

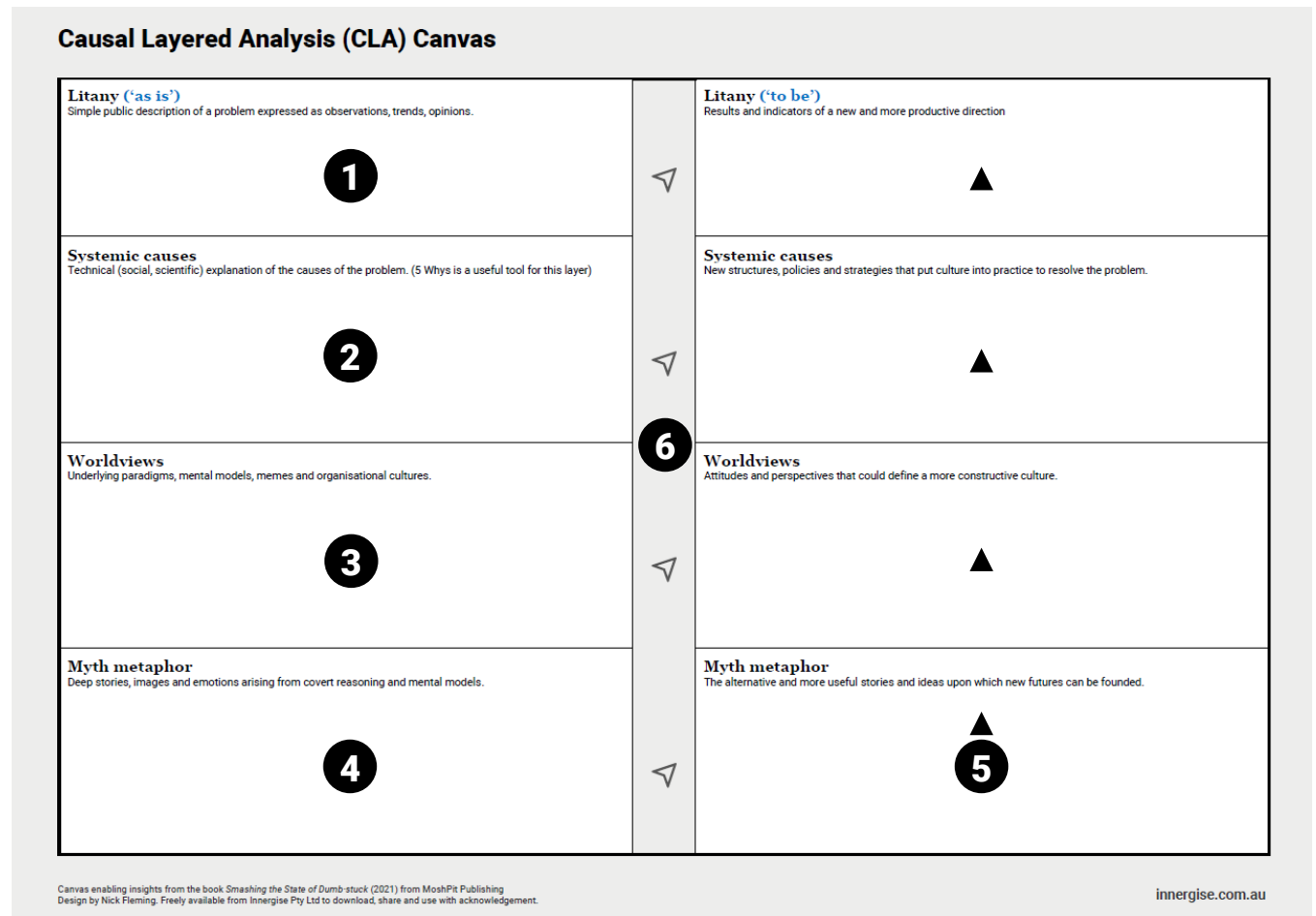
Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) Canvas

When we ask questions about why a situation or problem exists, the answers usually explain the mechanical, procedural, and organisational causes. But why are those things happening? What are the real root causes?

We must ask, “From where do our choices and actions emerge?” The answer is our mindsets and beliefs. Only when we interrogate them do we truly understand the root causes of many of the problems that matter to us most.

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) is a conceptually simple but very powerful tool developed by Sohail Inayatullah to explore these deep, human causes. Bringing about change at the deep ‘myth metaphor’ level can lead to the most profound and enduring benefits. Further insights to the method and its benefits are available in *Smashing the State of Dumb-stuck*.

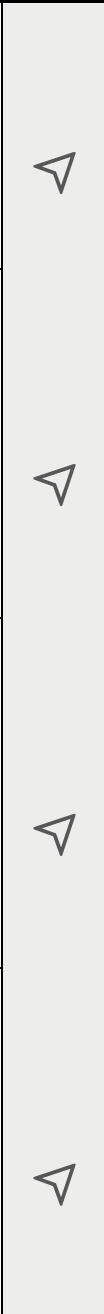
Suggestions about how to use this canvas are provided below. Explore and test your own ways to make it more powerful, sharing your experiences and examples with others.



Steps to using the CLA Canvas

1. Characterise the challenge or problem you are endeavouring to solve. Imagine it as a newspaper headline and record it as the 'litany'.
2. Explore the record the likely systemic causes of the litany. (The 5 Whys method explored in a previous canvas can be useful.)
3. Delve beneath the systemic causes by asking, “What frames of mind make these causes possible?” Record the mindsets and worldviews.
4. Reveal the deepest causes of the litany by describing the most fundamental ideas, myths and values upon which the mindsets are based.
5. Now ask, “What ideas and mindsets would be more useful and realistic in our situation? And what aligned actions (causes) would bring about a new and better result (litany)?” Work back upwards through the CLA structure recording your responses.
6. Your attention can now turn to the tactics or actions that would shift thinking and action from the 'as is' to the preferred 'to be' situation.

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<p>Litany ('as is') Simple public description of a problem expressed as observations, trends, opinions.</p>		<p>Litany ('to be') Results and indicators of a new and more productive direction</p>
<p>Systemic causes Technical (social, scientific) explanation of the causes of the problem. (5 Whys is a useful tool for this layer)</p>		<p>Systemic causes New structures, policies and strategies that put culture into practice to resolve the problem.</p>
<p>Worldviews Underlying paradigms, mental models, memes and organisational cultures.</p>		<p>Worldviews Attitudes and perspectives that could define a more constructive culture.</p>
<p>Myth metaphor Deep stories, images and emotions arising from covert reasoning and mental models.</p>		<p>Myth metaphor The alternative and more useful stories and ideas upon which new futures can be founded.</p>

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EXAMPLE

<p>Litany ('as is') Simple public description of a problem expressed as observations, trends, opinions.</p> <p>The community is lacking dedication and persistence in combatting climate change in an informed way</p>		<p>Litany ('to be') Results and indicators of a new and more productive direction</p> <p>The community tackles climate change together with a sense of collective responsibility and accountability using transparent, systemic progress metrics</p>
<p>Systemic causes Technical (social, scientific) explanation of the causes of the problem. (5 Whys is a useful tool for this layer)</p> <p>Consumerism has gained dominance over citizenship People avoid the intellectual challenge of understanding climate change We have no economic model that doesn't rely on constant growth People are motivated by personal success over collaboration and shared benefits</p>		<p>Systemic causes New structures, policies and strategies that put culture into practice to resolve the problem.</p> <p>Responsible citizenship is prioritised in our hyperconnected world People engage in solution-minded dialogue around complex issues Broader notions of prosperity are embraced alongside economic strength People enjoy the benefits of diverse and close-knit communities in the suburbs and organisations</p>
<p>Worldviews Underlying paradigms, mental models, memes and organisational cultures.</p> <p>"My car, clothes and watches reflect my worth and status" "Governments think about these things, it's why we have them" "Growth (consumption) fuels prosperity" "Hard work gets rewarded, not the laggards and leaners"</p>		<p>Worldviews Attitudes and perspectives that could define a more constructive culture.</p> <p>"My contribution to a bigger cause fuels my self-worth and satisfaction" "We are all part of system with a role to play in achieving progress" "Creating things people value is what fuels prosperity" "Teamwork and inclusion - leveraging diversity - is what's rewarded"</p>
<p>Myth metaphor Deep stories, images and emotions arising from covert reasoning and mental models.</p> <p>"Wealth is the key to happiness" "The government looks after us" "It's a dog eat dog world"</p>		<p>Myth metaphor The alternative and more useful stories and ideas upon which new futures can be founded.</p> <p>"Purpose in life is the key to happiness" "We look after the government", i.e. democracy doesn't look after itself "You get what you give"</p>