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catastrophe

Perma RESCUE

Permaculture

Management

permarescue.org

Catastrophe

permaculture

Avoidable Catastrophe

Permaculture

soon to be a true story

by Paul Nimbakly 2013

*"This book is dedicated to all protectors of
the earth"*

Community Support Groups

Versus

Coal Seam Gas

**"Those who love PEACE
must learn to organise as effectively as
those who love war."**

Martin Luther King Jr

The intention of this work is to introduce communities to Permaculture. To demonstrate the practical applications of the invisible structures outlined in "Permaculture A Designers' Manual" by Bill Mollison, chapter 14, The Strategies of an Alternative Global Nation.

Imagine, if you can, communities organising themselves to support each other, legally and peacefully with purpose and intent. The tools are within the story, what are you waiting for?

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Permaculture

The sky was dark and gloomy, drizzling rain blowing on the cold southerly winds sets the scene for a meeting with my agitated boss, the fat controller.

“There is something happening up there in the Northern Rivers, something strange and worrisome to those upstairs.” The fat controller says sweating and scratching the stress rash on his forehead. “We are sending you to investigate what the hell is going on at that coal seam gas protest.”

“Me, why me?” I protest “I am not the person to do undercover work with a bunch of hippies and ferals, there are others trained for that. My skills are in social structures and behaviours not dealing with really bad hygiene scenes.”

A folder is slid across the cluttered desk marked BENT CREEK CSG PROTEST INVESTIGATION

“That’s why you are going, we have teams already there to identify the key players and they did that. The same old misfits and wanna be’s that we see again and again. Then 3 days ago something happened that we haven’t seen before, the feral's got organised. In fact they have gotten so organised it makes us look like a joke. There are people from all over Australia converging there calling themselves PROTECTORS not protesters. I don’t care what they call themselves, find out who is behind this.”

“You said something happened three days ago, what have the others found out about this.” I ask.

“It is all in the folder,” he says staring uncomfortably, “I want you on site tomorrow morning. You will be acting independently of the others, no need for you to investigate individuals. As you will see in the report there are too many for you to worry about. We want you to determine what organisation structure they have employed and how it works.”

“What makes you think they have any structure?” I regrettably ask as the roaring starts before I finish.

“Because they’re bloody organised, there are hundreds of them arriving by the day. The new comers are put straight into function doing all sorts of jobs to support the protest action. Because all the usual big head ring leaders for some reason gave over their control to teams of others. Teams of others I say, not just one or two. We can’t keep up with the rate this structure is expanding. We can’t pin point any one individual coordinating this circus.” The fat controller pauses long enough to reach for a large black hardcover book titled ‘Permaculture A Designer’s Manual’ by Bill Mollison.

“What is this, Permaculture I have heard of this before, what do you want me to do with a gardening manual?” I ask as I flick through the pages.

“Read it and tell me” cracks his reply. “We know it was started in the early 80’s by the fella who wrote that book. He has been promoting and teaching this new age alternative, sustainable living shit for over 30 years. Yet nothing has happened like this before. Check out the last chapter.”

I turn to page 506 “Strategies for an Alternative Nation, wow this does look interesting. I had no idea that Permaculture was all encompassing, ‘Ethical Basis of an Alternative Nation’, ‘A new United Nations’, ‘Alternatives to Political Systems’, no wonder those upstairs are worried. And this is actually working you say. How?”

“Turn to the next page.” He replies coldly

“Bioregional Organisation, I have heard of this before. There was a movement in the 90’s out of America promoting this subject but it hasn’t amounted to much.” I stated, gazing at the next three pages. “This is good, this is very good. I haven’t seen a structure as comprehensive as this, it certainly covers all the bases. But how does it work?”

“Find out, I want a detailed report within 3 days. I suggest you study that last chapter like your life depends on it, cause your job does. Now get out!” he yells whilst furiously scratching his glowing forehead. “All this is giving me a migraine and a sore arse from upstairs. Get out and get me some answers.”

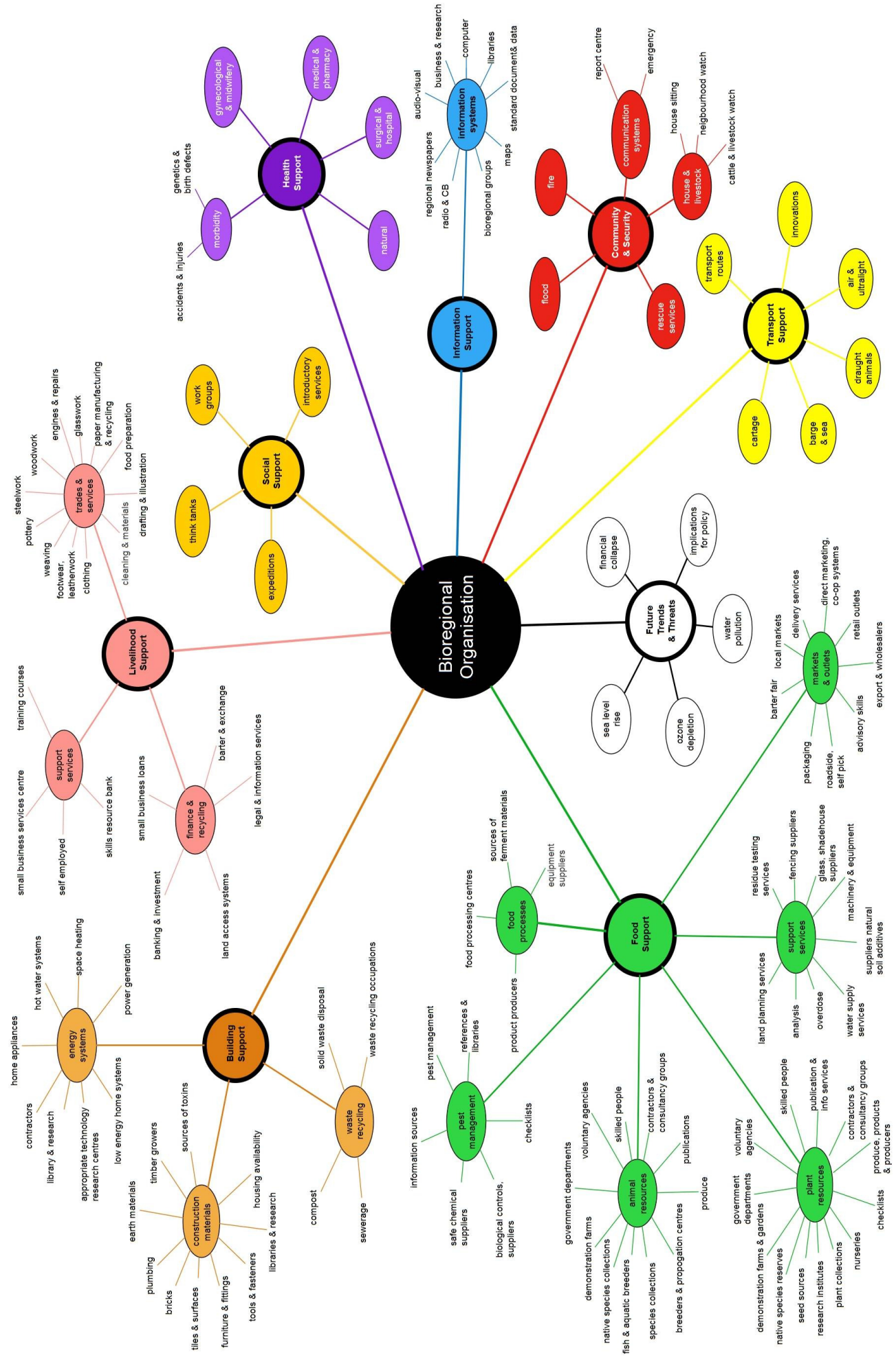
The day did not feel so gloomy after that ordeal. Upon arriving at my apartment I settle down on the couch and open the folder to examine the contents. An airline ticket, a hire car receipt and address for pick up and a note to get some appropriate clothes from a second hand shop and pick up some camping gear. Great ... it just gets better.

This whole Permaculture thing is confounding me, 30 years and now these protesters have embraced it and are off and running. Why now? The folder is a who is who of the Permaculture world, teachers, activists, course curriculums from half a dozen of the well-known from here and abroad. Profiles of key people, links to web sites and some DVD’s, and a bioregional map.

The bioregional map draws me in. As I glance from one topic to the next, my mind races with questions. Where has this come from? I haven’t seen anything like this in all the other documents. Ah - I recognise the titles. I rummage through my bag to find that large black book, the bible of Permaculture apparently. ‘Permaculture a Designer’s Manual’, Bill Mollison, published by Tagari Publications in Tasmania first published 1988.

I turn to page 511. There it is, Bioregional Organisation, listed in detail on three and a half pages. This new map appears to be a summary of the text drawn in a mind map form. It makes a world of difference when you look at the map as opposed to the text only.

It appears that the map is fully inclusive of the text, nothing has been deleted and nothing added, it is true to form, a simple summary.



Still more question race to mind. I start reading the last chapter. Permaculture appears to be the science of designing with nature. The approach the author has adopted is very scientific. I cannot understand how this subject has been limited in the minds of most people to the realms of gardening. Does anyone read this last chapter I wonder? Phrases from the book jump out at me;

“These strategies may in fact be of more assistance to real change than the skills of land management.”

“We know how to solve every food, clean energy and sensible shelter problem in every climate; we have already invented and tested every necessary technique and technical device, and have access to all the biological material that we could ever use.”

“We should cease to look to power structures, hierarchical systems, or governments to help us, and devise ways to help ourselves.”

Wow, now I can see why this hasn't gone main stream. The controllers do not like this sort of talk.

“The argument for simplicity is never a political argument ... when people practice it in their lives ... they don't even need any politics.”

Ok! Now this is starting to make sense, I know that this map is not based on a hierarchal model. That is why they are having trouble identifying the key people. If the people involved are trained to be multi-functional, which this book indicates they are, then controlling this social movement would be impossible.

Reading on to Extended Families, Trusts and Legal Structures, Developmental and Property Trusts, Village Development, Effective Working Groups and Right Livelihood ... Bingo!

I feel a rush of excitement as I start to see how this works. the genius of this model. I haven't felt this interested in anything since my days at university learning new and exciting subjects that challenge the mind.

'Effective Working Groups and Right Livelihood', this is how they are making this work. There are clear instructions on how to abolish hierarchical structures on page 530;

“The way to abolish such systems is to have one meeting where the sole agenda is to vote to abolish decision meetings – this is usually carried unanimously! – and another where consensus is reached to abolish consensus – this too shouldn't take too long. What do we put in place of such impediments to action?”

“An essential strategy for rapid and flexible action is to limit the number of people responsible for any one area of action or task. Some ideal number is between one and three individuals, who manage independently, but who may work to a general plan and schedule to fit in with others.”

“This troika approach ensures that meetings in any one area are few; news can come out as reports, available to anyone. It also means that no one person or group has ‘rights of decision’ over other functions or groups.”

“In such a web of function, any one person can be in two or three teams, thus achieving a ‘portfolio of occupations’. Also each group depends on each other being in function, and this is important for group unity; we presume a shared ethic and values, which are clearly spelt out, but do not assume love, trust or any particular form of personal diet and behaviour except in line with ethics (we are never perfect, just moving towards improvement).

- 1. Only in the initial planning do people need to assign or choose functions; once chosen, no group meetings for business are necessary.*
- 2. Each group or sub-group is small enough to reach fast agreements and know of each other’s movements and work.*
- 3. No consensus beyond that of an initial ethical and value consensus is necessary; everyday decisions are made by small groups.”*

The phone rings, startling me. I ignore it, I am too engrossed in getting my head around this, I am just getting to the juicy justification bit and it already makes perfect sense.

“Certain behaviours occur at various group sizes; here are some approximate size and function groups

1-3 people: Executive decision, least meeting time, greater pressure to act, fast changes possible, fast replacement of key people.

4-6 people: Good volunteer or cooperative group work, or work group for special single projects; good size for work exchange systems.

7-30 people: Function well only in social conditions; can be a recreational group or team, but at 7 or so, a chairperson is needed and decisions are slow and frustrating, often creating descent.

30-40 people: Acknowledged as the minimal group of people in which most human functions can be covered, and who (if well chosen) can cope with almost any type of problem.

40-200 people: Rarely found as a group or settlement, but good size for regional organisation.

200-300 people: The basic number for genetic variability; such a group can, by careful breeding, maintain their numbers as a tribe and allow for some losses to disease. Probably the minimum human village size (called a Hamlet).

300-600 people: About the limit at which people know every other person by name; thus, about the limit of identity. This is the largest satisfactory size for educational or learning systems if personal attention is valued. Acknowledged to be the upper limit for successful cooperatives for real participation.

1000-5000 people: Usual upper limit of federations of tribes; a good size for a bioregional group or sub-region. Also, a village size limit. Cliques, theft and cheating common and possible; hierarchies are needed.

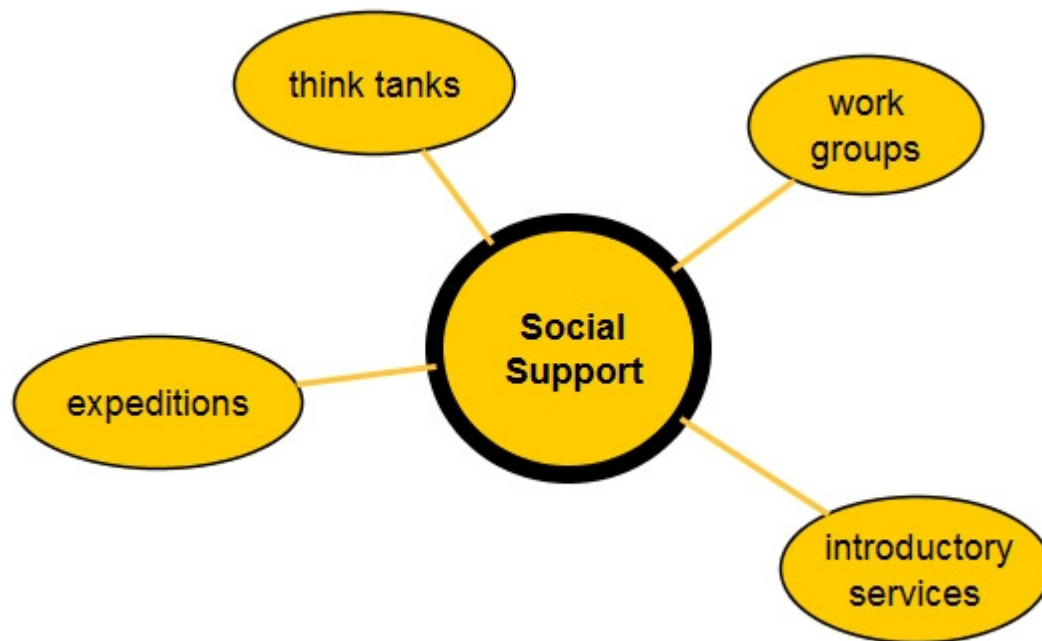
7000-40000 people: Towns, large bioregions. Chinese communities start about here. This number is not satisfactory unless broken into small cooperatives and villages. Crowds and very large audiences can reach this size, and can be difficult to control if aroused. It is about the upper limit of any real control by strict hierarchical systems.

150,000-10,000,000 people: Cities; mainly disorganised on every level. Effective anarchy and crime, and social isolation in many areas.

Enough already, it goes on and on, my mind is spinning with the possibilities this structure presents. My eyes are tired, it is late, I hadn't realised just how long I have been absorbed by this book. Yet I flick the page.

"It is not that people lack the will to cooperate; it is more often that they have not adopted those sensible legal and administrative, or social mechanisms which allow them to cooperate."

Alright, alright ... already I am sold. My trip tomorrow has taken on a new meaning, I feel like I am about to embark on an adventure. My eyes are heavy, my mind is racing and I drift into a deep sleep on the couch.



Chapter 2

Social Support

As I study the map my mind searches for historical comparisons. Sure the military cover most of this map but they are unquestionably a hierarchical structure and they do not take Food Support seriously as they have handed that responsibility over to corporations.

Permaculture however appears to be grounded in ecology where the earth comes first. This is why the food support group is by far the largest.

My mind wanders to a lecture I attended by a former Vietnam veteran. Who, as an officer in an elite commando regiment, was tasked with identifying and locating key military officers in the Viet Cong and assassinating them. This he explained proved to be difficult as there were three officers responsible for a given field of support. I remember that they covered most of the topics that are included in this map. To make things harder these officers were multi skilled and could function as leaders in other groups. The groups worked interdependently ... supporting each other. This created a communication and supply line matrix resembling a spider web pattern. A spider's web is very strong as we know. You can destroy seventy per cent of it and it will still function. This is why we lost the Vietnam War and why we were never going to win.

I am brought back to the now as the captain makes his announcement for the cabin crew to prepare the cabin for landing. My faded and slightly torn blue jeans and multi coloured shirt

purchased from the op shop on the way to the airport still smell musty and the deodorant is not helping. The woman next to me is leaning well away from me. Oh well the disguise is working.

I feel eager to get to the protest site and check out what is happening. I waste no time collecting my pack and catching a taxi to the hire car place.

I can't believe that they actually registered this car. I do not complain it is perfect for this job. An old ford station wagon with different coloured panels and a "magic happens" sticker on the rear filthy window. This will come in handy, it's been raining here for weeks they tell me, this is the first day of sunshine in a long time.

Sleeping in the car might be an option. I pick up some camping gear. a small esky and some food supplies and head north.

The country is startlingly beautiful, so green, so many shades of green glistening with a backdrop of vibrant blue skies. The dams are full, as are the ditches beside the bitumen road. Flocks of bird's parrots, galahs, white cockatoos and sacred ibis fly off in swarms only to resettle nearby and resume feasting on the abundance nature has to offer. Such a contrast from the city I call home. It takes all my effort to concentrate on driving as my eyes strain to take it all in.

Slow down, I hear, as if someone next to me is warning. There's only me here as I look up and hit the brakes. A slow moving caravan, a flash one with a "grey nomads" sticker on the back and coloured sticker representing a military band of colours that I know to be the one which is presented to soldiers of the Vietnam war. What a coincidence.

As we crawl around the bend I can see that there is a convoy of caravans. Four I can see and a coaster bus are slowly turning off the main road. As I get closer I see the rainbow coloured sign "PROTECTORS CAMP and an arrow.

A gravel and dirt road leads the painfully slow journey onward, as a campervan and another 4WD towing a caravan bank up behind me.

The gravel track is in surprisingly good condition given all the rain they have had up here. I imagine the mining company had something to do with that.

The convoy comes to a stop as we are directed into a paddock. There is a mixture of people there to point us in the right direction. The barefoot hippies, the dreadlock crew, and conservative looking older people mingling amongst them. They are all wearing yellow somewhere, some as a bandana, another has a yellow baseball cap, an older woman has a yellow ribbon pinned to her blue blouse.

The woman with the yellow ribbon approaches my window. "Welcome to the Protectors Camp thank you so much for making the effort to come out and support us. You can park

your car over by the others. People are camping in the car park with their mobile homes and others are camping in tents further up the hill. We suggest you park and wander up the hill along the main track. The first marque you will come across, the orange one, is Social Support. They will introduce you to what is happening here.”

Thanking this woman who could have been my grandma, I follow the others to the parking area. There are hundreds of cars and assorted caravans, campervans and buses, all parked very orderly, as if carefully designed. There are more people roaming around amongst the newcomers wearing something of yellow.

I approach a young woman, barefoot, wearing rainbow clothes and a white bandana.
“Excuse me why are some of you wearing yellow?”

“You must be new here, welcome. You will see a few, quite a few of us now as it is getting so busy, wearing yellow. This means we are representing the Transport Support Group. We are directing traffic and a whole bunch of other things around here. Drop in and visit our tent, the yellow one, and they can tune you in.”

“Where is the protest happening?” I ask.

“We are not protesting we are protecting.” She replies with a smile. “It’s happening all round you, you’ll see. If you just walk up the hill and register at the orange tent, they are the Social Support Group. After that keep following the track and the next tent you will come across is blue and that is where you will find the Information Support Group. They can help you out with any info you need.”

Thanking the young lady I head up the track. I can hear drumming coming from different directions. There are groups of people mingling and roaming around the different marques I can see set up in the distance.

The orange tent is actually two marques set up on either side of the main track. A large sign dangles high between them: ‘Social Support Group Welcome’. There is a crowd of people gathered around, us newcomers and people wearing orange. There is a line of tables at the front of each tent with people filling in forms. On the rear walls of the tents are posters. There is the map, the bioregional map I have been studying, it is different, it has been coloured in and printed as a large poster. The nine functional groups have been colour-coded, large print at the top: ‘WHERE DO YOU FIT IN’. Next to this is another poster:

ETHICS

1. CARE OF THE EARTH
2. CARE OF THE PEOPLE
3. RE-INVEST SURPLUS TO CARE OF THE EARTH

This I recognise as the same ethics described in the Permaculture manual. Next to this is another poster:

THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

1. ALWAYS BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORDS
2. DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY
3. NEVER MAKE ASSUMPTIONS
4. ALWAYS DO THE BEST YOU CAN

By Don Miguel Ruiz

I find myself standing behind an elderly couple, hand in hand helping each other to stand steadily. They are calling each other mother and father; they are obviously husband and wife. I struggle to hide a smile and listen carefully as they study the map.

"Crikey what do you think of all this mother?"

"Don't talk to me now father can't you see I'm trying to take this all in."

"Well come on then I can't stand here all bloody day then can I. What use are a pair of old farts around here anyways." Says father

"Watch your tongue father, I have none of that foulness. Look here COMMUNITY AND SECURITY SUPPORT GROUP and look, look, look over here ... are you listening?"

"Yes, yes I can hear you woman, what am I going to do there?"

"Well you must have learnt something in your twenty years in the army, didn't you? Have all these years of retirement wet your brain?"

"Steady on old girl, let me have a closer look, pass me that chair." Asked father as he adjusts his glasses and leans ever closer to the map.

"Well it is pretty clear to me where I can help, all those years of nursing and I am still nursing you."

"Come on now mother," says father carefully sitting down, "Alright I could probably teach these young fellas a thing or two here in Community and Security, this one here Fire Volunteers and Support, this one here Communication systems, this one Rescue Services and I have some information for this group, what is that Future Trends and Potential Threats ... yeah this one might have some young fellas who might just listen."

"Not that conspiracy thing again father, god help us. If Fukushima was that bad they would be telling us." Mother soughs.

“It is not a bloody conspiracy theory woman it is a conspiracy reality.” Father says as he springs up off his chair like a freshly invigorated young man. “You bugger off to your Health Support tent and I will go see what this future trends fellas are up to. “ What colour are they? Don’t we have to sign in?”

As the old couple wonder off I start to look at the colour coded map and the functional group known as Social Support. There are four sub groups – Think Tanks, Work Groups, Introductory Services and Expeditions. As I examine the map a grey haired, grey bearded man approaches.

“Welcome to Protectors Camp, can I help you?” speaks the grey haired man with a neat ponytail. He is softly spoken, calmly spoken even.

“Thank you,” I reply “what can you tell me about this map?”

“It is brilliant, has got us all organised in a way we didn’t think was possible. Before the map came along there were one or two people trying to organise everything and then another group would arrive with different ideas. Now we have 27 people in teams of three managing nine support groups, and now most of those teams have understudies.” He looks around smiling.

It is not easy to focus on what this kindly man is saying as there is a bustle of activity all around me. People coming and going, mobs of them.

“How did all this come to be?” I enquire.

“About four days back three young folk arrived. Didn’t look any different from the other young ones. Two blokes and a young girl. They said they had a plan, a catastrophe management plan. They asked us if we considered this to be a catastrophe yet or did we want to wait a bit longer. Then they handed out some photocopies of a book called “Avoidable Catastrophe”, a bunch of large posters of the map, a copy of ‘Permaculture - A Designers’ Manual’, and a copy of the Four Agreements, then quietly left. No one has seen em since.”

“What, they just left, how did all this come to be then.” I ask with genuine interest.

“Well we started reading this book, Avoidable Catastrophe and I’ll be buggered, just couldn’t put it down. Got me and others hooked right off. The story made so much sense, it guides you into action, keeps making references to their designers manual. Like the story says once started there is no stopping or controlling it. Look around you it works, the four agreements helps.”

“How did all these people get to be here in a short time?” I ask

The Community and Security group came up with the idea to put out an emergency call for help, they started the Emergency Communications team just like the map shows, who put

together a passionate letter on behalf of the young people. They addressed this to their elders, all of us oldies. The letter was a cry for help and it worked, especially when they gave the letter to the Information Support Group. They know how to do the social networking thing on the computer like. They made sure it went viral, they say. The letter has links to the GASLAND documentary.” He reaches under the table and hands me a DVD with GASLAND on the cover. “You seen this lad?”

“No I can’t say I have”

“It’s a must see, came out years ago, a real eye opener. If they showed this on main stream TV we wouldn’t be hanging round this muddy paddock.”

“There are so many older people here.” I state.

“Yeah, bout 250 – 300 I reckon, they just keep on comin. They’re the grey nomad mob, they’re just roamin around the country in their mobile homes, all retired like with plenty of time on their hands. And they all be talkin to each other, on the computer, that facebook and twitter and email thing. And they all have CB radios and talk to each other on their travels. It’s a real bush telegraph and they’re all fired up. You talk to em and you will see it has given them a new lease on life, a cause. They are fighting for their grandchildren’s future and fearless they are. And they can talk, they are going to the RSL and Bowling clubs everywhere and educating their folk what is really goin on, good on em.”

I am fascinated with the social mix of people, so many over fifties and so many under thirties, not many in between. “How has that worked?”

“Workin real fine. At the start there wasn’t so many of us so we did what that book says. We started the nine support groups. Some of us were in more than one group when we started to get organised and it was already workin. Then they started to come, the nomad mob, seems to me that some of them must have read that book too. They fitted straight in, teaming up with the young folks, it’s what we needed. The young firey blood blended with the old focussed wisdom.”

“This book ‘Avoidable Catastrophe’ who wrote it?” I ask.

“PermaRescue, the same ones who gave us these posters and the other two books.” Replies the older man.

“Who is PermaRescue?”

“Don’t know, all I know is it means permanent rescue. They say when you have been rescued by PermaRescue you don’t need rescuing again. They promote Permaculture as sustainable catastrophe management, writing books like this one and they’re developing training courses. Must be something new I reckon, no one seems to know much about em.

There are copies, not many, floatin around the place, pretty popular though. You might get your hands on one. Suspect it will be in the shops soon though.”

“What is it that you do here?” I ask.

“I am part of the Social Support team, used to be quite busy but now with all these people arriving my job is getting easier.” He states with a smile.

“How is that” I ask.

“This map works better with the more people up to 600 they say. They tell us that this is the upper limit of individuality where everyone can know everyone by name. After that we simply duplicate ourselves, we are getting ready to do that here. When they all started coming we just started our sub-teams, Think Tanks, Workgroups, Introductory Services and Expeditions. Each sub-group is managed by a team of three, that’s another twelve people focussed on social support. My job is simple I just support our sub-group to make things happen. If they need something then there are three of us to make it happen. We make things happen by working closely with the other groups.”

“How do you do that?” I ask.

“At the end of each day each support group sends along a representative, the nine of them state what they have done for the day as a group, what they intend to do tomorrow and what help they need. Any calls for help are dealt with there and then, works like a treat.” His smile seems to be growing with prideful delight.

“Aren’t there any conflicts of interest?” I ask.

“Not since we adopted the four agreements, that has worked so so well, stopped folks fightin, everyone here reminds everyone else when they slip.

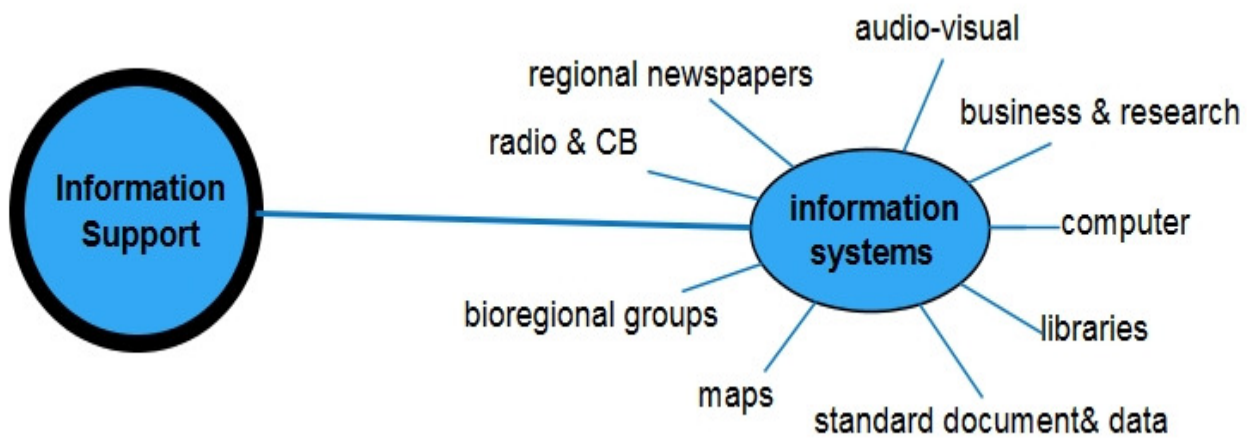
My mind is racing with questions.

“The next tent along the track is Information Support those folk keep you updated with what is going on. We recommend everyone to visit all nine support groups, take this map with you and as you go circle those areas that you feel to support. We like to ask people to circle the areas they have skills in and then in another colour circle the ones that they are interested in. This helps us to plug you into function. By the way - we suggest you visit the white tent last. A bit of an eye opener that one.” The older one says as if reading my mind.

“How do I get plugged in” I ask.

“When you fill in that small map I gave you, bring that back here and we will direct you to the Introductory Service team who will introduce you to the group or groups you can support, or just approach the groups yourself” He says.

I thank the man as he fluidly moves to greet more new-comers. I fill in the registration forms with my contact details, rego number, medical questionnaire. At the bottom I sign my name after the part where it states that whilst participating in this Protectors action on this site I agree to abide by the ethics and four agreements. Simple enough.



Chapter 3 Information Support

Stretching my legs I take in the scene as I walk slowly up the muddy track. There seem to be work teams busily doing their thing everywhere. I pass three young people digging drains along the track to move the still standing water. Others are carrying building materials up the track towards the camping ground. Young people with yellow arm bands are walking with the elderly chatting and laughing and sharing stories. There is a vibe in the air and it's not just the chattering of the excited birds relishing the sunshine. There is a hum of excitement, unity, I don't know what it is. This is a new experience for me.

Blue flags gently flapping in the mid-morning breeze announce my arrival at the Information Support tent, or tents I should say. The main tent is a large army green canvas style lined on both sides with long tables and benches. Towards the back are laptop computers set up with people facing each other, papers spread out around them. I can hear the faint sound of a generator just barely over the drumming coming from the distance.

The outside wall of this tent is lined with white boards and some blackboards. There are two young women rubbing things out and writing things in. There are groups of people mingling around reading what is written, some are taking notes others engrossed in conversation. As I move forward to get a better view, a young man in his late twenties, short black hair and a scruffy beard approaches.

"G'day mate can I help you" says the scruffy bearded one.

"Yeah thanks, I've just got here and am doing the rounds. What happens here?" I ask pointing around me.

"It all happens here brother, it hectic but good hectic if you know what I mean. We provide information support for this Protectors action and we also have an Outreach Team

informing others. There are two Media Teams filming and recording what's happenin. What we are doin here is sic man, like we are bringing all the info together, we have started a Library Team, those 3 dudes are awesome they are sourcing all the cool books, mags, docos, DVD,'s, internet links. Should be getting some deliveries soon enough and that's sooo cool, a lot of these cool people haven't been exposed to this stuff before and their sooo into it man."

"Where do you get your funds from to get all this together?" I ask.

"You have to ask the Livelihood Support dudes that, they look after the money scene, which is way cool cause it keeps all us dudes free to focus on what we do best. Get the best info out there. It is epic what's happenin here man, we have a Radio and CB team organising all the communications around the place. We can all talk to each other now on these little 80 channel UHF walkie talkies, way cool. We got a Computer nerdy team, na just kiddin, these dudes are way cool they are setting up all the computers for our Research teams."

"Researches teams, how many are there?" I ask

"Oh man they're growing by the day, we have a team of three focussed on the CSG deal here and everywhere. We got another team focussed on outreach, this mob are stylin, they're into the social network scene makin that happen. Any of the other Support groups need something researched they just ask us and we put a team straight on it, they'll be all over it. No guessing no wondering just ask us and we'll get the facts, fast, we love that shit man, love it" he says with such passion and wonders off into the tent.

The crowd that had been examining the boards moves off to give me a clear view. The first one is an update on what is happening with the drill rig and expected movements, along with blockade plans.

The next white board is titled Health Support. There is a list of health support services available at the purple tent. A whole range of alternative therapies, some of which I have never heard of, from massage to cranial sacral therapy. There is a list of presentations and times, at 2:30 there is a talk on the benefits of medicinal marijuana by a medical doctor. The dangers of immunisation at 3:30, Is the Food You're Eating KILLING YOU? 4:30. Health Risks of CSG Mining 6:30 in the big tent.

This is looking more like a university camp than a protest camp. There is a complete time table for tomorrow as well. As people mingle and move on, more arrive. There is a buzz in the area, I can't quite explain it.

A young woman dressed in rainbow coloured clothing and carrying a small baby tied to her, moved in next to me pointing to the next white board.

“Here you go, you see, Community and Security Support, All young males 14 – 40 please do not attend blockade.” She says directing her comment to a group of five friends. “What a great idea.”

“Why is that a great idea?” replied her colourful bearded friend.

“Remember the occupy protests, we were there when it started and it was all peaceful, the way we like it. Then we noticed these young men coming in regularly and stirring up the young blokes. We followed them when they left. They weren’t very careful, they ducked down a lane way into the next block and walked straight up to their waiting mates who were wearing police uniforms.” She says as she adjusts her restless baby.

“So what, that’s why us young blokes need to be there to sort them out.” His voice tinted with aggression.

“Can’t you see, that is what they want, they are better bully boys than we are and the law is on their side. At the occupy protest they stirred things up to the point that testosterone boils and the young get angry and vocal. That’s when they bring in the real violent cops, they call them the public disobedience squad now but they used to be the riot squad. These cops are real pigs, they give the others a bad name, they’re a nasty piece of work.” She pauses to present a breast to her hungry baby.

“I see, don’t give em any reason to get violent, then what do they do?” he says “more to the point what do we do, stand around and scratch ourselves?”

“Just look at these boards, we need the young men to help support all this, there is heaps to do. They’re making a village here man, check it out. Way more organised than our rainbow gatherings. We can learn a lot from this just like everyone else here. On that note I’m taking the baby to the health support tent to learn how to massage this little one properly” she says with a smile and walks off up the track.

I sit down on a bench made from rough sawn timber balancing on two cut logs. I take in the view and try to absorb what I am witnessing. I study the map and start to see more clearly the interactions. People can come here for their information or go directly to the group that interests them. There are videos, presentations and workshops held by all nine support groups. These groups are self-expanding, forming new teams and work groups as required. It is obvious that they have not reached the full potential of this structure, yet, but they are well on their way with this map guiding them through the process.

I must have been staring blankly into space, as a middle aged woman dressed in an old fashioned long floral dress sits next to me. “How are you going, you look a bit lost.”

“Very well thank you, I feel a bit taken back at the moment with all this activity going on. I guess I ‘m just trying to take it all in.” I replied truthfully.

"I know what you mean, I've been coming and going here for the last two weeks, but what has been happening in the last few days is wow." She says with a big smile on her face.

"What brings you here?" I enquire.

"I grew up not far from here, my folks still live here. They got very concerned when the drill rig showed up in this valley. They watched that documentary, 'Gasland' and that really upset them. They've worked hard all their lives to make a bit of paradise for themselves, quietly farming and getting into organics years ago. This whole mining thing threatens all that, as the Community and Security group says 'it's an unacceptable risk' and we'll have none of it." She replies with a stern look.

"Do you think you can stop them?" I cautiously ask.

"What do you think, just look around, there's no stopping us now. We are all coming together now. This whole coal seam gas thing has really shown us all that our governments no longer represent us the people, they have prostituted themselves to the corporate world and all of us too. It has been hard for the olders to accept this, they grew up believing and trusting our governments, thinking they had our best interests at heart. The young ones have been watching and knowing something is very wrong." She says with real conviction.

"What do you mean by that?"

"You're not from around here are you? We knew they had their greedy eyes on this place. We surveyed every home in this district, every one. The results were overwhelming over 87% voted to declare this region CSG free, some towns voted 100% against CSG mining. We made this very public, and what does our government do, ignore us, ha. Just look around you, this is a very beautiful part of the world and we are all committed to protect it. Not just here, this will spread out from here once people get a taste of this they won't go back to sleep. For our children's sake we have to lift the veil and see what is really going on. Have you visited the white tent yet?"

"No, no I haven't yet, they suggest doing that last." I reply, feeling slightly uncomfortable and ill informed.

"Good plan that, could be a bit overwhelming without soaking up all the other groups first. By the time you visit all other eight groups you feel empowered, like you're not alone, we have support. Future Trends and Potential Threats is a real eye opener, just the radiation effects from Fukushima and the risks to all of us especially the children, is outrageous. And what are our governments doing about it? Nothing, they are telling us nothing, it's a crime, like the fluoride in our drinking water, vaccinating our babies, putting mercury in our fillings, on and on, you'll see. We absolutely need to support ourselves now in stopping this madness; we can design our own futures in harmony with this planet. Permaculture has been showing us this for years."

“What can you tell me about Permaculture, I always thought it was about growing food.” I ask.

“You and most people, I did my first PDC ten years ago and thought the same thing before then.” she replies.

“What is a PDC ?”

“Permaculture Design Certificate course, it is based on the Permaculture a Designers’ Manual by Bill Mollison. It is a two week intensive train the trainer’s course in holistic design, I used to say sustainable design but that word has been bastardised, pardon the expression. Some people teach the course over six or so weekends and others by correspondence. The two week intensive works the best I think, something happens, the interaction with other students and the venue, the experience of community living even for two weeks is special. It is something you have to experience to understand.” She says enticingly.

“Where do they teach this?” I ask with obvious ignorance.

“Everywhere, there is not a country on earth that doesn’t have a permaculture group teaching in some way. The Livelihood Support Group have put together a Support Services team to focus on training courses here” she says.

“Did you say you did your first PDC ten years ago? Have you done more than one?” I question.

“I have attended three PDC’s over the years, two here and one overseas. Each teacher teaches in a different way, they specialise in different areas. Mostly they are food support specialists and this is what comes across to the students.” She says.

“What about this map, what do you know about that?”

“It’s brilliant, I know that much. I didn’t know anything about it until a few days ago. I was surprised as everyone when I saw how extensive it is and how easy it is to apply?” she replies.

“How can that be when you’ve attended three Permaculture courses?” I ask with interest.

“You have to ask my teachers that question. I don’t know, I guess they didn’t study the last chapter or didn’t get it. When I got to read Avoidable Catastrophe I raced back to my folks to get my copy of the designers manual to cross reference. I was stunned to collaborate the story to the manual. The map is not in there and that makes a real difference being able to see it all drawn up in a mind map. Sort of helps start the process. People stand in front of it for ages just staring at it. You can hear their enthusiasm climb as they see where they fit in, where they are useful. Everyone likes feeling useful no matter how old they are. The Four

Agreements really helps to keep things flowing and that was never part of Permaculture, until now. She says.

“What do you do here?” I ask.

“I usually help out in food support, today I am helping out here in Information Support. The local indigenous elders are due here today. I know them quite well, having grown up here, nice people, quiet usually but they are not happy with what’s going on. They will love all this support though, I can see their beaming smiles already and they’re not here yet.” She says with a matching smile. “One of our research teams has put together a contacts list of all the indigenous corporations, cooperatives, and social groups they could find in the country. They are going to sit down with the elders and write a passionate letter requesting their help to come here and protect this land. To stand with us. How exciting, we saw what happened when we focussed on the grey nomads, they responded immediately. We expect tribal groups to start arriving any day soon. This village is growing and growing for the better. It is like we are uniting after all this time, one big family, I love it.” She says.

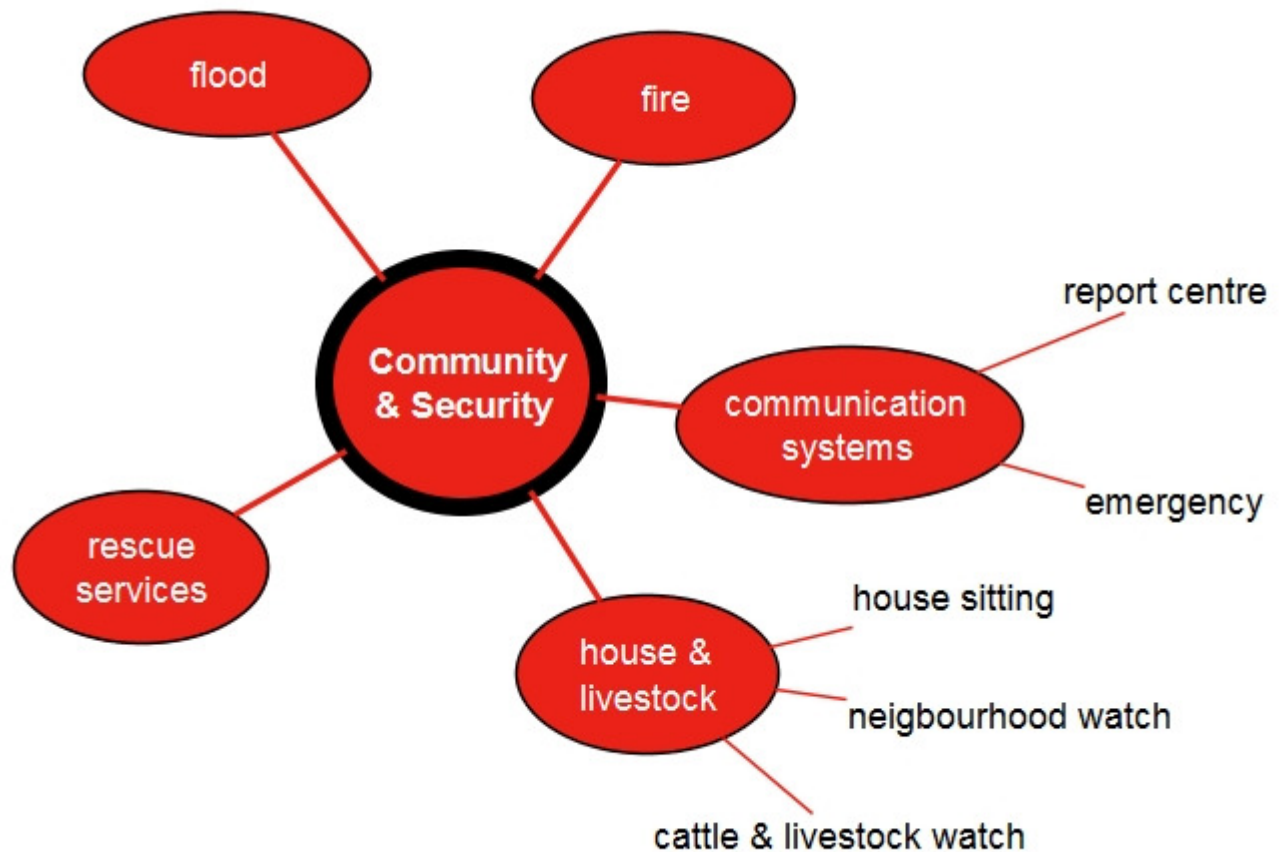
“What do you do with the Food Support group?” I ask.

“That’s where my Permaculture training and local knowledge comes in. I know all the local growers and I help out on the Markets and Outlets team sourcing food to feed this mob. We haven’t started growing much here yet, we don’t know how long we are going to be here. We have put together a design team to start designing food gardens. I also helped set up the Plant Resource team and they have started sprouting on a big scale. It all helps and adds to what we are doing. We are not walking away from here without assuring this country is protected forever.” She says

A young girl wearing a yellow bandana and carrying a UHF radio approaches the helpful woman in the floral dress. “Please excuse me, the elders have just arrived.”

“Thank you.” She says turning to address me. “You will have to excuse me I have to greet the elders, it has been nice talking to you, thank you for being here.” She gracefully moves off down the track in the direction of the car park.

My eyes follow her, as my mind races, more than before. I decide to explore the next tent. As I walk slowly up the track I tune into the rhythmic drumming, seemingly closer than before. My mind calms down as I take in the beautiful scenery, cascading greens blending with the now bright blue sky, mixed with colourful people peacefully and purposely interacting. How good is this.



Chapter 4 Community and Security Support

The red coloured tents are a hive of activity. As I approach the first marquee there is a white-board with *Community and Security Support* with a version of the map that shows this group only. *Volunteers for Jungle Patrol wanted*, in large red writing. Followed by *14 to 40 year old male please do not attend blockade*. The rest of the board is taken up with weather reports and road conditions.

An elderly man with short well-kept white hair and a neat goatee beard, bounds up to me. “You look like a healthy strapping young lad, we’re looking for people like you to help us out with our jungle patrol.” His voice resonating with authority.

“Jungle patrol, what is that?” I reply nervously.

“The hippies around these parts came up with the concept for their local harvest festival. Their way of managing themselves without the authorities getting involved. Their task is to find any problems and defuse it straight away before it escalates. The motto is *ask for help and help if asked*. Damn good Idea I say, someone told us about it yesterday and we’re putting it straight into action. Our Rescue Services team is coordinating this from that tent

over there where the Communication Systems team lives. You done your first aid certificate son?"

"Yes," I stutter, "I try and keep it up to date."

"Good show," he says as he takes me by the shoulder and points where he wants me to go.

"Good to have you on the team, off you go now."

"Ah it looks like you just got recruited by KFC." Says a middle aged clean shaven man, a rarity around here, and long black hair tied back in a ponytail. You must be healthy and have a first aid certificate, I bet. Welcome, they call me Sparky."

"Nice to meet you Sparky, who was that man?" I ask trying not to let him notice me.

"Ah that's KFC," he laughs. "He is a retired Lieutenant Colonel. Been retired from the army for years but you wouldn't know it with that goatee and all. He looks like Colonel Sanders of KFC fame, that's what we call him, but don't let him hear you say it. So you're volunteering for Jungle Patrol eh, good on you."

"Well I guess so, what do I have to do?" I asked wondering how I got into this all of a sudden.

"It's easy, we move around the farmers land here keeping the peace, basically helping anyone who needs help. We keep an eye on the blockade site too, up the road. We work in pairs, with one person having a first aid certificate, if we can swing it. One of us carries a UHF radio, we use channel 33. The Communication Systems team keeps in contact and coordinates any assistance we might need." Says Sparky.

"Sounds simple enough." I reply.

"Great you can be my partner for today. We're doing four hour shifts, but it goes real quick. I can teach you the deal on the run. Here put on this red vest and take this radio." He says passing me the bundle.

"I've only just got here and haven't seen everything yet." I comment.

"No worries," says Sparky. "We can start our patrol up that way, there's no fixed route, we just wander around. We have to do some radio checks along the way, to see where these things work and more importantly don't work."

We both put on our red vests with Jungle Patrol hand written on the grey reflective tape.

"You can operate the radio, we'll call you Sparky TOO (two) that way they'll know you're with me. No one is big on names here. I don't know how the hippies get on, all those weird names. It's good in a way; nobody is judging anybody for what they have done in the past. We are all focussed on what we can and are doing now." Says Sparky.

“Do you have much trouble on your patrols?” I ask imagining the worst.

“No, not much, there’s some pretty messed up people getting around. All sorts of misfits, people rejected by society. The Health Support Group is a great help, if we come across anyone with obvious mental health issues we call on them. They have a mental health team that can respond and do their magic.”

“Magic, what magic?” I ask.

“Oh there is all sorts of natural remedies that can safely calm people down, then they work closely with Social Supports Introductory team who help put them into function. Most mental health issues diminish when people feel useful, and eating good food helps them too.” Replies Sparky

“Don’t you just move them on, kick them out.”

“No, society does that, the old version of society, the one you live in out there in the world. Here we are participating and living in a new version of society. They call it the Supportive Universe model. Notice how all our functional groups include the word support. That’s why we are here to support each other and the planet. Just like Permaculture teaches.” He says.

“What do you know about Permaculture?” I ask.

“Nothing really, didn’t even know about it till the other day but I like what I am learning. Those that know about it say that you never stop learning about it. They say it is a way of thinking and you’re either thinking functionally or you’re not. Makes sense to me, at least organising ourselves this way makes sense.” He says.

“What about disruptive and violent people, what do you do about them?”

“We don’t tolerate violence, in any way. When we arrive we try and keep people back and away from anyone acting weird. We make sure they can’t hurt anyone else or themselves if possible. We aren’t allowed, by law, to touch anyone unless they ask us for help. We call the Health Support group and if they can’t deal with it we call the police. Everyone here has agreed to ethics and the four agreements, that sorts most problems ... just reminding them of that settles everything down.” Says Spark.

“What else happens here at Community and Security?”

“Well we’re growing by the day, we have just started our Rescue team and there are three dedicated people working on that. Jungle Patrol is part of that, they are organising stretcher beds, first aid kits, fire extinguishers for the kitchens and main fire pits, all that safety stuff. Then there is the Communication team, those three are organising all the radio communications and training, a p.a. system for the public areas, they have computers set up to monitor local weather events, fire, flood warning, that sort of thing. Each group designs their own expansion and modifies it to suit what is going on now. We had a design meeting

yesterday and agreed to train up our Jungle Patrol to be multi-functional and able to deal with fire and floods. Fires aren't a big deal at the moment cause of all the rain but we don't know how long this village is going to be here for. This farm country burns real well when it is dried out and fire has been identified as a risk. KFC is concerned a disgruntled mining employee or local might try and burn us out."

"What would you do about that?"

"That's what we do here, our group assesses risk and comes up with strategies to mitigate them. KFC has asked the farmer to move his cattle into adjoining paddocks to eat the grass down, reducing the fuel load. The local farmers are very resourceful and have lots of equipment available for our use if we need it. Old fire trucks, trailers with tanks and pumps, tractors, graders, you name it. That's another important job that all nine support groups do, identifying available resources: natural, human, machines, you name it. The Permaculture Manual talks about doing this in zone 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, I'm not sure what that all means, something to do with how often you visit a place I think. The Food Support Group are right into all that, we'll check them out on the way." He replies.

"Where does PermaRescue come into all of this?" I ask.

"They just started this, sparked our imaginations by telling a story that we could believe in and act on, showed us how to manage and support ourselves, we're doing the rest. I have read their course curriculum Permaculture Catastrophe Management and it looks full on. It's a two week intensive PDC set up in two parts. Part one is on risk assessment, natural, technological and sociological risks to humans and their settlements and design strategies to offset those risks. That only goes for three days, can't wait to do that. The next ten days is on catastrophe management, basically how to implement the map in four different phases - prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases. I'd love to do that one too." He says.

"Where and when are they doing this course, sounds interesting." I say.

"Don't know, I hear the guy who wrote that book Avoidable Catastrophe has been teaching this for 18 years, one on one across the dining table, the way he was taught by Bill Mollison. Word has it that he is recruiting a course development team to produce a professional power point presentation and a catastrophe designers manual to deliver the course. It shouldn't take them long, the curriculum I've seen is pretty well panned out, just needs those computer savvy youngsters to do their thing by the sounds of it." Says Sparky looking eager to move on.

"Why has it taken him this long?" I enquire.

"By the sounds of it, I guess, nobody has taken him seriously, not even in the Permaculture world. He apparently developed that map straight from the Permaculture Designers'

Manual back in 1998. He had been studying with that Bill Mollison fella for three years already by then. They say that's why he promotes that map as catastrophe management because he has realised it's gonna take a catastrophe for people to take him seriously. That's why he wrote that book *Avoidable Catastrophe* to try and inspire people before a real catastrophe hits and believe me when you visit the white tent you will wonder what is everyone waiting for. Our governments and their authorities are failing us the people already, what makes us think they have what it takes to manage what is about to befall us." He says with a smirk.

"What do you mean by what is about to befall us?" I asked with concern.

"You have no idea do you, where do you get your news from?" he asks.

"I read the daily papers and catch the nightly national news including the local news." I say with confidence.

"Do you just, do you check out all the other stations news as well? Have you noticed they all tell the same limited stories on the same day, they all follow the same recipe, happily informing you what pop star and sportsman is rooting who. You would think that there is nothing wrong with this planet, nothing wrong with CSG mining. Well that's simply not the truth, they are not telling us the truth, far from it, it's an insult to our intelligence. That's why the map and all this is so important. We are learning to take responsibility for ourselves. To keep ourselves informed of what is really happening. Designing our own futures in response to the madness we have inherited. It is up to all of us to stop this nonsense and get back to nature, supporting her and everything that lives on her. If we don't do this she will simply flick us off like the parasites we are. " He says staring me in the eyes.

"I know things are bad but they're not that bad surely?" I say feeling slightly uncomfortable.

"Worse than bad, out there, here and now it just keeps getting better. Permaculture is showing us that there are no problems only solutions to be found. They show us how to design with nature not against her. They design and plant out food forests, even in the desert. Can you believe that, imagine that, creating a full on forest and selecting all the plants to be edible. You gotta love that, the Food Support Group are talking to the farmer and his neighbours about doing that here. They have a design team working on that now, we'll give them a visit." He says.

Sparky's comment *here and now just keeps getting better*, jolts me out of my head as I take a deep breath and tell myself to relax. I feel the warmth of the sun on my face and arms, a gentle breeze tinted with the smell of eucalyptus. The whistles and calls of the wild life blending with the sounds of humanity. I take it all in, feeling peaceful, I don't think I've ever felt quite like this, something I could easily get used to.

Suddenly the radio I am holding screams to life. "Jungle patrol Marty to base over."

"Go ahead Marty over." replies base.

"Yeah base we have a medical emergency here near the big tent, an elderly man, was complaining of chest pain, then unconscious, distraught wife says he has history of heart attack, have started CPR need urgent help, over."

"Copy that Marty help is on its way switch to channel 35 over."

I see KFC spring into action as he storms into the communications tent. "Right you get on the phone call 000 emergency now, directions are written on the wall there, give em the gps co-ordination as well, I want to know their ETA. You get all Jungle patrols up here now ready for a stretcher relay, leave one team at the entrance to direct the ambulance, and are there any cops down there? Get Health Support on the radio, there's bound to be a doctor or nurse around here, get them on the scene. If this ambulance is gonna take too long I want a four wheel drive up here to hurry things up if needed, get onto Transport Support get a vehicle on standby. Sparky get out there and organise that stretcher relay."

"Come on Sparky Too, we got work to do," he says as I struggle to hear him over the constant chatter on the radio. "Switch your radio to channel 35. Smithy you and your partner sprint up to the big tent with this stretcher, you will need four of you to carry it with a patient in it, grab another two. There will be four others waiting to relieve you as you go, move fast but safe, you got that."

There are eight teams of Jungle Patrol all eager to help. Sparky instructs them quickly in where to run to meet the stretcher and where they're to run to.

"Jungle Patrol Marty to base over."

"Go ahead Marty over."

"Health Support have just arrived they have a doctor and a nurse with them ... standby, over."

"Base to Marty, stretcher is on its way. Have your partner direct them from the main track over."

"Copy that base, can see it coming now."

"Marty to base, doctor says patient is experiencing a heart attack. Does anyone here have a defibrillator, over."

"Base to Marty standby".

I can see the communications tent abuzz with radios beeping. The call goes out to all the support groups.

“Transport Support Christy to base over”.

“Go ahead Christy over.”

“We have an elderly couple that have just arrived who say they have a defibrillator in their caravan down here in the car park.”

“Copy that Christy we need that now can you send your fastest runner up the track, make sure they have a radio and switched to channel 35, over.”

“Jungle Patrol Marty to base, the doctor doesn’t want to move the patient until he is hooked up to the defibrillator, doctor is on his mobile trying to get rescue helicopter here, over.”

“Yeah copy that Marty’ need runner to relay defibrillator over.”

“Jungle Patrol Sparky here, I’m onto that over.”

I find my heart racing, blood pumping into my racing legs chasing Sparky down the track.

“Stay back here and get ready to run in front of me clearing the track.” Yells Sparky.

I stop, thankfully to catch my breath for what seemed like only a second before I hear Sparky screaming” GO GO.”

“Get out the way coming through.” I yell with all my might running faster than I thought possible. “Emergency move!”

Sparky over takes me leading the way over the hill and into the clearing where the doctor is kneeling over the old man, his shirt ripped open, a woman rapidly pushing on his chest. Sparky passes the small pack to the doctor.

“Open it, get the razor blade and shave his chest here and here.” Orders the doctor.

“Electrodes on ... all clear.”

The machine chimes to life with a surreal calm voice giving instructions which the doctor ignores and pushes the red button. The old man’s limp body jumps, then nothing.

“All clear.” Repeats the doctor and again hits the red button.”

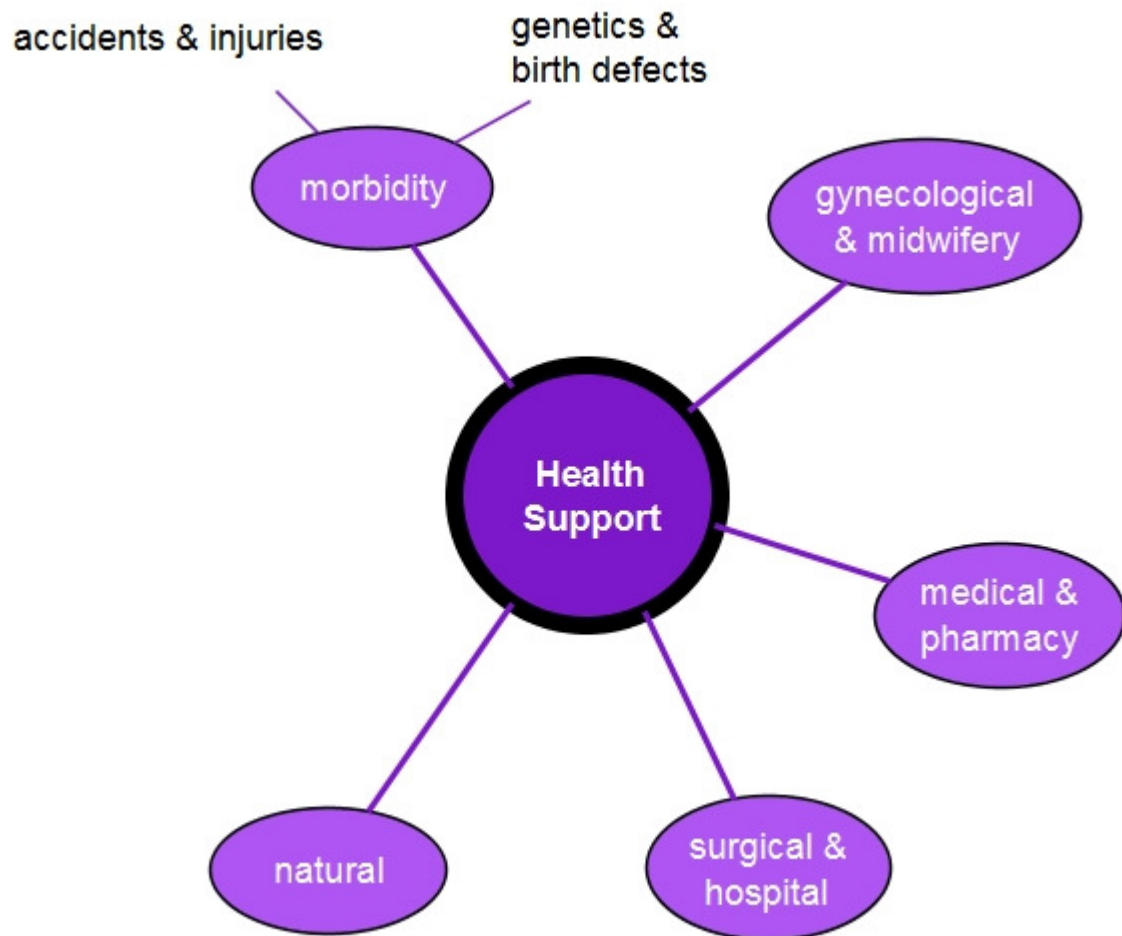
The old man’s chest and upper body jump up off the ground then back down. This time the machine keeps beeping, his heart is beating.

I feel overwhelmed, tears welling up in my eyes as I see the man’s distraught wife being comforted by two young women, Jungle patrol teams moving in to transfer the man onto the stretcher. The radio buzzing orders I can’t quite make out.

Sparky shakes my arm, "You all right mate, good job, you can yell louder than I can while I'm running. I am going to supervise the stretcher relay, I want you to stay with the man's wife, we need to find out from her what medications he's on and his medical history. She's too upset right now, Health Support are looking after her. You just hang around and stay on channel 35. Contact us when you find out anything."

"No worries Sparky, thanks mate." I reply chocking back the moment.

"Feels good to be useful don't it." Sparky smiles.



Chapter 5

Health Support

“No need to fuss dearies,” says the old lady, whose husband has just been carried away on a stretcher. “I’m alright now, this has happened before you know.”

“We’re happy to fuss here Maple, that’s our job. Can I get you a nice cup of chamomile tea, it will help settle your nerves.” Says the young woman dressed in purple, as she sits Maple down on a comfy chair in the first aid tent.

“That would be nice dear, thank you.” Says Maple, clearly more relaxed.

I catch the young woman as she moves away to get the tea. “Sorry to bother you but they need to know what medications her husband is on.”

“Yes I know the doctor told me, they are travelling with friends, we called them, and they are on their way down there now.” she says.

“That’s great, thank you.” I say and immediately call Sparky to tell him.

“Good job,” replies Sparky, “The old fella is stable and the ambulance should be here soon, stay put and I will be up there soon, switch your radio back to channel 33, out.”

“We’ll that was exciting and I only just got here.” I say.

The young women laugh. “So you haven’t even explored the place yet? It takes a good half day to check out what it is happening here and then it changes. Come on let me show you around our humble Health Support camp. My name is Jemma, nice to meet you. Lucy will fuss over Maple and let her know her husband is alright.” she says and turns to talk with Lucy.

“Lovely to meet you Jemma, they call me Sparky Too.” I say with a large grin.

“We’ll that’s easier to remember than a lot of names around here.” She says pointing around her. “This here is the first aid tent where we tune people into this bioregion by letting them know all about our lovely ticks, leeches, snakes and spiders and how we treat them. We encourage people to drop in here and let us know if they have any pre-existing health problems we may be able to help them with.” She says.

“Do many people do that?”

“Not at first but we are finding more and more people are coming to our presentations and workshops, where they learn, some for the first time, that there are many natural alternatives to modern medicine. We have a large tent set up over there.” She says pointing to the large circus style tent. “It used to be smaller but like everything here we are growing all the time. We show documentaries, that you don’t see on TV. We have guest presenters and there’s more of them booking in too.”

We walk around the back of the first aid tent, where there is another smaller tent set up for massage. “We are working with Building Support to create another space over there under the trees, where mums and mums to be can hang out with their little ones and learn from each other. They can make as much noise as they want over there without disturbing anyone else.” Says Jemma.

“How do things work over here?”

She leads me to the notice-board on the side of the first aid tent. Pointing to a large version of the map showing just Health Support. “We have three people managing the Health Support Group and we design amongst ourselves how to best expand this group. You can see we have already created a Natural team, these three people are responsible for coordinating all the different skills in natural therapies as they arrive. It is obvious that whoever designed this map was not a health support specialist. But that’s alright. We are, and the process is the same, we just modify the sub groups to suit our situation.”

“What is this Morbidity team all about, sounds a bit grim.” I suggest.

“Yeah it is a bit grim, we’re not addressing this one yet, though we will. It is actually very important, if you refer to the Permaculture Designers’ Manual, as we have, you will see a more detailed explanation, the map is just a summary.” She picks up the book from a nearby desk. “Here you go – Page 513, 4.1 Profile of morbidity in region, life expectance, infant mortality, cause of death, ailments in order of importance, under 4.1 Accidents and injuries; infectious diseases; addictions and drugs. 4.2 Genetic and birth defects; nutritional problems. Note: until the above listing is made, no region can assess health priorities.

We will be talking with Information Support about putting together a research team to focus on this. Especially how this affects areas where CSG mining has been happening for decades. I know the results will be scary, we’ll see.” She says.

“My jungle patrol partner was telling me that you have a mental health team, how does that work?”

“The Natural team are looking after that. They make sure there’s always a team of three on standby with a radio. There’s plenty of therapists here now to cover it. When someone loses it we bring them back here and settle them down with herbal teas, healthy food, and quiet surroundings. We all encourage them to listen to what they are saying and to realise they are not following the four agreements and we all said we would. It seems we’ve all been taught by our education system to do the opposite of the four agreements. How insane is that. We guide them into helping us help others, not just here. They go off and plant trees with Food Support, help the Building Support teams. They love it. It works really well.” She says proudly.

“How does the four agreements help?”

“Just like the map is a summary of bioregional organisation, the four agreements you see written on the posters around the place are a summary too.” she says as she picks up a photocopy from the desk. “We have a more detailed summary of the book here (she reads):

The Four Agreements

1. *Be Impeccable with your word.*

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

2. *Don’t take anything personally.*

Nothing others do is because of you. What others say or do is a projection of their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won’t be the victim of needless suffering.

3. *Don't make assumptions.*

Find the courage to ask questions and express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

4. *Always do your best.*

Your best is going to change from moment to moment. It will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstances, simply do your best and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret. Have patience with yourself. Take action. Practice forgiveness. If you do your best always, transformation will happen as a matter of course."

"Wow, I obviously didn't realise what it really meant, where did this come from." I asked amazed.

"It is TOLTEC philosophy from South America, ancient; it formed thousands of years ago around the same time as the TAO in China. The guy, who wrote the book, Don Miguel Ruiz, is a medical doctor, a surgeon actually. He was taught by his grandfather the ancient ways and didn't take it all that seriously until a near fatal car accident. He now writes and promotes this philosophy around the world, thankfully." She says.

"I can certainly see how this might work, but what has that got to do with Permaculture?" I ask.

"Nothing, until now. I think this is a big part of why this is all working here now. I've been involved with the Permaculture community for years and I can tell you they haven't adopted the four agreements. Teachers' whinge and bitch about other teachers doing this or not doing that. There is minimal cooperation with each other in a lot of cases. Leaving students watching wide eyed and wondering what the hell is going on. This will stop all that." She says knowingly.

"How will this stop all that?"

"People attracted to Permaculture are very intelligent and dedicated. They are not stupid and will not behave in a way that makes them look stupid. When pointed out that they are gossiping and using poisonous words, they will stop. As soon as it is pointed out that they are taking things personally or making assumptions, they will stop. Most Permaculture people are already hooked on doing the best they can, that's what drives them. The new generations of Permaculturalists are more than ready for this shift, they will drive it home." She says.

"Do you really think so?" I ask.

"I know so, we are demonstrating that here, look around you, see how peaceful it is. See how cooperative everyone is, they all feel part of what's happening cause they're involve.

They all study the map when they arrive and they can see where they fit in and eager are to participate.” Says Jemma, flicking her curly hair from her eyes.

“Why do you think this hasn’t this happened before now?”

“There is so much to learn in a two week intensive course in Permaculture, the course is based on the Designer’s Manual and if you flick through it you will see just how exciting it is. Most of the good teachers are Food Support specialists and their designs reflect that. Instead of acknowledging that, and allow a non-hierarchal process to interact and expand their designs, making them even more holistic, they tend to hang onto control and defend their position. This has nothing to do with Permaculture it’s contradictive. You have seen how we operate here, how could we do this so quickly and thoroughly with one person in control. We couldn’t, no way. That’s why I love the PermaRescue approach, we don’t need anyone’s permission to do this, not the governments, not the Permaculture hierarchy, no one’s.” She says.

“Aren’t the Permaculture hierarchy driving this?”

“No, we all are making this happen, I guess the hierarchy would be hearing about this by now. There’s a section in the designers manual, here it is page 531: *As for dissenters, there never is any impediment to their setting up their own ideal system, and living in it; or setting up a parallel work group to show how it should be done. Above all, there is no one way to do anything.*” Says Jemma.

“What about PermaRescue, where do they fit into all of this?” I ask

“They just started it, nobody knows much about them. I guess the author of their book found himself to be a dissenter somewhere along the track and wrote this book to encourage a different approach.” Says Jemma.

Sparky comes bounding up with his eyes shining. “Ah there you are, G’day Jemma your looking lovely today.”

“Why thank you Sparky, how’s the patient?” asks Jemma.

“He’s alive, that’s good, he’s in good hands. The doctor has gone with him in the ambulance. Transport support are organising a vehicle to take in his wife and bring back the doc. All is good, don’t want anyone dying on my shift.” Says Sparky.

“I’ve bought it up with our group leaders about getting a defibrillator or two on site. I think they have already been onto Livelihood Support to get the funds, there should be one here tomorrow.” Say Jemma.

“Great, how lucky was that, we would have lost him without it. This bloke’s not causing you any trouble is he.” Says Sparky looking at me.

“Trouble, no, not at all. You know how we all love passing on information around here, especially when some-one’s interested.” Says Jemma.

“Very good, well we need to get back on patrol and I need a feed. What do you say Sparky Too, you hungry?” says Sparky.

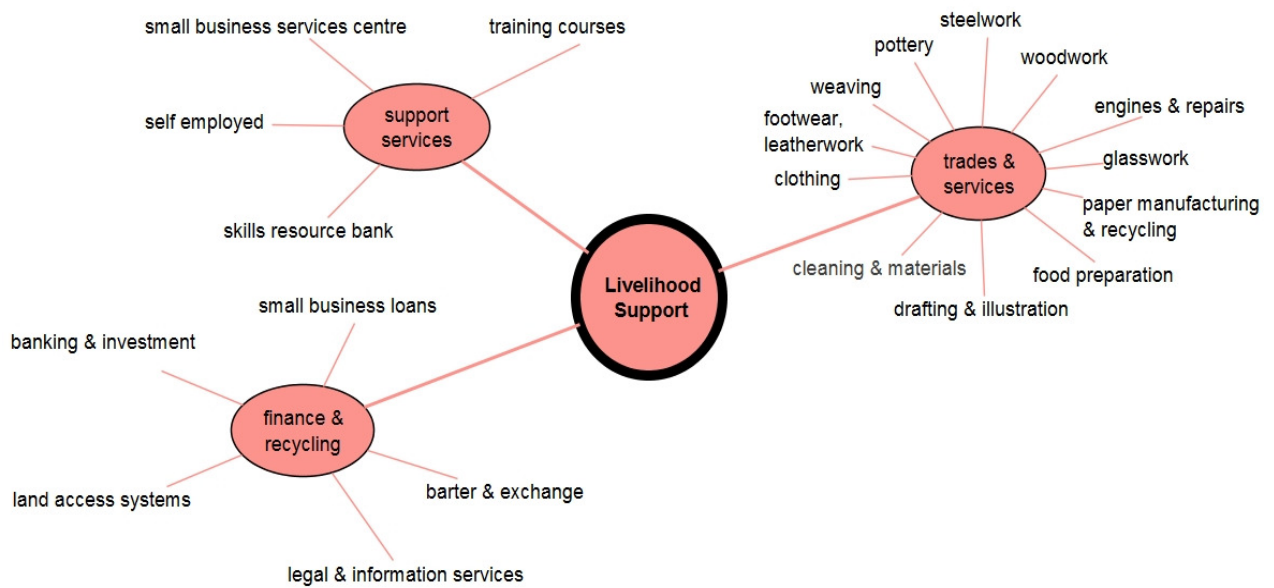
“I’m starving, could eat a horse.” I say as my stomach grumbles.

“No horse here mate, I heard something about the local farmers bringing over some more beef today. Let’s head over to Livelihood Support for a feed.” He says.

“What Livelihood Support don’t you mean Food Support?” I ask puzzled.

“Check out your map, you’ll see that Food Support grows the food, preserves it, markets it, and sources it. What do you want them to do everything? Livelihood Support has a team organising Essential Trades and Manufacturing Services and Skills. There you’ll find catering and cleaning and a whole lot more, you’ll see.”

We say our goodbyes to the lovely Jemma and I follow my nose up the hill. Feeling lighter, somehow. Can’t quite explain how good I am feeling, but I like it.



Chapter 6 Livelihood Support

The Livelihood Support Group is spread out, looking very much like a village on its own. Pink flags and welcome banners swaying gently in the breeze. There are groups of people mingling together. Farmers mixing with greenies, oldies with the young, all interacting and all very much interested with what is happening. It is obvious that people from all different social backgrounds are connecting here.

“This place just keeps getting busier, the camp has grown since I was here last.” says Sparky, “We’ll check in with the food tent and see if they need help, get a feed, then I’ll show you around.”

As we shuffle through the crowd I can’t help but notice women dressed in purple letting the people know what was happening at the Health Support tent after lunch. A young man proudly wearing his yellow bandana, patiently escorts an elderly couple around the mob.

Sparky singles out the three people dressed in pink. “It’s getting busy in these parts.” He says.

“Sure is, I think we need to change the design and move these information boards over to the trees there.” Says the small man with thick glasses. “People are more interested in what we are doing than I thought. They are queuing up to read them, blocking the path, they’ll be more comfortable waiting over there in the shade and it’ll keep everything flowing.”

“No worries, good plan, we’ll get straight onto it.” Says Sparky, signalling to me to swing into action.

Excusing ourselves, we pick up a long white board with Livelihood Support Group written in large letters followed by Community Finance and Recycling Team.

“This team is starting up a LETS system, have you heard of that?” asks Sparky.

“It’s some sort of barter scheme, isn’t it?” I reply.

“Sort of, barter is more a one on one exchange. With this LETS thing a member in credit can spend over the whole range of services and goods offered.” says Sparky.

“What range of goods and services?” I ask.

“Everything on the map.” Sparky says, giving me a moment for it to sink in. “Everything on that map. When they get this up and running in the next day or two. We will earn credits for what we are doing and spend it here and not just here, they are going to extend this system to all future Protector actions.”

“Thanks guys.” says the man with the thick glasses, coughing in his handkerchief to clear his throat. “This is all very exciting isn’t it, there’s a growing group of us boring old accountants and legal types over here who aren’t feeling so bored any more, I can tell you.”

“There does seem to be a lot of people interested in what you are doing here.” I say.

“As our group has grown so has the interest. We first started our Essential Trades and Services team to coordinate all the people arriving and identify their skills. That’s how we flushed out our legal and money people and started the Community Finance and Recycling Team that I’m part of.” He proudly announces. “We started off with just three of us and the potential was startling and dazzlingly obvious to all of us. Word has spread quickly. Professionals, PhD students, retirees are coming just to experience and be part of this.”

“How are you going to accommodate all these people arriving?”

“Follow the map and expand. We are working with Building Support to set up some more temporary structures so we can form our tertiary teams. We need teams of three people to focus on LETS or as we call it the informal economy, Banking and Investment, what we call the formal economy, Legal and Information Services, this team needs its own tent now. That’s just what’s happening in our own little sub group.” He says taking off his glasses to wipe the sweat off his forehead.

“How is all this funded?”

“Magically” he laughs, “Magically for now anyway. People are contributing what they can. Doing the best they can. The grey nomads have helped, they are used to paying camping fees and our Building Support Group is doing a great job making the camp comfortable for us all. Our Banking and Investment Team collects and accounts for all the donations. Our Legal Team is working on setting up the legal structures to support all this. The

Permaculture Designers' Manual has us all engrossed, we are all trying to get our heads around the last chapter and applying it. Legal structures have already been designed for years that encompass all of the activities in this map and provide for tax deductibility."

"Tax deductible, how's that work?" I asked intrigued.

"It's all there in The Designers' Manual last chapter, all the good stuff, Trusts and Legal Strategies, Developmental and Property Trusts, Village Development, Money and Finance, Land Access, Ethical Investment. Recycling finance within community, ha, who would ever have thought? They don't teach that in university." Says the little man, laughing to himself as he scurries off.

"I love what they do here but it is not my cup of tea I can tell you. All that money and legal stuff does my head in. I'm so glad that they're doing it though." Says Sparky. "It's all flowing now, lets get a feed."

Really large tarps supported high in the air by bamboo poles and colourfully decorated fill the scene. A long table runs down the centre in between the bamboo posts. The table too is bamboo, split, as are the benches lined up along the walls. In the centre of the long table at one end are huge woven baskets with assorted fruits. Further along are oversized wooden and stainless steel bowls and pots, containing leafy salads, rice salads, sprouts, vegetarian dhal, beef dhal, mild and hot varieties. The catering crew can be seen dressed in pink talking with people about what's for lunch, where it came from, how it was grown, fussing over the orders, smiling lots.

"How does this work?" I ask Sparky.

"Simple, grab a plate and cutlery from that end of the table and help yourself. There's a washing up station at the end of the tent where you clean up and leave in the racks to dry, enjoy." He says as he serves up.

"Where do we pay for this beautiful food?"

"There's a donation box around here somewhere, or just pay the jesters when they come around." Says Sparky.

"The jesters, who are they?"

"You'll know when you see em, they get around in groups of three or more all dressed up like court jesters, colourful like, playing different instruments and performing for the crowd, while one of them moves around with a bucket accepting donations to fund all of this. You'd be amazed how much money they collect for the cause. You'll usually see em around lunch and dinner." He says waiting for me to follow him.

I sit down on a log, under a tree, opposite Sparky. The surroundings are amazing and the food is better. "The food is beautiful, how do they put this together here?" I ask.

“Easy, haven’t you been to a Rainbow Gathering? I’ve been to one where there were three thousand people, representing fifty two countries. Everyone got fed communally, sitting in a big circle and another circle inside about two metres away. When the circles are formed the jesters come in to play, entertain and collect donations. The food is prepared in massive pots, some cooking all day ready for dinner. All this in a bush kitchen. Smiling people with big pots and ladles enter the space between the circles and serve the waiting masses, bowls outstretched. It works a treat, been a bit wet here to do the circle thing though.” He says.

“Bush kitchen eh.” I say looking a bit sceptical at this delicious food.

“Yeah don’t worry about that, people get plenty sick at those gatherings.” Sparky says with a laugh. “Since this Livelihood Support Group has formed, the money has flowed and we can afford to be a bit more up market. The Catering Team have hired a mobile commercial kitchen. I don’t know what they do in there but they are good at it. They can focus on just that, cause they give their shopping list to the Food Support Group who has a market and outlets team onto supply and ordering. Then they work with the Transport Support Group to get it picked up and delivered. That’s what I like about this map it frees people up to focus on what they are good at and know they are supported. You know because you can see it in action, things get done.”

“Well I can taste something going on in this food, I can tell you, you don’t get a feed like that in the big smoke.” I say finishing off my bowl.

“Yeah, fresh food, might as well grown it right here, didn’t come from far away. Makes all the difference, that does.” Says Sparky, licking his bowl clean.

After cleaning up Sparky leads me to yet another shelter tucked away behind the large eatery. The white board has the portion of the map showing Livelihood Support and a big pink circle drawn around Support Services.

“This is new, they’ve started up their Support Services Team, lets check it out.” He says walking up to a woman in her thirties wearing an Anna name tag. “How’s it all going over here?”

“Great,” she says as she shuffles a large wad of papers on the desk. “We are just getting our Skills Resource Bank Team organised here to put all this information into a database on the computer. We are hoping to attract some programmers who can put all this info into a useable format.”

“What information is that?”

“Oh we’re just focussing on Skills in this team. The Social Support Group is collecting these personal maps that everyone is given when they arrive. On the map they circle their skills, passions, contact details and we put it in the computer. All the Support Groups can access this when they need to find people to help them. It’s also going to be handy for the LETS

Team, I can already see that we cover nearly all the bases on the map already, a lot of these oldies have skills all over the map, you'd never know it if you didn't fish it out of them." She says with a wink.

"How do you fish it out of them?" I ask curiously.

"At every opportunity, the map opens it all up for people. Most of them don't consider their life skills to be all that relevant. So we put up large posters of the map everywhere where people can stand or sit quietly and study it. Then we give them a small version to carry around and fill in at their leisure. Then every support group does the best they can to encourage everyone into function. Social Support has an Introductory Team, that sits down with people and helps them as they arrive and we do the same here. All the other support groups try and recruit as they meet." She says.

"That's what happened to me." I say adjusting my jungle patrol vest and retrieving my copy of the map from my pocket. "I haven't filled this in yet."

"Ah, no problem we can do that now if you like. Just fill in the contact details, here's a pen. Then start circling any areas you have skills in blue and what interests you in red." she replies.

"Where to start?" I say after completing the contact details.

"Let's start from now and work backwards. By the look of your vest you are already in function. Jungle patrol lives in Community and Security under Rescue Services, here, circle that one to start with. Now what other skills do you have?" she says.

"I lecture in sociology and spend a lot of time researching on the internet." I reply honestly.

"Well then if you look at social support, checkout which sub group you may be interested in and as for research you will see that those skills are used in nearly all the groups. What skills did you grow up with as a kid?" she asks.

"I haven't thought about that for a while." I say leaning back in the chair with memories racing forward. "I spent a lot of time at my grandparent's farm as a kid, helping them out around the farm."

"That's great, those skills are as highly valued here as you can see in Food Support. Have a good look at each group and circle what you think describes your life experience and how that can support us all." she says.

Looking at it that way I steadily move around the map circling, starting with Food Support > Plant Resources. I circle research institutes and government departments. I can navigate around those fairly well. Animal Resources again government departments I circle. Next Integrated Pest Management > information Sources I circle, I could put something together pretty quickly especially as part of a team. Building Support > construction materials >

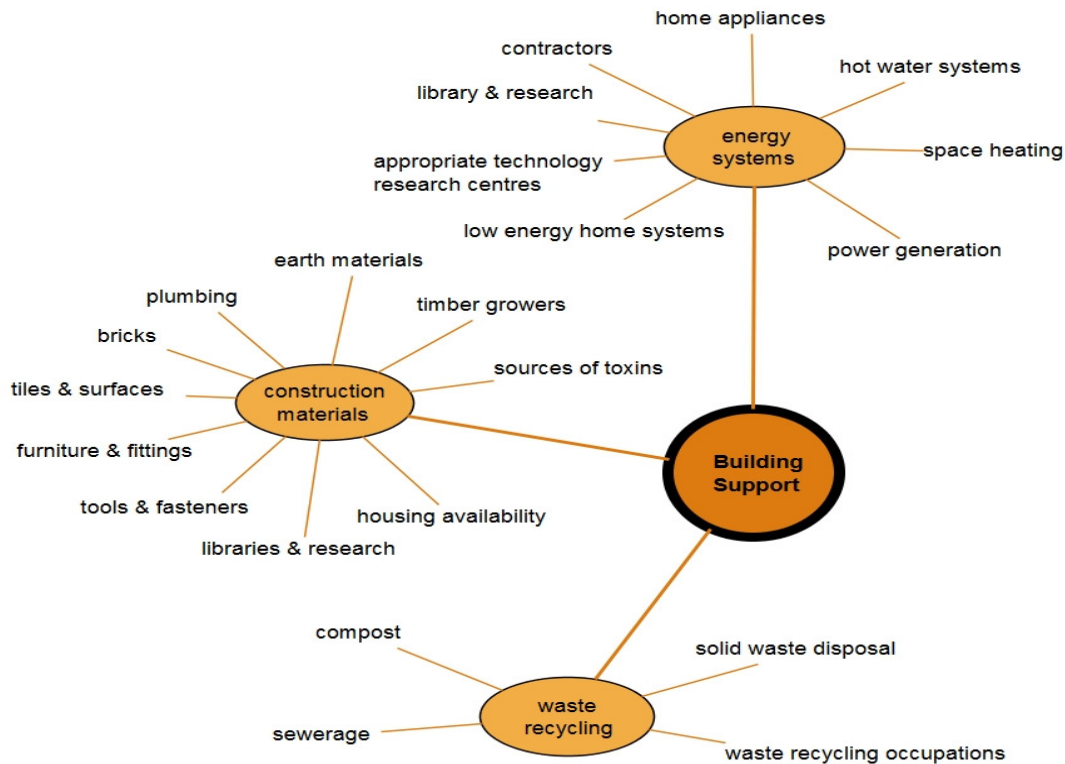
library and research, would be interesting. Energy Systems > research centres, yes. Information Support > Business and research, computer, and standard documents and data. This one looks interesting: Future Trends and Potential Threats > implications of policy making, I circle this one in red. "There you go." I announce as I hand over the map.

"Terrific, you are a handy guy, seeing that you are into lecturing you might like to keep an eye on our Training Courses Team that's forming to focus on organising quality training here. The Essential trade's team is leading the way. They've already started basket weaving workshops and they're organising a bamboo workshop. It's all happening." She says with obvious excitement.

"Thank you very much for your time Anna." As I turn to answer the radio.

"Base to all jungle patrol, Building Support and Transport Support are shifting camp down to the front. Anyone available to help, over."

"Yeah Sparky's on their way, over." I respond casually, really starting to relax into this whole thing now. It almost feels natural.



Chapter 7 Building Support

The Building Support camp is a hive of activity as people dismantle tarps while others are heading down-hill laden with goods. Sparky heads for a large man with bright red hair, who appears to be coordinating the move.

“Bob the builder, how you going mate?” says Sparky. “What can we do to help?”

“Flat out mate, flat out as usual. We be movin the group down by the entrance where all our deliveries arrive. The Energy Systems Team will stay here. Plenty of people around to carry things maybe you mob can make sure they don’t bump into anyone.” Says Bob, as he turns to issue more instructions to a fresh group of volunteers.

“Bob runs the Building Support Group along with two others, he’s a builder along with his mate and the other fella is a very handy man. Between em they are doing a great job putting this camp together on the run. A couple of local blokes have shown up who specialise in building bamboo structures and furniture. You can already see their influence around the place. Bob and his mates are still trying to get their heads around it but they’re lovin it by the looks.” Says Sparky.

“You guys are doing a great job,” I say “the camp is really coming along nicely.”

“Yeah, what do you reckon about bamboo eh. It’s bloody amazing what you can do with it and cheap. The stuff grows better than weeds round these parts. Don’t know how long it lasts though, but hey it’s perfect for what we’re doin here. If we make anything too permanent around here we’d be having to deal with the local building inspectors. They wouldn’t be able to keep up with this mob, I’m flat out keepin up.” Bob says.

“How do you go about staying on top of it all?”

Bob laughs “with a good team matey, with good teams. There’s lots of top people helping out around here, we’re all learning from each other. Our Waste and Recycling, Construction and Energy Teams are all up and running now. My job is to support them, if they need toilet paper, I make sure they get it, whatever it takes to keep things running smoothly. We also have a design team focussing on planning, I keep updated with them so I know what is coming. They work closely with the other groups, so we can get the big picture. This is all part of the design process, being able to place components in the right spot to maximise efficiency. You know all that Permaculture stuff.”

“Are you a Permaculturalist too?”

“No,” laughs Bob, “When I get a chance I’ll be on the next course though. Bloody good idea, makes perfect sense if you ask me. Just the way we build these days is mad, it’s terribly expensive and frighteningly toxic. A new house these days is more toxic inside than it is outside, even in the most polluted cities. Takes years for the fumes to gas off, you wouldn’t wanta live in it. Now they tell me it’s the same deal with the food we buy, bloody hell, I tell ya that’s why it’s important to learn to look after ourselves. What’s happenin here is awesome, it’s good to be part of it. This is only going to grow from here.”

“What makes you think that?” I ask.

“Oh mate, there are folks here from all sorts of life, some with money and not much in the way of practical skills. Others loaded with talent and no money or access to land. The connections are already happening, farmers are talking about creating villages, business people are talking about ethical investments, young people wanting to live in a supportive environment and raise their kids. Who knows how long we will be here for, there are plenty of other places that need protecting. I can see this whole circus permanently on tour, reproducing itself in its wake, imagine that.” Says Bob with a sparkle in his eyes.

“You gonna take the missus and kids on tour Bob?” asks Sparky.

“Yeah thinkin about it mate, you wouldn’t believe it, the missus and kids are lovin this whole deal. She’s already talking with Livelihood Support about home schooling the kids here. They’re all getting right into it, kids learned how to make a basket yesterday, how cool is that. They’re learnin more here than at school and the missus doesn’t feel so isolated like

she does at home, she's made a stack of friends already. You know what they say mate a happy missus is a good one." Says Bob.

"How's that gonna work with your real job?" asks Sparky.

"This will be my real job, feels more real. They're talking about starting up that LETS system and we already have all the goods and services that I need here. Plenty of local farmers are getting involved and are grateful that we are here standing beside them, they have a stack of odd jobs to be done. You know what the hippies say, magic happens. Any way nice talking to you guys I better get down the front and supervise setting our new camp, need it done today, we've got a stack of bamboo arriving tomorrow." Says Bob as he grabs one end of a rolled up tarp and heads off.

It's quieted down a bit, I guess most people are at lunch. The mob of helpers have quickly picked up their loads and are gone, it is amazing what many helpful hands can do in a short time. Two lone tents still remain flying the brown flag, colours of Building Support. They have drawn up the map showing just the Building Support Group on a white sheet and tied it flapping between two trees. There is a big red arrow pointing to the Energy Systems Team saying you are here. There is a young woman and man sitting behind a desk in the first tent, snacking on some nuts.

"This is a new addition, very nice, what happens here?" Sparky asks.

"We just got this team up and running today brother, we're responsible for designing all the electrical energy systems. Researching and sourcing, sourcing those super quiet generators, the ones you can run computers off, for now. We are teaming up with the local solar power businesses and using this site to promote their products, they should be showing up today or tomorrow. We just finished finding these quiet 12 volt fans for the Waste and Recycling Team. They need them for their composting toilet vent pipes, what- ever that is." Says the young man, pausing to put some more nuts into his mouth.

"Basically if any of the support groups has any power issues they let us know and a team of us come up with a solution. We then present the costings to the Livelihood Support Group who find ways to fund it and voila." Says the young woman cheerfully.

"What happens in the other tent?" I ask

"We are putting on documentary videos to inform people what's available and what's dangerous. Like a whole lot of these people bro, especially the old ones, have no idea about EMF radiation and the negative health effect of their mobile phone, their power board smart metres, their microwave ovens, electric blankets, hair-dryers and on and on. It's scary bro, it really is, they tell em nothing on main stream media, nothing important anyway." He says chewing on some more nuts.

“That’s our mission this afternoon, is to put together the best doco’s out there, there’s some brilliant info on you tube and the net. We’re talking with Information Supports computer team about running workshops so the oldies can learn to navigate on the computer and find this stuff for themselves. It’s really important to get the facts out there now that everyone is starting to wake up to the fact that our governments are not serving our best interests.” she says.

“Thanks’ for your time guys you are doing a great job, keep up the good work. Do you know if your Waste and Recycling team have finished that new toilet block they’ve been working on?” asks Sparky.

“Yeah, yeah bro it’s all finished, you should check it out. Can you take these two fans up to them for us?” says the young man.

“No worries, happy to.” says Sparky as he grabs the fans and strolls off with me following.

“I love this team,” says Sparky, “they really make this whole show a much more enjoyable experience. Dealing safely with all our shit, our food wastes and garbage. Sorting and recycling, pretty much all gets reused somehow.”

“Didn’t I see portable toilets down in the car park?” I say.

“Yeah, they’re a new addition, we started out with trenches and a few pits, dug well away from any ground water flows. These lads are now building compost dunnies, we shit into these 200 litre olive barrels and when they’re full they close em up and roll em out into the paddock in a sunny spot and let em sit for a year. Then they’ll use it to fertilise all the trees they’re planting around here. Top idea, we encourage blokes to pee on a tree, the trees love it especial citrus trees they tell me.” says Sparky.

“What happens when women pee in these toilets?” I ask with genuine interest.

“These blokes got one of those research teams from Information Support to come up with some designs off the internet. They chose this design because it uses heavy duty plastic olive barrels, which are a dime a dozen around here, cheap as chips mate. The beauty of this design is that it has a urine separator built into it. The urine gets drained away into another barrel or filtration system. They are working on designs using gravel pits, straw bales, woodchips, and reed bed systems. If you’re interested like I am, you can keep an eye on their notice boards where they let you know when the design teams are meeting and what they’re focussed on. It’s fascinating to me, I love to see the design process in action and watch how it evolves. One person will suggest a design and by the time the discussion goes around the table the design has evolved so much it hardly looks the same as when it started. It’s a real team effort, just goes to show more heads are better than one. Here you go fellas, these are the fans you ordered.” says Sparky as he passes the fans to a large man in a blue singlet and shorts sporting a plumber’s crack.

“You bloody beauty mate, we’re ready to put those in and lob one in.” he says with a sly grin.

“Looks good.” I say.

“Good, it’s a bloody ripper mate, best shitter in town. She’s not bad for our first demo model, the next ones will be slightly better, cheaper and easier to build. These fans will suck any foul smells straight up our vent pipes, you can feel your bits being sucked in when they work, no smells from the olive drum or from smelly farts, they’re the ducks nuts mate, just add sawdust and bob’s your uncle.” Says the jolly plumber with his bum crack seeming to laugh with him as he passes the fans to his offsider.

I wander off to find a quiet tree to pee on. I find the perfect spot under a huge eucalypt tree overlooking the camp ground tucked into a small valley. What a beautiful sight, there must be at least fifty or sixty tents spread out amongst the green forest. Brown paths can be seen slithering across the landscape, wisps of smoke from fire pits. There is a group of tipis set up on the far edge where the rhythmic beats of drumming fill the soundscape blending harmoniously with the chorus of nature. I take a deep breath and try to take it all in, the vista, the sounds, the fresh smell is intoxicating. I feel like I’m falling in love, with this place, these people, this cause.

“What do ya reckon so far mate?” says Sparky with a sigh, as he exerts himself to see how far away he can pee.

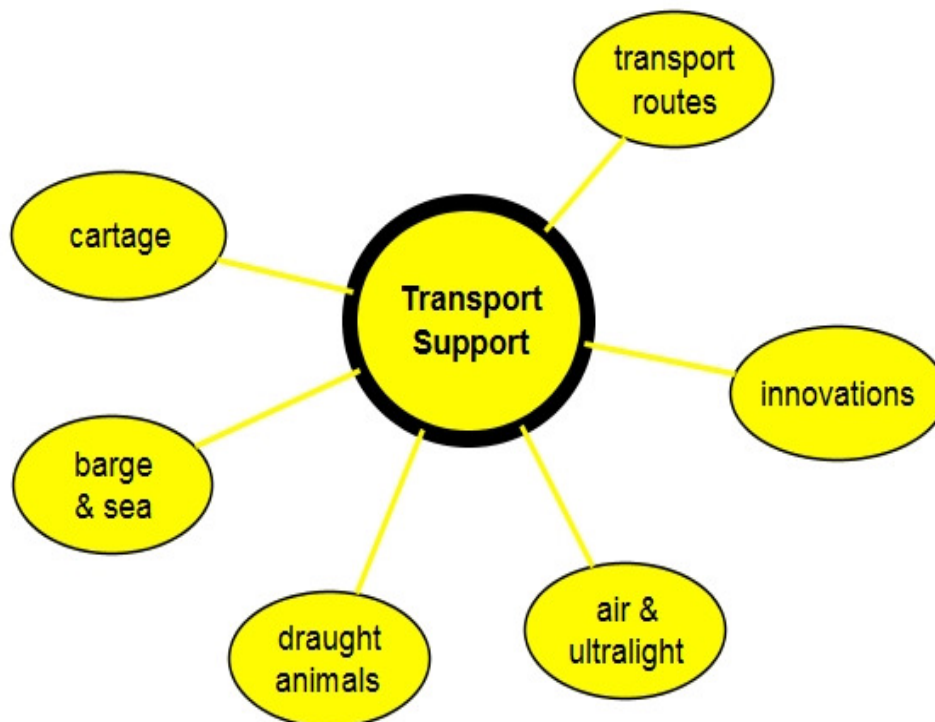
“This is pretty cool, I can’t say I’ve experienced anything like this before, I like it. I can’t get over all the tents.” I say trying not to sound emotional.

“This is where most people camp, the young ones anyhow. The rest of the mob camp in the car park. There’s a raging scene down there. When we started we followed the Rainbow mobs model, where you keep all the cars, alcohol and drugs out of the main camp ground and meat, but that one didn’t stick. The car park is another story, they know how to party that mob. They’re pretty good, jungle patrol keeps an eye on em and the Transport Group have designed the party area away from the grey nomads parking. Those oldies know how to party too, don’t you worry about that, it all seems to work out. I don’t mind a cold beer and a good chat in the car park camp of an evening.” says Sparky sighing and shaking his old fella before putting it away.

“Sounds like the place to be, I’ll be camping in my car tonight. A cold beer would go down a treat.” I say as I turn to follow Sparky.

“We’ll check out what the Transport Support Group is up to, they’re supposed to be moving this arvo too. When we started all the Support Groups were set up around here, bunched up together. It worked well then cause there were fewer of us and some of us were managing multiple groups. It was easy to keep track of everything and to be in sync. Then

all these people started arriving and we had to expand. The radios helped facilitate that. Each group operates on their own channel. These little radios are bloody beauties. They work up to three kilometres. Most of what Transport Support does is down around the car park, that's where most of their team members spend their time. So they are moving their camp down there to make it more comfortable for them. It's an evolving thing, but the lessons we learn from here will benefit future designs." Says Sparky as he surveys the scene.



Chapter 8 Transport Support

Arriving at the Transport Support camp we find it nearly bare, just a few plastic tubs left lying around, one full of stickers and the other full of Lock The Gate signs. Two young women wearing their yellow bandanas are cleaning up the last of the mess.

“Looks like you guys are done, can we help you carry anything.” I ask.

“That would be fabulous, you can help us carry these boxes down.” says a happy young woman that I had seen earlier escorting an old couple around. Her name tag says Becky with a smiley face.

I pick up one end of the tub and Becky the other. Sparky is helping the other young lady.

“Besides moving things what do you do around here?” I ask.

“The Social Support Group have a think tank team that focusses on collecting new ideas and ways to apply them here. At one of their discussions someone put up the idea of getting the young people to help escort the older people around the camp. I thought it was a great idea and so did everyone else. The Transport Support Group took it on, they set up their Innovations Team to organise it and I volunteered for the job.” she says as she carefully walks alongside the gently swinging box between us.

“Where are we taking this stuff to?” I ask.

“To the front gate right where you drive in, a much better place for us. We can greet them properly when they arrive and tune them into what we do.” she says.

“Besides escorting the oldies around, what do you do?” I ask.

“We are following the map, but a lot of it is not applicable to us, at least not yet. We are in the process of modifying it to suit, we have a Cartage Team that focusses on organising pickups and deliveries, that doesn’t take a lot of their time so they are organising car-pooling so that people without transport can get around more easily. We also help out Jungle Patrol by keeping an eye on the car park, make sure no one has left their lights on, that sort of thing. We are sort of turning into the meet and greet team, so we are working more closely with the Information Support Group so we can keep updated with what’s going on. It changes all the time here and Info Support are the ones that keep abreast of all that. We don’t want to be telling newcomers the wrong thing, especially with what’s going on with the blockade action, it’s flat out just keeping up with the camp action.” she says.

“What is going on with the blockade?” I ask, realising I have no idea.

“A couple of weeks ago they got the drill rig in there, less than a kilometre up the road, with the help of the riot squad. They only come up here for a day or two and they’re gone and we’re back to blockading the access road again. We let the workers in and out with their four wheel drives, but we’re not letting their trucks come or go. The Social Support Group have organised expedition teams that keep an eye on what’s going on and they come up with some pretty creative ways to bugger them up.” she says laughing.

“Like what?” I ask.

“You need to walk up the road and see for yourself. Anyway they tell us that the drill rig has finished drilling. Apparently this rig is designed to drill straight down taking samples. Then they plan to bring in a second drill rig that can drill horizontally for up to two kilometres. That’s why we are maintaining the blockade and now with all these people it will be interesting to see how the riot squad behaves next time. We don’t know when that will be, the rain has kept them trapped in there as well, they’re waiting for the track to dry out, then they’ll get their hired bully boys back.” she says with a deep frown.

“Do you really think you can stop them?” I ask cautiously.

“I know we will, just look at this.” she says pointing to the view in front of us.

As we walk down the gentle slope towards the entrance, the trees part to allow a clear view of the valley below. The car park has swelled since this morning. I can see crowds of people walking along the dirt road towards a mob hanging around a large bamboo tipi construction, built out of what appears to be a wrecked car blocking a side road. There is a procession of

cars, campervans, caravans and delivery trucks steadily arriving and being directed into the camp. A truck full of portable toilets, another full of bamboo and yet another with fruit and vegetables all boxed up. The large yellow tent is already set up at the gate and the brigade of volunteers, wearing yellow, directing the flow.

“I see what you mean.” I say amazed.

“The sleeping dragon sleeps no more, the masses are awakening and taking up the cause as protectors, check it out.” says Becky delighted with what she is witnessing.

“Let’s drop these off and check out what’s happening up the road.” says Sparky as we approach the newly erected Transport Support Tent. “We’ll only get in the way here, these guys have got it all together.”

After sharing thank yous with Becky I follow Sparky out of the gate and head up the road. There is a string of people walking on the road and its sides for about two hundred metres before they cross over and head down the side road. I assist Sparky in moving rocks, branches and other obstacles from the edge of the road. We pick up any rubbish we see and generally try to keep the place safe and clean.

“This is state forest over here which we normally have a right to be in but they found some loop hole to keep us out, or so they say. Shame about this car breaking down here hey.” says Sparky with a long loud laugh, so I can hear him over the gathered crowd.

There are people singing and drumming, some chanting. There are cars and vans parked all around some with people dressed up in costumes displaying placards while dancing on the roofs. There is a car totally wrecked, the wheels missing the doors gone along with most of the floor. There is a bamboo tipi tripod erected out of the car high into the air with a platform built into it perhaps fifteen feet high. Sitting on the platform is an old lady wearing a red safety vest, knitting a scarf. A banner hangs in the breeze under the platform says ‘Knitting Nanas against CSG Mining’. There is a steel cable attached to the top of the tipi then tied to a nearby tree.

“What is going on here?” I ask in disbelief at what my eyes are seeing.

Sparky laughs, “This is what they call a dragon, it’s designed to stop or at least delay the mining company from moving their heavy vehicles in or out. Under the car is a tunnel, goes right under the road, big enough for a person to crawl into. One crawls in from this side and another crawls in from the other side. They get face to face and lock onto each other. Then there are four plumbing pipes that go down through the car and into the tunnel. The pipes are big enough for a person to put their arms into. Two people get into the wreck and put their arms down the pipes where they are locked onto the guys in the tunnel. One leg of that tripod also goes down through the car and into the tunnel, they’re locked onto that too.”

“Far out man, someone’s put a bit of thought into this.” I say with utter amazement.

“Yeah, not bad eh. Last time they had four of em locked onto the wreck and a nana up the tripod. It took the cops a couple of hours to cut em out of the wreck and to get the nana off the platform with a cherry picker. Next time they’ll have to tunnel down before they do anything.” says Sparky.

“There’s no one locked in there now.” I state.

“No, we have spies out everywhere, we get plenty of notice when the local cops or riot squad are arriving. We have people watching the mining company’s compound in the next town. The dragon was originally designed to give us time to get support here. Well we’ve got that now, next time we will have overwhelming support. There are always people down here ready and trained to lock on at a moment’s notice.” says Sparky.

“What do you mean trained, trained to lock on?” I ask.

“Yeah, its serious business, those brave souls can be locked on for hours to days. They need to know how to move their bodies to keep the blood circulating; they need to know how to lock on properly. Not to mention taking verbal and physical abuse from the cops. Health Support makes sure there is a nurse here to monitor them and Information Support makes sure they have a media team or two to document everything. Livelihood Support gets their legal eagles down here to bear witness.” Sparky states.

“What does Jungle Patrol do?”

“Our motto is ‘Ask for help and help if asked’, but we’re not here to help the police do their corporate dirty work. When they arrive we make sure we are not over here and we focus back at camp. We’ll be busy keeping the young hot headed males busy, making sure none of us does anything stupid.

“There’s plenty of young males over here at the moment.” I notice.

“It’s only when the riot squad arrives, we don’t want them here. All other times are cool, they’re presence intimidates the mining company, just like their drill rig intimidates us. Most of the lock on crew are young males, they’re the ones crazy enough to do that, but they are hardly antagonising the police with their hands already chained, head down and bum up in a wrecked car, or locked onto that steel cable while balancing to stay up there.” says Sparky.

“How do you see it working next time you confront the riot squad?”

“Can you see the cut logs in the long grass along the track? Next time we place all those logs on the track here between the dragon and the road, for the oldies to sit on, I reckon we’ll fit 300 to 400 people packed in here. The olders mixed with the women with the young mothers up the back. They’ll need a lot of buses to arrest everyone and that will

make good TV. Most of the grey nomads arriving have been law abiding citizens their whole long lives. They are not afraid of being arrested, a lot of them are excited at the adventure. Livelihood Support group have their legal teams advising everyone of their rights. It is stressed to all that we are to behave according to the four agreements, to be non-violent and peacefully non-compliant.” says Sparky.

“Do you really believe you will get that many people willing to be arrested?”

“More I reckon, when people arrive they are already pissed off with their elected officials selling out our precious land to multinational corporations. They come here and experience the support we are all providing each other. They learn that we are being lied to on a whole range of issues that directly affect our health and well-being of our grandchildren. It is an unacceptable risk and we all have a duty of care to do everything in our power to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from this madness.” Sparky says with conviction.

“I do believe you are right.” I hear myself saying out loud as I take in the scenery. There is a tangible air of excitement and expectation. I am starting to feel drawn into it all, a feeling of being part of something really useful, for a change.

An old Ute pulls into the track loaded with planks of wood and two olive drums marked drinking water. Sparky is talking with the young driver.

“Give us a hand here mate, the farmer has sent over these planks for benches, we’ll put em in the long grass and set up benches with those logs later. And we’ll roll these water barrels near the wreck, just in case we’re here for a while and the cops stop our supply. Livelihood and Food Support are working on having some emergency food supplies over here too.” says Sparky.

“Is there anything that you guys haven’t thought about?” I ask in jest.

“If you can think of anything let us know and we’ll get a team right on it.” says Sparky.

After unloading the Ute, we head back down the track to the entrance of the camp. There is still a hive of activity. A row of eight portable toilets has been set up right at the gate opposite the Transport Support tent.

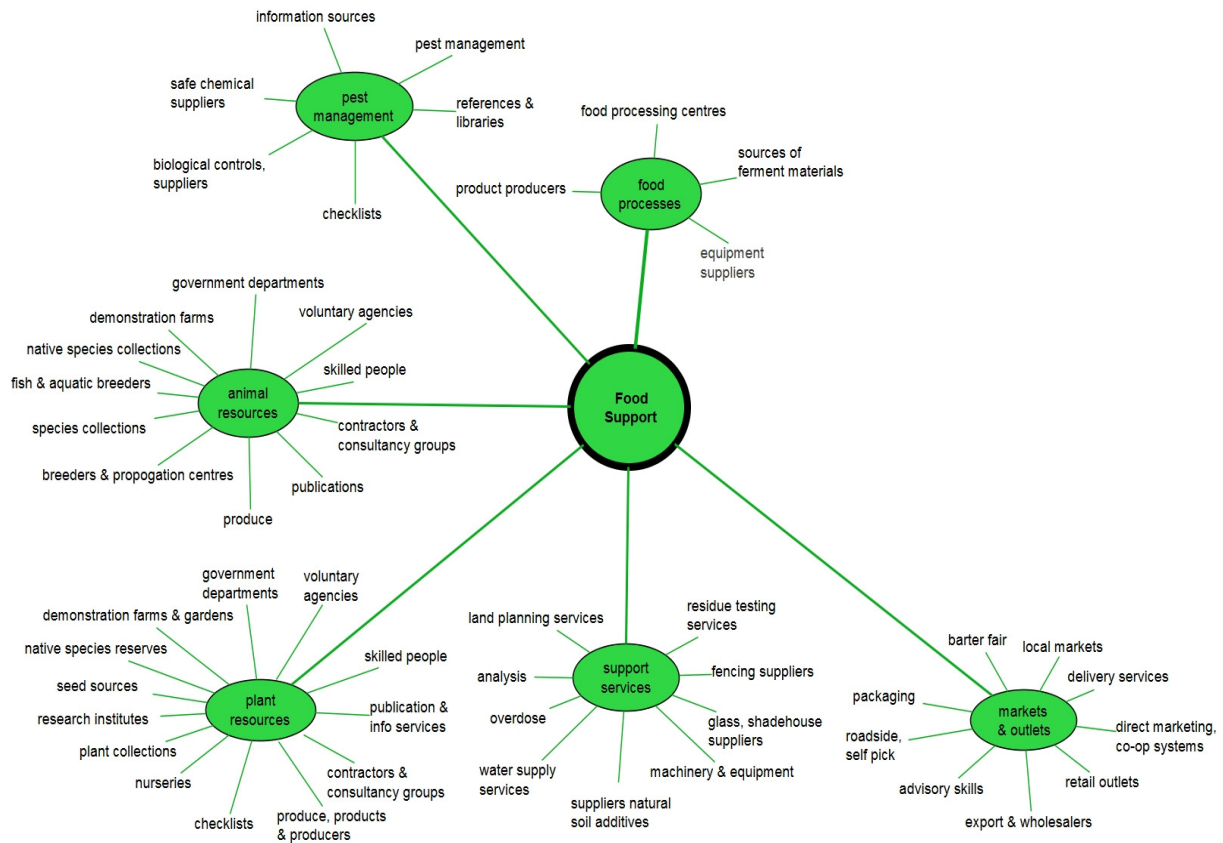
“Jungle patrol keeps an eye on all the dunnies around here. Part of our job is to make sure no-one’s passed out in there or trashed the joint. It helps out Building Support’s Waste team, we check them anyway, and we let them know when they need cleaning or more dunny paper that sort of thing. They’re pretty good, they get someone straight on it, and you can get them on channel 27 on your radio. Or just call our base on 33 and get them to contact them for you.” he says.

“How many more people can you fit in here.” I ask amazed at all the vehicles amassing.

“The Permaculture model talks about three to six hundred people being the upper limit where people know every other person by name, they call it the limit of identity. They say that this is the largest satisfactory size for educational or learning systems if personal attention is valued. I’d say we’re about there now. I guess they’ll be duplicating this whole show tomorrow.” He says casually.

“What, duplicating this whole camp, tomorrow?” I say with surprise.

“Yeah, tomorrow I’d say. Let’s go and check in with the Food Support Group. They have a Support Services Team that have been focussed on land planning for days now. They have been designing a village layout for the next paddock up the road. A lot of people have been involved in the design, they’re all excited about it, gives us a chance to get things right and really show off this model of living.” says Sparky and he heads back up the track, with me following.



Chapter 9 Food Support

The Food Support Group is set up near the far end of the camp with excellent views looking down on the main camp ground. Volunteers proudly wearing the colour green are scurrying about from tent to tent and off again down the track. Something is happening. There is the now familiar white sheet with a drawing of the map showing just this group, tied between the trees. There is a smaller tent set up in the middle of a cluster of six larger tents. Pot plants line the edge of the path fanning out at the welcome banner where three people in the small tent are directing people to various other tents spread around.

“I’m gonna check out the Support Service Team and see what’s happening. You can check out the place and see what you think.” says Sparky as he charges off.

I’m interested in everything and decide to work my way round clockwise and head for the Plant Resources tent. At the entrance to the tent is a large white board with all of what they are doing here and what they plan to work towards. It appears to be the detailed version of the map from the Permaculture Designers’ Manual.

Plant Resources

Criteria: Native and economic species, organic and biocide free, products of good nutritional value.

1. Nurseries and propagation centres, tissue culture, sources of inoculants, mycorrhiza.
2. Plant collections and botanical gardens, economic plant assemblies, aquatics.
3. Research institutes, horticultural and pastoral agencies.
4. **Seed sources and seed exchanges.**
5. **Native species reserves and nurseries.**
6. **Demonstration farms and gardens, teaching centres, workshop conveners.**
7. Government departments and their resources, regulations.
8. Voluntary agencies involved in plant protection, planting and propagation.
9. **Skilled people, botanist, horticulturalists.**
10. Publications and information leaflets of use in the region, reference books, libraries, posters.
11. **Contractors and consultancy groups: implementation of plant systems, farm designs.**
12. **Produce: products and producers in the region, growers.**
13. Checklist of vegetables, fruits and nuts which can be grown in the region and species useful for other than food provision.

A small group of people have gathered around me studying this comprehensive list of functions. A young woman sporting a bright green singlet approaches.

“Hello everyone, my name is Anastasia and I am part of the Plant Resource Team and what you see on this white board is a list of what we focus on here.”

“What are the highlighted ones?” asks an older woman behind me.

“We have teams of three people focussing on these tasks now, here. You can find tables set up inside the tent, they have numbers and descriptions of what they are doing. Feel free to approach anyone of them and volunteer if you can. The other functions on the list we haven’t focussed on yet. We have been prioritising, waiting till we get enough people to fill all the roles. That’s happening quite quickly now. Most of the other tasks are research roles, where we put together a team to collect the information and then that team is disbanded and absorbed somewhere else.” says Anastasia.

“By crikey, that’s a lot of people. How would you deal with all them?” says the husband of the older lady. “I’ve been farming me whole life, it’d give me a headache just thinkin bout it.”

“Ah that’s because on your farm you are the one responsible for doing everything I bet. That’s not how we work here. Each one of our 13 functions is managed by a team of three, that way there is always at least one of them around that knows what is going on. At the beginning of each day a representative from each team meets to explain what they did yesterday, what they intend to do today and what help they need to do it. The Plant Resource managers then deal with it and send a representative to the Food Support Group morning meeting. They basically sum up what’s going on with all six sub-groups and any unresolved problems that need sorting get sorted out. The nine support groups meet at the end of each day to discuss what they have done as a group, what they intend to do and what help they need.” says Anastasia.

“And that works?” asks the older man.

“Works really, really well. What you see around you didn’t look like this three days ago, didn’t look like this yesterday. This model allows people to focus on what their good at while others support them. You can imagine this model like a tree.” She says, pointing to a large poster of the map hanging above the white board. If you can imagine the tertiary teams, these ones right on the fringes. These teams are the practical doers, they are like the roots of a tree, the foundation. The secondary teams or sub-groups act like the trunk of the tree passing information and resources up and down. The nine primary teams or support groups act like the upper canopy of the tree protecting the rest of the tree from the harsh external elements. In our case, financing, accounting, taxation, regulations, all that stuff.”

“How do you pick your teams?”

“Their skills make it obvious. Someone managing a tertiary team would need an obvious understanding of their subject. A person managing a secondary team, say this one, Plant Resources, well they would need a skill set that gives them a basic understanding of all the thirteen functional teams in our sub-group. The same is true for the primary teams - they need an understanding of the functions of all six sub-groups in Food Support. Mind you there’s three people in each team plus understudies, so we get a diversity of skills and knowledge.” she says.

“So this map also acts like a job vacancy notice.” says a young man at the back.

“That’s right it does. We use it in many ways, here we write the three names of the people in each team and their contact details, so we know who is responsible for what and how to contact them. We use the map as a model to store information in the computer and in files, and guess what? No more lost files, it’s easy to navigate when you have the map in front of you. Livelihood Support are developing the map further to manage our formal and informal economy here at camp, they are excited by the statistics they will get from this particular model. Information Support is working on expanding the map to encompass this whole

bioregion and prepare us to link with others. I think we are yet to discover the full potential of how to apply this.” she says

A barrage of questions come from the small group, wanting to know how they can participate. I take the opportunity to leave and explore the rest of this camp. The next tent is Animal Resources they too have a white board displaying in detail what they do.

Animal Resources

- 1. Breeders and stud or propagation centres, artificial insemination, hatcheries.*
- 2. Species collections, including worms and like invertebrates.*
- 3. Fish breeders and aquatic species.*
- 4. Useful native species collections and reserves, potential for cultivation.*
- 5. Demonstration farms, eg free range, bee culture, workshop conveners, teaching centres.*
- 6. Government departments and their resources, regulations.*
- 7. Voluntary agencies and animal protection societies.*
- 8. Skilled people, farriers, vets, natural historians.*
- 9. Contractors (shearers, etc) and consultancy groups, farm designers.*
- 10. Publications, posters, libraries for the region.*
- 11. Produce: species and suppliers in region.*

I am not surprised to see this sub-group only covering four functions out of eleven. This is after all a protest camp. I keep forgetting that. A short distance away is another tent with their notice board.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

- 1. Insectaries and invertebrate predator breeders and suppliers of biological controls.*
- 2. Suppliers of safe control chemicals, traps.*
- 3. Information sources on IPM*
- 4. Pest management of stored grains and foods.*
- 5. References and libraries.*
- 6. Checklist of common pests and predators, and safe pest control procedures.*

I'm starting to feel that my research skills would be highly useful here. All these areas that are not being addressed can be fixed by gathering the appropriate information together, that's all. You just have to know where to look on the internet and usually you find that someone somewhere has already done it for you. The next tent in the circle announces.

Processing and Food Preservation

- 1. Suppliers of processing equipment.***
- 2. Food processing centres (FPCs).***
- 3. Information sources on food processing sources and preservation.***
- 4. Sources of yeast, bacterial and algal ferment materials.***
- 5. Processed-product producers in region.***

A young wide eyed man proudly wearing a mohawk hair do is engrossed in conversation with a young couple from health support; I guess by their purple apparel. Their conversation is infectious so I hustle in on the side to participate.

“How did you come to be so passionate about fermentation” asks the young woman.

“I have been for a long time eh, but last year I ran into this PermaRescue crew. They put the fear of god up me when they told me what was happening at Fukushima. Man I thought they dealt with that years ago eh. Man they haven’t, they haven’t done fuck all, if anything they keep fucking up and basically haven’t got a clue at WTF they’re doing. Meanwhile that place is spewing out radioactive particles into our atmosphere and oceans for our kids to breathe in. It’s bad enough for us adults, boys under five are five times more affected, girls under five, twice as much again. And foetuses one thousand times.” he says.

“Bullshit man, where are you getting your info from.” asks the purple shirted man.

“Man, I wish this was all bullshit. I said it was a year ago when my baby boy was born. The PermaRescue crew politely told me that I was using my baby as the canary in the coal mine. Fuck that, I’m not waiting for that to happen. We put together a research team and explored the facts, they’re tragic. We researched the effects of Chernobyl, like that happened way back in 1986 man, and the place is still fucked. We’ll they’ve done heaps of research into natural remedies and found that certain foods and ferments help to strip the nuclear particles out of the body. Other foods boost the immune system response. Mushrooms can be used to suck up radioactive particles from soils, same as sunflowers. There’s heaps we can do to protect our young ones from this nightmare. We basically all now need to live like we have an advanced form of cancer and live life appropriately.” says the mohawk man.

“How do we do that?” asks the other man.

“Eat clean fresh food that will naturally detox you with high vitamin C content and other anti-oxidants. Compliment this with exercise to keep your immune system functioning and live life like you won’t live forever. You don’t want to dwell on stupid little things when you live on a planet being polluted with ten million Becquerels of radiation every hour, day in day out, for over two years now and no sign of it slowing down. Don’t eat sea food and

come to our workshop and learn how to prepare a fermented detox drink that everyone can use, cheap, easy and so fucking important.” he says scratching his mohawk.

I make a mental note to check out this Fukushima threat as they call it and this bloke’s workshop. I am starting to clearly see the interconnections where Future Trends and Potential Threats announces an unacceptable risk and all the other support groups design strategies to offset it. It is obvious that Food Support with all their focus on the natural environment would come up with a natural solution. Then pass that onto Health Support to deliver it to the community with the help of Information Support. If what they say about the radiation risk is true and they are confidently designing natural solutions to that. I get the sense that there are no problems only solutions to be found. And if they are to be found then this design orientated structure will do it. The next tent’s board reads.

Markets and Outlets

- 1. Local markets**
- 2. Delivery services**
- 3. Export markets and wholesalers*
- 4. Urban-rural co-op systems, direct marketing*
- 5. Retail outlets**
- 6. Market advisory skills and groups, contract and legal skills*
- 7. Road side and self-pick sales*
- 8. Market packaging and package suppliers, ethical packaging systems and designs*
- 9. Annual barter fair*

I can easily imagine this team expanding quite quickly using this model in a village setting, not a protest camp. I move onto the last of the tents in this camp and check out their list.

Support Services and Products for Food Production

- 1. Residue testing service for biocides, also nutrient, mineral and vitamin content (food quality control)*
- 2. Soil, water and leaf analysis service for micronutrients and soil additives, water analysis, pH levels*
- 3. Hydrological and water supply services (dams, domestic water), design and implementation**
- 4. Fence and trellis suppliers and services, cattle grids and gates*
- 5. Suppliers of natural fertilisers, mulch materials, trace elements, soil amendments*
- 6. Farm machinery, garden and domestic tool suppliers (see also processing), appropriate and tested equipment, fabricators and designers, repair services, hire and contract services**
- 7. Land planning services**
- 8. Glasshouse, shade house, food dryers, suppliers, and appropriate materials*

9. *Lime quarries and sources, stone dust, local trace mineral sources, regional geological resources*

This is where I find Sparky intensely studying plans on a table inside the tent with a group of others.

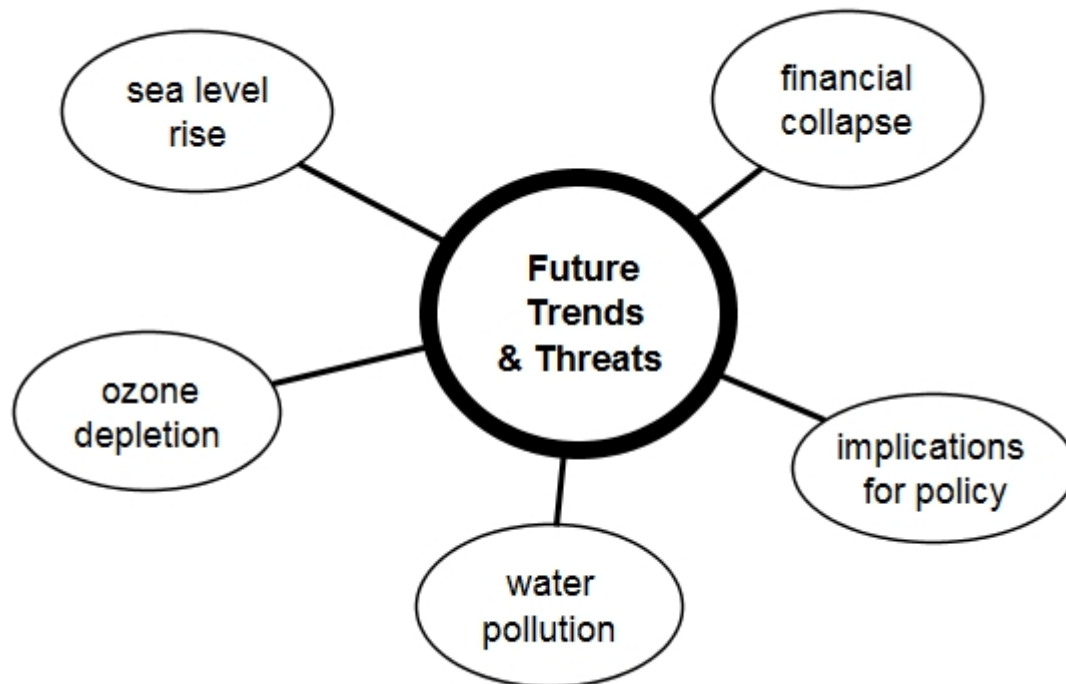
“Check this out mate, this is a concept plan for the new village. Plant resources and animal resources both have farm design teams and this team here in Support Services is putting it all together. The really good news is the farmer who owns this joint doesn’t want this to stop, he’s lovin it. He’s talking with the PermaRescue mob about creating a research institute right here. That’s so cool, that means this next design can be planned with permanence in mind instead of being just temporary. We were all hoping for this and these plans are just awesome - they are allowing for a full scale food production complete with animal systems. This will be a brilliant training and demonstration farm.” says Sparky excitedly.

“Aren’t there a million hoops to jump through?” I ask.

“Probably but we’ll find ways around that. This PermaRescue mob have legal structures ready to go that will tie us in with the national scientific and industrial research organisation, giving us full tax deductibility. Now that’s cool, they’re bringing in this earthship mob who create buildings from tyres and bottles and just about any rubbish that doesn’t rot. They’re planning on designing, building, training and promoting from here. It’s all happening. We’ll know by tomorrow.” he says happy as.

“Base to Jungle Patrol, need you to respond to Future trends tent, there is a potential threat, ha ha. No! Someone’s losing the plot up there over.” says the woman voice over the radio that I had forgotten was wearing over my shoulder.

“Two Sparky’s on our way.” I respond.



Chapter 10 **Future Trends and Potential Threats**

As we arrive at the very top of the camp I can see that the purple angels have beaten us here. A jungle patrol is here also, reassuring the crowd that everything is alright. Jemma and two others from the Health Support Group are gathered around a tall blonde middle aged woman who is clearly distressed.

“If anyone is going to flip out they generally do it up here. That’s why we designed this camp to be right up the back here.” says Sparky.

Jemma comes over to greet us. “Everything is fine.” she says. “We know this woman. She gets a bit upset when she comes up here and tries to digest the future trends and potential threats that we all face. I think we all get taken back a bit, feeling a bit vulnerable. She’ll be fine. We’re taking her back to the Health Support camp for a nice cup of tea and remind her that she and her beautiful children are supported. We’re all in this together.”

“Why do people lose it up here?” I ask.

“Everyone processes this information differently, many don’t want to digest any of this. They would prefer others to do it for them and they think that their governments have taken on this responsibility and are acting accordingly, then they realise that they are not. People react differently. Some get frightened, some get angry and others combine the two and want to get active. The young ones get it ... like they have always known something

was very wrong. The old ones see it clearly now they have time to reflect on what life was like when they were kids and what we have left our grand-kids to inherit. The middle aged ones, especially the one's who are successful and in control of their lives don't take it very well. That's why there's not many of that age group here I guess." says Jemma.

"Health Support was onto this pretty quick." says Sparky.

"Yeah, we keep a close eye on this group. They need all the support they can get. I really feel for the volunteers here, many of them have dedicated their lives to warning us all about these unacceptable risks. They get the old 'conspiracy theory' rave constantly, people abusing them or screaming at them like this woman telling them that they are manifesting this darkness by focussing and talking about it. Can you believe that? They cop it all." says Jemma.

I survey the camp around me ... white banners flapping one reading Future Trends and Potential Threats – EYES WIDE OPEN, NO FEAR, set up between two tents. One is full of people watching a documentary on a projected screen. The other is lined around the outside with notice boards, and inside are clusters of tables with laptop computers set up on one and printed documents neatly placed on others. Small groups of people are seated around and appear to be in intense conversation. I excuse myself from Jemma and Sparky and head for a large notice board.

PERMACULTURE FUTURES

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION

- A. Desertification, under the topics of:
 1. Deforestation.
 2. Water balance disturbance.
 3. Soil salting and collapse.
 4. Overgrazing.

POLLUTION

- A. Of the atmosphere.
- B. Of soils via chemical waste.
- C. By radioactives in soils and food chains.
- D. Of inland and fresh waters.
- E. Of estuaries and marine systems.
- F. Of food by biocides, radiation.

THE EXTINCTION OF NATURAL SYSTEMS AND SPECIES

- A. By rainforest destruction.
- B. By desertification of arid area borders.

- C. By clearing for agriculture.
- D. By draining wetlands.

CLIMATIC CHANGE

- A. Heating of the earth by carbon dioxide and gaseous pollutants in the global atmosphere.
 - 1. Rising sea levels.
 - 2. Reduction of stratospheric ozone.
 - 3. Intensification of local ozone at ground level.
 - 4. Acidic particles leading to acid rain.

SOCIAL-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS

- A. The use of torture and imprisonment for repression of people; arrest or detention without charge or public trial.
- B. The continuous repression of minority ethnics, language, cultural, or tribal peoples.
- C. Corruption, the misuse of public monies by self interest groups.
- D. Replacements of crafts and skills with machines and mass production.
- E. Intolerable employment; unsafe, unhealthy, waste productive.
- F. Essential short term solutions to long-term chronic problems.
- G. Cash resources sequestered via addiction and crime.

DIRECTLY HUMAN CONCERNS

- A. Meaningful work (employment in right livelihood)
- B. Adequate nutrition.
- C. Adequate and easily maintained, low energy shelter.
- D. Access to land base for sustenance.
- E. Access to finance for development.

RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC CONCERNS

- A. The perversion of science to assist war, torture and oppression.
- B. The lack of common, practical translation of scientific findings to those who can use the information.
- C. The ineffectiveness of researchers in applying findings and obtaining feedback.
- D. Setting priorities for research via morbidity and global analysis, and funding such priorities.
- E. The monopolisation of socially useful inventions by patients, especially in seed and technology.

“All of that was published twenty five years ago and it was an emergency then.” says a familiar voice.

I turn around to face KFC, the colonel. “I didn’t expect to see you up here.” I say

“Like most of us here, I have enough energy left in me to contribute to more than one team sonny. I take duty of care seriously, been trained that way. All of us are bound legally and morally to take our duty of care seriously. All of us are required to do everything in our power to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from risk to human life. We all must treat risks that we are aware of as worst case scenario until proven otherwise. No use being ignorant.” says KFC.

“I had no idea, doesn’t that have to do with work place health and safety?” I comment.

“It does, legally when we become aware of a risk and we can’t fix it, then we are to immediately report the risk to our superior. If they can’t fix it then they are to report it immediately to their superior and so on up the chain until it is sorted out. The problem is what happens when this system doesn’t work as it should. What happens when our superiors chose to not act or ignore a risk to humanity for whatever reason.” questions KFC.

“What does happen then?”

“Then it falls back on us to identify the risks and design sustainable strategies to offset those risks, that’s called mitigation sonny. That’s what we are demonstrating here, to me that’s what this is all about. CSG is just the catalyst for most of these people here. Now they are being made aware of a whole bunch of risks that are clearly unacceptable.” says KFC.

“Like what?”

“There are a number of outstanding ones. Radioactive contamination from the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plants that continues to spew ionising radioactive particles into our atmosphere and oceans. Sodium Fluoride in our drinking water supplies, which greatly increases the risks associated with radiation exposure. Genetically modified foods and their effects on the human immune system, the bees and the soils. We all know about the toxicity of mercury yet we are told by some that is ok to use it as a preservative and inject it into our babies and later stick it in their teeth. The way modern agriculture is practised, the effects of geo-engineering Christ they’ve been spraying us with chemtrails for so long now these young ones think they’re natural.” KFC pauses.

“Why don’t we hear about this?”

“That’s another unacceptable risk, the main stream media keeps everyone stupidly ignorant.” He says.

“No wonder people get so overwhelmed up here. What can we do about all this?”

“We support each other through this son. We take responsibility for our own lives and of those yet to be born, we must plan ahead for the next seven generations. Before I came here I too was at a loss as to what to do. This whole Permaculture concept with their map is the answer. We simply do what we are doing here now, the very best we can do to support ourselves and others. These poor bastards here in this group don’t rejoice in monitoring the horrific effects we are having on the entire planet. They are extremely concerned for us all, they are desperate for people to listen, to engage in the battle.” he says.

“You see it as a battle?”

“Son I’ve been to battle and all of us there knew we were in one. All of us there were dedicated to the cause, prepared to die, and many of us did. Good men and women putting everything on the line like their lives depended on it and it did. Those same veterans will engage again, when they wake up to the fact that they have been sold out, they’re environments destroyed and with it the future of their grand-kids, everything they fought for. There is no other cause more worthy.” he says.

“Do you really think this will make a difference?”

“I spent a lot of years in the military son, and I can tell you that we all take the defence of our nation seriously. I am surprised that our military leaders have put up with this nonsense this long. Mark my words it won’t be long before we see mass arrests of political and corporate figures charged with crimes against humanity.” says KFC.

“What’ a military coup?” I ask surprised.

“I know how our military leaders think, they are well aware of the environmental risks that our political leaders are exposing us to. They are aware of the back door deals being done with their corporate bosses. Until now they have been unsure how to deal with an undisciplined civilian population without handing power back over to another political structure with ongoing corruptibility issues, as history demonstrated. They will be watching what is going on here very closely. I believe this is the alternative structure they’ve been waiting for. The map will provide the blue print for handing power over to bioregional management.” he says.

“How do you think the public will react?” I ask.

“They will make a national announcement detailing the arrest and public trials of prominent figures outlining the charges. At the same time they will detail the timeline for hand-over of political powers back to the people and their bioregions. The criminals will run like rats and the general public will be made aware of the risks hidden from us and given the necessary strategies to get to work to fix the problems we’ve inherited. How do you think they will react?” he asks.

“Well if they duplicate what is happening here I know they will love it.” I say.

“Well if it doesn’t go down like that we need to be getting behind PermaRescue because we will all be managing a catastrophe sooner or later.” he says.

“Do you think PermaRescue is the answer?”

“If you look at their proposed course curriculum you will see that it is in two parts. Part one is risk assessment and designs for catastrophe, it goes for three days. That’s a lot of information to digest in three days, that will be a real eye opener. If you look closely you will see that this tunes people back into the earth, big time, how it works, how she nurtures you or devours you. Part two is focussed on catastrophe management, how to use the map in the four different stages of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. That’s ten days of intensive strategic planning. At the end of this two week course students will be capable of directing energies where required.” he says.

“Do you think so?” I ask.

“Permaculture talks about a life intervention principal, ‘in chaos lays unparalleled opportunity to impose creative order,’ we’ll see.” he says with a reassuring smile, while he passes me a copy of the PermaRescue Course Curriculum, pats me on the back and walks away to talk with others.

I find a quite spot under a tree with a log to sit on. The day is fading, as is the light, as I focus on reading. I reflect on how much there is to learn and how little I know. In just one day I have discovered so much. I have experienced a feeling of belonging and acceptance. I have a knowing deep within me, a good feeling, that this is what I came here to do. This is why I’m here on this beautiful planet, I remember now and I will not forget again ... I know.

To be continued – Avoidable Catastrophe – Military Intervention (fiction)
 Unavoidable Catastrophe – Volunteer Fire and Rescue (fiction)
 The Map and Me (non-fiction, auto-biography)
 Permaculture Catastrophe Management Course
 Permaculture Catastrophe Designers’ Manual (non fiction)

The author welcomes support from you to make this story a reality.

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Permarescue on youtube/facebook

Permaculture Emergency Management

PermaRescue Course Curriculum

Paul Nimbahly

PART 1

1.0 RISK ASSESSMENT / CATASTROPHY DESIGN

1.1 Introduction 1.2 Ethics: duty of care 1.3 Methods of design, systems thinking 1.4 Patterns in nature; periodicity 1.5 Risk identification 1.6 Information resources 1.7 Process / content 1.8 Cause and effect 1.9 Future trends and potential threats 1.10 Implications for design

2.0 NATURAL RISKS

2.1 FIRE EFFECTS

2.1.1 Introduction 2.1.2 Wildfires 2.1.3 Bush fires 2.1.3 Grassfires 2.1.4 Sub-terrestrial fires 2.1.5 Vegetation effect 2.1.6 Slope effect 2.1.7 Ember effects 2.1.8 Flame effects 2.1.9 Radiation effects 2.1.10 Secondary effects 2.1.11 Risk assessment 2.1.12 Design applications 2.1.13 Designers' checklist

2.2 WIND EFFECTS

2.2.1 Introduction 2.2.2 Landscape effect 2.2.3 Vegetation effect 2.2.4 Tropical cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons 2.2.5 Tornadoes 2.2.6 Gale force winds 2.2.7 Dust, sand storms 2.2.8 Air-borne pollutants 2.2.9 Air-borne pests 2.2.10 Secondary effects 2.2.11 Risk assessment 2.2.12 Design Applications 2.2.13 Designers' checklist

2.3 EARTH EFFECTS

2.3.1 Introduction 2.3.2 Geographical effects 2.3.3 Earthquakes 2.3.4 Landslides 2.3.5 Volcanoes 2.3.6 Global warming, drought effects 2.3.7 Pests 2.3.8 Extra terrestrial effects 2.3.9 Secondary effects 2.3.10 Risk assessment 2.3.11 Design applications 2.3.12 Designers' checklist

2.4 WATER EFFECTS

2.4.1 Introduction 2.4.2 Geographical effects 2.4.3 Floods 2.4.4 Tsunami 2.4.5 Tidal surge 2.4.6 Sea level rise 2.4.7 Torrential rain 2.4.8 Lightning, hail 2.4.9 Erosion 2.4.10 Pollution 2.4.11 Secondary effects 2.4.12 Risk assessment 2.4.13 Design applications 2.4.14 Designers' checklist

3.0 TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS

3.1 Introduction 3.2 Industrial pollutants 3.3 Agricultural pollutants 3.4 Mining pollutants 3.5 Domestic pollutants 3.6 Radiation effects 3.7 Microwave, communication effects 3.8 Secondary effects 3.9 Risk assessment 3.10 Design applications 3.11 Designers checklist

4.0 SOCIOLOGICAL RISKS

4.0 Introduction 4.1 Historical patterns 4.2 Financial collapse 4.3 Over regulation 4.4 War, terrorism 4.5 Collapse of engineering life lines 4.6 Bio-geographical effects 4.7 Feral animals 4.8 Secondary effects 4.9 Risk assessment 4.10 Design applications 4.11 Designers' checklist

PART 2

1.0 SUSTAINABLE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1.0 Introduction 1.1 Prevention 1.2 Preparedness 1.3 Response 1.4 Recovery 1.5 Aid and assistance 1.6 Ethical basis of an alternative nation 1.7 A new united nations 1.8 Alternatives to political systems 1.9 Extended families 1.10 Village development 1.11 Effective working groups and right livelihood

2.0 BIO REGIONAL ORGANISATION

2.1 Introduction 2.2 Bio regional map 2.3 Emergency Application - Beyond command and control

2.1 FOOD SUPPORT

2.1.1 Introduction 2.1.2 Plant resources 2.1.3 Animal resources 2.1.4 Integrated pest management 2.1.5 Process and food preservation 2.1.6 Support services 2.1.7 Markets and outlets

2.2 BUILDING SUPPORT

2.2.1 Introduction 2.2.2 Construction materials 2.2.3 Energy systems 2.2.4 Wastes, recycling 2.2.5 Construction methods 2.2.6 Voluntary simplicity

2.3 LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

2.3.1 Introduction 2.3.2 Livelihood support services 2.3.3 Essential trades, and manufacturing services and skills 2.3.4 Community finance and recycling

2.4 SOCIAL SUPPORT

2.4.1 Introduction 2.4.2 Think tanks 2.4.3 Work groups 2.4.4 Introductory services 2.4.5 Expeditions

2.5 HEALTH SUPPORT

2.5.1 Introduction 2.5.2 Morbidity 2.5.3 Gynecological and midwifery 2.5.4 Medical and pharmacy 2.5.5 Surgical and hospital 2.5.6 Natural therapies

2.6 INFORMATION SUPPORT

2.6.1 Introduction 2.6.2 Communication systems 2.6.3 Newsletters 2.6.4 Audio visual 2.6.5 Business and research 2.6.6 Libraries 2.6.7 Standard documents and data 2.6.8 Bio regional groups 2.6.9 Maps

2.7 COMMUNITY AND SECURITY SUPPORT

2.7.1 Introduction 2.7.2 Flood 2.7.3 Fire 2.7.4 Rescue 2.7.5 Communications 2.7.6 House and livestock security 2.7.7 Outreach services

2.8 TRANSPORT SUPPORT

2.8.1 Introduction 2.8.2 Barge and sea 2.8.3 Draught animal 2.8.4 Cartage 2.8.5 Innovations 2.8.6 Air and ultra light 2.8.7 Transport routes

2.9 FUTURE TRENDS AND POTENTIAL THREATS

2.9.1 Introduction 2.9.2 Sea level rise 2.9.3 Ozone depletion 2.9.4 Water pollution 2.9.5 Financial collapse 2.9.6 Implications of policy making 2.9.7 Futures

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