Educating students with disabilities in regional independent Christian schools of Queensland: An analysis of school policies

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Educating students with disabilities in Queensland independent Christian schools
Abstract

In recent decades, in Australia as elsewhere, students with disabilities (SWD) have been increasingly introduced to mainstream schools. This reflects both changes in social attitudes towards young people with a disability and changes in the policy environment for disability and education. At the same time, independent schools in Australia have been growing both in number and rate; but, as Prasser (2009a) has indicated, the numbers of SWD in independent schools are not growing at a proportional rate.

In Christian independent schools, policy issues with regard to SWD collide with central tenets of the Christian faith and the business models in which these schools operate; and these may generate tensions and problems with regard to educating these students. This study sought to explore the issues surrounding educating SWD in a number of regional independent schools in the state of Queensland, Australia. It sought to uncover uniquely Christian approaches to educating SWD by exploring: (a) the perspectives of Principals of these independent Christian schools, (b) tensions between faith and policy and (c) issues surrounding the mainstreaming of SWD.

The research used methods of qualitative data collection and analysis. In-depth interviews with ten Principals of regional independent schools in Queensland (RICSQ) provided the primary form of data collection, complemented by data gained from studies of relevant documents. Data analysis involved two stages: (i) thematic analysis and (ii) discourse analysis. Surprisingly, the findings from these analyses showed that the enrolment of students with disabilities in the RICSQ privileged a secular business discourse above Christian concerns. With regard to the education of SWD, these Principals were clearly facing a dichotomous tension between the expectations of their faith and those of having
to lead sizeable business organisations. In particular, the critical *policy moment* for educating SWD in RICSQ came at the point of enrolment.

The outcomes of the study have highlighted the tensions facing Principals in these schools in educating SWD; and may provide evidence for Principals, school boards and others in the development of policy for SWD in independent schools. They also highlight a need for more widespread, perhaps quantitative, research around the education of SWD in such schools; and this may also have implications for the education of such students in other schools and systems.
Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: __________________________

Date: ______________________________
Acknowledgements

The suggestion for this work was spurred on by Dr. Bill Allen after several unsuccessful entries into research on disability in community organisations. Dr. Allen also gave useful critiques and direction to the work, and guided me through its development and completion. Dr. Ablett, as my other supervisor, inspired me to a new level of research with his sociological knowledge of religion. Thanks also go Ms Bev Hinz and Robyn Kent for their editing work and to the University of the Sunshine Coast for allowing me to study and arranging my support when needed. I would also like to thank the research office staff for their patience with me. My thanks go to my wife who was so kind as to support my study and research, and my daughter who read the thesis and helped me with editing. My acknowledgement goes to the Principals and past Principals of Christian schools who allowed me the time and courtesy of an interview. Ultimately I would like to thank God for the joy of learning something of His kingdom and creation.
Abbreviations

AACS: Australian Association of Christian schools.


ACROD: Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled.


AEU: Australian Education Union.


AGSRC: Average Government School Recurrent Costs.

AIHW: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

AISQ: Association of Independent Schools of Queensland.

CEO: Chief Executive Officer.

CCS: Christian Community Schools.


DOGS: Defence of Government Schools.


DSE: Disability Studies in Education.

ECDP: Early Childhood Development Programs.

ERIC: Education Resources Information Centre.
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ETRF: Queensland the Smart State. Education and Training Reforms for the Future.

FTE: Full-time equivalent.


ICF: International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health.

ICIDH: International Classification of Impairment, Disabilities, and Handicaps.

IDEA: Individual with Disabilities Education Act.

IEP: Individual Education Plans.

EAP: Education Adjustment Profiles.

ISQ: Independent Schools Queensland.

IYDP: International Year of Disabled Persons.

KWIC: Keyword-In-Context.

LNP: Liberal National Party.

LRE: Least restrictive environment.

LRP: Least restrictive practice.

NCISA: National Council of Independent Colleges of Australia.

NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme (Australia).

NIDRR: National Institution on Disability and Rehabilitation.
PWD: People with disabilities.


ROI: Return on Investment.

RICSQ: Regional independent Christian schools of Queensland.

SEP: Special Education Program.

SES: Socio-economic status.

SEU: Special Education Unit.

SWD: Students with disabilities.

USA: United States of America.


UPIAS: The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation.

WHO: World Health Organisation.
Confidentiality

Names of the participants and their schools have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms to ensure their confidentiality. All references that may give clues to their identity have been removed as far as can be known. Any references to names of school websites have also been deleted for confidentiality.

References to secondary documents, such as form web-sites and promotional material, are referred to in absolute minimum because almost any reference, even with a few words, would allow the identification of that school, such as through ‘Google Search’ or another search engine.

The officer for Queensland Policy Network Organisation (QPNO – a pseudonym) for independent schools (referred to in the text by the pseudonym Ms Anna Taylor) was also interviewed to lay out a context for the policies of the RICSQ. The person referred to as Ms Taylor was in charge of funding and ascertainment of SWD.

Style

This thesis is written in accordance with a style as recommended in APA Publication Guide (6th Edition) (2009). One modification, however, is found in Chapters 4 and 5, where quotations from the interviews are presented in italics. This is because there are a large number of these and so identifying and reading them is made easier.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the last three decades of the 20th Century, into the 21st century, there has been a strong movement in Australia towards educating students with disabilities (SWD) in mainstream schools and in classes (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004). This movement has occurred across different levels of schooling and among different types of schools: government, Catholic and independent. The movement reflected changes in social attitudes towards young people with a disability, and changes in the policy environment for disability and education. The 1960s and 1970s had proved to be a period for reshaping public opinion on disability and people with disabilities (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004). Since then State and territory government policies in Australia have increased the proportion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools and have promoted inclusive education for all (Cherney, 2011). In the 1980s and 1990s, education for students with a disability became progressively more inclusive than it had been in the decades before, with fewer children being educated in special schools. Between 1976 and 1993, the number of children with a disability attending special schools in Australia dropped from 25,200 to under 18,000. By 2013 a majority of children with a disability attended regular classes in mainstream schools (65.9%), rather than special classes within mainstream schools (24.3%) or special schools (9.9%) (ABS, 2013a).

The majority of children in special schools had the most severe forms of disability which is to be expected as these environments are specifically set up to cater for children with special needs. Of the 28,900 children with disability attending special schools, 69.0% had a profound core-activity limitation and 16.4% had a severe core-activity limitation. This meant that 85.4% of the entire school population in special schools needed assistance
either all the time or some of the time, with at least one core activity area (self-care, mobility or communication) (ABS, 2009b). By 2002, 81% of children with disabilities attending government schools and 91% of children with disabilities attending non-government schools were enrolled in mainstream rather than special schools (ABS, 2013b).

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of government schools decreased in most states and territories, while the number of non-government, i.e. independent, schools increased. Between 2000 and 2010, government schools decreased by 223 – including a comparatively large drop of 59 schools between 2009 and 2010. Over the same period, the number of non-government schools increased by 91, mainly driven by the rise in numbers of independent schools (79 since 2000). However, there has been a slight decrease in Independent schools since 2008 (from 1,024 to 1,017).

Nevertheless, despite the many positive signs contained in the three previous paragraphs, there is evidence that these increasingly inclusive trends do not apply consistently across all types of schools. In a policy review paper commissioned by Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), Dr. Scott Prasser (Prasser, 2009a) pointed out that the number of students with a disability in independent schools was not proportional to numbers of SWD across the broad population or to enrolments in the sector. One of Prasser’s views in the paper was that independent schools received proportionally less funding for SWD, only about 20 per cent of what the government schools get. He also pointed out the confusion around defining disability across the different states of Australia and the effect this was having on independent schools education of SWD.

Prasser argued there was a clear need for a review of current policies and funding governing students with disabilities and a uniform definition of disabilities across
Australian jurisdictions. Independent Schools Queensland Executive Director David Robertson said there had been a number of Government-initiated reviews of students with disabilities over the past two decades, including a Senate Committee Inquiry in 2002 and a 2007 Monash University study initiated by the Federal Government, but little action on resolving the funding issues.

This study aimed to find out how Independent Christian schools in regional areas of the State of Queensland in Australia determined the educational opportunities for SWD. The research study focussed on Independent Christian schools that exist outside the metropolitan area of Brisbane, and on schools which are independent and non-systemic. This study denotes these schools collectively as Regional Independent Christian Schools in Queensland (RICSQ). The study sought to find out how these schools approached and accommodated demands by parents/carers to educate their children with a disability.

From personal experiences in the area of educating students with a disability, from a deeply held personal conviction in the Christian faith, and from concerns raised by Prasser’s 2009 paper, a primary research question arose which was:

| How do regional independent Christian schools in Queensland deal with the issues of educating students with disabilities? |


1.1 Background Context and Problem of the Research

This section extends the brief introduction to this chapter above, and to the whole study, by outlining the topic and the main issues that are the subject of this study. It presents a context for understanding Christian schooling, and legislative policies and funding. Then it describes the aims of the research and research guiding questions. Finally reasons for this unique study, which included a gap in the literature, are explained. It presents the problems around the definition of disability and the disproportionate numbers of SWD in Christian schools.

1.1.1 Christian schooling in Australia.

Both government and non-government schools have existed in Australia since 1848. While government schools continue to educate the majority of Australian students, over the past decade the number of student enrolments and the number of teaching staff have grown at a faster rate in non-government schools than in government schools (ABS, 2011). Buckingham (2011) stated 1.1 million children (out of a total school population of 3.4 million) were enrolled in non-government schools in Australia. More than 90% of these students were in religious schools.

The umbrella term, ‘independent schools’, includes elite secondary schools, Catholic parish primary and secondary schools, as well as schools and colleges with other religious affiliations, or associated with particular philosophies such as Montessori or Steiner schools. In the history of Australian education where state schools are “free, compulsory, and secular” (Austin, 1961, p. 184), parents who seek education with a religious foundation have to send their children to an independent school.

There has been a long history of Christian involvement in Australian education. Australia’s first schools began as works of the Christian church. Christians, as churches
and as individuals, have always played a significant role in educating young Australians. With the establishment of state-provided education as “free, compulsory, and secular” (Austin, 1961, p. 184), in the late nineteenth-century across all colonies in Australia, Christian schools assumed an independent status and have remained so since then. While Catholic schools developed a systemic approach to school education within their dioceses, other churches’ schools retained a genuine sense of independence which has remained to this day.

Some religious schools are also independent from the governing church body, for example Anglican schools. These schools are known as independent organisations. In this study, the word independent signifies the ability of the school to raise funds external to government funds, and allows the school management to independently determine who may enrol in the school. Each school is a separate entity in that they are independent from each other. These independent schools are managed by church groups and teach a particular faith. Religious schools are made up of two groups: (a) Catholic and (b) independent schools. This study looked at religious or faith based schools which were not systemic, but were independent of each other. Different religious organisations control individual schools which govern themselves. It is these individual RICSQ that this study focussed on.
Figure 1.1. Diagram of 3 school sectors in Queensland, Australia. This figure illustrates the position of RICSQ in the landscape of Queensland schooling.
Australia’s Christian education has developed diverse approaches and traditions. Within the broad definition of Christian education, there is also diversity of tradition. The last three decades have seen steady and solid growth in these affordable, local, faith-based schools. Figures from the (Australian) Government Productivity Commission have revealed that independent schooling in Queensland is the fastest growing education sector in the country (AGPC, 2012). Christian schooling gives parents a choice in schooling as part of the diversity in education in Australia.

Furthermore, fundamentalist and evangelical Christianity has also been growing in popularity in Australia, concurrent with the ascendancy of the new Christian school (Symes & Gulson, 2005). The outcome of this growth in Christianity has been the rise of Christian schools, with a huge growth in Christian schools since the 1960s. Peter Crimmins, the Executive Officer Australian Associations of Christian Schools (AACS), representing 253 Protestant Christian schools across Australia, said that, from 1991 to 2002, the number of SWD increased in independent non-government schools by 250 per cent (Crimmins, 2004). In 1996, 28% of fundamentalist Christian students attended independent schools, increasing to 40% in 2006 (Buckingham, 2010). While the number of government schools in Queensland has decreased, the number of non-government religious schools has increased (ABS, 2010).

A significant factor in this study is the funding. First income for independent schools comes from a number of sources. Parents pay fees usually set by the governing bodies of the schools. Secondly the major source which may comprise over thirty per cent of income comes from government funding – Commonwealth and State. Thirdly older longer established schools have income streams from investments and bequests. This is not a feature of the schools in this study.
Funding for students with a disability became a central theme in this study, as the findings will reveal. Prasser’s paper (2009a) made a connection between the extent of funding for SWD and the number of SWD enrolled in independent schools. At the time, Prasser said that he did not believe that the apparent lack of funding for SWD would be a causal factor in enrolments, but the issue is significant. Funding for all students for independent Christian schools comes from two sources – the Commonwealth and the State governments. This funding is adequate for most school resources and general students but it is deemed to be insufficient for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities receive less than 20 per cent of the cost of their education (Prasser, 2009a); and this presents problems for the Principals of RICSQ, and parents who wish to enrol their children with disabilities in these school.
1.2 Aims

This research aimed to develop empirically-derived understandings of how RICSQ develop and carry out policies with regard to SWD. The aims of this research are: to add to the knowledge of Christian education of SWD by firstly looking at policies, secondly at the role of defining SWD, and thirdly at practical issues associated with educating SWD.

An important aim was to determine if the needs and rights of SWD are being met by examining what the schools are doing for SWD. These questions include the needs of SWD in RICSQ, and educating SWD in RICSQ. A second aim of the research was to inform policy makers and educators about what the Christian organisations are doing for SWD and how they see their role in helping SWD. The research aimed to develop some understanding around RICSQ perspective on disability, and the understanding of disability by principals.

A further aim was to determine if definitions of disability held by Principals had a noticeable effect on school policies. A second aim was to determine the impact of funding models on schools’ approaches to educating SWD.
1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the aims a principal research question and several research guiding questions were formulated. The primary research question arose from this brief introduction to the problem and a more extensive analysis of the problems including an extensive literature review. The primary research question was:

How do regional independent Christian schools in Queensland deal with the issues of educating students with disabilities?

Three secondary research questions, along the lines suggested by O’Donoghue (2007), stemmed from this leading research question. These research questions were important in developing the empirical research, and featured in the chapters that present the findings and the discussion in Chapter 7. Further sub-questions which were important in the data collection and analysis phases of the research arose during the investigation and were developed to guide in the interview of Principals.

They were selected as the research participants because they were identified as the formulators, interpreters and exponents of policy in these schools, and were seen as the principal conduits of different influences and directions on policy. The first of these sets of questions revolved around the Principals of these schools. The second set of questions revolved around the policies themselves for students with a disability. The third set of questions looked at the issues that have emerged in these schools for students with a disability.

Research guiding question (a): How do Principals in RICSQ define students with a disability (SWD)?

- What are the theological perspectives of the Principals of RICSQ on disability?
• What are Principals’ understandings of disability?
• Are there common definitions of SWD between RICSQ, and how does this impact on the approaches to educating SWD within?

Research guiding question (b): What are the policies, formal and informal, that guide RICSQ in their education of SWD?
• Are Christian schools’ policies inclusive of all SWD?
• In the last two decades, what changes have occurred in the policies for education of SWD in RICSQ?
• What policies guide schools in their decisions about educating SWD in RICSQ?

Research guiding question (c): What are the issues that RICSQ face in educating SWD in practice?
• What are the ideological (theological, social, medical, legal, or economic) issues that influence school based policies in their education of SWD?
• Which of these issues influences educating SWD the most and why?
• What are the needs of SWD as identified by the school leaders in RICSQ?
• Are the needs of SWD in RICSQ being met?

The secondary questions were the basis of the interview schedule to support and draw out answers to the main research question: How do regional independent Christian schools in Queensland deal with the issues of educating students with disabilities? They helped construct a framework for interviewing RICSQ Principals. This research initially sought to analyse the response of Principals of RICSQ to the policies of disability education in Queensland in order to provide a deeper understanding of the Christian perspective of disability in general and specifically of educating SWD in RICSQ.
Therefore included in the aims of the research was the need to have questions answered about any ideological (theological, social, medical, legal or economic) issues that influenced principals in RICSQ policies in their education of SWD. Which area impacted educating SWD the most, and why? This research drew attention to the issues that RICSQ faced in educating SWD in the day-to-day routines by interviewing Principals and exploring their experiences. The study aimed to clarify RICSQ policy on educating SWD or initiate and shape the debate, and asked if there is a need for a biblical framework to guide policies for educating SWD, and one that challenges Christians to think more deeply about their involvement in the education of SWD.
1.4 Reasons for and the significance of the study

The inspiration for this investigation was a personal interest in young people with disabilities, and a Christian faith. An original idea was to research healing and spirituality in the lives of people with disabilities. This research direction was changed to focus on SWD in Christian schools. This research aim was to analyse the issues faced by local Christian schools in educating students with disabilities (SWD). However, the instructional processes for educating SWD in RICSQ were not uncovered. Surprisingly a major difficulty uncovered was the funding difference for SWD in a government school compared with that in a Christian school. Various Christian groups revealed this cause for conflict in open letters to the Queensland Government. The research uncovered a barrier that deterred many Christian schools who may wish to enrol students with disabilities. How these schools dealt with this funding shortfall became a central focus of the research.

The research appeared to be necessary for three main reasons.

(a) A review of the literature discovered a glaring deficiency around the educating of SWD in regional independent schools in Queensland and Australia, more broadly.

(b) There were issues that were peculiar to Christian schools: (a) disproportionately fewer SWD in Christian schools (b) issues of funding for these students and (c) the possibility of elitism and discrimination in Christian schools.

(c) Further to these gaps in the literature identified above was the complexity of defining disability (Kaplan, 2004). Each of these is now explored in more detail.
1.4.1 A gap in the literature and the uniqueness of the research

This research is unique in that it focuses on independent Protestant schools in the local region of the Sunshine Coast, which exist outside the systemic schools. It explores issues of funding, and the numbers of students with disabilities (SWD) in regional independent schools of Queensland (RICSQ).

In the database ERIC, under the search name of ‘history of Christian special education’, there were only four references. The search found only one reference to ‘special education’ in Victoria. There was no literature available on Christian special education. The same search in Pro Quest Education journals found no results. The keywords of ‘special education and religious schools’ were entered with one result. A search for ‘Christian schools’ in Bb multi-search found nothing, and a search for ‘Christian schools’ found only three results. A further search for ‘faith schools and disabilities’ failed to find any results. The term ‘faith and disabilities’ returned one result while the terms, ‘students with disabilities and faith’, and ‘private schools and disabilities’ returned no results. ‘Religious education and disabilities’ turned up one result, while ‘special education and faith’ produced only two results. A limited search of databases for ‘Christian education of SWD’ provided no results. One study was found that researched the history of special education in conservative Christian schools in America (Craig, 2010).

Overall, Christian education has expanded rapidly and was a fertile area for research (Striepe & Clarke, 2009). The significance of this research was that it adds to and compares the existing empirical literature that informs the policy for SWD, especially in regional Queensland, and developed original and substantive theory in an area that was sparsely researched. There were only two research dissertations, Curry (1999) and Sheldon (1997), which explored the issue of educating SWD in an Australian Christian
environment. In addition, there was only one investigation into the attitudes of principals in both government and non-government schools relating to SWD (Bailey & du Plessis, 1998).

Bailey and du Plessis (1998) examined the support policies and provisions for students experiencing learning difficulties in five Protestant, independent, secondary girls’ schools in Victoria. A multiple case study, utilising special teacher interviews and surveys of students’ parents, was carried out. The justification for the study lay in the important role of school principals in implementing social justice strategies, together with the need to focus on attitudes toward inclusion, as opposed to mainstreaming or integration. The approach to inclusion taken was the placement of students with disabilities and special needs in classrooms with children who do not have such disabilities or needs, together with the provision of support for the included student. One of the recommendations was for further theological research to be undertaken into the religious and social responsibilities of church-founded schools.

Striepe and Clarke (2009) agree with Bailley and du Plessis (1998) that faith-based schools are an important subject for research. Political, market and historical forces within Australia have produced a supportive environment for creating a new marketplace for schools, including those that are affiliated with a range of different faiths. Indeed, this sector has now become a significant feature of the Australian educational landscape. This thesis argues that the increasing significance of religious schools in combination with their complexity, distinctiveness, and controversy made them a key area for research, particularly with regard to the education of an important minority group-SWD, and that this research should be a priority (Striepe & Clarke, 2009).
1.4.2. Disproportionate number of SWD and issues of enrolment.

The issue of the proportion of SWD in Christian schools was also significant and suggested a need for further research. Prasser (2009a) argued that the proportions were low due partly to the independent sector receiving less than 20 per cent of the funding allocated to the same SWD if they attended a state school. In Australia Dowling (2007) was critical of the funding system for schools and called for greater transparency. Although non-government schools educate around one third of students, they enrol less than ten per cent of Indigenous students as well as very low numbers of students with a disability (Dowling, 2007). In the literature from the USA, there were similar questions around why there were less SWD in faith-based schools, especially when these schools should treat SWD equally with dignity and respect.

At the time of this research there were several research papers on funding issues of SWD in Christian schooling in the USA (Bassett, 2008) but none in Australia. A reason for the research was to understand parents’ choice to enrol their children with disabilities in RICSQ and the tensions around policies that these choices generate. By way of understanding this issue it looked at the Principals’ knowledge of SWD in RICSQ and the social meaning these professionals attach to their understanding of disability, using an interpretative, qualitative methodology.

1.4.3 The complexity of definition of disabilities.

This research found there were numerous models of disability, and a wide range of perspectives among Principals on the definition of disability. Relating to the problem of definition, this study recognised a need for documenting and understanding the Principal’s perception of disability, which is perhaps a foundation for the implementation of policy. The research focused on the policy process and the role of individuals in this
process, and the decisions that are made. Thus, there was a need to develop a conceptual framework or map concerned with the issue of SWD, and policies, organisational control and regulations.
1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the background and context of the research, and mapped out the guiding questions and the field of the research subject. A gap in the literature around educating students with disabilities (SWD) in Christian education, and particularly in regional independent Christian education in Queensland (RICSQ), was uncovered. The complexity of defining disability and the perspectives of Principals on disability was a central focus of this research, which contributes to the development of empirically-derived studies of RICSQ education of SWD. Driving this research was the researcher’s passion for educating SWD within a Christian worldview.

The research direction focussed on the response of RICSQ to enrolling and educating SWD. Some questions about these religious organisations and the extent to which they include SWD, and overall, the responsibility of RICSQ towards SWD, needed to be answered.

The literature reviewed revealed that various authors of literature on disability had also discussed a difficulty in defining disability (Crimmins, 2003; Fulcher, 1989; Jeon & Haider-Markel, 2001; Prasser, 2009b). The numerous and diverse definitions of disability needed to be addressed. The study reviewed the literature on the difficulty of defining disability and the conflicting models of disability. There was little or no research literature available on this issue in Christian education, and because of the large and rapid growth of Christian independent schools, it was necessary to fill this gap in the literature.
1.6 The Thesis in Overview

The study is developed in the following 7 chapters. Chapter 2 explores the literature relevant to the problem. This includes defining disability, as a background for understanding the issues of educating SWD in RICSQ; it examined global issues around educating SWD. It then looked at the literature around policies of Queensland independent Christian schools.

Chapter 3 set out the research design. It was organised into two parts, based on what Crotty (1998) called the “scaffold” of the design (pp. 1-2). The first part outlined the conceptualisation of the study. The second part detailed the technical aspects of the data collection methods and data analysis, its design and its implementation. The research made use of interviews to uncover data from Principals of RICSQ. Discourse analysis focussed on the socio-cultural and political context of the text and talk (Tannen, 1982) of the Principals of RICSQ.

The data collection methods of the study were twofold: in-depth interviews and document analysis. The research methods attempted to uncover the opinions, beliefs, understandings, awareness, and problems of educating SWD in RICSQ largely through the statements of Principals of RICSQ. Data analysis uncovered two different processes which contributed to the quality of the study. One was thematic analysis while the other was discourse analysis.

Chapters 4 and 5 presented the findings from the data and discuss how the Principals speak about the education of SWD. Chapter 4 presented the findings from a thematic analysis, while Chapter 5 presented the findings from the discourse analysis. The major themes that emerged from the data analysis were complemented with a discussion of the discourses in the interviews. Connections with the literature were made in Chapters 6 and
7. Chapter 7 explored the importance of the findings. Re-problematisation allowed the researcher to clarify what Principals in RICSQ understood about disability, and educating SWD in a Christian school. The last and final chapter concluded with reflections on what the research has uncovered and proposed some implications of the study. It summarised the specific contribution of the research and makes some recommendations.
Chapter 2: Literature Review: defining disability and exploring the changing context of disability.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the available literature and identify gaps in existing knowledge. The literature review begins with the confusion around defining disability; and then looks at the changing policies for special education globally, as well as in Queensland, Australia. Principals’ perspectives on disability or construction of disability may influence their policies and interpretation of policies and for this reason the literature on the issues surrounding a definition of disability was considered paramount.

The idea of ‘models’ of disability is useful for clarifying these perspectives. This literature review explores many different models of disability, and the implication of adhering to these models, as well as the literature available on the education of SWD in Christian schools.

Then a review of the changing contexts of disability is carried out. This includes a history of education for SWD. Important concepts such as ‘inclusion’ and ‘least restrictive environment’ and ‘social justice’ are reviewed. Several important Acts of Parliament are considered in relation to disability and social justice. Legislative policies and funding of non-government schools in Australia are reviewed. Literature around Christian education is examined and the landscape of schools is described and mapped out so as to identify where RICSQ are situated. Finally the literature around the education of SWD in Christian schools is reviewed and funding practices explained.

The first part of the literature review considered several themes, the first of which was definitions, or models of disability. Although there were many models of disability referred to in the literature, the four considered important for this study were the religious,
medical, social and ableist models. The relevant literature for this study was subsequently reviewed. First, definitions or models of disability were reviewed.

Clarifying the definition of disability was useful to understand the policies in RICSQ for educating SWD and add to the knowledge base about SWD in RICSQ. Mitra (2006) argued that there is no consensus on what constitutes disability. There were a variety of different models of disability, and each contributed to an overall understanding of disability; however, there was no consensus on a definition of disability. Olyan (2008) highlighted the growth in disability studies and explained that the definition of disability was highly contested. This very important area has been the subject of much research recently but it has not been used as a framework for perspectives of educators in Christian education. There was a large gap in the research literature about this important subject.

The background of the problem of defining disability in order to address issues in educating students with disabilities (SWD) in RICSQ was reviewed. Disability has received increased attention across all academic disciplines. Barnes, Mercer, and Shakespeare (1999) identified an increase in disability studies courses and literature about disability. There were many different approaches to defining disability.
2.1 Definition of Disability

Understanding the complexity of defining disability was a key to researching how RICSQ educate SWD. The problems associated with the definition of a person with a disability, and how persons with disabilities perceive themselves was complex (Kaplan, 2004). Reseine and Fifield (1992) maintained that disability was an area that was difficult to define and measure. Triano (2003) discussed the naming of people with a disability by the dominant culture in many scenarios. Her response to these definitions was to define disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity that people living with disabilities can take pride in. She said:

I believe the barrier to be overcome is not my disability; it is societal oppression and discrimination based on biological differences (such as disability, sex, race, age, sexuality, etc.). (Triano, 2003, para.15)

The range of literature available encompassed many models of disability. Kaplan (2004) wrote that disability scholars subscribed to four models of disability (moral, medical, rehabilitation and disability models); and, although these reflected a broad consensus of definitions with regard to disability, other scholars have identified some other models. Each model of disability has its own unique definition of disability. However, this literature review was limited to the religious or moral, medical, social and ableist models. The medical and social models were the most prevalent and accepted models of disability in the literature (Barnes et al., 1999; Lutz & Bowers 2003; Speece & Harry, 1997). Barnes et al (1999, p. 20) referred to “A tale of two models” reinforcing the medical and the social models of disability as being fundamental to the definition of disability.
2.1.1 Religious model of disability.

Olyan (2008) highlighted the growth in disability studies and explained that the definition of disability is highly contested. Olyan’s description of how PWD were treated in biblical times did not define disability, but provided a rich picture of the attitudes and barriers constructed by the society in biblical times. Biblical texts appeared to stigmatise or marginalise the disabled through a variety of strategies, such as characterising them as weak, vulnerable, inferior, or associated with other disabled individuals (Olyan, 2008).

Clapton and Fitzgerald (2009), Covey (2005), and Kaplan (2004), all acknowledged a moral or religious model. The religious model was based on Jewish and Christian writings. Kaplan preferred to call the ‘religious’ model the ‘moral’ model, and referred to two periods of treatment in the history of Christianity. He described the first phase, when there was a stigma attached to disability, and people with disability were considered impure. Covey (2005) described the religious model in detail in his treatment of disability in western Christianity. Christianity has two traditions of interpreting PWD. The older tradition viewed disability as the result of sin. This tradition punished, separated, and restricted PWD. It barred them from full participation in the Church and its rituals.

However, as Christianity developed, a second tradition emerged where God was seen as accepting everyone and where PWD needed compassion. The second tradition saw PWD as representing opportunities for the faithful to do charitable works. Christianity led the movement to provide assistance to PWD until the government later began to supplant its efforts. Bunch (2001) described how Jesus’ healing ministry restored PWD to the community. Bunch explained why Jesus came into a culture of honour-shame and stigmatisation of PWD. Jesus had come to bring good news to the oppressed, blind and the prisoners (Bunch, 2001). Fulcher (1989) referred to the religious model of disability
as the charity model and Kaplan (2004) also equated the moral or religious model with Christian charity. PWD were treated as objects of pity and charity in the religious model, which was based on a history of western Judeo-Christian society and biblical accounts of PWD.

The moral/religious model was historically the oldest and is less prevalent today. Berinyuu (2004) engaged in a theological analysis of disability, exploring issues of healing from the perspective of people who live with disabilities, and analysing the doctrine of ‘imago dei’ or the image of God with respect to disability, using “a hermeneutic of suspicion” (p. 203). Berinyuu explained that healing has become a word full of theological, medical and psychological ambiguity and contradiction. Efforts intended to foster healing have too often produced victims instead.

Berinyu (2004) importantly questioned what a PWD thought about being created in the image of God? He also asked if they saw themselves as having the mind of God and if they did what did they think about having an impaired mind? How do other PWD see them? Healing in the religious model has therefore been shadowed by theological, medical, and psychological ambiguity and contradiction. Thus, efforts intended to foster healing have too often produced victims instead (Berinyu, 2004).

Lindsay (1995-1996) explained that the early treatments of PWD in Australia were based on moral foundations that originated from England. Lindsay linked the attitudes to disability in the early years of white settlement as based on the manifestation of divine disfavour, and it was supposed that moral and mental defects were synonymous. These views translated into a moral and a medical model of disability. Either there was a total neglect of PWD or they were confined in hospitals attached to gaols, in gaols or in asylums (Lindsay, 1995-1996).
Some of the literature reviewed was critical of the Church treatment of PWD. Rose (1997) found that attitudes toward those with disabilities could be categorised under four general themes. There were four main themes that formed the basis of many beliefs within organised Western religion. The first theme was that disability is a sign of punishment or evil incarnation. Next, disability was seen as a challenge to divine perfection. Third, PWD were often looked on as objects of pity and charity. In the fourth theme disability was regarded as incompetence and warranted exemption from religious practice. Taken together, these attitudes formed a theological barrier that seemed to obstruct the rapid and complete integration of persons with disabilities on the part of religious institutions. They served to deny the quality of life which so many seek. They also provided insight into many of the assumptions and prejudices that run in the broader secular society, as these have been heavily influenced by religious thought and doctrine Rose was more condemnatory of many churches treatment of PWD, stating that persons with physical or mental disabilities often turn to religious institutions for comfort and belonging. Rose’s investigation included the beliefs and perspectives of ancient literature from Christian and Jewish sources, and which created barriers for PWD (Rose, 1997).

Lititz (2006) argued that churches who claim to welcome everyone to worship need to be better aware of the needs and behaviours of adults with disabilities. Bunch (2001), an Anglican priest, and a doctor specialising in muscular skeletal diseases in children, had a lot of experience with children and disabilities, as well as with ethics and the church. He added to the criticism of the religious institutions when he declared that society often separates and marginalises people with disabilities, the largest minority in the United States. McKenna (2005) wanted to review the Christian understanding of disability and undertook a literature search on the themes of ‘Christianity and disability’ and a ‘theology of disability’. He argued that the Catholic Church has not been proactive in its role of
supporting PWD. The most commonly cited problem within the literature he reviewed was the issue of the link between sin and sickness, which has affected the views of church and society to this day. Such themes have to be balanced by Jesus’ concern for people with disabilities in the Gospel narratives. It is striking that the church has, sadly, given little attention in the past to the needs of these people (McKenna, 2005). Gaventa (2008) argued that spirituality and faith are important for families and parents. He was critical of the lack of research on faith and spirituality as understood by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities themselves.

Calder (2004) reflected on how Australian people view PWD and relate to them in the community. Calder’s understanding of disability differed from the medical model - his perspective was qualitative. He explored some Australian quotations often used to comfort and support people with disabilities, their families, and carers. Clichés such as “God is on your side” were regarded as problematic (p. 18) because they instilled a notion of spiritual trauma and perpetuate a sense of victimhood and collusion by God in their suffering. Calder argued that the church needs to articulate a theology that sees disability as a part of everyday life. This was a very important attempt to articulate a uniquely Australian Christian cultural perspective on disability, perhaps the first indictment of the churches in Australia on this subject.

Clapton (1997) was also critical of the Church (in general) and its relationship with PWD. Clapton considered that Christian churches in Western society have been and are still involved with people with disabilities; but while they may practise Biblical ethical imperatives such as care, compassion, mercy, support, welfare and charity, they have only minimally offered cohesive or explicit moral notions for the inclusion of people with disability in communities. Importantly, churches have paid little attention to the historical construction of exclusion (Clapton 1997)
However, not all literature was critical of the Church and the religious model of disability. Banks (2006) reported some good news about the church and disability. Banks described the Haven in Damascus, which is a ministry for members with developmental disabilities such as autism, Asperger’s syndrome or other conditions that may make sitting through a typical church service difficult or impossible. Terri Kellum, the leader of a disabilities ministry, conducted the first "Buddy Break" at her church in Florida (Banks, 2008).

Joni and Friends is a ministry founded by Joni Erickson-Tada in the USA. The ministry has been in existence for 20 years, and has an email-marketing program alongside a web site. The organisation aims to accelerate Christian ministry in the disability community. The mission is to communicate the Gospel and equip Christ-honouring Churches worldwide to evangelise and disciple people affected by disabilities (Erickson-Tada, 2008). The organisation aims to present the clear and concise Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people with disabilities and their families served through their programs. Joni and Friends trains, disciples, and mentors people affected by disability to exercise their gifts of leadership and service in the church and their communities. Importantly, Joni and friends aims to energise the church to move from lack of awareness to inclusion of disabled persons into the fabric of worship, fellowship, and outreach. Joni and friends lists many churches that have special needs ministries. One such ministry is “Matthews’s Ministry” (Erickson-Tada, 2008).

McNair (2008) argued that the local Church should be responsible and caring toward all its members. He referred to the biblical metaphor of the church being a body wherein every part needs the other. He distinguished charity from service. Charity and membership of a church are distinct. Individuals with disabilities who are members of a church enjoy the benefits of membership. McNair (2008) regrets that in our society the
church as a support agent is often ignored or dismissed out of hand. The state should encourage and aid the church in providing resources for individuals with disabilities.

Most churches are voluntary organisations, and are dependent on the members to act. An excellent example in the literature of a proactive approach to the problem of church and disability is Jean Vanier (2013), the founder of the international movement of L’Arche communities, where people who have developmental disabilities and the friends who assist them create homes and share life together. He speaks for the millions of men and women who are excluded and voiceless. Vanier pleads for a radical and authentic engagement from the Church towards the most vulnerable, the PWD. He is referring to the Roman Catholic Church and advocates for the church to be more involved with PWD (Vanier, 2013). He is a champion for PWD and the literature flowing from and about him is extensive.

2.1.2 Medical model of disability

Within the medical model, the individual with a disability is considered sick. When people are sick, they are excused from the normal obligations of society: going to school, getting a job, and taking on family responsibilities. They are also expected to come under the authority of the medical profession in order to get better. Thus, until recently, most disability issues have been regarded as health issues, and physicians have been regarded as the primary authorities in this policy area.

In the eighteenth century, during the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the scientific medical profession in the western hemisphere, PWD came to the attention of the medical world. The goal was to fit them into a “normal” life so they were not a burden on the rest of society. Barnes et al. (1999, p. 20) described this as “the medicalisation of disability”. They describe the conflict of the church and medicine in research concerned with
disability policy in the UK, and how the medical model superseded the religious model, as the church lost its power to influence government and medicine.

Fulcher (1989) referred to the Human Rights Commission in Australia, which noted that Victorian reformers felt the moral duty to give protection and succour to the poor and afflicted. He further observed that the repercussions are still felt today. Fulcher described the lay or medical model and explained that the charity ethic was compatible with the medical model. Even today the lay model is common in organisations that have services outside the limited provision of the welfare state.

Kaplan (2004) described how the medical model came into being as “modern” medicine began to develop in the 19th Century, along with the enhanced role of the physician in society. Since many disabilities had medical origins, people with disabilities were expected to benefit from coming under the direction of the medical profession. Under this model, the problems that were associated with disability were considered to reside within the individual. In other words, if the individual is “cured” then these problems will not exist. In this model, society has no underlying responsibility to make a place for persons with disabilities, since they live in an outsider role waiting to be cured.

Kaplan (2004) pointed out that the influence of the medical model could be seen in the Social Security systems of the USA, where disability is defined as the ability to work or not. This is consistent with the role of the person with a disability being defined as sick. It is also the source of enormous problems for persons with disabilities who want to work but who would risk losing all related public benefits, such as health care coverage or access to Welfare payments, since a person loses his/her disability status by going to work. This may not be so in Australia where there is a disability pension available.
The medical model considers disability a problem of the individual, directly caused by a disease, an injury, or some other health condition, and thus requiring medical care in the form of treatment and rehabilitation (Mitra, 2006). Under this evolving model, difference came to be seen as deviance and it was the individual and not the society who had the problem. In more recent years, after normalisation principles were introduced in the 1950s, the medical model of disability remained wedded to the economy and charity-based support perpetuated the view of PWD as objects of pity. Mitra (2006) illustrated how the medical model attributed the problem to the individual, who has a condition that is unwanted, and which placed him or her in the role of patient. People were considered disabled because of being unable to function as a “normal” person. The major outcome of the medical model at the political level was to provide health-care and rehabilitation services (Mitra, 2006).

Brisenden (1986) was very critical of the medical model and referred to it as the “dustbin definition” of disability (p. 23). Brisenden explained that the medical definition did not distinguish between disease and disability. Where a disease has a physical manifestation, a disability may have no tangible manifestation. A disability results from the things one is not able to do because of the organisation of the world. Impairment may be the loss of limbs and having to use a wheelchair, but the disability is perhaps the lack of ramps and paved roads, or a lift in a building. However, it should be noted there are disabilities that are genetic such as Parkinson’s disease, or Multiple Sclerosis.

The medical definition was considered partial and limited. Doctors are unable to respond outside their own constructed definition of disability. This view ignored the social and psychological definition of disability (Brisenden, 1986). Brisenden’s critique of the medical model created a building block in the construction of a new definition of disability from the point of view of a person who has a disability, and provided a
firsthand account of what it means to be seen as disabled from a narrow medical perspective. Brisenden argued that the medical profession’s refusal to change the way it viewed PWD has influenced the definition of disability, which has been partial and limited. Doctors have been unable to respond outside their own constructed definition of disability. Brisenden’s criticism helped to prepare the way for the models that succeeded the medical model, namely the social and biopsychosocial models.

Fulcher (1989) explained that the medical model excluded a consumer discourse or language of rights. Fulcher argued that PWD were not consulted about policies or events, but the doctor was regarded as the expert. PWD were not regarded as stakeholders in policy making, but as objects of disease that needed to be made whole. Without the views of PWD, the definition of disability may be limited and perhaps even myth-building, contributing to the oppression of PWD.

Madden and Hogan (1997) addressed the need for administrative functions associated with managing PWD, and argued that this necessitated the need for a consistent definition of disability. They provided a documentary explanation and description of the definitions of disability from an official government perspective.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is Australia’s national agency for health and welfare statistics and information, and the Australian collaborating centre for ICF. Two of the main products of their work are the National Community Data Services Dictionaries (AIHW, 2004). The National Community Services Data Dictionary (NCSDD) is the reference on agreed data definitions and information standards of relevance to the community services sector. In essence, the aim is to provide a common language for the various agencies and governments involved in community services. The focus at the national level was consistency of disability and health information, and
challenges relating to health status measurement, disability surveys and national datasets generally (Madden, 2003).

These attempts at controlling and measuring disability were regarded as evidence of the definition of disability within the medical model. The medical model of disability and the international classification of disability are necessary for a compensatory form of social justice, as part of a government policy for PWD. Fulcher (1989) quoted Hahn (1966), who was of the opinion that the definition of disability was fundamentally a policy question, a political and social construct used to regulate. Hahn’s view that disability was a political function was consistent with the establishment of a definition that was needed for administrative and regulatory purposes, and the medical definition suited this administrative function. Barnes et al. (1999) wrote that there is an associated administrative and policy interest in translating the individual’s disability into specific needs for welfare benefits and services.

Changes in viewing disability began to emerge later in the 1990s. Madden (2003), nearly ten years later, described the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, known as the ICF definition of disability, which included the environment and participation in that environment. The following diagram (Figure 2.1) clearly illustrates the ICF model of disability.
Figure 2.1. ICF definition of disability.
Figure 2.1 is from the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations’ public health arm, which published its new framework for disability and health in 2001, known as the ICF. The functioning and disability of a person was conceived as a dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors (World Health Organisation, 2001). Environmental factors were presented in the second part of the classification (Madden, 2003). These environmental factors resided outside the confines of the medical model and the literature showed an emerging paradigm of disability encompassing the social factors that cause disability.

Associated with the medical model was administration and policy interest in translating the individual’s disability into specific needs such as welfare and services. The focus of the medical model was on technical measurement issues for the best prediction of an individual’s service needs.

2.1.3 Social model.

The social model of disability proposes that systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society are the ultimate factors defining who is disabled and who is not, in a particular society. It recognised that, while some people have physical, intellectual or mental disabilities, these do not have to lead to disability unless society fails to include PWD and include people, regardless of their individual differences. The model accepted that, while some individual differences lead to individual limitations or impairments, these are not the cause of individuals being excluded. The social model of disability could be traced to the 1960s and the PWD civil rights movements. From disabled activists using civil disobedience for social justice to university professors with disabilities researching and teaching disability studies, a new, clearly articulated analysis of the disability paradigm emerged (Tusler, 2007). Parallel to an increase in knowledge about disability,
there was an increase in the number of PWD who have added to this knowledge. This new knowledge came to be known as the “social model” of disability, which challenged the traditional approach to disability (Barnes et al., 1999).

The debate over definitions and language has been central to the PWD movement’s critique of traditional medical and academic approaches to disability knowledge. Barnes and Mercer (1997) described the complexities of researching disability and the emergence of disability activists who established the social model of disability. The emerging disability criticism critiqued the mainstream discourse on disability as a negative influence, and confronted the social oppression and isolation experienced by disabled people, initiating policies which have made a significant improvement in the quality of their lives. Their approach pointed to a more optimistic picture for PWD and included personal stories and experiences as well as reflection on these experiences. The emergence of the social model of disability offered a comprehensive critique of traditional approaches to disability. Parallel calls have been made to break the mould of disability research by adopting an “emancipatory” approach. Barnes and Mercer’s (1997) study contains thirteen original contributions from leading figures and newcomers on the key issues and problems in translating disability theory into research practice.

Fulcher (1989) considered the discourses surrounding disability which were relevant to the educating of SWD in RICSQ. He enquired whether schools’ individualised problems surrounding pedagogy for a child with a disability. If so, did schools construct the issues as personal trouble deriving from that child, or did they see it as a public curriculum issue? Fulcher argued that discourses have uses rather than inherent meanings. Fulcher cited Chua (1961) who believed that the question was how the discourse became established in the social order. Chua believed it was from institutional bases, such as schools, that discourse established itself as a practical system of power and a system of
social control. This requires critics and researchers to consider the institutional bases of different discourses. Disability was regarded as a political construct whether impairment existed or not.

Lutz and Bowers (2003) described how the medical model located the disability in the individual, and aimed for rehabilitation whereas the social justice model saw society as causing the disability. The social model saw disability as a social construct and not totally belonging to the individual. Thus disability was not the attribute of the individual; instead, it was created by the social environment and required social change (Mitra, 2006).

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), a component of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), is the main United States federal agency that supports applied research, training and development to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. This organisation believes that current definitions of disability do not reflect the new paradigm of thought, because nearly all definitions identify an individual as disabled based on a physical or mental impairment and that limits the person's ability to perform an important activity. The complementary possibility that the individual is limited by a barrier in society or the environment is not considered. The disability paradigm that underpins NIDRR’s research strategy for the future maintains that disability is a product of an interaction between characteristics (for example, conditions or impairments, functional status, or personal and social qualities) of the individual and characteristics of the natural, built, cultural, and social environments. The construct of disability is located on a continuum from enablement to disablement. The new paradigm can be understood best in contrast to the one it replaces. The old paradigm has presented disability as the result of a deficit in an individual that prevents the individual from performing certain
functions or activities (see Table 2.1). This underlying assumption about disability has affected many aspects of research and rehabilitation (NDIRR, 2014).

Mitra (2006) explained the origins of the social model. The core definition of the British social model (UPIAS, 1972) claimed that disability was the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation that took little or no account of people who have physical impairments, and thus excluded them from participation in the mainstream of social activities.

In 1983, Oliver, a scholar with a disability originally conceptualised models of disability as the binary distinction between what he chose to call the individual and social models of disability. He coined the term “model” of disability in reference to a social model, but he did not intend this as an all-encompassing theory of disability, but rather a starting point in reframing how society views disability (Oliver & Sapey, 2006). Oliver attempted to make sense of the world for his social work students, and other professionals. Oliver discussed the idea of an individual model versus a social model, derived from the distinction originally made between impairment and disability by the UPIAS. The social model was extended and developed by academics and activists in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA) and other countries, and extended to include all disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, or who have experienced the mental health system (Mitra, 2006).
Table 2.1

Attributes of the Two Models of Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrast of Paradigms</th>
<th>Medical &quot;Old&quot; Approach</th>
<th>Social &quot;New&quot; Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of disability</strong></td>
<td>An individual is limited by his/her impairment or condition</td>
<td>An individual with an impairment requires an accommodation to perform functions required to carry out life activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy to address disability</strong></td>
<td>Fix the individual, correct the deficit</td>
<td>Remove barriers, create access through accommodation and universal design, promote wellness and health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method to address disability</strong></td>
<td>Provision of medical, vocational, or psychological rehabilitation services</td>
<td>Provision of supports, e.g., assistive technology, personal assistance services, job coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source of intervention</strong></td>
<td>Professionals, clinicians, and other rehabilitation providers</td>
<td>Peers, mainstream service providers, consumer information services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entitlements</strong></td>
<td>Eligibility for benefits based on severity of impairment</td>
<td>Eligibility for accommodations seen as a civil right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of individual with disability</strong></td>
<td>Object of intervention, patient, research subject</td>
<td>Consumer or customer, empowered peer, research participant, decision-maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain of disability</strong></td>
<td>A medical &quot;problem&quot;</td>
<td>A socio-environmental issue involving accessibility, accommodations, and equity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from ‘Accessing Safety Initiative’ (2006)*
The boundaries between the models can be blurred and to highlight the differences in the social and medical model Table 2.1 was added. This contrasts the “old” and “new” models of disability, or medical and social perspectives. However, some models may include more than one perspective of disability. Edwards (2004) maintained that the arguments revolve around whether disability is the result of a deficit in an individual or the product of social relations. He was very critical of the social model of disability and in favour of what he called the “barriers model”, and attempted to enhance and inform disability studies with his writing.

Just as the distinction between the medical and social models are blurred at times, so the Christian and social models were incorporated in one model with authors such as Jones (2004). Jones recounted the story of a blind man who had a torch in his hand. The blind man depended not just on his visual impairment but also on the willingness of others to remove barriers and to make the environment friendly. It is now accepted by people with disabilities, activists and scholars that much that is disabling is socially constructed.

There are several names for the social model and one of these is Kaplan’s (2004) “disability model” which recognised social discrimination as the most significant problem experienced by persons with disabilities. It is recognised as the cause of many of the problems that are regarded as intrinsic to disability under other models (Kaplan, 2004).

However, Peters’ (2007) analysis of the models does have relevance for SWD. She analysed the transformation from a medical model of disability to a social model explaining that this change is not easily explained by historical analysis. Peters also described the rise of the social definition of disability and the guidelines for action set out in policies. Her historical analysis is important because it was directed towards education and children. It highlights a number of policies aimed at educating children, and illuminated the disability models in relation to educating SWD.
Kaplan’s (2004) disability model was influenced by the rights-based models, but it is similar to the social-based models discussed earlier. Kaplan argues that the disability model took hold as the disability rights and independent living movements gained strength. This model regarded disability as a normal aspect of life, not as a deviance, and rejected the notion that persons with disabilities are in some inherent way "defective". A person’s physical disability does not particularly limit a person’s mobility as much as attitudinal and physical barriers do. The question focuses on “normality”. What, it is asked, is the normal way to be mobile over a distance of a mile? Is it to walk, drive one's own car, take a taxicab, ride a bicycle, use a wheelchair, roller skate or use a skateboard, or some other means? What is the normal way to earn a living? Most people will experience some form of disability, either permanent or temporary, over the course of their lives. Given this reality, if disability was more commonly recognised and expected in the way that we design our environments or our systems, it would not seem so abnormal. In this way of thinking, another model of disability is recognisable, and that is ableism.

2.1.4 Ableist model of disability.

The literature is expansive on disability and ableism, although there is less focus on ableism in education. The term ‘ableism’ evolved from the disabled people’s rights movements in the United States and Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. Ableism described prejudicial attitudes and behaviours towards PWD. Definitions of ableism hinged on ones understanding of normal ability and the rights and benefits afforded to persons deemed normal (Wolbring, 2012).

The significance of an ableist philosophy is that it questions, and confronts all definitions of disability, including the medical model. Cherney (2011) explained that recognising
ableism required a shift in orientation, a perceptual gestalt framed by the filter of the term ableism itself. The ableist model of disability was similar to the medical model of disability in that able-bodied people were seen as the norm in society, and disability as an inherently negative state that must be overcome.

According to one writer, the Christian and ableist discourses conflicted. Wolbring (2007) explained that the National Council of Churches, USA states:

> Our humility must extend as well to our own limited knowledge of God’s infinite design. Human frailties have allowed us too often to be glib about what constitutes “normal” or “whole” or “able-bodied” life. In so doing we relegate many of our sisters and brothers to the status of “other”, seeing only their differences, which we call “disabilities,” rather than seeing them as those who manifest, like us, reflections of the imago dei. (p.90)

The Christian and ableist discourses represent a mismatch in wide-ranging practices in the education of SWD in RICSQ. While the Christian discourse is friendly to SWD, the medical/ableist discourse is a formation of beliefs, values and material practice. As Pinto (2011) pointed out power struggles often take the form of discursive practices.

Cherney (2011) provided a theoretical framework in order to analyse ableism as a rhetorical problem. He pointed out that rhetoric can reveal the hidden workings of language as well as strategies for reinterpreting meaning. He presented criteria to identify an ableist discourse which have been useful in the analysis of school interviews and documents for this study. Ableist culture sustains and perpetuates itself via rhetoric. Cherney’s concept of rhetoric complemented the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis in this research.
Campbell (2009, p. 5) acknowledged that the concept of ableism was, as of 2009, not clearly defined in the literature, and has "limited definitional or conceptual specificity". She described it as:

A network of beliefs processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical, and therefore essential and fully human. Disability is then cast as a diminished state of being human. (Campbell, 2001, p. 2)

When disability is viewed through an ableist lens, it reveals an attitude towards disability that “devalues or differentiates disability through the valuation of able-bodiedness equated to normalcy.” Ableness and disability exist in a “binary dynamic which is simply not comparative but rather co-relationally constitutive” (Campbell, 2008, p. 2).

Campbell (2008) pointed out that, while the equalisation initiatives have provided remedies in the lives of individuals with “disabilities”, the subtext of “disability” as negative ontology has remained substantially unchallenged. Campbell further argued that disability is always present in the “ableist talk of normalcy, normalisation and humanness” (p. 109). She insisted claims around disability are dependent upon discourses of ableism in their very legitimation, indicating a need for engaging with disability ontology. Campbell discussed disability as negative ontology and wrote about the “unthought of disability” (Campbell, 2008, p. 109).

the biggest obstacle in the deconstruction of disabling social restrictions and barriers, for example by legislation and socio-political reforms, lies in the othering cultural constructions of disability, which produce otherness for disabled people”. This “othering” means that disabled people are represented as distinct and apart from the assumed normality, as well as apart from the “normal” and the “natural” majority. (p.60–61)

Hehir was former director of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, Associate Superintendent for the Chicago Public Schools, and Director of Special Education in the Boston Public Schools. Hehir (2002) defined ableism as "the devaluation of disability" that:

results in societal attitudes that uncritically assert that it is better for a child to walk than roll, speak than sign, read print than read Braille, spell independently than use a spell-check, and hang out with nondisabled kids as opposed to other disabled kids. (p. 3)

Hehir highlighted ableist practices through a discussion of the history and research pertaining to the education of deaf students, students who were blind or visually impaired, and students with learning disabilities, particularly dyslexia. He asserted that ableist beliefs in special education reinforce prevailing prejudices against disability and may contribute to low levels of educational attainment and employment.

Burke and Wolbrinig (2010) suggested a practical tool to help eliminate ableism in schools and ensure a holistic, equitable approach to education. This approach helped identify biases under three categories – maintaining a hierarchy, failing to examine difference, and using a double standard. The framework is built on the assertion that biases maintain social hierarchies.
UNESCO strives to build networks among nations that enable this kind of solidarity, by mobilising for education, so that every child, boy or girl, has access to quality education as a fundamental human right and as a prerequisite for human development (UNESCO, 2014).

Storey (2007) provided suggestions for recognising and acting against ableism in schools, in terms of ability awareness, disability content in curricula and school activities, in service and professional development for teachers, disability literature, the use of role models, and hiring teachers with disabilities. This approach looks at the education of SWD holistically (King, 2010).

Ashby (2010) has done some valuable research on students with developmental disabilities and the concept of “normal”. Ashby’s critical, qualitative study considered issues of access to the academic and social experiences of middle school, for five students with labels of intellectual disability and autism, through a lens of ableism and enforced “normalcy”. The author started from the position that schools are sites where ableist norms of performance leave many marginalised. The research study privileged the perspective of individuals whose inclusion in school is most tenuous. Challenging the notion that mere access to general education classrooms and instruction is enough, the author interrogated questions of efficiency and meaningful engagement within the context of middle school (Sire, 2004). Additionally, Connor and Gabel (2013) wrote an admirable article on disability and ableism within education. They argued that schooling itself is the disabling factor, and describe Disability Studies in Education (DSE) as an example of academic activism that counters the master narrative of deficiency. They refuted the “Hegemony of Normalcy” (Connor & Gabel, 2013, p. 102) where normalcy is equated to ableism.
The models of disabilities in the literature helped provide a framework to understand the views of the Principals on disability. A model was regarded as a construction of disability by a person, organisation or society, and included the religious, medical, and social models, which are reviewed here to provide a context for an analysis of Christian education of students with disabilities (SWD).

The models of disability have evolved in the literature in the last decades since Oliver (1983) first coined the word. The religious model was seen as problematic for people with disabilities and most of the literature reviewed was critical of the church treatment of PWD. The medical model was considered inadequate and a shift in thinking preferred the newer social model of disability. However, one model not popularised was the ablest model which challenged all definitions of disability, including the medical model.
2.2. Changing context of disability

At the beginning of the United Nations International Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992, there were some visible groups representing the interests of people with disabilities (PWD) but many people with disabilities were invisible to society. At that time, PWD were still being placed in institutions. Disability was associated with health issues. People with disabilities could not live autonomously because Australian society did not accept disability as a state of life and the world was not set up to meet their needs (Spicer, 2001).

Education for children with disabilities in Australia has changed over the 120 years since Federation (Disability Services Australia, 2000). Thomas Pattison, a deaf migrant to Australia from Scotland, set up the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children in 1860. With the help of several prominent people of the time, the school was officially declared a public institution on 15 October 1861. It was a school with residential facilities. Andrews (1979) surveyed the history of the first special schools in Australia. In the first 50 years of the last century, many schools were established throughout Australia for children with specific disabilities. Charitable institutions or voluntary organisations managed most of these schools. The records on both the Watt Street Hospital in Newcastle (1872) and the Kew cottages in Melbourne (1889) mentioned including a teacher in the first staff appointments. Schools for children with intellectual disabilities were not established until the 1920s; however, special classes were created in a number of regular schools to cater for the needs of these children. The first conference of Directors of Education (1916) in Australia discussed the needs of the mentally handicapped.

Andrews (1979) noted that some special schools for children with sensory handicaps had their origins in the 1860s. Andrews stressed that any review of special education had to recognise the early efforts of voluntary organisations and individuals acting
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independently of the government on behalf of ‘handicapped’ children (p. 24). The language used, for example ‘handicapped’, in this history of special education is worth noting (Andrews, 1979, p. 26). Person-first terms have now replaced descriptors like the ‘handicapped’ such as ‘person with a disability’ or ‘student with a disability’.

Gaffney (1984) traced the analysis of the titles and abstract of every article in Exceptional Children in 1965, 1975, 1985 and 1995 which demonstrated the transition in terminology that occurred in 1985 when the terms ‘handicapped’ and ‘disabled’ were used equally. By 1995, the fields had completely shifted to “person-first” language and the only expressions found were of the form “student with disability” (Gaffney, 1984, p. 70). The fact the early schools for SWD were hospital schools revealed how the medical perspective of disability has changed and expanded in education (Disability Services Australia, 2006). Dempsey, Foreman, & Jenkinson (2002) researched special education and the influence of policies at Commonwealth and State level. Their study is important as a context or history for special education in government schools. They also described the policies on exclusion of SWD in government schools.

In 1939, only 11 per cent of the estimated 22,000 children with intellectual disabilities were receiving school education — mostly those children with lower levels of disability. From the 1920s onwards, some hospital schools were set up for children with significant physical disabilities. There were twenty such schools established over the next two decades. The trend to educate children with disabilities in special schools continued until well into the 1950s. By then, there were some 1600 special schools throughout Australia (Disability Services Australia, 2000).

Before the 1950s, voluntary organisations managed most special schools. This changed during the 1950s with State Governments taking a more active role in educating children.
with disabilities. By the late 1950s, the number of children being educated in special schools had risen to around 25,000 (Disability Services Australia, 2000).

During the 1950s, as stated previously, the State governments began to take on responsibility for education provided in Australia’s special schools and to establish special education units within regular schools to enable children with disabilities to attend (Keeffe-Martin, 2001). Another important milestone was a report published about education in South Australia in 1951. It strongly recommended integration and establishing a greater number of special classes within the regular school. A similar recommendation by the Schools Commission in 1956 led to government funding and appointing a Minister for Special Education. Additional training for teachers in special education was also provided.

Changes in attitudes towards education for SWD date from around the 1960s. In 1964, Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled (ACROD) recommended the integration of children with disabilities into regular schools, as opposed to special schools. This policy change evolved to mainstreaming of all SWD in regular schools. Today, special schools continue to provide education for students with disabilities who require intensive support. More commonly, though, children with disabilities are attending regular schools, assisted by special support services.

Concurrent with this development was the identification of two concepts of individual differences: (1) “inter-individual differences,” which compares one child with another, and (2) “intra-individual differences,” which compares the child’s abilities in one area with the child’s abilities in other areas. The grouping of children in special classes rests on the concept of inter-individual differences, but the instructional procedures for each
child are determined by intra-individual differences—that is, by a child’s abilities and disabilities (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014).

### 2.2.1. Integration and inclusion.

Integration traditionally refers to the education of children with special needs in mainstream settings, while the fundamental principles of ‘inclusion’ are far deeper. Integration is mainly a physical process where the visually impaired student is educated in the unchanged regular mainstream school system.

Inclusive education is the process whereby the visually impaired student also becomes a part of the social life of the peer group. To fulfil this, the inclusive school must change its pedagogical praxis to meet the needs of the student (ICEVI, 2002).

Inclusion in education involves the process of:

- increasing the participation of students with disabilities in, and reducing their exclusion from, curricula and communities of local schools;
- restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students' needs;
- accepting diversity as normal and as a rich source for all students;
- responding to the diverse needs of all students; accommodating both different styles and rates of learning;
- ensuring the quality of education to all students through appropriate curricula, support and teaching strategies;
- accepting that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society (ICEVI, 2002).
Inclusion of SWD is the major policy in disability to have emerged in the last 30 years. It recognises human rights and social justice in the mainstream schools. Least restrictive practices became important. These ideas have helped change education for SWD. They are now included in regular classes with non-disabled students of the same chronological age in local schools (Griffith University Faculty of Education School of Cognition, 2003).

Curry (1999) described the impetus of inclusion in Australia. In the last 25 years, educational settings and provisions for SWD in Australia have changed. Policy implementation and interpretation between states has varied. No state has actually legislated to ensure the phasing out of segregated special educational provision. In fact, Australian legislation does not guarantee education, nor specify minimum educational standards for SWD, as does the United States of America (USA) (Dempsey et al 2002).

The United Kingdom 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act required the rights of all children to be included in the education system. This was followed by the Warnock Report (1979) which include that every child had the right to be educated in a regular school. This education must be compatible with the needs of the child receiving the required “special education” provisions. Other children were not to be disadvantaged, and the parents’ wishes were to be met.

In other countries, inclusive schooling has had varied introductions. It was the repealing of ‘special education’ legislation that ‘normalised’ conditions for students with disabilities in Denmark; while in Norway, inclusion in its broadest sense has existed since the inception of comprehensive schools (Fulcher, 1989). In the United States of America, the impetus for change came with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act through the Congress in 1975 (Elkins & Ashman, 1994). This Act asserted
that, as far as possible, children with disabilities should be included in regular schools (Curry, 1999).

At a world conference held on special needs in Salamanca, Spain in 1994, the Salamanca Statement espoused inclusion. In this philosophy, regular schools with this inclusive orientation were held to be more effective in combating discriminatory attitudes. They create welcoming communities, build an inclusive society and achieve education for all. They provide an effective education to most children and improve the efficiency and the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (Peters, 2007).

Education in Australia has changed dramatically in the last 30 or 40 years. By 1960, all States of Australia were encouraging, as far as possible, the education of children with disabilities within regular schools (Keeffe-Martin, 2001). Some integration in education of SWD was seen as early as the 1950s; but the new direction was to include children with disabilities among regular classes at their local school. In particular, there was a move toward the principle of integration in the 1960s, and in Queensland a move to inclusion in the 1990s (Disability Services Australia, 2000).

Special schools continue to provide education for students needing intensive support. They help SWD move into regular school classes by providing extra teaching support. More often, children with disabilities attend regular schools, whether in regular or special classes. Some educators (Slee, 1996) debated inclusion but the Queensland Education Department (2010) considered it a fitting policy for educating SWD. An inclusive curriculum is the focus in Queensland education. An important goal of policy is acceptance of the right of all students to have access to, and enter, an education that enables them to develop their full potential. In general Australia began to integrate, compared to include, SWD into mainstream classrooms in the mid-1970s, after almost a
century of educating students with disabilities in segregated settings. This was in response both to research findings about the relative effectiveness of special education settings, and a shift in attitudes in the Western world towards how people with disabilities should be educated, and indeed, live their lives (Konza, 2008).

Gillies and Carrington (2004) reviewed the research informing the inclusion movement and the role schools played in developing inclusive education. They outlined the specific initiatives that were undertaken in Queensland, Australia. They added that the successful Inclusive Culture and Practice in Schools Conference (2003) demonstrated examples of the innovative work in developing inclusive culture, policy and practice in Brisbane. They further argued that inclusion would not be straightforward and the power structures and curriculums would have to be challenged alongside existing pedagogy.

In other countries as well as Australia, there is literature that is critical of the inclusive education policies of the Queensland authorities. Inclusion needed a larger plan than just including students in school. It was the community’s responsibility. Kauffman and Sapon-Shevin (1994) wrote: “Inclusion is much bigger than special education, much bigger than individual differences; it’s even much bigger than the whole school” (O’Neil, 1994, p. 9).

The school Principal plays a pivotal role in the success of the inclusive system in Queensland. The impact of the roles of staff, parents, and other Principals is also important. Teachers as leaders influence networks and collaborate in the inclusive system. This conclusion was reached in a study of a small primary school in the local region (Mercer, 2003). It revealed that a network responsible for teaching SWD is much bigger than the Principal and the teachers, and needs to include the whole community. Policy implementation and interpretation of policy between states have varied. At this time, no
state has legislated to ensure the phasing out of segregated special educational provision. Australian legislation does not guarantee education, nor specify minimum educational standards for SWD, as does the United States (USA) (Dempsey et al 2002).

2.2.2 Least restrictive environment.

When the term ‘least restrictive’ is used it pertains to the ‘least restrictive environment’ rather than ‘least restrictive practice’ – the latter is used for PWD within services. ‘Least restrictive environment’ (LRE) refers to educational settings for students, and it refers to students that are included in the normal school environment. In the USA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1995) made it compulsory that all SWD be educated in the least restrictive environment (Palley, 2006). According to IDEA, a LRE provision required that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities were to be educated with children who were not disabled. Removal of SWD from the regular education environment was to occur only when the nature and severity of the disability was such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services could not be achieved satisfactorily (IDEA, 1995). IDEA emphasised the individual rights of particular students (Palley, 2006).

In Australia, students unable to function successfully in a general education class are placed in a special class within a public school. This is less restrictive (closer to the mainstream) than placement in a separate school or residential facility (Lewis & Doorlag, 1999). Part time removal from general classes is considered less restrictive than special school on its own, or a residential program.

In Queensland government high schools, there is a distinction between learning support students and special education students. Learning support students are taught in classes of approximately five to fifteen students with learning difficulties, such as emotional
problems and behavioural issues, often sometimes referred to as ‘slow learners’. The special education students are usually more in need of individual support and access the school Special Education Unit (SEU).

The Education Department of Queensland has different names for special education support centres within schools. Education Queensland school’s SEU are sometimes called Special Education Program (SEP); or, in some schools, simply Education Services. Early Childhood Development Programs (ECDP) support preschool children with disabilities and some children may then be sent to special schools. These schools include students with autism, intellectual impairment, or physical impairments in classes in the general school. Other students who have more “severe” disabilities are educated in special education schools. Underpinning inclusion and least restrictive practices for SWD is paramount to the concept of social justice.

Policies and principles central to the support of PWD (and SWD) are important for understanding education programs for SWD. The education of SWD is based on a number of beliefs and principles. These beliefs and principles are responsible for the way society supports these students. The core of our belief systems for the education of SWD is reflected in the ideas of human rights, equity, and social justice (Foreman, 1996).

2.2.3 Social justice.

Starr (1991) found it necessary to look outside of education, in the larger society, to define social justice. She found no policies that defined social justice at any level. Economic wellbeing of the government determined the kind of social justice that was affordable. This was because social justice is bigger than education alone. While there appears to be no single definition of social justice, the literature suggests the notion of
social justice coexists with expressions of human rights, fairness and equality (Sturman, 1997).

Jenkinson (2001) wrote that, by the early 1990s, Australia had moved from a welfare-based model of service provision to a model that has its foundations in equity and social justice. There are two different forms of social justice: distributive and compensatory. ‘Distributive justice’ was originally espoused by Rawls (1957) who argued that the main area over which justice presides is the distribution of primary goods. Rawls saw justice as fairness, which included mutual agreement among several people. The problem was about how to justly distribute goods. Should justice be based on merit or need? Justice had to be fair.

‘Compensatory justice’ or 'affirmative action’ involves some degree of compensation for social handicaps. Equality of opportunity is achieved by a far more active, interventionist form of redress for the disadvantaged. Society must treat people differently, in order to treat people equally. Under distributive justice, a person with a disability might be given a pension; whereas under compensatory justice, the government invests in training and job placement. Thus the government is seen as equalising opportunity.

The influence of ‘normalisation’ and ‘social role valorisation’ has had a large impact on disability services throughout the world. Normalisation as a principle started in Scandinavia. This form of social justice was referred to as compensatory justice in contrast to distributive justice. The importance of social justice is reflected in federal policies which represent attempts to deal with past injustices to PWD by ensuring access to services for these groups (Annison, 1996).

The *Intellectually Disabled Citizens Act Amendment (1969)* was necessary to upgrade the Queensland government’s stance on the population of PWD. By this Act, the government
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could finance the education of PWD/SWDs more efficiently. A person with a disability was called an ‘assisted citizen’ (meaning ‘an intellectually disabled citizen’) who was receiving, or had been approved to receive, the special assistance provided for by this Act. The phrase ‘Intellectually disabled citizen’ meant a citizen who is limited in his functional competence because of intellectual impairment. This reflected the government’s interpretation of social justice principles, and the idea of citizenship was similar to that later advocated by Miller (1999).

The Commonwealth Government Disability Services Act (1986) provided a policy statement on the rights of PWD and a set of principles (5) and objectives (14) to apply to service provision. The act sought to develop new services that would meet individual needs and provide a bridge between older programs and newer ones. This was as a model of affirmative or compensatory social justice.

Education and social justice are inextricably linked, according to Sturman (1997). The National Strategy on Social Justice in Education (1994) maintained that social disadvantages translated into educational disadvantage. School-based factors such as inappropriate and exclusive curriculums, an unsupportive and discriminatory environment, ineffective teaching, and inequitable resourcing still existed.

Social justice was defined by Education Queensland (1993) as identifying and eliminating barriers which hinder students’ participation and achievement. Education Queensland attempted to enshrine the principles of social justice in the delivery of schooling for students. Equity was seen as the achievement of equal access or equal opportunity (Education Queensland, 1994).

The Queensland Educational Provision for Students with Disabilities (1993) laid out the social context of education, the key principles of social justice, and the context. It also
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presented a management plan to identify PWD. Its policy statement set out that Education Queensland provided a range of educational programs across primary, secondary and special needs schools for students with disabilities. The Commonwealth Government 1986 Disability Services Act legislated that PWD have the same rights as others. This moved to improve employment for PWD and had a strong social justice theme. Although very little was said about education, the principles and objectives set a standard for the operation of governments and institutions to follow.

The law clarified the issue of access to regular schools; and classrooms for SWD were about fairness of distribution of educational resources. The ideas of citizenship and common schooling or inclusion, the interests of the least advantaged where specific programs were implemented, and a dynamic concept of equality which changed as the educational system changed, all have had a very significant impact on special education in the 2000s. Inclusion came about from social justice principles for PWD, and was a major advance in achieving social justice in the curriculum. The inclusive curriculum made clear the process of ensuring that educational outcomes for all students in the State are maximised.

An Action Plan in 2010 outlined how Education Queensland would carry out strategies in line with Queensland State Education Policy. The Queensland Government’s Ministerial Taskforce on a Strategic Framework for Disabilities in an inclusive education context (2000-2005) was appointed in March 2002, with Professor John Elkins as chairperson, and members of the taskforce representing community and professional organisations. The plans were established to update current policies and practices and to remove barriers to inclusive education, and to transform organisational culture, policy and practice in inclusive education.
Equity and equality of SWD are important as a social justice principle and the issue of access to regular schools and classrooms for SWD is interpreted as one of fairness of distribution of educational resources. The ideas of citizenship and common schooling or inclusion are central to establishing a curriculum for SWD.

Gale (2000) and Gale and Densmore (2000) explored social justice from an educational perspective, and classified explanations of social justice as “distributive”, “retributive” and “recognitive”. The authors summarised these perspectives and distinguished distributive and retributive from recognitive justice, arguing that recognitive includes a positive consideration for social difference and the centrality of socially democratic processes in working towards its attainment. In essence, the recognitive perspective of social justice stresses process and action over state and form (Nelson, 2010).

Nelson (2010) was project officer for Queensland University of Technology’s (QUT) project for Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement. The project involved an additional seven institutions, all of which are engaged in various initiatives that monitor student learning engagement. Nelson argued that examining the literature on social justice and education was difficult because it linked society with the role of education. This means that educational institutions are directly involved in and reflect the social, cultural and economic activity of society.

Nelson’s (2010) examination of themes in social justice literature and its applications in education conceptualised a set of five principles: Equity, Participation, Rights, Self-determination and Access. Each principle is defined and accompanied by a rationale and description of the implications of the principle for practice. She also defined and articulated the social justice principles with good practice examples.
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This section has provided a context for the principles and concepts that are important in educating SWD. The principles of social justice, equity and anti-discrimination legislation have improved life for SWD. Further research into the effectiveness and extent of inclusion in Queensland education would be useful; but for this study the research focus was on non-state schools and educating SWD, and Christian special education and SWD. A general background context for educating SWD in RICSQ is necessary and helps fill the gap in the information on educating SWD in RICSQ. It is thought important to review research on RICSQ.
2.3 Literature dealing with Christian Independent Schools and SWD

This section reviews literature on Christian independent schools. In Australia Curry (1999) researched the issue of educating SWD in an Australian Christian environment. Bailley and du Plessis (1998) investigated the attitudes of Principals in both government and non-government schools (Bailey & du Plessis, 1998). These dissertations dealt with inclusion of SWD after they have been enrolled in the schools, and did not consider the enrolment policies.

Curry’s research in Western Australia focused on Catholic education policy and pointed to the lack of studies that analyse policy for students with disabilities in Catholic schools (Curry, 1999). Curry stated there was little research on this topic. He argued that changing attitudes to SWD in Australia play a role in local Catholic schools being expected to facilitate the enrolment and education of all Catholic children regardless of disability. The Catholic Church has followed changes in Australia rather than taking the lead. Curry’s research on policies of Catholic schools in Western Australia is helpful for this research project, but does not explore funding and choice for SWD in Queensland. There is some literature in Australia and USA that probes this idea of Christian schools being elitist and failing to include SWD (Bello, 2006; Hill, 2001; Matheson, 2007).

Bello (2006) in the USA analysed Catholic schools and the problem of including SWD. She noted that there was a reason for the lack of numbers of SWD in Catholic schools. She suggested that the schools may have an elitist parent or church board which wants to have the school gain a high academic score and reputation as a high achieving school. This is important research and it could be true of other Christian schools. Bello researched issues that Catholic high schools faced in their efforts to develop and carry out special education services for students with disabilities. Results were based on survey
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responses from a stratified random sample of 300 Catholic high schools. Bello’s study argued that elitist academic leanings of the Catholic schools she studied meant that they worked as exclusionary establishments, instead of promoting inclusion. Bello pointed out there was no formalised education for students with special needs within Catholic schools. Unlike public schools, in 2006 Catholic education did not enforce Catholic schools to meet the need of every child. Moreover, Catholic schools, and Catholic secondary schools in particular, had traditionally excluded students with special needs because of the schools ‘limited academic curriculum and focus on University preparation.

Bello’s argument also contradicted the reputation that Catholic schools had of catering for the poor, critiquing a number of past studies that had asserted that Catholic schools were successful in meeting the needs of specific socio-economically at-risk populations. She was critical of the distinctive features that had been equated with these schools’ instructional effectiveness, such as rigorous curriculum, strict disciplinary code, and controlled communal atmosphere. She viewed these as exclusionary rather than inclusionary (Bello, 2006). Bello’s research contradicted that of Curry.

Both Bello and Curry focused on inclusion in Catholic education, with different conclusions. Curry researched changing attitudes to SWD in local Catholic schools which were expected to facilitate the enrolment and education of all Catholic children regardless of disability. Bello (2006) analysed Catholic schools in the USA and the problem of including SWD and considered that these catholic schools were elitist.

2.3.1 The purpose of Christian schooling is contested.

The secular and religious literature disagreed over the purpose and aims of Christian education. Symes and Gulson (2008) discussed fundamentalist and evangelical Christianity’s growth in popularity in Australia, reflected in the ascendancy of the new
Christian schools. They examined the historical and policy climates that had given rise to this educational phenomenon and drew some links with other education systems, particularly in the United States.

Hill (2001) considered it important to clarify the purpose of Christian schooling. Choice is important and students should be able to make informed decisions whether they make a faith commitment or not. Students ideally should see faith being lived in all sorts of implicit ways. Faith should be seen through the values that infuse the curriculum and the school’s style of administration, and through the models provided by the best of their teachers. Hill argued that schooling does not lie at the heart of the Christian Gospel. It belongs in the domain of cultural custom, and it must be judged on its own merits in the light of broader biblical principles. It should be judged just as Christian involvement in hospitals, homes for the aged, child welfare, and politics should be. Hill qualified his criticism of the biblical foundations of Christian schooling, pointing out that an important stakeholder in biblical education is the parent. Hill argued that, though schooling does not lie at the heart of biblical revelation, parenting and teaching do, and it is from what the Bible says about these ministries in particular, that we can derive general principles by which to judge the theories of schooling (Hill, 2001).

Matheson (2007) was more damning of Christian schooling, arguing that Christian schools were not serving the poor or the SWD but instead exclusively served the rich. It is a stark choice for a multimillion-dollar Christian school. It is either the Gospel of the market and the good news of parental choice, or the gospel of Matthew and “the preferential option for the poor” (Matheson, 2007. p. 2). Matheson posed a relevant question. He asked how such policies and practices aligned with the demands of the Gospel that Christians claim to preach. How do Christians and their schools, with new performance halls, libraries, gymnasiums, swimming pools, tennis courts, ovals, specialist
computer areas, creative arts centres and purpose built early learning centres, respond to a Gospel that asserts that the judgment of God is determined by response to the hungry, those who are thirsty, the prisoner and the stranger? Perhaps, he suggested, students “baking muffins for the homeless” might not count at this point (p. 1).

Another Christian school, shopping for elite young athletes, poached the entire year 10 girls’ volleyball team from the local government school. Incidentally, there was no such raid on the local schools, for kids with disabilities, children of single parents or children whose parents were unemployed (Matheson, 2007).

CSA provided professional services, development, direct assistance, information and advice to its members. It considers itself as a voice for Christian schools, advocating for their needs in the national debate. CSA establishes positive relationships with government and others and play a leading role in the public policy debate to ensure the voice of Christian schools is heard (CSA, 2013).

CSA did not consider this argument fair. They point out that funding is assessed according to the socio-economic status of the area, and most of the newer Christian schools have been situated in working class areas, giving these parents the chance to choose (O’Doherty, 2007).

Some non-Christians question the existence of these schools and are unkind and hurtful in their attacks, using language that is emotively charged; as instanced by Symes and Gulson (2005) in a journal article provocatively titled “Crucifying education: The rise and rise of new Christian schooling in Australia”. This criticism says nothing about SWD but is about Christian schooling. There was a lack of any significant research on SWD in these newer Christian schools (for example RICSQ) in the literature. The gap in the literature reveals the lack of research by Christian and non-Christian alike.
Pike (2004) also examined the role of Christian schools in a society, and in particular evaluated the position of Christian schooling within a liberal democracy in the UK. He proposed that Christian schools are a vital part of a diverse, tolerant and inclusive society. He pointed out that distinctively Christian education is of political and cultural value to life in a diverse democracy (Pike, 2004).

Sutton (1993), McCormick (2005), McNair (2009), Eigenbrood (2005), and Pike (2004) all have contributed to the literature concerning Christian education’s role and effectiveness in educating SWD. There is very little or no available research on educating SWD in RICSQ. The Christian school population is rapidly expanding and as stated earlier, represents one quarter of all schools, or about 30 per cent of all students (Christian Research Association, 2010).
2.4. Legislative policies and funding.

Funding of non-government schools in Australia is derived from three sources. First, these schools are entitled and required to raise fee income from parents. These are fixed annually, and parents at the same school pay the same amount for each child. All schools also receive income from government sources; some comes from their State government, while the rest comes from the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government—the larger provider—calculates the funding for non-government schools on the socio-economic status (SES) of a school’s students. These funds are referred to as General Recurrent Grants (GRGs). The Commonwealth Government calculates GRGs at different rates for primary, secondary, public and non-government schools (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2004).

Funding to State schools comes from State governments (77.5 per cent), while the remainder comes from the Commonwealth (22.5 per cent). In 2004–05, States provided 91.3 per cent of the total funding available to government schools, while the Commonwealth provided 73.0 per cent of the total funding available to non-government schools. Of total State funding to schools, 93 per cent goes to government schools. Of total Commonwealth funding to schools, 70 per cent goes to non-government schools (Dowling, 2007).

As a reminder what was significant in this study was that, while independent schools in Australia receive a fixed amount for each student, Prasser (2009a) found that a SWD in the independent sector received less than 20 per cent of the funding that would be allocated to the same student if they attended a state school. This then has an impact on the way that non-government schools may view the arrival at a school of a SWD who intends to enrol there.
The problem of definition of disability was another important feature of this story. Defining disability has become increasingly complex and is often determined by regulation such as the most recent *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act* (2013). Yet, little research has explored the influence of statutory policies on enrolling SWD in government schools. At the beginning of this century, there were no detailed and systematic national data on enrolling students with a disability in inclusive settings, special classes, and special schools in Australia (Dempsey et al. 2002). Differences between States in their definitions of disability, and the lack of a national database which tracked enrolment across special needs, made it difficult to identify clear trends in Australia. Additionally, changes in mechanisms for identifying students with a disability enrolled in mainstream schools made it difficult to detect the impact of both policy and legislation on enrolment (Dempsey et al., 2002). There was a shortage of data specifically addressing legislation and special education policy for state schools.

*The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)* and the subsequent Disability Discrimination Regulations of 1996, together with the *Disability Standards for Education* (2005), have implications for the education of students with disabilities in both government and non-government schools. One of the significant and positive results of the DDA legislation was the increased participation of SWD in mainstream schooling. Speaking at an inquiry into educating SWD, Peter Crimmins (2003) from AACS, was concerned to ensure that the economic and social benefits of mainstream school education should be available to the over 1,200 students with disabilities attending Christian schools. AACS considered the absence of definitive policy and financial commitment on SWD to be a matter of discrimination against SWD in non-government schools. Crimmins considered there was a real problem of credibility in the Government’s rhetoric on the issues of social inclusion and disability. There was no new commitment of funds.
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for large populations of disabled and disadvantaged children in non-government schools (Crimmins, 2003).

This was an important area of conflict for educating SWD in Christian schools. Crimmins (2003) was particularly critical of the State and Commonwealth Government funding policies. According to him, the confusion over the definition of SWD was one reason SWD in Christian schools did not get adequate funding from the Commonwealth government in 2002. The reasons for not attracting Commonwealth funding included differing definitions of disability from State to State which resulted in some students being ineligible for funding. Yet, SWD education, funded by the Commonwealth, represented 1.9 per cent of the student population in 2001. There may have been other SWD educated in AACS member schools in 2001 that, for various reasons, did not attract Commonwealth funding.

Prasser (2009a) added to the views expressed by Crimmins in a commissioned, detailed study of independent schools and issues of funding for SWD. He wrote that Queensland’s independent schools were enrolling an increasing number of SWD, with the number rising by 122 per cent between 2002 and 2008. According to Prasser, around 20 per cent of SWD attended non-government schools across Australia. He believed that the independent schools were neither receiving adequate funding for SWD, nor did they have access to the range of services that are a feature of other school systems. Prasser argued there was an increasing number of SWD in independent schools, but the problem of definition of SWD and funding meant these schools could not educate these students to the standard they needed (Prasser, 2009a). Shortage of funding, therefore, appears to be an important cause of tension involved with education of SWD in RICSQ.
Added to funding issues was the confusion over definitions of SWD. How did schools and their Principals define disability? How people understand an issue is important in determining how they act towards those involved—the core of an interpretivist approach that will be considered later. Gaining knowledge of different views of disability should help to understand how principals in RICSQ resolve their beliefs and values and their practical approach to education of SWD. It was thought that clarifying how the Principals of RICSQ defined disability would help understand how they responded to issues of funding for SWD, and the inclusion of all SWD.

Inclusion of SWD was an important principle for education of SWD. Educational policies for students with a disability in Australia, the United States of America (USA), and the United Kingdom (UK), and in most western countries have stipulated that inclusive placement should be a choice available to parents (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2008). The question arose as to how far this was being accomplished in regional independent schools in Queensland, Australia.

Prasser (2009b) and Crimmins (2003) agreed about the financial burden of Christian schools in enrolling SWD and the issue of confusion over definition of disability. Prasser stated that the funding gap between children at private and state schools could be up to $30,000, depending on the nature of their disabilities. This is on the top of the financial load of private schools who do not receive funding to put in wheelchair ramps and the like, and the only way to pay for such items is by raising their fees; and such a fee increase impacts on all parents in the school. Prasser believed that to resolve this issue, there needs to be clarity in defining special needs children.

Despite the conclusions of a Senate Report (2002) on the educating of SWD, differential funding for government and non-government schools remained a policy. Crimmins
(2003) stated that it was a well-known fact that SWD attending non-government schools received a fraction of the financial support from government sources which the same students would legally attract if they attended a government school.

Becker (2005) raised doubts about social justice and disability, and Conway (1992) researched the pressures of governments to legislate to the rights and needs of persons with a disability as a result of the failure to have those needs met in wider legislative provisions. Australian laws and regulations such as the Disability Services Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, and the potential legislation reflect the importance placed on ensuring that persons with a disability receive appropriate services. The problems of translating legislator services and rights into adequate practices could, however, be a source of frustration for all players in the field – persons with a disability, carers, advocates, service providers and governments.

It was the issue of government funding for SWD that was broadcast by Four Corners on ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2010). In an interview, Bill Shorten, then the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services, stated that the government could not afford the money needed for helping finance the education of children with a disability. ABC Four Corners told how parents of children with a disability were leaving for the United Kingdom (UK), where the government was more generous and forthcoming with finance and schooling for severely disabled students. The shortages of funding for SWD in Christian schools in Queensland was recognised as a policy issue for legislation.

In recent times Government at both Commonwealth and State levels have recognised the need to legislate on the rights and needs of anyone with a disability because of the earlier failure to have those needs met in wider legislative terms. Australian laws and
regulations, such as the *Disability Services Act* (1986) and the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* reflected the importance placed on ensuring that anyone with a disability receives suitable non-discriminatory services. The problems of translating legislator services and rights into satisfactory practices were, however, a source of frustration for anyone with a disability, as well as for carers, advocates, service providers and governments (Conway, 1992). The lack of choice for SWD in independent schools such as RICSQ is a vital issue upon which the research questions are based, seeking answers to whether SWD and their parents have an open and fair choice for educating their children with disabilities. Additionally, reports of elitism and fewer SWD in Christian schools were concerning issues revealed by the literature review.

### 2.4.1 A brief history of Christian schooling in Australia.

Buckingham (2010) a policy analyst for the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), explained the history of Australian schooling, which is briefly outlined here. The first schools in Australia were Christian schools established by the Anglican Church (Church of England) in New South Wales in the early days of British settlement in the late 1700s. Free ‘charity schools’, run by other denominations, gradually came into existence in the following decades. There were also some private commercial schools catering for middle-class boys, and schools offering instruction in etiquette, art and ‘polite accomplishments’ for girls. These did not give religious instruction, which was assumed to be provided at home or in church.

An attempt in the 1820s to establish non-denominational National schools for all students was defeated by the Catholic and Anglican churches. Charity schools run by clergy remained the major providers of education until the 1840s, when a dual system of denominational and National schools was established (Austin, 1961)
Between 1872 and 1895, the six Australian colonies passed education acts which committed them to the establishment of national systems of education entirely supported by central government funds, and under Ministerial control (Austin, 1961). As educating children remained a State responsibility after Federation, these colonial acts still constitute the legal status of the education systems of Australia.

Some States withdrew funding to religious denominational schools as new public schools opened. The Catholic Church was the most vehemently opposed to secular public education and maintained its schools under great financial stress for almost a century. State aid was restored by the Menzies Liberal government in 1964, initially in the form of grants to upgrade science teaching. By the end of the 1960s, federal and state governments were providing some recurrent funding to non-government schools (Buckingham, 2010).

State aid or public funding of non-government schools has continued in various guises since government and nongovernment schools have co-existed in Australia since 1846. In 1964, the Federal parliament passed legislation that allowed for Commonwealth provision of financial aid to nongovernment schools. Recommendations from the Karmel Report on Australian schools in 1973 formed the basis of the Commonwealth’s policy for funding government and nongovernment schools, and based on the principle of need (ACER, 1998).

The first period of non-government school growth was the post-WWII decade from 1950 to 1960. This growth was due to the post-War baby boom rather than a shift in enrolments to non-government schools; enrolments in government schools also grew strongly over that decade, with a 5.4% annual average increase (Buckingham, 2010).
Government schools have experienced a decline in the proportion of student enrolments since the late 1950s. The proportion of school students attending government schools fell from 71% in 1995 to 67% in 2005. Concerns were raised by some analysts about the weakening of the government school system as resources follow students to non-government schools. Ongoing debate about the capacity of government schools to deliver high quality education has also affected public confidence in these schools (ABS, 2006).

The second period of high growth in non-government schools was between 1980 and 1985, when enrolments grew at an annual average of 3%. But this time, the state school sector shrunk by an annual average of 0.8%, indicating a preference for non-government schools rather than a general increase based on population growth. This marked the beginning of a major shift in school education: the non-government sector continued to grow while the government sector remained static. In the 30-year period from 1979 to 2008, government schools have experienced a negative annual average growth rate of -0.15%. Since the 1980s, not only has the size of the non-government sector relative to the government sector changed, but the nature of schools within the non-government sector has also changed (Buckingham, 2010).

The number of government schools in Queensland decreased 4.1 per cent, from 1,305 in 1996 to 1,250 in 2006. Over the same period, non-government schools increased 11 per cent from 419 to 463. In 2006, there were 459,650 full-time government students in Queensland (an increase of 14 per cent from 1996) and 226,612 full-time non-government students (an increase of 39 per cent from 1996) (ABS, 2009a). Non-government schools, including non-systemic Christian schools, were increasing in number.
2.4.2 Independent Christian schooling.

The terms ‘independent’ and ‘Christian’ schools, as used in this research, requires clarifying. Faith-based schools in Australia are generally grouped together in a category of non-government schools, and are further categorised as Catholic or independent schools. Eighty-five per cent of independent schools maintain a religious affiliation (Independent Schools Council of Australia, as cited in Striepe and Clarke, 2009). An independent school is a non-government school that is governed, managed and accountable at the level of the individual school. Its governing body is autonomous. Independent schools in receipt of Commonwealth and State funding are incorporated non-profit organisations.

Although constituted independently, some independent schools with particular church or ethnic affiliations operate within a mutually supportive school system. As might be expected from such a description, independent schools are a diverse group (Dilley, 2004). Whilst many independent schools in Queensland have a particular religious affiliation, most schools do not require a student to be a member of that denomination. Some Christian schools are parent-controlled schools, in which a Christian-based curriculum was taught, whilst other Christian schools are more fundamentalist. Some independent schools are ecumenical, and have representatives from many faiths on their school’s board/council (Dilley, 2004).

Although not systemic, many independent Christian schools in Queensland are members of a Christian association. The main Christian association in Queensland is CSA, which fosters leadership, growth, and excellence in Christian school education. The membership of CSA includes approximately 150 schools Australia-wide, with 22 in Queensland. CSA has more than 60,000 students and 3,000 teaching staff. CSA’s commitment is to see
Christian beliefs and values impact on all aspects of practice and community life in its member schools. With Biblically based beliefs as a foundation, CSA provides leadership, services, and resources for its members, and generally works to advance the cause of Christian schooling (CSA, 2009).

Striepe and Clarke (2009) noted that writers have recognised that faith-based schools were expanding in number, growing in diversity and becoming an important part of education worldwide. The churches responsible for the increase in Christian schools in this study are largely Protestant Pentecostal churches. Growth was also gained in schools sponsored by the Anglican and Uniting churches. These churches and concerned parents have created new alternative private schools which were to provide working class people with a private education at a reasonable cost. These new schools have grown exponentially in the last 30 years.

According to Hughes (2001), other Christian schools such as the Baptist and Brethren made up a large part of the other non-government category. These small schools include both primary and secondary departments. Often, parents rate providing education for their children in their particular denominational tradition or stream (that is evangelical Christian) equal to quality traditional education.

In 1996, 11 per cent of the other non-government school category consisted of Christian Community Schools Ltd. (60 schools, 15,465 students). An extra 10 per cent was made up of Christian Parent Controlled Schools (56 schools, 20,641 students). Other noteworthy associations of Christian schools include the Christian Schools Association of Queensland and the South Australian Association of Christian Schools. There are also at least an additional 250 independent Christian schools, an estimated 100 of these unregistered (Hughes, 2001).
Buckingham (2010) stated that enrolment in non-government schools has been traditionally high in some religious groups such as Jewish and Catholic families, and this has changed little from 1996 to 2006. Australia has a relatively high concentration of religious schools by international standards: 94% of non-government schools have a religious affiliation. This is close to 30% of all schools. Government policies enable or facilitate the choice of a non-government school but parents make the final decision.

By comparison, religious schools comprise 68% of private schools in the United States (but less than 10% of all schools); 13% of private schools in Sweden (less than 2% of all schools); and 90% of private schools (60% of all schools) in the Netherlands. In England, most religious or “faith-based” schools are classified as government “maintained” schools and comprise 33% of that sector—totalling more than 6,800 schools. However, unlike in Australia, almost all religious schools in England are Roman Catholic or Anglican (Buckingham, 2010).

Wilkinson, Caldwell, Sellick, Harris, and Dettman (2006) covered the origins of state aid to Australian schools and its evolution since the Second World War. This included key periods of reform from Australian colonial origins to state aid under the Whitlam, Fraser, Hawke, and Keating governments, and state aid reforms under the Howard government. It is a very informative review, especially for background context and understanding of funding.

The Commonwealth government did not significantly involve itself in aid in the first half of the twentieth century. Wilkinson et al. (2006) elaborated on the landmark developments associated with forming the Australian Schools Commission in the early 1950s, and covered the years up to the Hawke-Keating and Howard Governments. These years of Hawke to Howard (former Prime Ministers) were years of significant and great
change for government funding to non-government schools. This is important literature in
the history of funding to non-government schools. It described the role of church and
state in the 20th century, as the church lost control of schooling and government public
schooling began (Wilkinson et al., 2006).

This research acknowledges the importance of these traditional schools (Anglican,
Lutheran, and Catholic) but specifically focuses on the Pentecostal or charismatic church
schools in the local regional area of Queensland. In the last 10 years alone, there has been
a significant rise of independent Christian schools in the local area of the Sunshine Coast,
with ten new schools being built. The number of independent schools in Queensland from
1993 to 2009 increased by 45 (ABS, 2010).

The rise of non-government schools continues up to the present time. Regional Christian
Independent Schools form a major part of this rise in non-government schools. The last
three decades has seen steady, solid growth in these affordable, local, faith-based schools,
and the emergence of what has become known as the Christian School sector. A hallmark
in the rise of these Christian schools was the establishment of associations such as CSA
(CSA, 2009).

An added problem for SWD is that schools and services in regional areas often lag behind
the city schools and services. SWD need specialist services; but in regional areas, these
may not be so readily available. In addition, the RICSQ fund these specialists themselves,
creating an added burden for educating SWD. Education in general, particularly at the
tertiary level, is less accessible in rural and remote areas than in larger metropolitan
centres. Many specialist services are simply not available in rural or regional areas
(Department of Immigration and Multicultural Indigenous Affairs, 2002).
The principal outcome was that Protestant, independent non-systemic schools function differently from systemic schools. The Principals have autonomy to act as business CEO’s. As well, Protestant independent schools give greater authority to the faith leadership of the Principal. Protestant, independent non-systemic school Principals have autonomy to act as business leaders, making decisions on finance, as well as faith leaders, guiding the school in spiritual matters. Both these criteria mean that these Principals have a more sharply defined role as business leader and faith leader than systemic school Principals. These two qualities contrast sharply with systemic schools.

2.4.4 Christian schooling: research in the USA.

Research by Eigenbrood (2005) in the US is relevant to this research. The study looked at educating SWD in faith-based rural schools and compared them to public schools. A survey was used to collect information about the special education services typically provided to students with mild disabilities in faith-based schools. Information was also gathered about teacher qualifications and instruction by special education teachers in these schools. The same information was gathered on a matched sample of public schools. Eigenbrood found that most faith-based schools provided some level of special education services to students with mild disabilities and used some special education services provided by public schools (2005). It is worth noting there were clear differences between the public and faith-based schools in Eigenbrood’s study, including (a) fewer students with identified disabilities in faith-based schools, (b) less special education training for the special education teachers in faith-based schools, and (c) less use of certain related services, such as physical therapy.

Eigenbrood suggested there was no reason put forward why there were fewer SWD in faith-based schools. McCormick (2005) agreed with Sutton (1993) who found that very
few schools in the American Association of Christian Schools had special education
programs. McCormick concluded that the needs of many Christian young people with
disabilities, who may want a Christian education, were not being met through Christian
schools. Therefore more time, more money, and more energy was needed to provide for
the educational needs of disabled students (McCormick, 2005).

McCormick considered that many in leadership positions in Christian schools did not
understand why it was necessary to provide for the needs of disabled young people. The
purpose and primary goals of Christian education and Christian special education are the
same. McCormick framed the role of the Christian school regarding SWD within the
belief that it is uniquely Christian to welcome PWD. He considered that more time and
money should be spent to provide for the educational needs of disabled students
(McCormick, 2005). Christian education should set an example for the inclusion of SWD.
The government might not see Christian schooling for SWD as a priority, and the
opposition to private Christian education could compound this problem.

Bassett (2008) explained that in the USA, public opinion of the private religious school
and parental choice in educating children is fervently debated. He discussed the voucher
system of funding. Vouchers provide support so that parents may make choices vital to
their children’s’ well-being. Vouchers complement their rights as citizens to equal
educational opportunities for their children. Bassett argued that the voucher system is a
secular idea with secular roots. It is a government program of aid to parents, who can then
make private choices about where they will spend their educational funds. Bassett argued
that governments need to assure the public that the educational standards of religious
schools are good. It must highlight that these schools can be trusted not to divert the
taxpayers’ money into self-interested sectarian purposes (Bassett, 2008).
Stymeist (2008) (USA) investigated what can be done to help students with special needs receive a quality education in Christian schools. She asked whether students with special needs are being educated in private Christian schools. She also questioned whether private Christian schools are allowing students with special need access to an education in their schools. Stymeist was concerned that while some Christian schools are making progress in extending services to students with special needs, Christian schools must make greater efforts toward understanding and raising awareness about the difficulties that students with special needs face. Stymeist believed that Christian schools must ensure their approaches are research-based. Christian schools need to examine how they are educationally intervening for students with special needs. Stymeist concluded that the current approaches Christian schools were taking toward helping students with special needs were limited, and that they needed to expand their financial and professional resources to accommodate these students in a manner of excellence. She asks: Who is to provide these funds – parents or the government?

In a more recent study, Craig (2010) examined the historical progression of the availability of special education in Conservative Christian Schools in the United States since 1950. Due to the limited nature of research in this field, a historical analysis was used to better understand how the development of special education in Conservative Christian Schools compared to the development of special education in Public Schools. The roles of funding and biblical support were examined.

2.4.5 SWD in Christian independent schools

The number of students with disabilities in schools is disputed by the Australian Education Union (AEU, 2002), which believes there are more SWD than are registered for funding purposes. The AEU maintains the incidence of students identified with a
disability (using whatever definition) has increased significantly in the last decade. The number of students in schools who have disabilities significantly exceeds the numbers of students identified with disabilities, for the purposes of receiving additional support. The incidence of disabilities in the general population exceeds 20 per cent; and depending on how disability is defined, the incidence in schools is somewhere between 12 to 20 per cent (Australian Education Union, 2002). According to the AEU, despite the lack of clear definition of SWD, there is more than 20 per cent of SWD in these schools.

The Executive officer of the AACS, Peter Crimmins (2004), corroborates this statistic. He states, that while more SWD are attending mainstream government and non-government schools, in the period 1991 to 2002, the number of SWD increased in independent non-government schools by 250 per cent (Crimmins, 2004). This represents an important rise in the number of SWD in Christian schools. In small rural areas, the issue of funding and health services compounds the provision of acceptable service.

Only a handful of Christian schools provide high-end help for disabled learners. These schools are rare throughout the world. There are only three Christian schools dedicated to SWD in the world (Vincent, 2006). As a reminder, McNair (2009) points out only 1% of religious schools in California have SWD. McNair (2007) also recommends further research to determine whether responses from Church leaders represent confusion about disability among respondents or differences due to denominational perspectives.
2.5 Funding and Educating SWD in Christian Independent Schools in Australia

The issue of funding of school education in Australia continues to be problematic. Funds are derived from both the Commonwealth and State governments. The allocative model is continually changing with each new Government.

2.5.1 Commonwealth and State funding.

Potts (1999) has described the issues of public and private funding in Australia. Australians returned to Commonwealth government the Labor Party in 1972 with a new policy of school funding. Since 1996, the Commonwealth has contributed to school funds as General Recurrent Grants (GRGs) at different rates for primary and secondary government and non-government school students. The current trend in Commonwealth funding for schools, with an increasing share for the non-government school sector, is expected to continue (Lindsay, 1995-6). This literature said nothing about funding for SWD.

Crimmins (2003) and Prasser (2009b) both expressed concern over funding for SWD in Christian schools. The funding of Australian private schools derives in part from Commonwealth and in part from State governments. Most funding to schools comes from State governments (55.5 per cent), while the remainder comes from the Commonwealth (22.5 per cent). Two concepts that drive Commonwealth funding to non-government schools are: (a) Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC), introduced in 1993, and (b) Socio-Economic Status (SES) funding formula (2001).

Australia’s $30 billion of funding for schools can be confusing for many because of the division between State and Commonwealth. The accounting approach (cash or accrual), and even time (financial or calendar year) is faulty. There are several sources of income
which flow into schools, and they are not in unison. They are sometimes slow to arrive at an individual school level on time (Dowling, 2007). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2006) examined trends in government and non-government student enrolments. It also focused on government funding of schools, household spending on school fees and the characteristics of families with children in government and non-government schools. It documented the funding for government and non-government schools as well as statistics for funding. It is interesting that, at the time of the report, Catholic schools received only 22 per cent of funding for their schools from parents while the independent schools received 53 per cent (ABS, 2006).

The ABS stressed that government schools and private schools receive equitable funding. The ABS report also pointed out that, at first glance, it appeared that students in government schools were funded at a higher level than are non-government school students. Taking into account the expenditure on non-government school students arising from private income, such as school fees, total expenditure per non-government school student in 2004 ($9,600 on average) is close to the average total amount spent per government school student ($10,000), plus a relatively small parent contribution. Expenditure per student in the non-government school sector can vary greatly between schools due to the diversity in school funding. For example, in 2004 total expenditure per student averaged $6,300 in Catholic schools compared with $12,100 in some Independent schools.

Not all the literature agrees with the ABS account of funding. Faith-based schools in Queensland have multiplied in the last two decades, especially in the South East, where independent schools are plentiful. RICSQ are increasing in number and enrolments, and in the last decade alone ten new Christian schools have been established. Christian school organisations are unhappy with the funding for SWD and have called this funding
shortfall discriminatory. Prasser (2009a) argued that this issue and that of a clear
definition of disabilities needs further detailed investigation. As noted in the just released
Productivity Commission’s Report on Government Services 2014, while governments
invest on average $15,768 per government school student in terms of recurrent costs, the
figure for private school students is only $8,546. The reality is that even though Catholic
and independent schools enrol 34.9 per cent of state and territory students, such schools
receive only 22.4 per cent of what state and Commonwealth governments spend on
education in terms of recurrent costs (Donnelly, 2014).

*The Australian* newspaper (November 3, 2014) found that 1 in 5 school students has a
disability and requires financial support at school; this is almost 3 times as many
students who are receiving funding for special needs. The report by
PricewaterhouseCoopers surveyed 77 schools across the nation to determine the level of
support currently provided for students and found 18.6 per cent of students on average
had a disability. This finding has huge potential cost implications for federal and state
budgets, representing more than 18.6 per cent of students across the nation. This is almost
double the previous estimate of 10.6 per cent of students.

Christian Schools Australia demands equality and rights for students with disabilities in
Christian schools (CSA, 2007). CSA refers to funding in this country for SWD in
Christian schools as unfair, denying the democratic choice of SWD to attend the school
they believe best suits their needs and values. A survey of CSA found there were
shortfalls of up to $20,000 per student with disability. CSA argues that current funding
policies discriminate against SWD who choose a non-government school. SWD will not
have access to the same extra funding as state school students to meet their needs (CSA,
2007). CSA does not propose a solution to this problem. Prasser (2009a) agrees with this
criticism and suggests an alternative.
Prasser (2009a) pointed out that independent schools are calling for funding equality for the state’s most vulnerable students, with research showing a significant shortfall in government support for students with disabilities in independent schools. He reported that Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) argued the existing funding and policy models governing the education of SWD require an urgent overhaul. He stated that Queensland’s independent schools are enrolling an increasing number of students with disabilities, with the number rising by 122 per cent between 2002 and 2006.

Prasser (2009b) added that an analysis of funding suggests that a SWD in independent schools could receive less than 20 per cent of the funding granted to the same student if attending a state school. He cited a 2005 Monash University study commissioned by the Federal Government, which decided that payments to non-government schools could be still doubled without achieving sector parity. He suggested a limited voucher model could be adapted to direct funds to parents of students with disabilities for the express purpose of spending on approved education services in whichever school they chose.

Prasser insisted there is a clear need for a review of current policies and funding governing SWD and a uniform definition of disabilities across Australian jurisdictions. He quoted Independent Schools Queensland’s (ISQ) Acting Executive Director David Robertson, who pointed out that the Federal Government had established a Senate Committee Inquiry in 2002, but that there was still little action on resolving the funding issues. Robertson believed SWD were an important and growing part of Christian school communities and deserved the same opportunities and life chances as other Queensland children (Prasser 2009b).

Nader (2010) reported in a newspaper article that the then Liberal National Party (LNP) Opposition leader (Tony Abbott) promised to include a voucher for SWD to take to any
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school. The money would follow students rather than be given to a school (Nader, 2010). This issue of vouchers is sharply debated in the United States, where bureaucracy has impeded the progress of the system. However, many parents and educators argue that the voucher system is not the perfect solution and is riddled with unnecessary barriers (Heasley, 2010).

In 2008, a panel led by David Gonski was commissioned to make recommendations regarding funding of education in Australia. Many submissions supported the need for additional investment for disadvantaged students, and SWD, and that funding should be the same regardless of school or sector. It was also noted that levels of funding were not the complete solution and that consideration must include how the resources are directed to address disadvantage (Gonski, 2011). The Gonski Report which was presented to the previous Labor Government, but which failed to act on its recommendations, is likely to change under the Liberal government which took office in 2014. The Liberal Government, now led by Tony Abbott, has announced a further review and has not committed to developing a new funding model. As such funding models for SWD in independent and in State schools remains in a state of uncertainty
2.6 Conclusion

The first part of the literature review covered the complexity of definitions of disability and the problems this has posed for policy and education of SWD, especially in RICSQ. The concept of models of disability – religious, medical, social and ableist models – particularly helped to clarify how disability is defined. How educators and scholars interpret and define disability was important for helping to understand how Principals might conceive educating students with disabilities, and the review noted the confusion in official organisations trying to find a common definition.

The medical model is a natural development of the religious model, but treats the individual as sick and brings exclusion and stigma with the diagnosis. The medical model is based on personal tragedy, whereas the social model is based on the social oppression theory. The social model makes a distinction between impairment and disability and its focus is on fighting against prejudice and discrimination and defending self-determination of the rights of PWD. The literature reviewed helped construct a framework of references by which the interviews of Principals of RICSQ were analysed, giving rise to the question; did the Principals and educators of SWD in RICSQ represent a particular model or view of disability?

The next section of the literature review focussed on Christian education in Australia and noted the rapid growth of Christian independent schools in the latter part of the last century and the beginning of this century. The concern of AACS regarding the absence of definitive policy and financial commitment on SWD was highlighted and the relevant literature reviewed. Particularly important was the policy review of Prasser (2009b) regarding the financial load of Christian schools enrolling SWD, views reiterated by Crimmins (2003).
The third section of the literature review focussed on the changing global contexts of disability and their importance for education of SWD. This covered principles of inclusion, least restrictive environment and social justice. A review of the literature on these concepts was necessary to construct a framework that could clarify the perspectives and policies on disability of Principals of RICSQ. Literature on the history of special education and particularly on the literature of special education in Christian schools in Australia was also reviewed. It was noted that funding was a source of tension for independent schools. Prasser (2009a and 2009b) was particularly critical suggesting the funding policy was disadvantaging the most vulnerable students. He argued that Queensland’s independent schools received less than 20 per cent of the funding granted to the same student in the state system.

The rise of the Pentecostal and independent churches in the last century has produced an abundance of alternative Christian schools. Literature from Australia and from the USA revealed that SWD in Christian schools such as these deserve more attention. There was relatively little in the research literature to show the nature and quality of the services provided to students with a disability in private schools and in response to the inadequacies revealed in the literature review, this study aimed to address the problem.
Chapter 3: Research Design, Methodology and Method

This chapter of the thesis describes how the empirical research was conceptualised, designed and implemented. It outlines what Crotty (1998) calls the “scaffold” of the design (pp. 1-2). Crotty’s idea of scaffolding the research helped to give a “sense of stability and direction” (p. 2), and provided a useful means of sorting the different parts of research design into a logically connected framework.

The chapter begins with the conceptualisations or philosophical underpinnings of the study, the epistemology and theoretical perspective. It then summarises the technical aspects: data collection methods and data analysis, and their design and implementation. These were developed around the leading research question, which was: How do regional independent Christian schools in Queensland deal with the issues of educating students with disabilities? Finally, there is a brief note on ethical considerations and a concluding remark on the implications of the results. The two chapters that follow are concerned with the findings from the data gained in the empirical research.
3.1 Epistemology

Each study in social research is shaped by a dominant way of knowing or “epistemology” (Walter, 2006; Crotty, 1998). Epistemologies are bound up with “ontology”, - that branch of philosophy that studies the nature of existence (reality) or the basic model of that which can be known (Laible, 2000). The epistemology that underpins this study is constructionism. A social constructionist epistemology views knowledge as the co-construction of the observer and the observed (Crotty, 1998). This implies that social reality is an always-emergent profusion of social meanings and relations of power. It is a work in progress that must be made sense of by its various participants who in turn are constantly re-shaping it.

Crotty (1998) explained that all knowledge is dependent on constructing the interactions of human practices between human beings and their world. What this means is that human beings construct meaning as they engage with the world they interpret (Blumer, 1969; Gee, 2005). This research will explore the meanings that the Principals of RICSQ hold in relation to phenomena such as SWD, their education within a Christian context and resultant policies. This epistemological approach directs the study towards finding out, in as much detail as possible, how Principals construct disability and therefore SWD, and seeks to tease out the constructions that the Principals make of the key phenomena of the study.

One way that a social researcher can determine a participant’s sense of knowing is by dealing with the discourses within which actors are already situated, as well as those they explicitly articulate and perhaps reconstruct. Therefore, discourse analysis is one of the means of analysing the data collected in this study.
3.2 Theoretical perspective

The chosen perspective for this thesis is interpretivism. Theoretical perspectives are often conceived as the lens through which the researcher approaches empirical research, and are the assumptions the researcher brings to the methodology. Crotty wrote: “The interpretivist approach…looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (1998, p. 67). O’Donoghue put it in a different way: “This approach emphasizes social interaction as the basis for knowledge” (2007, p. 9). Both summaries refer to a number of common aspects, such as the need to understand the meanings participants carry, their sources, their impact on behaviour and the importance of interaction. O’Donoghue (2007) succinctly summed up the role of the interpretivist researcher: “The researcher uses his or her skills as a social being to try to understand how others understand their world (pp. 9 –10).

3.2.1. Interpretivism.

Interpretivism can be traced back to Weber (1864-1920) who argued that, in human sciences, most researchers are concerned with understanding rather than explaining. Weber located the study of society in the context of human beings acting and interacting (Crotty, 1998). A means of understanding by individuals is through symbolic interaction. This theory grounded the assumptions of individuals (in the case of this research study, the Principals), and dealt with issues such as language, communication, interrelationships and community.

Walter (2006) explained that an interpretivist paradigm focuses on social agency. It is concerned with the way people as social beings, interrelate and interact in society. From the interpretive perspective, the human world is a world of meaning in which our actions take place on the basis of shared understandings. To understand society, it is necessary to
understand people’s motives and interpretations of the world. The meanings people (actors) give to their circumstances are the explanation of what they do. The micro-level emphasis of the interpretivist paradigm and its focus on the role of meanings, in which individuals interpret social life, means that this paradigm is fundamentally associated with qualitative research methods such as interviews.

Thus, the interviews with Principals of RICSQ focused on questions of defining disability. This enabled the researcher to understand the meaning they attach to the definitions by examining their language, actions and symbols of communication. A theoretical perspective informs the methodology and thus provides a context for the process. Schwandt (1994), as cited in Denzin and Lincoln (1994), explained the roots of interpretivism, stating: “Painted in broad strokes, the canvas of interpretivism is layered with ideas stemming from the German intellectual tradition of hermeneutics and the verstehen tradition in sociology” (p. 119).

3.2.1.1 Symbolic interaction. The theoretical perspective of interpretivism includes Symbolic Interaction (Crotty, 1998), which grounds these assumptions, and deals with issues such as language, interrelationships and community. According to Crotty (1998), symbolic interactionism is about the basic social interactions whereby we enter into the perceptions, attitudes and values of a community, becoming persons in the process. The symbolic interactionist tradition of interpretivism stems from the Chicago School of Social Research and was encapsulated by Blumer (1969), who laid out three premises that explain the nature of symbolic interactionism within the interpretivist framework:

- The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them.
The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows.

The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he [sic] encounters (1969, p. 2).

Interpretivism is about people behaving according to the meanings that they give things. Therefore, interpretivism is a research perspective for social theories including symbolic interactionism, which assigns a central place to the method of *verstehen* (empathy). At the base of this tradition is the definition of a difference between explanations in causal terms, as opposed to interpretation by understanding (*verstehen*), as a suitable model for the humanities (Webb, 1991).

O’Donoghue (2007) described two basic types of studies which could be developed from the symbolic interactionist view of the individual. The first is one where studies are aimed at generating theory on the perspectives which participants hold with regard to something. The second is where studies aim to generate theory on how participants deal with a phenomenon. This research uses both approaches and it is argued that how Principals define disability will influence their ways of dealing with SWD. However, the second view dominates the research and therefore the aim of the study is to generate theory on how Principals of Christian schools in regional Queensland deal with educating students with disabilities.

This research study emphasises the interpretation of policy (Ball, McGuire and Braun, 2012). It attempts to uncover how Principals give meaning to disability, to Christianity and to Christianity’s views on disability. The making of meaning and of constructing responses to policies (Ball, McGuire and Braun, 2012) around educating SWD by
Educating students with disabilities in Queensland independent Christian schools

Principals of RICSQ is the main focus of this thesis. Disability theories use a disability interpretive lens to focus on disability as a dimension of human difference and not as a defect (Creswell, 2013). It is this theoretical perspective that has been adopted in this research method and is reflected in this research. The literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) focused on the various definitions of disability.
3.3 Methodology and methods

Crotty described “methodology” as a research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods, and links them to desired outcomes. Methodology is a way of connecting the research to the world; a way of supplying a framework for posing questions and answering them. Crotty’s elements of a compatible epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and research methods ensured the soundness of this investigation, and created an orderly segmentation for the study.

The methodology selected to approach this study is interview research (Trainor, 2012), which is appropriate because the strategy is concerned with trying to elucidate the knowledge, understandings and meanings that participants have towards the phenomena being investigated – in this case, students with a disability, education and Christian perspectives, among others. Rubin and Rubin (2005) described qualitative interviewing as the art of hearing data. Within the methodology of this study, documents are used as a further source of data, but the interview remains primary. While the methodology is explicit about the methods of data collection – interviews – there are a number of ways of analysing the resultant data; and, in this methodology, there are two methods of data analysis used. The first is thematic analysis and the second is discourse analysis. The chapter continues by explaining and describing the data collection methods before detailing the two methods of data analysis that are employed.

3.3.1 Data collection.

The data collection methods of the study are twofold – principally, in-depth interviews and also some document analysis. The interviews attempted to uncover the opinions, beliefs, understandings, awareness, and problems that school Principals of RICSQ spoke of in educating SWD. The documents were searched as an alternative source of data to
triangulate the interview data, or as contrasts. Documents included Principals’ reports and newsletters, annual general business reports, notices and videos on webpages, and electronic marketing material. It was important in reporting these documents that specific school sites and Principals were not able to be identified. Care was taken to minimise the identity of the schools by reference to the particular web pages and documents.

The first contact with the proposed participants was through a letter outlining the purpose of the interview and including an information sheet about the proposed research. Following the initial letter, the researcher contacted each person by telephone to set an interview date. Some Principals were also followed up by email with information about the research. Consent forms were signed before the interview. Because the research was in regional Queensland and distance was a problem, some participants were interviewed by telephone.

3.3.1.1 In-depth, semi-structured interviews. These were chosen because they helped to create an atmosphere for Principals to communicate their perspectives without control or inhibitions. Face-to-face interviews have the best reputation for response rates and the quality and flexibility of the data gathered (Walter, 2006). Blaikie (2000), Denzin (1989), Stromquist (1997), Todres (2007) and Walters (2006) all extol the benefits of the interview in qualitative research.

Johnson and Christensen (2007) described some of the strengths of the interview method. Interviews are beneficial for measuring attitudes and most other content of interest, and can provide information about participants’ internal meanings and ways. They allow probing and can provide in-depth information of an accurate nature. Rubin and Rubin (2005) pointed out benefits of qualitative interviewing, which requires more intense listening than normal conversations, a respect for and curiosity about what people say, a
willingness to acknowledge what is not understood, and the ability to ask about what is not yet known. The information is often able to be guided by research questions and adapted for the nature of the interview.

Data were collected via ten semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Fifteen Principals were contacted via letter, with a request to take part in the research. It was difficult to get answers to these letters. Several Principals did not answer and were contacted several times via phone or email. At the outset, three agreed to interviews; but as the research developed others agreed to be interviewed. Some were ex-Principals of several schools. In the end, nine Principals or ex-Principals of Christian schools in Queensland agreed to be interviewed. The only person who was not a Principal, but was interviewed, worked as the administrative officer of Queensland Policy Network Organisation for independent schools Queensland (QPNO)

This officer of QPNO was asked to take part in the interviews. According to the web site, Independent Schools Queensland (QPNO) is a leading source of guidance on the leadership and administration of independent schools for Principals. Services include advice on effective governance, workplace relations, compliance and operational management, as well as provision of examples of school policies on school administration, risk management, ICT management, work health and safety, copyright, student wellbeing and other matters. The Queensland Grant Authority, a subsidiary company of QPNO, administers Australian and Queensland Government capital funding for independent schools.

Principals interviewed often referred to the Education Queensland and QPNO guidelines for defining disability and assessing SWD. QPNO acts in the interests of Queensland independent schools to protect their autonomy, which includes the rights of schools to
Educating students with disabilities in Queensland independent Christian schools

decide unique forms of governance. There are currently 180 independent schools in Queensland that are members of QPNO with over 105,600 students.

The QPNO funding officer spoke about specific disabilities that were assessed according to the Disability Standards for Education. Some disabilities do not meet the criteria for funding. She pointed out that the Colleges were independent and QPNO did not decide on policies. Therefore, QPNO did not comment on issues particular to Christian Colleges. This interview helped clarify the role of QPNO and was important because several Principals recommended that I interview this particular officer. This interview was about the general role of funding under the QPNO guidelines, unlike the interviews with Principals which were specifically related to policies of educating SWD.

3.3.2 Interview procedures. One aim in generating successful semi-structured interviews was to ensure an open, non-threatening atmosphere. A relaxed atmosphere for discussion rather than that usually associated with more formal “question and answer” interview sessions is important (Taylor and Bogdan, as cited in O’Donoghue, 2007). O’Donoghue explained that a relaxed, rather than a formal site, should be preferred so that there is no rigid question and answer routine in place. Five of the interviews were in the Principal’s office. Two interviews took up to an hour while the other interviews took less than an hour. The interviews by telephone were briefer.

3.3.2.1. Before the interviews. Informed consent was gained, before explaining that the Principals’ right to privacy and protecting the identity of the subject were guaranteed, before the interviews took place. Principals were asked about recording the interviews and, if agreement was given, this was done. Information was recorded using a Sony voice recorder which could be uploaded to Sound CD. This CD allowed voices to be transcribed and had a range of playback options.
3.3.2.2. Conduct of the interviews. The interview began with building a rapport with the participant in several stages. The interviewee was encouraged through conversation to open up to the interviewer. Once this rapport was established, it was desirable to find a way to connect with the participant and his or her experiences. Questions were clarified and additional information requested where necessary. The flexibility of an informal interview meant that this is possible. The types of questions allowed the interviewee to answer according to their experience. Some variation in the questions allowed for the role Principals were playing at present in the education of SWD.

Each Principal was quickly briefed regarding the recording method and asked if they were happy with this. Once this rapport was established, it was desirable to find a way to connect with the participant and his or her experiences. The participants were encouraged through conversation to “open up” to the interviewer. The first question asked was about the length of time of the Principal’s association with Christian education. This focused attention on the Principal’s experience and involvement in Christian education. The average amount of time of the Principals’ work was over 10 years, and stories of working in remote country schools were retold. Having established that the Principals were very experienced opened up channels of communication that were acceptable.

3.3.2.3 Face-to-face interviews. The first interview was relaxed, and the Principal of Zechariah Christian College was willing to share his history and experience, contributing stories and anecdotal information about SWD from his experiences in the rural schools in which he had been involved.

The next interview was with the Principal of Bethlehem Christian College. He was reminded of the information and aims of the research. His interview was also relaxed and his remarks seemed casual and colourful. His school was a larger school than the previous
school, and it did have what seemed to be a fair representative number of SWD in the school.

A third Principal was met and interviewed. The Principal of Damascus Christian College approach was formal and committed to showing his school’s tradition and progress. He was known to me. In fact, my children all attended this school. The school was about 30 years old and had been able to extend to include “sister” schools in several other countries. Again this Principal was happy to tell stories about disability and his experiences, but was factual and formal when discussing the policies of special education.

The following interview was even more formal, with the Principal of Capernaum Christian College choosing a very large office or board room to conduct the interview. He regarded himself as Chief Executive Officer of a large business. He was also happy to give detailed anecdotal information about disability and SWD. His school was a more traditional Christian school, with wealthier parents but very few SWD. In his interview, the reason for so few SWD was made apparent.

The Principal of Gethsemane Christian College had been in several Christian schools which were also more traditional. She described her experiences and her attempts at establishing policies with parents of SWD. This Principal was not from a theological background and her interpretation of education was not as formally religious as the previous Principal. She was also now a Doctor of Philosophy and lecturer in education at a university.

Later, well into the research, an ex-Principal of one of the schools was interviewed. He was the founding Principal of a Christian school, of which the present Principal was also interviewed. The former Principal was able to give information on the reasons for the establishing of this school. His perspectives were not only important for history but also
religious perspectives on the nature of Christian schools. In addition, he had worked with SWD in overseas schools.

Four participants were interviewed via telephone, three because of the remote country area where they were situated. The QPNO officer was interviewed via telephone because she found this more convenient and was quite busy.

The difficulty of getting local Christian school Principals to respond to the research inquiry was a reason that many more traditional Christian school Principals were interviewed. Yet this mixture and experience of principals was worthwhile and aided in being able to compare and explore the rise of Christian schooling and its ideas of educating SWD.

3.3.2.4 Transcribing of interviews. Interviews were transcribed one at a time and were then read for meaning and content by the principal researcher. Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2013) wrote that transcription practices can be thought of in terms of a scale with two dominant modes:

- naturalism, in which every utterance is transcribed in as much detail as possible, and
- denaturalism, in which idiosyncratic elements of speech (e.g., stutters, pauses, nonverbal, involuntary vocalizations) are removed.

These two positions correspond to certain views about the representation of language. With a naturalized approach, language is thought to represent the real world. However, a balance of natural and de-natural was struck with the transcripts being slightly edited to remove “ums”, “ahs”, and repetition (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2013). Transcripts were
returned to the Principals, if they so wished, so that they could make any changes they wanted, or, in the worst extreme, withdraw.

3.4.1 Documents.

On-line school publications provided a means of documenting the communication between the Principal and the parents, students, and staff of the school. Principals may use these as means of communicating issues, policies and procedures, as well as vision, mission, and ethos. State Government accreditation of independent schools requires that policy statements are publicly available. Closed and restricted documents were not used unless permission was given; only open archived and open published documents were sought and collected. Collection and analysis of these documents was planned to provide further understandings of the Principal’s relationships with the school community. The web pages were not analysed in detail because this would allow easy identification of the school. Most schools had unique web sites with key logo’s and identifying sales and marketing phrases. As a precaution secondary documents were kept to a minimum discussion so as not to reveal the identities of the schools.
3.5 Data analysis.

The methodology of interview research is explicit about the principal method of data collection – interviews – but there are a number of ways of analysing the resultant data. The aim in data analysis is to uncover the meanings contained in the information collected. In this study, the interview data was analysed twice, using two different approaches that yielded very different, but related and important, findings. First, a thematic analysis of the data was undertaken; in essence this revealed ‘what’ the Principals spoke about. Second, a discourse analysis was undertaken. Here the emphasis was on ‘how’ the Principals spoke; what were the discourses that underpinned the responses of the Principals in the interviews. As a result, there are two chapters on the findings from the research, each chapter related to the method of data analysis.

The overall framework for data analysis was based on the model developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). They described data analysis as flowing from three activities: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions, or verification (pp. 10-11). The most common forms of the first of these activities – data reduction – involve the researcher labelling the textual data in some way – usually referred to as coding which constitutes the “bedrock of the analysis” (Howitt & Crammer 2014, p. 398). Data display involves sorting the coded data into representations that give clarity to what has been unearthed. To best display the data in this study, use was made of the storage and display features of NVivo™, the software program developed by QSR International (http://www.qsrinternational.com/about-qsr.aspx). From data display the third activity, drawing conclusions was facilitated.
The section below begins with an outline of the coding processes, which involved the use of three types of coding – ‘in vivo’, ‘descriptive’ and ‘a priori’. Within each of these sections, there are examples of displays from NVivo.

3.5.1.1 Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves “breaking open” the data (Punch, 2009, p. 183) using codes to facilitate this. These codes are then grouped into larger constructs called themes. These themes reveal the ‘content’ of the interviews – what the Principals, in this case, spoke about. As will be shown below, six major themes appeared from the data being analysed in this way.

Miles and Huberman distinguished between codes and themes. They distinguished between a code as a word or phrase that describes a segment of the data that is explicit; in contrast, a theme is a phrase or sentence that describes a more subtle and tacit process. For example, in this research, ‘parents’ was recognised as a code, whereas ‘partnership with parents’ was highlighted as a theme.

The sections that follow explain the three types of coding that took place in this phase of data analysis. The first type was in vivo coding; the second was descriptive coding and the third was a priori coding (Saldaña, 2009). The first two types of coding give primacy to the data – the codes emerge from them. The idea in the first two types of coding is to ‘let the data talk’. The third type of coding involves the researcher searching for codes from pre-determined categories – such as evidence of a particular definition of disability, which would have come from the literature review.

3.5.1.1 In vivo coding. The first level of thematic coding used the process of “in vivo” coding, as explained by Strauss & Corbin (1998). To understand “in vivo” coding, one must first understand coding. A code (noun) is a concept, a word that signifies what the data means. Coding (verb), on the other hand, is the analytic process of examining data,
line by line, or paragraph by paragraph, for significant meanings, events, experiences, feelings that are then denoted as concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

‘In vivo’ concepts are usually singular words or phrases that are actually contained within the data (Saldaña, 2009). They are often key words or terms employed by groups or individuals that give a deeper insight into their worldview or experience; thus they can be very telling and revealing. The interesting thing about in vivo codes is that a researcher knows the minute the idea is expressed by a respondent, that this is something to take note of. The term that is used expresses meaning in a far better way than any word that could be provided by the analyst (Strauss, 1987). Some examples of these phrases in the research were “wiring of the brain”; “there is only so much of the cake that can be sliced up to go around”; “you’re talking education to get funding”, and “disabilities equals funding”.

After the interviews, the data were stored in NVivo™, in alignment with the research guiding questions, a process suggested by Saldaña (2009). Below, in Table 3.1, is an example of some of the ‘in vivo’ codes stored in NVivo and displayed accordingly.
Table 3.1

*Some of the In vivo Coding Displayed: From Part of NVivo Storage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Enrol</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Teacher/ SWD</th>
<th>Support of Parents</th>
<th>Tension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>Solomon Joram</td>
<td>Not all “Pie”</td>
<td>Funding legislation</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capernaum</td>
<td>Benjamin Williams</td>
<td>Tricky Very few SWD</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>Cain Brown</td>
<td>Policy forms</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>Daniel Jones</td>
<td>Can’t accommodate</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gethsemane</td>
<td>Abigail Goshen</td>
<td>Enrol despite funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(QPNO)</td>
<td>Anna Taylor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Isaac Lyon</td>
<td>Board paid for some SWD</td>
<td>Funding but government</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazareth</td>
<td>Baruch Wilson</td>
<td>More SWD in other states</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑↑↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessalonian</td>
<td>Nathan Johnson</td>
<td>Parents have choice</td>
<td></td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑↑↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>Aaron Smith</td>
<td>More than other student</td>
<td></td>
<td>↓↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.2 Descriptive coding.

The second type of coding was descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2009, pp. 87-91). Descriptive coding is where the analyst gives his/her own words or phrases to categorise what the participants said. These codes are identifications of the topics, not necessarily abbreviations of the content. The data was labelled or coded in order to give meaning to the data. Each code was given a name. An example of description of the data was seen when statements of the Principals were assigned to topics – honesty, anti-discrimination, SEU, changes, internal policies for SWD, enrolment and inclusion. Descriptive coding leads to a category or an account of the data’s content. Thus, descriptive coding was a process of looking at the data and documenting from the interviews tangible products that the Principals talked about.
Educating students with disabilities in Queensland independent Christian schools

Table 3.2

*Some of the Descriptive Coding Displayed in NVivo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Definition of Disability</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>Solomon Joram</td>
<td>Loving Caring</td>
<td>Medical Biopsychosocial</td>
<td>Responsibility to help SWD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capernaum</td>
<td>Benjamin Williams</td>
<td>Caring Safe</td>
<td>Economic Medical</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>Cain Brown</td>
<td>Caring Supportive</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Costly/admin Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>Daniel Jones</td>
<td>Caring Safe</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Discourage SWD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gethsemane</td>
<td>Abigail Goshen</td>
<td>Loving Caring</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Parents weigh up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Policy Network Organisation (QPNO)</td>
<td>Anna Taylor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Economic Medical</td>
<td>Determines funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Isaac Lyon</td>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Economic Medical</td>
<td>Disability = funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazareth</td>
<td>Baruch Wilson</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Economic Medical Christian</td>
<td>Economic God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessalonian</td>
<td>Nathan Johnson</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Discrepancy in funding State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.2.1. A priori coding. While the ‘in vivo’ and descriptive styles of coding proved to be productive in quantity of codes, a further method of coding was also used – what Saldaña (2009) called a priori coding (p. 62). A priori coding simply means developing codes in advance of the data analysis process and searching in the transcripts or documents for these codes. For example, a priori codes included “medical model of disability”; “social model of disability”; “in-service training”. Table 4 illustrates some of the coding known a priori coding.

All research is motivated in some way or other — that is, it is directed towards exploring a particular issue, often (although by no means always) formulated in the form of a research question. A priori codes are categories that relate firmly to these interests. In general, a priori codes are created to categorize aspects of a more general pre-specified interest. A good example of a priori coding is where Principals talked about teacher qualifications, lack of training, empathy for SWD, learning support.
Table 3.3

_Some Examples of A priori Coding: From NVivo Storage_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of SWD</td>
<td>22 high</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>11 Primary</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of disability</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>///</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>In-services training</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anti-discrimination</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEU</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>Internal policies</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension</td>
<td>Hardship clause</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is best for the child?</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limits to number of SWD</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>///</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents pay</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business to run</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWD</td>
<td>Needs being met</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A priori coding involves the researcher searching for codes from pre-determined categories – such as evidence of a particular definition of disability, which were relevant from the literature review.
3.3.3.2 Data display.

NVivo™ as explained earlier was useful for displaying data and drawing conclusions. This process is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 3.1. The functionality of NVivo in Jones (2007).*
This analysis was completed using the earlier version of NVivo 8. After the interviews were recorded they were entered electronically into NVivo in the ‘Sources’ file labelled ‘Internals’. They were then transcribed and entered into folders containing each participant’s interviews. The interviews were coded manually on paper (see Appendix) using the three types of codes outlined above – in vivo, descriptive and a priori. Following the manual coding process, these codes were entered into the NVivo program as themes in the ‘Nodes’ section of NVivo.

Within the ‘Nodes’ section the themes were then sorted and entered into the ‘Tree’ nodes, grouping the themes into ‘Compartments’ and ‘Sub themes’. The NVivo program had another folder called ‘Cases’ into which the interviews were entered recording further details of the participants. These cases contained the questions and answers of the participants. Another folder in the NVivo program labelled ‘Relationships’ and this folder, containing evidence of the participant interviews, allowed the connection of two or more cases to be compared and contrasted. The codes were given shortcuts in another folder labelled ‘Attributes’ which was useful to store demographic data, such as information about participants’ length of service in the schools, and in Christian education, for example. Care was taken not to include information that would identify the Principals or schools.

The program’s ‘Find’ bar was used for searching all folders with matching items that could be displayed. The data was explored in NVivo by using the ‘Queries’ tool where the results were stored as models. These could be visualised and preserved as charts or diagrams.

Reports were also generated and were useful as summaries or analysis. Leech (2011) discussed the many authors who wrote about NVivo, but recommended only two (Leech
and Onwuegbuzie, 2007) who go further than do most authors of these textbooks by
describing seven types of analyses, namely, constant comparison analysis, classical
content analysis, keyword-in-context, word count, domain analysis, taxonomic analysis,
and componential analysis; and they outline how to conduct each manually.

These authors have also created a compendium of 18 qualitative analyses to assist the
school psychology researcher in choosing the appropriate analysis for their works. One
recommended tool in NVivo was keyword searches, or Keyword-In-Context (KWIC)
searches. A search can be made for a word like “normal” to see how many references
were made to it by each participant or how much coverage a particular word has. This can
be useful for analysing language and increase understanding of how words are utilised
(see for example, Figure 3.2). This had value on both the thematic analysis and the
discourse analysis.

Display of the data seeks meaning on a limited sorts of the data, and diagrams or tables
are drawn to display what is important. The data appears compact and organised and
accessible. See Figure 3.2 below.
Figure 3.2. Example of developing relationships between the descriptive codes using NVivo.
This display was completed in an NVivo search query around the idea of “caring”, which was a phrase repeatedly used by the Principals. The statements in the diagram around the node “caring” are those nodes or themes that are linked to the word ‘caring’, both in terms of ‘who’ is caring and ‘what’ the care is for.

Other examples of data display can be found in Table 2.1 which displays examples of a priori coding and Table 3.1 with examples of thematic coding. Both of these tables were completed with the aid of NVivo and were useful in drawing conclusions.

### 3.3.3.3 Drawing conclusions from the data analysis – themes.

Drawing and verifying conclusions is the final process of comparing, contrasting, and searching for patterns. As the data was collected and coded, the ideas and thoughts about what the data meant, as well as irregularities, consequences, and explanations were noted. Themes and alternative themes were also noted, and the data examined to see if it fits what was observed and reported.

Themes were compared to find differences in their characteristics and boundaries. The themes include attitudes, values and beliefs, and are representative of the reality of what these Principals were speaking about. The following six major themes emerged from the thematic data analysis described above:

- Disability definitions
- Issues - funding and tensions
- Schools - loving, caring, safe environments
- Enrolment
- Parents
- Teachers
These themes can be seen as parts of a whole that constitutes a Christian Education for SWD. The themes are representative of the reality of what these Principals are speaking about. The data recorded communicates how these principals make meaning of their world of special education in a Christian culture.

3.3.3.4 Discourse analysis. A second form of data analysis – discourse analysis – based on Gee’s (2011) discourse analysis toolkit, and Foucault’s ideas on discourses and particularly the notion of governmentality (Niesche, 2011), was pursued to uncover and reveal various discourses involved in the Principals’ statements. This method of combining the approaches of Gee and Foucault was considered necessary to analyse in detail the discourses in the statements of the Principals. Gee’s (2010) toolkit for discourse analysis and Foucault’s idea of Genealogy, in particular his concept of governmentality, (Niesche, 2011) were useful in this data analysis.

This additional method of discourse analysis added to the thematic analysis to give depth and validity to the analysis. In particular, the revelation of the discourses spoken by the Principals was critical in helping to explain the meanings, understandings and discourses that underpinned the policies common across the Principals. Without the discourse analysis, only the themes would have emerged. The discourse analysis helped to explain why the Principals took the actions that they did. For example, the thematic analysis revealed that ‘enrolment’ was the significant policy moment as far the Principals were concerned. But, it was the three competing discourses, revealed in Chapter 5, the discourses of Christianity, business and dependency that helped to explain what was happening in the enrolment process and how the Principals were caught in a dilemma between the three.
The search for discourses was located mainly in the interviews of the principals of various RICSQ, but cross-referenced with discourses revealed in each school’s documents and websites. Policy-as-discourse theorists deconstruct the language of policy and seek discursive interpretations and explanations, not only of objective principles and procedures, but also of what the language hints or suggests, omits or silences (Peters, 2007). Ball gave prominence to the concept of policy as ‘discourse’ which goes beyond and simultaneously saturates the “policy as text” (1993, p.1). This being the case, the policy-as-discourse analyst needs to identify the dominant discourses that constitute this discursive frame (Bacchi, 2000; Ball, 1993), while exposing the power relationships (Foucault, 1977) endemic in the policy-making process. The “discursive contours” (Liaisdou, 2011, p. 889), within which SWD are educated in RISCQ, were the focus of this analysis.

As the research progressed, the method of analysing the discourses, which began with a Fairclough (1995) and Halliday & Hasan (1989) functional grammar approach, was modified to Gee’s “D/discourse analysis” (2005, p. 8). Gee distinguished large “D” and small “d” discourse. To further validate this approach, it was thought important to use a Foucauldian (1991) concept of governmentality. This method of combining the approaches of Gee and Foucault was considered necessary to analyse thoroughly the discourses in the statements of the Principals.

Gee (2005) pointed out that it is social language which contains “the clues or cues” (p.105) of discourse. Gee explained that these different social languages use grammar in ways which are different to those represented in traditional grammar. ‘Grammar 1’ is about traditional sets of units such as nouns, verbs, inflections, phrases, clauses and parts of speech; ‘Grammar 2’ is about the rules of grammar we use to create patterns. These rules signal or “index” characteristic “who’s-doing-what’s-within-Discourses” (Gee,
In other words, Grammar 2 is where speakers and writers deliberately design oral or written utterances to have patterns in them, so that the hearers or readers interpret and attribute situated identities and specific activities to us and our utterances.

Gee (2005, p. 61) also wrote about “Discourse Models”, which are recognisably “different theories” people hold which consist of story lines, images, explanatory frameworks. Thus, it is possible to look for “situated meanings” (Gee, 2005, p. 65) which are images or patterns that people assemble as they communicate in a given context based on their experiences.

Gee (2010) explained how to do discourse analysis, and it is this “toolkit” which was used for directing this discourse analysis. Gee made available many tools for analysing language and context, doing and designing and building things in the world. Several of these tools were useful in analysis of the discourses. The five important tools for this study were (a) the identities building tool, (b) the relationship building tool, (c) the politics building tool, (d) the connections building tool and (e) the situated meaning tool.

The first tool, the identities building tool, was useful to determine what language is used to establish an identity of the Principal. This could also be a parent, a professor, an evangelical Christian or other identities. Some of this language may be vernacular or informal. Gee explained that for any communication, the researcher needs to ask what socially recognisable identity or identities the speaker is trying to enact or get others to recognise. He suggested we ask how the speaker’s language treats other people’s identities. For example, in this research, Dan defined disability using a Christian vocabulary, and gave the impression that he was an ordained minister: *Well I would say that every person whatever they look like is created in God’s image. That’s my first*
definition. So in that sense...I don’t believe that disability is necessarily a punishment from God.

The second tool that was useful was the relationship building tool. Here, Gee stated that for any communication, it is necessary to ask how the words and various grammatical devices are being used to build and sustain or change relationships of various sorts among the speaker, other people, social groups, cultures, and/or institutions. One Principal, Isaac, spoke about his connections with QPNO:

Anna Taylor does a lot, we have a lot of chats, Anna and I, she usually is the person down there who specifically heads up the special needs section in the, down at QPNO. She is involved for many, many long years and she knows that part of the industry inside out.

The third tool, politics building, questions and explores how words and grammatical devices are being used to build (construct or assume) what counts as social goods, and to distribute these social goods or to withhold them. In other words, one could look at how words and grammatical devices are being used to build a viewpoint on how social goods are or should be distributed in society. When Dan (Elim Christian College) was talking about how SWD funding is distributed he gave his views openly:

You may have heard that, in the whole review of Independent school funding, there’s a real shift to say that the funding should follow the child and that doesn’t work at the moment. So and the funding I don’t think is enough.

The fourth tool, connections building, explores how the words and grammar being used in the communication connect or disconnect things, or ignore connections between things. It asks how the words in the communication make things relevant or irrelevant to other
things, or if the words ignore their relevance to each other. A good example of this connections building tool is when Isaac speaks about the learning support teacher’s role as connecting with other teachers:

Well, we have a learning support teacher here, who has had a lot of specialist training and she sees her main role is to see that the teachers are empowered and able to deal with all these different issues and she’s there for feedback and help and so on so we tend to send with the one teacher away,

The fifth tool, situated meanings, looks at words and phrases to explore what situated meanings they have. That is, what specific meanings do listeners attribute to these words and phrases, given the context and how the context is construed? Abigail and several other principals spoke about “accommodating” SWD. This word normally would be used in a hotel or motel where guests visit for a length of time. The word can cover the whole range of activities involved with SWD. It is different to a hotel but has that connotation. It has a situated meaning in special education of enrolling and educating a SWD in an inclusive environment.

The discourse analysis in this study extends Gee’s methods to include a Foucauldian approach. Danaher, Schirato and Webb (2000) described discourse as language in action, which is like windows that allow us to make sense of and see things. Danaher et al added that for Foucault, thoughts and actions are influenced, regulated and to some extent controlled by different discourses. Foucault (1994/1974) wrote:

I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area.... I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an
This research method uses Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), where he described discourse as “the general domain of all statements, and sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (1972, p. 80).

Discourse, then, is firstly, a number of statements or ‘corpus’ whose organisation is regular and systematic. The corpus is necessary to recognise what the discourse says about people and things. For example, the Principal of Elim Christian College spoke about Christian education and about money: “so part of our role in Christian education is to say how can we get them..? Because you have got students for whom there is ascertainment, right, and you have money to assist them with physical and intellectual [needs].” The statements about Christian education are regulated by Christian beliefs and understandings of biblical teaching around educating children, while statements around funding reflect guidelines established by protocols of governance set by QPNO and the Queensland government. These statements are part of a regulated practice in which Christian schools receive money for educating SWD.

A second step for using a Foucauldian analysis of discourse is identification of the rules for the production of statements. The second definition that Foucault provides – “an individualizable group of statements” (Foucault, 1972, p. 80) – is one which he uses more often when he is discussing particular structures within discourse. It is useful to be able to thus identify discourses; that is, groups of utterances which seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have coherence and a force in common. In this way, it is possible to speak of a Christian discourse around educating SWD. For example, one of the
Principals, Solomon, spoke about not being able to provide an education for all SWD. The discourse reflects this Principal’s Christian school philosophy, and is unique to an independent school.

*If I was talking about a Christian philosophy... a Christian school philosophy about disability is I think that Christian schools have a responsibility to those kids. In exactly the same way and it does break my heart because... In exactly the same way we try and cater for parents who want a Christian education for their kids and so not philosophically for any other reason except that we can’t provide for the kids, ah, physical needs essentially.*

Thus, the meaning of expressions depends on the conditions in which they emerge and exist within a field of discourse. These statements about Christian schools and SWD disability are peculiar to Christian schools.

Foucault’s third definition of discourse is perhaps the one which is most important for many theorists: “a regulated practice which accounts for a number of statements” (1972, p. 80). Mills (1997) explained that Foucault is interested less in the actual utterances/texts that are produced than in the rules and structures which produce particular utterances and texts. So statements are not just analysed as linguistic statements but are about the “visible” or “things” (Foucault, 1972, p. 84). Statements reoccurring or being repeated in the interviews, such as “disability equals funding”, or “SWD are created in the image of God” have rules (or uses) for repetition. Part of the archaeology of knowledge in action is to describe the “surfaces of emergence” (p. 410) — places within which objects are designated and acted upon. These surfaces of emergence are “where these individual differences, which according to the degrees of rationalisation, conceptual codes, and types of theory, will be accorded the status of disease, alienation, anomaly, dementia, neurosis,
or psychosis, degeneration, etc., may emerge, and then be designated and analysed” (p.41). Archaeology in action helps to describe institutions, which acquire authority and have limits as to what is sayable. In the statements made in this survey around funding and disability in the schools, there are rules referred to, which define how funding could be raised. This was accepted and taken for granted, but not many Principals thought about alternate ways of funding SWD. Most of the Principals did not question the arrangements for funding which were reliant on the Government, but did question the shortage of Government money allocated for educating SWD in RICSQ.

Although Foucauldian Archaeology was called upon in this discourse analysis method, Foucault’s idea of Genealogy, in particular his concept of governmentality, (Niesche, 2011) was adopted in this research method. According to Kendall and Wickham (1999), genealogy is not so much a method but a way of putting archaeology to work, a way of linking it to the problem. Genealogy is a strategic development of archaeological research. Genealogy introduces power through “a history of the present, concerned with disreputable origins and unpalatable functions” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 34). Genealogy focuses on statements as an ongoing process, rather than a snapshot of the web of discourse. So the Foucauldian concept of governmentality was used to analyse the discourse which revealed the power relationships of the Principals and RICSQ.

Foucault argued that a certain mentality that he termed ‘governmentality’ has become the common ground of all modern forms of political thought and action. Foucault defines government as conduct; or, more precisely, as “the conduct of conduct” and thus as a term which ranges from “governing the self” to “governing others” (as cited in Lemke, 1997, p. 2).
The word government had a very broad meaning in the sixteenth century. Government referred not only to political structures or to the management of states, but also to “the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 221). In his history of governmentality, Foucault (as cited in Lemke, 1997) endeavoured to show how the modern sovereign state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other’s emergence. The concept of governmentality links technologies of the self with technologies of domination, and the constitution of the subject to the formation of the state. Governmentality is introduced by Foucault to study the autonomous individual’s capacity for self-control and how this is linked to forms of political rule and economic exploitation (as cited in Lemke, 1997).

This Foucauldian approach looks at the relationship of the Queensland government and the Christian school Principals’ administration of education for SWD. It does this by looking at the statements which, according to Foucault, are not just about linguistics, but about the “sayable and the visible” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 26). The statements are not just about what Principals thought, but also the ‘material reconstructions’ of thought and knowledge. Kendall and Wickham explained that these sayable and visible things focus on the sets of statements and arrangements that make up the school – instructions of Principals and teachers, instructions from them to pupils, statements about the curriculum and buildings. They argued that a Foucauldian approach is not about interpreting the statements, but focussing on the appearance of statements.

Ball (1993) and Taylor (2005) both spoke about discourse exposing unequal power relationships. In the interviews, the Principals were critical of the Government for the amount of funding given to Christian schools. Taylor (2005) stated that policy analysis in education is seen as a field in which there is a struggle over meaning or discourse.
Liasidou (2011) quoted Fulcher, who asserted that policy is the result of intense struggles between different social actors whose interests often collide; and policy making is implicated in the politics of discourse, whereby different discourses compete for ascendancy. However, in this study, the discourse conflict was contained within individuals rather than between them. Discourse was used tactically in the struggle (within the Principals’ between competing objectives.

Niesche (2011) explained that leadership discourses operate to produce particular principal subjectivities. He stated that governmentality and its underlying concepts of disciplinary power and pastoral power can be useful to understand the relationship of the Principal to himself, and to others. Discourses are analysed to see what they say about these relationships, and to understand the power relationships and what Niesche refers to as the “technology of power”. Thus the ‘sayable’ — statements, thoughts, and ideas about students – especially those with a disability, teaching and other staff, or theories of education – will also contain statements about the ‘visible’ (special education units, learning support curriculums, tests and measurements).

3.3.3.5 Document analysis. The same methods used for analysing the interviews were also used for analysing the documents. The documents that were available – on-line school publications and newsletters collected as supplementary data sources – provided insights into the policies of the RICSQ in dealing with issues of educating SWD. These added to evidence from interviews and helped reveal the realities of the Principals in policy making and management of education of SWD. O’Donoghue (2007) acknowledged Crump (1993) who believed analysing documents was useful, because it allowed identification of the spaces, gaps, accidents, and missed opportunities in policy-making. The “meaning making” of Principals of RICSQ in relation to education of SWD was highlighted through a thorough study of the documents. What are understood by
meaning making are the sense, importance, and perhaps significance that Principals place on the education of SWD. Analysis of these documents helped provide further insight into the Principals’ relationship with the school community, especially in relation to educating SWD.
3.6 Ethics

This research was submitted for approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast. This study attempted to ensure that ethical principles and rights were paramount. Every care was taken regarding the moral and spiritual lives of the participants so that there was nothing in the conduct of interviews that would be considered offensive. It was a high priority to ensure that each participant’s trust was gained and safeguarded. This research is presented with integrity and is sympathetic to Christian values. The researcher also made clear to each interviewee the principles of anonymity and confidentiality, informing the participants that interview transcripts and research findings would be available for scrutiny for accuracy, relevance, or fairness.

This study also secured the informed consent of the participants. The participants were given information about the study through the Research Project information sheet. The values and decisions of the participants were respected and anonymity guaranteed as much as possible, in a qualitative study. When the researcher was sure that the participant understood everything required, then the consent form was signed by both parties.

Confidentiality was a major concern for the study. The interviews were edited in places to protect the participant’s anonymity. This was difficult to do while maintaining the authenticity of the transcription. Terms that are more generic may have to be used, such as “senior staff member”. Documents such as web sites were carefully edited so as to remove any identifying words or phrases. Participants were asked if they would like to read the transcripts. These changes uphold the important ethical principle of ‘informed consent’.
Finally, it has been pointed out that some PWD distrust and reject any research done on their behalf by people without disabilities. “Nothing about us without us” (Charlton, 2000) is a slogan and name of a book that expresses this feeling of disempowerment and mistrust. Bridges (2001) supported the importance of retaining the role for outsider research in communities of PWD, but argued that one must operate under appropriate ethical constraints. The researcher must work with proper human respect and care. However, the fact that an individual belongs to a certain community does not attach special authority to their own representations of their experience. The experience of outsiders may be different from that of insiders but it is not worthless (Bridges, 2001).

The research ethics for this study employed ethical and moral standards and precautions and attempted to understand what definitions of disability the Principals of RICSQ held, and to what models of disabilities these conformed. Questioning of definitions of disability was used to guide the study of the perspectives of Principals of SWD and to see where their education of SWD was grounded. This questioned the foundation of the concepts and therefore actions of Principals in their treatment of SWD. It searched for the understandings of SWD to which Principals of RICSQ adhered.
3.7 Conclusion

The first part of this chapter described the theoretical perspectives of the research design, using Crotty’s (1988) illustration of the design as a scaffold which helps to maintain order in the process. The philosophical underpinnings provide an essential support for the research analysis. The symbolic interactionist approach was chosen because it would enable the researcher to unfold the beliefs and culture of the Principals’ understandings of disability, while remaining sensitive to the Christian worldviews within which they were situated. This interpretivist approach allowed the interviewer to enter the worlds of the Principals in a friendly non-clinical manner, allowing these Principals to tell their stories and share their ideas.

The methods and methodology helped this friendly narrative approach by allowing the Principals to express themselves in semi-structured interviews. The openness and frankness of the Principals was surprising. These busy people took time to answer questions and share their unique educational ideas, which were often complemented by personal stories about people with disabilities or SWD. The small number of interviews (11) was not a limit on the richness and personal disclosure of the Principals. A larger quantitative survey may not have collected the personal ‘folk’ stories of the leaders of these large Christian schools.

The data analysis aimed to enhance the outcomes of this atmosphere firstly by a thematic analysis. This allowed the researcher to explore and order the ideas and stories of the Principals. This thematic approach used several coding lenses to order the data. The a priori data analysis drew strongly on the nature of the friendly openness of the Principals to focus on questions which formed the aims of the research.
Next, using Gee’s and Foucault’s toolboxes of discourse analysis, the data were further explored to add to the thematic patterns. Gee’s many tools for analysing language and context, and doing and designing and building things in the world were useful in analysis of the discourses. To add rigour and intensity to Gee’s method, Foucault’s lens of governmentality was used to analyse the relationship of the Principals to the State governing authorities. The discourse analysis attempted to identify the dominant discourses, endemic in the policy-making process especially around funding for SWD.
Chapter 4: Themes

This chapter is the first of two that report the findings from the empirical research. The first of these chapters reports on the themes that emerged from the interviews themselves. These interviews were the primary source of data, and from them six common themes emerged. The second of the two findings chapters is concerned with an analysis of the discourse that emerged from both the interviews and the documents. Each Principal spoke to the researcher about his or her experiences at length.
Table 4.1

Matrix of Principals’ Pseudonyms and Experience in Christian Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Years in Christian education</th>
<th>Years in the school</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antioch Christian College</td>
<td>Aaron Smith</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Christian College</td>
<td>Solomon Jones</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capernaum Christian College</td>
<td>Benjamin Williams</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus Christian College</td>
<td>Cain Brown</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elim Christian College</td>
<td>Daniel Jones</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gethsemane Christian College</td>
<td>Abigail Smith</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,3,5</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem Christian College</td>
<td>Isaac Brown</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazareth Christian College</td>
<td>Baruch Wilson</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessalonian Christian College</td>
<td>Nathan Johnson</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information about the length of Principals’ experience in Christian was noted in Table 4.1. The most time a Principal had spent in Christian education was 31 years and the least was 11 years. 8 out of 9 Principals were male. Two had been Principal in a Christian school for 20 years. None had special education background and one was no longer principal, but was teaching in university and another in a school. Another founding Principal was employed as a Pastor of a large church. Central to the discussions was a reporting and clarification of the thoughts that each respondent expressed on questions of educating SWD in their school. The chapter considers the themes that arose as a result of coding the data. The most important of these themes was concerned with the funding of SWD. Since the 1990s in Australia, education policies have changed funding arrangements for non-government schools and created an environment in which competition between schools has increased and parental choice has been encouraged (English, 2004).

The Principals’ management of education of SWD, as well the models of disabilities (or discourses) evident in these discussions, was the focus of this chapter and the next. Chapter 5 elaborated on the discourses, while this chapter discussed the themes. The themes that emerged from the data are categorised under the following headings:

- Disability definitions
- Issues: funding and tension
- Enrolment
- School: a loving, caring, safe, environment
- Parents
- Teachers
These themes were seen as what constituted a Christian Education for SWD, and included attitudes, values and beliefs, and were representative of the reality of what the Principals spoke about. Except for the last three interviews, RICSQ data is also available in the form of electronic or web site information. Most schools maintain an electronic web based site. However, the first and important analysis was the interviews themselves.
4.1 Defining Disability

According to writers on disability, there was no consensus on what constituted disability (Mitra, 2006). There were many different models of disability, and all were important and each contributed to understanding disability. This very important area was the subject of much research recently. However, it has not been used as a framework for studying the perspectives of educators in Christian schools. The Principals were questioned about their understanding of disability from two perspectives: a secular and a biblical perspective. In this research, the charity or religious model was important, and was considered alongside the 3 main secular models, the social and the medical models as well as the ableist model.

Solomon, Principal of Bethlehem Christian College was initially asked about a definition of SWD, rather than a definition of disability in general. Nevertheless Solomon spoke about learning difficulties rather than a general definition of disability, using the words “wiring of the brain” in his definition of learning difficulties. This casual language, which was uncharacteristic of a Principal’s formal dialogue, was evident throughout this interview.

But in terms of learning difficulties there is always a barrier for all of us to learn... For some kids it’s going to be profoundly difficult because of you know what ever’s happening you know wiring of the brain, sorts of things and it works its way upwards to those that find it less difficult. But anything that requires energy; and learning requires energy is going to have a certain degree of difficulty to it.

However, when asked about disability, Solomon said that “we all have a disability to some extent.” The idea that we all have a disability was a very broad definition and would
include people who are left-handed or people who wear glasses. Inherent in this statement was the assumption that disability was a negative thing or a deficit.

The dialogue placed Solomon’s perspectives about SWD and disability in the “old” approach to defining disability, which was in line with a medical model. The tone of the dialogue was a medical one, and the phrase “wiring of the brain” clearly indicated this approach. The disability or medical condition was seen to reside in the individual in this interview.

Ben the Principal of Capernaum Christian College divided disability into two areas, mental and physical. He was brief and straightforward in his thoughts that disability was either physical or mental. He spoke mostly about mental disabilities and regarded his College as too large for someone with a physical disability.

I say that in the context of the course that for someone who is profoundly disabled as a College we wouldn’t have the capability of looking after someone like that. Our College is on ninety acres and as a College you need to be a very fit person to be able to walk from one classroom to another classroom.

This was an important attempt to defining disability because there are many students with physical disabilities. It was a definition of disability that sat squarely within the medical model. In this model, the strategies to address the disability were focused on the individual rather than on removing barriers and creating access. The environment was perceived as a barrier to those with profound disabilities.

Ben submitted to the official model on disability when he said: “Look the only definition I suppose would be common, (would) be the definition that exists as far as access to Government funding”. His understanding of disability was based on the “old” medical
model of disability. He did not contemplate the socio-environmental issues. He considered his College too large an area for a SWD who was physically impaired. Overall, the College had a culture that was suited to sports and recreation. It had very few SWD and was not accommodating for students with profound physical disabilities.

The concept of “normal” was tagged in the discussion of disability. Damascus Christian College Principal (Cain) used a metaphor describing schooling as “normal learning”.

*I would define that something that makes normal learning for a child a struggle, so that it can be visual, it can be intellectual, it can be physical, but it would cause normal learning to be a struggle for that child, and therefore they require some modification to enable them to reach their full potential.*

Something that makes “normal learning a struggle” was a broad but vague definition that placed the disability within the individual. What it is that made the learning a “struggle” was unclear. This discourse suggested Cain’s ideas about disability resided within a medical model where the problem belongs with the individual rather than the environment or social conditions.

It is important to note the difference between the idea of normal and the concept normalisation. One of the most important principles for changing policies of disability was that of normalisation. The principle of normalization was developed in Scandinavia during the sixties by Nirje in 1969 and further developed in 1992 (Lemay, 1995). The idea of normalisation had been a result of examining the lives of PWD and reading philosophy and literature especially on human rights. Nirje proposed that PWD should have access to normal rhythms of activities that other people have. The principle was further developed during the seventies, especially by Wolfensberger (1972). Normalization has had a significant effect on the way services for people with disabilities
have been structured throughout the UK, Europe, North America, Australasia and increasingly other parts of the world. It led to a new conceptualisation of disability as not simply being a medical issue (the medical model which saw the person as indistinguishable from the disorder), but as a social situation. Wolfensberger’s (1972) idea of normalisation was a basis for the egalitarian initiatives to generate an environment for people with learning difficulties, and which offered as “normal” a life as possible. Social role valorisation grew out of Wolfensberger’s understanding of normalisation (Wolfensberger, 2004) but was quite distinctive. It had a large impact on disability services (Annison, 1996). However, “normal” in these interview statements does not equate to egalitarian issues, but a division of ability into two — normal and abnormal. It is a familiar term in psychological studies and is further discussed in the discourse of ableism.

Abigail, Principal of Gethsemane Christian College addressed lack of opportunity for SWD, and defined disability as: “any condition which is causing the student to have less opportunity to learn within the classroom, within that learning environment.” “Any condition” was a very general idea or concept. She included Attention Deficient Disorder (ADD) in her discussion of defining disability, though this was not included as a disability under funding from QPNO.

_We didn’t have access to the advisory visiting teacher who specialised in ADD, as an independent College. We could for vision impaired. We could for vision impaired and a whole range of other things … but not ADD._

The definition of disability for this Principal was not just with children who have been recognised as disabled, but included those not usually thought of as “disabled” enough to receive funding. Her definition was not confined to the official government policy which
included only SWD who have been recognised, or who have been given a “profile” for an Education Adjustment Profile (EAP). Abigail defined disability in a mix of medical and social. She was aware of how other children perceive SWD and discussed this.

Aaron the Principal of Antioch Christian College classified disability as part of an everyday experience of the human race, but in unusual language for a Principal.

*We’re all damaged goods. We’ve all got a learning difficulty of some sort, some is permanent, some is temporary ... but most kids I think ninety-nine per cent of them what some might seem as a disability, has its strengths as well, we are all just exactly the same except how we’re different. Not better not worse just different.*

In this, Aaron attempted to argue the difficulty of any labelling of children by way of disability. Rather, Aaron argued that all children have a disability of some sort. However, some of the language he used (such as “damaged goods”) bordered on the negative, perhaps even offensive.

The social perspective or “new approach” was reflected in the Elim Christian College Principal’s interview. Dan described a disability as anything that stops one achieving one’s best. Dan said:

*I think that’s, anything that doesn’t allow a child to achieve their personal best. Something that inhibits..., so I’m being very broad there...in terms of... if a child comes from a violent home ... and that is impacting their ability. So emotionally, they’re thwarted by that disability.*

Here, the Principal defined disability according to wider criteria and included social or emotional bearings on the disability. This was suggestive of a “new approach” to defining
disability as a social-environmental issue. Disability included the home and the environment as limiting factors for the child.

The social model of disability evolved as a reaction to the medical model and replaced the medical model’s focus on disability as residing in the person. It focused on disability as a "social construction," recognising that one does not experience disability in isolation but rather in relation to the attitudes and behaviour of others. Disability was not just a condition of the person, but the result of a set of circumstances, many of them at the societal level. Most important was the idea that progress in the field had shifted the focus from “fixing" the person with a disability to "fixing" the social situation through collective action.

Baruch Principal of Nazareth Christian College was insistent that a definition of disability was needed before he could talk about it. He attempted to define disability: “... because for this question you need to define disability, because there are kids with disabilities but we’ve only got one kid in the College with a disability bad enough to require an aide.” He felt that government criteria must be met. He thought that there were kids who have a disability, but who were not included in the criteria, or definitions which determine policy. However, he thought about disability more than other Principals, and defined disability from both a Christian and a business perspective.

Baruch regarded the definition of disability as directly connected to funding. It was part of government policy and he accepted this, as did all the Principals. This at first seemed a contradiction for his Christian world view. For him God is the creator and disability is no accident: “You see basically you’re talking education to get funding for educational disability you have to prove that God made a mistake and I don’t believe that”.
While Baruch was passionate about disability and looked at the biblical view of disability, he did admit that disability was related to funding. Isaac (Jerusalem College Principal) also agreed that funding and disability were connected. His discourse was business-like. He said: “when most people are thinking about disabilities, it has a price tag attached to it, so disabilities equals funding of some sort or some sort of assistance.”

Disability in RICSQ equalled money or funding. The QPNO administered the Educational Adjustment Profile (EAP) process to which the Christian Colleges belong. Funding was a source of tension, where the College downgraded its responsibility and pointed to the government as the source of conflict. However, Isaac had a strong Christian definition of disability and contemplated challenges rather than disabilities. The College Board’s decision to pay for a teacher aide supported this faith or theological model of disability.

Nathan, Principal of Thessalonians Christian College defined disability from a medical or deficit model of disability. He compared disability to normal ability. His idea of a “condition” was similar to Abigail, who referred to a “condition” as well. “I guess any condition in a person that prevented them from learning in the normal way”. He did not expand on this but later he clarified his views of difference between learning disabilities and other disabilities.

_I mean there’s certainly, I mean you’ve got SWD and then of course you’ve got students with learning problems and whilst it’s possible to the students with learning difficulties, to a large extent in our independent sector with actual SWD it was much more difficult and off course you can have some students with physical disabilities ... it was difficult to help them at times. Well yes obviously there are, particularly the things relating to ADHD and those types of autism_
It did seem from the interview, that his perspective of disability was situated within a medical model where descriptive words like “condition” and “normal” were commonplace. Perhaps Nathan was not interested in definitions. Nathan spoke from his heart and experience as a father of a child with a disability, as well as a College Principal. An academic or intellectual understanding of disability did not matter to this parent and Principal of a child who is severely disabled.

The QPNO funding officer (Anna) took into account specific disabilities that were assessed according to the Disability Standards for Education. Some disabilities did not meet the criteria for funding, and this influenced her definition: ‘It’s not about the disability as such. The first step is to confirm their eligibility but the second really important part is identifying the level of adjustments that are made.” Anna defined disability as “as per the disability standards”. She clarified the Queensland official policy on disability and how the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has standards for education which prescribe the classes of disability. The DDA was drafted at the level of broad obligation for service providers; but the high level of focus of the DDA has led to uncertainty for people with disabilities and for education and training providers. The standards were designed to answer this uncertainty (Report on the Review of Disability Standards for Education [2005], 2014b).

Anna spoke about these standards:

In Education there’s a document called Disability Standards for Education. And it sits under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as supports documentation and it relates to all aspects in Education whether it’s Colleges, kindergartens,
QSA, universities, TAFE colleges or whatever. So there is a very clear definition in there and that’s what we would use as the definition of disability in general. OK there’s … what you need to have clear … is the definition of disability in general terms. But when we talk about disability in our College sector we sometimes are talking about students who meet the criteria for the College to access funding. And that’s a subgroup, because you could have a disability such as a learning disability. That is not one where the College can actually apply for support funding. Well they’re not exactly the same but in general they are very close. I mean they would generally have the same impairment areas but they are not quite exactly the same. I mean and because of the different understanding of what a disability is, I mean is a learning disability a disability well yes and the full range you can see it on the spectrum, for example a hearing loss …Yeah you might not meet the criteria for support funding.

Anna pointed out what some of the College Principals already knew. A definition of disability does not always include all disabilities. The administrative reasons for QPNO’s definition of disability were for the provision of funding. The Standards were there to ensure education providers such as Christian Colleges took reasonable steps to ensure SWD were included in the courses and programs and in the use of the facilities.

Under the Standards, education providers must take reasonable steps to ensure that SWD are able to participate in the courses or programs provided by educational institutions, and be able to access and use the facilities and services provided, on the same basis as students without disabilities. The Standards require the provider to consult with students or their associates on whether the student’s disability affects their ability to participate, decide whether an adjustment is required, and undertake the identified adjustment as deemed necessary (Australian Government Department of Education, 2005).
The definition that all Colleges had in common was one which equated government funding with disability. All College Principals’ definitions of disability were similar to the “old model of disability”, which of course is the traditional medical model. The exception to this was Baruch, who spoke about factors external to the individual, family and social circumstances. Solomon and Aaron defined disability in a manner that suggested everyone has a disability. Ben, Baruch and Israel equated disability to funding and thus described disability within an economic model. This was based on a medical assessment of disability. Baruch insisted on a Christian model of disability with God as creator who does not make mistakes. This was dominant in his dialogue. He still equated disability to funding as did most of the Principals. Anna described disability in accordance with the DDA (1992) which saw disability within a “new approach”. Most of the Principals spoke about disability from personal experience and said very little about the Standards for education of SWD. Only one Principal regarded disability from the social perspective or “new approach” — Elim Christian College Principal Daniel, who described a disability as anything that stops one achieving one’s best. The next section will look at the Christian explanations for disability.

4.1.1 Christian model of disability.

The discourses will be clearly analysed in the next chapter, but it is important to look at the model of disability referred to as Christian or Biblical. Baruch’s comment that God does not make mistakes is a “faith” derived assessment of disability. Daniel (Elim Christian College) regarded disability as not being a punishment from God. In the past, Church-based views on disability have been criticised for creating victims instead of healing people. The “image of God”, or “imago dei” is a concept and theological doctrine in Christianity and Judaism, which holds that human beings are created in God’s image and therefore have inherent value independent of their function on earth. The fact that
these ideas are part of the Christian belief system may be seen as a faith-driven attempt at inclusion of these children.

Ben (Capernaum Christian College) believed all people are created in God’s image and are not to pass judgement. He was surprised when he was asked about a Christian definition. He added some personal stories about people with disabilities and his interpretation of a biblical model of disability:

...look my, I suppose, I come from the more probably from the perspective that we are all created in the likeness of Christ, and it’s not our position to judge or to pass judgment in regard to [who] someone is.

The term likeness of Christ or the image of God has its roots in Genesis 1:27, wherein "God created man in his own image." This scriptural passage does not mean that God is in human form; but rather, that humans are created in the image of God in their moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature.

Ben considered “honesty” important especially if one is a leader. This idea of “honest” was a conscientious effort not to deceive parents or argue over whether one child has a disability or not. It exposed a tension between the Principal and the parents during enrolment of SWD. Enrolling SWD was not a simple process for him.

What I find as an educational leader is we have to be honest with people when it comes to enrolment process and explain to people what we are able to offer to parents and what we are not able to offer, and by doing that we are not actually drawn into a debate as to the worth of someone or casting aspersions on whether or not someone has a disability.
By being honest and telling parents the College did not have the facilities; Ben was able to avoid a debate about disability. Ben did not think about what a Christian definition of disability was. Perhaps being honest and avoiding a debate on what disability meant also avoided having to think about enrolling SWD.

“Responsibility” was a belief that was expressed repeatedly in the interview with Cain, who said: “...that these are all God’s kids and we have a responsibility to look after them, regardless.” The statement that these are God’s children was repeated in this interview, and yet it was not clear how they will be “looked after.” This was again simply a medical approach with a moral model predominating. Having a responsibility suggested a conscience or Christian faith at work. “Responsibility” was a key theme here but details to include SWD were not spoken about. Educating children was the parent’s responsibility according to Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4. However, most Principals saw the responsibility for the education of children with disabilities as being entirely the governments. The concept of faith in Christianity expressed itself in many lives where Christians relied on God by faith. Faith was written about many times in the Bible and yet Principals did not use this word or express their beliefs on faith. In James 2:22 the author said: “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect (YouVersion Bible App). Perhaps the Principals could have put their trust in God for funding? This would have expressed their faith in God in contrast to dependency on the Government.

Abigail said she had not thought about a Christian definition of disability:

*Perhaps it is based on a Christian belief. I am passionate about enabling all children to be able to achieve to their very best capacity regardless of what it is they have as a challenge. So that is tied to wanting the best for other people. So I
guess it is a Christian philosophy but it is I don’t know I haven't thought about it in those terms.

This was not a particularly strong Christian explanation, but Abigail was desirous of doing whatever she could to help SWD. She had not thought about it deeply but was able to provide examples of her beliefs in action. Most of the Colleges she was involved in were systemic Colleges from a traditional Christian faith, compared to some of the newer independent church Colleges.

Like other College Principals, Aaron defined disability as part of God’s plan. The Christian definition was clear. “Well basically, God made every one of us and he made every one of us unique”. The definition of disability was seen in terms of place and situation: “So his disability was in the classroom, but on the farm, he was brilliant.” This thinking involved the idea of a socio-environmental issue involving accessibility, accommodations, and equity. However, not much was said about the role of the College to educate SWD from within a biblical model.

After defining disability, Daniel qualified the biblical model by saying that they do not like the word disability in the College.

We would never call it disabilities here but we ... I would certainly say when they come to our College we have a responsibility to work with that issue... if that makes sense... we have a responsibility to help that student.

Responsibility was important in this Christian approach, but what this meant was uncertain. It was unclear what form the “help” would consist of, or whether it was a medical definition, with the doctor as power and knowledge producer. A biblical viewpoint on disability makes it clear that the person with the disability is not made to
feel like a victim. Rather, they are created in God’s image. Disability is not accepted as a part of human life. But Elim Principal Daniel Jones defined disability from within a social perspective.

Well I would say that every person whatever they look like is created in God’s image. That’s my first definition. So in that sense that every person and I don’t believe that disability is necessarily a punishment from God. So in that sense I don’t think that you have a hearing impairment that’s because basically your mother was whatever.

This Principal had theological training and thought about the biblical understanding of disability more than all the other Principals.

Baruch was passionate about his biblical ministry to SWD. Having begun his career in a Christian disability centre, he pointed out the name of the centre meant “Helper”; or “to draw alongside to help”. This was a Christian reference to the Holy Spirit. He expressed God’s view of disability:

Yes well there is it’s not a definition of disability it’s just that the Bible said that God never created anybody by mistake, God didn’t make a mistake, so disability is not a mistake a disability is something that God uses for his glory.

He expanded on this and pointed out scriptures that show the blind man did not sin but God created him blind so that His glory was revealed when Jesus healed him.

And there’s one as they approached this guy the disciples had this great big theological debate that was a man born blind because he sinned, or was he born blind because he sinned in his mother’s womb....because he had to have been born blind ... because he sinned in the womb? Did his parents sin? And when they
get close to him Jesus says, he says “cool it guys” if you excuse my language, he said “cool it guys, this man didn’t sin and nor did his parents sin, I created him blind, so that today when I came down the road he would be healed and God would be glorified.

Baruch was certainly passionate about his beliefs; and, in fact, resigned from his teaching position to give more time to his establishment of new Colleges in Burma and Malaysia. Isaac also showed some compassion about SWD and he reflected on this:

When most people are thinking about disabilities, it has a price tag attached to it, so disabilities equals funding of some sort or some sort of assistance and look I guess we don’t really see it that way and there’s a sense that all kids are born in the image of God and they’re all special and unique in their own way, and they all come to us with all sorts of different needs and challenges I guess, and so I’d rather think about different challenges than disabilities.

The College Board at Jerusalem Christian College paid for a teacher aide for a SWD. This showed faith in action according to Isaac, the Principal of Jerusalem Christian College. In regard to a definition of disability, he said that his College had a Christian perspective on disability. By enrolling a student and then helping he/she with funding was a positive sign of the College’s Christian essence.

Nathan did not say much about a Christian definition of disability. As a Christian parent of a child with a disability, perhaps he was more concerned with the practicalities and challenges of educating his daughter. When asked about Christian schooling for SWD he pointed out:
In my experience it’s hard enough to even get choices to support Christian education let alone special education within a College. I know in NSW for example that the XXXX Christian College system of Churches centred in XXXX run a special College, actually run a special College with two platforms, one for helping students that have just dropped out of the system and another one for unmarried mothers and they’re highly successful. And a movement like that could well be expanded into looking at or providing for a Christian College for special needs.

Although he was not specifically asked to define disability from a biblical perspective, he did elaborate on education of SWD in Christian Colleges. Nathan pointed out that Christian education was not a mainstream organisation that was funded by the government, but an independent schooling system for parents who wanted a Christian education for their children. The choice for parents with or without SWD was a difficult, financial one. It meant sacrifice on their behalf.

From the discussion on disability, and their attempts to define disability, it was obvious that most Principals’ perspectives of disability fell within a medical model of disability. SWD were “helped” or even their problem was to be “fixed.” Principals’ views of disability were that an individual is limited by his or her impairment. As well as this, the strategy was to address disability so as to fix the individual and correct the deficit. Eligibility for funding was based on the severity of the impairment. The medical model of disability was dominant in the Principal’s definitions.

The Principals also defined disability from a secular, and a Christian perspective. The discourses that emerged were classified as models of disability or what Fulcher (1989) called “discourses “of disability. Solomon and Aaron described disability in a broad way
so as to include everyone as having a disability. This definition was not useful for improving the confusion around what disability means and lumbered disability with a negative interpretation.

Examples of references to God, *imago dei*, and “*God does not make mistakes*” were pointers or clues to identifying this Christian discourse. Some talk of responsibility for SWD reflected the tensions of the Principals around enrolling SWD. A Christian discourse was clearly evident in the interviews, but there was more than one discourse present. Sometimes a medical discourse dominated, and a business discourse around funding was foregrounded. Gee (2005) explained that discourses sometimes have no boundaries. More is said about discourses as models of disability in the discussion chapter.
4.2 Christian School: a Caring Environment

Portraying the school as a caring environment was a common idea in most of the interviews of Principals. Actions that might underpin these values were not elaborated upon. In a query search in NVivo, the only school that did not have the words “loving” and “caring” was Zechariah Christian College, while Bethlehem College had four references.

However, Zechariah Christian College Principal (Aaron) spoke about care in a philosophical manner. Bethlehem Christian College Principal (Solomon) spoke about a loving, caring environment as important. This was acknowledged to be sought after by parents of SWD, rather than an educational value: “I have had parents who have been looking particularly for a caring and loving environment so. I think it is definitely the way to go.” Most important was the Christian philosophy of educating SWD. The Principal explained that God wants all students (general and SWD) to be educated in the school. This indicated a strong Christian belief of inclusion at work.

Solomon also spoke of the importance of a caring environment where students felt safe. Safety is an important aspect of education of SWD in the Disability Discrimination Standards for educating SWD, and is a necessary requirement for any school. It is part of the Standards of Education Queensland for schools. As for SWD, a caring environment may be understood as a more welcoming environment, and a place where children are looked after more than in a state school.

Capernaum Christian College environment was described as rich and offered a wide range of activities and subjects. The Principal (Ben) spoke more of a “supportive” and “welcoming” environment where students felt more safe and supported. Unlike Solomon’s vision of a loving caring environment, Ben’s concept of the school
environment was not limited by lack of finances and was more about activities and performances of educationally rich programs.

We’ve got supportive parents, and we have a culture at our school which is one of friendliness and support. You know we have a very, very, caring school and a very welcoming school. I think that culture is just so important. It teaches tolerance, understanding, compassion, it allows you to be respective and to think about... my goodness aren’t I lucky.

The reference to “luck” in this interview was a deliberate choice of words. Solomon could have referred to God or blessing, but he used the words “luck, compassion, tolerance and understanding”. Ben spoke about what he considered a rich environment, compared to Aaron, who felt the financial strain. Aaron reported that one of the parents was paying for a teacher aide for their son who had a disability. He argued that this exemplified the financial freedom of the parents of this school, of whom 60% were self-employed.

We have a boy who is quite significantly physically disabled and his family wanted him to be here with his brother and sister and they pay for a full time aide for him. So they pay the difference between what he’s entitled to at the cost of full time aide. Now, so, this particular student is very fortunate and that his parents have made and have the ability to make that commitment ... for him.

Not all parents in RICSQ could pay for a teacher aide for their child with a disability. This situation of parents paying for their own aide was not representative of other schools, although some of the school boards chose to pay for the education services of a teacher aide.
Prayer was a vital component of the Christian faith. Its role is important for Christians and reflected both compassion and care for others. Engle and Cerny (2010) stated that prayer, far from being an escape from action, was actually the forerunner and impetus for action, service and being sent out. They said that a prayer must have actions attached to it.

Prayer was important for Damascus Christian College Principal (Cain) who talked of a caring environment, in which SWD were prayed for and supported. The prayerful culture of the school extended to the voluntary work of the parents. Cain did not elaborate on the actual pedagogy of SWD. There was not much said about how a loving, caring environment was practised by the staff and how much prayer was needed, or why it was needed. Cain spoke about prayer as important and considered it powerful enough to “cover” the department, or the learning support department: “So we provide what I consider is a very high level of service to the ones we are able to take....” The parents knew and liked this idea of a loving, caring environment where the children were nurtured. Cain said:

They also know that they will be putting their child into a caring, supportive environment, we care for those kids and we pray for those kids, and there is no doubt that prayer will cover the department all of the time, they are very conscious of that. But you could hear the heart of the parents saying that they believe that with a child with disabilities is in a Christian environment they will get nurtured more than if they were in a non-Christian environment...which is what you want of course, and expect.

Cain was referring to the parents who considered enrolling their children into the school. He believed that prayer was an important ingredient in a safe, loving environment. This
loving and caring environment seemed to be underpinned by a true Christian value – prayer.

Gethsemane Christian College Principal (Abigail) was in agreement with other schools, providing a loving and caring environment. Abigail presented examples of how the school exemplifies this quality. She spoke of a strong pastoral system: “...a wonderful house system there which the heads of the house was specifically appointed to ... be that nurturing caring person that really had the welfare of the student in mind.” She regarded “the policy of the pastoral care system... as a real plus,” which “works very well in terms of the nurturing and caring for students with all abilities,”; and described these as “just brilliant environments.”

The Christian belief and documentation of the loving and caring environment being put into practice in the school were clear in the statements. The theme of a loving, caring environment was centred on inclusion of SWD and the pastoral systems established in the school. Abigail and Solomon both agreed with the idea that a small school is important for this loving caring environment.

Aaron was brief but philosophical when he spoke about a caring environment: “I think it all has to come down to the old statement my old boss used to say, kids don’t care what you know until they know you care. That has to be the number one place to start.” Aaron did not use the words “support or love” in this interview, but he did make the point that care comes before knowledge or teaching. Aaron also emphasised the word “safe” in agreement with the anti-discrimination legislation (1992) and school standards for educating students with disabilities. He said “because the kids with disabilities are working within a closed environment in which they feel safe and secure, we don’t really
have too many problems, no, I can’t think of any special rule we have for any particular child”.

The unique classroom learning was presented as a safe environment for SWD. This was not the case in the school playground, where it was considered problematic for SWD who were not supervised or who are lacking in social skills. Aaron said:

*You also are getting a child with a disability in the playground and that culture is another area you’ve got to look at, because we’ve got a program that’s fantastic, I believe, for kids with Asperger’s and ASD, but you put (any) of them in the playground and all of a sudden you’ve got all sorts of problems, because they just can’t cope with some of that social side, our program suits them because they are one on one, and a little more isolated and the distractions out there are removed, but, there aren’t those things operating in the playground, you run the risk of having more bullying and more fights, and you’ve got the people saying, look we came to this school because it was a nice environment, so they’re the issues we’ve got to look through.*

The unique learning environment in this school suited the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students. Still, an open environment like the playground was a risk that had to be weighed up. This idea of care did not cover the entire school or SWD in the playground. This weakness in regard to SWD was unique to this schooling system. The playground was not considered a weakness for other schools, although the playground is often difficult for SWD.

Although the teachers’ eagerness to help SWD was high on the agenda for Elim Christian College Principal, Daniel expressed how the resources and teaching expertise for SWD were inadequate in his school. According to Daniel, SWD would be better off in a state
system, and this would be recommended if the situation arose. His school was not prepared and did not have the resources to accommodate SWD.

Nazareth Christian College Principal Baruch was interviewed on the telephone rather than “face-to-face.” He was teaching in a small country school with a unique learning environment. He also spoke about the school being “a caring environment” but he believed SWD should be a Church responsibility.

> I believe that a Christian School is an arm of the Church in as it’s fulfilling the caring role of the Church and therefore any child that has a disability or assessed as having a disability, that child is immediately under the care of the Church or whatever and that means Christian School.

Baruch has been a pioneer in founding and developing Christian education since the early 1980s, and strongly believed the Church should bear the burden for educating SWD. His outlook was not shared with other Principals who rarely mentioned the Church’s responsibility for education.

The Jerusalem Christian College Principal (Isaac) was also interviewed via telephone. His school was in a small remote town in a country area of Queensland. Isaac did not use the specific phrase “loving and caring environment”, but he was very focused on the interests of SWD and their parents’ needs. He proudly told how the school demonstrated these concepts of love and care in a practical way. He also considered that acceptance of SWD by others was important. The idea of acceptance was part of an inclusive philosophy which has been promoted in the last two decades in Queensland.

> I think probably acceptance and certainly willingness for other students to help and support as well as the community. Although it wasn’t always the case but it
was generally speaking you could say they were able to fit into a normal school system and be supported in that and didn’t feel as if they were isolated from the normal stream of education.

Jerusalem Christian College was a small school that was in close proximity with the parents and community. Its role of caring and loving was demonstrated by its willingness to pay for a full time carer for a SWD. In fact, the school was doing what Baruch has spoken about – “reaching out” to SWD as part of the church and community.

The phrase “loving and caring environment” was not mentioned by Nathan, the Principal of Thessalonians Christian College, who was also a parent of a child with a disability. However, the description was evident in his concern for, and leadership of, the teachers. His understanding of SWD and his appreciation of the need not to isolate SWD from other students were notable.

Many people and parents particularly would want their students not to be isolated, to be identified as lacking in some way and put into a special withdrawal group. They want them to be particularly — if they’ve got siblings in the school — they want them to be part of the main school stream.

Nathan valued inclusion, even though he did not focus on love, care or safety as factors in a school environment. He spoke about the importance of schools not “isolating” SWD in withdrawal or special education units. Solomon at Bethlehem Christian College was also concerned about inclusion. He pointed out the need for teachers to be supported in teaching SWD.

In summary, the school Principals reported that the environment was important for parents who wanted to enrol SWD. All of the Principals and their advertising media
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promoted their organisations as “caring”. Only two schools used the word “loving” while three mentioned safety as an important benefit.

The frequency of expressions for the type of school sought and described by both parents and school Principals was analysed in NVivo Except for being “safe,” which is a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) for SWD (and all students), “loving and caring” were Christian values the schools held dear, and were consistent with a Christian belief.

Jerusalem and Capernaum Christian School parents were willing to pay fees for SWD, while Gethsemane’s parental “house” system of pastoral care” was a good example of a “loving caring” environment. Zechariah Christian College emphasised safety and care, but had a limited understanding of educating SWD. One school regarded the schools’ play ground as a weak area in its education of SWD. The social interactions of SWD in the school playground were not seen as being as successful as its unique classroom environment.

Baruch at Nazareth Christian College regarded the school as an arm of the church. Isaac at Jerusalem Christian College advocated acceptance of SWD as important in the school system. Gethsemane and Elim Principals included the idea of “loving and caring environments” in their interviews, which suggested this is important for the schools in educating SWD. However, in Table 2.1, the “caring” aspect of the school was the most agreed upon, while only three schools spoke of the concept of “safety”. “Loving and caring”, as two connected concepts, were referred to by only two schools, while three schools never used the words “loving and caring”. Nevertheless, it was evident from the interviews that this rhetoric of love and care was a selling point for the schools.
While Baruch was passionate about disability, he looked at the biblical definition, and Isaac was more businesslike in his definition. There was a prevailing economic discourse in all the definitions, which caused issues or tensions in educating SWD in the Principals’ leadership. These tensions and issues will now be presented.
4.3 Issues of educating SWD

A theme that developed from the coding was one of issues surrounding the education of SWD in these faith-based colleges. Issues included mostly funding, although parents and enrolment were sometimes seen as problems. Parents’ honesty in disclosing the students’ disability was an issue for Principals. These are treated as separate themes. The theme of funding included tension between Christian faith and government accountability for funding these students. Funding as a theme is discussed here, and included the college Principals’ frustrations over wanting to enrol SWD despite having inadequate funding.

4.3.1 Funding and tension.

Solomon expressed clearly and emphatically that funding was a major issue. He has fairly strong views on providing an education for SWD. He blamed the legislation for the funding issue: “The legislation that impacts ... the most on us is the fact that we get about a third of the funding of what public Colleges do”. Solomon described this predicament of funding as a source of tension.

And when you are getting such a small amount it doesn’t even pay for you know a teacher’s ... a teacher aid salary so it becomes very difficult and so what you are asking, a private College dilemma really, is you’re asking parents who are paying fees to subsidise those kids who are going to need over and above and I think that’s where the government needs to come into it because for those kids who under the EAP classification of disabilities, that really is not only a College responsibility but a government responsibility, and I think the government is abdicating their responsibility by underfunding and not having the funding attached to the actual child. If we had the money we would be able to do [it] ....

But whereas the public colleges get something like 10 or 12 thousand dollars per
student…we’re getting three. If they (SWD needs) were being met then we wouldn’t have to turn kids away.

The dilemma was that private colleges had to ask the parents to compensate for their shortage of funding. The Principal believed the government should compensate the college. In stronger terms, Solomon believed the government was failing their responsibility to SWD in RICSQ. He also believed it was a reason why the needs of SWD were not being met.

The outcome of this funding issue was that the college could not meet SWD needs and had to turn away these students. Ben and Cain were also concerned about funding, but did not say as much as Solomon. Ben disclosed:

I worry about, what worries me more is the fact that we have a small number of children who have been ascertained with a learning disorder and A.S.D. and the level of funding that they are entitled to is so miniscule in relation to the individual learning needs of the children.

However, the parents of one SWD were prepared to pay for a teacher aide and overall, there were fewer SWD in the college. This was a wealthier private college which, even so, had an issue with funding. Ben regarded the funding as a worry, but it was not a major source of tension. This wealthy college did not have a high percentage of SWD. There were no issues present in the college when teaching SWD, and there was not a major problem with funding.

Cain was also concerned about funding but believed this might change soon with Government legislation. He had quite a lot to say on the issue. When asked about how he defined disability, Cain replied:
I think in general terms we would follow the legislation that’s put down because that’s how we get funding for those individual students, however, as a Christian, I would probably look a little differently and this is the tension you have I think as a Christian, one is that these are all God’s kids and we have a responsibility to look after them, regardless, the tension comes in it’s a very costly exercise and when you don’t get equal funding to do it you’re challenged by that so, every independent college that I’m aware of especially Christian ones are running their departments at a very big loss. Their learning support departments run at a very big loss.

The conflict between his Christian views on disability, and the legislation which only covered a category of disability, was a source of tension for Cain. He had a responsibility to look after all the children with disabilities, but the funding was limited and restricted to a small number of SWD. Cain wanted to educate all students but it was “costly” due to the funding discrepancies for SWD and general students. He pointed out that funding was a major source of tension for him, especially as he felt he had a responsibility to SWD.

... if we had correct funding I would probably treble my learning support department because I believe that it’s our responsibility, I don’t believe we should ever have to turn a child away because we can’t afford to provide those facilities that some children need. Now, the challenge comes you’ve got to run a business, and it’s got to work.

He suggested an answer might be that the SWD get an amount allocated to them so that whatever college they chose, this money would follow. He recommended a voucher system similar to that in the United States:
I’m saying the funding should go with the student, if you’ve got a disability and its categorized then you’re eligible for $20000, no matter what college you go to. They should get that funding so that they can meet your needs. Without a doubt it’s funding, without a doubt, see if it’s recognized that the state college needs $20000 well they’ve picked that figure not me, so therefore everyone should have the same amount. There has been a senate inquiry into it, there have been parliamentary enquiries and yet nothing has happened. It’s been one of the slowest things to move that I’ve ever seen.

The frustration that this issue caused was obvious, and this Principal was feeling the pressure from issues of funding. Aaron believed a more important issue was getting the children early so they could be diagnosed and early intervention started. However Aaron made his views on funding quite clear:

Yeah, funding is one, honestly, I’d say the biggest issue we have is we don’t get them early enough ... surely the funding should go to the child and not the college. It should be fair no matter where they are, Well I can’t really think of any off the top of my head, I would be inclined to say that many years ago that a student with a disability at a government college would attract somewhere around twenty thousand dollars’ worth of funding per year whereas in the private sector independent colleges you got three, you know and look, surely the funding should go to the child and not the college. It should be fair no matter where they are...

Aaron did reveal some tensions around the issue of funding, although he did not think this was as important as early intervention for SWD. He thought the resources were not good enough.
Look, because there’s not a lot of funding ... for kids with disabilities ... We just find as a college that we don’t have all the spare money to just go and do that so you rely on parents who are already paying fees.

He spoke well of his school and its education. His school was an alternative method of schooling and he believed its setup suited the education of SWD.

While all Principals believed the government should fund SWD, Daniel was not sure who should be funding SWD in RICSQ. This was an important thought because most Principals did not question who should fund SWD. Only one other Principal thought about who was responsible for SWD — Baruch. Daniel’s uncertainty about who should pay for funding of SWD did not seem to be a source of tension for him.

Should we be... should our society, our college, be subsidising disabled students?

I don’t know the answer to that, I think the fact, the fact that the funding is so poor means that colleges are finding ways of encouraging people not to attend their college.

This telling remark highlighted the enrolment predicament of many of RICSQ. Principals had to recommend SWD go to state schools. This Christian college did not encourage SWD to enrol. The issues of funding were a cause of this turning away SWD; but each school was independent and it was an individual choice as to whether they would enrol SWD or not. The concern and reality was that the college turned SWD away. This interview highlighted the question of educating SWD in Christian colleges and who should be responsible. Several Principals regarded SWD as the government’s responsibility.
Unlike the other Principals interviewed, Abigail thought the main issue was facilities, not funding. Abigail had the experience of working as Principal in several private Christian colleges. She did not say funding was a primary issue. This was unusual but could be important because these colleges obviously found a way around the issue. Still, the tension around funding was discussed. She further expressed her concern about the tension surrounding educating SWD and funding.

*I would say for me, and it never came to a really difficult situation but I know there are independent colleges which are businesses. There is a bit of a tension between, and I don’t necessarily mean it is the governing body versus me or the staff. But people who are not so involved in the education process will tend to look at the impact of taking a student in who has significant disabilities that might, it might entail putting in huge changes to the facilities of the college and cause a huge economic impact into the budget of the college. I find that some people in those positions have found it easier to say well we simply can’t accommodate those students, whereas I can’t look at it that way.*

Abigail thought business was paramount for the college administration, but she did not agree with this business emphasis of the college. Although he did not mention the word tension, Solomon expressed his dissatisfaction with the funding, which was a major issue for him.

*The fact [is] that we get about a third of the funding of what public colleges do. When you are getting such a small amount it doesn’t even pay for, you know, a teacher’s ... a teacher aide salary. So it becomes very difficult, and so what you are asking — a private college dilemma really is — you’re asking parents who are paying fees to subsidise those kids who are going to need over and above and I*
think that’s where the government needs to come into it because for those kids who under the EAP classification of disabilities you know that really is not only a college responsibility but a government responsibility and I think the government is abdicating their responsibility by underfunding and not having the funding attached to the actual child. That would take a choice away from those kids too, now we’ve had kids with disabilities here, we had one with pretty profound Asperger’s … in prep… and we just couldn’t help this kid…

You know, he needed… his carers wanted him to be here this is the college, [but] we just had to say to the parents, after about six months … look he needs more specialist care than we can give. If we had the money we would be able to do it. But whereas the public colleges get something like 10 or 12 thousand dollars per student… we’re getting three.

The issue of funding shortage was important in understanding enrolment. When asked if the needs of SWD were being met, Solomon answered: “Yeah I don’t believe they are being met. If they were being met then we wouldn’t have to turn kids away.” The responsibility for the education of SWD was an important question for Solomon. He thought it was the government responsibility. There was obviously a lot of tension in enrolling SWD for this college Principal. Baruch did not speak directly about tension but it was evident in his dissatisfaction with the college in which he was once a school Principal. Baruch was a pioneer who established many Christian colleges; and for him, enrolling a child with disabilities in colleges was treated purely as a business decision that had no Christian foundation. He commented that he could talk a lot more about Christian education business in relation to the refusal of the college to enrol his grandson.
Baruch did not talk specifically about issues, but spoke from personal experiences about shortage of funds or misspending around the educating of SWD. He was deeply hurt by the lack of consideration for his grandson who needed an aide; but the college said it could not afford that.

_I can talk from experience in that my eldest grandson has a disability, he has severe epilepsy and that hinders his learning drastically particularly in his language, he still can’t read even though he’s 14 he can’t read. That has been his Christian testimony whatever, but anyway we wanted to put him into XXXX College which was the closest college to us, but XXXX College even though it’s a member of our system all that sort of thing, still wouldn’t take him because they said we can’t afford a full time aide for him, and he was only eligible for a part time aide. There’s a lot to speak of if considering we got XXXX College 6 million dollars right, for a building project that they wouldn’t have got outside of the system. I reckon they could have taken him ... but they wouldn’t._

Baruch felt that the college should help pay for the aide. His belief was that the college was an arm of the church and the responsibility of educating SWD lay squarely on the church and the college. This was important because very few Principals linked the church to the schools. It was only Baruch who stated that the church should be responsible for SWD. The responsibility of the Christian church and their religious model of disability which neglected the love of Christ for their neighbour (people with disabilities) were at fault according to Baruch.

Jerusalem Christian School Principal Isaac talked about funding for SWD and the fact that funding was the government’s responsibility. His was a small college and needed
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funding for SWD. Isaac did not speak directly about the tension but did not think highly of the funding policy.

Oh yeah ok, external policies, look to a degree there are anywhere and we like everybody else are getting funding and we need to meet certain criteria and so there are checks and balances in place in relation to who we can claim for if we are. We don’t get a huge amount and you’d appreciate if you’ve done your research, the figures will show that the independent colleges, Christian colleges like ours don’t get like a whole heap of money for what we’re doing for special needs kiddies.

Isaac did not comment on the enrolment process except to say that the college enrolled a student even though this seemed unaffordable.

Yeah I suppose when we take on those kiddies and I mean we have a girl [with Downs’s syndrome] here who’s at a level 6 and we get a fairly small amount of [funding] in return for a teacher that has to be with her all of the time. The board when they looked at enrolling this child decided right there that whatever it cost, if they were going to enrol her that the School would wear the rest of that if you like. So the funding itself is really not the issue the board itself has to make a decision if they enrol each child on their own merit system, to just where we stand as far as that’s concerned, it would take a full time carer, well that’s what we provide. And yes I guess there’s a benefit in it for us; we are able to get some of that back in funding. That’s not the focus in a sense at all.

This small school was willing to accommodate SWD despite the financial burden. In larger Christian schools, it would appear that SWD could not be enrolled because the schools were unable to accommodate them through lack of funding. Isaac desired a strong
partnership with the parents of children with disabilities and parents in general. This country school welcomed parents as partners in education. These parents were willing to contribute to the education of their children with disabilities. Isaac said:

*Look, all of those things are very available, I mean we have a bit of financial assistance with that, and we find that parents are only too happy to put into what they need to in those different areas, it’s a partnership between us and the families, making sure that the child gets the very best outcome that they can.*

Nathan discussed the funding and how teachers in general classes are burdened with the inclusion of SWD:

*Primary is quite different because of the classroom situation but yet as soon as the students get into those adolescent years the whole system changes. The secondary education model in Christian colleges really struggles to support students with significant special needs. I mean as long as the students are capable of being able to move from room to room, even if it’s not in every class and we ran a withdrawal unit [a separate class for SWD] for many years. That can work but there is a point at which it doesn’t work and a student needs particularly those not capable of really learning at the subject oriented learning. Yeah I found the same thing in NSW but often and depending on the amount of funding you had … teachers could be really burdened by having a student with special needs put in their class, even if it was only a part of their college week because they had to do all the special planning for them, they had to be accountable for what they’re doing. It put a great deal of extra pressure on teachers and they weren’t really compensated for that at all. That was just part of their job and so you can see the difference of points of view, I mean if you’ve just got a class with basically normal
students compared to a class with one or two special needs students there’s a huge disparity in the amount of work and preparation that teachers were or are required to do.

Nathan was very concerned with the level of funding. He saw this problem as a direct cause of the inability of Christian colleges to educate SWD: “But I guess the issue that we found would be the discrepancy between the levels of funding for students in the independent sector compared to students in the state sector.” Government funding was lacking and was perceived as a main issue in the college’s endeavours to educate SWD.

It was one of the main issues and probably one of the limiting factors for our ability to help SWD and in fact in my experience once they got more or less to the high school level we weren’t actually able to compete if you like with the state system. Because what we were able to offer was so much less than the state special education units could offer but it was actually in the student’s interests really to move on to the state system even if, and even in the family’s interest in some ways because there so much more support available to them.

RICSQ could not provide for SWD in the high schools. Nathan (Thessalonians Christian College) looked at the best interests of his own child and recommended a state school. According to Nathan, high school was a big issue for a SWD. Primary teachers could cope with a SWD, but the high school was reliant on specialist teachers and teacher aides, which were lacking due to the discrepancy in funding. Therefore, educating SWD was affordable in the primary school, but in high school it was uneconomical. This was a very practical criticism that not many Principals mentioned.
Anna explained that QPNO did not get involved in policies, since the schools were independent. Therefore, QPNO did not comment on issues, particularly of Christian colleges. She stated:

*Ok well, QPNO doesn’t have a role in policy development for independent colleges. Each of our independent colleges develops their own policy and procedure ... it would be very difficult for me to actually indicate from a college perspective a policy that may impact most. No as I said before we’ve got no role in the policy but certainly QPNO runs leadership programs.*

The QPNO officer clarified the funding policies but pointed out that there are still SWD that do not fall under the funding requirements, and therefore miss out on funding. RICSQ Principals felt the pressure to comply with national and state policies. It would seem that they had to choose to make a hard business decision, which challenged their Christian ideal of wanting to enrol SWD, to include all SWD in their colleges. The official governing body of QPNO, although supposedly non-political, believed that the government should fully fund these SWD.

Daniel, who had the most to say about funding, made one very important point — the fact that the funding was so poor meant that colleges were finding ways of encouraging people not to attend their college. This meant that SWD were missing out, and being turned away from RICSQ because the colleges did not have the funding and the resources this enables them to provide.

Cain, Israel and Baruch all regarded SWD as God’s children and felt they had a responsibility to look after them. This responsibility produced tension, because SWD had to be refused enrolment, which conflicted with a Christian desire to enrol all SWD. The desire to educate “God’s children”, embedded in the Christian faith, was seen to conflict
with the business of managing these schools which rely on funding from the government to enrol SWD. Most of the college Principals identified with the suffering and marginalised but had to put this aside so that the college could function in business. They felt that, in this environment, there was “not enough pie to go around” if SWD were enrolled.
4.4 Enrolment of SWD

In Australia, funding for independent schools is a joint effort of the Commonwealth and State governments. This amount of funding proved inadequate for educating SWD in RICSQ. While the Disability Services Act (1986) provided principles and objectives for people with disability, the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) prescribed the conditions under which a school could refuse enrolment for a SWD. One such condition was the “unjustifiable hardship” clause. This hardship clause included all circumstances:

- Benefit or detriment likely to be suffered by SWD
- Financial circumstances and cost for reasonable accommodation provided by the school
- Provision of services.

The interviews revealed several issues about enrolment. Firstly, Principals recognised the need for parents to disclose the disability of the children before they enrol them. Secondly, there was a problem of knowing and understanding the policies, in particular the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Thirdly, and most importantly, there was the issue of the cost of enrolling and educating SWD.

4.4.1 Disclosure.

When parents were enrolling SWD in the school, they were obliged to disclose their children’s disability. However, some parents did not wish to do this. Principals regarded this lack of disclosure as being dishonest. They held trust and respect as important in the enrolment process.

Several Principals spoke about some parents’ lack of honesty in the disclosure of their children’s medical records. Solomon said parents were obliged to supply information
about the student’s disability. This was necessary so the college could understand their disability and respond by preparing for their educational needs. Sometimes, the parents did not inform the college of the child’s disability. This was seen as a problem. Solomon said: “At enrolment they fill out an application form, so it’s an application for enrolment, and on that we ask whether the student has been previously ascertained [as having a disability]”. He was concerned that parents were not telling him about the extent of the disability of their children, viewing this as dishonest. If this was the case, the student was not able to continue as a student at the college. Lack of disclosure was a major obstacle to educating SWD.

We also say that parents need to be up front with the information they give us. Otherwise we have the right to terminate enrolment and take the application process no further if we find the parents are being dishonest.

A lack of honesty in disclosing details of disabilities would result in the enrolment being terminated. The reason for some parents not disclosing their child’s disability is unclear; perhaps some parents did not want to label their children with disabilities. Perhaps they feared they would not be accepted. The Christian value of acceptance of all SWD was clear. Solomon explained this by quoting scripture verses in a colourful language, which were not referenced or explained:

Now my philosophy is that you know we have an open enrolment policy here because God is not a respecter of these peoples but these peoples, no, they can go jump. God is a respecter of all people. And so as such we need to be inclusive with what we do. So we try and are as inclusive as possible. Really the only place we can beat it is in the physical disability area ... sometimes.
Solomon’s phase “beat it” meant that the only SWD he could enrol were students with physical disabilities, and only sometimes. However, it was not clear as to who the college would enrol. Was it only students that have physical disabilities that the schools would “sometimes” enrol?

Solomon’s school (Bethlehem Christian College) had a higher number of SWD than most other Christian schools. The Principal had a casual way of talking about God and SWD, suggesting a “hands on” approach to educating SWD. It was at times colourful and direct.

Cain (Damascus Christian School) was more organised and professional about the business of educating SWD than Solomon. The school had been established longer. Cain was more businesslike and efficient, and said there were important decisions to be made. However, he saw the procedures as clear and easy to follow: “We have very clear written policies on what is a student with a disability, how do we enrol them, all of those things.” Cain was happy to provide a copy of the enrolment forms. The boxes were ticked and all the information was clearly reviewed concerning enrolment of a SWD. There was a clear policy and a procedure to follow at his school. Nevertheless, Cain had difficulty telling parents of SWD that the school could not enrol their child.

So before we make a decision we gather all of this information, so we fully understand the child before we have even met the child. Ok, because as you know once you get parents in for an interview, it’s very hard to say no.

The reason that Cain wanted all the information about the student before enrolling them was that he found it difficult to tell the parents in an interview that he could not enrol their student for whatever reason. Perhaps he found being a Christian and wanting or not wanting to enrol SWD was difficult. Cain needed to be prepared for interviews with parents with SWD.
Abigail explained how the college enrolment policy had not had an administrative policy which identified SWD before they were enrolled. This loophole in the administration policy was corrected because parents were not being honest — not telling the school about their child with a disability at enrolment. Abigail spoke about having to create a school enrolment policy that made the parents responsible for declaring if their child had a disability. Abigail was Principal of several Christian colleges and was Principal of one college as late as 2011. She created a policy so that a statement was included in the enrolment clause, stating that parents are obligated to declare their child’s disability.

*Abigail: Yeah I mean all the schools had...if you go back right to the enrolment procedure where ...and sometimes I mean that didn’t exist on the enrolment forms... and I had it add it in. It was incumbent on the parent to discuss with us if there was a disability.*

*Interviewer: So it wasn’t on the forms but that was a good thing you had to ask so you added that to the enrolment forms*

*Abigail: Yeah because and I understand why families hope these issues are going to go away sometimes and if they start a new school it’s going to be the start of something new and they don’t have to divulge previous information but that’s the worst thing from the school’s point of view because if you don’t know you can’t support and so I mean I can think of quite a few students whose parents hid the information from us as the new school and it’s the students that suffer in the end because you eventually find out that there is something significantly wrong with an auditory processing problem or whatever it might be.*

*Interviewer: Did you find that any parents deliberately...*
"Abigail: They do deliberately do that particularly.

Interviewer: They didn’t tell you about the kid’s disabilities?

Abigail: Yip I have found that, that’s why I then had it put on the enrolment forms; it’s their obligation to discuss you know we’re partners in the education process and we need to know that information.

Abigail made it mandatory for parents to declare their views child’s disability, and she felt it was in the best interests of the students. Abigail was very informative regarding enrolment and positive about the parents’ input in the education of SWD: “So the parents, really the parents give you so much anecdotal stuff ....” Overall Abigail had a major input into the enrolment procedures. This involved formulating polices in the schools so SWD could be identified at the beginning of the enrolment process.

This problem of parents not disclosing information about their children with disabilities was not discussed by Ben (Capernaum Christian School Principal). It was the Principal’s honesty that was more important rather than the parent’s dishonesty. Ben discussed explaining to parents that the college may not be able to enrol their children.

"You get tricky enrolment situations and you just have to work it through with the families ... what I find as an educational leader is we have to be honest with people when it comes to enrolment process and explain to people what we are able to offer to parents and what we are not able to offer. And by doing that we are not actually drawn into a debate as to the worth of someone or casting aspersions on whether or not someone has a disability.

The issue of enrolment here was not fully clear but honesty was seen as a way of avoiding a debate on the problems of disability. This was another perspective to the tensions felt
about enrolling SWD, with Ben feeling uncomfortable discussing the SWDs’ enrolment with parents.

4.4.2 Policies of enrolment.

Queensland Policy Network Organisation for Independent Schools (QPNO) schools’ officer (Anna) clarified legislation and procedures for SWD. She explained the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* was an important act in relation to enrolment, but emphasised that QPNO did not make policy decisions for schools:

*Ok well, QPNO doesn’t have a role in policy development for independent colleges. Each of our independent colleges develops their own policy and procedure. But when you’re talking policy you’re talking from the government perspective then probably the one that has the greatest impact would be the Disability Discrimination Act, I think.*

One college Principal was not clear about this Act. When asked about enrolment policies, Daniel began to search through his computer for policy statements but could not find them. He discussed legal issues in the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*. He said the unjustifiable hardship clause was not a valid reason to refuse enrolment. This may have been true in New South Wales where Daniel had been previously working, but in Queensland this was not the case. *The Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education (2005)* set out the main purposes in order to clarify the obligations of education and training services providers and the rights of people with disabilities under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*. It contains an “unjustifiable hardship” clause. These clauses prescribe that the education provider ensures that SWD have timely information about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship to the provider. The Standards are
reviewed every 5 years and set out the obligations of the service providers (Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, 2012).

Daniel did not believe that a service provider could use the “unjustifiable clause” as an excuse for refusing enrolment of a SWD:

*They amended the Act to say there is no reason you cannot use lack of resources as a means to enrol a child, to ignore enrolment for a child. So if a child turns up and says I have a wheel chair, and we go, sorry we have not got access for you, that’s no longer acceptable you can’t...*

The Principal seemed confused about this policy and how it has changed. In Queensland, there is legislation that contains this clause dealing with unjustifiable hardships and the rights of the service provider. However, Nathan, Principal of Thessalonian Christian School, knew his policies well, and argued that parents had a choice to send their children to the school. If this right was denied, they could go to court. Choice was important for Nathan.

*And if you are taking away a parent’s right to have their students enrolled in the school of choice regardless of their level of needs. There are issues there that would have to be worked through because they can and do end up in court quite quickly if parents feel they are being disenfranchised.*

According to Nathan, parents have a right to have an education that is inclusive for their children. Nathan spoke as a parent and a Principal. His daughter has a disability. He was able to offer insights into educating SWD as a parent and a Principal of a Christian school, and this revealed some unique practical insights into Christian education.
All the RICSQ had access to QPNO for assistance and advice about policies of enrolling SWD. QPNO were often the only source of advice about policies. The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) is quite clear about enrolling SWD, and it contains clear statements about unjustifiable hardship, yet at least one Principal did not understand it. Further discussion of this issue will occur in Chapter 7.

4.4.3 Cost and lack of resources.

Ben (Principal of Capernaum Christian College) spoke honestly about costs of enrolment, and lack of resources to educate SWD.

_To me, what we have to be is be honest, and say as a school, you know these are our strengths and this is what we cater for, rather than say, we can cater for anybody and we have the ability to do that, because we don’t._

Thus, like many of the school Principals, Ben was honest and admitted to not being able to accommodate all SWD. Talking to parents of SWD was “tricky enrolment situation” for Ben as Principal because his college was on ninety acres and he considered it not suitable for someone with a physical disability. He said it could be embarrassing for some SWD who may not have control over their mobility:

Although Ben thought the school’s size was unsuitable for SWD, Ben explained the school is financially profitable and able to provide for some SWD. Yet the parents are acknowledged as an important part of the education process. Ben stated that that one SWD parent paid for a teacher aide. Generally, though, the college would pay because it is a wealthy college. However, it had very few SWD in comparison to its total enrolment.

Not all parents could pay for a child’s teacher aide. Zechariah Christian College Principal Aaron said the school relied on parents to pay fees. This school was not as wealthy as
Capernaum College, but the parents were happy with the college program and unique education structure: “We just find as a school that we don’t have all the spare money to just go and do that so you rely on parents who are already paying fees”. Aaron believed that Zechariah Christian School system of education suits SWD, except in the playground.

Cain at Damascus Christian College said one of the decisions which had to be made regarding enrolment of SWD was how many SWD already in the school were similar to the SWD being considered for enrolment. This was an administrative decision based on adjustments for teaching and staffing availability. Cain explained his policy of enrolment:

So all this information is before me and then together we can make a decision and part of the decision – how many children have we got that are similar? Can we cater for these in our existing staffing? Or do I have to get extra staff in? And all of those things, so you sit around and make those decisions.

The administrative procedures were all necessary and legal. This school made important steps to ensuring SWD were considered. The school had a policy and a template for enrolling SWD in independent schools from QPNO.

Baruch added his personal perspective as a grandfather of a child with a disability and a former Principal. Unfortunately, he was not as positive as Cain. He taught at Nazareth Christian College but was not the Principal at that time. Looking back to his experience as a pioneer and pastor of Christian schools, he questioned one Christian college’s refusal to enrol his grandson, who was epileptic, in a program in the college. This seemed to be a conscious choice to put buildings programs in front of SWD.
The school had put building an expensive building before the education of his grandson. This was an important observation about finances and enrolment policy. The building funds total millions of dollars and the fees for a SWD were small compared to these large expenses.

Dan says very little about actual teaching of SWD. He admitted the school could not cope if ten SWD turned up tomorrow.

*We do often say to ourselves, what is the maximum. If ten students with intellectual impairment turned up tomorrow could we cater and the answer is no. So there’s no ratios because it’s OK at the moment. But we also think to ourselves strategically what would happen if that was the case it would mean we would have to provide.*

*Interviewer: Teacher aides?*

*Dan: More rooms yeah we would take them but we don’t have the resources yet.*

Dan, like other Principals of RICSQ, had to “juggle” finances and students to accommodate SWD.

Enrolment policy was an issue for most schools if the parents were not honest and disclosed the student’s disability. However, this is more a reflection of the parent/school relationship or association than it is about enrolment. Lack of disclosure of a disability by a parent was a serious concern and translated into termination of the student’s enrolment. Some college Principals were open about not being able to accommodate these SWD, and did not enrol them. Rather, they referred them to the state systems. The reality is that it was the parent’s responsibility to provide details of the child’s disability and history at schools.
4.5 Parents

RICSQ Principals reported that parents of SWD were both helpful and unhelpful.

Solomon explained that he did not have any written policies regarding parents. He stated that parents want a safe, happy environment for their children, but that parents could be a problem and could possibly make the teaching more difficult. Solomon said: “So it’s not a written policy as such. It’s just a policy of working with the parents of working with our learning support specialists...when they do come often it’s worse.”

The parents were not encouraged to share in the education of SWD in Bethlehem Christian College. Some parents of SWD were seen as a problem instead of a collaborator in educating the child with a disability. Often parents of SWD are too close to their children and may hinder their independence.

Unlike Solomon, Abigail regarded parents as a source of anecdotal information, and therefore helpful. Cain was full of sympathy or understanding for the parents. The Principals explained that parents’ goals for their children were more about them being happy, having friends and wanting a nurturing and caring environment. This was a big factor in marketing for these schools.

Solomon explained:

Our parents with our special needs kids are ... I think have realistic expectations when they are outside of the college. You know they have realistic expectations of what their child can achieve. A lot of times the goals are less about academic and more about socialisation. Some of them just want a pleasant environment for their kids where they are not going to get bullied, where they are not going to be taken advantage of. Where they are going to be nurtured, loved; that’s what a lot of
these parents are looking for. I have had parents who have been looking particularly for a caring and loving environment.

Parents wanted the best for their children and this could often simply mean for them to be happy, or to be secure. This is a basic right for the SWD and is at the heart of the inclusion process for SWD in Qld. A loving and caring environment is of paramount importance for parents of children with disabilities.

Ben (Capernaum Christian College) explained that parents have to be willing to be involved in the college and with the staff. The parents-school relationship was one of trust. At Capernaum Christian College at least one of the parents paid for the child’s special support.

Her parents don’t just want her to be happy; they want and realize that one day they won’t be here, so they want their daughter to have some skills. We couldn’t do anything unless their parents were one hundred per cent on board with us. When I say on board, they must be available to come for meetings. They must be available if their child is unable to stay at college for a period of time. So there has to be a very open, frank, and quite detailed relationship between the college and those parents.

Ben believed that the parents want no more for their children than to be happy. They want an education that is functional.

I think maybe we are very fortunate here, but I think our parents want more than just their children to be happy, I think they want them to have skills as well. If the parents trust the College, they trust the teachers, they’ll listen to the advice and
feedback of the teachers, parents on the whole and I wish it would happen but, on
the whole here, our parents want the very best for their children.

The parent-school partnership was emphasised. Parents played a big role in the College
activities, especially sport and leisure. They showed a trust that was crucial to the
education of SWD. This College Principal spoke at length about the role of parents.

Not all Colleges had parents who could pay for a child’s teacher aide. Aaron said
Zechariah Christian College relied on parents to pay fees for SWD. They are not as
wealthy as Capernaum College, but parents were happy with the college program and
unique individual education structure: “We just find as a school that we don’t have all the
spare money to just go and do that so you rely on parents who are already paying fees.”

The Principal said Zechariah Christian College prided itself on their programs being
suited to SWD and the parents often testified to this. The parents believed it was the best
for their children spiritually and emotionally. Aaron was happy to market the unique
College education of all students.

Parents were welcome in Elim Christian College. However, they were expected to give
their child some freedom and space to be nurtured. Teachers needed to have parents stand
back a little bit and trust the teachers. Daniel, the Principal, said the college has values
and rules and there is discussion with the parents about the type of college they want for
their SWD. After the discussion, the parents would then decide if this college was the
type of college they wished for their children. Daniel pointed out:

Yes we’ve got a college policy, basically our college policy says that we ... we will
be honest with parents and say this is what we can do ... we can do x, y, and z. We
don’t want to enrol someone and make a fake promise if we can’t provide the
Daniel had a lot to say about how parents were given all the information about the College, its standards and unique values. However, he was honest with parents and would not hesitate to tell them that their child with a disability could get a better education at a local state College. This he said was due to lack of facilities and resources. He was not afraid of speaking to parents about their child, or about the debate over disability, like Ben from Capernaum.

Abigail was also anxious about parents who wanted to enrol children at Gethsemane Christian College. Although parents were important for support and as helpers in the education of their children, they also needed to step back and give the students some space. This was similar to Daniel’s comments about parents. Abigail welcomed parents’ input because she considered they were an important source of information, and very helpful, especially in the primary College: “(Parents) give you so much anecdotal information, so you have got to include them. I think it varies a great deal. Generally speaking the primary college parental help is really welcome as you know.” This college Principal was able to recall information from the three or four colleges she has been involved in, and this information was based on experience and learning through working with parents. Abigail regarded these parents as very knowledgeable about their children, and welcomed their anecdotal information.

Damascus Christian College had a partnership and a strong empathy with parents. Cain pointed out parents often had a difficult job dealing with a child with a disability. Cain was firm in his claim to have a strong partnership with the parents, with parents welcome in the college and where parents were invited to speak to staff about SWD. He also spoke
about “the heart” of the parents. This was a way of expressing Christian love and understanding for the parent as a father or mother of a child with a disability.

But you could hear the heart of the parents saying that they believe that if a child with disabilities is in a Christian environment they will get nurtured more than if they were in a non-Christian environment. Which is what you want of course, and expect? I think the most important leadership quality is understanding, you’ve got to understand the type of thing that they go through, you have got to understand the things that parents go through, the challenges, you got to understand those things and then have a real vision for those kids, because those kids I believe, we don’t push them aside, we say you are a part of who we are and we need you to succeed so we all succeed. I think it’s really important that they’re seen as an important part of our college, regardless of a disability, important part of our college.

Parents of SWD chose the college because of its special qualities, despite the college having fewer facilities than a government school. Cain emphasised a strong partnership and a welcoming environment for the parents. He spoke of a vision for SWD and how they needed to succeed so the college could succeed.

Isaac (the Principal of Jerusalem Christian College) told of having an open door policy in the college. The organisation that oversaw this particular school was previously called “Parent Controlled Christian Schools”. He explained the name change from the Christian Parent Controlled Colleges to a new name – “Christian Education National”.

That’s it yes, and so we do have a very open policy here in regard to allowing them to be involved in the classroom here, like we are, we are one of the colleges that came out of the older movement that was called Christian Parents Controlled
Colleges. Essentially no they haven’t changed although you would find that some of their policies are a bit different, there are reasons for them coming away from that name, the Christian Parent Controlled Colleges, there was a bit of an issue with “CONTROL” so, Christian Education National who in a sense just I guess a name that sort of gives the impression of us being colleges all over Australia...they’re big in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, big in Tasmania and Victoria.

The parents of SWD were held in high regard by Nathan, Principal of Thessalonians Christian College. He had a child with a disability himself, and he was also a Principal. He spoke truthfully and openly about his experience as a father and a Principal.

I think that they play a huge role and particularly with students, well parents with kids with disability regardless of the system play a huge role and I think the burden that is on parents is huge. Having had a daughter with a disability myself I can speak from that point of view with quite some experience. What I’ve observed with other families too is that contribution that they make is enormous.

The education of the child was the parent’s responsibility, Nathan insisted, and “Christians take that very seriously” (Deuteronomy 6:12). Being a Principal and a parent of SWD helped him to be a better leader for SWD, to know what other parents were feeling. “It perhaps helped me understand a little bit more of the pressures on parents and the needs of the child...” Nathan was a thoughtful, positive and practical source of information about parenting a child with a disability as well as educating SWD in RICSQ.

Baruch, Principal of Nazareth Christian College, questioned the helpfulness of some of parents of SWD.
We had one kid who was in because his Dad was on drugs and cocaine and he put this kid on drugs, he went into this centre, he was just uncontrollable, but he was controlled. The problem is ... my research shows me that well we had someone with ADHD and we had a dysfunctional family therefore the parents were unhelpful and I did not have enough evidence to conclude whether this kid had ADHD first and [whether] that caused them to be dysfunctional, and that could have been the case, or whether it was because of the ADHD kid that the parents became dysfunctional.

Nathan’s view of parents was based on a personal experience in his role as Principal of several schools, and his strong Christian beliefs. He was speaking personally as a founder of Christian education in Australia and a pioneer of schools in Myanmar (Burma).

Christian schools are supported and funded by parents; and yet some of the parents were mistrusted and treated with suspicion. However, most Principals regarded parents as having a desire to do what was best for their children. Parents were consumers with children who may have a disability. RICSQ were dependent on parents for fees, but SWD in RICSQ received about 25 percent of what they would get in funding in a Government school. SWD incurred more expenses than general students to educate. They may need teachers’ aides, and specialist visits from physiotherapists or speech language pathologists. Some parents were portrayed as overprotective of their children.
4.6 Teachers

In this section, the findings display what the Principals reported about their teachers and their engagement with SWD. Issues discussed include:

- Specialist teaching
- General teaching
- Instruction
- Attitudes
- Professional development.

4.6.1 Specialist teaching.

For the purpose of the following discussion, specialist teachers are special education teachers, learning support teachers, and auxiliary staff such as speech, language and physiotherapist specialists. Principals who spoke about the specialist staff were invariably full of admiration for them, and highly supportive of them in their work. Solomon was vague about the learning support teacher’s qualifications in Special Education at his college. Solomon did not have the information at hand or could not remember it. Special education teachers withdrew SWD but this was not encouraged, unless it was essential to the goals of the SWD.

Ben, Principal of Capernaum Christian College, spoke highly of his staff.

Well we have got two teachers that come to mind straight away and both of them have Master’s qualifications and both of them have actually done work for Independent Colleges and other organizations. They’ve presented at QPNO special needs conferences, and they’ve been there for the particular workshops, and you know these two ladies are seen as significant leaders.
This college Principal had a good knowledge of his staff and was able to speak about the
differentiation of the curriculum, and the expertise of the teachers, unlike Solomon
(Bethlehem Christian College), who was extremely vague about the qualifications of the
special education staff.

The learning support department in Zechariah Christian College was highly regarded by
its Principal. Aaron spoke about the role of the learning support teacher and how the
college provided strategies for helping teachers.

We do have some mainstream lessons ... look we put on a learning support
teacher this year... at the request of the teaching staff we had been using our
funding in teacher aide time doing one-on-one literacy and numeracy, but we still
do and there was still some money available in grant to put on a learning support
teacher. So that learning support teacher has been assisting the kids to make sure
they’re on place correctly, has been providing the teachers with strategies on how
to handle different aspects of their learning and behaviour, and really a lot of it
just boils down to emotional intelligence really for the teachers, to be able to say,
hey this kid’s playing up... why.

Daniel, Principal of Elim Christian College, described how the learning support staffs
were sent to QPNO for professional development. The general staff did not know much
about Special Education but were very eager to help. The learning support staffs provided
a lot of information and were the first line of contact with the general teachers.

Generally speaking our staffs relies on the wise counsel and support of the
learning support staff. That’s the way it works. The learning support staff are
proactive in saying right that you’ve got. We do rely on the teacher saying to us,
“You know what, I’m struggling with this or that” a couple of times so we’ll find
the best course for you. So we rely on the teacher to say “I’m OK with x y z but I need help with a b c” and we find it for them.

Jerusalem Christian College was a small college, but had a learning support teacher who was highly trained. This college was in the outback area of Queensland. Isaac, the Principal, did not say much about the staff and their teaching methods other than that they have a specialist teacher in learning support.

Well, we have a learning support teacher here, who has had a lot of specialist training and she sees her main role is to see that the teachers are empowered and able to deal with all these different issues and she’s there for feedback and help and so on so we tend to send with the one teacher away, XXXX is that lady’s name and she’s [been] involved with learning support and special education for many years.

From the comments, it is apparent that empowerment of teachers by specialist staff is an important part of professional development.

4.6.2 General teaching.

A general teacher who has a SWD in his or her class must write individual lessons or modify lessons, and adapt teaching styles to suit the SWD. By way of background and to clarify terms, an Education Adjustment Profile (EAP) means that teachers are legally obliged to modify lessons and make adjustments and accommodations for SWD.

Solomon, Principal of Bethlehem Christian College, was honest, but not very flattering when describing teachers who, he explained, could not teach SWD. Solomon regarded the general teachers as unprepared and untrained in special education, and considered that
they only tolerated SWD in the class: “It varies ... ah I think ... I think for the majority there’s a tolerance, but at the same time it’s not my problem”.

He went on to describe a general teacher’s ability to teach SWD. Solomon described the “myth of differentiation” attitudes prevalent at his school. He said some teachers just “spray their lesson” and struggled to help SWD.

*Solomon:* So the myth of differentiation........really isn’t...

*Interviewer:* So that that’s like sweep it under the mat or you know like I’m not going to have to ... like an EAP, they actually have to adjust their teaching.

*Solomon:* Generally you’re teaching a main stream class. And these are at a certain level and you have got 25 kids in the class ... and you are trying to teach to about 16, 17 of them, 8 of them are going to be left out. Some of them are going to be special needs kids; some of them are going to be special abilities ... kids. And it’s just the nature of it, because the poor old teacher has to try and spray their lesson and try and hit the most number of kids.

As Solomon saw it, these teachers relied heavily on the teacher aides to help them in the learning process, and were happy to be free of any problems associated with teaching these SWD. Solomon implied that some teachers did not teach individuals but just gave lessons in a lecture format. This was a strong criticism of teachers of special needs students and teachers need to take SWD as “their problem”, or differentiate the curriculum, designing lessons specifically for SWD; for example; a student with dyslexia needs to have the lesson on coloured paper, or the instructions simplified.

Yet Abigail spoke about the general teachers in a positive light.
General teachers ... I suppose I’ve been genuinely very lucky at all the colleges I’ve been at in that there have been a lot of staff who have been very professionally minded – [for example] [the primary teacher who has an autistic child in their class. They would prepare themselves very well, in specific Ed. But they might not have any prior qualifications but they make sure, and then there would be the ongoing PD [Professional Development for teachers] that the college (provides)... And really supporting them to go and make use of the QPNO days because they’re free. I mean you have to cover the future the class when they are gone. But or sometimes there is a charge but it is generally part of the independent colleges ... 

Nathan, Principal of Jerusalem Christian College, believed that being a teacher of a class that included SWD was a burden and stressful. The general classroom teacher should be supported with extra staff such as teachers’ aides, or be compensated financially or in some other way. However, he acknowledged this was a real problem in a Christian college where there was little or no funding. Teaching a class with SWD in a Christian college was not an easy task, especially under the policy of differentiating of the curriculum. Nathan’s insight was extremely good and he argued:

Like that is always going to be a challenge. Yeah I found the same thing in NSW but often and depending on the amount of funding you had teachers could be really burdened by having a student with special needs put in their class, even if it was even if it was only a part of their college week, because they had to do all the special planning for them. They had to be accountable for what they’re doing. It put a great deal of extra pressure on teachers and they weren’t really compensated for that at all. That was just part of their job and so you can see the difference of points of view. I mean if you’ve just got a class with basically normal
students compared to a class of one or two special needs students there’s a huge disparity in the amount of work and preparation that teachers were or are required to do.

This burden on teachers raised an important question of where is the best place to educate SWD – teachers are legally responsible to modify the lessons for SWD. Nathan continued:

What isn’t good for everybody is if the teachers (are) then burdened with the extra work that’s involved and that’s where I guess funding comes into it and the need to have ... more aide time available to help in the education of those students. And that was always the issue from my experience for teachers when they were being given special education students to include in their classes as to what level of teacher aide support could they expect, because often the needs of those students in the classroom were quite demanding.

Nathan spoke of the extra load of teachers who have SWD in their class and suggested they were not compensated for this extra load of teaching; as a Principal he felt that this extra load was unfair.

4.6.3 Instruction.

“Differentiating instruction” is doing what is fair and developmentally appropriate for students. It is a collection of best practices strategically employed to maximise students’ learning at every turn, including giving them the tools to handle anything that is undifferentiated. It requires the teacher to prepare different variations on lessons for different students. Solomon of Bethlehem Christian College regarded this specialised instruction to be non-existent. Solomon was able to describe the teaching process for
SWD openly, honestly and bluntly at times. He delivered a frank and detailed account of how SWD are regarded by the teachers and the teaching processes.

However, he expressed some recognition that SWD need to be selected and streamed into classes so the teachers are not overburdened: “Yeah we do, we try and keep that allocation we recognise that there’s a class that’s got a significant amount of special needs kids so therefore we try and keep those numbers small.”

The “myth of differentiation” was forgotten when Solomon commented about adjusting assignments and exams for SWD. Differentiation of the curriculum means that “if they need some extra you know maybe a tweaking of the assignment because the assignment is beyond them....” Solomon considered that pedagogy for SWD either did not exist or was very poor.

There is very little in terms of actual direct instruction which is the vast majority of what happens in a classroom. When the kids are just sitting at their desks working on something the teacher I think generally tends to go over and see the kid with the special needs you know a little bit more but at the same time that can work the other way because there’s some who just give up on that kid, more or less. It’s like what I was saying before; it’s someone else’s problem and really as long as they are being quiet that’s OK. And I could try and explain this to them but they wouldn’t get it.

Solomon thought that his general education teachers (as distinct from special education) were either not able to teach, or neglected to teach SWD effectively. They did not use programs or instructions that were suited to SWD. Their attitudes reflected an inability to educate SWD in the general classrooms.
At Capernaum Christian College, on the other hand, Ben reported that the teachers were insistent on differentiation of the curriculum. Ben clarified the differentiation principle of educating SWD, and also spoke about the importance of professional development. Differentiation of the curriculum was practised in this Christian College.

We really thump the table and talk about the concept called differentiation. And differentiation is to differentiate the curriculum or the learning abilities of each child in your classroom. That is something that one of our special ed. teachers was adamant about 7 or 8 years ago should be fundamental about here at our College. And it’s something therefore that’s part of our practice, in regard to alerting staff as to the special needs or the special requirements of students that is the responsibility of our special ed. teachers who do that. They actually have a seminar with all teachers at the start of the year.

...and there is also obviously not only modification of the programs but it also then also comes down to modification of assessment tasks.

But, I would suggest that because we have a great community here, it’s a friendly, warm, welcoming community, that, on the whole, our staff will do everything they can within their capabilities to help all students.

Ben explained the importance of differentiation and fully understood the principles of adjustment for SWD learning. He stressed that differentiation of the curriculum and assessment tasks was important, and he provided professional development for his staff.

4.6.4 Attitudes.

One of the qualities of the teachers towards SWD is described as “tolerance”, as Solomon of Bethlehem Christian College said:
Yeah I think as I say some teachers do it better than others some of them talk of the majority of teachers ... ah really it’s a special kind of tolerance so they might for instance if a child needs extra time with an exam then they will be granted that extra time.

So there’s a tolerance of them being in the class and everything but there is a knowledge that they will get their specialised instruction from the aide or they will get their specialised instruction from the learning support teacher you know. In other words not my problem. Essentially and if they don’t bug me I won’t bug them. And it will be all right.

Now that’s probably being too harsh because obviously they walk around they treat them just like any other student.

Ben of Capernaum Christian College referred to the idea of “tolerance” as described by Solomon: “You know we’re talking about people, so you will find there will be some people who will be more tolerant than others and some will be less tolerant.” The idea of tolerance suggests SWD were not fully accepted but “tolerated”. There are two uses of “tolerance” here — one is to make adjustments and the other is to put up with SWD. Overall, Principals showed Christian attitudes to students, but acknowledged that this does not necessarily flow onto all teachers, although some teachers go out of their way to help students. Dan (Principal of the Elim Christian College) has this to say:

**Interviewer:** Now teachers of students with disabilities — what are the views that your teachers have towards SWD, what sort of...?

**Dan:** Our staff are very, very open and very gracious and it’s not because they are Christian necessarily because our staff, it’s probably just who they are as
human beings which is why they have got a job here. To get a job at this school you have to see the relationship with the child as the most important reason for being. You must want to be with kids so whether it be a child with disability or not the rule still applies.

Interviewer... Yeah it’s that rapport with the kids.

Dan: Yeah we’ve got a girl whose got cerebral palsy, the lift’s been playing up lately so we said who could volunteer to help XXXX up and down the stairs in the lift ... you know, within twenty minutes the emails come back and we got twenty staff. Yip, I can do Monday morning, I can do Monday afternoon. So they all jumped in and said look I’ll help XXXX up and down in the lift because she gets ... she can like do it herself. That’s the sort of thing, like you just say “who can help” … this staff are great.

Overall, Ben expressed that the attitude of the teachers in this school was to help and show consideration to SWD. Teachers went out of their way to help SWD.

4.6.5 Professional development.

Aaron spoke about the need for teachers to have emotional intelligence in order to deal with behaviour, but the teachers were also given opportunities for professional development in relation to SWD. This was supported by QPNO. The officer-in-charge of support for Christian schooling was interviewed and asked about professional development. Anna said:

So we try to provide teachers with strategies to help individual kids with their individual problems, and then strategies with the program as well. Look if QPNO have got some PD
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[Professional Development] we’re going somewhere about learning and working with kids with disabilities and yeah we send our folk off if they’re interested...

Professional development for teachers was a high priority at Gethsemane Christian College. Abigail said that members of staff were sent to professional development meetings for specialist information, and the general staff were well informed:

Specialist advisors in QPNO disseminate information ... run a lot of in-services for staff. Yeah they run a lot of workshops. They usually put on a lot of day-long workshops on, say, Asperger’s is the topic for the day, or hearing impairment. They will run those for teachers, for the support teachers and for particular primary teachers who have got a child with that disability. Yeah they do a lot of PD.

This was one of the few colleges that mentioned QPNO as part of the in-service for teachers with SWD. QPNO provided a big input into funding professional development for teachers and are also a national organisation for independent colleges.

Professional development of teachers for special education of SWD was important for Damascus Christian College as well. Cain said that experienced teachers in the college know more about special education, and how much his college values it:

Ok, I think that teachers that have been with me a long time would have a different view in many respects to teachers who come into the place new. I say that because teachers who have been here for a while know the importance we place on our students with disabilities and they know they have to modify their programs to cater for them. They also know that we will send them away to get training if they
have a child with a particular disability that they need to understand a lot more.

We will send them away and train them, so that they understand them.

The new teachers learned how to teach SWD from QPNO, and attended specialist training from organisations like Autism Queensland. These new teachers were not trained in special education, and had to be sent to QPNO for training.

Now teachers coming in that are new to us or are new to teaching have to be trained, because to them it can almost feel like an imposition ... I’ve got to modify my program ... I have to make changes for this one child ..... And that will take me a lot of time etc.... So, it takes a little bit of time, working with them to understand that, and we make sure that our head of learning support, both in primary and secondary regularly go to staff meetings and they will regularly be raising issues, regarding their children. So that over a period of times you build up a culture that this is who we are and what we do and it’s accepted but, yes you have to work with new staff. They will, a lot of them go to QPNO, they run and have a person who is responsible for students with disabilities, and they run courses. Sometimes we will go to an association, like Asperger’s association and all of those and we will use those at times, or bring someone in, sometimes we’ve even had parents come in to speak to staff about their children with disabilities.

Cain considered that the culture or reputation of the school was important. Teachers who have been in the college a long time know the importance of teaching SWD. Newer teachers were given professional development and the learning support department played a big role in educating SWD.
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In this Damascus Christian College, as in others, Learning Support was an important source of information and help. General teachers, in contrast to Learning Support teachers, had to teach a whole class of students including SWD.

Baruch, the Principal of Nazareth Christian College, had previously been in charge of a college that took in SWD and specialised in SWD. His was a small country school.

There are special courses that teachers can do that are post graduate or extension courses, in service training courses they can do for it, and again we talk about the biggest Christian College where I worked was actually XXXX. We had there an annex and it was linked with the XXXX Centre, and in that we had that full all of the time, we had a waiting list for that, 26 kids in there. We had 2 trained teaching staff, who had done specialist courses and we had a trained aide too who was a specialist in teacher specialist education.

However, he spoke very little about the teachers in the College.

Overall, the College Principals regarded their staff as well trained, except for Solomon (Bethlehem Christian College). Solomon was colourful and honest in his appraisal of teaching abilities of staff with SWD. In most RICSQ, the Learning Support teachers, or Learning Support unit, was considered as the heart of the special education of SWD, and was relied upon for information and communication of ideas about SWD. In addition, QPNO had regular seminars to train teachers about SWD as part of their role. Yet, this resource appeared to be an afterthought for the schools. It seemed that most teachers do not have specific training in working with SWD in the general classrooms. This raises the question, do Principals have this training around disability, or do they need it? This question was to be considered in this thesis but the point of enrolment was the issue that emerged as important in the interviews.
4.7 Conclusion

The themes coded and chronicled in this chapter emerged as significant from the interviews with the RICSQ Principals; they highlighted the issues of importance among the large volume of statements delivered for this survey. In all, they helped to identify how the Principals construct reality in the schools with regard to SWD. The first theme, the definition of disability, revealed the fields of knowledge that inform how the Principals construe disability, their attitudes and assumptions about SWD. This theme disclosed how Principals thought and acted towards educating SWD. Educational practices for SWD were founded on these definitions. How these RICSQ principals defined SWD was unique. They defined SWD from a traditional Christian perspective, as created in the image of God. However, SWD were mostly viewed in terms of the funding they attract, which amounts to an economic definition of SWD. Funding was a source of tension and contradiction for the Christian faith of these school Principals. This caused some schools to redirect SWD to other schools and some to be very selective with the kinds of SWD that are accepted.

The second theme regarded the Principals’ attitudes to educating SWD. The issue of funding revealed itself as a source of tension. One Principal was hoping for a change in the shortage of funding with the new government. Shortage of funding was the primary cause of concern in the enrolment of SWD. The education of fee paying students was the first priority. As one Principal said, the business of a Christian school was paramount. She disagreed with this business mindset, but she saw it as important for the school. Another Principal highlighted the fragility of Christian schools which relied on parents for funding. The discrepancy in government funding for SWD between State schools and RICSQ was a major issue.
Another issue linked to funding was enrolment. The Productivity Commission’s review of the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* identified educational exclusion and segregation as one of the most serious forms of discrimination. However, these Principals all said they could not afford to enrol SWD, and often they advised parents to enrol their children in the Government schools where they would get access to resources and specialist teachers which the RICSQ could not afford.

Enrolment of SWD presented the Principals with the issue of disclosure of the medical condition of SWD. Some parents chose not to disclose their children’s disability. Principals regarded this as dishonest and a serious problem. Abigail had to draft a policy whereby parents had to disclose their children’s disability if they wanted to apply for enrolment.

However, the main concern for Principals wishing to enrol SWD was the lack of resources and costs involved in educating SWD. The lack of resources meant Principals had to think very carefully who they could enrol. Lack of government funding was a major reason for the inability of the schools to enrol SWD. Wilkinson, Denniss and Macintosh (2004) (Australia Institute) produced a table of the private school sector in regard to funding of SWD. All denominations of Christian colleges agreed on the need for government to fund SWD, and to be able to enrol at the college of their choice. The authors concluded that “In order to ensure that public funds are being spent properly it is necessary to link public funding more closely to the willingness of private schools to enact policies that are entirely consistent with the National Goals for schooling”. (p. 76) (See Table 6 in Appendix).

Another theme in the interviews was parents of SWD. Overall, most schools saw parents of SWD as partners in the education process. There were times when parents needed to let
go and give the school space to educate their children. Except for lack of disclosure, parent-college partnerships were important. Damascus Christian College had a strong empathy for parents, while Jerusalem Christian College Principal spoke of an open door policy for parents. Nathan referred to the Bible, which regarded parents as responsible for their children’s education.

An important theme in the interviews was the role of teachers in the education of SWD. Teachers were regarded as important by Principals, although only some mentioned the role of QPNO for professional development. Teacher’s attitudes and treatment of SWD were praised in most interviews, but two Principals were concerned about the knowledge and ability of teachers to educate SWD. One Principal said his teachers “tolerated” SWD, and that some teachers did not see SWD as their problem. He was honest and truthful about the difficulty of including SWD in the classes. Nathan also spoke about the difficulty of secondary teachers educating SWD, and considered that primary teachers were better equipped.

In most interviews, the school environment, which was regarded as safe and loving, was applauded by Principals as a major benefit of the RICSQ. One Principal told of his concern for SWD in the playground where they were not monitored as carefully as they were in the school learning centre.

A safe school environment is a part of the Disability Standards of Education in the Queensland schools. However, in RICSQ, the quality of the school environments takes on an extra quality of loving and caring. Most RICSQ Principals interviewed prided themselves on this quality of care. A safe, secure, and sometimes a loving, environment was considered as optimal for RICSQ, and was often what parents wanted for their children.
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Chapter 5: An Analysis of Discourses

This chapter considers findings that emerged from the second analysis of data in the interviews and documents from school publications, including statements and policy documents on the school websites and promotional material. The purpose was to describe and analyse the discourses contained within these two sets of collected data.

In the first instance, the analysis involved a discourse analysis using “Discourse Models” (Gee, 2005, p. 61) as explained in Chapter 4. A way of understanding how Principals educated SWD in RICSQ was to uncover the discourses within the spoken and written statements of the Principals. Gee (2005) wrote that discourse is a social language which contain the clues and cues that are part of “grammar 1” and “grammar 2” (p. 104). Grammar 1 is about traditional grammar, while grammar 2 is about rules of grammar to create patterns which signal or “index” characteristics: who’s — doing — what’s — within. Who is speaking and about what and what is the context is Gee’s message. Grammar 2 correlates/co-locates characteristics objects with other objects. For example, when we mention thongs, hat, and sunscreen - this co-locates to “signal” outdoors and sunshine (Gee 2005, p. 42).

Besides using Gee’s discourse models for analysis, a Foucauldian approach was used. This involved seeking out strangeness in the social arrangements (Kendall & Wickham, 1999,p.8).between the RICSQ and the government, or the apparent conflict between the Principals’ Christian world view and their reliance on the secular government for funding. The statement is the “atom of discourse” (Foucault, 1972, p. 80) and has “a function” (Foucault, as cited in Graham, 2011). When “doing” discourse analysis within a Foucauldian framework, it is necessary to look to a statement’s function. It is also necessary to ask what the constitutive or political effects of saying this, instead of
something else, might be (Graham, 2011). Ferguson, Ferguson and Taylor (1992) wrote that interpretivist research on PWD is unavoidably and intimately connected to the social status of those individuals. The very process itself of studying disability in this way, instead of in more traditional ways, is part of the outcome of how we understand the people to whom we apply the various handicapping labels.

Ball (1993) defined policy as both text and discourse and talked about the conflict and struggle between interest groups, and/or individuals, in the context of policy text production and of practice. For Ball, analysing the discourses in policy texts was the means whereby the discursive struggle was identified and the hegemonic individuals or groups noted. This research study presumed that the Principal was the hegemonic individual in schools.

Taylor also wrote that policy analysis in education involved a struggle over meaning or discourse. Again, different people with different agendas competed in the “struggle” for policy, and discourse analysis revealed the beliefs and ideologies brought to the table. The unique quality in this study, compared to other studies in policy analysis, was that the discourses revealed struggles within the same actor, in this case the Principal, rather than among competing individuals or groups of individuals seeking to impose their opinions or ideology.

Four main fields of discourse were present in the findings. As might be expected, a Christian discourse was identified. This field was further divided into theological, pastoral and moral discourses. The second field of discourse was around disability, reflecting varied models of disability in the interviews of the Principals. This field was further broken down into three subfields: medical, Christian, and ableist. The third field was a business discourse which included a discourse of choice. Taylor (2004) wrote that
economic and cultural aspects of globalisation have led to increasing fragmentation and plurality and complexity of social life. RICSQ were established to give parents a choice between government and private schooling for their children. However, parents of SWD did not have this choice. The conflicting and competing discourses were evidence of the tension over choices for SWD. Sometimes these discourses were clear; and at other times hybrids of two or more discourses.

Kress (1985) stated that these changes in networks of social practices were associated with a “discursive multiplicity” (Kress, as cited in Yeatman 1990:163) of new forms of hybrid texts, discourses and identities. Gee (1999) described discourses as units with no clear boundaries. The Principals interviewed spoke about funding and finance, profit and loss in regard to the education of SWD.

Finally, and surprisingly, the fourth field present in the findings was a discourse of dependency. This dependency discourse revealed the complex dilemma of Principals. They spoke about their responsibility for the education of SWD but did not question the government’s role in caring for SWD. This discourse of dependency on government finance revealed one of the most significant tensions for the Principals of these schools. They wrestled with conflict between being independent businesses and the need for state-aided financial support. As will be shown in the following sections, there were complementarities and tensions between the different discourses that impacted on the policy statements of these Principals.
5.1 Christian discourse

The Christian discourse had references to God, the Bible, and the teachings of Jesus. A Christian worldview shaped the discursive identity of the Principals. These individuals were differentiated from others whose discourse was controlled by a different worldview or ideology (Reid, 2008).

Anderson (2012) explained there are several biblical themes that comprise a Christian worldview involving disability and disabled people. He explained the nature and character of God, the goodness of God, and God and human weakness. A Christian worldviews considered human kind to be created in the image of God, which is significant, in that human beings were intended to serve as ambassadors of God. This included PWD, who were also in the image of God. Mapping out a discourse that upheld a Christian worldview involved looking at statements containing references to God, and Bible-based thought and practices. The Christian worldview also comprised a moral discourse centred on faith and beliefs of the colleges, as well as a pastoral discourse about Christian schooling. The Christian discourse was evident in all interviews with Principals and school documents, as would be expected. Christian discourse consists of that which Christians say both institutionally and de facto about God (Huber (2002). Huber added that, when a Christian speaks, he does not always use the language of his faith, and linguistically this faith does not make itself continuously apparent, any more than it does behaviourally. Principals of RICSQ assumed a Christian viewpoint and did not feel they needed to indulge in strong Christian expressive speech. These statements contained references to God, the Bible, Church and the gospels of Jesus, and theological views.

The broader Christian discourse was broken down into three fields:

- theological statements
• statements around pastoral care
• ethical or moral statements.

These three themes emerged from the discourse. This was an artificial separation for purposes of clarity about the evidence of a Christian discourse. It served to identify the sources of policy for these Principals. The Christian discourse was evident in all interviews with Principals and school documents as was expected.

5.1.1. Theological discourse.

A theological field should display groups of statements about God and Scripture, and qualities of a Christian or marks of those who follow Christ, including love, care, forgiveness, and compassion. It should comprise expressions of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught about how a Christian must behave and live with His teachings commanding people to obediently follow Him, or His word. Christian schools are founded on the Scripture and the permeative role that one’s faith plays in the school’s operations (Gannell, 2004).

Statements with references to God’s love were apparent in a group of statements making up a theological discourse. Bethlehem College Principal Solomon said God love all people whether they have disabilities or not: “Now my philosophy is that you know we have an open enrolment policy here because God is not a respecter of these peoples but these peoples no, no they can go jump. God is a respecter of all people.” Solomon’s casual quotation of the bible was colourful and unusual for a College Principal with a Christian worldview. The phrase “God is a respecter of all people” means that God’s dealings with people are not based on outward appearance, position, rank, wealth or nationality. We, because of our fallen and sinful nature, are guilty of respecting some persons while neglecting others. God does not look to the outward face of a man to
determine His dealings with anyone. What this Principal said, in his own colloquial language, was that the school does not favour certain people and reject others. It has an open enrolment policy. But the school could not cater for physically disabled children and these SWD had to go somewhere else.

Gee (2005, p. 37) used the phrase “other stuff” to describe “grammar 2” in discourses. Discourses involve more than language. They always include coordinating language with ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, and feeling. The uses of two different social languages by Solomon are obvious in this passage of speech. Solomon is expressing his beliefs as a Principal and a Christian. This is what Gee (p. 35) named a “heteroglossic” discourse, or double voiced. Solomon’s language in this discourse was informal and the context determined the social language (Gee 2005, p. 43). He was speaking in an informal situation where his experiences with SWD and his knowledge of the Bible were combined to create a Christian discourse about disability. His thoughts appeared to be “off the top of his head”; that is, not really thought out in detail. Yet the discourse was rich in experience and the language seemed to be embedded in “hands on” (practical) knowledge of SWD.

A further basic premise of the Christian faith is that a person with a disability is created in the image of God (McNair, 2007). Some Principals spoke about the design of God and how SWD are created in God’s image. This theological stance is known as imago dei. The foundation of the doctrine is Genesis 1:26-27: “God said, “Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (NJKV, 1992, p.2)
Christians should see one another as persons of intricate value to God and each other (Blair, 2008). At least three school Principals expressed that people with disabilities (PWD) were created in the image of God. Daniel stated that all humans are created in the image of God and appearances did not change this fact. “Well I would say that every person, whatever they look like, is created in God’s image.”

Statements like this were evident in the college Principals’ theological discourse which reflected a basic Christian understanding of disability. This particular statement drew attention to an omnipotent God. Applying Gee’s (2005, p. 12) method, the question here is: how does this piece of language connect or disconnect things, or how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another? The statement “created in God’s image” reflected a strong belief in God and connected the definition of SWD to a God who is creator. It contextualised the discourse within a Christian scaffold. Principals did not expand on imago dei to say whether it meant physical or supernatural image. They did not expound on this theological concept but it was a statement meant to include all God’s creatures.

Isaac (Jerusalem Christian College) also spoke about SWD being created in God’s image. He disliked the term “disability” and preferred the term “challenges.” He also declared SWD are created in the image of God.

...There’s a sense that all kids are born in the image of God and they’re all special and unique in their own way, and they all come to us with all sorts of different needs and challenges I guess, and so I’d rather think about different challenges than disabilities. That’s the way we trust so that if God’s in it, I’m sure there will be good come from it.

This Principal explained disability very much in terms of his belief in God. The Christian discourse is clearly evident, with imago dei statements and God as an explanation for the
source of all creation. The idea of “challenges” and “image of God” was combined with SWD being “special and unique.” Here the discourse involves “situated identities,” or “ways of performing” (Gee 2005, p. 32). SWD are unique and have a connection with God’s creative powers, facing challenges rather than having a disability.

There were some contradictions in the Principals’ discourses. Even though most Principals believed that SWD were created in the image of God, not all his thoughts seemed to align with this belief. Solomon referred to SWDs’ “wiring of the brain,” and teachers who “tolerated” SWD in the class. Crotty referred to “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (author’s emphases) (1998, p. 67). These remarks were situated in a Christian organisation and culture. Solomon’s interpretation of the Bible and God were casual and informal. At the heart of a Christian theology should sit a critique of perfection and an honouring of weakness, brokenness and vulnerability (Berinyuu, 2004). Describing SWD in this way highlighted their imperfections and with teachers, it exposed their lack of understanding of SWD as created in the image of God.

As well as the theological doctrine of imago dei, there was a statement about SWD being unique. Some Principals referred to God’s purpose in creation. Zechariah College Principal, Aaron, said that SWD are unique: “Well basically, God made every one of us and he made every one of us unique.” Again, there is the clue that SWD are unique, and are part of God’s creation. Aaron’s theological discourse was also informal and recognisable as part of “grammar 2” discourse (Gee, 2005). Aaron stated that God was the standard for all education in the college, and was the criterion on which all education was based.
But there are majority Christian schools, so, look yeah (you take) everything you hear or listen to with a grain of salt and pass it through your own biblical filter and ask you know there is a God, does he agree with all of that.

Aaron’s statements contain a “situated meaning” based on the context of Christian schools. The language was not theological but referred to the Bible as the authority for what God agrees with. All ideas and values were “filtered”, not just as a private act but as a social, conformist act in the Christian schools. The language in use in this discourse revealed how Principals constructed their practice of educating SWD.

The Nazareth Principal, Baruch, was most prolific in his use of Bible-generated statements. Baruch expanded on his perspective on disability. Not only were SWD created in God’s image, but God’s creation is perfect. SWD are created to glorify God. SWD have a purpose in God’s design of things, according to Baruch. His Christian statements were filled with references to scriptures, and references to God. In the following example, there are theological, medical and dependency statements pointing to evidence of tension between the Christian ethic and the government. This exemplified what Kress (1985) described as a “discursive multiplicity”; and Gee (2005) called discourses that have no boundaries. Gee stated that two or more discourses can “meld” together (p. 30), and be hybrids of other discourses. Baruch declared:

Yes well there is … it’s not a definition of disability it’s just that the Bible said that God never created anybody by mistake, God didn’t make a mistake, so disability is not a mistake. A disability is something that God uses for his glory ... I created him blind, so that today when I came down the road he would be healed and God would be glorified ... You see basically you’re talking education to get
funding for educational disability you have to prove that God made a mistake and
I don’t believe that....

Baruch’s declaration of God’s word in these statements established God as the all-powerful authority. This Christian interview revealed a very active and strong faith in God. Baruch referred to God to explain and justify his beliefs around disability, expanding this further in a Biblical illustration to explain disability in God’s plan of creation.

Yet there was a business discourse woven through these statements. God created PWD, but saying this might mean the government would not pay the funding. Baruch did not believe in “talking education to get funding” because his identity was in God and not the State government. This phrase “talking education to get funding” was a way of identifying and, at the same time, critically judging the whole process of having to identify SWD in the worst light possible, to obtain funding. Baruch was cynical in his assessment of the whole funding situation.

Yet not all Principals quoted scripture and promoted Christian education as vehemently as Baruch. Baruch’s discourse not only pointed to God and to His word, but he also said that a Christian school was “an arm of the church.”

Baruch’s discourse revealed something about his identity. Gee (2005) argued that socially significant identities are constructed in language. Baruch was one of the few Principals who made references to church in the interviews. The language reflected that of a pioneer Christian school teacher, Principal, missionary, and evangelist. The interview was filled with theological statements around education of SWD, with references to God: “Christian schools are not ashamed of taking them (SWD) into enrolment. They see it’s their role.” But not all the schools regarded it as their role. Most Principals looked to the government...
as the source of funding and caring for SWD. The spiritual needs of students were part of Baruch’s discourse. The effects of this sort of vocabulary were important because they revealed a thoughtful and Christian response to the questions, and a careful choice of words. The whole response was actively Christian and the quotations were directly from the Bible. The dedication to radical Christ-like teachings relied on the church for strength and support. For Baruch, a Christian school should be responsible for the education of SWD.

In the theological discourse of the Principals interviewed, there were references to God and SWD being created in His image. These references were said in passing, and not many were directly thought out or explained further. The Scripture was not quoted liberally, but was referred to generally, except in one interview with Baruch. Two Principals saw educating SWD as their responsibility, representing a sort of Godly pronouncement that these students should be looked after by the College. The Principals used Scriptural references about God’s love for children with disabilities. These statements expressing compassion are part of a pastoral discourse.

5.1.2 Pastoral discourse.

The second sub-field that emerged in the Christian discourses was pastoral. A constant theme in the New Testament is that of Christ as a shepherd who attends to or looks after the flock of sheep; this analogy is used metaphorically of Christian pastors. Pastors guide as well as feed the flock (Vine, Unger & White, 1985). Pastoral care is an essential theme of Christianity, and God’s care for mankind is seen in the parables of the Good Shepherd and His sheep.

Pastoral care was important for Baruch, whose views were based on years of experience in Christian education and working with SWD. His biblical statements referenced the
Holy Spirit or Advocate whom he described as the *Helper,* and his interview contained distinctly Christian references to the pastoral work of the Christian school for SWD. He believed the role of the principal should be one of a Pastor.

As seen in the previous chapter, the school as a caring, nurturing environment was a common idea in most of the interviews. According to some Principals, the parents were the ones who sought this pastoral environment for their children with disabilities. Solomon, the Bethlehem Christian College Principal, said "*I have had parents who have been looking particularly for a caring and loving environment....*" Solomon also spoke about the importance of a “caring environment” where students felt safe. This call for safety is not uniquely Christian, but safety is an important aspect of education of SWD in the Disability Discrimination Standards (2005) for educating SWD.

Words and phrases such as “loving and caring” and “nurturing” signalled the identity of these Principals as pastors. The discourses revealed ways Principals perform their duties and coordinate the care of students in a Christian environment. Parents were often the subject of this pastoral discourse. Cain said parents knew and liked this idea of a “loving caring environment” where the children were “nurtured”. Parents helped in a pastoral role by working in voluntary positions. Principals coordinated parents and were aware of their importance. Cain said parents knew their children were prayed for. A pastoral discourse was also evident in words and reported deeds of prayer and nurture. The discourse seemed to be “correlated/co-located” (Gee 2005, p. 37) with a Christian life style. A word like “prayer” is situated within a Christian context and is part of a Christian pastoral discourse; and as Gee stated, discourse models explain why words have the various situated meanings they do.
The rhetoric of loving, care and safety was advertised in Damascus Christian College’s web site, which targeted parents in this marketing discourse. The support theme appealed to parent’s sense of Christian values: “You would expect your school to provide a supportive environment for your child, based on timeless Christian values” (Damascus Christian College website). The significance of this discourse in the web site was that it was based the activities of the school on “timeless Christian values.” However, there was a difference in rhetoric of love and care and practices of love and care. The care as a central tenant of the Gospel and the Good Samaritan parable contrasted with this language as rhetoric.

Gethsemane Christian College Principal (Abigail) regarded “the policy of the pastoral care system... as a real plus,” which “works very well in terms of the nurturing and caring for students with all abilities” and described these as “just brilliant environments.” Abigail’s language included statements about SWD which were not just generic statements about all students. Her discourse constructed the pastoral care as “brilliant” and she spoke positively about pastoral care in the school.

A philosophically-oriented pastoral discourse was evident in Zechariah Christian College. The Principal, Aaron Smith, spoke about a caring environment:

*I think it all has to come down to the old statement my old boss used to say, kids don’t care what you know until they know you care. That has to be the number one place to start. That’s it.*

This language about the pastoral role of the College was moral but not essentially stated in Christian language. It told a story and professed a truth, a moral about the Principal’s values and thoughts on the practice of educating SWD. It was based on experience and perhaps years of work in the role as Principal; but the context was a narrative style
expressing a truth in a language that was not academic. It was situated in his experience in life.

The founding Principal of Damascus Christian College, Caleb, spoke about the authority, values and general culture of the school. There was planning in the founding years of the school for “interaction between teachers, personal counselling and occasionally special occasions where they went away for retreats, holidays or camps.” Caleb talked about the church and Christian school having a common aim, and what the Bible said about SWD.

In one school, acceptance of SWD was part of the philosophy of their pastoral system. The discursive practice present within Jerusalem Christian College was evident in the actions of support of SWD by the school. This college’s role of caring and loving was demonstrated by the school boards, who were willing to pay for a full time teacher aide for a SWD. This was an example of love and care in action. The difference between Capernaum College and Jerusalem College was that in the former, one parent was willing and financially able to pay for their children’s teachers’ aide fees while at Jerusalem College, the Board paid for the school fees. School fees are what parents pay for their children’s education. Fees are also charged for teacher aides to help support SWD. In this case the wealthy school did not pay the fees for the teacher aide, but were happy the parent paid these. In Jerusalem Christian College although they were not a wealthy school the board did pay the fees for the SWD. In doing so they showed compassion for educating this particular SWD. However, the idea of “compassion” was strangely mixed with “tolerance” and “understanding” in Ben’s statements, and gave clues to his thoughts as the Principal. He spoke of the school’s culture and connected that to the parents.

_We’ve got supportive parents, and we have a culture at our school which is one of friendliness and support. You know we have a very, very, caring school and a very_
welcoming school. I think that culture is just so important. It teaches tolerance, understanding, compassion, it allows you to be respective and to think about... my goodness aren’t I lucky.

The social language in this discourse was mixed. Words like “lucky” were contrasted with “tolerance” and “compassion.” Gee wrote that discourse models are cultural models. Yet not all school Principals’ discourse included a loving caring environment for SWD. Solomon (Bethlehem Christian College) was honest when describing teachers who could not teach SWD. Solomon regarded the general teachers as unprepared and untrained in special Education; but said they “tolerated” SWD in the class “…It varies ...I think for the majority there’s a tolerance, but at the same time it’s not my problem.” The idea of tolerance suggests a straining of social relations in a place. Historically, “tolerance” is connected to racism. In racist situations, whites have “tolerated” blacks.

Solomon’s discourse included “an Asperger’s kid who is going troppo.” This was indicative of a normalising discourse, where one student is regarded as normal and the Asperger student is labelled “troppo.” a term that refers to living in the humid, hot areas away from civilisation, and abandoning all normal ways of living.

This is also part of a medical discourse whereby “troppo” refers to the abandonment of sane normal behaviour and is similar to a mental relapse. It is also something to be “tolerated” by teachers and other members of the school community “…really, it’s a special kind of tolerance.” This attitude is perhaps meant to be seen as objective and fair; but the opposite, bigotry or prejudice, must be present if this “tolerance” is portrayed as gracious and strength of the staff. It is an unusual description of SWD, not unlike the tolerance shown to black people before civil rights in the US. It suggests a patience or
benevolent attitude which is given freely to dependent or inferior people. At best, these children’s’ behaviour or disabilities are endured.

Did teachers of SWD who “tolerated” them appear to be neglecting their pastoral care at the very least, and at the most important as Christians with SWD? Most Principals said that their college had a strong pastoral, loving, caring environment, but this did not always include SWD. While some schools turned students away, other schools admitted that the teachers did not know how to educate them. Pastoral rhetoric was strongly evident in the web sites, but was not always communicated in the interviews. Some schools admitted they could not enrol SWD, and turned them away because of lack of resources.

5.1.3 Ethical and moral discourse.

A third field in the Christian discourses concerned the ethical beliefs of the Principals about educating SWD. One of their beliefs around SWD concerned responsibility. A question of responsibility was obvious in the interviews with the Principals. For example, Cain said: “...these are all God’s kids and we have a responsibility to look after them, regardless.” The language apparent in this discourse established relationships with God, SWD and the Principal. They were “God’s kids” and “looking after them” was important. He did not say “educating” them or “including” them. The word “regardless” at the end of the statement gives the reader a clue to the situation. It was one of struggle and hinted at the frustration he felt in the process of educating SWD. Perhaps he was alluding to the financial shortage; however it is not clear. It may provide the reader with a window to the thoughts in his mind.

Jerusalem Christian College website reported a shortage of volunteers. It was a small school in outback Queensland which was established by a group of concerned parents.
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who wished to see a school with Christian values. It had approximately 150 students in
the schools. On the website, family and home life are described as important for the
“common good of the children.” “The School is an extension of the Christian home. It is
therefore essential that parents and staff work together for the common good of the
children.” The school had a central message of being in touch with its families and
community, and the Christian message was paramount for this small school. The image of
a Christian home provided the context for this discourse, which strove to recruit parents
to help at the school. The biblical view of the education of children as being the parent’s
responsibility was clearly narrated in this discourse, revealing attempts to build a
relationship with parents to transform or create a cultural, social or educational
relationship. This discourse constructed the biblical and social meanings of the school.

Responsibility emerged as a key idea in the pastoral discourses for educating SWD.
Thessalonian’s Principal Nathan pointed out that according to scripture parents are
responsible for their children’s education. This school Principal preached what the Bible
said about children’s education: “I mean Deuteronomy 6:12 says its God’s requirements
that parents should be responsible for the kids’ education so ....” Thessalonian College
advertised that choosing the right school was one of life’s big responsibilities. This
promotional rhetoric highlighted a discourse of responsibility in the education of their
children, and appealed to the parents to enrol their children at this College. Responsibility
was visible in this moral discourse, which was marketed directly at parents, and helped to
reproduce or transform through media the parents’ thoughts of the Christian school.

The idea that these are God’s children was repeated in interviews with Cain, Israel and
Baruch, who all said they regarded SWD as God’s children, and expressed a
responsibility to look after them. This responsibility also produced tensions because SWD
were refused enrolment. This conflicted with a Christian desire to enrol all SWD. The
desire to educate “God’s children”, as embedded in the Christian faith, was seen to conflict with the economics of managing these schools which had to rely on funding from the government to enrol SWD. The education of SWD was, in Christian terms, a moral responsibility, and the implications were that such views would mean that SWD would be welcomed in their schools. A moral discourse was inherently part of the total Christian discourse.

Some of the discourses contained strong references to God. Most of the Principals’ reports about God, in their interviews, were around disability. These accounts contained the ideas of SWD being created in the image of God, or God’s love for SWD, or that SWD were unique. A really powerful declaration was that God never made a mistake. Although some Principals did not refer to God’s role in creation of disability, God’s character was declared or implied in the relationships of the Principals to SWD. The discourse models contained references to God sometimes as “theories” or explanations of situations.

The idea of love and care was evidence of a pastoral discourse that was promoted by the church and the schools. Parents not only asked for this loving caring environment but were part of it in the support they volunteered. The idea of responsibility for SWD was the Government’s, and it was this duty that caused the most tension in the schools. Funding was deemed to be inadequate, and the Government was considered responsible for the funding shortfall. One must question the “safe and loving” environment of the Christian school when SWD were being rejected. As quoted previously at the heart of a Christian theology should sit a critique of perfection and an honouring of weakness, brokenness and vulnerability (Berinyuu, 2004).
Responsibility was a key concept in this moral discourse. Principals of RICSQ felt responsible for SWD, yet there was still the lack of equal opportunities, and economic demands on the system were obvious. However the Government was considered to be responsible financially for placing SWD in Christian Colleges.
5.2 Discourses around disability

This section of the chapter describes three views of disability, particularly around the definition of disability. Fulcher (1989) preferred to call these models of disability “discourses” of disability. The religious or Christian model of disability was expected in the interviews because this was an analysis of policy in Christian schooling. The statements concerning disability also included the secular, medical definition and the ableist definition.

The secular discourse could be seen in the medical discourse of disability, while an “ableist” philosophy questioned and confronted all definitions of disability. Thus, there was a division of secular and faith-based discourses present in the interviews and documents. There were two secular discourses of disability that emerged in the interviews; it was decided for this study to focus on the two main discourses and limit analysis to medical and ableist discourses. All of these discourses arose from the thoughts and conduct of the school Principals, and the college documents on the websites. The Christian discourse reflected the medical model of disability contained in the bible where Jesus had compassion and healed PWD, but healing was not an end in itself. Berinyuu (2004) argued that if that interpretation is given to the healing narratives, they lose their contribution to the theological reflection on salvation in Jewish and Christian faith. A comprehensive treatment of the Christian discourses around disability is beyond this chapter, and what follows is a discussion of the medical and ablest discourses.

5.2.1 Medical Discourse.

The majority of the Principals’ views of disability contained phrases or ideas consistent with a medical model of disability. The medical discourse was widely discussed in the literature and the subject of criticism (Barnes et al 1999, Lutz & Bowers, 2003; Speece &
Harry, 1997). This was extensively reviewed to reveal that the medical model was a way
of looking at PWD not as people with different abilities, but as helpless individuals who
have been forced into a life that was constructed for them. As a reminder, Brisenden
explained that the medical definition did not distinguish between disease and disability.
Where a disease has a physical manifestation, a disability may have no tangible
manifestation. The medical definition is partial and limited. Doctors are unable to respond
outside their own constructed definition of disability. This view ignored the social and
psychological definition of disability (Brisenden 1986). Brisenden’s critique of the
medical model created a building block in the construction of a new definition of
disability from the point of view of a person who has a disability, and provided an inside
view, a firsthand account of what it means to be seen as disabled from a narrow medical
perspective. It was helpful because it distinguished construction of the definition of
disability which described the difference between disease and disability. Fulcher (1989)
explained that the medical model, through its language of body, patient, help, need, cure
and rehabilitation, and its underlying politics that “the doctor knows best”, excluded a
consumer discourse or language of rights. A medical discourse was one that is prevalent in
the medical world and is used by psychologists, teachers, and social workers. It excludes
the theme of social construction of impairment and most of the criticism is based on its
comparison with, or lack of a social understanding of disability. A medical model of
disability which regards disability as a defect or sickness must be cured through medical
intervention (Kaplan, 2004).

It is not the medical treatment of PWD that was questioned by the literature but rather the
exclusion of rights and environmental issues. Impairment is the condition but the
disability is often a result of the societal attitudes and physical restrictions. In the United
States, Jeon and Haider-Markel (2001) concluded that policy change was influenced by
the redefinition of disability issues from medical and economic definitions to a new socio-political perspective. They have thoroughly researched the definitions of disability in the last 40 years and their research provided an insight into the changing perspectives of society’s attitude to disability and the resulting policies (Jeon & Markel 2001).

Most school Principals defined disability within a medical approach (see Table 2). Only one school Principal defined disability in a social model. The majority of Principals regarded disability as residing in the individual, and it was viewed as a medical problem that was to be treated. Two school Principals believed everyone had a disability to some extent. Most of the medical definitions were vague using terms such as ‘conditions’ or ‘normal’ as part of the definition of disability.

Aaron (of Zechariah Christian College) spoke positively, saying SWD are “unique”, and have “strengths”. Aaron, like Solomon, used rather colloquial language to define disability. He said we all have some disability. His language enacted social and cultural perspectives (Gee, 2005) around disability, using a metaphor reserved for a commodity or product “…Well really, I suppose I have a bit of an unwritten philosophy that we’re all damaged goods.” Then he clarified this by adding that: “…we’ve all got a learning difficulty of some sort, some is permanent, [and] some is temporary.” As well, he distinguished between all people who have a disability of some sort with those who are “diagnosed.” “But as for diagnosed children with disabilities we have two with EAPs [Educational Adjustment Plan], recognised EAPs, but we’re currently going through an analysis of all of our students.” This medical discourse constructed SWD as patients who have been diagnosed. But the discourse was more than a medical discourse. The description was not clinical but used metaphors that described the human condition as less than human and more like a consumable (“damaged goods”).
According to this Aaron, happiness is strength although this may not be obvious.

...Yeah we all have our strengths and talents, every single one of us, you might have to look a lot harder for someone who you know has for instance Down Syndrome, but then you’d have to say but well, their strengths and their talents is just that they’re happy, and when you want to be as happy as some of those kids.

However, he regarded disability as not just a classroom event but told stories of those SWD he had known: “So his disability is in the class room, but on the farm, he is brilliant.” Thus, disability was constructed as something that occurred in and out of school. The construct was derived from a familiarity with parents of SWD not only in the school environment, but in the community. Although it was constructed within a deficit discourse, it revealed a social dimension to the concept of disability. This was one of few instances where a social construction of disability was indicated or referred to in the interviews.

Medical statements around diagnoses also included funding. Nathan, a parent of a child with a disability and Principal of Thessalonian Christian College, equated disability with funding. His talk revealed his frustration with the funding model for disability. He spoke about the difficulty of identifying SWD in the independent schools because of the disabilities that were not funded. His use of medical terms like Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) were clues to the thinking and interpretation of this Principal of disability. Added to this perspective was “a grey area” which he believed contained SWD beyond his help.

I mean there’s certainly...I mean you’ve got SWDs, and then of course you’ve got students with learning problems. And whilst it’s possible to the students with learning difficulties, to a large extent in our independent sector with actual SWD
it is much more difficult and of course you can have some students with physical disabilities ... it is difficult to help them at times. Well yes obviously there are, particularly the things relating to ADHD and those types of autism spectrum disorders were yeah, there’s quite a grey area there that made it difficult for us to help as much as we would want.

This was an admission of lack of understanding of disability and perhaps a window into the mind of the Principal which showed a lack of mission for SWD.

Sometimes, the statements reflected more than one network of social practices. Baruch, the Principal of Nazareth College, spoke about the problems of defining disability and about his experiences in Christian education. He spoke about his grandson who was refused enrolment in a College of which he had been Principal. He also spoke about other SWD of varying disabilities. His understanding of disability contained a mix of medical and Christian statements:

...because for this question you need to define disability... because there are kids with disabilities, but we’ve only got one kid in the school with a disability bad enough to require an aide ...I can talk from experience in that my eldest grandson has a disability, he has severe epilepsy and that hinders his learning drastically particularly in his language, he still can’t read even though he’s 14 he can’t read.

Describing a disability as “bad enough” associated disability with qualities of worthiness and unworthiness, and good and bad. Most of the school Principals viewed disability from within a medical model. The dominant discourse viewed disability as a medical problem, a deficit or a personal tragedy.
Some Principals were uncomfortable with this medically-based process and referred regularly to the concept of disability developed from knowledge of God and the scriptures. However, this may have been an acknowledgement of their Christian faith and desire for including SWD. It was not a theology of special education; but, at the same time, it did offer up an understanding of disability as part of their social identity. The language created an identity or role wherein they could be recognised as Christian Principals.

A medical view of disability is not wrong in an educational environment and is necessary for a clinical diagnosis. However, with a social perception of disability the environment is largely what needs changing. Most Principals did not speak about this. In fact in one school the dominance of sport was a reflection of this lack of awareness of the environment as affecting the education of SWD. One other school Principal admitted the school was too large for SWD and conceded that the environment was therefore unsuitable.

Overall, the language in the interviews strongly depicted a medical discourse of disability. This medical discourse was similar to an ableist discourse with terms like “normal”, “special” and “bad”. At times the two may be inseparable, but as Gee (2005) explained, discourses can be hybrid with blurred boundaries.

5.2.2 Ableist discourse.

This is the final section analysing Principals’ discourses of disability. As well as a medical discourse, there was evidence of an ableist discourse. An ableist discourse constructs the problem of disability within the concept of ability and is embedded in the neoliberal discourse. In an ableist discourse, two categories of human beings are presented; sub-species and superior species constructed as truth. This binary discourse
advocates “normalcy” as the ideal state of being and disability as undesirable and inferior. Hogan (as cited in Corker and French, 1999) referred to deaf people and ableism. The lived experience of being deaf contests the notion that the world is hearing, and therefore deaf people should also be able to hear and speak. Ableism is a political issue for disabled people because hearing and speech has traditionally dominated modes of communication.

An ableist discourse is obvious in some of the statements of the Principals. Ashby (2010) cited Rauscher and McClintock (1997), who defined ableism as an oppressive system of discrimination and exclusion (p. 346). The term ableism evolved from the disabled people’s rights movements in the United States and Britain in the 1960s and 1970s (Wolbring, 2008). Ableism describes prejudicial attitudes and behaviours towards PWD.

Words common to the medical discourse of disability include “normal”, or “normal learning”, “unique,” “strengths,” and “diagnosed”. Some of the language used by the Principals is uncomplimentary and metaphorical, for example “damaged goods” or “wiring of the brain.” These descriptions are also ableist in their perspective. The discourse around disability is viewed through ableist lenses. In some interviews the discourse is more ableist than others.

Most of the discourse about disability that depicts a medical model resides in the bigger picture of the ableist philosophy. These are discussed in the section of this chapter dealing with secular discourses. Zechariah Principal, Aaron, believed SWD are “unique” and have “strengths”. He explained how he viewed disability stating that we all have some disability but uses the metaphor of a commodity or product. This talk infers there is a divide between “normal” and “others”. SWD were portrayed as inferior or “damaged” in contrast to “normal” students.
5.2.2.1 Normal versus abnormal. Several Principals (Cain, Nathan, Ben and Solomon) spoke of normal learning. An example of ableist thought was the “othering” of SWD, where Cain and Nathan compared SWD to “normal” students. Cain included the word struggle: “... I would define that something that makes normal learning for a child a struggle.” Normal learning was established as a benchmark against which SWD are measured. This comparison with a perfect set of learning conditions or traits is a clue to the thoughts and contexts of Principals’ ideas about learning and disability.

An ableist concept is a part of the QPNO and government administration of disability. Wendell (1996) stated that the biggest obstacle in the deconstruction of disabling social restrictions and barriers, for example, by legislation and socio-political reforms, lay in the “othering” cultural constructions of disability, which produce otherness for disabled people. This othering means that disabled people are represented as distinct and apart from assumed normality, as well as apart from the “normal” and the “natural” majority (Reinikainen, 2006).

Cain (of Damascus Christian College) spoke about SWD who have their own “special” area to play. Cain’s talk was “othering” SWD because it described the learning area for SWD as “..a special room” and contrasted the learning of SWD from the learning of “normal” children. “Normally accepted grades” was a benchmark for SWD to achieve. He distinguished them from “normal” students. Caleb defined disability in a historical perspective. He compared understanding and awareness of disability in earlier times and in the present time:

*Define a disability... [it] is any challenge a student is facing that would take them out of basic norms of society, their ability to read, to write, to have motor skills, comprehension, task and challenge, all that sets them behind what would be the*
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normally accepted grade averages. If you for example said that DH5 child should have these basic skills, if a child isn’t reaching them you would suspect that the child has some sort of challenge or a disability there... the challenge of disability is not seen in such a high agenda as what we’ve got these days, you’ve got to remember this is [in] 1979 - 80 and Para-Olympians hadn’t even [been] considered as part of the Olympic exercise.

The idea of normal learning was also present in the statements of the Principal of Thessalonians Christian College. Nathan spoke about “normal” learning. However, Nathan’s experience as a Principal was extended to the practicalities of being a parent of a child with a disability. Nathan had to make tough decisions, as a father of a child with a disability, as well as a Principal. He spoke about disability and “normal” students: “I guess any condition in a person that prevented them from learning in the normal way”.

The idea of stereotypical learning for SWD suggested an ableist viewpoint which divides normal from subnormal learning.

Thus, ableist talk depicted a deficit or personal tragedy discourse, and set up a distinctive “normal” life as something to be sought out. The statements of Daniel contained words and descriptions that were based on a deficit or impairment model of disability; for example, “kids who come along with disabilities that we need to fix.” This view of disability was based on a “problem” that was thought necessary to be “fixed” and in no way celebrated or admired the disability. These statements strongly suggested ableist and medical constructions of disability.

Ben, the Principal of Capernaum Christian College, distinguished normal students from SWD: “If you’re talking physical disabilities we have got one, if we are talking intellectual mental disabilities we are probably talking closer to a dozen.” Ben said his
school was not suitable to take students with physical disabilities. Thus, an ableist perspective in this conversation was obvious. Ben distinguished physical disabilities from other disabilities, as well as from the “normal” students. Those students without disabilities were superior, and more suited to a “normal school situation”. Ben’s comments neglected any social understanding of the definition of disability:

*It would be too far for someone with a profound disability to move around. That’s exactly right, for someone who has no control over their bowels and bladder that would be in a normal school situation that would be embarrassing. You don’t want to put anyone through a situation where you know they could feel humiliated or embarrassed. But, for a lot of children who have low level disability. I believe we do a really, really nice job.*

His interpretation of disability reflected an ableist perspective. Ben distinguished normal students from those with physical disability. Those with physical disability could not cope on such a large school ground. The able-bodied student was more suited to this large school acreage. The expression “a really, really nice job” suggested that the image of the school is important. Having to accommodate SWD who could not control their bowels would not be “nice”.

The statements of Solomon from Bethlehem inferred that SWD have an inferior role in learning. He said that “there is always a barrier for all of us to learn... For some kids it’s going to be wiring of the brain profoundly difficult because of you know what ever’s happening you know wiring of the brain.” This talk reflected a medical approach to defining disability, and negatively depicted SWD in an ableist model. A medical inference was present throughout the talk, and the phrase “wiring of the brain” strongly suggested a defect or deficit discourse contained in ableist ideas.
Still, Solomon questioned the ableist notion of disability by declaring “we all have a disability to some extent.” However, this concept of disability was part of a larger discourse which was discussed in Chapter 5. It was one of many models of disability called the social or biopsychosocial model.

5.2.3 Conclusion to discourses of disability.

The construction of disability contained several different discourses. In this section, the Christian discourse was obvious in words such as “unique”, and “image of God”. Most Principals said that “every person whatever they look like is created in God's image.” The medical discourse was evident with terms like “normal”, “special” and “bad”. The dominant discourse viewed disability as a medical problem, a deficit or a personal tragedy.

Finally, the ableist discourses were present in the “othering” of SWD with comparisons to the “normal” or the deficit model of disability apparent in the medical model: “...you might have to look a lot harder for someone who you know has for instance Downs Syndrome....” An artificial divide was created between the species’ (typical) versus sub-species’ (atypical) bodily abilities (Wolbring 2012). Campbell (2005), a writer and academic with a disability, argued that disability is always present in the “ableist talk of normalcy, normalisation and humanness.” She insisted that the truth claims around disability are dependent upon discourses of ableism in their very legitimation. According to Campbell (2008), ableism is part of the neoliberal discourse.
5.3 Business discourses

In this section, the discourses around business are explored. “Business discourse” has been defined as “talk and writing between individuals in the domain of business for the purpose of doing business” (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson 1999, p. 2) and “founded on the twin notions of discourse as situated action and of language as work” (Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson 2002, p. 277 cited in Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009).

A business discourse is one which contains within it management and economic models associated with privatisation, deregulation, efficiency, globalisation, and accountability to results. For example, the discourse of managerialism can, at times, reduce the project of education to cost benefit analysis (Caughlin & Beach, 1997). The analysis of business discourse sought to uncover statements revealing managerial and administrative thoughts about educating SWD. Firstly, the statements about costs of educating SWD are discussed. Secondly, the discourse of choice is explored.

5.3.1 Costs.

As expected, managerial viewpoints were expressed in interviews with the Principals. The Principals of Damascus and Gethsemane Colleges spoke about the economic impact of educating SWD. Most of the Principals interviewed commented on money and the cost of educating SWD. Shortage of funding made it difficult to educate SWD to the extent they would have liked. Not all Principals agreed that a business direction should control the education of SWD.

Gethsemane had 100 years of tradition and its founders were from a Christian religious order. Students at Gethsemane had access to sporting fields, a sports centre, swimming pools, tennis courts, rowing and sailing sheds, and an Arts centre. Abigail, the Principal, pointed out that education of SWD had a huge economic impact on the budget. She said
some independent schools acted solely as businesses, adding that the management of the College looked at the costs of taking a student who had significant disabilities. They decided it might entail making changes to the facilities of the school and would have a huge economic impact on the budget of the school. Abigail expressed her opinions about what the function of a Christian school should be. She recognised there was tension in the treatment of SWD. The business discourse dominated a Christian discourse, and this was a source of tension for this Principal.

...I would say for me, it never came to a difficult situation. But I know there are independent schools which are businesses. There is a bit of a tension between ... and I don't necessarily mean it is the governing body versus me or the staff. But people who are not so involved in the education process will tend to look at the impact of taking a student in who has significant disabilities that might, it might entail putting in huge changes to the facilities of the school and cause a huge economic impact into the budget of the school.

Abigail questioned the RICSQ’s policy direction and choice of putting business before compassion when it came to enrolling SWD. The Principal described this business choice in a metaphorical phrase as being the “nuts and bolts” of the organisation. This Discourse Model (Gee, 2005) is chosen over and above a compassionate policy direction. The choice of words here was interesting. A “nuts and bolts” approach to educating SWD does conflict with compassion and understanding, perhaps the opposite of a Christian discourse Model. The management of the school was socially constructed in this narrative to be unthinking or not human, as a consequence of this discourse model. Abigail thoughts about her experiences with schools in business decisions seemed to dominate any Christian compassion for SWD:
If we accommodate that student and we put all the ramps in or whatever we have to do, and it cost $200,000 or whatever that is going to severely impact on the learning, the resources and the way we can support existing students. No, I'd find that hard to say to the family well I'm sorry we can't take you because there'll be too much of that. Maybe I've been fairly lucky because not all the schools have been financially really easy but no so what I is saying is the people who look at the nuts and bolts, the finances of the school will be, they will often look at it in a calculated way and say well the impact of that is too significant.

Another one of the financially well-off colleges, which weighed up the business of cost of enrolment of SWD, was Capernaum Christian College. Ben, the Principal, included the subject of business and educating SWD in his interview. The Principal explained that his school was financially well-off and they were “fortunate that the teaching and care of a student with a severe physical impairment is paid for by the parents.” Ben explained:

It’s a minor issue, but ... we have a boy who is quite significantly physically disabled and his family wanted him to be here with his brother and sister and they pay for a full time aide for him. So they pay the difference between what he’s entitled to at the cost of full time aide. Now, so, this particular student is very fortunate and that his parents have made and have the ability to make that commitment ... for him.

Ben said that they pay for students with emotional or mental health issues. The identity of this school management was portrayed as more compassionate than that of Abigail’s. Ben identified the school family as compassionate and the school as “fortunate” and also a caring school.
We tend to probably find as a school when it comes to people with either an emotional or mental health issue that on the whole we probably tend to pick up the majority of the costs. Now, we see that as our, I suppose part of our mission, but, we are fortunate enough we have the ability in our budgets to do that. It does come at, and it is expensive.

However, enrolment of SWD was considered as sometimes ‘tricky’ and educating SWD was considered expensive. The Principal did not want parents thinking the school was discriminating against their children and did not want to ask parents to pay for their children.

The business discourse was clear in Damascus College, where the Principal, Cain, also weighed up the costs associated with educating SWD. Cain considered that enrolling SWD at his college was costly. The following statements reveal the dilemma of enrolling SWD and having to turn SWD away. The Discourse Model identified the function of the school as a business which had to work. The cultural model or Discourse Model meant costs were paramount over and above any discourse of love or compassion for SWD.

Now, the challenge comes you’ve got to run a business, and it’s got to work, so you’ve got to be careful, but, a very good friend of mine in South Australia, XXXX of XXXXX Christian School in South Australia, ... believes the same thing I do, but he bit the bullet and said I will set up a full learning support department a big one and we will not turn any child away.

The phrase “bit the bullet” described how this particular Principal put SWD first in his agenda. Management and educating of SWD proved to be a challenge for this Principal. Money was considered ‘a struggle’ and one had to be careful in decisions around SWD.
Budgeting and staffing were costly, and enrolment of SWD had to be considered fully. The conflict between Christian and business values was obvious in the statements.

Solomon of Bethlehem Christian College expressed his views on the costs of educating SWD. He blamed the legislation for their policies of funding SWD. “The legislation that impacts ... the most on us is the fact that we get about a third of the funding of what public Colleges do.” Funding of SWD was a source of tension for Solomon. His statements revealed his sadness with having to turn away SWD. Solomon’s main focus was on costs associated with educating SWD.

And when you are getting such a small amount it doesn’t even pay for you know a teacher aide salary so it becomes very difficult and so what you are asking — a private College dilemma really is — you’re asking parents who are paying fees to subsidise those kids who are going to need over and above and I think that’s where the government needs to come into it because for those kids who are under the EAP classification of disabilities, you know that really is not only a College responsibility but a government responsibility and I think the government is abdicating their responsibility by underfunding and not having the funding attached to the actual child .... If we had the money we would be able to do it because often it’s like all they can do like at public Colleges like if they can. But whereas the public Colleges get something like 10 or 12 thousand dollars per student ... we’re getting three. If they (SWD needs) were being met then we wouldn’t have to turn kids away.

The “college dilemma” arose when the private college had to ask the parents to compensate for the college’s lack of money. This was on top of fees and other costs that parents already contributed. The Discourse Model in this situation was clearly one of
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frustration and financial stress. It was a question of who was responsible for funding SWD. Gee (2005) wrote that the issue of “politics” (status and power, the distribution of social goods) is revealed in relationships, and this is seen in the relationship of the State and the Christian school.

Finance was also an issue for Elim [of XXX College] and for Bethlehem College. Bethlehem’s Principal, Solomon, described his finances for educating SWD as a “cake” to share. He explained the dilemma and concern about all parents having to pay fees and how paying extra for SWD would be taking money away from the other students in general.

   A private school dilemma really is you’re asking parents who are paying fees to subsidise those kids who are going to need over and above. So what we do then is get the parents in. We talk to them about … these are the difficulties your child is facing so the way we can help your child ....

Again, the “politics” of the distribution of social goods is seen in this Discourse Model. Solomon was concerned about dividing the “cake” between SWD and general students. The figure of speech - “so much of the cake” - is important in this discourse. Unlike the “nuts and bolts” description, this is about sharing. It is also expressive of a mood – a party. Human beings construct meaning as they engage with the world they interpret (Blumer, 1969; Gee, 2005). Finances are compared to a “cake” which if shared by SWD will leave other students as having less. Solomon stated that:

   ... because when you say compassion, obviously if you get more kids coming in then the kids that you’ve got are going to necessarily suffer because there is only so much of the cake that can be sliced up to go around.
But this school was generous toward SWD even if it was a small new college, as the Principal explained: “And in the area of financial difficulties we will even say we will pay for half the tests that need to be done, half the paediatrician.” This was in contrast to Capernaum Christian College where the parents paid for the services of a teacher aide for their child.

Nathan of Thessalonians Christian College was critical of the funding for SWD in the Christian system of schooling. Government funding was inadequate and was perceived as a main issue in the college’s endeavour to educate SWD. However, the interests of the student were paramount to Nathan. This revealed the understandings of a Principal who had the experience of having a child with a disability to educate.

*It is one of the main issues and probably one of the limiting factors for our ability to help SWD and in fact in my experience once they got more or less to the high school level we weren’t actually able to compete if you like with the state system. Because what we were able to offer is so much less than the state special education units could offer but it is actually in the student’s interests really to move on to the state system ... and even in the family’s interest in some ways because there so much more support available to them.*

Christian colleges could not provide for SWD in the high schools, and Nathan looked at the best interests of the child and recommended state schools for educating SWD. Being honest with parents was important and Nathan recommended state secondary schools as better funded to educate SWD.

Nathan was very concerned with the level of funding and looked at this problem as a direct cause of the inability of Christian colleges to educate SWD. “But I guess the issue
that we found would be the discrepancy between the levels of funding for students in the independent sector compared to students in the state sector.”

Assessment of SWD was equated with cost according to Isaac, the Principal at Jerusalem Christian College. Costs of educating SWD are a big problem and he stated that “the outcome when most people are thinking about disabilities, it has a price tag attached to it, so disabilities equals funding of some sort or some sort of assistance.” Yet the College Board graciously enrols SWD and helps pay for them.

Principals’ concerns around educating SWD in these Christian colleges boiled down to costs. Managerial thinking about assessment and “disability equals funding” spelt out the tension of having to enrol SWD. Abigail, Gethsemane College Principal, unequivocally stated that there were Colleges which were purely business-minded. She did not agree with this business mindset of educating SWD.

Daniel, Principal of Elim Christian College, said that because the funding was so poor colleges were finding ways of encouraging people not to attend. Parents of SWD missed out on their choice of schools. Some RICSQ excluded these students because of a lack of finance. Colleges did not have the finances and resources to provide adequate education of SWD; hence the parents’ choice of schools was limited, and SWD missed out on a Christian education.

5.3.2 Discourses of choice for parents.

Statements concerning choice were plentiful in the interviews with the Principals. Privatisation of schools included competition and delivered a choice for parents of affordable, private, independent schooling for their children. Educational policies for students with a disability in Australia, the USA, and the UK and in most western
countries stipulate that inclusive placement should be a choice available to parents (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2008). Choice is part of discourses within independent schooling. Yet choice is actually lacking when it comes to educating SWD. The inequality of government funding is considered by the interviewees as the reason for the lack of choice for parents of SWD. Furthermore, the rhetoric enables the government to hold parents responsible for choices (Parjanadze, 2012).

The increasing emphasis on competition and choice had also brought with it a ‘hidden curriculum’ of marketization within the enterprise culture (Whitty and Power, 2000). Whitty and Power (2000) preferred the term marketization rather than privatisation:

…if we look strictly at the issue of funding, or even at provision in most countries, it is difficult to argue that education has been privatized on any significant scale. In many cases, marketization might be a better metaphor for what has been happening (p. 94).

Marketisation connotes a more radical business agenda compared to privatising of schools. The competitive nature of the market affects these RICSQ. Choice or a market of suppliers leads to better service provision and lower levels of cost, as competing suppliers vie for potential clients. Choice is often promoted as having merit in itself (Levin, as cited in Harma, 2010). Christian schools offer parents choices for their children as an alternative to government schools.

Caleb spoke about the reasons Damascus Christian College was established over 30 years ago. It was about choice and standards or quality of education. According to Caleb, Government schools failed in literacy and numeracy standards and children needed an alternative philosophy of education. Caleb explained that: “One of the working philosophies we had is that Christian schooling in Australia is the first schooling, not
government schooling.” Caleb elaborated on the reasons behind founding a Christian school, as Christian education provides an alternative to what is seen as a lack of literacy and numeracy education in the State schools. The discourse provides the context for the existence of Christian education in opposition to the State system. However, it also reveals a Christian discourse.

We decided that … as a Christian community that we would start a Christian School. From a Christian worldview came a basic philosophy — children should be educated to learn how to read, function better in life, that’s basically they should not just have life skills, but they should know alternatives, they should not just be subjected to one humanist world view.

Caleb also believed that parents have choices: “I think it’s the fair thing that if a parent pays taxes that they shouldn’t be discriminated against, they should have the choice to either have a State system or a Christian world view or an independent world view.”

The governing Church established Damascus Christian College to provide an alternative to the government schools for parents. However, Christian schooling operates in a very competitive market place.

The discourse model of choice in education for SWD and students in general reveals the difficulties and financial stress of these independent schools. Nathan of xxx College, when asked about Christian schooling for SWD, pointed out: “In my experience it’s hard enough to even get choices to support Christian education let alone special education within a College.” Nathan was quick to stress that Christian education was not a mainstream organisation completely funded by the government, but an independent schooling system for parents with children who want a Christian education. The choice for parents with or without SWD is a difficult one. The right to choose is important for
many parents. According to Nathan, parents take pride in their freedom to send their children to the school. Additionally, parents strongly believe they had a right to choose an education that is inclusive for their children. Nathan spoke both as a Principal and as a parent whose daughter has a disability. He was able to offer valuable insights into educating SWD from both Principal’s and a parent’s perspective. His statements included economic rational thinking about educating SWD in Christian school.

*I guess this does, unfortunately it comes to a point economically where it’s just not feasible for students to be educated in an independent system because of the two conflicts and at that point I don’t know that Christian education is as important as something that will support the child and the family because for some children like in my own case, our family case, our own daughter has never reached a mental age beyond about early childhood, at the best mid primary school and in terms of being able to live independently she is never capable of that and of course a private school system can’t cope with that level of dependence.*

As both a Principal and a parent, his statements reflected his experience, and pointed to a lack of choice in schools where funding policies are inadequate. Choice of schools by parents was not always possible due to the lack of resources and financial assistance available to these schools.

At Damascus Christian College, enrolment and choice for SWD were cost analysis decisions, rather than decisions dependent on God. Cain, the Principal, said that one of the decisions when enrolling SWD was how many SWD in the College were similar to the SWD being considered for enrolment. Cain made tough economic decision based on adjustments for teaching and staffing availability.
Decisions to enrol SWD were purely pragmatic business issues. The Principals had no choice if they could not afford the teachers and resources. Each college had the ultimate final say in the decision to enrol SWD. Baruch, retired Principal, was a grandfather of a child with a disability. He questioned one Christian College’s refusal to enrol his grandson in a program in the College.

*I can talk from experience in that my eldest grandson has a disability, he has severe epilepsy and that hinders his learning drastically particularly in his language, he still can’t read even though he’s 14 he can’t read. That has been his Christian testimony whatever, but anyway we wanted to put him into Nazareth College which is the closest College to us, but Nazareth College even though it’s a member of our system all that sort of thing, still wouldn’t take him because they said we can’t afford a full time aide for him, and he is only eligible for a part time aide. There’s a lot to speak of... considering we got Nazareth College 6 million dollars right, for a building project that they wouldn’t have got outside of the system. I reckon they could have taken him ... but they wouldn’t.*

In Baruch’s opinion, the power to enrol SWD was clearly with the schools. Choice for the parents in this situation was non-existent according to Baruch, and the interests of the College were not part of the ministry of Jesus to SWD.

The discourses of choice revealed that the relationship with parents was tested. Principals’ language revealed this strain. Most parents of SWD were looking for a loving caring school. Some parents’ choice included paying for the staff to care for their children. Aaron, Principal of Zechariah Christian College, said they relied on parents to pay fees for SWD. They were not as wealthy as Capernaum College, but parents were
happy with the college program and unique education: “We just find as a school that we
don’t have all the spare money to just go and do that so you rely on parents who are
already paying fees.”

The economics involved with educating SWD clearly put a strain on Principals. For some
parents, there was limited or no choice. Elim Christian College welcomed parents of
SWD, but he considered that funding shortages limited parents’ choice for educating
SWD in the school. Daniel said the college had values and rules, and often he held a
serious discussion with parents about the type of college they wanted for their SWD.
After being told the school did not have the teachers or the resources to provide a good
quality education of SWD, parents decided if the college was the type of college they
wanted for their children. The lack of choice for parents of SWD revealed that Principals
had to give parents the choice to enrol the students or not. A moral discourse of honesty
was best, according to Daniel, Principal of Elim Christian College. The interviews with
him revealed that the Discourse Model of honesty resulted in a practice of referring SWD
to State schools: Daniel spoke openly and honestly:

Yes we’ve got a College policy, basically our College policy says that we ... we
will be honest with parents and say this is what we can do ... we can do x, y, and z.
We don’t want to enrol someone and make a fake premise, if we can’t provide the
resources. It’s the parents call.... we are saying here is ... you make the call
you've looked at us now, what we can and can’t do. You make the decision.

Some parents were told that the school could not provide for their child with a disability
at all. Daniel had a lot to say about parents who were given all the information about the
college, its standards and unique values. However, he was honest with parents and did not
hesitate to tell them that their child with a disability would get a better education at a local
state school. This he said was due to lack of facilities and resources. Yet, some schools showed more compassion for parents and wanted them as partners.

Cain of Damascus Christian College was firm in his claim to have strong partnerships with parents. The college web site included rhetoric about a partnership with parents and a strong empathy with them. Cain expressed empathy with parents having a difficult job caring for a child with a disability. These parents were welcome in the College and parents were invited to speak to staff about SWD. He also spoke about their needs, expressing compassion for the parents of SWDs.

*But you could hear the heart of the parents saying that they believe that with a child with disabilities is in a Christian environment they will get nurtured more than if they were in a non-Christian environment. Which is what you want of course, and expect?*

Cain said parents often chose this college because of its special qualities, despite it having fewer facilities than a government school. If the college did not have the resources for educating SWD, the parents were advised to enrol their children elsewhere. Some colleges did not have a choice available for parents of SWD. In the end, the decision to enrol a SWD was directly that of the college.

However, parents had a right to choose for their children. Abigail spoke about choice in relation to SWD. “*I do believe that every child has the right to be able to choose where they go to school... and if that can be done.*” Abigail spoke about the business of whether a school could afford to pay for the education of SWD. The financial strain often dictated the choice. The discursive practices were often one of letting the parents decide, but Abigail felt the schools were driven to making decisions, or business policies were put before compassionate policies. Abigail expressed her heart’s compassion for SWD:
No, I'd find that hard to say to the family. “Well I’m sorry we I can’t take you” because there’ll be too much of that. Maybe I've been fairly lucky because I would always strive to accommodate that child because I do believe that every child has the right to be able to choose where they go to school and if that can be done.

A managerial discourse revealed that the enrolment of SWD was reduced to a cost benefit analysis. Metaphors used by the Principals were used for the purpose of constructing the meaning and reality of educating SWD in RICSQ. They highlighted the tension and strain of policies around managing SWD. This “down to business” discourse, unlike the following discourse, was no surprise. Lack of finance due to funding shortfalls for SWD meant RICSQ could not support the education of SWD.
5.4 Dependency discourse

An unexpected discourse emerged in the analysis of the interviews with the Principals. Funding for SWD created a discourse of dependency on the government. As a reminder, the funding of Australian private schools derives in part from Commonwealth and in part from State governments. Funds for SWD are provided by the State Government to non-state school peak bodies (i.e., namely, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland who administer further distribution to schools). The split of available funds between Catholic education and independent Schools is determined each year on the basis of the number of students with disabilities reported in the most recent State survey data of non-state schools (Education Queensland, 2012).

CSA demands equality and rights for students with disabilities in Christian schools (CSA, 2007). CSA refers to the funding in this country for SWD in Christian schools as inequitable, denying the democratic choice of SWD to attend the school parents believe best suits their children’s needs and values. A recent survey by CSA found there were shortfalls of up to $20,000 per student with a disability. CSA argues that current funding policies discriminate against SWD who choose a non-government school. This is because they did not have access to the same level of additional funding in order to meet their needs (CSA, 2007).

McNair’s (2008) survey of Christians attending church revealed that 81% of respondents disagreed with the idea that the governments should be responsible for SWD. That Christian schools should be responsible for SWD is a basic Christian belief. College Principals see funding as problematic and want the Government to increase the amount of funding for SWD. This dependence of the schools on the government for funding was evident in all interviews. Costs and resourcing took priority over compassion in enrolling
SWD. While this conflict is a source of tension for these Principals, the irony is that the schools prided themselves on being independent. This dependence for funding of SWD is an important source of tension revealed in the interviews with the Principals of RICSQ.

Evidence of varying degrees of dependence was present, although college Principals did not openly acknowledge this. As was discussed in the previous section, some colleges laid blame on the government for the funding shortfall. Statements concerning responsibility were common in the interviews of the Principals. The dependency on funding produced frustration and tension for some college Principals, but only a few Principals offered any solutions to the problem, and blamed the government for this shortfall. They believed the government should be responsible for financing the education of SWD in RICSQ.

Thus, many statements around funding of SWD constituted what amounts to a discourse of dependency. Some school Principals believed funding and disability were inextricably linked. Jerusalem Christian College Principal, Isaac, said: …“when most people are thinking about disabilities, it has a price tag attached to it, so disabilities equals funding of some sort or some sort of assistance.”

There was a long detailed process for accessing this funding. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Education Adjustment Profiles (EAPs) had to be written so Colleges could access funding. QPNO helped facilitate this process of determining if a student met the criteria for funding.

SWD were a priority for Jerusalem Christian College, despite the issue of funding. Disability and funding were present in the managerial discourse. This College decision to enrol SWD and to pay for their funding showed its independence, instead of dependence,
for educational finances for SWD. Funding of SWD created limits on the capacity of the schools to educate SWD, but it did not stop this college from enrolling SWD. Isaac said:

*We don’t get a huge amount and you’d appreciate if you’ve done your research, the figures will show that the independent schools, Christian schools like ours don’t get like a whole heap of money for what we’re doing for special needs kiddies. The board when they looked at enrolling this child decided that right there that whatever it cost, if they were going to enrol her that the school would wear the rest of that if you like. So the funding itself is really not the issue the board itself has to make a decision if they enrol each child on their own merit system, to just where we stand as far as that’s concerned, it would take a full time carer, well that’s what we provide. And yes I guess there’s a benefit in it for us; we are able to get some of that back in funding. That’s not the focus in a sense at all.*

The College was grateful for building and equipment supplied by the government. However, statements in this interview with Isaac revealed a conflict of Christian beliefs and the practical business of educating SWD. Disability equals funding signified the strength of the dependency discourse. Principals were subject to the government’s funding policies in their education of SWD.

Although the schools source private funding from parents, they were heavily reliant on government funding. They had autonomy to teach from a Christian perspective but SWD needed extra funding for resources and specialist staff. A SWD cost considerably more than a general student to educate.
Although he agreed with the policies of fairness and equity, Ben did not agree with the funding policies. Funding presented a problem for him. However, he did not suggest a solution to the problem.

_I worry about, what worries me more is the fact that um we have a small number of children who have been ascertained with a learning disorder and A.S.D. and the level of funding that they are entitled to is so miniscule in relation to the individual learning needs of the children_

Statements indicating dependency on the government also revealed signs of tension and worry. Cain disliked the funding policies. The impact of this policy weighs heavily on the Principals. Cain spoke from his heart:

_I think in general terms we would follow the legislation that’s put down because that’s how we get funding for those individual students, however, as a Christian, I would probably look a little differently and this is the tension you have I think as a Christian, one is that these are all God’s kids and we have a responsibility to look after them, regardless, the tension comes in it’s a very costly exercise and when you don’t get equal funding to do it you’re challenged by that so, every independent schools that I’m aware, of especially Christian ones, are running their departments at a very big loss. Their learning support departments run at a very big loss._

Cain regarded it as a problem that business decisions over-ruled any responsibility for educating SWD. Statements like these were part of a larger business discourse.
Thus, a managerial discourse presented as the dominant discourse, and included within it, a dependency discourse. Cain continued to express his compassion for SWD and the tension he felt:

Yes, substantially, but, if we had correct funding I would probably treble my learning support department because I believe that it’s our responsibility, I don’t believe we should ever have to turn a child away because we can’t afford to provide those facilities that some children need. Now, the challenge comes you’ve got to run a business, and it’s got to work.

Although the parents provided some private funding the schools were heavily reliant on government funding. Cain argued for equality of funding with the government schools.

Now sure as I said, if money isn’t a struggle I would take more and I believe the Commonwealth Government is at a point where they are going to make a decision about funding, because what we are after is equal funding across all sectors, so the state school, a student in a state school on level 6 in Queensland will get $20,000, now if I got that then that makes a big difference, I’m saying the funding should go with the student, if you’ve got a disability and it’s categorized then your eligible for $20,000 no matter what school you go to, they should get that funding so that they can meet your needs.

The tension was apparent as Cain explained the lack of progress in legislative reform with regards to government funding. He depended on the government to subsidize the education of SWD. A discourse of dependency emerged in this interview:

There has been a senate inquiry into it, there have been parliamentary enquiries, and as yet nothing has happened, it’s been one of the slowest things to move that
I’ve ever seen, but I believe the Gillard government at the present time is saying that we want to address it now. We’ve heard it before, from previous governments, and even this government, we haven’t seen it yet. I don’t know why it’s so slow, I really don’t.

Caleb, the founding Principal of Damascus Christian College, acknowledged reliance on government funding in the initial setup: “So rather than to just simply tackle the issue by criticising and asking for more government handouts we decided that as a Christian community that we would start a Christian school.” Caleb elaborated on the current state of the economy in Queensland in 2012, and about asking for funding:

I’m not anti-socialist or anti-government, but I think somewhere you’ve got to strike a balance between always looking for government handouts, and maybe that balance needs to be put somewhere in the mix it’s not good to be asking for, putting your hand out, and asking for government funding all the time. But if the government is in deficit, how do you fund a national disability scheme?

Caleb also believed that policies about educating SWD should be clear. In the founding years of Damascus College, SWD were catered for as they arrived. There were no planning or specific policies. Caleb retold his story:

The initial interviews that we took were with Peter Crimmins who was then the Commonwealth funding liaison officer... they saw that this is giving a viable education opportunity that complemented what the State Schooling and government were doing, and there is no way that the State schooling system could cater for the immense amount of education that is needed.
The dependency of the college on the government for financing SWD moderated the passion for educating SWD. Statements around finance were often evident in this dependency discourse. The irony is that dependency on the government did not guarantee funding. The effects reached a climax when the colleges could not, or would not, enrol SWD.

The reports by Baruch were similar and also highlighted this business discourse:

You see basically you’re talking education to get funding for educational disability you have to prove that God made a mistake and I don’t believe that.
Sure, and in a sense you need that because if schools don’t follow it then the government doesn’t have enough money to go around.

This relationship with the government was a cause of tension and disappointment as colleges were unable to pay for and enrol SWD. Yet, there was no suggestion for an alternate funding arrangement for SWD. Foucault (1990) wrote about the silences in discourses, or what is not said.

Silence itself—the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses (p.27)
There is nothing said about a social discourse, or the church or schools helping to fund SWD throughout most of the interviews. This neglect of the social aspect of disability was obvious with a focus on the medical definition dominant. The responsibility of the Christian church and their religious model of disability which neglected the love of Christ for their neighbour (people with disabilities) were at the root of the Christian schools choices about buildings over SWD.

As a result the relationship with the government around funding for SWD proved to be frustrating and demoralising for some Principals. Lack of resources and staff was the cause of these Colleges not enrolling SWD. Daniel said: “I think the fact that the funding is so poor means that schools are finding ways of encouraging people not to attend their school.” The government funding model and the approach to educating SWD in RICSQ limited the availability of places for SWD. Nathan recognised this lack of resources for SWD; he was a Principal and a father of a child with a disability; and, because the Christian school could not cope with his daughter’s disability, he sent her to a State special school for SWD.

Unfortunately it comes to a point economically where it’s just not feasible for students to be educated in an independent system because of the two conflicts, and at that point I don’t know that Christian education is as important as something that will support the child and the family.

As a Principal and a parent of a child with a disability, his opinions were insightful. Therefore, ‘disability equals funding’ and similar statements revealed the situated meaning around educating SWD and revealed it is severely limited by a dependency mindset around funding. These RICSQ relied heavily on the government for support. They depended on this finance; but recognised that, because it was inadequate their
ability to accommodate SWD was limited. Thus, some Colleges recommended SWD go to state schools; in fact, actively encouraging SWD to go elsewhere. Thus, the dependency of the Principals on the government for funding for SWD was taken to its logical conclusion when Nathan spoke of sending his daughter to a government special school.
5.5 Discourses found in the schools’ documents

The websites are not identified and the schools names are fictional. Zechariah Christian College website promotes a structured, individualised education program flexible for all students regardless of learning style, difficulty, disability, ability, giftedness or talent. Most of the video was shot outside in the playground. The rhetoric was unashamedly Christian, promoting a “distinctively Christian curriculum.” On its website, the school marketed itself as different to other Christian schools. The website pointed out an “obvious” fact that the children “actually learn within a safe environment.” It went on to express its concern about students learning:

“Unfortunately, nowadays we can’t take these things for granted. At Zechariah Christian College students are encouraged to be both heavenly minded and capable of doing great earthly good. Teachers care. Students thrive (website not included for anonymity”).

The only inclusion of Christian rhetoric was in the adverbial phrase “heavenly minded” which was contrasted with “earthly good.” This Christian education was contrasted with a non-Christian education and supported Reid’s (2008) notion of Christian and non-Christian worldviews to help identify what a Christian discourse looked like. The promotional, marketing rhetoric was critical of the other government schools where these values may not be guaranteed, and explained that the spiritual and earthly values of the college were an important ingredient in a good education.

The priority of sport and community was seen in Elim Christian College’s website (website not included for anonymity).which described the college as “an award winning private school achieving excellence ... where we value the unique sense of community that is well known.” A welcoming introduction by the Principal for the primary school
reflected the idea of a safe and secure environment that was present in nearly all these college web sites. Yet, there was an absence of “Christian” values in this discourse. Foucault (1990, p. 27) often refers to what discourses say in silence “There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.”

The number of hyperlinks on Elim Christian College website to sport was 28, while the number of hyperlinks to learning support was nil. There was nothing available on the website search for disability. The website main screen contains a photo of half a page of a student athlete. Learning support is called Learning Services and encompassed three distinct areas of student support:

- supporting students who are having difficulties with their learning,
- extending the more capable students,
- designing pathways to support students who are following a vocational education option.

Learning Services included students from Prep to Year Twelve. The department was designed to assist students meet learning outcomes which they would otherwise find difficult in a normal classroom setting.

Support for students was important for Daniel, the Principal at Elim Christian College. The teachers were eager to help SWD. Nevertheless, Daniel admitted that the resources and teaching expertise for SWD were inadequate, and SWD would be better off in a state system. This contrasted to what the web site displays.
Capernaum Christian College Principal expressed a ‘supportive’ environment for students in general rather than ‘a loving caring’ place for SWD. In the school website, learning at Capernaum Christian College was described as more than just the three “Rs”. The website advertised the best possible opportunities – sport, learning, community, leadership, innovation, art, helping hands, and music. Sport was important in this College, followed closely by learning. The rhetoric in “The reasons why parents, students, and ‘we’ love the school” marketed a loving environment and culture. It involved the correlation of parents, teachers and students as the agents of constructing a Christian environment by their “love”.

Some “cues and clues” (Gee, 2005, p. 104) in the web sites of these schools highlighted the dominance of sport in the discourses. The idea of “personal best” is often associated with elite athletes who strive to obtain their personal best wins. A review of the web site and documents of Bethlehem Christian College included the Principal’s welcome and the latest monthly newsletter for March. The rhetoric of love, care and achievement describes a place where “…children are nurtured in a warm and friendly environment while encouraged to pursue their own personal best.” A story of sport and competition was similar to the rhetoric used in the Elim Christian College website.
5.6 Conclusion

An investigation of the data suggested there were four fields of discourse present in the interviews, and these have been explored in this chapter. The first discourse was a Christian discourse, with three overlapping components: theological, pastoral and moral. The second major discourse revolved around definitions of disability. The third major discourse was business or managerial and contains within it a distinctive discourse of choice. The final discourse was best called a discourse of dependency.

The discourse of dependency ironically revealed exclusion of SWD. This was viewed as a necessary practice for colleges that do not have enough resources to accommodate SWD, especially those with severe disabilities. The expected discourse was a Christian discourse. The disability discourse was evident in three separate fields: Medical, Christian, and Ableist.

These discourses varied and sometimes appeared as multiple discourses with overlapping boundaries (Gee, 2005). The approach to sourcing these discourses was a Foucauldian one. As described in the methodology chapter, Foucault (1974) wrote advising his books be used as a kind of tool-box useful to an educator. (pp. 523-4)

This research method used Foucault’s (1972), ideas on discourse as a platform. Foucault described discourse as “the general domain of all statements, and sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (p. 80).

Danaher, et al (2000) described discourse as language in action like windows that allow us to make sense of and see things. Danaher et al. added that, according to Foucault, thoughts and actions are influenced, regulated and to some extent controlled by different discourses. The discourses around disability are consistent with medical professions.
which have dominated this area for the last 100 years. Discourses around the administration and choices available for SWD revolve around economics and funding demands, and produce a tension between economics and Christian world view.

An unexpected and inexplicable limitation in the choice or options for parents became apparent. This strange relationship of the school with the government results in a reduction and a regulation of choice for parents. What was evident in this scenario was a discourse of dependence on the government for funding, and a denial of choice, or discourse of dependency

Lastly, a discourse of dependency revealed varying stages of dependency on funding, with some weak solutions offered. The results of this dependency were evident in friction and a sense of frustration; and, in some cases, exclusion of SWD, and Government school services being recommended.

An intermediary force in the regulation of funding, QPNO, managed the assessment and funding of SWD in these independent schools. QPNO protected the autonomy of member schools, including the right of a school community to decide its form of governance and school policies, including enrolments, staffing, curriculum and co-curricular activities. This freedom of governance allowed the school boards to source finance for its buildings and education of students. Additionally, the RICSQ all chose to accept finance from the government from whom they were supposedly independent causing a tension in the management of SWD in RICSQ.

An analysis of the reports showed that, at times, these Principals spoke as Christians, while at other times they spoke as managers, or executives. The two discourses revealed the tensions that SWD created for the Principals as managers and Christians. Although they also spoke about disability in theological terms an ableist discourse was dominant.
Finally, and rather surprisingly for leaders of schools that pride themselves on ‘independence’ in the education sector, a discourse was present that can best be described as one of dependency on government for funding of education for SWD.
Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter moves the thesis into a discussion of the findings (themes and discourses) around educating students with a disability (SWD) in regional independent Christian schools in Queensland (RICSQ). The purpose is to answer the leading research question: “How do RICSQ deal with issues of educating students with disabilities?” A tentative framework (Lewins, as cited in O’Donoghue, 2007) was developed to explore connections and plausible explanations in answer to this major research question. This is an ideographic model rather than a predictive one (O’Donoghue, 2008). It could also be called a “landscape” map. How the Principals “navigated these tensions” (Tisdell, 2013 p. 295) between the sacred and the secular (Waggoner, 2011) and especially around the enrolment of SWD, is explained by the analysis of discourses. This map is a three tiered representation of the reality of how RICSQ educate SWD. It is possible to argue how each part contributes to answering the important question of how RICSQ Principals educate SWD.

The first part of the image clarifies the context of RICSQ and the role of the Principal before enrolment is considered at the college. This landscape is one of neutrality, co-existence and cordial relations or sympatricity in the dealings of RICSQ with the Queensland government. It is a relatively uncomplicated affiliation, and there seems to be no conflict.

The second picture builds on this first image with the impact of the arrival of SWD. The Principals’ discursive responses to the arrival of SWD are a key to understanding this addition to the landscape. Competing and conflicting discourses are visible and lay bare the Principals’ responses to, and sometimes confusion with, the arrival of SWD. Models of disabilities (discourses) evident in the map highlight the intensity of the struggle
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brought about by issues around SWD. It is possible to see how the discourses in policy
texts are the means whereby the discursive struggle is identified, and to show where the
Principals are situated as faith leaders and business leaders.

The third picture reveals policies of funding and enrolment of SWD in response to the
impact of these students. It brings the chapter to a conclusion, as the map shows the
territory of the competing discourses, where Christian discourse recedes, and the ableist
and business discourses dominate the landscape. In this same map, funding is seen as an
excuse for the policies of enrolment. The policy moment is the enrolment of SWD.
Enrolment policies are spoken about as open policies but are revealed as ones that
exclude SWD. The policies around enrolment appear undefined and lay the foundation
for a discourse of dependency.

This dependency discourse contradicts the independent area of the RICSQ landscape and
is explained by a Foucauldian lens of “governmentality” Foucault, (1991). The layout of
the landscape exposes contradictions and silences between a Christian ethos and a secular
government in a less than satisfactory business covenant.
6.1 Context of RICSQ

This first part of the map, a snapshot, looks at the fragments or the borders of regional, independent and Christian Colleges, including the Principals’ function. These are crucial parts of RICSQ and impact on policies of educating children with disabilities. They are a key to understanding how the territory of RICSQ is composed; and are dealt with in this map individually because they are foundational to understanding the uniqueness of these schools. This contextual picture is a key to the dynamics of these schools; but more importantly zooms in on the individual identities of RICSQ. It explains the individual entities which compose RICSQ.

6.1.1 Regional.

The first identifying feature of the landscape of RICSQ is their geographical positioning. They are dispersed across a wide area of Queensland away from the capital city and situated in less populated areas. Regional independent schools operate in a competitive marketplace, with a population that is not as large as in capital cities. However, in the last 30 years, the regional area of Queensland has been fertile for the growth of new Christian schools. The timing and reasons for this growth were not investigated in this research, but it would be a valuable study.

These schools are newer but have limited capital. They rely to a great extent on income from fees, unlike the older independent schools in the cities of Queensland. Most of the regional independent schools in this study are 30 years or younger, while one school was less than 10 years old. The schools’ age is significant because they have accrued fewer assets (property and investments), thus holding smaller equity than other older schools that have been able to accrue capital over 80-120 years. For example, some of the older schools have funding from former students who have left legacies and other capital.
Lack of property or capital assets mean that RICSQ are particularly reliant on fee income and grants. Reliance on these two sources of income results in budgets being limited. The loss of income from the departure of one or two students can have significant impact on the school’s budget.

This was important in the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) which occurred during the period of this study, and made budgets even tighter in regional schools, because many parents lost income and could no longer afford to enrol their children in the independent schools. Some parents had to send their children to less expensive Catholic schools in the region, or to state schools. Simply the loss of income of one student impacts on the finances of these schools. It can mean being able to hire suitable staff or not.

Finally, Prasser (2010) pointed out that parents provide 82% of the cost of buildings and equipment in the Independent schools through fees, fund raising, donations and levies. While there are some limited interest rate concessions to a few independent schools, most manage by borrowing to finance capital development. Fees are then used in part to service the debt. This is an indication of how tight the RICSQ budgets are and why Principals cannot look to parents to raise money for other things, like SWD.

The significance of being regional is that budgets are small and their margins are very limited. Therefore, Principals, (CEOs), become tense when anything arises that can threaten these margins. One such event is the introduction of SWD who cost more to educate than the income they bring in.

6.1.2 Independent.

A second but important feature in the RICSQ landscape is their independent status. For the schools in this research, independence means each school is managed as a business
where the Principal is a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and has a Board of Directors, or a Council. This independence means RICSQ can independently decide how to spend its income, and decide policies so long as they do not infringe on State government or Commonwealth policies.

While independent schools in the USA or UK are solely reliant on fee income or income from private assets, in Australia, independent schools receive grants from both Commonwealth and State Governments. Government funding is a major source of income for many of these schools to educate SWD.

Independence is an important identifying characteristic included in the brand name of these schools, and something of which these schools are often proud. One RICSQ founding Principal said independence was a reason for founding the school, with independence a quality that is often a selling point in the web sites.

The history of independent schools in Australia dates to the *Colonial Education Acts* at the end of the 19th century. These Acts ensured that government schools were to be “free, compulsory and secular” (Andrews, 1965, p. 172). As a result, faith-based schools exist outside government schools, and so rely on income from fees. These faith-based schools raise their own finances and strive to be economically independent.

A further feature of the schools in this study is that they are not systemic. That is, they have no superior body that underwrites them financially, which means that not only are they independent of the government schools, they are also independent of other independent schools. In other words, there is no overseeing body or organisation that unites them, as happens, for example, in the Roman Catholic schools. The Catholic schools are systemic in that they are directed by Catholic Education Offices within each Diocese. Prasser (2009a) pointed out that most independent schools are standalone bodies.
and do not therefore have the opportunity to cross-subsidise support for SWD from other parts of a system.

These newer independent schools have multiplied exponentially in the last 40 years. The number of independent schools in Queensland from 1993 to 2009 increased by 45 (ABS, 2010). This is significant for such a small regional area. Figures from the Government Productivity Commission have revealed that independent schooling in Queensland is the fastest growing education sector in the country (Sunshine Coast Daily, 2013). In this study, the term ‘independent’ is a part of the school’s brand name, and allows the school management to teach a specific faith.

6.1.3 Christian.

The third feature of the landscape is that they are Protestant Christian schools. They are not systemic schools like the Roman Catholic schools; newer Protestant schools have traditionally not been systemic.

Protestant, independent non-systemic schools (a) are independent businesses, distinguishing them from systemic schools; and (b) may give greater authority to the faith leadership of the Principal. Both these criteria mean that these Principals have a more sharply defined role as business leader and faith leader. These two aspects contrast sharply with systemic schools where a governing body decides policies for the group of schools. For example, the Catholic Church governing body decides on policies about all the schools, while in the RICSQ the Principal and board decide the schools’ policies. As previously state, there has been a rise in faith-based schools in Australia.

There is no separation of church and state in Australia. Section 116 of the 1900 Act to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia (Australian Constitution) provides that:
The Commonwealth of Australia shall not make any law establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth (ABS, 2003).

The United States has a constitutional distinction between church and state, but the Australian Constitution creates possibilities and constraints within the politics of education which allow for government funding of religious schools (Symes & Gulson, 2008).

Many faith-based schools belong to organisations that oversee certain areas of the schooling, such as Principals’ leadership, staff personal development and assessment of SWD. CSA, Australian Association of Christian schools (AACS) and Independent Schools of Queensland (ISQ) are examples of these organisations. CSA states that it is a peak group serving the diverse needs of a large network of independent Christian schools. CSA provides professional services, development, direct assistance, information and advice to its members. It also advocates for schools individually, positively maintains relationships with government and others and plays a leading role in the public policy debate to ensure the voice of Christian schools is heard (CSA, 2013).

6.1.4 Queensland.

An important part of the landscape map shows those not only are these schools regional, but that they are in Queensland and receive funding from the Queensland and Commonwealth governments. They come under the educational jurisdiction of Queensland, and must uphold certain Queensland laws. The regulatory environment for independent schools exists at both State and Commonwealth levels. The Independent Schools Council of Australia states that independent schools must meet the criteria fixed
by their state or territory governments for registration as a school, and for their accreditation for credentialing students. State and territory governments provide some funding support for independent schools. Comprehensive conditions and accountability requirements apply to this funding. The Department of Education, Science and Training collects data for the Financial Questionnaire directly from independent schools. This data is used to analyse income and expenditure patterns of non-government schools and school systems for both research and accountability purposes.

The independent schools in Queensland are accountable to both State and Commonwealth authorities, which provide funding to them, and therefore are also accountable to broad policy dictated by the two levels of government. Parents and donors provide more than 90 per cent of the funds needed by independent schools for their buildings, grounds, and equipment. Although these schools receive funding from the Governments, it is the private contribution that has provided additional funds to support the growth in the sector (ISCA, 2008).

6.1.5 RICSQ: a summary.

The identification of key components in the landscape map of RICSQ is necessary to understand the connection of individuals and corporate bodies who govern RICSQ. It helps to explain the nature of these businesses and their independence from the Government schools and other similar independent Protestant schools. However, the first sign of disharmony in the RICSQ appears where the ‘independent’ schools and the Queensland government join in a business relationship. A secular government and the independent RICSQ are “strange bedfellows” (Hartman, 2005). This map simplifies and clarifies the landscape of RICSQ. These individual schools are corporations with educational contexts and existence, as well as links with Christian and secular
organisations. The Principals are central to these organisations and their role is clarified in the next section of this map. The map is a simple visual picture of the components of RICSQ, the main players in the composition of what is labelled RICSQ in this study.
Figure 6.1. Tentative theory of research: the qualities of the school which make up the whole RICSQ.
6.1.6 Principals’ roles in RICSQ.

The schools are made up of four separate and distinct elements. The purpose here is to clarify the role of the Principals as leaders in RICSQ, in order that the apparent contradictions of discourses can be explained as part of their policy development around the education of SWD. Principals have a primary role in RICSQ as a conduit or channel through which all information flows.

The map of RICSQ highlights the conflict between the roles of Principals as faith leaders and Principals as business leaders. The resulting tension is a key to the direction of the decisions that guide the policy of educating SWD. Principals act as not only conduits for the flow of information, knowledge and instruction, but also for the management of the economy of RICSQ.

6.1.7 Principals as conduits.

Craig (2002) described the conduit metaphor as a philosophical and linguistic concept and an educational idea. The Principal is the channel through which all information and decision making in the RICSQ flows, including information and decision making about school staff, the Board of the schools, the Church, and importantly, parents of students. It involves the organisation of all people involved with the architecture and landscape of what is known as RICSQ in this research study. The position and location of Principals in this map is important and it is necessary, to clarify further their roles as both faith leaders and business leaders. It was this centrality which determined why Principals alone were interviewed for this study.
6.1.8 Principals as faith leaders.

As expected, a close up of the Principals as leaders revealed spiritual or faith leaders committed to understanding and applying a Christian worldview or paradigm. This worldview aligned with what God has revealed in the Scripture. Cookson (2010) affirmed that having a well-defined biblical world view is a key component of the Christian Principals’ decision-making process. Gannell (2004, p. 16) wrote about the “sense of calling” that many Principals of Christian schools feel; this is a specific call of God to the position. Scriptures living authority and power shapes the Christian’s paradigm.
Figure 6.2. Tentative theory of research – The Principal’s role in RICSQ comprises three distinct identities.

Adapted from Mutton (2005, p. 70)
The spiritual or faith roles of the Principals interviewed in this research were revealed in their descriptions of SWD. Overall, the sanctity of SWD was important and the Principal’s Christian discourse as faith leader was obvious in all interviews with Principals and also found in school documents. There was a genuine Christian discourse that spoke of compassion for SWD. This compassion was situated in an area that had strong competition, and there was a battle for dominance in the decisions around educating SWD.

It may be reasonable to assume that independent faith or spiritual responses to disability would result in a holistic faith response to SWD, resulting in a compassion-based education of SWD. However, this study found a schism in the map between the discourses of secular business and Christian education. The secular business discourse emerged as a dominant backdrop which competed fiercely with the Christian discourse. Principals were confronted with decisions about SWD that the school chose to enrol. The business direction appeared to be the necessary and accepted road for Principals to follow.

6.1.9 Principals as business leaders.

A Principal’s role has increasingly moved away from teaching to managing. Gannell (2004) pointed to Principals’ roles as managers, with a focus on the business of running schools. Niesche (2011) explained that Principals must prove themselves as efficient and entrepreneurial managers; and therefore feel pressed to become more task oriented.

RICSQ are independently managed in a competitive marketplace. Caughlan & Beach (2007) wrote that the discourse of managerialism can, at times, reduce the project of education to cost benefit analysis. The business discourses of the Principals revealed managerial and administrative thinking about enrolling SWD, and that business interests
and enterprise were part of their vocation. Most of the Principals interviewed spoke about money and cost of educating SWD. Doing business was the paramount concern in their interviews.

The interviews revealed the roles of Principals as chiefly managerial around educating SWD. The finances of the schools required economy of practices and challenged the Principals in the areas of recruitment and business (ISCA, 2008). A survey of Principals by ISCA (2008) found that the financial sustainability of the school was the most important issue for Chairs and Heads.

One of the business tasks of the RICSQ Principals was managing and administering the funding for SWD. Queensland Policy Network Organisation (QPNO) oversees the government funds for SWD. The Principals’ interviews revealed a Christian world view of SWD who were created in God’s image; yet business responsibilities were seen to dominate the decisions about SWD. Romans 12:10-10 urges the Christian “to be not slothful in business, fervent in spirit and serving the Lord”. “Stewardship” in Hebrew means “house law and rule”. It means the person who is hired to manage the property has resources, money, and provisions under his care. Thus, all dimensions of management are under the concept and theme of stewardship. As good stewards, Christians should not be wasteful, and have to be prudent in allocating and managing the gifts and resources God puts in their care (Discipleship tools). The RICSQ Principals were faith leaders, but the business role was paramount in management of the schools. Principals formed decisions around SWD based on rational business thinking, rather than charity.

Principals as faith leaders and business managers faced challenges which were unique to these schools. They had to be good stewards of their finances and provide pastoral advice and guidance, as well as working in an environment of increasingly litigation and
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decreasing enrollments. The mapping of the RICSQ landscape with the Principals as leaders highlights the three functions of the Principals: (a) Conduit, (b) Faith leader and (c) Business CEO. The landscape of a Christian or faith position was invaded by the strong business interests. The following figure provides a simplified visual interpretation of this environment were the Principal functions as a conduit in the policies of the RICSQ.
Figure 6.3. Tentative theory of research: The Principal's role is CEO and faith leader and he is the conduit through which all information and directions flow.
6.1.10 Sacred and secular sympatricky

The landscape map of RICSQ is designed to answer the research question, and shows the co-existence of two apparently contradictory understandings of SWD, and the Christian and secular discourses. The map depicts a sacred Christian world view and a secular business world view in the name RICSQ and in the two distinctly conflicting roles of the Principals. Matthew 6:24 says: “No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon.” (The Holy Bible, 1992, p. 1311). In the context of RICSQ, this appears to be a conflict of interests between the secular and the sacred. This would appear to be important for a Christian in dealing with the secular but it was an apparent cause of much tension and conflict in the Christian dealings with the government.

Gousmett (1996) argued that secularism is simply a belief that any part of life and its associated institutional expressions can be separated from commitment to God and faith in Jesus Christ. Secularism does not necessarily imply the denial of God’s existence but rather the denial of the relevance of God’s revelation for life in the world. Waggoner (2011) referred to secular humanism which was promoted in 1933 in the Humanist Manifesto. Waggoner explained that secular humanism is grounded in the Enlightenment values of rationality, the scientific method, naturalism and the unencumbered freedom of enquiry.

According to Millbank (1990, 2006), a traditional Christian worldview believes that the secular cannot exist separately from the spiritual. While many Christians think it is possible to reconcile the two, secular and spiritual, Milbank advised Christians to beware, and that this thinking is complacent self-deception and in danger of heresy. He argued
that modern secularism is constructed out of non-Christian (pagan and ‘heretical’) 
philosophical sources that are fundamentally opposed to the Christian project. Milbank’s 
point here is that the secular is not simply a ‘neutral remainder’ that is ‘left-over’ when 
you remove the sacred or delete God from the world. It too had to be constructed, given a 
positive content, from somewhere. Millbank wanted Christians to be aware of what the 
sources are. Therefore, though the RICSQ Principals may not be opposed to the secular, 
for Milbank the secular is opposed to Christianity, whether Christians acknowledge this 
or not.

Over a century ago, Max Weber (1930) identified a close symbiotic relationship or 
elective affinity between Protestant Christianity and capitalism. Wells (2014) argued that 
the paradigm of many Christians is to believe that money is the root of all evil. Christians 
have often thought that you cannot serve God and mammon. However, Wells argued that 
this thinking indicates a poverty mentality whereby people with money are regarded as 
selfish. She argued that God created us to have dominion over the earth and it is 
acceptable to create wealth and money; that wealth properly assimilated and handled is 
the vehicle through which the kingdom of God will be established on planet Earth.

One way of understanding the existence of these two discourses of the Principals is 
through the idea of sympatricity. These apparently conflicting discourses are also 
reflected in the business dealings of the RICSQ with the secular Queensland and 
Commonwealth governments. Although seemingly contradictory, the Christian and 
secular/business discourses and worldviews exist within the same school organisations 
sympatricity to describe when people talk of their illnesses. Rogers noted that accounts 
which contradicted each other could co-exist, and termed this sympatricity. King labelled 
this idea as sympatricity of constructions or constructions of health and illness.
King argued that not only is this idea descriptive but can go beyond peoples’ accounts of illness and extend to people’s behaviour, and we can expect to find evidence that they are acting on the basis of belief systems which contradict each other. King added that Rogers also considered this idea of sympatricity to describe underlying worldviews, which co-exist and compete in interplay, varying in the extent to which they are culturally sanctioned and endorsed. King defined this as a sympatricity of systems in contrast to sympatricity of constructions (p.221-3). This concept is useful here to understand and explain the existence of two apparently differing discourses in these newer independent Christian schools.

There is no conflict when Christian schools work in a “partnership” with the secular government. However, this link of Christian and secular business is weakened by the arrival of SWD; this ‘arrival’, though, was not their induction into the school, but at the point when they and their parents sought enrolment into the school. The findings demonstrate that it is at the point of enrolment that the main issue in the ‘education’ of SWD in RICSQ arises. As will be shown in the next several sections, SWD challenge the equilibrium of the different belief systems in the school, notably Christian versus business, and independence versus dependence.

The Christian and the secular world discourses were clearly distinguished in the landscape of RICSQ. They appear to have existed comfortably in equilibrium; the sympatricity of the two world views was without problems. The sympatricity of these two contradictory worldviews – Christian and secular government – is suggested as an explanation for this apparent contradiction in discourses.

The idea of sympatricity is also helpful to understand the relationship of these schools, where Principals acted as faith leaders and business CEO’s in an environment of mutual
satisfaction. The conflict of interest between faith and business interests did not appear in the majority of the schools management, but the arrival of SWD issued a challenge to the sympatricity of the schools. SWD disrupted this sympatricity of Christian, independent and the secular Government entities. The map now includes the arrival of SWD and their impact on the Principals.
6.2 Funding and enrolment of SWD

A more complicated and detailed map builds on the landscape of RICSQ as a mixed group of indeterminate creation, and begins to explore the Principals’ responses to the arrival of SWD. This section explores their decision-making around dealing with SWD, exposing a battle between faith and business beliefs. RICSQ are supported financially for buildings and education projects as well as with a token amount for SWD. A key to understanding this economic relationship may be the concept of “Return on Investment” (ROI) (Wells, 2014, p. 47). This association of RICSQ with the Government is a covenant relationship where each partner has to gain some benefit. However, the benefit proved to be a source of tension for RICSQ Principals.

This covenant relationship between RICSQ and the Queensland secular government challenges the Principals’ Christian faith. The faith seemed to fade from the foreground and the map reveals the expansion of the business discourses triggered by the funding shortages around the enrolment of SWD. RICSQ Principals act as CEOs out of desperation in their attempts to engage with the arrival of SWD. They have more than “one iron in the fire” and they choose the business/secular plan that best fits their schools.

This business policy becomes clearly inadequate when SWD are turned away from RICSQ. This map reveals decisions around SWD when Principals interpret and respond to their needs. The presence of SWD at RICSQ complicates the policy arena and brings into play two critical factors which impinge on the policies and decisions that the school Principals have to make. Two of these factors are (a) fewer SWD and (b) the policy moment of enrolment.

6.2.1 Fewer SWD in RICSQ than in Government schools
The findings showed there were fewer SWD in the RICSQ than in Government schools of the same size. A Government school of 1000 students in Queensland would generally have around 50-60 SWD. Several school Principals admitted to refusing enrolment to students and advising them to look elsewhere for better facilities and accommodation for SWD. Enrolment and choice were influenced by cost in some RICSQ. Principals spoke about the tension created by SWD, commenting that business decisions over-ruled any compassion for SWD.

RICSQ Principals did not see it as their role to pay for the special education needs of SWD. Only one Principal believed that it was the school’s responsibility. His definition of disability was that God does not make a mistake and all children are made in the image of God. The literature review documented there were fewer SWD in Christian schools (Eigenbrood (2005) Sutton (1993); Stymeist, 2008); and this was found to be the case in these schools. Another Principal did not know who should be responsible for funding SWD in RICSQ and admitted having to tell parents of SWD that the local state school would be a better option for their child.

Most RICSQ Principals spoke about the high costs of educating SWD and lack of resources. SWD needed extra teachers and teachers’ aides as well as auxiliary staff. The added burden of having a SWD in the school took away money from other students. Principals looked at SWD and were forced to make painful economic decisions about SWD.

The map reveals a smaller population of SWD in these Christian schools. One or two of the wealthier schools had only one or two SWD in a population of 1,000 or more. The prevalence of children with disability in school varied between states and territories, from 7.4% in Queensland to 11.7% in Tasmania (Figure .7.4). This was consistent with
variations in disability prevalence between state and territories amongst school-age children (ABS, 2009b). This was 5 years ago and the number of SWD in schools may have increased.
Figure 6.4. Proportion of children at school with disability, by State or Territory, 2009.

Source: ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2009
According to these statistics, in a Queensland government school of 1,000 students, there would be on average about 70 SWD and more with learning support needs. Only 5 years later in 2014 the number of SWD is likely to be twice as many as thought (Sunshine Coast Daily, 2014). This will increase the financial burden of RICSQ and will cause further tensions in the independent sector.

It should be noted that one school Principal said that there should be more SWD in Christian schools than state schools because Christian schools see it as their role to educate them. Across Australia, the number of funded students with disability in all sectors increased by 28 per cent between 2005 and 2010, from 134,864 to 172,300.

Prasser (2009b) supported the views expressed by Crimmins and stated that Queensland’s independent schools are enrolling an increasing number of SWD. However, this research found that RICSQ had fewer SWD than State schools of the same size and Principals admitted to not being able to meet their needs.

The result of this covenant relationship with the government around funding for SWD proved to be frustrating and demoralising for Principals. Several Principals admitted openly that “the fact that the funding is so poor means that schools are finding ways of encouraging people not to attend their school”. SWD, mentioned earlier as created in the image of God, are being denied places in RICSQ. The government funding model and the RICSQ Principals’ decisions not to enrol SWD in RICSQ limits the entrance of SWD into these schools.

One Principal has a daughter with a disability. As a Principal and a parent of a child with a disability, his opinions were insightful and valuable. He recognised the inability of the RICSQ to accommodate his daughter in the senior phase of her schooling. Because the Christian school could not cope with his daughter’s disability, he sent her to a State
special school for SWD. He said: “Unfortunately it comes to a point economically where it’s just not feasible for students to be educated in an independent system.” This parent and Principal had to choose a state school for his child to be educated because the RICSQ was not fully equipped for the education of SWD due to funding shortages.

### 6.2.2 The policy moment.

RICSQ Principals recommended State schools to parents of SWD because they were better resourced to educate their children. However, this painful business-driven decision is not easily implement. Parents of SWD have to be confronted and told there is no room for them at the inn (Luke2:7). Principals had to explain to parents that their loving, caring environments could not take SWD. This reality contrasted strongly with what was being said. Christian faith seemed to fall short and love towards neighbours was glaringly absent. Jesus spoke about loving your neighbour in Mark 12:29:

> And Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is, ‘Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

> 30 And you shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all thy strength’: This is the first commandment.

> 31 And the second is like, namely this, ‘You shalt love thy neighbour as yourself.’

There is none other commandment greater than these.”

The Christian principle of love of your neighbours was highly regarded by parents as mentioned by Damascus Principal who said:

> But you could hear the heart of the parents saying that they believe that if a child with disabilities is in a Christian environment they will get nurtured more than if
they were in a non-Christian environment. Which is what you want of course, and expect?

Principals also spoke about the difficulty of meeting with parents who wanted to enrol SWD. For one Principal, his “policy” was to be up front and tell the parents they did not have the resources to cater for SWD. Other Principals spoke about the parent’s need to supply information about the student’s disability so that the school could understand the disability and respond by preparing for the student’s educational needs. Sometimes the parents did not inform the school of the child’s disability and this was a problem. One Principal spoke about explaining to parents at enrolment that the school may not be able to enrol their children: “you get tricky enrolment situations and you just have to work it through with the families”. What this Principal meant was that he sought to avoid discussion around right and wrong ideas of disability. Enrolment of SWD meant that parents had to be told the school was ill prepared to take their children.

The face-to-face meeting with parents in these schools at enrolment was a difficult time, because of limited resources and funding that could be offered to the SWD. The Principal had to think, “do I take this child or not?” Budgeting and staffing were costly, and enrolment of SWD had to be considered fully.

Some Principals admitted refusing to enrol these SWD and sending them to local state schools where they could be better accommodated. In fact, choice of schools for parents of SWD was non-existent according to some of the statements in the interviews. One retired Principal was upset because he had obtained millions of dollars in funding for school buildings yet the school could not afford to enrol his granddaughter.

The ‘policy’ some Principals took with parents of SWD was to be honest from the outset, admitting they could not enrol SWD. The religious model of disability (based on
Leviticus 21:16-23) has historically been used negatively with regard to people with disabilities and church inclusion of PWD (Cox, 2011). In contrast, the New Testament provides narratives of compassion and inclusion of people with disabilities in the covenant of Christ (Winzer, as cited in Thorsos, 2012). It is the religious focus on disability that underpins the approach to research in this study, but the policies around enrolment appear to be similar to the Old Testament narratives of disability.

Principals and their professional associations, for example the AACS, consider the absence of definitive policy and financial commitment on SWD to be a matter of discrimination against SWD in non-government schools. There is no new commitment of funds for large populations of disabled and disadvantaged children in non-government schools (Crimmins, 2003). The responsibility for educating SWD is placed firmly on the government. This is clearly visible on the map and is more fully developed under Governmentality.

The findings reveal that this point of enrolment highlights the lack of policy and understanding of government regulations such as Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA). In this legislation, an education provider does not have to comply with a requirement of the Standards (The Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education (2005) to the extent that compliance would cause ‘unjustifiable hardship’. Parents and the school collect information to determine what accommodations need to be made, such as physical access, equipment, building modifications, health issues, personal care needs, communication needs, curriculum needs, specialist agencies, and emergency procedures.

However, this meeting with parents is often confronting for Principals. This map clearly displays the tensions of educating SWD in RICSQ. The borders between faith and business are blurred. The landscape reveals a focus, not on faith-based decisions or
independent policies, but an increasingly economic discourse of the Principals. This visual diagram reveals the role of Principal as faith leader and business manager. His function is shown to be that of a conduit functioning as both a faith leader and a business manager. The sympatricity of the Christian school and secular government is explained.
Figure 6.5. Tentative theory: RICSQ and sympatricity which maps out the relationship of RICSQ with the government.
6.2.3 SWD and Principals’ discourses.

This section maps the discourses around how RICSQ deal with a SWD, when SWD disrupt the sympatricity of the faith and business interests. As the policies of educating SWD were explored in this study, it became necessary to map the discourses of Principals toward disability in order to clarify the problem. These discourses were explored in in-depth interviews. The discourse analysis extended Gee’s (2011) methods to include a Foucauldian approach where thoughts and actions are influenced, regulated and to some extent controlled by different discourses. The school Principals’ discourses revealed SWD as equating to disability, or as economic entities. Ball (1993) defined policy as both text and discourse. He described the conflict and struggle between interest groups and/or individuals in the context of policy text production and practice.

This developing map reveals how Principals respond to the challenges of educating SWD. The responses are mapped into four discourses. Gee (2011) pointed out that the boundaries of these discourses are often unclear and blurred, and some discourses may have discourses within them.

The landscape map depicts how SWD challenge the Principals’ role as faith leader and business leader. It is at the point of enrolment that this disruption is seen. RICSQ Principals first embrace enrolling SWD, based on their beliefs and Christian world views. However, Prasser (2009b) and CSA (2007) and this research study have all shown that SWD are a negative income stream. They cost far more to educate than the fees and funding they bring to the school. This is the critical issue about SWD for the Principals, and what makes SWD challenge the sympatricity in the policies of the Principals.

Principals’ understandings and definitions of disability are important in explaining how they determine policies around SWD. Their response to questions about disability
revealed a discourse of business. However, an ableist discourse is also obvious in Principals’ thinking.

Competing discourses in the interview data from the Principals are evidence of the disruption of the sympatricity of faith and business roles of the school by the arrival of SWD. The three main discourses around SWD in the interviews are Christian, business and ableist. Firstly, in the Christian discourse, Principals explain their unique Christian school environments, the parents, teachers and the policies of educating SWD. The second discourse is a business/secular one related to the governance and management of school. An ableist discourse emerges and competes with the Christian discourse. These multiple and often competing discourses document the shifts in thinking about SWD. They make clear the policy direction around the education of SWD in RICSQ.

6.2.4 A Christian discourse of disability.

SWD were seen first seen in a spiritual light in the analysis of the interviews. Christian hospitality is professed. As Anderson (2012) explained, hospitality is practised out of gratitude and obedience to God. The discourses concerning disability revolve around the belief that SWD are created in the image of God. According to the Christian worldview, because God gives all humans life, all people, though unique in their talents and abilities, are created equal and deserve to be respected (Stymeist, 2008). This Christian discourse around SWD in the interviews is rich and deep, brightening and enriching the definition of disability.

In this part of the landscape, the Principals’ Christian definition of disability describes SWD as part of the body of Christ (or part of the image of God). This definition highlights the vocation SWD have in God’s purpose and in God’s service, as indispensable as that of any other part of the Church, known as the body of Christ, (Goldingay, 2013). SWD
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make an important contribution to the overall social milieu of the school environment and have something special to contribute to the Christian school. This seemed to be neglected by most Principals.

Cookson (2010, p. 140) concluded from his study that Christian leadership is extremely important in establishing special education programs. He quoted how one Principal thought about his role as Principal in special education:

I need to study closely how God wants me to lead my school. By looking at God as He tells me to see each of His children as special, as made in His image, and as different parts of the body with unique gifts, I will fulfil my duties as principal to provide an education for all children.

Yet, the faith which caused the Principals to look at SWD through a Christian lens was challenged by the business mindset or “nuts and bolt”, as one Principal commented. The Christian discourse was weak and overpowered by the more secular business discourses which take over the landscape. It dominates and its influence is widespread.

6.2.5 Business discourses.

What emerges in the map shows that Principals, when dealing with the enrolment of SWD in the RICSQ, surprisingly privileged a secular business discourse above Christian concerns. In Chapter 6, the costs of educating SWD and the discourse of choice was explored and analysed. Principals were resolute as they clenched their teeth and “bit the bullet” (in one Principal’s words). Their Christian zeal for SWD was pushed aside to make way for a clear win for the business on hand – the funding of SWD. Their Christian calling and faith-driven vocation were replaced with the pragmatics at hand — how to manage the arrival of SWD.
Decisions made about SWD in RICSQ by the Principals were purely economic judgements. The administrative procedures were all necessary and legal, and RICSQ made important steps to ensure SWD were considered in light of the *Disability Standards for Education (2005)*. However, SWD were tied into the funding shortages and they were counted as negative income for RICSQ. The Principals would tend to look closely at the costs of taking a student in who had significant disabilities because it might entail making changes to the facilities of the school, and have a huge economic impact on the budget of the school.

### 6.2.6 Ableist discourse.

Complicating the landscape was the discovery of a significant discourse. The tension between the Christian and medical discourses appeared to be subordinated to a third set of discourses based on the Principals’ beliefs about disability. The map was changed with this newer ableist discourse, which not only preserves disability but reinforces it. Except for the Christian discourse, most of the Principals’ definitions of disability remained within the bigger picture of the ableist discourse.

The impact of ableism has consequences for educating SWD in RICSQ and disrupts the Christian discourse. In RICSQ, Principals recognise the worth of SWD, but their reasoning is based on purely economic considerations. Principals refer to SWD as having worth and being part of God’s creation. Yet the Christian and ableist discourses conflict. Principals defined SWD as reflections of the *imago dei*; but the inclusion of SWD and the idea of a ‘normal’ learning ideal or set of conditions were articulated and so ‘instantiated’ in the social practices of the school. Most of the school Principals spoke about normal learning as an ideal.
The Christian and ableist discourses represent a mismatch in wide-ranging practices in the education of SWD in RICSQ. SWD are described as having ‘wiring of the brain’, being ‘damaged goods’ for whom ‘normal learning’ is difficult and “learning requires energy [and] is going to have a certain degree of difficulty to it.” Therefore, SWD are going to be challenged by this goal or criteria for “normal “learning.

The medical and ableist discourse adds an extra dimension to the map of the Principals, further complicating the faith and the business dichotomy. “Normal” and “subnormal” assessments of SWD were apparent in the Principals’ discourse. SWD were compared to students “with abilities”. Examining and assessing students produces a new sort of knowledge about the child, “capturing” the child in an inscription or label, and is a technique of normalisation.

An ableist discourse makes it clear that the school’s motive is to fit the individual for a role in society (Kendall & Wickham, 2002, p. 134). This is a link in the landscape, where the Queensland government surfaces more clearly as a power/knowledge base, and the provider of funding for SWD. Discourses of citizenship education are identified in Queensland school curriculums by Heck (2003). This map reveals the location of the RICSQ as part of the Queensland government and its secular school ideology.

The ableist discourses contribute to a further unexpected discourse which this research names as a dependency discourse. The dependency discourse was part of the web of policy around funding.

Emerging in the landscape is a newer addition to the observation that at times these Principals spoke as Christians, while at other times they spoke as managers, or executives. An ableist discourse sat parallel to the business discourse. Finally, and rather surprisingly for leaders of schools that pride themselves on ‘independence’ in the
education sector, the landscape map revealed a discourse that can best be described as one of dependency on government for funding.

**6.2.7 Dependency discourse.**

Thomsen, Hall and Jones (2012) clarified a Foucauldian perspective of discourse. When thinking in Foucauldian terms, it is common to talk of discursive social practices. It can be shown that not only is the dependency discourse part of the web of policy under government control, but the business discourse also reflects this dependency. It reflects a weakened business relationship and by no means a profitable one.

Blair (2008) argued that the language, or more precisely the discourse, around disability is the actual disabling factor for individuals whose physical, mental or behavioural characteristics vary from the socially constituted ideal of normalcy. Blair 2008, p.71) argued:

In fact, according to late twentieth century social constructivist theory (Butler, 1990, 1993; Corker & French, 1999; Foucault, 1982; Haraway, 1990;), the language, or more precisely, the discourse that has grown up around the concept of disability is the actual disabling factor for individuals whose physical, mental or behavioural characteristics vary from the socially constituted ideal of “normalcy.”

Every discourse positions subjects. Foucault (1982) wrote that his objective is to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are being made subjects. Every discourse positions subjects.

The government policies of funding for educating SWD in RICSQ were perceived by RICSQ Principals as creating a shortage of funding. The dependency on funding produced degrees of frustration and tension for some of the school Principals, but only a
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few thought about any solutions to the problem. According to the Principals, the government is to blame for this shortfall in funding and is responsible for financing the education of SWD. Therefore, statements revealed in the dialogue around funding of SWD constitute what amounts to a discourse of dependency. Some school Principals saw funding and disability as inextricably linked. Government funding became an issue because it helped to resolve the tension between Christian compassion and business exigencies. Funding policies were an excuse for hard decisions around funding of SWD.

6.2.8 How SWD challenged the sympatricity.

The findings in the discourse of the Principals revealed an underlying discourse of ableism. The impact of this ableist discourse is detrimental and can affect the education of SWD. Hehir (2002) stated that educators' 'ableist' assumptions about students with disabilities compromise the quality of instruction. However, the quality of instruction was not the main issue in this research. Rather it was whether or not SWD would be enrolled.

SWD appeared to be a “wedge” driven between the Christian and business discourse. This disrupted the sympatricity. Principals saw the education of SWD as their responsibility and that these students should be looked after by the College. Thorsos (2012) explained that Mark 16:15 implores people to go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. This includes people with disabilities, to take part in the promise and the Body of Christ. Thus, the message of the New Testament gives a message of inclusion rather than discrimination as Christ’s mission (Thorsos, 2012). The New Testament describes an inclusive attitude towards PWD (Matthew 11:2-5, Luke 4:18-19 Matthew 11:3-5) (The Holy Bible, 1992).

There was a disparity between the Christian discourse and actual practices which impacted upon policy in RICSQ. Christian school websites promote a
structured, individualized education program flexible for all students, regardless of learning style, difficulty, disability, ability, giftedness or talent. The rhetoric is unashamedly Christian. The promotional marketing rhetoric is critical of other Government schools, where these values may not be guaranteed, and explains that the spiritual and earthly values of the college are an important ingredient in a good education.

These discourses shaped the reality and practice of RICSQ in relation to SWD. The initial research question was: How do the Principals in RICSQ deal with issues of educating SWD? There was a gap between the discourse of the Principals and the broader Christian tradition (theology) and a gap between the discourse and actual practices. The Christian discourse of *imago dei* was subordinated to the larger business discourse of costs, competition and markets, private funding and consumer choice. The arrival of SWD also exposed the opposing discourses around funding. The ableist and business discourses provided a launching pad for a discourse of dependency.

### 6.2.9 Competing discourses.

The effects of the medical and ableist discourses were to create SWD who were to be ‘helped’, and ‘normalised’ so they could “replicate their benchmark ‘confrere’ and … not make too many economic demands on the system” (Campbell, as cited in Tremain 2007, p. 115). Graham (2011) wrote that statements privilege particular ways of seeing and codify certain practices. A SWD is a recognisable object of discourse in a power-knowledge field. This discourse excludes these students from their right to schooling. Principals wrestled with the desire to enrol SWD and the ensuing economic demands they placed on the school. Spiritual decisions gave way to economic utilitarian decisions. SWD are costly to educate, despite Principals defining them as being created in the image of God.
Much work needs to be done on identifying a common defining Christian belief that can drive the policies for educating SWD. Anderson (2012) proposed a theology of special education which goes a long way towards a Christian understanding of special education. He highlighted ideas such as interdependence between the SWD and the teacher, the idea of biblical hospitality and spiritual formation or “calling” (p. 210). Murphy (2010) cited Creamer, who argued that rather than conforming to a medical and ableist model of disability, a Christian understanding of disability should disrupt dominant, ableist perspectives of human embodiment and reflect a deeper theological understanding of disability. Christians should “examine and embrace and reinterpret our limits” (Creamer, as cited in Murphy, 2010, p.119).

SWD in these schools disrupt the inclusionist, loving and caring Christian environment so much lauded by Principals, as an important quality. As shown in the findings, in the RICSQ, the quality of the school environment takes on an extra quality of loving and caring. Most RICSQ Principals prided themselves on this quality of care. A safe, secure and sometimes a loving environment were considered as optimal for RICSQ, and were often quoted as what parents wanted for their children.

The findings revealed the competing discourses which became clear when the SWD were being enrolled in RICSQ. What followed was confusion and tension when Principals tried to resolve the issues of educating SWD. This section has described how these Principals responded by looking at the discourses which revealed the Principals’ thoughts and beliefs when faced with the decision of enrolling SWD. These various discourses (Christian, medical and business) shaped the reality and practice of RICSQ in relation to SWD. The question: “How do the Principals in RICSQ deal with issues of educating SWD?” is about understanding the Principals’ worldviews, and their challenges and frustrations with the introduction to the school of SWD. The Christian discourse was
subordinated to the larger business discourse of costs, competition and markets, private 
funding and consumer choice.

Finally, the medical and ableist discourses revealed that some students are privileged over 
others in the education process. This is an important issue in the development of the map. 
The map focuses in more detail on the issue of funding which confronts RICSQ 
Principals and the disruption to the sympatricity of the management of the schools by the 
enrolment of SWD.
Figure 6.6. Tentative theory of research: SWD disrupt sympatricity and the harmony between the RICSQ and the government.
6.3 The impact of funding policies on enrolment of SWD in RICSQ.

The next stage (mapping the dynamics of RICSQ and SWD) looks at this important issue of shortage of funding for SWD and the response of RICSQ Principals. Shortage of funding and its impact on enrolment of SWD was discussed at length by the Principals in the interviews. This issue explains the disruption and confusion when SWD were introduced into RICSQ. A closer look at this issue is crucial to answering the research question, and to extending the map to the next level.

SWD create an extra financial burden and seem to undermine the Christian desire to educate SWD. The presence of SWD at RICSQ complicates the policy arena and brings into play other critical factors which impinge on the policies and decisions that the school Principal has to make. These two critical factors, funding and enrolment of SWD, are the subject of this part of the landscape map.

6.3.1 Funding.

Policies around the Government funding of SWD in RICSQ reveal the tension between the two roles of the Principals — faith leaders on the one hand and business CEOs on the other. The Principals’ Christian love and compassion for SWD is challenged by the business demands of managing RICSQ. This means there is a need for extra finance for expenses to meet their education. Thus, the arrival of SWD in RICSQ forces the Principals to act either on their faith beliefs or their business demands. SWD cost more to educate than a general student, involving not just the child’s day-to-day education and care requirements but also modifications to the infrastructure. Additionally, SWD receive less funding in RICSQ than in a government school.
The major thesis here is that the sympatricity of these two contradictory worldviews is interrupted by the enrolment of SWD. Although the two world views exist peacefully, educating SWD creates a conflict with the government about shortage of funding for SWD. Independent Christian schools have expanded rapidly in the last few decades, but they are nevertheless dependent on government funding for SWD. Government funding is largely insufficient to meet the costs of educating SWD. RICSQ seem to provide an excellent alternative to the secular government schools in all aspects except when SWD apply for enrolment.

Shortage of funding for SWD is a source of tension for most school Principals, as they weigh up their feeling of responsibility for these students with the necessity of finding adequate support to educate them. The Principals feel compassion for SWD and want to enrol them, but this means there is a need for extra finance for expenses. The enrolment of SWD creates an extra financial burden and seems to undermine the Christian desire to educate SWD.

The interesting relationship in the dynamics of RICSQ is repeated at various levels of these schools. Firstly, at the macro level, the quality of independence is at variance with the level of government support around funding. Secondly, within the RICSQ themselves, Principals are in conflicting roles as pastors and faith leaders on the one hand and business CEOs on the other. The Bible tells the story of Jesus when his enemies tried to trick him by asking whether it was right for the Jews, whose nation had been taken over by the Roman Empire, to pay tribute to the Roman emperor. He took a Roman coin that would be used to pay the tribute and asked whose picture was on it. His enemies answered, “Caesar's.” The reply of Jesus implied that in using Roman coins, the Jews accepted the rule of the Romans, and so the Roman government had the right to tax them, as long as the Jews were not compromising their religious duties. Jesus' more general
point was that one should give to worldly authorities the things that belong to them and to God what belongs to God.

To the Principals in RICSQ, disability equalled money/funding. What the Principals associated with SWD funding was the policy and process of applying for funding. This policy was part of the legislation of the Discrimination Act and the Education Standards within that Act. The QPNO administers the Educational Adjustment Profile (EAP) process. The QPNO provide a service for RICSQ where they assess each SWD as to how much funding they should receive. This significance of this process is that it downgrades the Principal’s responsibility and reveals a reliance or dependence on the government for funding of SWD.

One Principal, Ben, when asked about a common definition in the independent schools replied, “Look the only definition I suppose would be common be the definition that exists as far as access to government funding” – a view held by a majority of the Principals. Although some Principals did not like the word disability, and cast their definition wider to include emotional and mental disabilities, they had to comply with the policies of defining disability to obtain funding. These school Principals were clearly concerned with funding SWD and the business of schooling.

The findings on policies of funding for SWD highlight a dilemma of RICSQ, where two worldviews operated peacefully at the point of enrolment. Unfortunately, government funding is inadequate even though the Principals depend on it. The RICSQ Principals are torn between their Christian worldviews of SWD as being created in the image of God and their business worldview where “disability equals funding”. Policies concerning funding of SWD were forged in a less than satisfactory contract with a secular power. The worldviews from which policies emanated were seen to shift from a Christian worldview
to a business one. Principals saw funding as a reason for not enrolling SWD. This was their way of dealing with SWD. Principals relied on the government for the small amount of funding they provided, and they did not seem to rely on God for funding. Faith in God was replaced by reliance on the Government.

Prasser (2009b) supported the views expressed by Crimmins and wrote that Queensland’s independent schools are enrolling an increasing number of SWD. He argued that the independent schools are neither receiving adequate funding for SWD, nor do they have access to the range of services that are a feature of other school systems. Prasser argued there are increasing numbers of SWD in independent schools, but the problem of definition of SWD and funding means these schools cannot educate them to the standard they need (Prasser 2009b). Funding, therefore, appears to be an important cause of tension around the education of SWD in RICSQ.

Prasser (2009b) pointed out that a SWD in the independent sector receives less than 20 per cent of the funding allocated to the same student if they attend a state school. This then has an impact on the way that non-government schools may view the arrival of a SWD at a school who intends to enrol there, and has a significant bearing on the way RICSQ Principals develop and enact policy for educating SWD. Prasser also suggested the needs of SWD could be met by sharing the costs to the whole school community by a general increase in fees. However, he noted that such an action is likely to be questioned by the parents. This was touched on in the data uncovered by the researcher as well. One Principal was not sure who should pay for funding and asked should the schools or the taxpayer be paying for educating SWD. A question like this may have crossed the minds of all the Principals but was not spoken about.
Principals’ reliance on the issue of funding helps to ease the tension of wanting to help SWD on the one hand and balance the budgets on the other. It circumvents the issue of Christian love and compassion for SWD by offering a reason for not enrolling SWD. Unfortunately, the issue of funding is a two-edged sword, and is a catalyst in the disruption of sympatricity between the Christian and secular governance of RICSQ. These schools have demanded democratic ‘rights’ for parents to choose an education for their children. Unfortunately, this principle is challenged by the Principals who turn away SWD. Yet the Government says all students have a right to attend a school of their own choice.

The Principals’ reasoning is that, because the government support is not enough, they have to turn SWD away. The Australian Education Union (AEU) argued that the claim only takes direct funding for students with disabilities into account. In reality, they have an advantage over government schools. This debate could be followed in more detail and is complex, and outside the scope of this thesis. This research is not about whether private education is better than government education. However, it is sufficient to state here that responsibility for education of SWD is a part of this complex situation. RICSQ feel responsible for them and this creates tension and confusion. Issues of conflicting worldviews, costs of SWD education and the problem of funding bring to the surface deeper issues at the heart of Christian schooling.

As part of the research’s focus on understanding the issues from the Principals’ perspectives, the officer in charge of funding at Independent Schools of Queensland QPNO was interviewed, and asked about policies. The funding officer explained that QPNO does not get involved in policies. She pointed out that the schools were independent and QPNO does not decide on policies, and does not comment on issues particular to Christian schools. Each individual school decides on its own policies. Some
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Schools have formal enrolment policies, while others have to write these as the need arises. The policy of funding in RICSQ rests solely on the shoulders of the Principals who meet with the board.

The fact that funding is perceived by the Principals as inadequate indicated that some RICSQ were not prepared for SWD and were turning SWD away. The practice of encouraging SWD not to attend Christian schools is explored by Prasser (2009b), in a discussion paper prepared for Independent Schools Queensland. He argued that schools may choose to “run down” or limit the services to SWDs to deter their attendance, or to encourage them to transfer to the better resourced schools. He found that this strategy was “pleasingly, not considered by individual schools” (Prasser, 2009b, p. 21). The findings in this research contradict Prasser’s research that RICSQ do not encourage SWD to transfer to better resourced state schools. Issues of conflicting worldviews, costs of SWD and the problem of funding mean that enrolment is the key policy ‘moment’ that emerges from the findings of this study. The evidence from the RICSQs was that some of them are turning SWD away because of the lack of funding. These are purely business decisions that override any Christian beliefs about SWD.

Buckingham (2011) made the point that it may seem that these students are being deliberately rejected by independent schools. She considered it is more likely that the current funding and regulatory systems for non-government schools limit access for these students to non-government schools. Buckingham expressed concern that school funding is plagued by inconsistencies and divisiveness, and its complexity has led to widespread misinformation and perceptions of inequity. She argued that a new school funding system should be based on the needs of individual students, not on the type of school they attend.
The result of this funding situation is that SWD are being turned away from RICSQ because RICSQ are not able or prepared to pay for SWD. Contrary to Prasser (2009) and Buckingham (2011), this research finds that SWD are being deliberately turned away from RICSQ. To put the funding issue in context, it is important to understand the Federal Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1992).

According to the DDA (1992), all schools have obligations to adjust their services to meet the needs of SWD. Then, an action plan with several steps is devised to identify barriers which limit access to service, and devise strategies to eliminate barriers. Educators must offer a person with a disability the same educational opportunities as everyone else. The Australian Government Productivity Commission's review (2004) of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) identified “exclusion from, and segregation in, education” as “one of the most serious forms of disability discrimination.”

The policies around funding were seen as both a cause and a symptom of the shortage of finances. Principals spoke about funding and disability as being mutually related. Principals blamed funding for their inability to educate SWD. It became clear that the point of enrolment was seen as the policy ‘moment’. Thus, some Colleges recommended SWD go to state schools. The funding of SWD exposed an inherent contradiction in the makeup of RICSQ — dependency on the government for funding. It was opposite to the independent discourses of the schools on their official websites and which appeared strongly in their corporate identity.

The arrival of SWD also exposed the opposing discourses around funding. The ableist and business discourses provided a launching pad for a discourse of dependency, which was an unexpected discourse that emerged in the analysis of the interviews with Principals. Funding for SWD created a discourse of dependency on the government.
Taylor (2004) cited Yeatman (1990), who argued that these statements reveal the arena of struggle over meaning, or ‘the politics of discourse. The following map depicts the consequences of enrolling SWD and the policies of dependence on the Governments for funding these students.

*Figure 6.7. Tentative theory of research: Funding and enrolment.*
6.4 Governmentality

A discourse of dependency became evident in the mapping process, and the notion of
governmentality is used to explain this discourse. The Principals’ dependency on the
government for funding and educating SWD revealed a web of dependency, or what this
research study labels a discourse of dependency. The mapping process of the extremely
complex educational corporation known as RICSQ exposed this discourse of dependency.
The map attempts to explain this deep discourse of dependency using Foucault’s idea of
governmentality (Niesche, 2011).

6.4.1 Discourse of dependency.

The map reveals a discourse of dependency in varying degrees, and some weak solutions
offered. Three important discourses – Christian, business and ableist — shaped the reality
and practice of RICSQ in relation to SWD. SWD tested the broader Christian tradition
(theology) and a gap between the discourse and actual practices was exposed in the
terrain. The Christian discourse of *imago dei* was subordinated to the larger business
discourse of costs, competition and markets, private funding and consumer choice.

Funding policies were situated within a business discourse and revealed the dependency
of Principals on the government for educating SWD. This discourse was part of the policy
of funding and enrolment of SWD. Perhaps the dependence of RISCQ on the government
and subservient unquestioning allegiance to the government reveals governmentality and
its discourse, which work to conceal the nature of the relationship. The dependency
discourse tells us something about the network of administration and the government,
about the Principals’ assumptions and beliefs. The Principal’s thoughts and ideas about
funding were a response to the government policies. It was this ‘truth’ (Ball 1993, p. 15)
that was *spoken* by Principals, and on which policy decisions relied. Meanings arise not
from language but from institutional practices, from power relations and social position (Ball, 1990, as cited by Bacchi, 2000).

The dependency of the RICSQ on the government for funding was obvious in the business discourse, which was dominant and made apparent the concern about equity of funding and the tensions of Principals. This tension was also apparent in the interviews where Principals spoke about compassion for SWD being overruled by pragmatism. Evidence of varying degrees of dependence was present with each RICSQ, although Principals did not openly acknowledge this. As was discussed in the previous section, some Principals laid blame on the government for the funding shortfall.

Therefore, many statements around funding of SWD constituted what amounted to a discourse of dependency. Some school Principals believed funding and disability were inextricably linked. When disability was spoken about it was associated with funding. One Principal aptly said what others thought: “when most people are thinking about disabilities, it has a price tag attached to it, so disabilities equals funding of some sort or some sort of assistance.”

Funding of course was from the government and was barely enough to cover their basic needs. Principals said they ran tight businesses and could not ask parents of SWD to contribute more, nor could they take money away from students without disabilities. SWD were seen as inconvenient intrusions in RICSQ, often depicted as negative income, but also as taking the focus away from the ‘better’ students. The dependency discourse arose from this combination of business and ableist discourses.

This discourse of dependency ran parallel to the Christian discourse at times, but for the majority of the time it dominated it. RICSQ Principals’ dependency on the government for funding replaced the passion for educating SWD. The effects reach a climax when the
Principals could not, or would not enrol SWD. This relationship with the government was a cause of tension and disappointment as Colleges were unable to pay for and enrol SWD.

The dependency discourse created ‘regimes of truth’ where SWD were seen as economic subjects in a web of funding policies and administration of disability. A closer look at the landscape map explains why RICSQ Principals of independent schools were dependent on the Queensland government. This tentative landscape map is composed to clarify the values and worldviews of the Principals and to explain this paradoxical situation of dependency/independency.

Funding and enrolment were major issues culminating in the discourse of dependency. This discourse which unfolded negated the element of independence in which the schools status rested. These two issues proved to be important in developing a three-dimensional view of the dynamics of educating SWD in RICSQ. The independence of RICSQ recedes from view and a mountain of dependency becomes apparent.

The effects of this dependency on the government proved detrimental when the Colleges could not enrol SWD and were turning them away. Dependency on the government for funding for SWD was proving to be financially inoperable and a real source of tension.

6.4.2 Foucault and Governmentality.

The landscape map in this chapter brings the research study question to a close. It illuminates the reasons for the Principals’ dependency on the government for funding. It also briefly describes governmentality and then answers the questions raised about: (a) the responses of the Principals around issues of funding and enrolment of SWD; (b) why the Principals acted the way they did; (c) “Conduct ‘of the Principals; (d) the contradictions and conflicts; (e) Business and Governmentality.
Foucault introduced the term governmentality in the 1970s in the course of his investigations of political power. Government, as he put it in the summary of his 1977-1978 course entitled “Security, Territory and Population,” was “an activity that undertakes to conduct individuals throughout their lives by placing them under the authority of a guide responsible for what they do and for what happens to them” (Foucault, 2007, p. 68). Foucault’s essay on governmentality argued that a certain mentality that he termed “governmentality” had become the common ground of all modern forms of political thought and action. Foucault’s notion of governmentality is a tool to understand how Principals are ‘disciplined’ in ways that produce tensions (Niesche, 2011).

6.4.2.1 Governmentality and independence. Foucault’s notion of governmentality may be a useful way of understanding the practices of government with regard to Principals and school management (Niesche 2011). Foucault (1978, p. 121) wrote that ‘to govern’ may mean ‘to conduct oneself’ in a spiritual or moral sense or ‘to govern’ may mean to impose a regimen” as when a doctor imposes a regimen on a patient. Niesche (2011) explained that power relations that produce multiple knowledges can be seen through such procedures as principal and school accountabilities.

The Principals need not only be understood as subject to the practices of the government but also as a vehicle through which the government can regulate populations. It is through these mechanisms of funding that governmentality works, to govern or steer “at a distance” (Ball, 1994, as cited in Niesche, 2011, p. 54).

Part of the business role of the Principals is an administrative process of applying for grants for funding. It is this dependency on the government that makes visible an aspect of governmentality. The State government controls the funding, and the State and
Commonwealth governments regulate and control the Principal’s role of administering funding for SWD.

Foucault defined government as an ‘action on actions’, which shapes ‘the field of possibilities’, with the notion of government as the ‘conduct of conducts’ (Darmon & Perez, 2011, p. 81). Darmon and Perez considered Weber’s notion of life conduct, *Lebensführung*, and his idea of discipline as “the consistently rationalised, i.e. systematically instructed and precise execution of the received order, unconditionally setting aside any criticism of one’s own, and the unremitting tuning *Engestelltheit* exclusively to this goal” (p. 86).

RICSQ Principals appeared to be incapable of considering alternate funding policies or reflecting on their policies, because they were dependent on government funding arrangements, and any Christian or faith decisions about SWD were lost in the *Lebensführung*. Their focus of attention was on a secular government. Millbank (1990, 2006) pointed out that Principals may not be opposed to the secular, but for Milbank the secular is opposed to Christianity, whether Christians acknowledge this or not. This mindset transformed and limited their policies to business discursive practices and reduced any influence of their Christian beliefs. The landscape at this point is a mixture of ableism and business, culminating in a dependency which impacts on the inclusion of SWD in RICSQ at the policy moment – enrolment.

The power over what is funded, who is funded and how much is given in funds lies with the government; but this is a choice and agreement that is entered into by the Principals of each school. Power /knowledge lie in the hands of a secular government and the funding of SWD and are shaped by the field of possibilities. The Commonwealth and Queensland governments combine to control policies of funding. Legitimate knowledge is viewed as
the regulations and rules for defining SWD and funding them. Thus, what is seen in this relationship between the government and the independent schools is an economically-focused approach to governance.

Niesche (2011) argued that through such activities as submissions, annual reports and accountability frameworks, schools and their Principals become knowable, calculable and administrable objects. Niesche (2011) further argued that these discourses are used to normalise others, as is evidenced in the business and ableist discourse around SWD.

Foucault (1977-80) wrote about going beyond the institution and trying to discover in a wider and more overall perspective what he broadly calls the “technology of power”. RICSQ Principals are subject to practices of the government but are also a vehicle through which government can regulate the population. The government relies on the Principals to assess their own conduct. The Principals are disciplined through documentation, which is a form of governmentality for school principals (Niesche 2011).

Principals are subject to the practices of the government; but are also a vehicle through which it can regulate the population. Schools and Principals are self-governing in the sense that the government relies on Principals to assess their own conduct. In addition, parents can also assess the Principals conduct. Governmentality is “conduct of conduct” (conduire des conduites) (Foucault, 2007, p. 138). Thus the Principal is subject to government regulation and he in turn subjects his staff and students as part of the regulation of the population by the government.

In this situation, this very idea of government involves a paradox: RICSQ are independent entities, yet government requires that individual behaviour be regulated and modified. Within the larger business discourse, a discourse of dependency is apparent in the interviews. This discourse of dependency contradicts the ‘independent’ attributes of
school. Government discourse conveys the idea of freedom; and at its core is the idea of liberal government rationality (Darmon & Perez, 2011. p.81).

6.4.2.2 The responses of the Principals around issues of funding and enrolment of SWD. One may ask why SWD were not a high priority for these Principals. Rouse’s (1994) explanation of Foucault’s dynamics of power could help clarify this. According to Foucault, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, “docile” bodies (Rouse 1994). It is this “docility” that may explain the dependency on the government for funding and the lack of questioning of the policies. Perhaps the Principals were unable to see any other alternative, as actors in the power/knowledge network underpinning the government funding of independent schools. Tremain (2008) wrote that the Principal is a subject in the Foucauldian sense. Ball believed that disciplinary power limits the possible ways of thinking and speaking (Wang, 2011). The Principals are governed as subjects whose conduct is to be limited by law, individuals to be disciplined. The Principals submitted to the regime of truth as posited by the Government and whose discourse was power and finance.

6.4.2.3 Business discourses and ‘governmentality. Foucault (1991) stated that the art of government is concerned with the introduction of economy into political practice (Niesche, 2011). Thus, it is necessary for the Principals to maximise their tight educational budgets and resources. Funding policies for SWD is a clearly defined part of the terrain in this landscape and is an example of economy through government in RICSQ. It lays the foundation for a strong dependency mindset that is so evident in the interviews of Principals.

Hook (2001) says that discursive rules are strongly linked to the exercise of power. The Principals’ business discourse clearly erected a framework for an ableist/dependency
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discourse. The business of educating SWD revealed a dependency mindset around
funding. The Principals depended on funding but recognised because it was so small their
ability to accommodate SWD was limited. Thus, some Colleges recommended SWD go
to state schools. They actively encouraged SWD to go elsewhere. The dependency which
is part of this landscape is in need of further explanation in order to see it clearly as part
of the ‘environment’ in this map.

6.4.2.4 Conflict and contradictions. In the findings, tensions and contradictions became
apparent when SWD applied for enrolment. Foucault’s concept of governmentality
explains how the Principalship is lived and ‘disciplined’ in ways that produce both
contradictions and tensions for school Principals (Niesche 2011). Funding policies are an
example of a government who regulate the lives of not only SWD but also the Principals.
The Principals appear to have made themselves subject to the government for economic
benefits but their Christian identity is in conflict with this relationship. The tension is
talked about by the Principals. The enrolment of SWD highlighted this conflict of faith
and business interests. Beginning with Foucault’s “Archaeology” (1972) as the first
‘ordering tool’, the archives of the statements were examined to reveal the strangeness of
the social arrangements (Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

Foucault wrote that governing people is always a versatile equilibrium with
complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assume coercion and processes
through which the self is constructed or modified by himself (Lemke, 1997)). Foucault
said that “subjectivation also involves being subject to someone else by control and
dependence” (Foucault, 1986, cited in Lemke, 1997). The dependence of RICSQ
Principals caused a degree of tension and confusion about their role in educating SWD.
Niesche (2011) argues that Foucault’s view of power emphasises the point that it is not
possessed but rather it is exercised through networks of relations that are constantly in tension.

The “strangeness” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 8) in this sympatricity of independence and government control was revealed at the moment of enrolment of SWD. The dependency of the RICSQ on the government for financing revealed a “welfare” relationship, suggesting that there existed a political rationality which was a combination of ideology and actual — possibly conflicting – practices (Hartman, 2005).

Fulcher (1989, p. 7) argues that policies are seen as the outcomes of struggles ‘between contenders of competing objectives, where language, or more specifically discourse – is used tactically.’ Liasidou (2011) writes that inclusion of SWD should be primarily regarded as a power and knowledge interplay (Foucault, 1977) of contradictory dynamics and insights. This is certainly true in the RICSQ where the dominant discourse frames not only what can be thought but also what it is possible to be and do. Principals relying on government funding choose not to enrol SWD.

6.4.2.5 Conduct of conducts and RICSQ Principals. Niesche (2011) explains how using tools from a Foucauldian toolbox can help one to see how Principals are subjectified under the shifting regimes of self-management of funding administration of SWD. The discourse of dependency is part of what Foucault calls “governmentality” or more precisely, "the conduct of conduct", a term which ranges from "governing the self" to "governing others" (Lemke, 1997 p. 2). Government in a Foucauldian sense refers to all endeavours to shape, guide, and direct the conduct of others. It also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one's own passions, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself (Rose, 1999). This may explain the Principals’ business discursive practices which included a combination of other discourses. Principals certainly had to
control their own ‘passions’ around SWD. Principals were not only conduits for RICSQ but they were unaware of the power/knowledge generated by the Government. Power in the Foucauldian sense is not overtly repressive and is not possessed but practised (Kendal and Wickham, 1999).

6.4.2.6 Governmentality as a tool to understand dependency. This landscape map reveals how the Christian discourse is clouded by governmentality, which obscures the judgment of the Principals. This explains the policies of dependency consisting of business and ableist practices. Foucault implied that, rather than framing investigations in terms of state or politics, it might be more productive to investigate the formation and transformation of theories, proposals, strategies and technologies for the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Rose, 1999). The landscape map simplifies and clarifies what would otherwise be hidden – these “technologies” which explain how RICSQ Principals govern themselves and others.

Niesche (2011) wrote that what is significant about Foucault’s notion of governmentality is that it challenges the taken-for-granted practices of government. Most of the school Principals appeared to take it for granted that the government should fund SWD. They did not attempt to create any policies of independent funding of SWD.

The practices of governmentality make some form of activity that is unthinkable and practicable (Gordon 1991, cited in Niesche 2011). It was unthinkable for Principals to raise funds for SWD because the government took on this role in the State schools and to a lesser degree in the independent schools. As educational administrators, Principals were incapable of asking critical questions because they were trapped within discourses of efficiency, productivity and performativity (Anderson and Grinsberg, 1998, as cited in Niesche, 2011).
Every discourse is a part of a discursive complex and locked into an intricate web of practice (Kendal and Wickham, 1999). Some ways of thinking come to be taken as truth while others are marginalised (Thomsen, Hall and Jones, 2012). The rhetoric of the self-managing school demonstrates a deliberate process of subterfuge, distortion, concealment and wilful neglect on the part of the state (Smyth, 1993, as cited in Niesche, 2011). On the one hand, RICSQ Principals felt empowered, more democratic, and having more choice. Yet, with the governmentality, RICSQ are given some responsibility with regard to funding and resources but they are still not able to exercise this power without centralised constraints (Niesche 2011). Ball (1993) stated that policy ensembles bring together the market, management and appraisal as regimes of truth and it is through this that the policies around SWD were government-generated and maintained.

6.4.2.7. Ableism and Governmentality. Ableism is a part of a discursive complex and part of the intricate web of practice called governmentality. Tremain (2007) argued that the idea of citizenship expressed in the ableist discourses hinges on governing disability according to an ethics of normalisation and minimisation. This normalising judgement and construction of norms as a field of knowledge is a technique of power (Rouse, 1994). Rouse commented on Foucault, who spoke about normalising judgement which produced a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homogenous social body, but also playing a part in classification, hierarchisation and the distribution of rank. These discourses are established as authoritative or regimes of truth. What is said is as important as who can say it (Ball, 1990).

These discourses revealed how the Principal is ‘constructed’. A business pragmatism overrules the Christian ‘spirit’ of these RICSQ Principals and SWD are either redirected to state schools, or educated within a school system that is lacking in funding and
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resources for SWD. The impact of the funding policies creates a surprising discourse of dependency which is explained by Foucault’s notion of governmentality

Foucault’s ideas of governmentality and disciplinary power illustrate how these Principals are positioned within discourses of school management. The dependence of the Principals on the government for funding is well documented in the findings. The application and administering of funds requires more and more documentation. Niesche (2011) pointed out that this work of applying for funds and administering is evidence of the power/knowledge that is at work. The administration of funding is just one example of a “regime of practice” that discipline Principals and construct them as subjects in these discursive regimes. These governmentalities all attempt to know the Principals and are both disciplining and self-forming (Niesche, 2011). The following picture displays in a simple form the relationship of the “independent” schools to the government as one of dependency.
Figure 6.8. Tentative theory of research: RICSQ and governmentality.
6.5 Conclusion

How do RICSQ Principals deal with the issues of educating SWD in their schools? About 45 years ago, Fulcher (1969) asked a question similar to the primary research question in this study. He asked how schools see SWD and how they construct the issues. In Chapters 2 and 3, the literature review of enrolment of SWD in Christian schools, reported that research has not addressed the influence of the special education policy and legislation on the nature of enrolment of SWD in Australia (Dempsey et al 2002). In the same chapters, it was shown that fewer SWD are enrolled in RICSQ than in State schools. Eigenbrood (2005) suggested that there is no reason put forward why there are fewer SWD in faith-based schools. McCormick (2005) believed that the needs of many young Christian people who desire a Christian education are not being met through Christian schools. RICSQ Principals were asked whether the needs of SWD being met in their schools with their responses revealing that they did not believe so. Most Principals had to make a difficult choice about enrolling SWD.

Chapter 6 of the findings discloses that Principals’ faith and their business worldview were in conflict. Principals faced the dilemma of turning away SWD for whom there is a lack of infrastructure and resources. The findings unearthed the tensions created by the arrival of SWD. A conflict between Business funding polices and Christian beliefs were obvious in their statements; but it emerged that “the nuts and bolts” of business were more important than their Christian compassion for SWD.

All Principals, as faith leaders, believed that SWD were created in God’s image; yet as business CEOs, they blamed the government for funding shortages and at the same time accepted financial support for these students from the government. The policies for funding SWD were problematic for the RICSQ.
In this chapter, the “world” of RICSQ is charted and the resulting map uncovers three distinctive features of RICSQ as institutions. These schools are identified as independent schools with a Christian foundation of faith; however, not only are they independent from the government but also from each other. They have no overarching policy board or body to direct them in decision-making; and are mostly newer regional schools, as compared to well-established systemic schools.

The Principal’s role is described as a conduit in the RICSQ, a faith leader and a business CEO. To answer the leading research question of how RICSQ deal with the issues of educating SWD, it was necessary to look more closely at the components that constitute these schools. In the centre of this “world” of RICSQ were Principals who represented both Protestant corporate ideologies and biblical worldviews.

Further understanding and charting of the landscape called RICSQ was needed to explain the apparent conflict of values between the Christian foundation of the schools and the secular Queensland government. The Christian school is seen to be able to co-exist without conflict with the secular Government. A key idea to explain the co-existence of both these views is sympatricity (King, 2010). The two worldviews of Christianity and the secular business co-existed peacefully. There appeared to be an elective affinity between the two worldviews, which may be explained by the protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism expounded by Weber (1930). The two entities (Christian and secular government) respected each other and the two appeared in an apparently harmonious relationship.

The map of the dynamics of RICSQ revealed that the arrival of SWD challenged this sympatricity. The findings showed that Principals had genuine compassionate feelings for SWD which conflicted with constraints placed upon them as business managers and
CEOs. In the interviews with the Principals, what this conflict revealed was confusion, with no clear policy goals, and a dichotomy of Christian versus business discourses.

A mapping of discourses helped to construct a picture of how RICSQ deal with the issue of educating SWD. Two distinct discourses were apparent in the interview narratives of the Principals. One was a distinctive Christian discourse derived from the Protestant traditions of theology, biblical and pastoral interpretation. The second was a business discourse derived from secular liberal interpretations centred on the rational exchange of economic goods, including ‘educational goods’ in a free market. Principals’ construction of SWD exposed how SWD are marked by the discourses emerging from the interviews. The discourses created regimes of truth for SWD in which they were seen as economic subjects, entangled in funding policies with a secular government.

It was not disability that was the disabling factor but the discourse surrounding disability. Every discourse positions subjects; and these SWD were caught in this unexpected discourse – a discourse of dependency. According to Gee (1999, p. 12), when we speak or write we build six ‘areas of “reality”: the meaning and value of aspects of the material world; activities; identities and relationships; politics; connections; and semiotics (an in-depth analysis of these areas is not within the purview of the present study). Language is social practice and action, both shaping and shaped by the sympatricity of RICSQ to government funding and therefore dependency.

Foucault’s notion of governmentality was a key for charting the dependency discourse and is a useful tool for understanding the practices of government with respect to school-based management and the Principals (Niesche, 2011). The independent quality of the RICSQ was replaced with a dependency discourse, and Principals were unable to break free from the secular power of the Queensland government.
Three sets of issues are part of the map which exposes how the arrival of SWD disrupts the sympatricity and creates what appears to be a significant policy ‘moment’. The first issue to impact on the policy is the Principals’ understandings of disability, the second is the issue of funding, which is both a cause and a symptom of the problem, and the third is the fact that the point of enrolment can be seen as the policy ‘moment’.

Principals’ meanings around the definition of disability are the key to their understandings of SWD, exposing competing discourses, while another finding – enrolment of SWD — was the defining moment of policy.

This research’s original aim was to uncover teaching practices for SWD in RICSQ. However, the research uncovered issues around the enrolment policies of SWD. Principals were faced with having to make decisions whether or not they could afford SWD in the school. This correlated with the literature (Eigenbrood, 2005; Stymeist, 2008) which indicated there are fewer SWD identified in faith-based schools.

Two distinct discourses are apparent in the interview narratives of the Principals. One is a distinctive Christian discourse derived from the Protestant traditions of theology, biblical and pastoral interpretation. The second is a business discourse derived from secular liberal interpretations centred on the rational exchange of economic goods including ‘educational goods’ in a free market. Principals determined their policies towards SWD by seeing them as negative income earners. The challenges were further compounded by two different definitions around disability – Christian and ableist, with the latter being the dominant discourse.

One defining discourse was embedded in the policies of funding SWD. The much vaunted quality of independence of these schools was contrasted with the dependence on the government for funding. Thus, a discourse of dependency overshadowed any avowed
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degree of independence. The common feature of the statements around policy for SWD seemed to have been confusion. The dependency for funding produced degrees of frustration and tension for some of the school Principals, but very few suggested any solutions to the problem. Principals blamed the government for this shortfall in funding in financing the education of SWD, and saw funding and disability as inextricably linked. As a result of insufficient funding for SWD, RICSQ turned away SWD.

Foucault’s notion of ‘governmentality’ (Lemke, 1997; Niesche, 2011) was useful in this stage of the mapping process to explain Principals’ dependency on the Government. RICSQ Principals were unable to make independent decisions, and denied any independent responsibility for funding SWD. Foucault’s idea of governmentality suggested that a certain mentality (governmentality) has become the common ground of all forms of thought and action by Principals in RICSQ. They were free to govern themselves as independent Principals and to govern others. However, this governmentality curtailed their thinking in some areas, so that they were dependent on the government.

The point of enrolment revealed the difficulties and confusion. The issue of funding was the key issue and this challenged the Principals’ faith leadership which was made subservient to the business decision-making role. Within a very complex problem of interplay of competing discourses, principals agonised over how to reconcile their beliefs with the pragmatic issue of managing an independent educational context, entangled with government policy. The results showed the common feature of confusion and dependency. Enrolment of SWD exposed this dichotomy of an independent business overwhelmed by dependence on a secular government.

In conclusion, these research aims — to develop empirically derived understandings of how RICSQ develop and carry out policies with regard to SWD — were fruitful. The
aims were realised by looking at policies, at the role of defining SWD, and at practical issues associated with educating SWD. A three-layered map was developed which simplified a very complex situation of competing world views, to describe how the resultant interplay of discourses worked to give meaning to the policies.
6.6 Implications for future research

The aim of the research was to develop theory surrounding the education of students with a disability in regional independent schools of Queensland. It is anticipated that this research may have implications for the education of SWD in other independent schools and systems. The findings may help to reveal a better understanding of RICSQ education of SWD, the methods and curriculums being taught, and the philosophy supporting these ideas.

6.6.1 Implications for Principals, school boards, churches and parents of SWD.

Knowledge of the difficulties faced by RICSQ Principals when enrolling SWD is significant enough to have this made known to several groups associated with the school. These include school boards, Principals and parents as well as Church representatives who oversee the running of these schools. It follows then that one implication of this research is that Christian schools, and schools boards and parents of SWD may become more aware of the difficulties of SWD in their schools.

Stainton (2008) examined how early church doctrine influenced the construction of and response to intellectual disability. The Church’s awareness of disability in this new century could inform the RICSQ on the position of SWD through a Christian perspective.

Another significant implication could be for the community of believers, including the Churches which have established these schools, knowing and understanding how RICSQ Principals reconcile their Christian beliefs for people with disabilities with the business of balancing budgets and expenses associated with enrolling SWD. Church communities may benefit from knowing how schools that represent those Churches undertake the education of SWD. A pastor of a church in NZ (Adair, 2009) which also has a Christian
school, stressed that leading edge research informs best practice and that research like this should be part of informing both the church and school.

It may also be helpful for Principals to make them aware of the multiple influences on educating SWD in Christian schools. The environment as an important factor in educating SWD would be a valuable area of future research and information for Christian school.

As mentioned before a medical view of disability is not wrong in an educational environment. However a social perception of disability – the environment, is largely what needs changing.

Educational policies for students with a disability in Australia, the USA, and the UK and in most western countries stipulate that inclusive placement should be a choice available to parents (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2008). Limited funds meant Principals spoke about explaining to parents at enrolment that the school may not be able to enrol their children, even though that was their wish, as the school was ill-prepared to take their children.

Parents need to be sure, in advance, whether RICSQ can enrol their children or not. The key value of Christian independent schooling is choice. For parents of SWD this was not available. This research was significant because it exposed the dilemma of the need for parents’ choice to enrol SWD in a RICSQ, and the tensions of policies that influence these choices.

6.6.2. Implications for Queensland Policy Network Organisation (QPNO) for independent schools. There are implications for QPNO from this research. The organisation may need to be aware of the different views in the literature on policies of funding SWD and policies exercised by RICSQ Principals. One such point of difference is that Prasser (2009) stated that SWD are not being turned away from independent schools even though the funding is inadequate. However, this research suggests there are
fewer SWD in RICSQ and more SWD were being turned away. This contradicts statements by Prasser and supports literature that says there are fewer SWD in faith-based schools (Patton, 2005). The intake of SWD in these RICSQ is disproportionate to that of SWD in government schools. The research may have implications that improve understanding of disability and education of students, so that there are more SWD enrolled in RICSQ. The findings of Eigenbrood (2005) are also supported in that there are clear differences between the public and faith-based schools, one of which is fewer students with identified disabilities in faith-based schools.

It is anticipated that due to changes in defining SWD an increasing number of SWD will be in need of funding and placement. As recent as November 2014 a newspaper reported that the number of SWD is likely to be twice as many as thought (Sunshine Coast Daily, 2014). This will compound the financial burden of RICSQ and will cause further tensions in the independent sector.

6.6.3 Environment in RICSQ. The social model of disability expounds that the environmental issues surrounding the definition of disability are paramount. By enhancing the physical environment and social milieu of the school, the nature and extent of disability is profoundly affected. For example a classroom milieu that sees SWD as fully engaged and participating in classroom activities enhances the life of that child. On the other hand, a school refusing to add a lift to its infrastructure increases the ‘disability’ of the SWD. Further research in this aspect of disability studies in RICSQ could be very illuminating and instructive, and Principals, Board members and other education leaders in these schools would benefit from developing an understanding of this concept in regards to educating SWD. A social perception of disability is largely what needs addressing.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

This chapter closes the thesis and reviews the study as a whole. It develops a critical reflection of the study and ties together several important themes that emerged from it. The critical reflection assesses the results of the investigation, and details how it answers the guiding research questions. It further describes the implications of the study, and summarises the limitations.
7.1 Aims

The study’s intention was to develop empirically derived understandings of how RICSQ develop and carry out policies for SWD. The objectives were to fill the gap in the literature on educating SWD in RICSQ. The study also sought to add to the knowledge of Christian education of SWD by first looking at policies, secondly at the role of defining SWD, and thirdly at practical issues associated with educating SWD.

The study developed a map to frame some tentative theory around the landscape arena of policy for SWD in RICSQ. One aim was to narrow the gap in the literature concerning the education of students with disabilities within independent Christian schools in Queensland.

One study which did address the issue of SWD in Australian private schools was that of Curry (1999). In his Doctoral thesis (1999), he explored policy around education of SWD within Catholic schools in Western Australia. According to Curry (1999), Catholic Education expects local Catholic schools to facilitate enrolment and education of all Catholic children, regardless of disability. Curry’s study researched systemic Catholic education of SWD by examining policies across all schools This study investigated trends in policies across independent, autonomous Christian schools and was conceived because of the limited research into SWD in independent, Protestant schools. RICSQ do not have one single governing body, unlike the Catholic schools, which follow policy direction around SWD from the Catholic Education Departments. Thus, the prime research question in this research was:

“How do regional independent Christian schools in Queensland deal with the issues of educating students with disabilities?”
This research unearthed tensions within the role of Principals who wrestled with their Christian beliefs and their dependence on the government for funding SWD. The research discovered that shortage of funding for SWD became a central issue, as Principals struggled with decisions as to whether to enrol SWD or not. From the interviews, it became clear that the actual education of SWD within the schools was not the main problem; rather it was whether the school would enrol them in the first place. Instead of exploring policies around teaching and learning of SWD in RICSQ, the research discovered that the central issue was whether RICSQ would enrol SWD or not. New understandings about enrolment policies of SWD in RICSQ were identified.
7.2 Value of the Methodology and Data Analysis

The methodology selected to approach this study was interview research (Trainor & Graue, 2012). This research explored the meanings that the Principals of RICSQ hold in relation to phenomena such as SWD, their education within a Christian context and resultant policies. The choice of methodology – interview research – was extremely fruitful because it produced insightful and useful information. The research methods selected were sensitive to the perspectives of all participants, particularly their Christian beliefs, and was analysed into two parts – themes and discourses.

The willingness of Principals to take part in the research was much appreciated and most commendable and reflected something about their transparency and trust in the researcher. The Principals’ willingness, frankness, honesty and openness added to the quality of the study. The interviews produced personal anecdotal information at times and revealed knowledge of uniquely Christian issues of educating SWD, beyond what had been imagined.

What emerged from the interviews of each Principal was a rich personal story of the conflict of beliefs – Christian worldview versus a business worldview – with regard to educating SWD in RICSQ. Principals expressed this conflict by revealing intensely intimate feelings about SWD, often from a biblical perspective. A picture emerged of the Principals’ Christian compassion for SWD in stark contrast to the costly business of educating SWD. Principals’ silence on their dependence on God was contrasted with their dependence on the government for financing SWD.

Another significant feature of this study was the decision to employ two methods of data analysis, one following the other. First the researcher conducted a thematic analysis, from which emerged six important themes with regard to educating SWD. Secondly, a
discourse analysis was employed which uncovered two clear discourses – a Christian
discourse and a secular business discourse, with a third, ableist discourse pervading them.
These two extensive methods of data analysis - thematic and discourse analysis -
complemented the data collection by providing a rich and deep understanding of
Principals’ thoughts and policies on SWD.

The discourse analysis revealed the political context, or what Fairclough termed social
practice (as cited in Walter, 2006). Gee (2005, p. 105) pointed out that it is social
language which contains “the clues or cues” of discourse. However, this analysis also
employed a Foucauldian-inspired analysis, which included an archival and historical
emphasis. The discourse analysis was built upon the thematic analysis, providing answers
for the questions of the research – around the definition of disability, and the issues and
policies of enrolment of SWD in RICSQ.
7.3. Findings

The significant and somewhat unexpected findings that arose from the themes and discourse analysis were:

(a) Principals’ understanding of disability

(b) Issues of funding and enrolment

(c) The discovery of a dependency discourse.

7.3.1 Principals’ understandings of disability: definition of disability.

Racino (1999) believed the use of historical information on disability issues provided an excellent foundation for examining the effects of disability policies on individuals, their families, and their communities today (as cited in Doughty, 2001). The first major finding was how Principals defined disability.

Principals held multiple viewpoints about disability. In addition to the Christian discourses were two secular discourses of disability; medical and ableist. This ableist discourse disrupted and confronted the Principals’ Christian discourses. It combined with the business discourse and proved to be directly connected to the unexpected dependency discourse. The silence around the social model of disability stood out, as the ableist and dependency discourses dominated. As a reminder, policy-as-discourse theorists deconstruct the language of policy and seek discursive interpretations and explanations, not only of objective principles and procedures, but also of what the language hints or suggests, omits or silences (Peters, 2007). The second major finding was on funding and the enrolment of SWD. This research uncovered the depth of tension surrounding these issues.
7.3.2 Funding.

The discourse around funding was embedded with a discourse of dependency (on the government). This is explained by Foucault’s notion of governmentality. These Principals expressed their dismay as Christians who could not accommodate SWD, while they acted as managers, or executives in making decisions around enrolment of SWD. They also spoke about disability in different ways, but an ableist discourse was dominant. The result of this relationship with the government around funding for SWD proved to be frustrating and demoralising for some Principals. Their compassion for SWD was subdued and a business decision outranked this Christian belief.

RICSQ Principals were critical of the government for lack of funds for SWD. However, there appeared to be no clear, alternative, Christian policy for funding SWD. They did not speak about faith in God to provide for SWD, and never seemed to be dependent on God. Principals simply regarded funding as the government’s responsibility. Issues of conflicting world views, costs of SWD and the problem of funding meant that enrolment was seen as a major issue in the findings of this study.

The conflict between Christian views on disability and the legislation which covered limited categories of disability was another source of tension for Principals. They felt a responsibility to look after all the children with disabilities, but shortage of funding restricted the small number of SWD who could be enrolled.

Funding therefore emerged as both a source of tension and a point of contradiction for the Christian faith of the Principals interviewed. This caused some schools to redirect SWD to other schools and some to be very selective with the kind of SWD that were accepted to be enrolled. The two contradictory worldviews existent in the interviews revealed the possible source of this tension.
7.3.3 The policies of Principals in their education of SWD enrolment.

The most important finding in this study was around enrolment policies. The main focus of policy towards SWD in RICSQ was on the decision to enrol SWD. This proved to be one of the most revealing outcomes of the Principals’ accounts. It was expected that Principals would speak about educating SWD, but instead they spoke about enrolment of SWD.

The analysis filled a gap in the literature on policies on SWD in RICSQ. It revealed the broader discursive and political positions of these policies. RICSQ Principals were the main policy conduits in these schools. Understanding the Principals’ perspectives of disability was important for analysing the policies they implemented in their schools. Issues of conflicting worldviews, costs of SWD and the problem of funding meant that enrolment of SWD was problematic. Enrolment thus became the critical policy ‘moment’ in the findings. The discourses also revealed a dominant business discourse on funding SWD, which had implications for enrolling SWD.

7.3.4. Dependency discourse.

The guiding research questions provided unexpected answers around what was previously unknown about educating SWD in RICSQ. They uncovered the conflict of feelings about educating SWD from two worldviews – business and Christian. The discourses revealed both Christian and secular views of disability and educating SWD in RICSQ. The issues of funding SWD revealed deeper more ingrained policies.

The findings revealed a discourse of dependency of the Principals on the State and Commonwealth governments for funding SWD. For schools that prided themselves on ‘independence’, a discourse of dependency on government for funding of education for
SWD was a genuine surprise, as this emerged from the data; and its effects on policy was described as frustrating and demoralising for some Principals. It overshadowed the Christian discourse; and the effect was SWD were portrayed as economic subjects. The comment of one Principal, that “disability equalled funding”, was the heartbeat of policies. Further complicating this was an ableist discourse which, combined with a strong business discourse, and fed a discourse of dependency. The use of Foucault’s notion of governmentality (Lemke, 1997; Niesche, 2011) was helpful in explaining how Principals were disciplined in ways that produce both contradictions and tensions (Niesche, 2011).
7.4 Limitations of the research

There were several obvious limitations to this research. The geographical area was small and rural, and the research was unfunded. It could also be suggested that the researcher was limited because he did not have a disability. A worldwide global financial crisis occurred during this research and this affected private school enrolments.

7.4.1 Area of research.

The area of the research was centred on one regional area comprising rural to small towns outside the metropolitan area of Brisbane, in Queensland. This was a qualitative study that relied on a small sample of participants. Therefore, the study does not claim to make any major generalisations. Nevertheless, there are no special circumstances within the region that imply that some aspects of the findings and conclusions may not be applicable in other contexts. This indicates that there are further opportunities for continuing or extending this research to other regions within Queensland, or in other states of Australia. A similar study may be gainfully undertaken in other countries as well.

7.4.2 Unfunded research.

There was no funding attached to this research; therefore the sample of participants and the distance of travel were limited. It was confined to Principals of regional independent Christian schools in Queensland (RICSQ). However, some of these participants had been Principals of one or more RICSQ, and they gave a range of perspectives.

7.4.3 Researcher without a disability.

People with disabilities (PWD) may view the researcher as a person without a disability and therefore infer the research is limited. Although it may be insignificant, being able-bodied should not disqualify the researcher. This research study did not interview SWD
but rather Principals of RICSQ with the aim of uncovering their unique Christian perspective on educating SWD. Therefore, there is no a basis for excluding the researcher from genuine and respectful enquiry (Bridges 2001).

**7.4.4 Financial context of the research.**

During this research, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) took effect. This was felt strongly by these RICSQ when parents lost their jobs and withdrew students from the schools. Some of this financial pressure may have contributed to the tensions felt by Principals, but this was not specifically studied. It may have had a bearing on the decisions of schools to enrol SWD or not. However, this was not part of this research study and it would not greatly affect the enrolment of SWD.

**7.4.5 Changes to funding since the conduct of this study.**

Two important policies have emerged from the Commonwealth Government in 2013, as this study was drawing to a close — The *Gonski Report* and *the National Disability Insurance Scheme*. This research was conducted when schools and government were considering Gonski and Disability Care (formerly National Disability Insurance Scheme).

Gonski was commissioned to make recommendations regarding funding of education in Australia. Many submissions supported the need for additional investment for disadvantaged students and that funding should be the same regardless of school or sector. It was also noted that levels of funding were not the complete solution and that consideration must also be given to how the resources are directed to address disadvantage (Gonski Review, 2011).

Disability Care Australia, which began in 2013, will cover more than 400,000 people by 2019. It will help pay for carers, new wheelchairs, home modifications, physiotherapy
and speech pathology. It will cost the Federal Government $19.3 billion over 7 years (Bennett & Margetts, 2013).

Of these two policies for SWD in all schools, the Gonski Report will impact the education of SWD in RICSQ, whereas Disability Care will not impact education directly but will help parents with school requirements and objectives.

At the time of writing this research, the Queensland government had not signed up to the Gonski legislation, and a new Coalition government replaced the Labor government which introduced Gonski. Whether this reform will be brought into Queensland is not certain at this time. The present government is changing the fundamental reform of Gonski; and a new review of the national curriculum has been announced.

7.5 Conclusion to the research

The research was significant because there was a lack of knowledge about the education of SWD in RICSQ. It was also unique in that it revealed principals’ perspectives of SWD in RICSQ concerning definitions of disability. It explored issues of funding, and the disproportionate numbers of SWD in RICSQ. The significance of this research was to clarify and compare the existing empirical literature that informed the policy for SWD, especial in regional Queensland.

This research developed original findings in an area that is sparsely researched. The research objectives — to develop empirically derived understandings of how RICSQ develop and carry out policies with regard to SWD — were fruitful. This study added to the knowledge of Christian education of SWD, thereby fulfilling the aims of this research. It did this by firstly looking at policies, secondly at the role of defining SWD, and thirdly at practical issues associated with educating SWD.
This research uncovered tensions and obvious conflicts of interest for Principals involving their theological and business paradigms about disability and in particular SWD. This conflict caused tension; but also forced the Principals to choose between acting from a Christian or business worldview when making decisions about enrolling SWD. Most chose a business paradigm for these decisions. Contrary to the literature, it was found that SWD were being turned away from RICSQ and advised to attend local state schools, which were said to be better able to accommodate them. Contributing to this unexpected finding was a discourse of dependency on government funds for educating SWD. This discourse was explained by Foucault’s concept of governmentality, which clouds the Principals’ faith-based responsibility to SWD.

The findings of this study provided insight into policies of educating SWD in RICSQ. The research added to the literature on the process of ‘policy analysis’; and in particular to that specific area of literature concerned with educating children with disabilities in RICSQ.

The study has connotations for the development of theory, for further research and for practice. This research may be important because there is little information available on this issue. No other scholars have researched educating SWD in RICSQ in Queensland. Thus, this study focuses on deepening the understanding of SWD education, the dilemma of schools, and the Principals’ attitudes to educating SWD in RICSQ. This study has important implications for Christian school leadership in educating SWD, especially around the development of a specifically Christian understanding of disability education for teachers in Christian schools.
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## Appendix

Table A.1

### Attitudes of Private School Authorities to the Funding of Students with Disabilities in that Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private school authority</th>
<th>Relevant comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventist education</td>
<td>‘We believe that the cost of providing special care to students with disabilities should be covered by the public purse via government’  &lt;br&gt; ‘Any future funding commitment should include a review of the recurrent funding of students with disabilities in non-government schools and a focused targeted funding program to accommodate students with disabilities’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Associations of Christian Schools</td>
<td>‘All students with disabilities should receive the same additional funding regardless of whether they are attending a Government or non-Government school’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Catholic Education Commission</td>
<td>‘The Strategic Assistance amount for non-government schools [should] be set at their AGSRC percentage of the average cost of educating a student with a disability in government regular schools…For Catholic system schools this would be 56.2% (51.2%) in the ACT’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of Independent Schools of Australia (NCISA)</td>
<td>‘The cost of educating students with disabilities should …be fully met by government expenditure irrespective of the school sector in which they are educated’  &lt;br&gt; This requires ‘the provision of recruitment funding in respect of the individual student that fully meets the costs adopting and providing suitable facilities for students with disabilities’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Schools</td>
<td>‘… students with severe learning disability needs [should] receive the same amount of support from government’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
regardless of the school sector in which they are enrolled’

Note. Taken from submissions to the Senate inquiry into the education of students with disabilities (Wilkinson, Macintosh, & Denniss, 2004, p. 43).