Overview

- Background

- Map of C4IE research program

- Paper 1

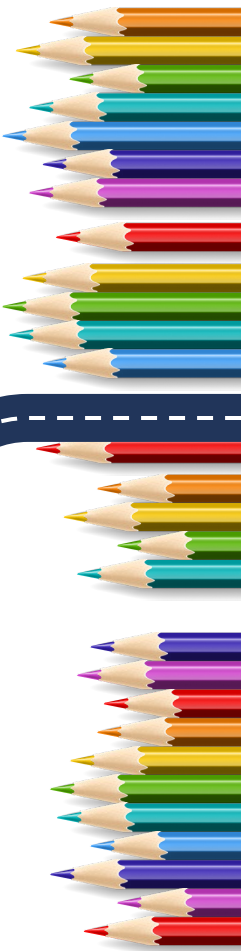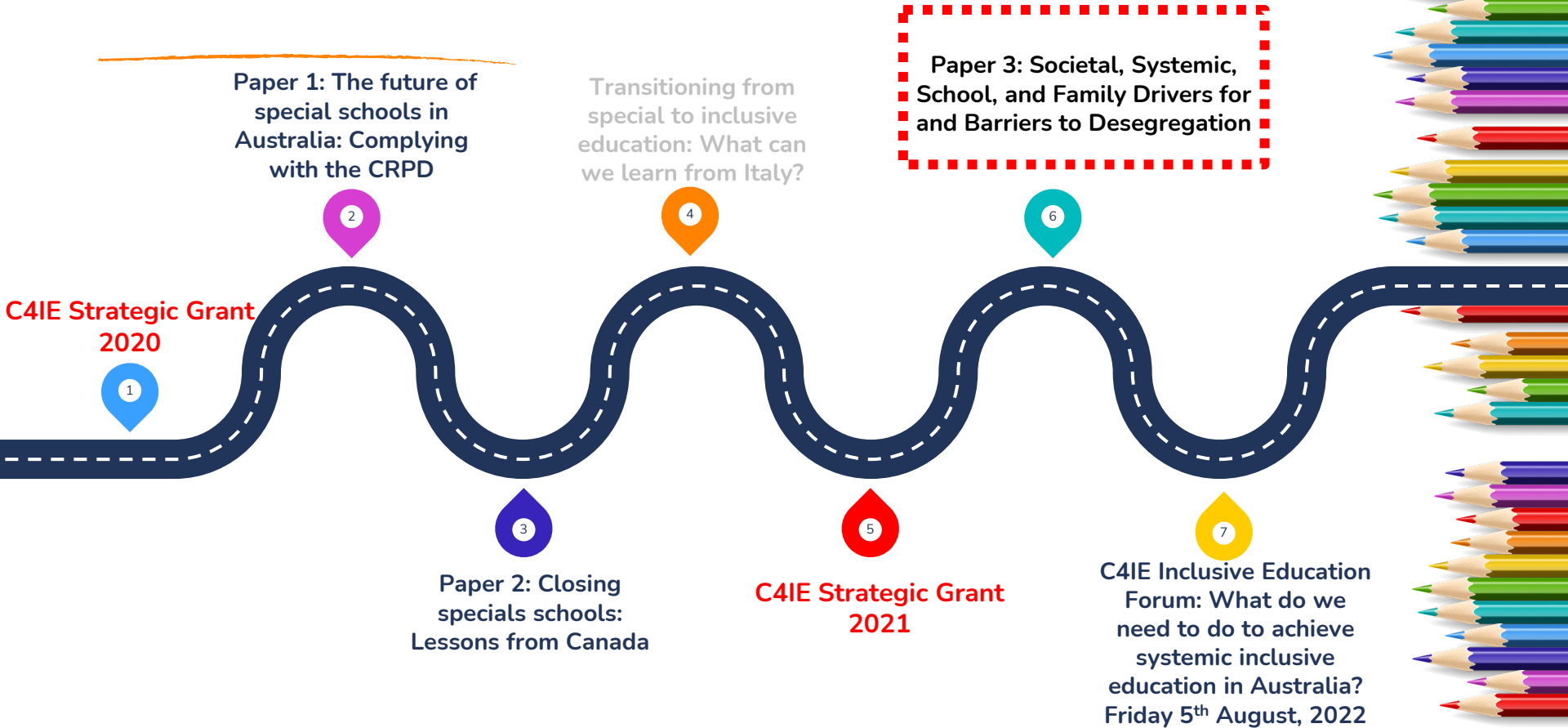- Paper 2

- Paper 3

- Moving forward

Roadmap – The Future of Special Schools Research Program

Paper 3: Societal, Systemic, School, and Family Drivers for and Barriers to Desegregation

Paper 1: The future of special schools in Australia: Complying with the CRPD

Transitioning from special to inclusive education: What can we learn from Italy?

C4IE Strategic Grant 2020

1

2

4

6

3

5

7

Paper 2: Closing specials schools: Lessons from Canada

C4IE Strategic Grant 2021

C4IE Inclusive Education Forum: What do we need to do to achieve systemic inclusive education in Australia? Friday 5th August, 2022

Background

- Assumption that students with disability are better placed in segregated settings, but there is no evidence to support that (Hehir et al., 2016).

- Evidence demonstrates placement in segregated settings leads to a marginalised population that has been **institutionalised, undereducated, abused, neglected, socially rejected, and excluded from society** (ACIE, 2020; Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 2020).

- Evidence shows that inclusive education **leads to positive academic and social-emotional outcomes for all students, with and without disability** (de Bruin 2020; Hehir et al. 2016); moreover, it results in better employment outcomes and higher incomes for this cohort (AIHW 2017).

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Background

- Students with disability have a right to an inclusive education *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and General Comment 4 (GC4).*

- *Disability Standards for Education (DSE)* state that students with disability are entitled to enrol in their local school and access education on the same basis as their peers without disability [inclusive education].

- *National Disability Strategy (NDS) 2010–2020* states, 'People with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in *an inclusive high-quality education* system that is responsive to their needs' (Commonwealth of Australia 2011, 53).

- But…segregated education in Australia is increasing (de Bruin 2019).

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Definitions…

- The seductive nature of a dual system (special & mainstream) is common throughout the world (Buchner & Thompson, 2021) and many countries, including Australia, espouse and even actively support inclusive education, and yet, at the same time, continue to fund segregation.

- The term *'segregation'* is used to describe special schooling for students with disability and the term *'desegregation'* has been used to describe the process of closing special (segregated) schools and progress inclusive education reform (Au Coin et al., 2020; Köpfer & Óskarsdóttir, 2019).

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Paper 1: Lassig, C., Poed, S., Mann, G., Saggers, B., Carrington, S., & Mavropoulou, S. (2022). The future of special schools in Australia: Complying with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. International Journal of Inclusive Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.2020344

We examined recent Government reviews/inquiries into the education of Australian students with disability to determine whether future planned actions align with Australia's international obligations to move away from segregated schooling.

Recommendation 1: Alignment between vision of inclusive education and General Comment No.4

Recommendation 2: A plan for the closure of special schools and the transition to an inclusive educational system
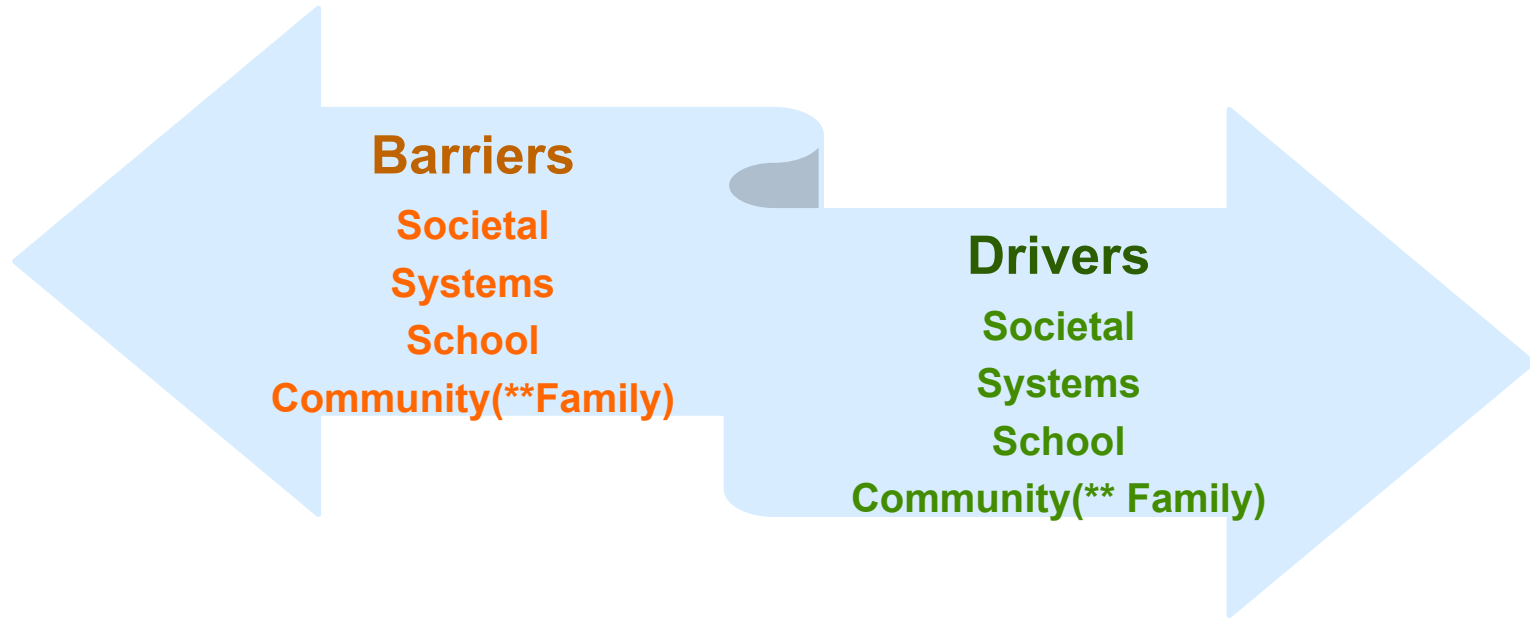
Conclusion
Australia's lack of commitment to desegregation was evident in an analysis of state/territory and national Government reviews and inquiries into the education of students with disability.

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Paper 2: Mann, G., Carrington, S., Lassig, C., Mavropoulou, S., Saggers, B., Poed, S., & Killingly, C. (under review). Closing special schools: Lessons from Canada.

- This paper reports on a critical review of the Canadian literature to develop a conceptual framework of drivers for, and barriers to special school closure (desegregation).

- Four levels of drivers and barriers were identified:
    - Societal level
    - System level
    - School level
    - Community level

- The findings will inform policy implementation in countries striving to meet their CRPD obligations.

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

The Framework of Drivers for and Barriers to the Closure of Special Schools (Mann et al., under review)

Barriers

Societal

Systems

School

Community(Family)**

Drivers

Societal

Systems

School

Community(Family)**

Paper 3: Carrington, S., Lassig, C., Maia-Pike, L., Mann, G., Mavropoulou, S., & Saggers, B. (in press) Societal, Systemic, School, and Family Drivers for and Barriers to Desegregation. Australian Journal of Education (Special Issue)

- We used the Framework as an analytic tool to gather evidence of drivers and barriers to desegregation in QLD, Australia.

- RQ: What are the societal, systemic, school, and community drivers for and barriers to desegregation in Queensland?

- We conducted reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) of data available in the Queensland Government websites, policy and strategy documents, media announcements, teacher and principal's associations, advocacy and parenting groups' websites, special school websites, and public social media posts.

- Ethical approval – considerations to protect the privacy of subjects & to maintain confidentiality of any collected data.

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Data Sources

- Queensland Department of Education
- Queensland Government
- Queensland Teacher's Union website
- Queensland Association of Special School Principals
- Disability Royal Commission Transcripts
- Community Organisations – CRU, QAI, QCIE
- Special Schools websites and Associations
- National – ASEPA, ACIE, Hansard reports
- Facebook – publicly available posts - Minister of Education and Queensland Premier

Results

Results are reported using the Framework Domains: Societal, Systemic, School and Family.

Evidence is provided in the paper to support coding of data.

The Framework - Family, replacing Community as the Framework's final domain.

Data files were numbered to identify the source of data and to protect identification.

Societal

Barriers → Drivers

• Lingering influence of traditional views about disability and segregation

• Endorsement of segregation

• Lack of national power to dictate IE policy

• Belief that parents have a right to choose school

•Attitudes and beliefs about disability – human rights; community inclusion; social justice

• Segregation recognised as harmful

• International treaties- CRPD

• National laws

• Education policies

Systems

Barriers

Drivers

- Operationalising a unified system
- Disassembling the structures supporting segregated services
- Conflicting messages from DoE (policy confusion)
- Developing an appropriate funding model

- Importance of DoE inclusive education policy & guidelines
- Govt commitment to progress inclusive education (strategic plans)
- Resources and professional learning to support inclusion
- Acknowledging the importance of student/family voice
- Govt support for family advocacy
- Promotion of inclusion
- Acknowledging research evidence

School

Barriers → ← **Drivers**

- Beliefs, attitudes (deficit) lack of understanding of inclusion
- Resistance to desegregation
- Gaps in translating policy to practice
- Lack of prof learning
- Lack of accountability in implementing DoE policy
- Inflexible delivery of curriculum
- Lack of parent/family consultation
- Low expectations of SWD

- Development, support & evaluation of inclusive practice
- Some evidence of leadership for equity and inclusion
- Inclusive school culture (beliefs, values)
- Increased teacher skills in inclusive practice
- Allocation of resources

** Family

Barriers

Drivers
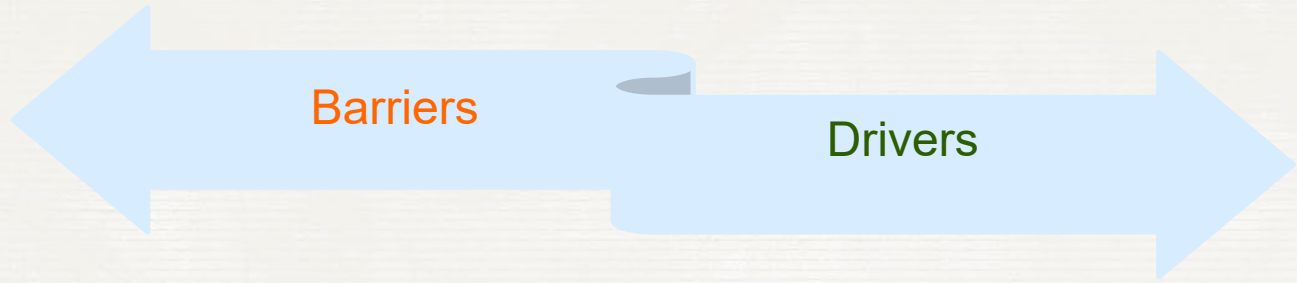
• Parental opposition to the closure of special schools
• Parent views that school choice is essential
•Parent support for special schools

• Parental advocacy for inclusion & closing special schools

Moving Forward

Need for development of a national plan for inclusive education that addresses segregation, seclusion & isolation & the lack of age-appropriate settings for students with disabilities….and redirect adequate resources to a nationwide inclusive education system for all students (UN, 2019).

Need for professional learning across the education system to support a better understanding of international and national conventions and policies and the research evidence to support inclusive education culture, policy and practice.

Time should be provided for collaboration and information sharing, specifically family-school partnerships - see Inclusive Education Forum slide.

School leadership for equity and inclusion is necessary.

Conclusion

- It is clear that a dual system of mainstream and special schools is hindering the reform that is necessary to create a national inclusive education system and we suggest that special schools, in and of themselves, remain a significant barrier to true inclusive education reform.

- We propose that desegregation must occur concurrently with systemic reform supporting inclusion so that all students can be genuinely included.

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Therefore….

The closure of special schools and a commitment to an inclusive system must be on every educational agenda.

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT
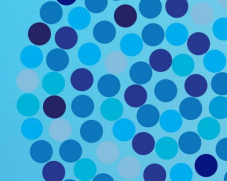
2022 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FORUM
What do we need to do to achieve systemic inclusive education in Australia?

Learning from international experience: Looking to New Brunswick, Italy and Portugal

Prof Suzanne Carrington, Dr Glenys Mann, Dr Sofia Mavropoulou, Dr Carly Lassig, A/Prof Beth Saggers

Online and in-person registration options
Friday 5th August 2022
Education Precinct, QUT Kelvin Grove Campus, Brisbane

References

- AuCoin, A., Porter, G. L., & Baker-Korotkov, K. (2020). New Brunswick's journey to inclusive education. *Prospects*, *49*, 313–328. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09508-8

- Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE). 2020. *Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia*. https://acie105204494.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/acie-roadmap-final_july-2020.pdf.

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2017. *Disability in Australia: Changes over time in inclusion and participation in education*. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/disability-australia-changes-over-time-factsheets/fact-sheets

- Buchner, T., & Thompson, S. A. (2021). From plot twists, progress, and the persistence of segregated education: The continuing struggle for inclusive education in relation to students with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, *18*(1), 4–6. https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12378

- de Bruin, K. (2019). Does inclusion work? In L .J. Graham (Ed.), *Inclusive education for the 21st century* (pp. 55–76). Routledge.

- Carrington, S., Lassig, C., Maia-Pike, L., Mann, G., Mavropoulou, S., & Saggers, B. (in press) Societal, Systemic, School, and Family Drivers for and Barriers to Desegregation. Australian Journal of Education (Special Issue)

- Hehir, T., Grindal, T., Freeman, B., Lamoreau, R., Borquaye, Y., and Burke, S. 2016. A summary of the evidence on inclusive education. São Paulo: Alana Institute. https://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A_Summary_of_the_evidence_on_inclusive_education.pdf

- Köpfer, A., & Óskarsdóttir, E. (2019). Analysing support in inclusive education systems – A comparison of inclusive school development in Iceland and Canada since the 1980s focusing on policy and in-school support. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *23*, 876–890.

- Lassig, C., Poed, S., Mann, G., Saggers, B., Carrington, S., & Mavropoulou, S. (2022). The future of special schools in Australia: Complying with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. International Journal of Inclusive Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.2020344

- Mann, G., Carrington, S., Lassig, C., Mavropoulou, S., Saggers, B., Poed, S., & Killingly, C. (under review). Closing special schools: Lessons from Canada.

- Commonwealth of Australia. 2011. *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.* https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/national_disability_strategy_2010_2020.pdf

- United Nations. (2016). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: General Comment No. 4*. United Nations.

- United Nations. (2019). *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Australia*. United Nations.

Professor Suzanne Carrington
The Centre for Inclusive Education

QUT

Contact

Professor Suzanne Carrington

Sx.Carrington@qut.edu.au

@CarringtonSx