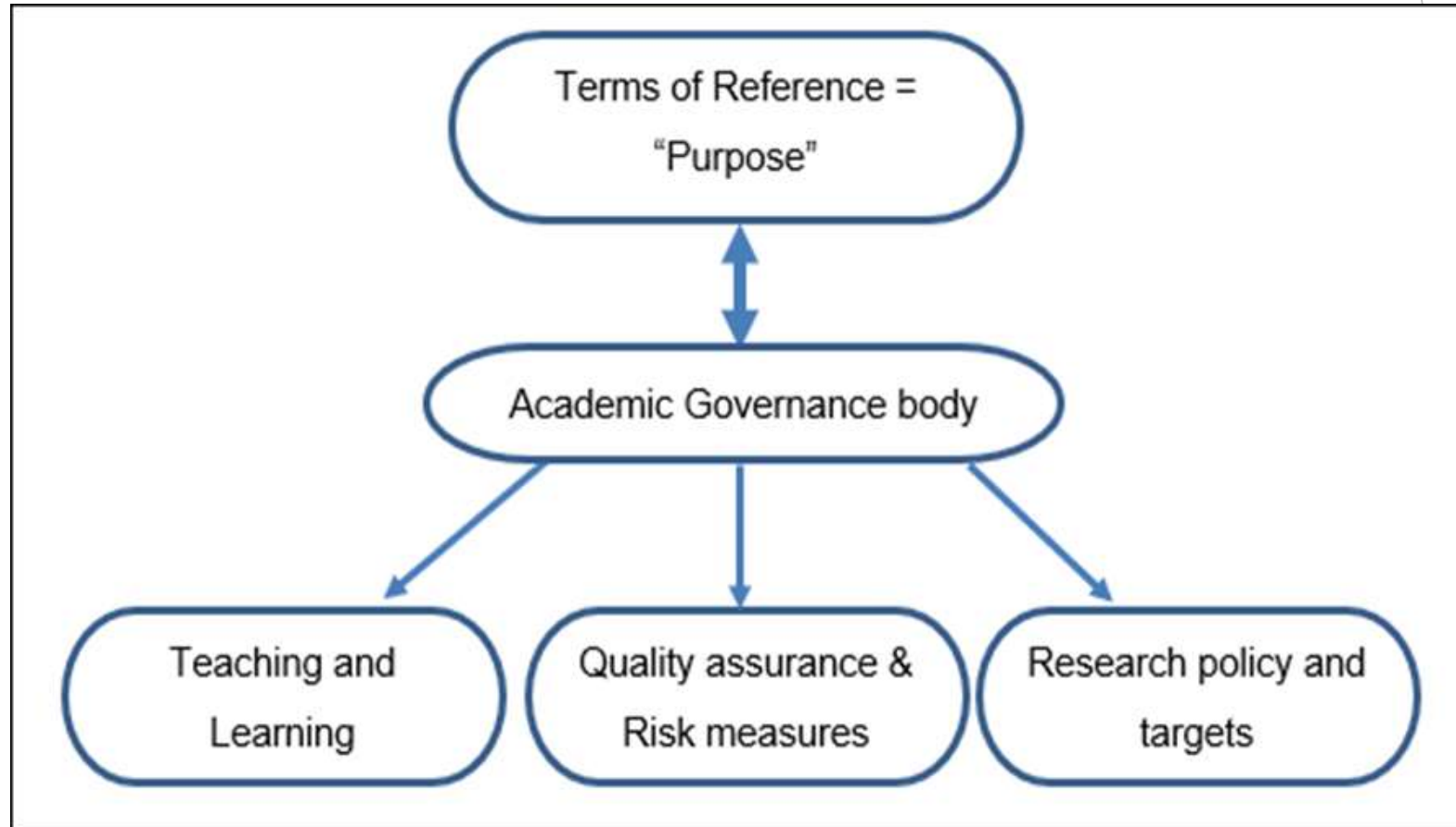
Proposals for change ...system level

- ▶ Proposal 1: Re-define the purpose(s) of Australia's higher education system - what does Australia want from its universities?
- ▶ Proposal 2: Establish a system governance body that brings together the key stakeholders to develop and recommend on strategy and policy;
- ▶ Proposal 3: States to refer all legislative power relating to universities to the Commonwealth - and harmonise the legislative framework

Proposals for change ...institution level

- Drive stronger integration of governance arrangements and approach- “scholarship/performance/conformance” (Carnegie & Tuck, 2010)
- Council: amend legislation to provide more freedom in designing the governance arrangements - remove government appointments
- Academic governance - develop more efficient and effective governance structures that engage key stakeholders

Academic governance model



While we are at it.....

- ▶ The government and the sector need to come together
- ▶ Start redefining the higher education workforce and academic work - institutionally and industrially
- ▶ Less competition and more diversity and co-operation
- ▶ Culture change ... less defensive
- ▶ It is a shared responsibility

