

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUSINESS INCUBATOR SERVICES AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL OF TENANTS

Confirmation of Candidature (Doctor of Philosophy)

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11 May 2017

# About Business incubators (BIs)

BIs: support start-up businesses.

Foster economic and regional development.

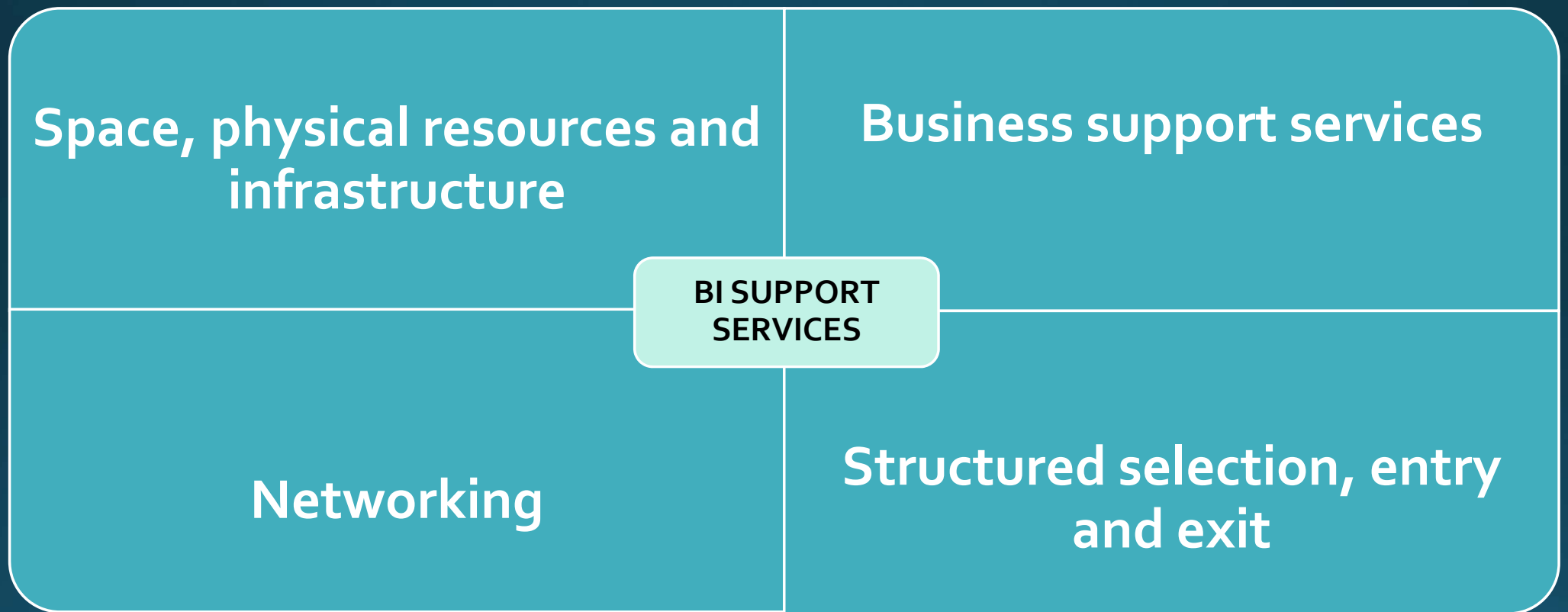
Not for profit organisations.

Established in USA in 1950s.

7,000 incubators world-wide.



# Characteristic services offered at BIs



# BI research

Focus: operations and management.

Gaps in research: incubator tenants.

Recent investigation: BIs may offer psychological benefits to tenants and may influence their psychological capital.

# Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Multi-dimensional; individual's positive psychological state of development.

Higher order construct comprising:

HOPE  
EFFICACY  
RESILIENCE  
OPTIMISM



PsyCap 'HERO WITHIN'

PsyCap: Applied to workplace; positive workplace behaviours, attitudes, performance.

# PsyCap and the HERO within

## OPTIMISM

A positive, realistic approach that leads to success both with current, and future tasks.

## HOPE

Goal focused; having the capacity to re-orientate pathways towards a goal, enabling success.

HERO  
within

## RESILIENCE

Rebounding from set-backs; the ability to achieve - and even exceed - beyond set goals.

## EFFICACY

Having confidence to implement steps for success, even with challenging activities.

# PsyCap interventions

## OPTIMISM

Develop realistic and positive expectations for goal success. Observing others as they plan and achieve their goals (reinforces optimism).

## HOPE

Setting goals, pathways planning; identifying alternative pathways when challenges arise.

HERO  
within

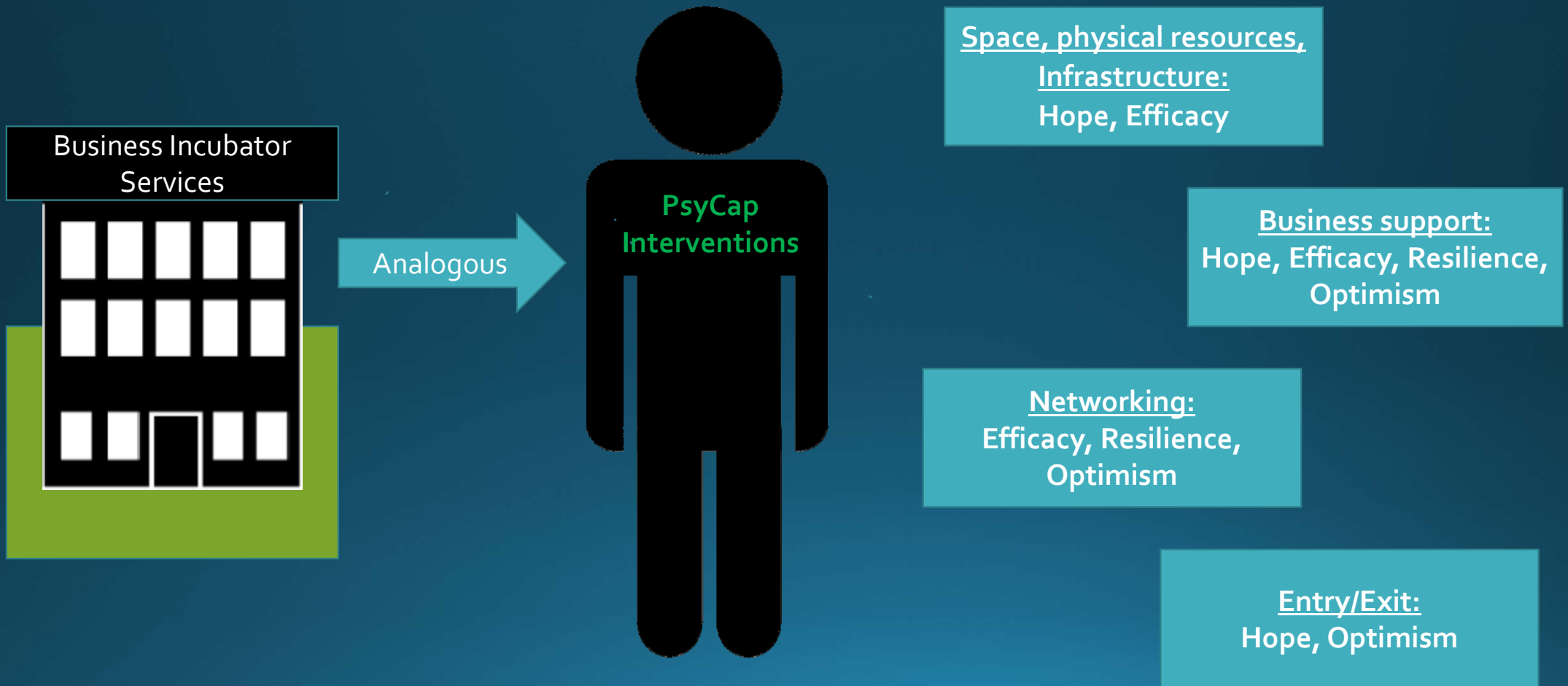
## RESILIENCE

Resources generation (skills; expertise). Focus on emotions and cognitions to address potential adversity.

## EFFICACY

Building confidence and success through mastery and expectation. Modelling, observation, vicarious learning, positive arousal.

# Similarities: BI Characteristic services and PsyCap intervention





# Gaps in BI – PsyCap research

One study (Ford, 2015): relationship may exist between BIs and PsyCap.

Ford explored how BIs serve the psychological needs of tenants.

Inferences from the data: *BIs facilitate positive interactions and ensuing psychological capital.*

Ford's research: Limited.

Research is needed to establish whether there is a relationship between the characteristic services of BIs and tenants' PsyCap.

# Proposed research:

- 1) *Examine whether a relationship exists between the characteristic services of BIs and tenants' PsyCap,*
- 2) *How this relationship manifests over time, and*
- 3) *Whether this relationship is reflected in the narrative experiences of tenants.*

## How?

Positivist research approach

Quantitative methodology

Three studies: mixed methods (surveys; interviews)

# Study 1: Establish the relationship between the BI characteristic services and tenants' PsyCap.

Aim: to investigate whether the four characteristic services of BIs are related to the PsyCap and HERO within of tenants (five hypotheses).

Cross sectional research; Ethics; Pilot

Participants;  $n = 400$

Instruments (online surveys; self-administered)

- Demographic Survey
- Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Method: Contact peak bodies + BI managers  TENANTS

*Duration: 15 minutes*

# Study 2: Examine whether the characteristic services of BIs predict tenants' PsyCap, over time.

Aim: to extend the findings of Study 1 by using a longitudinal research design to examine whether the characteristic services of BIs predict tenants' PsyCap, over time (five hypotheses).

Longitudinal research design: Data from Time 1 (Study 1) and Time 2 (Study 2).

Methods and participants (same method as Study 1; same participants)

- Demographic Survey
- Psychological Capital Questionnaire
- Data collection: 4-6 months following Time 1

*Duration: 15 minutes*

# Study 3: Examine the relationship between the BI characteristic services and tenants' PsyCap through the narrative experiences of tenants

Aim: to examine the relationship between the BI characteristic services on tenants' PsyCap through an exploration of tenants' incubator experiences.

Qualitative data: semi-structured interviews ( $n = 20$ )

Interview questions: Narrative insights from tenants about the relationship between business incubator characteristic services and their PsyCap (eg., supported goals, improved confidence, capacity to respond to challenges).

*Interviews: 1 hour duration*

# Data analysis

## Study 1

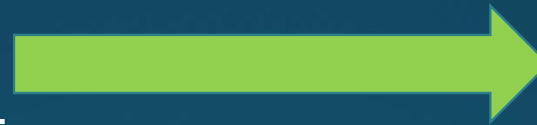
Relationship between BI characteristic services and tenants' PsyCap.



Correlations + multiple regression

## Study 2

Examine whether the BI characteristic services predict tenants' PsyCap, over time.



Multiple regression

## Study 3

Relationship between BI characteristic services and tenants' PsyCap as reflected in tenants narrative experience.



Qualitative data coding & thematic analysis

# Research significance

This research is important and unique:

Robust research design (cross sectional; longitudinal; qualitative).

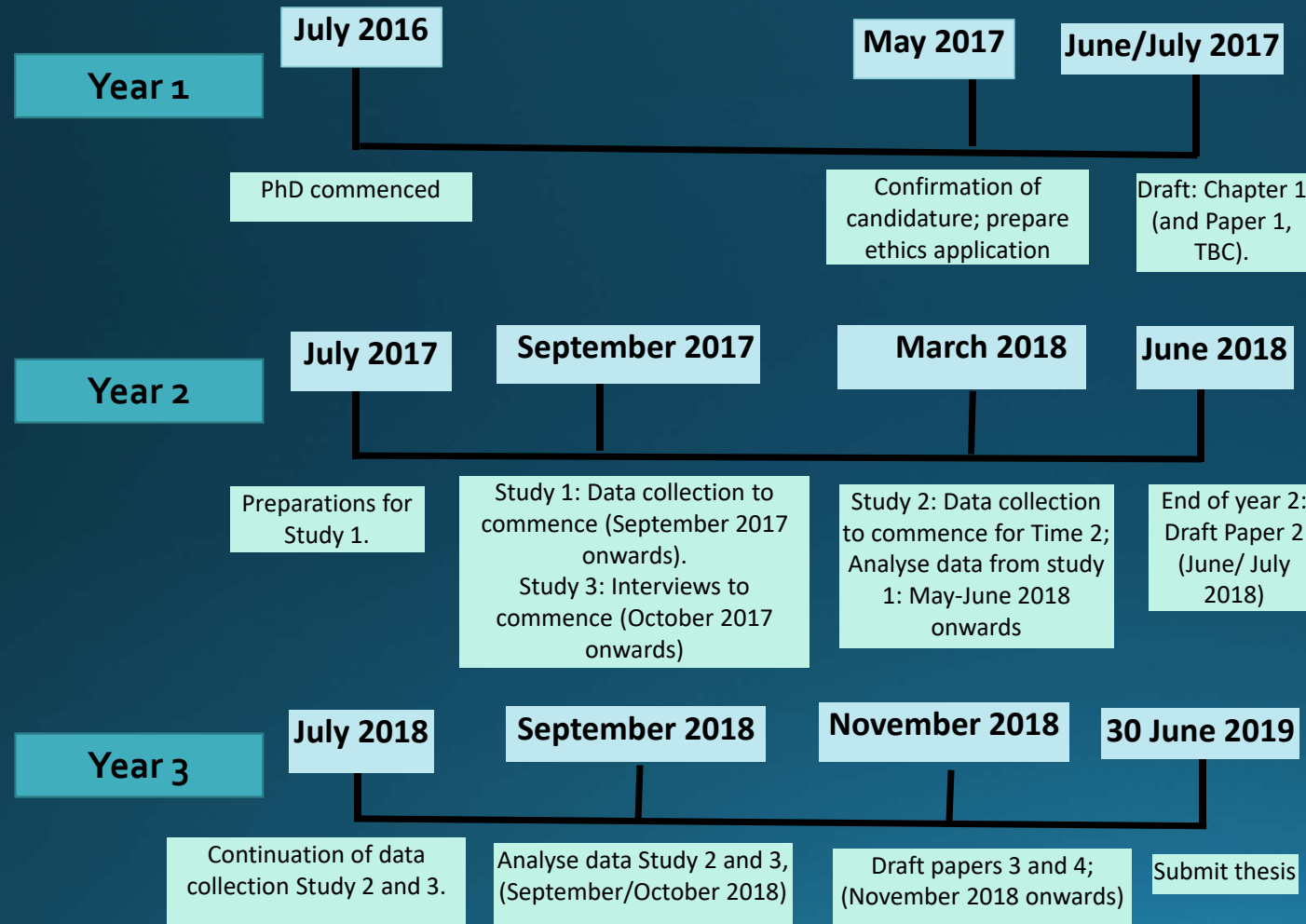
National and international reach.

Places tenants at the centre of BI research (rather than to the side).

**INDUSTRY:** Insights to inform the incubator industry. Research will enable recommendations about how BIs can support tenants positive psychological development.

**SCHOLARLY/RESEARCH:** Extend the application of PsyCap to other work-related domains; longitudinal research.

# Research timeline and publication plan:



## PhD by Publication. Proposed papers:

**Paper 1** (TBC): Review and methods paper. Establishing the need for this research and identifying gaps in BI research about PsyCap and recommending new directions to examine the impact of BI characteristic services on tenants' PsyCap.

**Paper 2:** Reporting on the relationship between the four characteristic services of BIs and tenants' PsyCap from the cross sectional research in Study 1.

**Paper 3:** Reporting on the predictive relationship between the four characteristic services of BIs and tenants' PsyCap from the longitudinal research in Study 2 (time 1 and 2).

**Paper 4:** Reporting on the consistent themes across all three studies about the relationship between the four characteristic services of BIs and tenants' PsyCap.



# Supervisors; Industry Partners

## **Supervisors:**

Dr Angela Murphy (Principal)

Prof Suzanne McLaren

Assoc Prof Helen Thompson

## **Industry partners:**

Melton City Council

With Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence

Questions?