

PERMACULTURE'S NEXT BIG STEP

Words by Ben Habib Photo by Robyn Rosenfeldt

The permaculture movement appears to have reached a crossroads. As a holistic design approach based on systems thinking, ecological principles and energy literacy, permaculture has the potential to have a transformative impact on how we sustainably operate our social, economic and agricultural systems in a period of converging global crises. The eleventh International Permaculture Convergence (IPC11) in Cuba in 2013 formally recognised that the permaculture movement worldwide would benefit from greater coherence at an international level, to follow through on this promise of transformation.

The Permaculture's Next Big Step project was formed to facilitate a global consultation on what we need, how we can work together, and what we can achieve. This project has brought together some of the best permaculture thinkers from around the world to explore potential pathways for further international coordination across the movement. Project participants include:

Andy Goldring from the Permaculture Association UK; Andrew Langford from Gaia University; American activist and author Starhawk; and Australia's own permaculture elders Robin Clayfield, Ian Lillington and April Sampson-Kelly, among many other talented individuals.

The purposes of the work being undertaken through Permaculture's Next Big Step are to: gauge what permaculturalists want and need from a global entity (if anything); and do the groundwork to get buy-in for greater coordination from across the worldwide permaculture movement. Our task is to formulate proposals for a more cohesive global permaculture movement that facilitates linkages, educational opportunities and resource sharing across the movement, while preserving local autonomy that is integral to permaculture design.

At the twelfth Australasian Permaculture Convergence (APC12), in Tasmania in March 2015, I led a workshop to solicit responses from participants on the Permaculture's Next Big Step project. Our presentation to APC12, and the workshop, were designed to raise

awareness of two online surveys, which are our primary mechanism to assess the needs of permaculture practitioners, gauge enthusiasm for greater international coordination and solicit input on what this enhanced cooperation might look like.

Everyone who practises or works in permaculture can complete the survey, as individuals and/or as representatives of permaculture organisations. The surveys are at the following URLs.

Survey for individuals: www.surveymonkey.com/r/?sm=3UAtmvsghfK8tPbBjgzvqWf3pXaHfWcDdPmWO6cQ1k%3d

Survey for organisations: www.surveymonkey.com/s/269NLJW

The results of these surveys will be presented at IPC12 in September 2015, where proposals for further action will be workshopped and submitted for approval. Please complete the surveys and circulate the survey URLs across your networks; the more people who complete the surveys, the more representative the outputs of the project will be, and the higher the quality of the proposals that are put forward for action.

