

Using technology to prevent depression at scale in  
Australian schools



**Black Dog**  
Institute

**Dr Joanne Beames**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Registered Psychologist

# An Overview

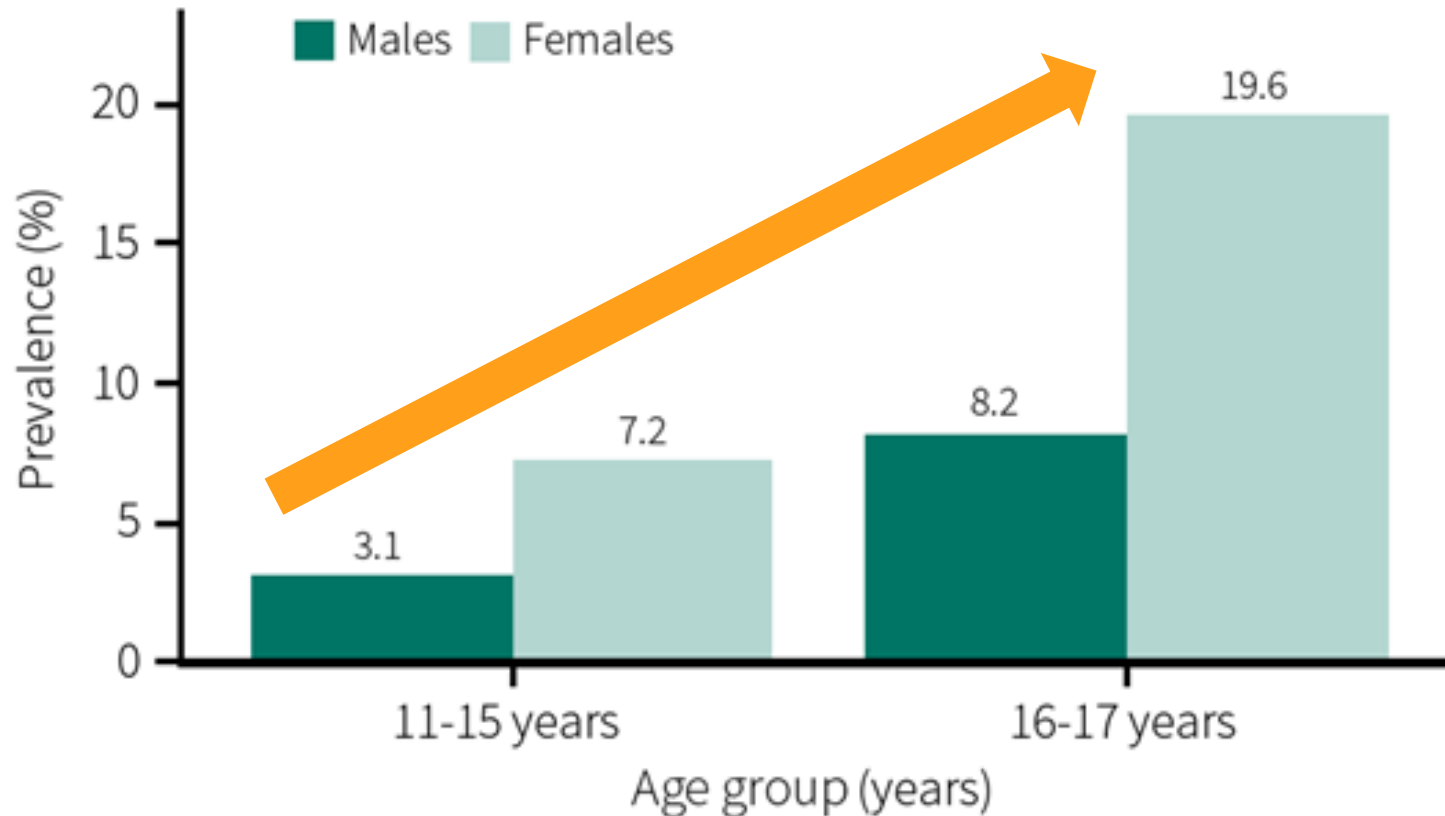


Largest **digital** mental health prevention project to date

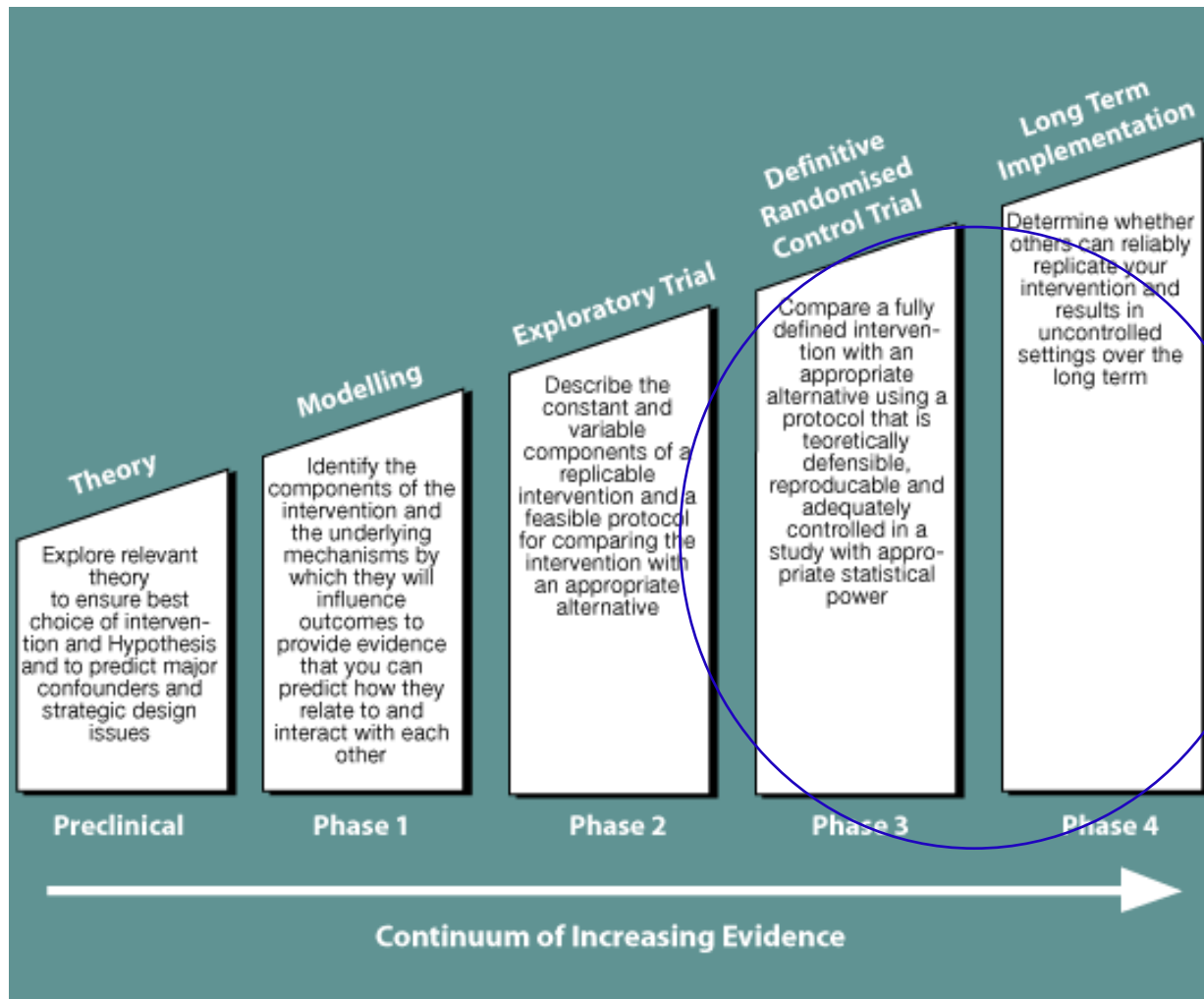
Builds on our research that has identified **effective digital prevention** programs for young people

Evaluates smartphone-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) programs **at scale** in a cRCT

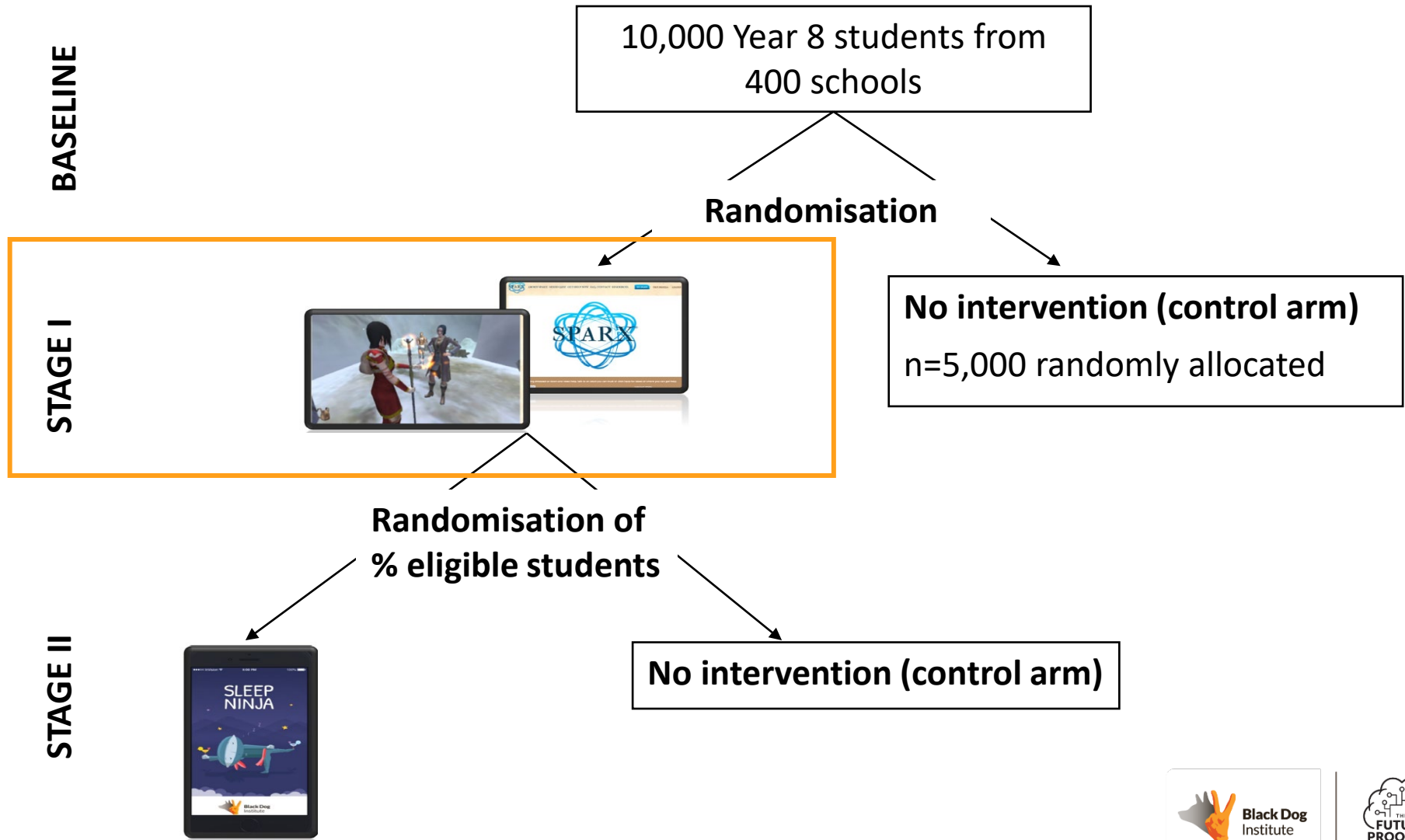
# The Problem (and Solution?)



# Next Step – Taking Prevention to Scale



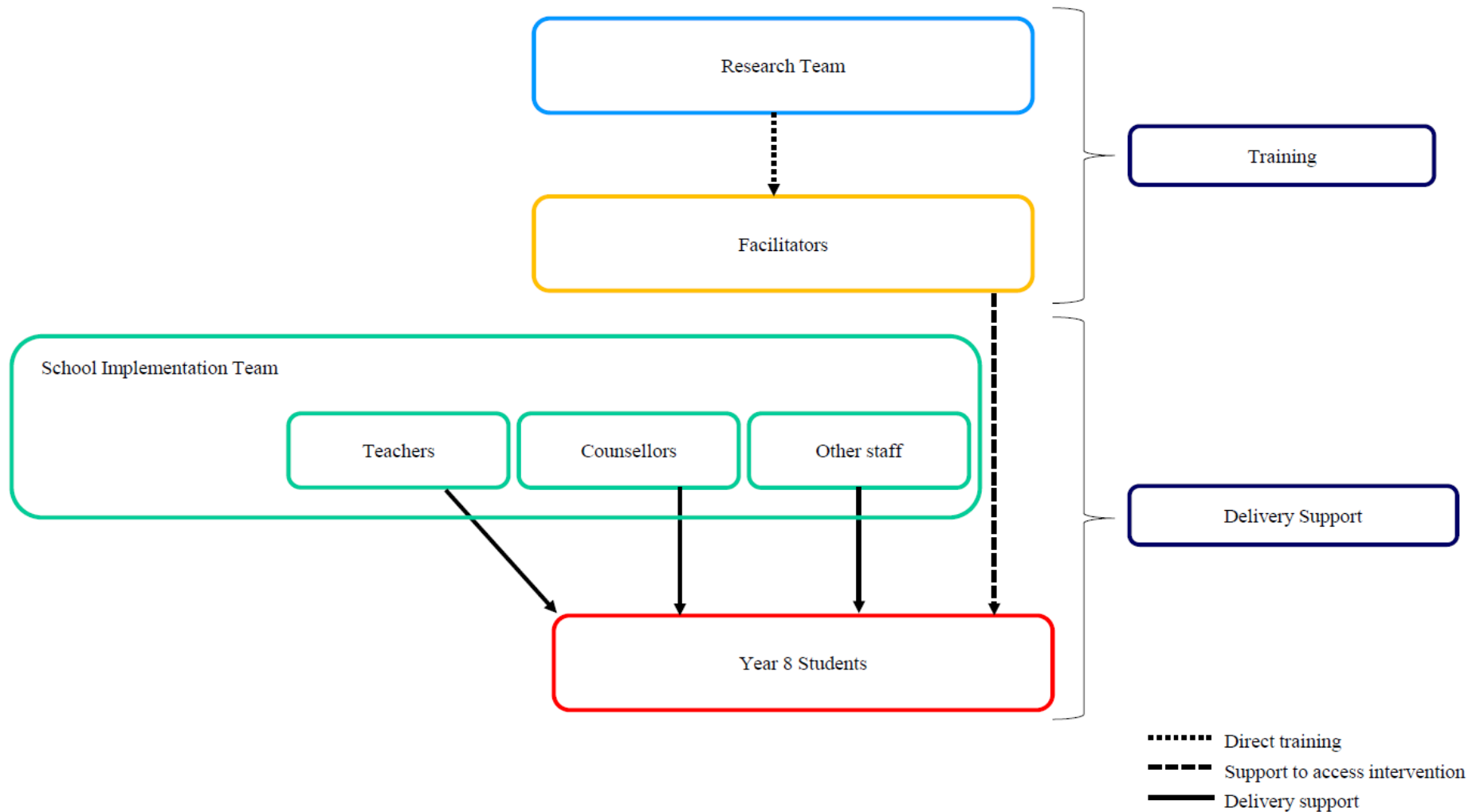
# cRCT Design



# Evidence-Based Digital Intervention



# Implementation Stakeholders & Strategy



***Implementation Strategy***

# Hybrid Type I Design



**Primary Purpose:** Test the effectiveness of an app-based depression prevention program when embedded at scale within schools

**Secondary Purpose:** Embedded implementation process evaluation – How is the app being promoted and used? What is the role of context?



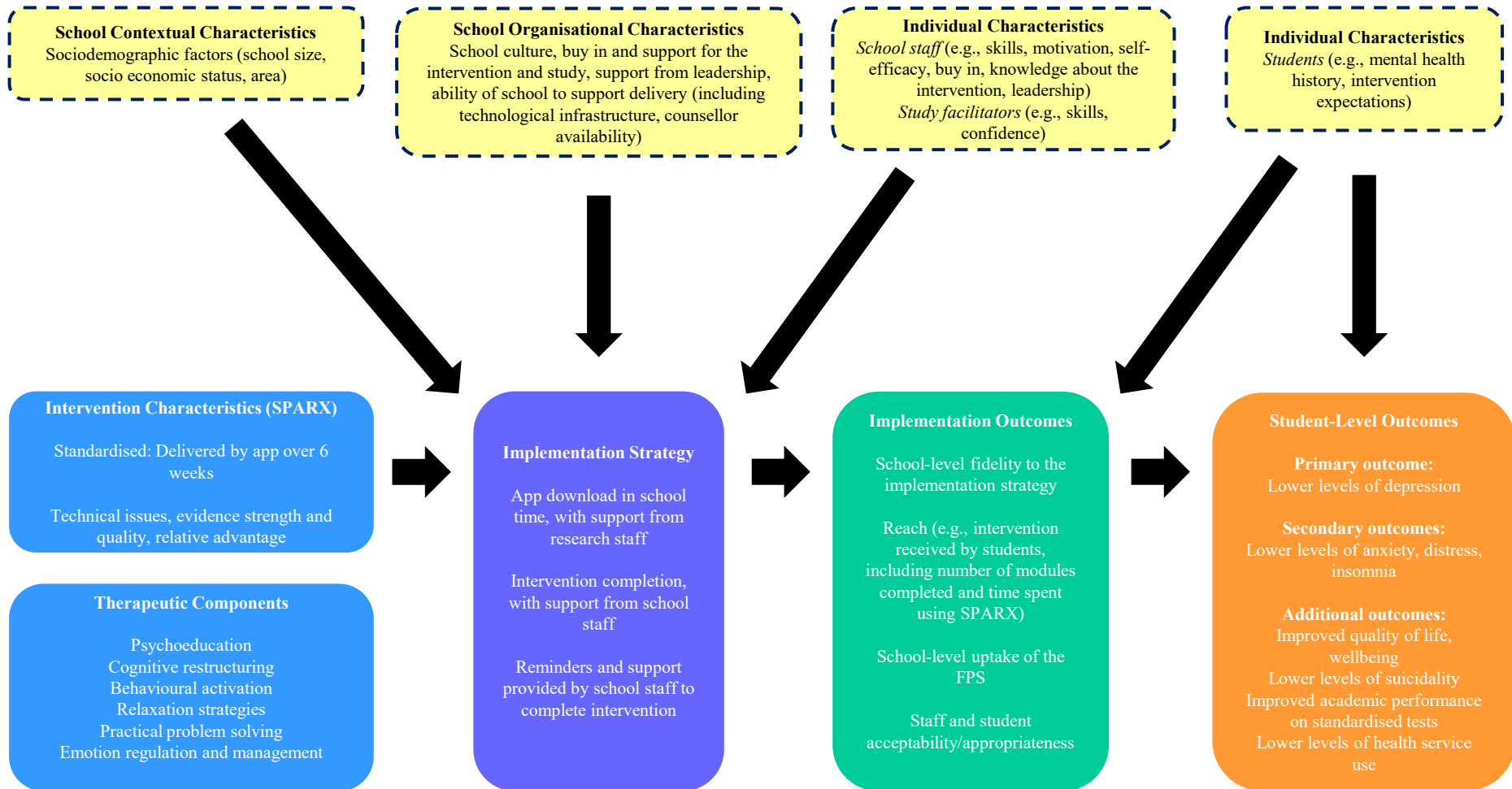
# Embedded Process Evaluation



# Broad Aims

1. To understand how SPARX was implemented and delivered in schools
2. To identify systematic differences and variation in delivery between clusters (i.e., schools)
3. To examine how this variability affects clinical effectiveness outcomes at the school- and student-level

# Logic Model



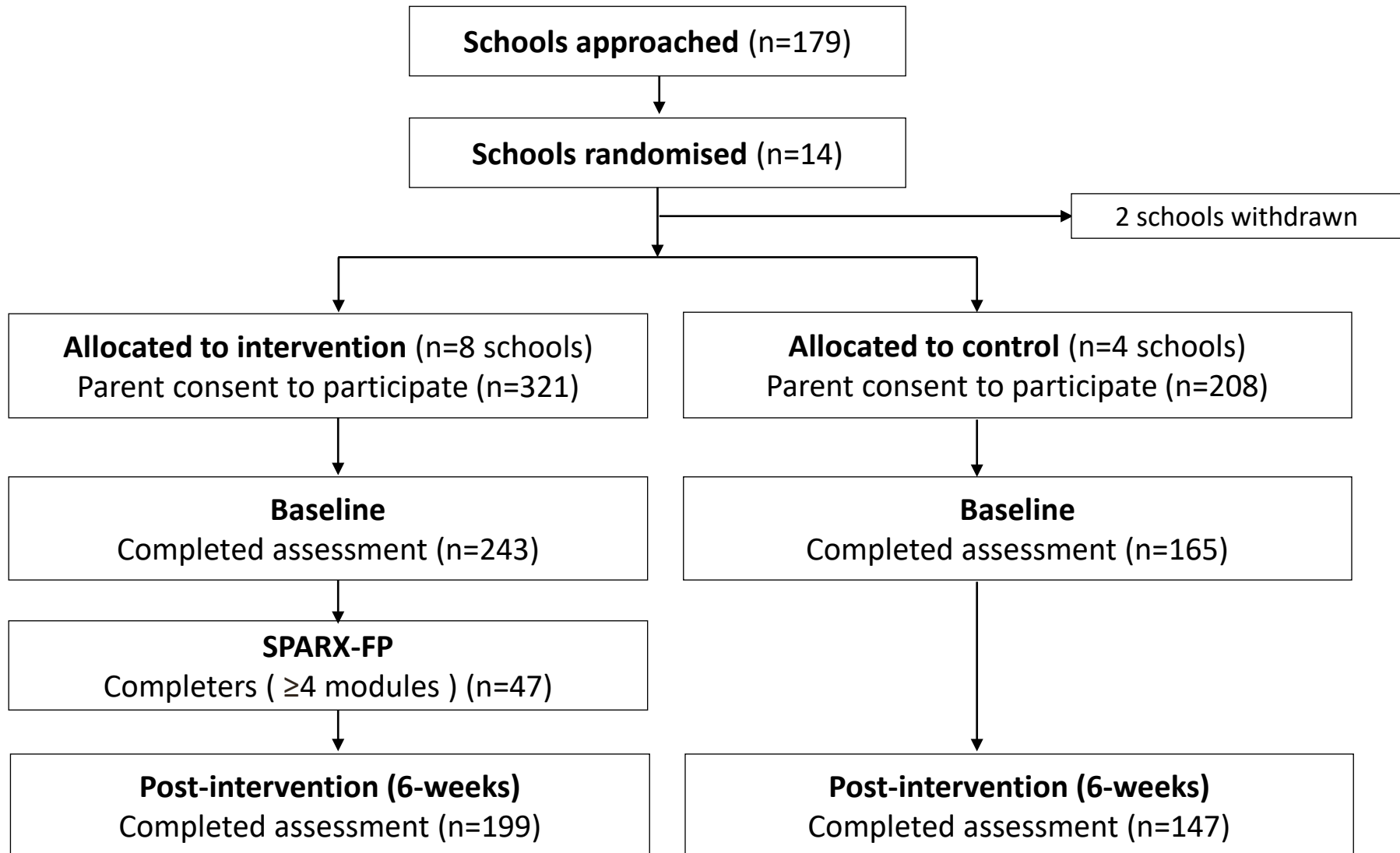
# Data Collection Methods

	Questionnaires	Individual interview	Digital analytics
Year 8 students	✓		✓
School staff	✓	✓	
Facilitators	✓	✓	

# Wave 1 Results



# Participant Flow



# Process Evaluation: Surveys

- School Staff
  - 17/38 completed; 14 consented
  - 10 female
  - 10 employed full time
  - All schools, except for one

Identified Role in Study	Freq	%
Key leader	5	35.7
Assisted/peripheral support	8	57.1
No role	1	7.1

Current Role	Freq	%
Teacher	3	23.1
Year adviser/head teacher	3	23.1
Guidance/wellbeing officer	2	15.4
School counsellor/psych	3	23.1
Principal/Deputy	1	7.7
Other (admin staff)	1	7.7

# Process Evaluation: Surveys

Questionnaire	Statistic
Implementation Leadership Scale	$M = 1.40$ [0-4]
Implementation Appropriate Measure	$M = 1.77$ [1-5]
NoMaD (total score)	$M = 2.08$ [1-5]
Prioritised your involvement in the FP program	58%
% of overall work time dedicated to FP program	22%
% of overall work time that you would have like to dedicate to the FP program	28%

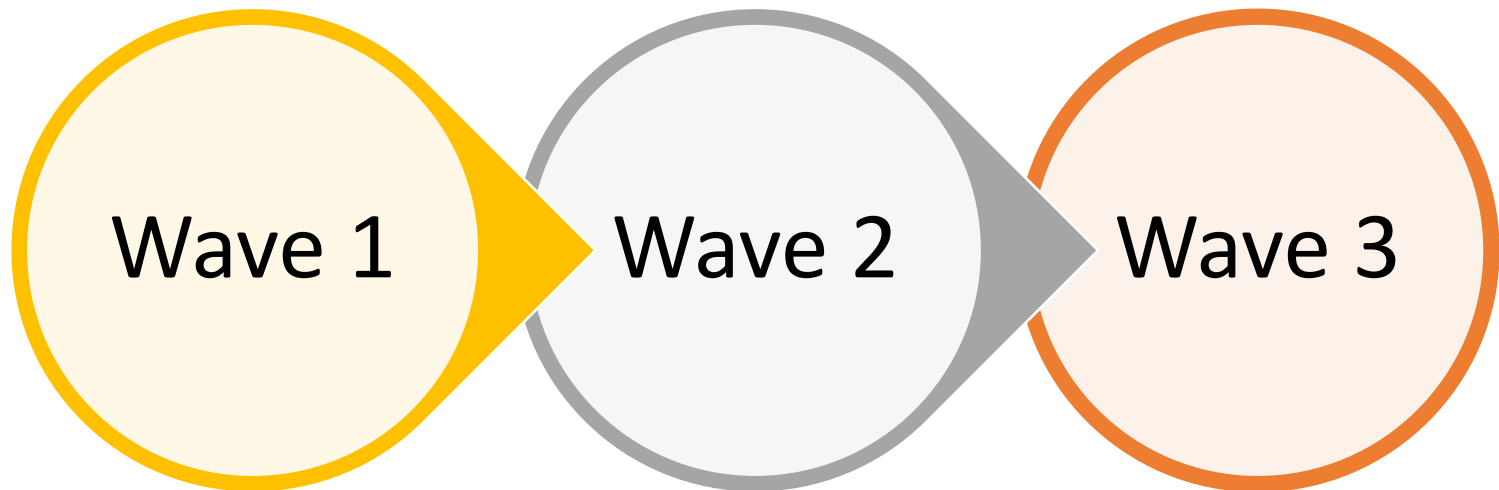


# Process Evaluation: Interviews

Responses	School Staff
Barriers/ Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Student attention during surveys</li><li>- Lack of clear referral pathways for risk</li><li>- Time</li><li>- Readiness of the school (logistics)</li><li>- Lack of promotion of study prior to onset</li><li>- Getting parents to consent; clicking “no” without reading info</li></ul>
Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Supportive team to respond to risk</li><li>- Key advocate for the program</li><li>- Support from admin staff</li><li>- SMS reminders to parents to complete consent</li><li>- Set-times to complete apps before school</li></ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Increasing parental awareness of program before roll-out e.g., Yr 8 open day, regular advertising in paper</li></ul>

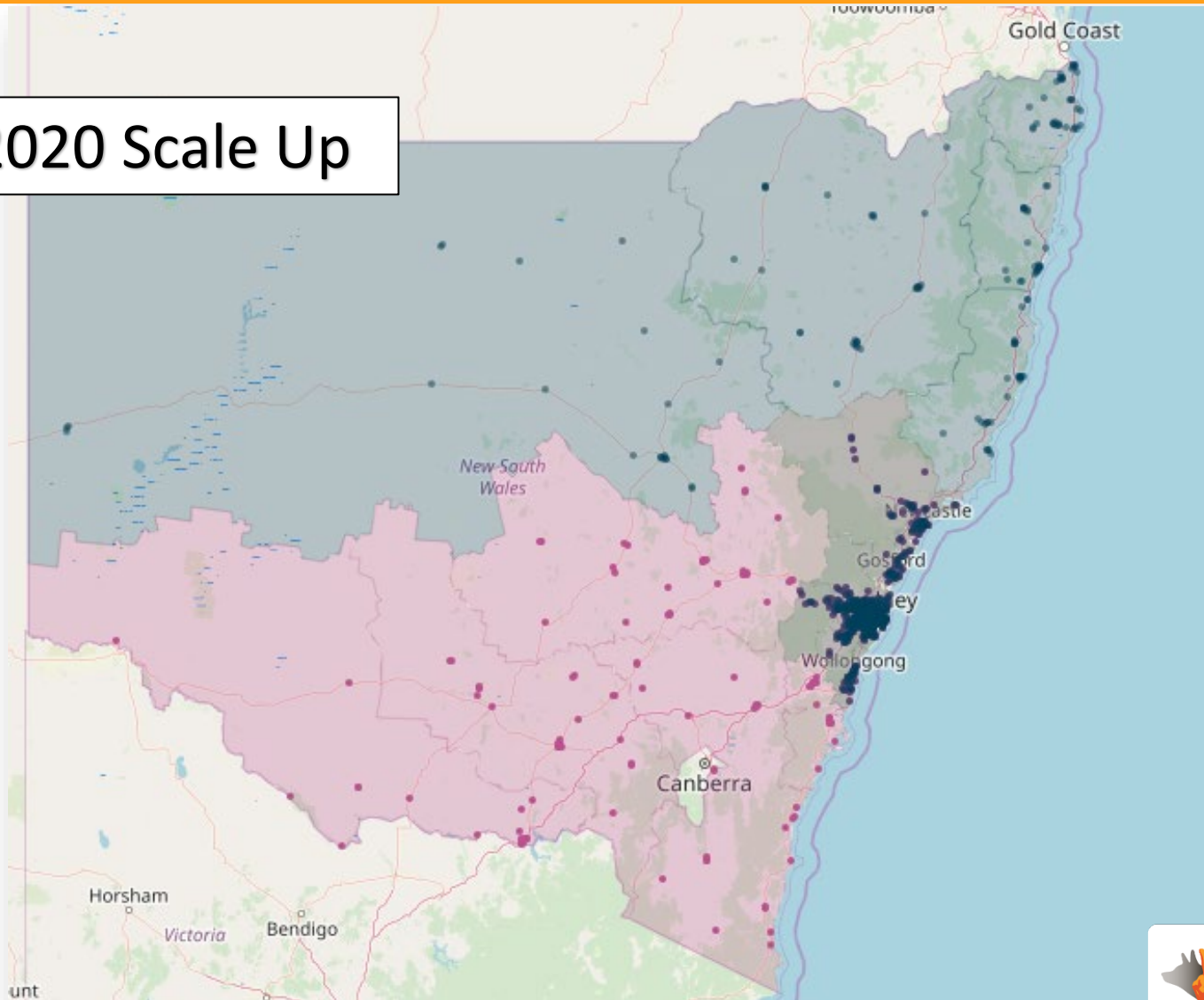
# Formative Approach

- Integration of Wave 1 results



# Where to next?

2020 Scale Up



## **Future Proofing Team**

Kate Maston

Colin Hyde

Lara Johnston

Lyndsay Brown

Hiroko Fujimoto

Cameron Banks

Dev Bal

## **Process Evaluation Team**

Prof Raghu Lingam

Prof Katherine Boydell

Dr Alison Callear

Dr Michelle Torok

Dr Isabel Zbukvic

Dr Kit Huckvale

Prof Philip Batterham

Prof Helen Christensen

Dr Aliza Werner-Seidler

**Funded by NHMRC**



Thank you!

[j.beames@blackdog.org.au](mailto:j.beames@blackdog.org.au)



@JoanneBeames

