Julie Ballangarry:

This episode was recorded on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and also on the lands of the Wurundjeri Nation.

Giina to F! It!. Giina is from the Gumbaynggir language, my language. It's a friendly welcome. Hi, I'm Julie Ballangarry. I'm a Gumbaynggir/Dunghutti woman and a researcher who specializes in indigenous policy. I'm also a part of the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition. F! It! is a podcast created by the International Women's Development Agency that brings feminist and First Nations approaches into the foreign policy conversation. We'll be exploring these emerging approaches to foreign policy by drawing on the knowledge and experiences from First Nations people and feminists from within the space. Traditionally, their voices have been excluded from the discussion and decision making, but we say F! It!. We want to live in a better world, one where we're part of the conversations about re-imagining global systems, one that mutually benefits all.

When we hear the term foreign policy, we generally understand this as a strategy a country uses to pursue its interests and approach international issues like diplomacy, trade, development assistance, defense, and national security. But we don't usually think about how approaches to foreign policy stem from the historical practice of imperialism and colonialism. It is these very patriarchal systems that have morphed, shaped and continue to influence the practices we see today. Plus, these systems have deliberately excluded both First Nations people and women in discussions and processes of decision-making, which has ultimately led to gross gender inequality and marginalization of First Nations people.

F! It! challenges this normative thinking around foreign policy and the patriarchal colonial system that it upholds. Throughout the series, F! It! explores feminist and First Nations approaches by centering the voices and perspectives of those who are some of the most disadvantaged by these systems. For this episode, Alice Ridge from IWDA and James Blackwell, a Wiradjuri man and indigenous research fellow from ANU are going to yarn with me about two different approaches to foreign policy, feminist foreign policy, and First Nations foreign policy.

Both these approaches seek to reimagine, reform, and decolonize practices and processes in international relations to increase the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and First Nations peoples. For our international audience, you may or may not be aware that Australia held a referendum in October, 2023 on Enshrining an indigenous voice to the parliament in our constitution. This was the first of three recommendations from the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which was developed through extensive consultation with indigenous people throughout Australia, and it represented a really generous offer to the Australian people from indigenous Australia. Unfortunately, that referendum was unsuccessful.

Am delighted to yarn with my colleagues, Alice and James, both of whom I've worked with within the space. James and I co-authored our paper in 2022, Indigenous Foreign Policy, A New Way Forward, and Alice has supported first Nation centered approaches through her work at the International Women's Development Agency and the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition. Alice and James, thank you so much for joining me today. So let's start with our first question. Could you tell us a little bit more about the feminist and First Nations approaches to foreign policy and what they seek to achieve, how they challenge normative thinking in the space while centering those voices that tend to be excluded?

Alice Ridge:

Yeah, so I think the starting point of this question is really the acknowledgement that something needs to change. We need new ways of thinking about foreign policy and whether you're someone who's studied international relations theory or just someone who's observing the state of the world today, I think we can really see that. If we're comparing feminist foreign policy to the norm, I think it's helpful to define what that norm is, what the traditional approach to foreign policy is, because sometimes it's invisible to us because it's just seen as the normal way of doing things. But really if we're thinking about a realist foreign policy approach, and bear with me, this is a really simple explanation of a complex theory, but a realist approach assumes that everyone is trying to maximize their own outcomes regardless of the expense to others. And when you start to act from that assumption, it really leads you down the path of amassing power for yourself and trying to contain the power of others.

And by doing so, we're actually creating that world where we do assume that others are acting in their own interests. A feminist foreign policy really tries to break that open and ask different kinds of questions that can get us beyond those sort of zero sum game thinking and really look for win-win solutions. So it's about asking, "Is there a way for our country to achieve its objectives that's not at the expense of other nations or particularly of the most marginalized people in other nations? Is there a way that we can share resources instead of trying to compete for them?" And these questions, asking them doesn't mean that you act on every possible answer, but it's about opening up different kinds of options that we consider to be viable. There's many different understandings of feminist foreign policy and of feminism itself, but to me it really comes down to power and how we think about it.

So whether that's the power relationships between men and women at an individual level or the power that exists between different nation states, a feminist approach is really about transforming those power imbalances. And to do that on the global stage, we need to grapple with the systems of power that shape our worlds. So the way that colonialism has shaped the relative wealth of countries or the power they hold in decision-making forums at the UN, the way that misogyny is linked to authoritarianism and the marginalization of women, LGBT people can really be a warning sign for war and conflict. It's about understanding how capitalism excludes the unpaid care that's performed by women and how that might impact on things like trade agreements. So it's not just kind of a theoretical thing, this can really come down to the practical level to guide a different way of thinking and approaching foreign policy conversations.

Julie Ballangarry:

And I think before I jump to you, James, I think too, when we think about questioning power sometimes like First Nations approaches to anything, let alone foreign policy is always taken down to a tokenistic approach. And I think too, at the very heart of a First Nations approach is questioning power because we've constantly been an oppressed and continue to still be an oppressed peoples. James, what would you like to add to that?

James Blackwell:

Really good points from you there, Julie and Alice. I think the thing about First Nations foreign policy perspective is it does start with that basic premise of questioning power, questioning colonial power, white power, sorry to use that kind of very cliched phrase, but that's kind of the presumption of where it starts is international system for a very long time, even to some extent in modern times has excluded us or at least sought to exclude us. Starting with that idea of exclusion and power relations and indigenous rights, then we're forced to rethink, to question, to poke at those fundamental narratives about foreign policy. And to reframe them in a way that's authentic to our cultures, our peoples, our stories, all of the other adjectives that you could use there because it makes us move from this idea of power and domination and control and influence into relationality relationships, understanding mutual benefit, caring for country as something beyond the mere people idea of country or economic idea of country, but this kind of inclusive sense.

And of course I'm speaking here mainly about Australia, other indigenous peoples have similar but yet different views in different parts of the world. But if we're thinking about Australia, it really is sort of recentering the focus of what foreign policy is. Is it the mere economic leverage, the military leverage, the security leverage, or is there this more inclusive whole of country approach that's much more relational, much more focused on what we owe to each other and what our obligations are to the whole system, all inclusive of everything. I think that's the way in which First Nations foreign policy approaches can bring a new approach to thinking it kind of really challenges that, nor new framework as you've said. And I think it really is this kind of not new way of thinking because it obviously is not the ideas of First Nations peoples aren't new, but it's new in the sense of the international system and the way it thinks and the way it has thought about our peoples and about itself.

Julie Ballangarry:

And I want to add to that because my own thinkings around this is you touched on it James, it's about centering First Nations perspectives and the idea of caring for country and how I see a First Nations approach in a very conceptual manner is it's about kin and country. And if we use different language, it's about human rights and our environment because there are two things that can sustain the planet and there are two things that can destroy the planet. And I think that's exactly what you are both getting at is it needs to be a place where we can all live together. It's not one person dominating over another.

That's where Australia will be if we can realize this goal. Australia can be very different in this particularly because we have a First Nations foreign policy that's been enacted and following through with the current government. But Alice, in terms of Australia and we don't have an explicit feminist foreign policy, but there are lots of nations that do. And I kind of touched on a little bit about how sometimes indigenous people aren't necessarily centered in that, but can you tell us a little bit about a feminist foreign policy, how it emerged and how it's evolved and how it might look different in different nation states?

Alice Ridge:

Yeah, so feminist foreign policy as a theory is not necessarily the same as the way that governments have implemented it in practice. And I think it's really important to acknowledge that these ideas come from civil society, they come from feminist movements, but Sweden was sort of the first country to formalize a feminist foreign policy approach back in 2014. And the way they talked about it was around 3Rs: rights, resources, and representation. And that was really sort the practical way of translating this theoretical approach, these concepts, into something actionable that could determine priorities and really guide people across the foreign policy bureaucracy. Other countries have taken different approaches. So Germany has been really consultative in designing its feminist foreign policy. It's one of the more recent commitments and because they've really listened to voices of civil society, they have a policy that's really grounded in power analysis in intersectionality and transformative approaches.

We're also seeing in the past 12 months increasing commitments from countries in Latin America. So Mexico was the first from that part of the world to commit to feminist foreign policy. But now we've seen Columbia come out and name pacifism as the first principle of their feminist foreign policy. Chile has a really strong focus on strengthening democracy. So it's really bringing a different flavor I think to these global discussions. The other thing we see is a real difference between what civil society see as feminist approaches and what governments are able or maybe willing to do. And so militarism versus pacifism is a really big area for that debate. And so it's quite interesting now to have Columbia come in with this approach that debate between government and civil society is also about how the concept evolves, how it develops over time. So it's a really important part of how we can kind of strengthen feminist foreign policy into the future.

Julie Ballangarry:

And that's really cool because I think that that's really important that it can't just be like a Eurocentric version of a feminist foreign policy because if it's trying to live up to its name, it needs to have that intersectional approach because not one size fits all. And I guess that's the same in the First Nations space as well. Take Australia, we have so many different nations within our one country, our modern Australia, there are so many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander countries within our country, our different nations. So one size doesn't fit all and unfortunately that tends to be how policies get rolled out across the board, whether domestically or internationally. So in contrast then James in 2022, Australia announced that it would enact a First Nations foreign policy. Could you yarn to us a bit more about this, particularly the evolution of this approach in Australia's foreign policy space?

James Blackwell:

It's important I think, to think about this idea within Australian foreign policy making as a governmental exercise is relatively new. In the early 2020, DFAT attended their own kind of in-house approach to First Nations engagement with foreign policy. People listening may know as the diplomacy agenda. You and I, Julie, have been publicly critical of that agenda in various forms, mainly for lack of detail and lack of engagement with our communities. But it does mark the point in which I think governments first start thinking about this issue. Obviously, we have a chain to government in 2022 and proceeding that election, Senator Penny Wong, then opposition foreign minister now foreign minister, talked about increasing indigenous engagement with the foreign policy community working out how indigenous identities, perspectives and practices can be better incorporated into our overseas engagement and to really support a new way of doing things with regards to Australia's international diplomacy.

And so definitely a lot of big and important talk from the minister and she's followed through on that in many speeches in the 18 months we've had post that election, part of that work involved obviously appointing our very first ambassador for First Nations issues, Justin Mohamed who was appointed March of 2023. So he's been in that role less than a year and he's been the one leading a lot of that work. He's obviously went to the UN permanent forum, he's been to [inaudible 00:14:58] engaged with those people. He's been doing some community engagement around Australia. So that's kind of where we're at now with regards to this, obviously we're still very early stages of the kind of approach. As I said, Justin Mohamed's only been in the role for a time of recording, nine months we're only 18 months post-election. Obviously we had a very big consequential and sort of sad referendum in the middle of that period in the course.

The policy was very clearly linked at the time of the election to the idea of a First Nations voice and what that meant. So there've been some hiccups, there've been some kind of slow movement towards progress. I definitely, I think... Sorry, hopefully I think in the next 18 months we'll see a real kind of push towards tangible action in the space. It's been a lot of really good signs so far, but I think we're at the point where in the next 18 months we need to start seeing really good talk from the minister and the really good talk from Ambassador Mohamed turn into, "Okay, what does this look like in action? What does this look like in foreign policy practice for Australia? How do we meaningfully engage our communities? What does that look like? How do we think about that?" So that's where we're at now.

The policy idea, obviously there's been many different ways in which this has come forward. The voice I mentioned, obviously being a really key influence on the A LP and on First Nations communities and we saw the data from the AEC saying, "Hey, 80% of First Nations peoples roughly supported the voice that's been borne out by the voting data." So that's a bit of real influence. Obviously UNDRIP, the ALP was the party that committed to UNDRIP in 2009, of course didn't enact it, but did sign onto it. There'd been a number of things that have influenced this policy and you can see that with regards to and with regards to the First Nation's voice. But I think key message I have for listeners is that we're now at that tipping point where the words, the ideas, the good meaning need to now be turned into meaningful action and tangible action.

Julie Ballangarry:

I agree with you, James. I think that we need to move past the tokenism. Indigenous diplomacy sometimes can be seen as a real soft power and that we're seen as this object to entice the rest of the world, that we have this old culture living here and all the rest of it. And I always give the example of tourism in terms of it being a soft power. The indigenous people are used as the enticement for people to come here. We are a cultural thing that gets wielded out at the sake of the colonial state to look good, to say, "We've got this, come and join us, come to our country."

And I remember when I was about... I don't know, it wasn't even that long ago actually, and I've said this quite often in a number of different forums, but I cried the day I saw us go on holidays versus us being the subject or the object of someone else's holiday. And it's about that we're real people in this. So it's moving away from tokenism to a place where First Nations people's voices do matter because unfortunately these decisions that are made on an international level impact us the most. They impact women and they impact indigenous women and indigenous people with disabilities. So we need to ensure that those voices are centered to be able to live in a better world. Things that both First Nations foreign policy and a feminist foreign policy promotes.

James Blackwell:

We are at that point where I think we do need to move beyond tokenism definitely. And so it's good to see Ambassador Mohamed going out and doing some of these meaningful tangible things with regards to his engagement with regards to what the government's doing. The thing I'd point out is obviously we are in that post referendum period, and I've not commented on the referendum term that much, but we are in that period where I think we now need to start seeing, "Okay, what is it beyond the First Nations section in air quotes there of DFAT that this foreign policy approach is being used in?" Like, "Yes, we have the ambassador, he's doing great work, he more than I can continue to do great work, but beyond his little area, what is fundamentally changing about the way in which Australia thinks of itself acts as itself engage with other countries?"

Because yes, it's great to have the ambassador doing the work that he's doing with regards to Emory at the permanent forum, indigenous communities, indigenous trade, all the things that he's doing and hopefully planning to keep doing. But it needs to be beyond that little kind of hawed-out area. The ambitious goal or the broad vision of this idea or even perhaps the potential of this idea is such that it changes the way Australian foreign policy thinks on a broader scale. I don't think we've quite seen that yet. And I think as we move into 2024 and beyond, how is the government, how is DFAT, how are first communities as well pushing for that change to move beyond that tokenism of the cultural space of the indigenous right space and move into the broader mainstream areas of foreign policy.

Julie Ballangarry:

Definitely. And I think that pigeonholing it in a thematic type of policy lens is not good. It doesn't do anything. It doesn't do it in the feminist space, it doesn't do it in the First Nations space needs to be embedded throughout. And I guess what I think is that, like you said, it needs to be really embedded within the foreign policy space, but it needs to change the way people think because it can't be ad hoc, it can't be added on, it can't just be siloed. It needs to be a part of our thinking and a part of our national identity as well about who we want to be.

James Blackwell:

Exactly. I think hopefully we see in the next couple of this term of parliament, even if pending a reelection of the government, a future term of parliament, that they do move outside that little area. I don't think they won't, but it's just I think we need to reiterate that that's where this needs to go. We can't let the shallow expectations of indigenous siloing remain. We need to push policy makers on, "This is about all of you, not just the indigenous 3.2% of DFAT, but the other 97%." We all need to radically rethink how this works.

Julie Ballangarry:

I just wanted to add to that too, because currently we see New Zealand just has a new government and a lot of the things there are not ideal for our brothers and sisters across the ditch there. And I think what's really important in both approaches that we're talking about today, what you talked about James, is that it's thoroughly embedded and it's not thematic because different governments can just come in on a whim and change things and we know that's to be true. And so if it's deeply embedded within institutions and within the fabric of our society, it's harder to just undo decades of work. It's very sad what I see happening in New Zealand at the moment.

James Blackwell:

I think there is a bit of work to be done because in New Zealand we saw it didn't happen where both parties or both sides of the political spectrum were on board with this idea. And so I think perhaps in this country, and of course the liberal party and the National Party acted atrociously during the referendum and are not friends of indigenous people, I would say, in many policy respects. But I do think there is a momentum or perhaps a possibility that we need to make this idea or this embedding almost it as the norm rather than the exception that it's not an ALP thing, it's an indigenous peoples Australia thing.

Alice Ridge:

We've seen this in the feminist foreign policy space as well where there are changes in government and there's a lot of discussion at the moment about how to embed feminist foreign policies more deeply across institutions so that they can survive changes of government. And sometimes it's not appropriate for them to be maintained. If a new government is truly not committed to the principles, then I think maintaining the name does become problematic. It becomes tokenistic. It kind of waters down the concept. If we want these kind of ideas to really last and to be deeply implemented, then we need to find these ways to really integrate them deeply into the work. And that means the horizontal integration. So across all areas of foreign policy, not just being siloed with feminist foreign policy, we often see it siloed in the development space, but also across all levels.

So from the head of department all the way across the bureaucracy as well as at the ministerial level. So I think that's really important. And I think we've sort of touched on tokenism a few times, and that's part of why I really shy away from definitions of feminist foreign policy that talk about women's leadership or women's participation. Because I think what we often see, and this is true across both spaces, is that we see only a certain kind of woman being included only certain kinds of First Nations people and voices being included. And it's the ones who were comfortable with the system as it stands. So really what we need to be doing, we don't just need to be putting more people at the same table. We need to be redesigning the table re-imagining what that looks like. And I think that that's such an important part of getting beyond this sort of tokenistic approach.

Julie Ballangarry:

Yeah, I agree, Alice. Alice, I want to circle back to, I guess it links in with tokenism, but I touched on it earlier around feminist foreign policy at the international level. You mentioned that it's in 14 different countries. I just want to know how well do First Nations voices or issues are represented in these approaches to your knowledge?

Alice Ridge:

Not much. So far, we haven't seen any feminist foreign policy country make First Nations issues a real centerpiece of their approach. And as James has sort of alluded to, there's a huge gap in terms of First Nations representation and integration of these issues within foreign policy. So I think it's a real gap.

Julie Ballangarry:

I think too, thinking about different nations and Sweden's held up as one of the meccas of feminist foreign policy, but how they deal with First Nations people is not necessarily how they perceive themselves to the rest of the world. And I think that that's really important and really interesting and I think it's really important that the emissions of indigenous justice illustrates a continuation of paternalism and colonialism in today's society. So I think James and I mentioned it in our paper is that if you're going to have a feminist foreign policy, you need to have indigenous-centered approaches at the center of it because they're the people that are the most marginalized from this. And if we're talking about power structures and deconstructing it, it's so important because where some of the people that have been the most disadvantaged by these systems, so why not go to the people that know it best to sort of help destabilize and to rebuild?

Alice Ridge:

And I think that's such an opportunity for Australia to contribute to the world, right? It is such a gap in the feminist foreign policy space, but we have this commitment to First Nations foreign policy, and so being able to sort of influence the way that other countries think about that, I think it's such an important opportunity. I just want to touch on as well, James has mentioned a few times the referendum and unfortunately it was unsuccessful. So that does raise a lot of questions then about the policy coherence between our international commitment to First Nations foreign policy and what's happening domestically.

And again, this is something that we see really often with feminist foreign policy countries who are claiming this feminist approach in international relations. No one has solved gender equality, not even Sweden. So there's this question of, "Can countries claim to have a feminist foreign policy when they have these issues at home?" Civil society, feminist groups in Mexico, point to the really high rates of femicide. In Canada, we see the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women, and I think these inconsistencies absolutely need to be pointed out. My hope I think is that these international commitments can be an accountability hook to push for more domestic progress while we're also acknowledging that there's an international element to these discussions as well.

James Blackwell:

And of course in the three countries that we've mentioned in the last five minutes, Sweden, Mexico, Canada, all have indigenous peoples insignificant populations in each of those countries. We have the Sami and Scandinavia, we have obviously indigenous Mexican peoples from various different backgrounds. They have indigenous Canadians from various different backgrounds. So each of these countries that we've talked about, some of which have feminist foreign policies, some of which don't all have indigenous peoples in them. And many of the other countries that have talked about feminist foreign policies also have indigenous peoples in them. So I think there is a bit of a disconnect as well in those countries about the kind of indigenous power relations that they're talking about. If you look at Sweden, there's a really big power imbalance between the Sami in Sweden and mainstream Swedish society. I think that disconnect I was talked about between the international and the domestic really is there in some of these specific circumstances.

Julie Ballangarry:

And I think that a huge part of that too is the questioning of the power relations, right? It is also about obviously gender equality, but I think at the very core of it, these are the things that inhibit gender equality, these power relations. And I think additionally to that, they're often seen as domestic issues rather than international issues. And I'm a big advocate for domestic must be. It's a mirror to what we show on the international. So you can't say one thing in an international space, then not do it at home. It doesn't work, it doesn't go together. So James, I want to end on a really strong note here, and I think that Alice, you've brought it home in terms of Australia has a really unique opportunity here to really grab it with both hands to sort of have a feminist foreign policy that embeds First Nations perspectives, but also James, we have a First Nations foreign policy commitment, so what strengths does a First Nations foreign policy bring to our country?

James Blackwell:

How long have we got? This podcast could go on for an hour. Bringing it back to that issue of power. It really makes Australia rethink and reexamine its place in the world. What is our role in the Pacific? What is our role in Southeast Asia? What is our role in western hegemony and western power? What is our role as a country in that place? What obligations do we owe to our Pacific neighbors? What obligations do we owe with regards to climate change and human rights? Making us rethink those things is a really strong benefit. Not to poke fun at Australian foreign policy makers over the last century, but there's a bit of sleep at the wheel going on regards to our role in the system that we're in. They don't kind of question the fundamental natures of the problem anymore. We see it with regards to AUKUS and the assumption that that's just a good thing. There is just this baked in racial power assumption with regards to AUKUS. First Nations perspective actually makes us sit back and go, "Actually let's rethink this, or what's the relationality here?

What is the impact on more than just us on more than just the West? What is the impact on the Pacific? What is the impact on indigenous peoples here with regards to AUKUS?" To give one particular example, what do we do with the nuclear waste from the submarines? Whose country is that going to? That is an international relations question that is almost not dealt with in other mainstream approaches because it's not relevant, but in an indigenous perspective it's extremely relevant, it's highly relevant both for the practical indigenous outcome of, "Are we going to dump it in South Australia or on some Pacific Island or even in the kind of broader relational sense of our international relations, our foreign policy needs to center those kind of issues, those kind of questions as foundational." The second kind of big benefit of centering First Nations voices is it's a better reflection of what this country is.

A lot of mainstream thinkers position. Australia is this kind of isolated white fortress in a very brown and colored Pacific. That's not what we are. We are a brown country in a brown Pacific. This country has a 60,000, 80,000 year history of indigenous peoples engaging with the broader region. And we can talk about all those examples again endlessly, but I think having an indigenous approach really makes us go, "Okay, what is the full picture of Australia?" You can't act on the world stage if you don't know what you are on the world stage. And we are acting in a way that I think is irreflective or not reflective of what Australia really is. We are acting as this British outpost, and for a long time Australia has liked to think of itself as this British American outpost. We aren't a British American outpost. We are to an extent, but we are built on indigenous lands, stolen indigenous lands, and there is this long history of engagement with the region, engagement with peoples.

And so I think that's the second benefit of indigenous focus perspectives in foreign policy is that it makes... Again, it's this idea of fundamentally questioning the nature of our foreign policy to lead to better outcomes. I don't think for one second that thinking in indigenous ways wouldn't lead to better outcomes for Australia with regards to almost any issue. Again, I'm biased, but I think that's the kind of real benefit here. It makes us fundamentally question how, not just ourselves and our power and the power of others, but our fundamental relationships. And that's really at the crux of it. For me as a Wiradjuri person sitting here right now on my country, I'm connected to the land I'm on, to the trees, the rivers, the people, everything in between. If we were to center that kind of approach, it really makes Australia act in a different way or hopefully makes Australia act in a really different way. Caveat is that we do it properly. If we don't do it properly, we don't get the benefit. But if we do do it properly, I think that's the real benefit that this has.

Julie Ballangarry:

I'm a real optimist sometimes when I shouldn't be, but I think it's actually a really great opportunity and wonderful opportunity even for Australia to really build a nation, like build our identity. Building on what you're saying, James, build our nation, build our identity with First Nations people being core to that identity. Everybody in Australia should be proud of our indigenous heritage. And Australia doing this, stepping forward is a way to move forward on a healing journey, on a reconciliation journey because a lot of nations see this, particularly Canada sees things like UNDRIP, which can underpin a First Nations foreign policy as a core mechanism for reconciliation in the nation. And I think that Australia can do this and move forward and leave our colonial history behind. It is a part of our history and it forever will be, but it's a way for us to move forward together as one nation respecting First Nations peoples and taking that to the global stage to respect First Nations people's rights.

James Blackwell:

As you said earlier, the domestic aspect is also very important. We need to have the front party aspect, but again, we need to have the indigenous truth telling justice potentially treaty discussions domestically as well as internationally. We can't neglect that domestic aspect. Obviously, the referendum has failed. The voice is not likely to occur, at least in a constitutional sense, but there are other aspects of First Nations truth, healing, justice discussion, but we need to have that to underpin the international. We can't neglect both or we can't neglect one and focus on the other.

Julie Ballangarry:

Definitely. Alice, just quickly, as a non-indigenous woman, what do you think a First Nations foreign policy brings to our country?

Alice Ridge:

I think something that has always stayed with me from the paper that both of you wrote back in 2022 for the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition issues paper series was this idea that before colonization Australia was made up of over 350 indigenous nations who were conducting foreign policy with each other with neighboring countries for 80,000 years. And this sort of hubris to think that we wouldn't have anything to learn from that, that we couldn't learn about how to navigate and heal from conflict and how to resolve disputes over resources, how to live in a better relationship with the environment. I think that we have so much to learn and to gain from that history and that deep wisdom.

Julie Ballangarry:

Thanks for sharing that, Alice. Look, I have really enjoyed yarning with you both today, but before I let you go, our podcast is focused on exploring emerging approaches to foreign policy that are really about re-imaging and remaking global systems to create a more mutually beneficial society. What's one takeaway for our audience about First Nations and feminist foreign policy that you want to share?

Alice Ridge:

For me, I think the takeaway I would love people to leave with is that First Nations and feminist foreign policy approaches are mutually reinforcing. There's been so many, I think, interconnections that we've surfaced through our discussion today. There's also a connection between the discomfort that the concepts sometimes raise for people if they say it's too politically sensitive to talk about First Nations justice or the word feminist is too divisive. I think that's also because these concepts are about challenging power, and so if they're challenging to people, it's because they are, but that's really why we need them.

Julie Ballangarry:

Thanks. And James.

James Blackwell:

I'm going to build up on what I said and say, embrace that discomfort. Embrace that challenging feeling. Sit in it. If you're engaged in the space, sit in that space where you feel the discomfort, where you want to challenge the power relations. When you're approaching issues, think about the power imbalances, think about the racial, gender, power imbalances because that's how we move forward. That's how we make change as you go forth into the world. Hopefully, people are going forth beyond this after this podcast and not kind of curling up into a ball. But if you go forth into the world, embrace that discomfort, embrace that challenge, and you got to really rethink how you position yourself in the world and how Australia positions itself in the world as well.

Julie Ballangarry:

That's how we grow. Thank you both so much for your time today. It's been an absolute pleasure.

James Blackwell:

Thank you.

Alice Ridge:

Thank you.

Julie Ballangarry:

Well, that's all for today. Until next time, yaarri yarraang. In case you're wondering, yaarri yarraang is from my language, the Gumbaynggir language, and it means goodbye. But it also means this way or in this direction, or it can mean a change of state. Yaarri can also mean a change of any kind, for instance, a change in place, direction, state, time, or subject. I think these two little words hold so much meaning and they're perfect for this podcast, which is all about changing the direction or state of foreign policy. So again, yaarri yarraang. This podcast was executively produced and edited by Pariya Taherzadeh and co-produced by myself, Julie Ballangarry, Alice Ridge, Carla [inaudible 00:38:02] and Annaliese Lacodia, and also a special mention to Joe Perdola.