

What are our best bets?

On the trail of your Question Without an Easy Answer

This session follows up on your Network's Question Without An Easy Answer. In *Best Bets*, we bring rigour to your inquiry around a question. The steps give you a way to:

Learn from the past. What you've done in the past, worked for a time, or worked in part, then didn't work so well. Rather than push away the past, let's welcome it in and learn from it. And learn from the old hands on your Committee.

Learn faster. You won't know what works and what doesn't until you try things out. Follow each new approach you start, and work out what's working, what's not working and why. If you're not sure, take an educated guess, then test that in action.

Push yourselves to innovate. Innovation comes when past solutions don't work, and someone gets frustrated enough with the situation to try something radical, new, out of left field. The faster you process your first attempts, the faster you'll get to this point.

Secure what does work. Don't let your solutions get blown away just because you forget them. A lot gets invented on the fly, or happens serendipitously. Regular review enables you to work out what works and why, and secure what works.

1

Break down your QWEA into smaller pieces

Break down your big question into the different lines of action you could take (see next page). Decide on one to concentrate on first.

2

What have we already tried?

What are you doing, or what have you done in the past, on your Question Without Easy Answer?

3

What can we learn from this?

What has worked? And why? What hasn't worked so well? Why? Take a comprehensive look, and dig beneath the surface.

4

What will we do next?

Use what you've learned to decide what you'll do next. Work out your Theory of Change.

5

Then repeat the cycle

- After a few months, sit down as a CoM, note what has been done and reflect on what you have learned from what's happened
- Use what you've learned to decide what you'll do next



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LVI's CLEA Project
Community Learning for Environmental Action

Decide on one line of action to concentrate on

Here's an example from
Mid Loddon Landcare

We've got a lot of work already underway, like conservation of Shelbourne Nature Reserve and captive breeding of Curlews. People get interested when they hear about this work and want to help. Let's concentrate on making more of this.

Promote what we're already doing to urban people, and give them opportunities to participate

How do we get city folk to understand and appreciate farmers' issues?

Educate young people about the land and landcare

Put pressure on planners and politicians to take account of the impacts of planning on farmers

We've started doing this, with a good relationship with one primary school, but our priority is getting more effort in behind the work we're doing now.

We can see impacts on the ground, but getting and holding the attention of planners and politicians is hard work. We need more local members, and stronger contacts with media. Let's park this line of action for now.

Learning from what you already done

2 What have we already tried?	3 What can we learn from this?	4 What will we do next?
<p><i>Set out all the different approaches you've taken. Go back in time if necessary, to get new people up to speed.</i></p>	<p><i>What worked? Why? What didn't work so well? Why?</i></p>	<p><i>What will we do now? Who specifically is going to do that?</i></p>
An example from Mid Loddon Landcare	Approached Field Naturalists Bendigo to cooperate in developing fungi book. They weren't interested.	Some flora and fauna groups guard their specialist knowledge and don't easily share. The attitude of the leaders is important - they act as gatekeepers. <i>Test the water with the leaders of groups.</i> See if they get excited about what we're doing - if they don't, don't push it. Facilitator to test this approach.