



A place to prosper

Building the practice of
community and economy in
place-based initiatives

December 2024





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.



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.

Theory of change

Why are we doing this?

Regional equality



CHALLENGE:

- Lack of access to networks, information, resources, and capital
- Lack of specialist skills and additional cost to source
- Increased cost in core services, Impacts are compounded for other areas of inequality including First Nations, youth, women, older generations, migrants, and health impacts

RESPONSE:

- Focusing attention towards shared goals, increasing connectivity within and across regional communities, and building capability and capacity in local leaders, institutions and supply chains.

Systemic approach embedding community and economic development



CHALLENGE:

- Increasing complex pressures including demographic trends, natural disaster events, decarbonisation response, industry transition, and technology advancement.
- Siloed response to complex challenges due to lack of resources, cultural influences, and lack of shared information systems
- Competing and misaligned economic development and community development functions.
- Lacking systems to track, measure and thereby value connectivity and connections that drive change.

RESPONSE:

- Clarity from shared information, connectivity across community functional areas, collaborative collective response, and a shared voice in the region on addressing complex challenges.

Place-based change



CHALLENGE:

- Uncoordinated approaches to place-based change can be extractive and be counter-productive to the intended outcomes
- Individual initiatives can be isolated from broader change impacts and have unintended consequences in the community
- Emerging backbone structures require additional support for broader impact
- Strategic plans can sit in isolation

RESPONSE:

- Place-based initiatives supported with 'scaffolding' support through shared information, connected initiatives, increased institutional capability and capacity, collaborative structures and clusters, and shared promotion of community transformation

Core principle Adding value

Activate latent resources

Map investment and assets to better understand duplication and gaps

Business tourism spend

SIITR24 \$348K in the Macleay

Attracting impact investment

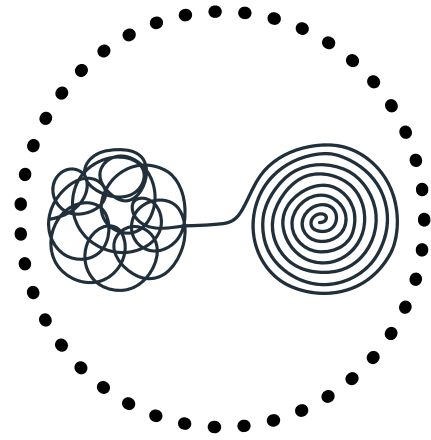
Impact investor tour and Ready Communities network

Building capabilities

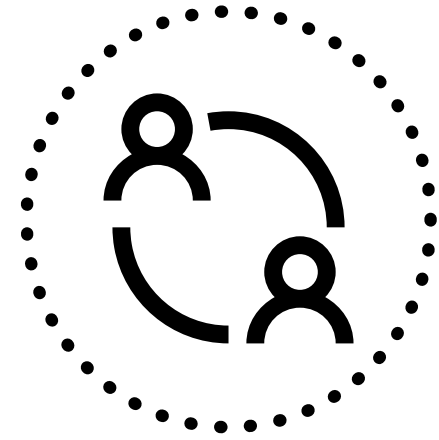
Mapping tool, training, opportunity

Ready Communities Framework

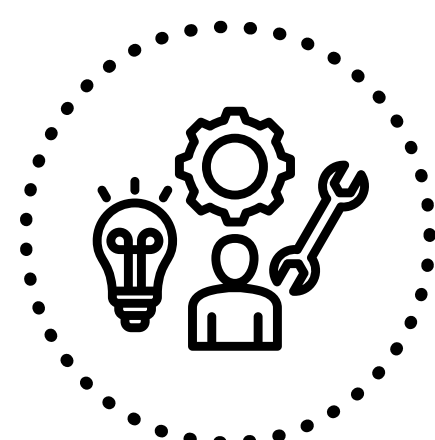
Works across



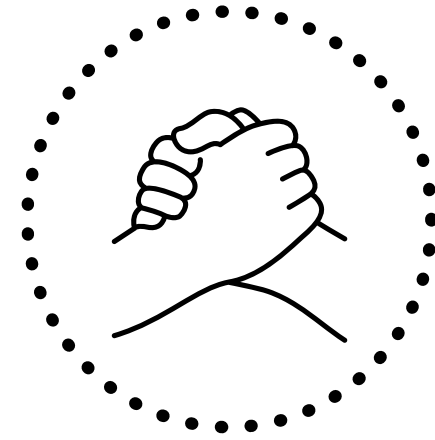
Clarity and Understanding



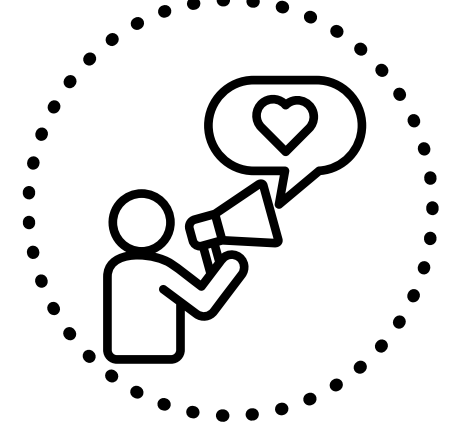
Connection and connectivity



Capability and capacity

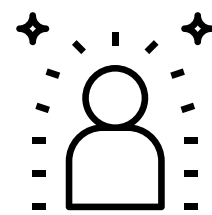


Collaboration for purpose

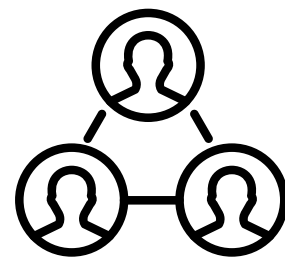


Advocacy and promotion

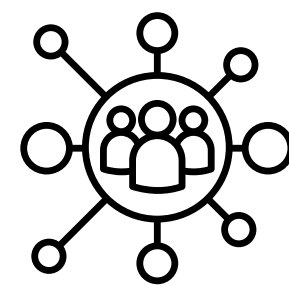
Creating change for



Individuals



Organisations



Communities



Impact areas

Mapping

Policies, programs, funding, stakeholders, individuals, organisations.

Mapping platform.

Culture shift

Entrepreneurial culture: Pop up shops, shop local program, evidence based. Inclusiveness: Activities, linkages

Community engagement

Public meetings, cafe meetings, one to one conversations, social media

Capacity development

ACTIVATE program. Link training partners, mentors and other support, bring together complimentary stakeholders

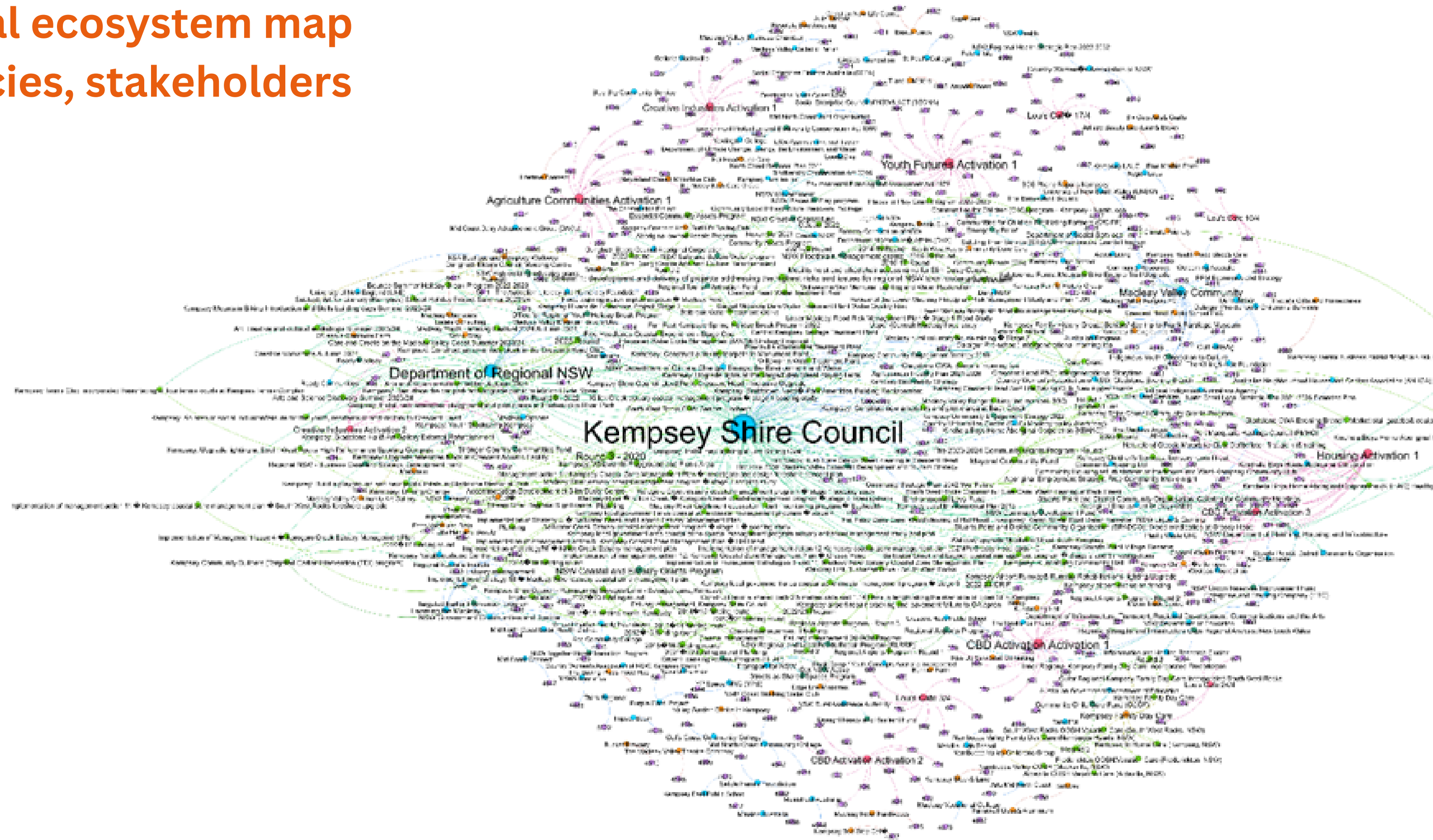
Activation

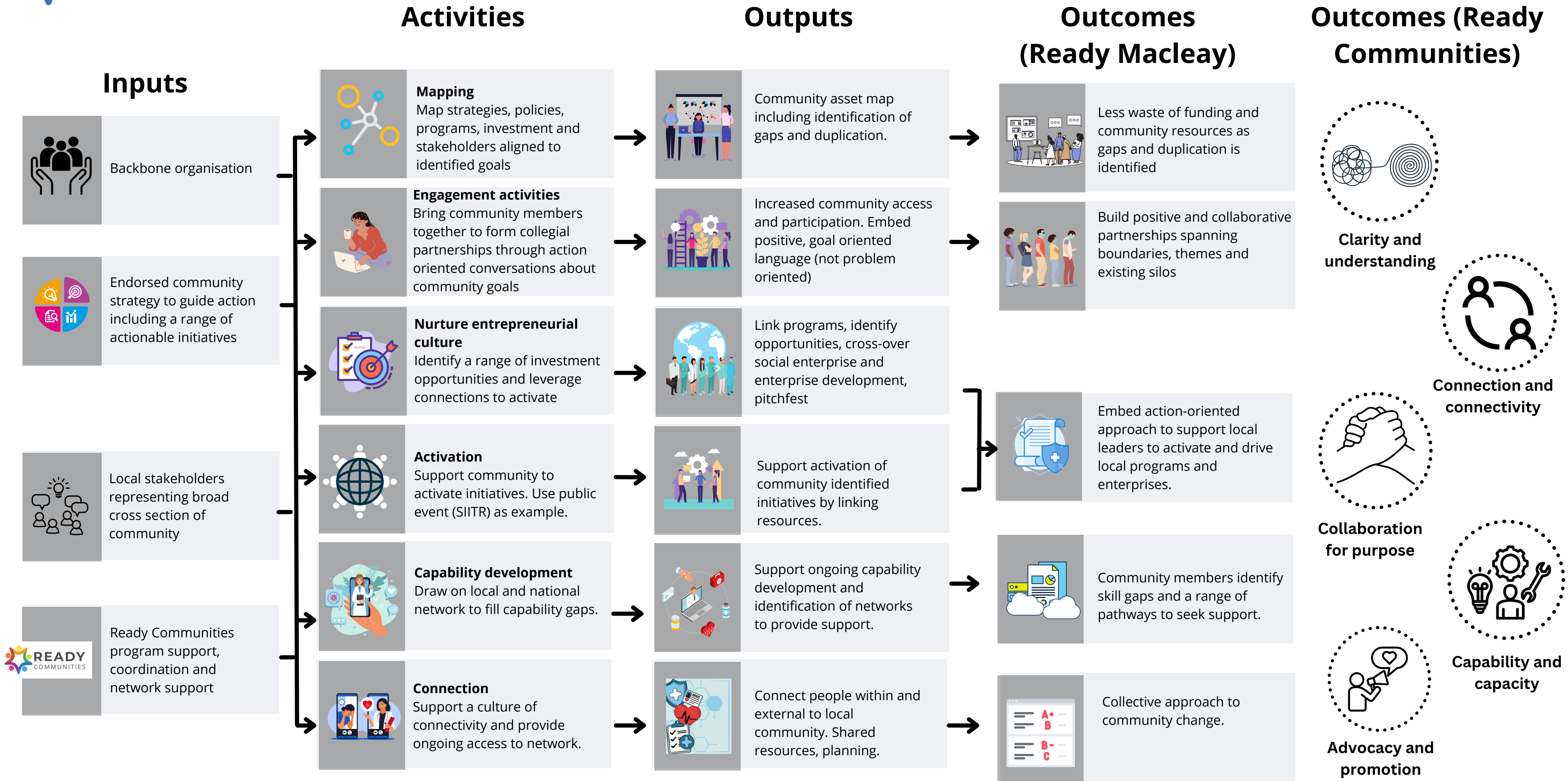
National conference. **Social Impact in the Regions.** Pitchfest, community celebrations

Advocacy and promotion

Local, national. Community led advocacy and broader national advocacy

A unique local ecosystem map of hubs, policies, stakeholders and funding





Economic

- **Structure:** Employment, income equality, age of working population, skills, job density
- **Security:** Savings, collective ownership, business mitigation, financial and investment instruments
- **Dynamism:** Inwards and external investment, business cooperation, entrepreneurial activity and openness, locally owned businesses, public-private partnerships, supply chain effectiveness and efficiency

Social / Individual

- **Structure:** Population composition, skills diversity, home ownership, mobility, liveability
- **Community:** community group connectedness, volunteering and civic engagement, trust and norms or reciprocity, shared assets, place attachment and pride, conflict resolution, vulnerable group connectedness

Institutional

- **Leadership and participation:** Strong leadership, stability, shared planning and vision, transparency and accountability, decentralised responsibility and resources
- **Resource management:** Skilled personnel, efficient management, redundant capacity
- **Contingency:** Risk reduction and resilience integration, climate impact planning, risk pattern and trend understanding, emergency and mitigation planning, inclusive risk planning
- **Collaboration:** Cross-sector partnerships, inter-agency MOUs, knowledge transfer
- **R&D:** Innovation and technology updates, research and translation channels
- **Regulation and policy:** Policy relevance, quality, and application
- **Education and training:** Education availability and quality across stages, information availability and application, migration and adaptation incentives

Infrastructure

- **Robustness and redundancy:** provider collaboration, space multi-functionality, distribution and redundancy
- **ICT:** Reliability and availability
- **Land use:** Accessible needs and services

Environmental

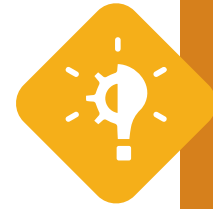
- Improved agriculture productivity and resource management
- Reduction in negative environmental impacts



“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.”

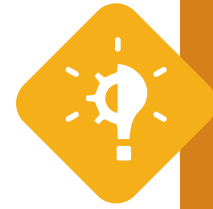
“We've now made connections with people who it would've probably taken a bit longer for us to even think about.”

*Jo Kelly, Partnership Lead
Learning the Macleay*



Year 1: Ready Macleay Community identified outcomes

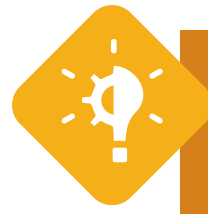
	Outputs	Outcomes
Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping policies, programs, stakeholders and organisations • Work across five key themes • Identification of four key investment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping utilised in local community strategic plans to reduce duplication • Participating in mapping and visioning with LTM • Mapping utilised to form collaborative outcomes between NFPs • Improved readiness in the community
Engagement activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 public meetings • 1,000 community contact hours • 179 people engaged • National Social Impact in the Regions conference attended by 246 • Macleay Valley Pitchfest • Macleay Valley Investor tour • key introductions within community • key introductions external to community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations formed across NFP and Business community • NAIDOC week celebration in community • Shop local card
Nurture entrepreneurial culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitchfest training and Macleay Valley Pitchfest • Shop Local program • Main street activation • Links with angel investor networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New social enterprise activity • Activated linkages with national social impact networks • Activated angel investor networks • Links to business support networks



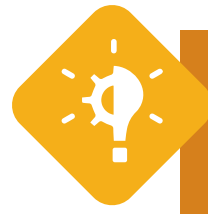
Year 1: Ready Macleay Community identified outcomes ctd

	Outputs	Outcomes
Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on 26 of 77 initiatives (34%) • Local investment over \$26,500 • External investment on initiatives \$64,646 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activated CBD • Community led and funded Shop local program • Local leaders emerged to activate identified initiatives • Local resources collaboratively contributed to funding initiatives • Economic impact of SIIR24 \$348K
Capability development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch training • National Social Impact in the Regions conference - workshops 32 scholarships for local leaders to attend the conference • Investor tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitchfest - connections for local business, entry to national pitchfest, link to business support programs • Conference
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link Retail group with Chamber of commerce • Link LTM with business community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community led NAIDOC Week celebration in CBD • Community led and funded Shop local program





	Output (initiatives)	Outcomes
Connection and Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% (50) • 51% (27) progressed or already in place • 16 require local leader to progress • 35 had contribution from Ready Communities team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated local contribution \$14,000 • Estimated external contribution \$64,646
Clarity and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22% (17) • 17% (3) progressed or already in place • 9 require local leader to progress • 8 had contribution from Ready Communities team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated local contribution \$5,000
Collaboration for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55% (42) • 48% (22) progressed or already in place • 15 require local leader to progress • 25 had contribution from Ready Communities team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated local contribution \$26,500 • Estimated external contribution \$63,646



	Output (initiatives)	Outcomes
Capability and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% (47) • 48% (23) progressed or already in place • 18 require local leader to progress • 30 had contribution from Ready Communities team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated local contribution \$26,500 • Estimated external contribution \$22,652
Advocacy and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% (50) • (36%) 18 progressed or already in place • 27 require local leader to progress • 24 had contribution from Ready Communities team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated local contribution \$26,500 • Estimated external contribution \$42,994








“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*



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



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)



Participation of local leaders Ready Macleay

Supported development of Community Activator Course commencing in 2025.

Ready Macleay participants benefiting a lot or significantly from the Social Impact in the Regions Conference

Clarity

Learn new information, including examples, strategies, and trends **100%**

Share knowledge I have to help others **90%**

Connection

Connect with people in my field of interest **90%**

Collaboration

Learn practical skills I can apply in my work or community **90%**

Capability & Capacity

Learn practical skills I can apply in my work or community **100%**

Find ways to access funds or investment for my work or ideas **70%**

Find opportunities to expand my work with new clients, customers, or projects **70%**

Advocacy and Promotion

Advocate for support for my project, cause, or region **90%**

Promote my business, operation, or region **80%**



Social Impact
In The Regions

What's next?

- ACTIVATE KEMPSEY
- Social Impact in the Regions 2025
- Community Activator program online 2025
- Advocacy
 - Regional social impact
 - White paper



ACTIVATE YOUR IMPACT 2025

We know you have a lot to do in your regional community and sometimes it's easy to get bogged down in the tasks.

In this 1.5hr webinar the Ready Communities framework will support you to create a 2025 plan to gain:

- Greater clarity and understanding about the impact you'd like to achieve
- Increased connection and connectivity
- Enhanced capability and capacity
- Stronger collaboration for purpose
- Additional pathways for advocacy and promotion of your work

Register here



JOIN US ONLINE
10 JANUARY 1230-1430 AEDT

www.readycommunities.com.au



Activate your impact in 2025



CODE:
2025impact

Contact Us

We look forward to hearing from you

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READY
COMMUNITIES



Social Impact
In The Regions

