READY COMMUNITIES

A place to prosper

March 2025

READY COMMUNITIES

Social Impact In The Regions

READY COMMUNITIES

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land and Elders past and present.

Through our deeply transformative work we acknowledge the endorsement and permission of each community and its Elders is an essential precursor to our work.

We work with great respect of the cultural landscape, the knowledge and skills of the community and the dreams of the people we serve.

Social Impact
In The Regions

READY COMMUNITIES

Introducing the founding partners

Ready Communities was founded by Kerry Grace and Dr. Chad Renando in 2023. While both founders agree there are excellent place-based initiatives found across Australia, few incorporate both community and economic development in their framework.

The combined experiences of the founders enables integration of community and economic development portfolios to maximise the impact of siloed initiatives and enhance established long-term place-based methodologies.

Kerry Grace

Through her company, Evolve Group Network (est. 2004) Kerry has delivered a broad range of work including strategic planning, program delivery, vocational education, social enterprise development and events for NGOs, Aboriginal Corporations and government.

Between 2016 (to 2023) Kerry held the role, Director of Regional Development for Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast and Norfolk Island. Kerry has worked in regional community and economic development for over 20 years.

Dr. Chad Renando

Chad has over 30 years' experience in leadership positions in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors in the United States and Australia. Following his role leading an award-winning incubator in 2017, Chad focused on understanding and supporting place-based initiatives to address systemic contributing factors to resilience in rural communities. His passion integrates his roles as a Research Fellow (Innovation Ecosystems) with the Rural Economies Centre of Excellence at the University of Southern Queensland, his work mapping and measuring systems through not for profit Startup Status, and as General Manager with the Global Entrepreneurship Network Australia.

READY COMMUNITIES

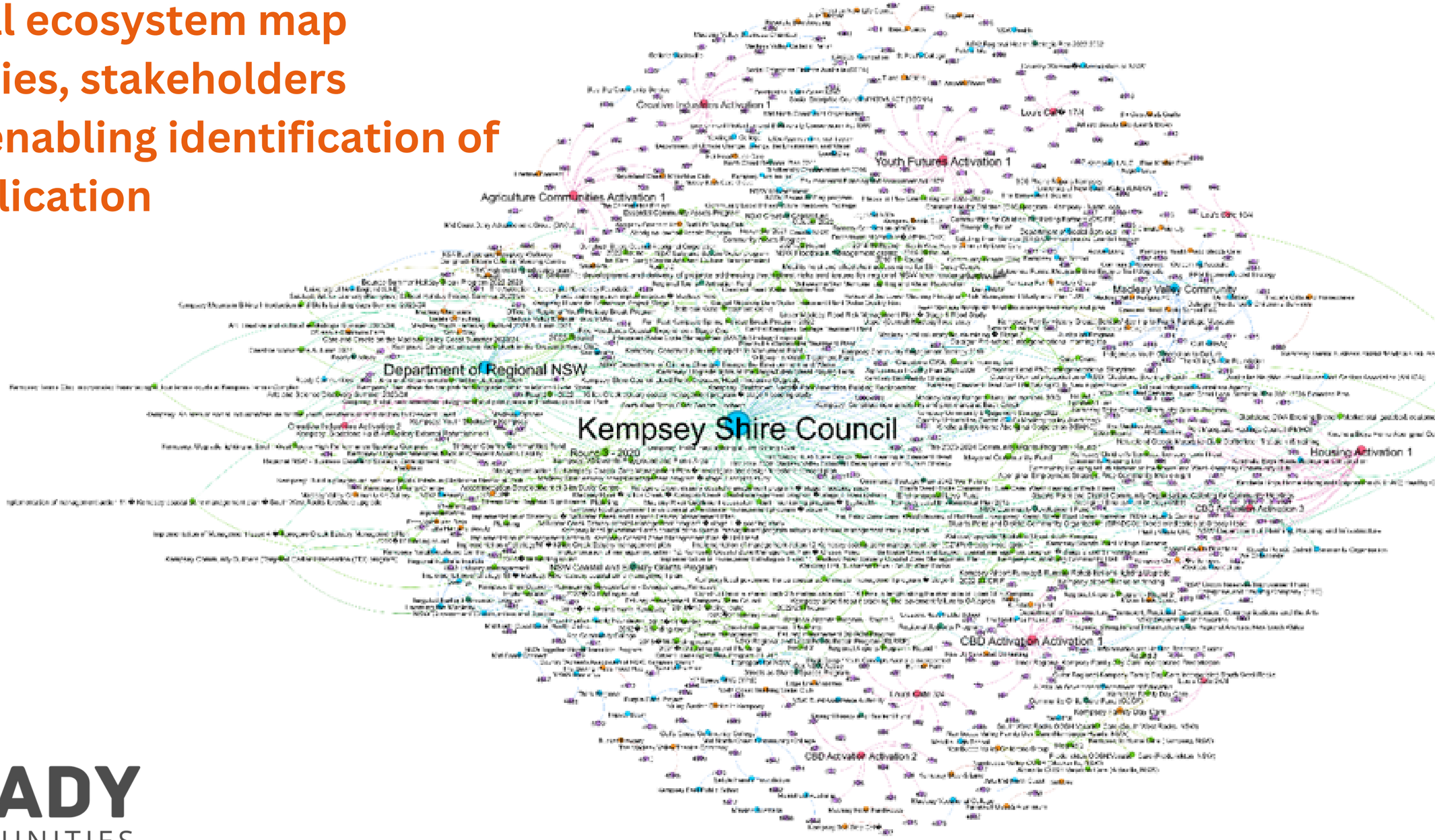
Why? We let the truth get in the way of a good story

Evidence base

There's community assumptions, myths and legends, and then there's data. No amount of consultation will ever find one single source of truth while it relies on hearsay and scattergun approach rather than a robust and long term framework. Furthermore, consultation fatigue is rife in regional areas meaning that the only people who participate are often those with something to gain.

Ready Communities *has a suite of mapping, data gathering and evaluation tools that supports a strong evidence base for our work. We enable communities to make informed decisions before they invest in resources and programs. We build capability and capacity in communities to conduct consultation and build a body of knowledge.*

A unique local ecosystem map of hubs, policies, stakeholders and funding enabling identification of gaps and duplication



READY COMMUNITIES

READY COMMUNITIES

Why? Things are different in the bush

Regional Equality

Regional communities face a different set of challenges to their metro counterparts. From attracting skilled workers to service access to lacking access to networks, information, resources, and capital many things are just harder to do in regional communities.

Ready Communities *focuses attention towards shared goals, increasing connectivity within and across regional communities, resource sharing and building capability and capacity in local leaders, institutions and supply chains. Most importantly, we are about doing.*

“The first (Ready Macleay) conversations that we had with the five groups that full week allowed the Learning The Macleay team to step into places that we hadn't been into at that time.”

“We've now made connections with people who it would've probably taken a bit longer for us to even think about.”

Jo Kelly, Partnership Lead
Learning the Macleay

READY COMMUNITIES

Systemic approach

Why? Too much time is wasted putting out spot fires

While it may seem logical to address challenges with a neatly defined scope regional communities, and associated challenges just aren't that neat. Addressing things in silos (for example staff shortages) pits organisation against organisation, problem against problem, sector against sector. It takes a whole system to create sustainable change. But how do you even start that?

Ready Communities *Maps community readiness giving a clear line of sight about what really needs to happen to transition from problem to asset then we enable our vast network to support capability and capacity development over time creating new ways to do things collaboratively.*

“Kerry and Chad, in leading Kempsey through the Ready Communities program, have absolutely transformed the conversation around positive place-based change here in the Macleay Valley.”

Father Jesse Poole, Minister
Anglican Parish of Kempsey

READY COMMUNITIES

Enabling conditions

Why? Because the skills and conditions to create sustainable change aren’t addressed

There are many factors that drive sustainable change however they aren’t always obvious or addressed. We call this the ‘space between’.

While capability and capacity development tend to focus on fixing things that present as pressing gaps there are other fundamental core skills that can be applied to any situation. These are often overlooked.

Ready Communities *builds capability and capacity in communities in the ‘space between’ ensuring skills, resources and connections can be applied to any presenting issue or opportunity.*

READY COMMUNITIES

Readiness index

1 Clarity and understanding

CLARITY & UNDERSTANDING

Establishing a shared comprehension of roles, policies, and perspectives, ensuring accurate and accessible information management, and fostering continuous evaluation and feedback through effective partnerships.

2 Connection & Connectivity

CONNECTION & CONNECTIVITY

Diverse, frequent connections across roles and sectors, facilitated by boundary-spanning activities. Regular inclusive events foster ideation and innovation, supported by adequate infrastructure for timely interactions and progress.

3 Capability & Capacity

CAPABILITY & CAPACITY

Strong individual and institutional leadership capabilities, supported by local programs and a robust network of roles and institutions. There's redundancy in services, a pipeline of skilled youth, and sustainable capacities for individuals and organisations, all backed by adequate infrastructure

4 Collaboration for Purpose

COLLABORATION FOR PURPOSE

Collaboration for purpose is characterized by a shared understanding of community challenges and opportunities, with organisations contributing and receiving fair value.

5 Advocacy & Promotion

ADVOCACY & PROMOTION

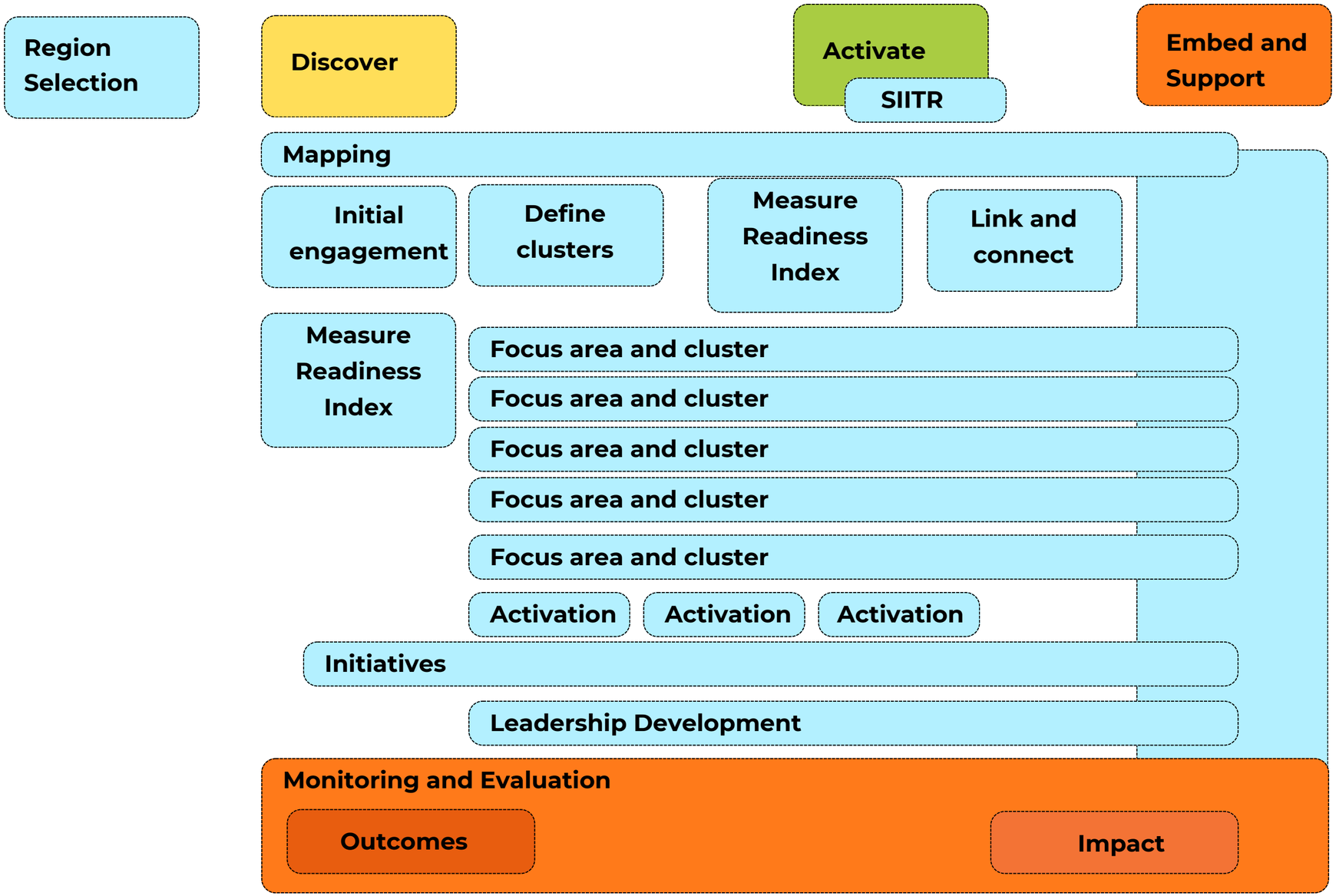
Driven by a unified voice representing diverse communities, a shared narrative of challenges and opportunities, and strategic media relationships to highlight successes and influence positive outcomes.

Existing approaches look for problems to solve.
We look for, measure and build capability and capacity in readiness

Ready for what?

Any challenge or opportunity faced by your regional community that impacts prosperity

Readiness index



Program phases

Discover

- Assess readiness and apply Ready Communities Readiness Index
- Initiate mapping software subscription
- Map key local, state and commonwealth policies, programs and funding related to priority areas
- Map key local stakeholders
- Identify a range of funding duplication, gaps and latent resources
- Map key local resources
- Identify a range of potential participants for the ACTIVATE phase
- Establish an evaluation framework - understand what matters
- Host three community weeks of community consultation (March, May and August) inviting community members to contribute to conversations on their aspirations for the community

Activate

- Work with community members to activate identified initiatives
- Source support from the Social Impact in the Regions alumni network
- Deliver Social Impact in the Regions conference or contribute to another significant local event
- Continue the work of the DISCOVER program by maintaining the asset database and supporting other identified initiatives in the community

Embed & support

- Collective measurement of shared KPIs and share on Ready Communities dashboard
- Hand over mapping platform data and mapping software licence to identified custodian including training and a further 12-month licence (24 months in total)
- Overall program evaluation including community and Ready Communities identified outcomes and impacts

READY COMMUNITIES

January-March 2025
DISCOVER PHASE 1
***Assess community readiness**

March-August 2025
DISCOVER PHASE 2

September 2-5 2025
SOCIAL IMPACT IN THE REGIONS

Social Impact
In The Regions

January-December 2026
ACTIVATE / EVALUATE

Ongoing
Links to Social Impact in the Regions and Ready Communities community and resources

Program logic

Inputs

- Backbone organisation
- Endorsed community strategy to guide action including a range of actionable initiatives
- Local stakeholders representing broad cross section of community
- Ready Communities program support, coordination and network support

Activities

- **Mapping** Map strategies, policies, programs, investment and stakeholders aligned to identified goals
- **Engagement activities** Bring community members together to form collegial partnerships through action oriented conversations about community goals
- **Nurture entrepreneurial culture** Identify a range of investment opportunities and leverage connections to activate
- **Activation** Support community to activate initiatives. Use public event (SIITR) as example.
- **Capability development** Draw on local and national network to fill capability gaps.
- **Connection** Support a culture of connectivity and provide ongoing access to network.

Outputs

- Community asset map including identification of gaps and duplication.
- Increased community access and participation. Embed positive, goal oriented language (not problem oriented)
- Link programs, identify opportunities, cross-over social enterprise and enterprise development, pitchfest
- Support activation of community identified initiatives by linking resources.
- Support ongoing capability development and identification of networks to provide support.
- Connect people within and external to local community. Shared resources, planning.

Outcomes (Ready Macleay)

- Less waste of funding and community resources as gaps and duplication is identified
- Build positive and collaborative partnerships spanning boundaries, themes and existing silos
- Embed action-oriented approach to support local leaders to activate and drive local programs and enterprises.
- Community members identify skill gaps and a range of pathways to seek support.
- Collective approach to community change.

Outcomes (Ready Communities defined))

- Clarity and understanding
- Connection and Connectivity
- Collaboration for purpose
- Capability and capacity
- Advocacy and promotion

Impacts

- Economic
- Social
- Institutional
- Infrastructure
- Environmental

Country
Universities
Centre

socialimpactintheregions.com.au
Social
Lectrum
evolve
NETWORK
EVENT PRODUCER
socialimpa

YP SPACE
MNC

Social Impact
In The Regions

	2023	2024
delegates	165	246
delegate origin	NSW, QLD, TAS, WA	NSW, QLD, TAS, WA, SA, ACT, VIC
diversity	11% young people 7% First Nations People	9% young people 7% First Nations People
Org type	41% NGO 15% small business 9% Aboriginal Corporation	41% NGO 11% small business 6% Aboriginal Corporation 13% community members
Economic impact	$210,000 in local economy	$348,355 in local economy

Social Impact in the Regions 2024, Kempsey NSW

Social Impact
In The Regions

Over $348K generated in Macleay Valley

Most hotel beds booked in Macleay Valley

8 Macleay Valley caterers utilised (31% of budget)

51% delegates are very likely or likely to return to Kempsey

Direct Conference spend $99,599

20% spend creative industries practitioners

96% spend regional SMEs

41% spend Kempsey based businesses

80% spend MNC NSW (host region)

Ready Macleay, Kempsey NSW 2024
(Ready Communities pilot)

500 Community engagement hours	13 public engagements	244 community members engaged
Identified 77 community initiatives	Activated $80K latent resources (cash and in-kind) in community	Supported shop local program
Activated spaces including empty retail space	Mapped 38 policies, strategies and funds identifyin $68M in funding	Delivery of national conference (SIITR)

READY MACLEAY

Contact Us

We look forward to hearing from you

(Kerry) 0404 88 7473

(Chad) 0479 117 101

www.readycommunities.com.au
www.socialimpactintheregions.com.au

kerry@readycommunities.com.au

READY COMMUNITIES

Social Impact In The Regions

Social Impact In The Regions

READY COMMUNITIES