Julie Ballangarry:

This episode was recorded on the lands of the Yaggera and Turrbal people and also the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. Giina to F! It! Giina is from the Gumbaynggirr language, my language. It's a friendly welcome.

Hi, I'm Julie Ballangarry. I'm a Gumbaynggirr-Dunghutti woman and a researcher who specializes in Indigenous policy. I'm also 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 experience from First Nations Peoples 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 are part of the conversations about reimaging global systems, one that mutually benefits all.

In May 2022, Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister, Penny Wong announced that the Australian government would adopt a First Nations approach to foreign policy suggesting a desire to engage with the Indo-Pacific region and other international actors in a more inclusive and relational manner. Minister Wong stated that a First Nations approach to foreign policy would ...

Penny Wong:

Weaves the voices and practices of the world's oldest continuing culture into the way we talk to the world and in the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

We will appoint an ambassador for First Nations Peoples and we will ensure First Nations Peoples have a stronger voice in our engagement with the world, deepening their long-held ties across countries of the Indo-Pacific.

Julie Ballangarry:

In March 2023, Mr. Justin Mohamed, a Gooreng Gooreng man was appointed as the inaugural ambassador for First Nations People and in December 2023, DFAT established the Office for First Nations International Engagement to lead on implementing the government's commitment to embed First Nations practices and perspectives into Australia's foreign policy.

Prior to this role, Ambassador Mohamed worked for decades in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organizations as well as senior roles in government and corporate sectors on issues spanning health, social justice, and reconciliation. This work has seen the ambassador have a strong commitment to, and connection with the First Nations community. Additionally, within these roles the ambassador has represented First Nations organizations internationally, including at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Today we extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Mohamed as he joins us to share his journey in the role, what his office has been up to so far and probably the most important question we are all wanting to know and understand, what is a First Nations approach to foreign policy and its role in Australian engagement in the world?

Thank you so much for joining us today, Ambassador Mohamed.

Justin Mohamed:

Yeah. Thank you for having me.

Julie Ballangarry:

Let's start at the beginning. We know that in September of 2022, the Australian government called for an expression of interest for Australia's first-ever ambassador for First Nations People. What appealed to you about this role and why did you want to be the ambassador for First Nations People?

Justin Mohamed:

I first heard about the role when the government of the day were elected in and Minister Wong, a part of her speech when she was going to be announced as the minister mentioned about having a stronger or a more pointed place for First Nations People across our foreign policy.

So I sat back for a while to kind of see how that was going to happen. I mean, I was working here in Victoria with the Department of Justice and Community Services. So just watching how that international space would unfold because as you know this hasn't been done before.

Then there was the announcement there was going to be an ambassador for First Nations People. That really took me by surprise. I said, "Well, what does that look like? How does it work?" Probably as it came out from the expressions of interest and then a bit of encouraging from different people that sat around me said, "You should put your hat in the ring. I think it'd be really good."

I wasn't too sure if I had what it took, but no one really knew exactly what it was going to take because it's an inaugural role. What attracted me to it was one that it was inaugural. It was new. It was in a part of the Australian government that hadn't had a strong First Nations involvement compared to departments like health and education, et cetera.

So the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, I said, "Well, this would be good to spread the responsibility of how we advance First Nations People not only in our service areas domestically, but what we do internationally, and taking some of those opportunities to take the strong stories, the innovation out internationally," was something which really attracted me to this role.

Julie Ballangarry:

Yeah. I think that's fantastic. Thanks for sharing your insights on that. I think that gives people a bit of a better understanding of who you are and where you've come from.

I think too, I've spoke about this in other podcasts with other guests is that sometimes we don't envision ourselves in the foreign policy space because we see ground roots at-home stuff really important. But the foreign policy stuff is just as important particularly because Indigenous people have a seat at the table at the UN and we have used that to leverage our rights.

Can you tell us about your first year in the role and what you and your office have been up to and what you've learned from the experiences that you've undertaken in this first year?

Justin Mohamed:

It's a fast learning curve, but number of things that we had to do, and starting from building the plane as you fly it sort of scenario that we're in. We had a task force that was already in place, the First Nations task force and their job was predominantly to arrange and to ensure that there was an ambassador appointed and all that processes that go through with that, and the work behind the scenes. So they did a fantastic job with that.

My announcement came and then it was really hit the ground running. Six days I was in the role, I was on a plane going to New York to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as head of delegation from DFAT. That was like a whirlwind of getting into Canberra, understanding the policies, my security, passports, a whole range of things that had to be organized within a couple of weeks even before I got into the office.

It showed me then when we went over to the UN how much interest there was in this role. This announcement wasn't just in Australia that there was interest, but internationally countries seeing Australia, the Australian government coming out on the front foot and saying they're going to announce and have an ambassador of First Nations People while no other countries in the world have got a ambassador for First Nations People.

So when I say other countries, like New Zealand, Canada, the U.S. that you'd think they may have, but they don't. So this was something which the international sort of our partners and people we spoke to internationally over there in New York were really interested, and probably had all the questions that many people had, you know. "What's the scope of it? What are you planning to do? Is it permanent? What support do you have? What the aspirations are, and where is this role going to focus on over the next 12 to two years?"

So with that I came back and with the task force still in place and staff making decisions if they should stay or move on because they did their job and now there's a new chapter with that, consolidating that space at the same time.

From my background I've come from the community controlled, Aboriginal Community Controlled background, which you need to have connection with the people you represent, and that was something which I've learned over many, many years.

So I came back and said, "We've got to connect. We just can't be overseas all the time, but we've got to connect to the people which this role is representing, the First Nations People of this country."

So we embarked a very intensive three months or so, three or four months of going around. We went to every state and territory. We spoke to over 100 stakeholders from all different parts of work that they do in the First Nations space, from land councils to businesses to school children in year 11 and 12 to primary school, traditional owner groups. Just a whole range of different people on social justice issues as well as economic and development and climate, gender.

I just did not close the door on any opportunity that we had. I'm really pleased to say that when we went around there wasn't a door shut that which when we said we were coming, people wanted to speak to us about that. So that was really a strong part of the development of this and making sure what we need to be representing in these international forums.

In tied with that over the 10 months as well there was also a number of international engagements, which I was a part of and I mentioned about the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. There was also Emirate, which was in Geneva and then went over to COP with the climate change in Dubai later last year.

APEC was another one which came from left field. We weren't too sure. That wasn't really on the agenda when I first started, but as we built the idea of having First Nations People at COP, having a bigger delegation at APEC and speaking to agenda items just started to build because we had capacity.

Thankfully, First Nations People in those areas wanted to be a part of it. So we had the experts over there. And more closer to home, the local connection with the Pacific was almost always and will be always a very key part of this role. So I went to PNG, Papua New Guinea and was over there when they had the World Trade Forum, Indigenous World Trade Forum in Vanuatu.

So that was all last year and it was a combination of domestic, international, from human rights to climate to trade, looking at health, looking at security, a whole range of different areas which we looked into and we worked with, as well as the work we're doing internally with The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I was very aware that to change anything, to make a difference we can't keep doing the same things over and over again. That means we've got to maybe need to change the structure or the machinery that is driving our foreign policies to get more of our First Nations Peoples into our foreign policies. That's something which was a big part of last year up until December.

At the end of September, or in September we were announced as an office. We moved from a task force to an office, which was a really big step as far as being embedded into The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Foreign Affairs policies.

Julie Ballangarry:

That just goes to show how important this space is for the whole of Australia as well as the Australian government. You did mention there that it has been well-perceived by people internationally. That's been my experience as well when talking about a First Nations foreign policy. People are very interested in that.

I guess then most importantly, you talked about how First Nations People really wanted to be a part of these conversations. So would you say then it has been really well-received by First Nations People in Australia?

Justin Mohamed:

Yeah, it has been. It's been amazing because a lot of my work that I've done in the past is probably looking at the deficits of what's not working. So you're speaking to communities and individuals about how we can improve the systems on justice or health, education, et cetera. Many of the closed-in-the-gap sort of targets that are there.

It's a conversation that needs to happen and there needs to be work with that. But what I've found with this role is that when I've gone to communities, and usually the communities or the individuals I speak to, or groups, what has attracted us to go there is that they are doing something pretty innovative in one of these areas if it's climate, or with their young people, or across the trade or et cetera.

So once we get through what's not working and the struggles maybe, the challenges that communities have or families have, when we start talking about what they're doing as the innovation that they're doing or the strength building or the achievements they've been able to make, the conversation goes to another level. It's at a level which I really enjoy because people love to share about the good stories that are there, the strengths, the knowledges, the changes that they're making in local communities, which don't always make the front pages of the newspaper or the media or even get tabled in Parliament because there's so much of the deficits type of language, which is around our people.

But to the side of that, there's so much innovation, which I think not only Australia can benefit from, but internationally we can contribute strongly into dialogue around international matters that affect all of us, and climate, and how we look after this, especially the Pacific, but the rest of the world dealing with other First Nations Peoples and what their struggles.

That some of the stories and innovation and examples we have show that we can achieve self-determination in areas, and the strength of what we do often doesn't get the acknowledgement and also the exposure which this role and hopefully we do. For them to pick this up, they want to be a part of it and I had overwhelming response. People want to be part of the international agenda. They really do.

They've donated or given their time freely, they've attended things, they've caught up on Teams meetings or with trying to unpack things. So their involvement, it's more about how we kind of accommodate the attitude of, "We want to be a part of this. Can we be a part of it, and when do you want us to be?"

Julie Ballangarry:

Yeah, and I think it's also great how you're going about working towards the objectives and goals because it's a different way of going towards policy and a different way of working with community, which is something that I'm very passionate about and a lot of First Nations People are very passionate about.

So I think drawing on your experience as well from the community sector is something that DFAT can really treasure and learn from. So this is probably a question that most people listening to are hanging on the edge of their seats to hear. How would you define First Nations foreign policy to our audience both domestically and internationally?

Justin Mohamed:

Yeah, look at the moment, and I think the fundamental reason why this role was established and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have embraced it, and obviously the Minister for Foreign Affairs has appointed this role is that our current policies, our foreign affairs policies don't reflect our First Nations People as strongly as they should, and our agreements and our MOUs that we have with other countries.

So there's so much that apart from our policies which cover a broad range of areas. There's trade agreements, there's MOUs with different parts of, some with other countries, maybe different states of other countries. Have they all got strong First Nations commitments or input into that? The answer's no.

Are we working towards making sure that's going to be more seamless and it's going to be more of the norm other than just the exception? Yes, we're going to move towards that. The answer of, what does it look like? We should be able to as First Nations People, and this is what I've kind of taken to imagine this.

If I'm standing on the edge of Australia and I go out 100 kilometers and able to swing around and turn back and see what's written about Australia to the rest of the world in our foreign policies, I should be able to see myself, my family, and many other of the nations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People reflected in every part of what we have in our foreign policies. That's what I'd like to see.

Building the template and the mechanism and the pipeline to do that. That's part of the work that's ahead of all of us. That's where not only what's reflected to the world of what we haven't been able to achieve, but our ancient knowledges, which now are being and are driving a lot of the innovation.

I mean, climate and looking after our country is one of those areas, but also our legal services and our health services and many of the social justice programs that are run from communities that have been designed for communities, what we do. How do we keep our language strong while we're being dispersed across different parts of Australia? How do we keep our connection to country?

These things are really strong elements that could be put into our foreign policies, and should be in there and they are slowly building to that. That would then affect every area that we have when we have dialogue with our partners internationally, on the world stage of places like APEC, COP and as well as First Nation to First Nation conversations between countries that are First Nations People with Australia is something which I would see would make up what should be in as part of our foreign affairs policies.

But also the tangible experience between First Nation to First Nations People also has to be experienced. That's part of what we are working towards and that's what I feel and believe that we'll be able to definitely showcase and have that part of our foreign policies that will be seen for generations to come.

Julie Ballangarry:

I find this a really exciting thing. I talk about this a bit and I may have talked about it before where you've been present, but the idea that it's moved from this real transactional to a relational aspect with First Nations People and the Australian government. I always bring up the example of First Nations People being used in tourism ads to going on holiday.

And it sounds silly, but when I saw it, I cried because finally we weren't the attraction. We were a part of Australia going on holidays, particularly in Queensland, like the Queensland tourism ads and things like that. What it does is it starts to build an identity for Australia that is inclusive of our First Nations history. What it does too is it builds onto Australia's statecraft and makes it stronger because we are stronger together.

Minister Wong has spoken about this previously that our foreign policy should be reflective of our modern Australia and it should be reflective of our rich First Nations heritage. So I think it's a really exciting time and I think you're doing absolutely amazing job. I don't think I could do it. I think you're doing amazing.

I just wanted to ask, how does UNDRIP or does UNDRIP as a framework play a role in informing the commitment to a First Nations foreign policy?

Justin Mohamed:

Yeah, it definitely does. I mean, the short answer, yes, it has been established for exactly that, for countries, not all countries, but countries in particular like Australia, that we have a international framework of global standards that we can uphold or we can measure ourselves against.

So at the department we acknowledge this and the importance of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People is something which we acknowledge as the Australian government. And how that kind of guides us is I think we are still working through exactly how we report directly against that because it's not an easy task, but it's something which if we are wanting to be the leaders that we are in many fields that we should also be leading in our Indigenous or our First Nations areas.

We know this is not speaking out of school at all because we know the Closing the Gap report card shows that we aren't doing as well as we should. Prime Minister after Prime Minister has acknowledged that and has accepted that. There has been a lot of work being done to how we fine tune that, how we make it more accountable. Just recently we've seen our own Productivity Commission review that, and there's report that has come out with that as well.

But as far as UNDRIP and its work and what it stands for, it is a very important piece of a standard, which I think as a nation of Australia that we can kind of connect more to that and work towards that. It's something which will help guide us to see where we sit and how we kind of are viewed.

Domestically, and this is where my role is probably a little bit different to a number of other roles within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space or First Nations space. My role is not a part of the domestic sort of, "What's wrong, what's right, and we need to fix it, and this is how we fix that."

Obviously I've got to see that and be able to talk about that internationally. Our agency, the National Indigenous Agency, NIAA has got courage over that and is working with the Closing the Gap, the committee on that. The National Peaks are working very closely to try to keep everyone accountable in how we work to this. And UNDRIP really provides that, I suppose the overlay of where we are internationally and setting those high-level markers for us to keep following.

So it's something which is really important but we do, I think need to still work as a country, but as also First Nations People, how we align and how we report against that, but also then how we can keep ourselves accountable to international standards like UNDRIP and this levels and standards that is set.

Julie Ballangarry:

Yeah, absolutely. So in context of the 2023 referendum, has the referendum results changed the focus or framing of the First Nations foreign policy commitment or your role as ambassador?

Justin Mohamed:

After the referendum it has impacted everything we do with First Nations People. We can't sidestep that. A lot of people are still hurting. A lot of communities are. A lot of people are still questioning about what they're doing and how does it fit in the commitment of both government but also community members and where we are.

I know the rest of the world are also watching what our next steps are after the referendum. Many countries have expressed that. So then focusing on my role and this appointment, transparently it has affected because the questions are different now from internationally what I get asked about the role in Australia and its commitment to First Nations People because of the result of the referendum.

However, the commitment from the foreign affairs minister, the commitment from Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has not altered. That it has stayed on course. We are still forging ahead because these are the next steps.

So that was a decision which was made by majority of Australia voted no. Okay. That was the result of that. We can't change that result. However, our guide and where we were heading into having First Nations Peoples' knowledges and expertise reflected in part of our foreign policy and interwoven through it is something which has not changed.

In some ways it's probably focused us even more to say, "Okay, this is what we need to make sure we get this right. We need to make sure we have the right connection, we have the right voices in there speaking and representing these key areas the experts from our First Nations People right across Australia to be able to provide the opportunities and the platform so that ensuring internationally that when we are represented that we have good, strong delegations over there of the expertise," that I've talked about.

That when we are developing templates, plans going forward, strategies, our policies, especially around new areas around renewable energies, what climate's going to, those sorts of impacts that we have embedded with us and intertwined our First Nations People right through that, not as a tokenism or a tick-the-box exercise, but they are there and be able from the start to the finish of it, and right through the development processes of that.

So, has it changed? The answer's yes. I think it has just focused us a lot more about what we need to get done now, and the steps after the referendum to continuing building towards what we had set out back in 2022 when this role or this development was announced by the Foreign Affairs Minister.

Julie Ballangarry:

Yeah. Thank you for your transparency and your answer. I think that our listeners will really enjoy hearing that and hearing that no matter what the result was anyway that you need to move forward, but even more so now. I think that commitment is really important, particularly for all the areas that you discussed.

You did mention it though, so I'm going to come back to it. So something that has come up in this podcast is the issue of tokenism and how we can ensure that First Nations, and this podcast also talks about feminist foreign policy.

So how can we ensure that First Nations and feminist foreign policy approaches go beyond this tokenistic inclusion of women or First Nations People to actually changing our approach to foreign policy more broadly? What do you see as some of the key steps to ensuring we go beyond tokenism with this agenda?

Justin Mohamed:

I think one of the key steps is how any sort of agenda gets developed. If it's a knee-jerk or if it's kind of response to an issue in 24 hours, it probably is a little bit of, "We just need to do the right thing because people are watching us."

That's where I take a lot of heart from this role and this announcement. So we know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, this idea, this concept of how do we have a stronger presence of First Nations People in our foreign affairs wasn't born overnight. The minister has been thinking about this for a number of years, and once she was announced as minister was able to articulate and put this into practice.

One of the areas which gives me some peace of mind, but also guarantee that this wasn't just a quick fix. We know this is going to take a number of years, and it took a number of years and experiences to say, "How do we do this and what's the best steps forward with this?"

So the planning of this wasn't just off the cuff. There was a lot of planning behind it. There was particular things done in a particular order. There is a budget now that we have, and also the uptake in getting this out across and the work that I'm doing I just explained. So the tokenism part, I thought long and hard about it when this role came up. Exactly that, "Is this a tokenistic sort of role? Is this going to tick a box?"

Some people have even said when I was considering it, "Be careful. You know, you don't want to just be one of the people which have been rolled out and then be forgotten about and then the government can move on." So I looked about how we can keep the Australian government accountable for their commitments. That's part of why this role I think has a number of levers in it.

The office and as we keep building this and bringing more people from our First Nations communities involved in our international platforms will continue to keep the honesty, but also the true reality of where we are with that.

On the side of gender, I will say and people may not know, but there's also an ambassador for gender. I work very closely with her. So there is a cohort of us thematic ambassadors which sit there on a number of these issues and gender is a key part of that along with First Nations.

So it's not just, it all lands on me to do everything. For one, I'm not a woman so I don't pretend to know everything that needs to be said, but I do know there's a number of very strong First Nations women that are doing, like yourself, doing a lot of work out there.

I sat on a panel with yourself and Sandra Creamer, which was just amazing to hear the work which is happening. And what I'm hoping to do is to take that evidence, the dialogue, all the conversations and that knowledge and be able to make sure that, that goes into the right areas that it needs to, to ensure that the First Nations approach and who we are as a people is reflected and is part of our foreign policy in a genuine way.

As well as that, and equally as that our First Nations women and our young women are also reflected in that. Not only just reflected, but are part of developing that. That's something which I think we've always got to be careful that we don't slip into or allow anything to slip into that can turn into tokenism. That takes people like myself, others in senior roles to ensure that, that doesn't happen.

The way I see that doesn't happen is having the people who are the experts in those areas given a voice to be able to do that.

Julie Ballangarry:

That's a really great answer. I think too, I'm going to keep looping back to it because I think it's really important how you're conducting yourself and your office in developing and working towards a First Nations foreign policy really enables First Nations voices to come through, First Nations women as well as you talked about younger people as well.

I understand that I am in a very privileged position having just submitted my PhD, which is great.

Justin Mohamed:

Well done. Congratulations.

Julie Ballangarry:

Thank you. I have quite a, not as public as yours, but I have a public profile and I have a platform of which I can share ideas and knowledges. And a lot of our other First Nations People don't necessarily have that.

So I think that your office and having a role in that and supporting that with the other ambassadors, the Ambassador for Gender, knowing when to stand back and get others to step up into that and include those voices in the conversation because quite often our most marginalized voices are silenced. Sometimes we can hear the same voices over and over again.

So I think it's really important that different voices are approached. I think your approach to this and moving past the tokenism is working with people who may not have the same platform as myself or others, to be able to showcase and highlight them and show what they have to bring forth and bring forth into the policy because not everybody is a researcher and not everybody has a research budget to be able to promote it in various different ways.

So I think that's really important that those people have the opportunity to show that what they have is working and use that for evidence-based policy. I think it's really important.

Justin Mohamed:

I mean, what you've said is exactly right. As First Nations People we've got some really strong voices out there. We've got some really expert opinions, evidence-based like yourself, PhD really going through and saying, "Well, I don't just think this is a good idea. I'm going to research it and deliver those papers and write those articles."

Having that evidence-based approach to that is something which in this role it's not about one person or a handful of people talking about all subject matter, but every area that I've gone to, every state and territory there is so much. There's these gems of experiences and knowledges which we've got to get to the international levels and even nationally.

More recently, I was over in COP28 at Dubai, the biggest conference I've ever been to and on climate. I think it was over a hundred and something thousand people go there. We had a panel, and the panel was represented by First Nations People in the Pacific, but we had not only the Pacific. When we think of the Pacific, we think of ocean, we think of water, but we thankfully with this we had the deputy CEO, Sam from the Desert Alliance, which Australia is a third of us is desert.

She was able to join that panel and talk about the experience of what it is with climate change from a First Nations person who lives and is looking after country in the desert regions. That's a sort of, when I talk about expertise combined with evidence and combined with the sciences and our traditional knowledges, that makes it all so much more powerful than what we do.

Hearing even on the panel with yourself and Sandra, just the work that youse are doing and the evidence that youse are finding and the voices of women who probably haven't been given a voice in the past and communities that may not be in the front line of media to hearing their stories. Not only just their stories of what hasn't worked, but very importantly the stories of strength and endurance and innovation, which is there with many of our First Nations People.

Julie Ballangarry:

100% and I think our culture and our people inherently have that inbuilt into us. My dad is one of the most amazing intellectual people that I know, but didn't go further than grade five. In a very Western system, education is held very highly. So people want to hear my opinions, but there are people that have different levels of education. That doesn't diminish them from the conversation. It actually enriches them because they have a whole another diversity and a way of thinking.

I always find it really bizarre that people don't think the same way as me, and it took me a really long time to work that out. But we have ways of thinking and seeing things different that you don't need to have a PhD to be able to speak about things that are working and not working and why, because you have different experiences and you have your culture behind you to be able to understand those things.

I'm going to go to our standard final question that I have given to all of our guests. Our podcast is focused on exploring emerging approaches to foreign policy that are really about reimagining and remaking global systems to create a more mutually beneficial society. What's one takeaway for our audience about First Nations foreign policy that you want to share?

Justin Mohamed:

Foreign policy is a lot closer to who we are than what we think it is. So whatever you do, you don't think what you're doing. It has nothing to do with how we're reflected as a nation to the rest of the world. It's probably very much the opposite.

At the moment we are really working tirelessly to ensure that our First Nations People for a long time hasn't been given that platform or the ability to be part of our foreign policy, the government's foreign policy that is. So the work that you are doing wherever it is, or the study that you're undertaking, or the research, or the youth group that you run, or the language class that you're doing with a handful of people or for your whole community, you're looking after a country. These stories are something which contribute very much to our foreign policies and enrich what we've got as a nation of who we are for the rest of the world globally.

So my takeaway is what you're doing, keep doing it because what you do allows people in my role, I'm not here forever, but people in my role to be able to show that to not only to the rest of the world, but also to our governments of the day, how innovative and the strength of our people can contribute to a better nation across all these disciplines that we've talked about.

Julie Ballangarry:

Ambassador, thank you so much for your time today and I just really want to thank you too for all of your thoughtful answers today.

Justin Mohamed:

Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

Julie Ballangarry:

Well, I hope that interview fills in some blanks for you because for me it was very insightful in how the First Nations foreign policy agenda is developing here in Australia.

If you have any thoughts please leave a comment on Apple or Spotify, but until next time yaarri yarraang. In case you're wondering, yaarri yarraang is from my language, the Gumbaynggirr language. 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 just perfect for this podcast which is all about changing the direction or state of foreign policy, which sounds like what the ambassador and his office are doing. So again, yaarri yarraang.

This podcast was executively produced and edited by Pariya Taherzadeh and co-produced by myself, Julie Ballangarry, Alice Ridge, Carla Kweifio-Okai, and Annelise Lecordier.