

00:00:00 Anjali

Beames

Yes, I'm born and raised in the western suburbs of Adelaide and the first time that I'd even heard of Newcastle as a place was to do with the Rising Tide blockade in 2023.

00:00:14 Anjali

Beames

Rising Tide had done a tour of some of the cities and came to Adelaide and that's where I met some of the core organisers, including Alexis Stewart, who is a young climate activists who'd also come up through school strike for climate like myself.

00:00:28 Anjali

Beames

And I was so moved by what they pitched to us in Adelaide about coming up for the blockade that I went with my dad and fell in love with Newcastle.

00:00:40 Anjali

Beames

And it's actually thanks to Alexa's sister Jazz that I knew about and applied for a scholarship at the University of Newcastle, which I got.

00:00:48 Anjali

Beames

So I've just finished my first year of a double degree in International Development and Global Indigenous Studies where I will hopefully be majoring in environmental sustainability and also International Relations and politics.

00:01:04 Nicky Page

Let's just backtrack before we talk about the Newcastle experience, particularly as a young person and a young person of colour, tell me about your experience with School Strike for Climate.

00:01:16 Anjali

Beames

I went to high school in the city of Adelaide and being in that space meant that you could physically see when protests were happening because people would leave class and you'd be seeing them walking down the street.

00:01:30 Anjali

Beames

And so I don't think that I would have had the same proximity to School Strike for Climate had I not been going to school nearby.

00:01:36 Anjali

Beames

And so in the end of 2019 I went to the September Climate strike, which was one of the biggest, perhaps the biggest that had happened in Adelaide.

00:01:46 Anjali

Beames

And after attending that strike, I got in contact with some of the students who'd organised it.

00:01:52 Anjali

Beames

And since then for the rest of high school had been a organiser for School Strike for Climate and had put on a couple of different rallies and strikes in Adelaide as well as different forms of action, including a sit in at the front of Parliament House, which I did to sort of finish off Year 12.

00:02:08 Nicky Page

And then of course, COVID struck and knocked all of that for six, didn't it really?

00:02:14 Nicky Page

How was that?

00:02:15 Anjali

Beames

It was hard because the momentum was sort of died out and so we'd still host climate strikes, but we'd get a tenth of the numbers that we did compared to the September strike that I'd been to for the first time.

00:02:28 Anjali

Beames

And it was also hard to maintain engagement with other young people.

00:02:34 Anjali

Beames

There wasn't sort of the energy and the enthusiasm and the hope in the same way that there had been and it was quite a tedious process trying to keep having meetings and trying to bring people in and unfortunately the energy, at least in Adelaide, kind of died out.

00:02:50 Nicky Page

Even studying in school became really difficult because a lot of people were having to do it online and so on.

00:02:56 Nicky Page

Tell me the story.

00:02:57 Anjali

Beames

Yeah, I think COVID was a big hit to the movement, especially because school strikes for climate tactics relied so heavily on those mass gatherings.

00:03:06 Anjali

Beames

And that's how we generated power, was filling the streets with thousands of people.

00:03:10 Anjali

Beames

And after COVID, we couldn't really gain that momentum back.

00:03:15 Anjali

Beames

We were getting sort of a tenth of the numbers that we'd maybe gotten at the September strike in 2019.

00:03:22 Anjali

Beames

And so to sort of try and continue as young people generating that sort of power, we had to change our tactics a bit.

00:03:31 Anjali

Beames

So we were relying on maybe less numbers, but a more direct approach.

00:03:36 Anjali

Beames

And that included at the end of 2023, doing a "Study In", we called it, on the steps of Parliament.

00:03:42 Anjali

Beames

So for a week during our exam study time, we sat on the steps of Parliament and would confront politicians who'd come out for their lunch breaks and whatnot about why weren't they doing enough on climate action.

00:03:57 Nicky Page

How did that go?

00:03:59 Anjali

Beames

It was a very interesting experience.

00:04:02 Anjali

Beames

Some of the politicians were quite friendly, said that they were really inspired by what we were doing, but also didn't necessarily actually do anything.

00:04:13 Anjali

Beames

Politicians can listen and they can nod and they can applaud you as young people for what you're doing, but that doesn't translate to them changing their policy in any way.

00:04:22 Anjali

Beames

And on the flip side of that, we had the state energy minister at the time come out and be quite antagonistic, in my opinion, towards us.

00:04:31 Anjali

Beames

We were asking why hadn't SA, like other states, banned new gas connections and houses that were being built and we were told that we're a gas state and for the economy of course that was not possible.

00:04:45 Anjali

Beames

And then we showed the minister a report from Asthma Australia saying that gas stoves in houses increase the risk of childhood asthma development and he told us he didn't believe them and criticised us for not letting him finish.

00:05:02 Anjali

Beames

So I think that was frustrating but also felt powerful because we're making those politicians uncomfortable.

00:05:09 Anjali

Beames

They were coming into our space.

00:05:10 Anjali

Beames

We had claimed the section on North Terrace in front of the steps.

00:05:14 Anjali

Beames

And instead of going into their offices and meeting with them, which I've also done, where you're subject to their space and their power, they're the ones sitting at the desk and you're sort of encroaching on their territory and you have to be polite.

00:05:29 Anjali

Beames

When we're out on the street, as citizens and constituents, we actually have the power and they are the ones having to listen to us.

00:05:36 Anjali

Beames

So in that way we can control the conversation and the narrative.

00:05:39 Anjali

Beames

And that felt really inspiring.

00:05:41 Anjali

Beames

And that was something that, yeah, I realised I wouldn't have had without doing that tactic in that way.

00:05:47 Nicky Page

Well, in terms of controlling the narrative, let's talk about your early experiences talking to the media, because that is one of the roles that you took on as a school striker as a 14 year old.

00:05:58 Nicky Page

Yeah.

00:05:58 Anjali

Beames

With school strike it was so fantastic because we'd had so much support to train us up as young people in doing media spokes and school strike especially. Even at the time I was very conscious of having a diversity of voices being the front-facing positions.

00:06:15 Anjali

Beames

So not just having the same old, same old picture of what the climate movement is generally, being white people, men, especially older. Those are the faces that you normally see talking

to the media and perhaps perceive as having expertise in the subject matter.

00:06:34 Anjali

Beames

So with School Strike, we really wanted to shift who can be talking on these topics.

00:06:41 Anjali

Beames

And so yeah, I was.

00:06:42 Anjali

Beames

I was trained up as media spokes and did a whole bunch of interviews throughout my years in School Strike. had an article in the SBS, was on the ABC, did radio, wrote opinion pieces, a whole range of things.

00:06:57 Anjali

Beames

And it felt so powerful using those, I guess mainstream tools, getting the word out, getting our voices heard and have it come from someone with a real stake in the matter.

00:07:12 Anjali

Beames

Being a young person, like our future, it's so personal to us and people need to hear that, that we're concerned and that they have a responsibility to act for our sake and for future generations sake.

00:07:23 Anjali

Beames

And you're not necessarily going to hear that perspective from someone who isn't concerned about what their adulthood is going to look like because they're on the sort of later side of life and they've already lived and travelled and seen all these sites that are being destroyed through climate change and resource extraction.

00:07:39 Nicky Page

Did you have experience with antagonistic or confronting media?

00:07:44 Anjali

Beames

I personally, I had never had much of an issue with upfront antagonism.

00:07:51 Anjali

Beames

I know sometimes I do recall the mainstream sites being a bit dismissive of, at a climate strike. I'd got to them and introduce myself and say my name's Angela, I'm the media spokes if you have anything and they were sort of dismissive and only really cared about filming some of the keynote speakers at those rallies.

00:08:08 Anjali

Beames

But other than that, I've actually managed to develop some great relationships with journalists who have met me once before when I was younger and then again more recently.

00:08:19 Anjali

Beames

And sort of having those, yeah, re establishment of relationships and in a friendly way.

00:08:25 Anjali

Beames

But I would say because of doing media, I've also gotten negative response from individuals.

00:08:30 Anjali

Beames

So people commenting on articles and stories, people sending me Facebook messages after I've done an interview to demean me or to say a mean comment that really doesn't have any effect on me.

00:08:42 Anjali

Beames

But they seem to feel so strongly that they have opposing that I say that they have to go out of their way to message me.

00:08:49 Anjali

Beames

But yeah, it's not necessarily negativity from the media as an institution itself, but from the people who are reacting to what I've been saying and they don't like what I have to say.

00:08:59 Nicky Page

Why do you think it doesn't affect you?

00:09:02 Anjali

Beames

I think I'm quite realistic and logical person, so if someone messages me and says you're dumb or grow up or whatever, they've got no argument.

00:09:12 Anjali

Beames

There's nothing to discuss.

00:09:13 Anjali

Beames

If someone sent me a message disagreeing with me and phrased it in a way that was sort of reasonable and seeking some sort of like debate or that sort of thing, I would respond to that.

00:09:23 Anjali

Beames

But all these random comments, it's just like, you haven't even said anything of meaning.

00:09:28 Anjali

Beames

You've just said an insult.

00:09:29 Anjali

Beames

And I used to do debating in school.

00:09:30 Anjali

Beames

So these like logical fallacies and people using these tactics to try and diminish your argument, it's just like, well, that means nothing so.

00:09:39 Nicky Page

So I wanted to focus particularly today on how rising 2024 was, but 2023, your first experiences of Newcastle and of the blockade.

00:09:51 Nicky Page

What were the highlights for you in 2023?

00:09:55 Anjali

Beames

I had gone to Newcastle with my dad, we drove up from Adelaide and the drive itself was so beautiful, going through the Central Coast and into Newcastle and how lush it is.

00:10:05 Anjali

Beames

Quite a stark comparison to how dry Adelaide can be.

00:10:09 Anjali



Beames

But what really stood out to me was the diversity of people from across Australia.

00:10:17 Anjali

Beames

Something that was really sweet was that I was able to meet in person school strikers from across the country who I'd only interacted with in messages pretty infrequently when we're doing some sort of national meeting and whatnot.

00:10:28 Anjali

Beames

So being there in person and being able to meet all these people and develop friendships with like minded young people who are also organising and activists and have their own advice and stories and that sort of thing was so fantastic.

00:10:41 Anjali

Beames

And I still maintain a lot of those connections when we're all together again at various events, including the 2024 blockade as well.

00:10:50 Anjali

Beames

But it was my first time in a quite formal way engaging in civil disobedience.

00:10:58 Anjali

Beames

So I was one of the few under eighteens who'd gotten arrested in 2023 as part of the flotilla.

00:11:05 Anjali

Beames

I'd been exposed to civil disobedience in the lead up through my activism in South Australia, being connected with a lot of folks in Extinction Rebellion and that sort of thing.

00:11:13 Anjali

Beames

So I'd seen it in practise but not necessarily felt confident to exercise that myself.

00:11:19 Anjali

Beames

But being there in Newcastle with other young people and hundreds of others, just in general who are willing to take that step and break the law in order to send out the message that if the government's not going to act on this, then we the people will, that felt so empowering.

00:11:37 Anjali

Beames

It was an experience that's really catapulted me into doing, Yeah, more organising for Rising Tide and in other spaces.

00:11:45 Nicky Page

And in 2024, how did that build on your 2023 Rising Tide experience?

00:11:52 Anjali

Beames

In 2023 I would say I was more of a participant and in 2024 I'd shifted into doing some of the organising for the blockade in areas that I care about, "South Under 18" support and coordination and also Co convening the People of Colour caucus.

00:12:09 Anjali

Beames

So I'd had my experience being a participant and getting arrested and being out on the flotilla.

00:12:15 Anjali

Beames

And this year I wanted to create safe spaces for people who are more so marginalised or there are greater risks in in being in this area.

00:12:26 Anjali

Beames

I still got out on the water, didn't get arrested this time because I'm actually still on bail from a earlier rising tide action of stopping a coal chain.

00:12:35 Anjali

Beames

But yeah, the shift in sort of doing community building and caring for each other and mutual aid felt almost equally rewarding to the adrenaline of getting arrested at the previous year.

00:12:48 Nicky Page

Let's just take a little sidetrack there because you mentioned an arrest and a coal train, which wasn't at the 2023 blockade, was it?

00:12:55 Nicky Page

No.

00:12:56 Nicky Page

What's that?

00:12:56 Nicky Page

What happened there?

00:12:57 Anjali

Beames

That was a snap action in September, that rising Tide Newcastle had done in response to Tanya Plibersek's approval of three coal mine expansions.

00:13:08 Anjali

Beames

So the day after that announcement in the morning, we went to the coal train line and flagged down the coal train and climbed up on top, started shovelling off coal to to not just let another fossil fuel project approval slide under the radar.

00:13:23 Anjali

Beames

And we made national media from that.

00:13:26 Anjali

Beames

A lot of other climate groups had expressed a lot of support for what we did.

00:13:30 Anjali

Beames

And that was my not first arrest, but first time being held in custody.

00:13:35 Anjali

Beames

So we were refused bail and spent over 24 hours in custody and then were finally granted bail and set free.

00:13:44 Anjali

Beames

But that was, yeah, quite an intense but powerful experience.

00:13:48 Anjali

Beames

And I felt personally compelled to do it because for so long, through school strike and through other campaigns, I've written letters to politicians, I've signed petitions, I've met with them, I've tried to lobby with them to support legislation to protect the interests of young people, including the Duty of Care Bill that Anjali Sharma, a school striker, had

conceptualised and is working to bring into Parliament.

00:14:15 Nicky Page

She's now studying in Canberra, is that right?

00:14:17 Nicky Page

And you?

00:14:18 Nicky Page

So she's taking on at Canberra and you're in Newcastle.

00:14:21 Nicky Page

Taken.

00:14:22 Nicky Page

Yeah, it's a pretty good outcome.

00:14:24 Anjali

Beames

Exactly.

00:14:25 Anjali

Beames

But I'd exercise all of the right ways that you're meant to give feedback to the government and to Tanya Plibersek specifically, all of these campaigns targeting the environment minister.

00:14:36 Anjali

Beames

And for her to still continue to approve fossil fuel projects and not consider the effect of those emissions on future generations was so enraging.

00:14:46 Anjali

Beames

And it's so ridiculous that all that effort over many years that I've personally put has led to this continual approval.

00:14:55 Anjali

Beames

So that was my motivation to get up on that Coltrane, to do something in response to that announcement, no matter how scary it was and no matter the consequences.

00:15:05 Nicky Page

Who was it to spend 24 hours in custody?

00:15:09 Anjali

Beames

It was pretty intense because we hadn't really expected that to be an outcome for those of us with no prior convictions.

00:15:17 Anjali

Beames

So my arrest at the 2023 blockade, they arrested me and other under eighteens and then upon realising that we were under 18, just let us go.

00:15:25 Anjali

Beames

So we have sort of no formal notification to the to the police or the legal system that that happened essentially, as far as I'm aware.

00:15:34 Anjali

Beames

So this was my first arrest in AI guess formal way at the Coltrane action and it's pretty unheard of for protesters in such a peaceful and nonviolent way with no priors to be refused bail.

00:15:49 Anjali

Beames

And it really shows a shift in police and political attitudes towards rising tide, but also the climate movement more generally where they're wanting to be more heavy handed.

00:16:06 Anjali

Beames

The police feel emboldened because of the statements that politicians make and the policies that they pass to really overstep in terms of their treatment of climate protesters and protesters in general.

00:16:19 Anjali

Beames

I mean, there was no logical reason for them to keep us.

00:16:21 Anjali

Beames

It was a waste of resources essentially.

00:16:24 Anjali

Beames

And when we were before the magistrate the next morning, even the bail conditions that the police wanted, my magistrate, not even my lawyer thought that they were ridiculous and got rid of all those conditions.

00:16:37 Anjali

Beames

So the police really like to overplay their hand and for the time being the judiciary rights these wrongs and keeps it in check.

00:16:47 Anjali

Beames

But it's a worrying trend.

00:16:49 Anjali

Beames

And the report, I think by Amnesty International that's come out recently that shows Australia arrests climate activists at three times the global rate is, yeah, no surprise to me.

00:17:00 Anjali

Beames

And that experience of being kept in custody for essentially no good reason, There's no real risk of reoffending or no threat to the community.

00:17:09 Anjali

Beames

And those are sort of the the reasons why police deny bail is if they seriously think that you're going to harm the community in a way or that you're not going to show up for court.

00:17:19 Anjali

Beames

When you look at rising tide in the family friendly and peaceful way, no reasonable person is going to believe that any of us are a danger to society.

00:17:27 Anjali

Beames

And the magistrate clearly agreed with that.

00:17:29 Anjali

Beames

But yeah, it's pretty intense to go through that process.

00:17:34 Nicky Page

I read a fantastic article from the Newcastle Herald written by ex coal miner who was part of that same action I think.

00:17:44 Nicky Page

And just to outline that, how extremely careful there were you were about flagging down the train and so on.

00:17:52 Nicky Page

Anjali, I have to admit my own prejudice.

00:17:54 Nicky Page

When I asked you about how was it, you just gave me the most extraordinary answer about what was really happening, what it was really about.

00:18:05 Nicky Page

So.

00:18:06 Anjali

Beames

Well, I can I can add a extra comment was that actually there were two other young rising tiders who I was with and they kept us in a cell together.

00:18:15 Anjali

Beames

So really our spirits were still high.

00:18:18 Anjali

Beames

Yes, it was horrible being in custody, No pillows, food that is pretty inedible.

00:18:25 Anjali

Beames

But they couldn't crush our spirits because we were together.

00:18:28 Anjali

Beames

And that's more broadly, I think, symbolic of Rising Tide and the power of the people and that we know that we're on the right side of this fight.

00:18:38 Nicky Page

All right.

00:18:38 Nicky Page

Well, that takes us pretty nicely then to talk about Rising Tide 2024 and perhaps in particular your role as Co coordinator of the People of Colour Caucus.

00:18:55 Nicky Page

Just set the scene for that.

00:18:56 Anjali

Beames

The People of Colour caucus sort of originated impromptu at the 2023 People's Blockade.

00:19:03 Anjali

Beames

I think it was set up by some people of colour from different climate groups who were there at the blockade and so on.

00:19:09 Anjali

Beames

How white Newcastle is as a city, but also how white this sort of Newcastle climate movement is and set up this space to connect with other people of colour and reflect on why is there a lack of diversity.

00:19:23 Anjali

Beames

And from that there was a lot of hard work put into writing a critical evaluation for Rising Tide, which had really detailed recommendations of what needs to be done better.

00:19:34 Anjali

Beames

And a lot of those recommendations were taken on board for 2024, which included the establishment of a permanent POC caucus which has happened throughout 2024 that myself and my Co convener have maintained.

00:19:47 Anjali

Beames

And we are not at all of a similar age.

00:19:50 Anjali

Beames

She I think is in her 40s.

00:19:54 Anjali

Beames

We had some online meetings in the lead up to the blockade though.



00:19:57 Anjali

Beames

It's hard to build community and that's really the intention of the caucus is building a community and support for each other.

00:20:04 Anjali

Beames

So it really came to fruition in person at the 2024 blockade.

00:20:09 Anjali

Beames

We had our own marquee, we had rugs out, it was a no shoes place and we had regular meetings throughout the day and in the evening where we would gather together and reflect on our.

00:20:22 Anjali

Beames

Experiences about things that others might dismiss as not actually being racism or that was, you know, an offhanded comment or people with good intentions saying things.

00:20:35 Anjali

Beames

Whereas we in this safe space for us can look at those maybe racist things and still unpack it and get support and understanding from each other.

00:20:45 Anjali

Beames

It was just a really beautiful space.

00:20:46 Anjali

Beames

And we had a whole range of ages of people.

00:20:49 Anjali

Beames

A lot were young, but there was actually intergenerational attendance with sort of activists bringing their older parents are along to the caucus gatherings.

00:21:00 Anjali

Beames

And yeah, it was really beautiful.

00:21:02 Anjali

Beames

Yeah, I'm half Sri Lankan Tamil.

00:21:05 Anjali

Beames

So my mom was born in Sri Lanka and fled to Australia because of the civil war.

00:21:11 Anjali

Beames

And so most of my family on her side are here in Australia.

00:21:15 Anjali

Beames

And actually my cultural identity, especially in the activist space, wasn't something that I had necessarily evaluated until the 2023 blockade where my friend who was part of that POC caucus invited me along.

00:21:32 Anjali

Beames

And I've never really considered myself a person of colour because I was born in Australia and just felt very white.

00:21:42 Anjali

Beames

But being invited into that space and to unpack the ways that my identity is still racialized has really put me on this trajectory of fighting for PSE inclusion and what that looks like in a movement and how that shapes the climate movement.

00:22:05 Nicky Page

When you say that in 2023, and more so in 24, people of colour were beginning to articulate to each other the impact of unaware racism or dismissed racism, could you say a little bit more about how that makes it more difficult to be part of a wide movement which is largely white still?

00:22:28 Anjali

Beames

Within the caucus at the 2024 blockade, we did speak about a sort of individual experiences just throughout that time to, yeah, get support and make it feel less bad.

00:22:40 Anjali

Beames

But really the bigger conversation that we were having was actually about structural

racism.

00:22:44 Anjali

Beames

So those individual experiences do matter, but what we really want to change is the attitude or the culture of Rising Tide and the climate movement more broadly.

00:22:55 Anjali

Beames

Rising Tide as a group have a lot of power.

00:22:59 Anjali

Beames

They're such a fast growing climate movement with such diversity in age and background and life experience and getting there when it comes to diversity of ethnicity and race.

00:23:13 Anjali

Beames

But when a movement is led by non POC people, the things that benefit people of colour aren't considered because there's not necessarily a seat at the table in that core organising space.

00:23:27 Anjali

Beames

And so a lot of the attitudes and the approaches and the structure of things is the sort of dominant Western way of organising even in activism.

00:23:37 Anjali

Beames

And that means that there's a lack of mutual aid, there's a lack of care.

00:23:42 Anjali

Beames

Community care was something that Rising Tide really leaned into at the 2024 blockade, and that was actually something that was from the feedback from the POC caucus in 2024.

00:23:52 Anjali

Beames

Because when people of colour shape what the movement looks like, it's not also just for the benefit of people of colour, it's for the benefit of all marginalised identities and everyone in general.

00:24:03 Anjali

Beames

We practise intersectionality in a way that you sort of have to teach sometimes to white people where it's not innate to consider how marginalised identities can be included.

00:24:16 Anjali

Beames

You have to advocate for that as a person of colour, but you're not just advocating for it for yourself, you're considering disability inclusion and queer inclusion and all of these things.

00:24:25 Anjali

Beames

From that feedback from last year, people of colour were the ones advocating for everyone, and I think especially attitudes around police was something that the caucus feedback from last year really tried to shape.

00:24:41 Anjali

Beames

There was some positive change, especially in the legal handbooks, what was written down, but still in practise.

00:24:49 Anjali

Beames

Rising Tide needs to work on its attitudes and approaches towards police because there were still people making public positive sort of comments in support of the relationship that we'd built with police.

00:25:01 Anjali

Beames

That's dangerous not just to people of colour but to anyone of a marginalised identity because police are more oppressive towards those groups.

00:25:11 Anjali

Beames

Also, the sort of protocols of rising tide at the blockade when it came to security was the first thing you should do if there's an issue is call the cops.

00:25:20 Anjali

Beames

And that's not just something, again, that people of colour say don't do, that's something that a whole range of other folks are harmed by that.

00:25:30 Anjali

Beames

So when we as the caucus gather and we reflect on what's happening, those are really the main things that we're thinking about and that's the feedback that we're going to bring back to the core Rising Tide team.

00:25:40 Anjali

Beames

And also more nationally, just the Rising Tide movement as a whole going to be a pretty thorough feedback process.

00:25:47 Anjali

Beames

And that is the sort of stuff that we'll be saying.

00:25:50 Nicky Page

I'll just make a brief comment as a person who has done quite a bit of police liaison with Extinction Rebellion in South Australia as a 70 ish woman at the time, quite, you know, well established, not scared of police.

00:26:05 Nicky Page

When I heard Rising Tide saying don't go around talking about how pleasant it is to work with the police or how cooperative they are, that is only your experience.

00:26:16 Nicky Page

I understood straight away, but I was aware that I had been speaking in that way.

00:26:20 Nicky Page

So one of the things that I gather was different at Rising Tide 24 was that the organisation had some security.

00:26:30 Nicky Page

There was some catchy name for them.

00:26:31 Nicky Page

What was it?

00:26:32 Nicky Page

Security.

00:26:32 Anjali

Beames

Meerkats.

00:26:33 Anjali

Beames

Yeah, That was sort of just to look after everyone who was at the camp and at the event to deal with any members of the community who are maybe sort of opposing what we were doing.

00:26:43 Anjali

Beames

But that also meant that when real conflict did arise, I don't necessarily think they were equipped to deal with that, which is why the process was to call the police.

00:26:52 Anjali

Beames

But when Rising Tide reflects on the blockade as being sort of a window into the world that we want to see, living the future that we're trying to shape, to me, a lot of these procedures still maintain the dominant way that we do things in society and not trying to be different.

00:27:10 Anjali

Beames

It's still relying on a lot of these systems that oppress people and that are built on the oppression of people and are sustained by oppressing minority groups.

00:27:19 Anjali

Beames

Yes, this is a glimpse of the future, but really not being ambitious enough in putting into practise the type of society that would benefit everyone in the future.

00:27:29 Anjali

Beames

And the blockade is a glimpse of the future.

00:27:31 Anjali

Beames

But people of colour and people with disabilities are still underrepresented and are not necessarily able to fully engage because we haven't put in place these structures that we need to all support each other.

00:27:42 Anjali

Beames

Then is that the future that we want?

00:27:44 Anjali

Beames

And that's something that I'm really passionate about working on and developing because I

believe in Rising Tide, I believe in this mass movement of people that is going to be diverse and is accessible and is beautiful, but more work still needs to be done.

00:28:02 Anjali

Beames

And when there's not that diversity in the organising space, then these things get forgotten and they get left behind and they don't get considered.

00:28:10 Anjali

Beames

And that the difficult responsibility of caring about people of colour and being a person of colour is that we have to be the ones doing the labour to make it happen, because it's not necessarily something that's innately considered.

00:28:20 Nicky Page

So security meerkats may or may not be there next time, or they may be operating differently.

00:28:28 Nicky Page

Watch this space, Anjali.

00:28:32 Nicky Page

A specific role that you had was liaising with a couple of people of colour who came from the US who had a lot of experience with kayak activism.

00:28:44 Anjali

Beames

We were so lucky this year to have three Kai activists, 3 BIPOC Kai activists, part of the group Richmond City Raise or Rich City Raise as Rising Tide sponsored them to come to this year's blockade in hopes of not just learning from them in kayaking skills but also asking them about their movement and their organisation that they're part of being BIPOC LED.

00:29:10 Anjali

Beames

It gave a glimpse of what is possible and I think here in Australia in the climate movement, where it is still LED in most spaces by white people, we don't necessarily consider the possibilities of what it could look like.

00:29:27 Anjali

Beames

So being able to hear from these activists who are leading change in their city where it's innately diverse, it's not something that you have to sort of really, really push for in the same way as trying to make rising tide less light.

00:29:41 Anjali

Beames

They've got their space and they practise intersectionality and they look after each other and they exercise mutual aid and that is what we in the POC caucus here can dream about now that we've heard about it.

00:29:53 Anjali

Beames

It was just such a beautiful experience.

00:29:55 Anjali

Beames

They're all such lovely people and I think the bond that we've created is so powerful because the fight isn't just happening here in Newcastle.

00:30:05 Anjali

Beames

Yes, we've got the world's largest coal port, but people of colour across the world and especially Indigenous people.

00:30:12 Anjali

Beames

And I think that that's something that I've actually been missing in this conversation because I myself am not Indigenous.

00:30:17 Anjali

Beames

And that is why you need diverse voices because if you're not part of that identity, you often forget to advocate for them.

00:30:23 Anjali

Beames

But First Nations people in this continent and across the world are the ones leading the fight for climate action and have exercised for millennia care for country.

00:30:32 Anjali

Beames

And that's also something that we need to learn from.

00:30:34 Anjali

Beames

Yeah.



00:30:34 Anjali

Beames

The Richmond City Rays also centre Indigenous resistance at the front of their work.

00:30:39 Anjali

Beames

That's why they're BIPOC LED movements.

00:30:41 Anjali

Beames

Yeah.

00:30:42 Anjali

Beames

BIPOC means Black and Indigenous and people of colour, especially in the US BIPOC is a term more commonly used there of Black and Indigenous people and it recognises the unique struggles at the rising tide blockade.

00:30:54 Anjali

Beames

We were the POC caucus.

00:30:56 Anjali

Beames

We weren't the First Nations and People of Colour caucus because in the organising space we didn't have enough First Nations representation to make that happen.

00:31:05 Anjali

Beames

And we weren't going to claim to be a First Nations and People of Colour caucus.

00:31:09 Anjali

Beames

And there was at the blockade a specific space for First Nations people.

00:31:14 Anjali

Beames

But in terms of rising tides, ongoing like that is such a major thing that we need to improve because we don't really in an ongoing way have First Nations voices in rising tide organising space.

00:31:28 Anjali

Beames

We can't have climate justice without intersectional justice and without centering Indigenous voices because they're at the forefront of the consequences of climate change and have so many of the solutions that through colonisation, our society has tried to wipe out.

00:31:44 Anjali

Beames

But Indigenous resistance is the way for the for the climate movement to go forward.