This thesis is dedicated to

My Dear Wife

*Rada*

Darling, I could not have done this without you.
Acknowledgements

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This research studies the interorganisational relationships within Australia's three federated network universities: the University of Western Sydney, Charles Sturt University, and the University of New England; in the period from 1988 to 1993. It examines the history, operation, and performance of the network universities from an Interorganisational Relations perspective drawn from the Management discipline. Interorganisational relations is primarily concerned with how organisations interact with their external environment. It considers the reasons organisations enter into relationships with other organisations, the motivations which determine the permanence of these relations, and the nature of these relations. Interorganisational relations is becoming increasingly important to organisations, both in the public and private sector, as they become aware that they need other organisations in order to survive and succeed. The federated network structure is an organisational structure which allows organisations to form interorganisational relationships under the guise of being a single organisation but allows them to retain some control and management over their own interorganisational activities. The literature's empirical investigation of the interorganisational relationships within federated network structures is still at an embryonic stage. This research proposes that the interorganisational relations within a federated network structure are critical to the performance of the network. It also proposes that the role of the central coordinating agency will contribute to the performance of the federated network structure. This research's fundamental theoretical framework is the federated network structure as a political economy developed by Benson (1975). This research develops the new concept that the political economy has degrees of strength. A strong political economy is where the interorganisational relationship allows member organisations to pursue funds and authority vigorously. A moderate political economy allows members the capacity to pursue funds and authority but this is moderated by a degree of central control. A weak political economy denies members the opportunity to pursue funds and authority in the competitive and combatative sense of the political economy. This research is designed to examine these issues. It aims to contribute to the understanding of relationships within network structures. It finds that the federated network structure is largely defined and explained by the members' pursuit of funds and authority within the network's political economy.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction 1
  1.1 Research Problem 1
  1.2 Methodological Weaknesses 4
  1.3 Contribution of the Research 7
  1.4 Definition of Key Terms 9
  1.5 Methodology 10
  1.6 Propositions and Hypotheses 14
  1.7 Delimitations of the Research 15
  1.8 Outline of the Thesis 16
  1.9 Summary 17

Chapter Two: The Literature Review 18
  2.1 Overview 18
  2.2 A Definition of Interorganisational Relations 19
  2.3 A Definition of Federated Networks 24
  2.4 The Exchange Perspective 36
  2.5 The Resource-Dependency Perspective 45
  2.6 The Mandated Relations Perspective 51
  2.7 Other Dimensions of Interorganisational Relations 56

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Design 62
  3.1 Introduction 62
  3.2 Research Design 63
  3.3 Research Methodology 64
  3.4 Analytical Methods Employed In This Research 67

Chapter Four: Australia's Higher Education Environment: 1988 to 1993 69
  4.1 Introduction 69
  4.2 The Dawkins Reforms 69
  4.3 Consolidations, Amalgamations and Mergers 83
  4.4 The Relationship Between Government and the Higher Education System 86
  4.5 After The White Paper 91

Chapter Five: Historical Context of the Network 92
  5.1 Introduction 92
  5.2 Environmental Uncertainty 93
  5.3 Organisational Exchange 103
  5.4 The Nature of the Mandate 109
  5.5 The Federated Network Structure 128

Chapter Six: The Network in Operation 150
  6.1 Introduction 150
  6.2 Governance Structures Within Federated Networks 151
  6.3 Relationships Within The Network 177
  6.4 Specific Structural Aspects Of The Network 220
Chapter Seven: Performance of the Network 237
7.1 Introduction 237
7.2 Theoretical Overview 238
7.3 Effectiveness of the Network Structure 240
7.4 Efficiency of the Network Structure 261
7.5 Network Performance From An Interorganisational Relations Perspective 299
7.6 Conclusions 311

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations 312
8.1 Introduction 312
8.2 Conclusions 312
8.3 Recommendations 327
8.4 Summary of Implications 341

Bibliography 344