

00:00:04 Speaker Bec Horridge

Walla wani welcome to Earth Matters Environment, Social Justice Stories from Australia and around the world.

00:00:10 Speaker Bec Horridge

Produced at the studios of 3Cr on Wurundjeri country in Naarm Melbourne and broadcast across this continent via the Community Radio Network.

00:00:22 Janet Salisbury

I'm Janet Salisbury and I'm the founder of the Women's Climate Congress.

00:00:28 Janet Salisbury

And our theme for today is beyond the fossil fuel Building an international roadmap for a just transition from fossil fuels.

00:00:36 Janet Salisbury

And we have two amazing guests with us who I will introduce to you very shortly.

00:00:40 Janet Salisbury

But I'd like to start, as we always do, with an acknowledgement of country and that we are meeting on the unceded lands of First Nations people.

00:00:51 Janet Salisbury

I'm joining you here from Canberra, where I actually live in very short walking distance of a place called Curradjong Hill.

00:00:59 Janet Salisbury

That was the traditional name, but it's actually now called Capitol Hill, which is the site of the Australian Parliament House.

00:01:05 Janet Salisbury

But in First Nations times it was a sacred place, so it's worth remembering that.

00:01:10 Janet Salisbury

And I pay deep respects, all elders, past, present and emerging.

00:01:15 Janet Salisbury

And I also pay respects to all the first nations people around the world.

00:01:18 Janet Salisbury

And we do have people joining here today from overseas.

00:01:21 Janet Salisbury

And I acknowledge the leadership of first nations women in particular who carry deep responsibilities for the nurture of life across generations and for life giving forces of water and culture and land.

00:01:34 Janet Salisbury

I invite you to take a few deep breaths and hold in your thoughts our sisters and brothers around the world who are suffering from the impacts of climate change and other disasters, effects that are compounded by other intersectional inequalities when disasters strike.

00:01:49 Janet Salisbury

In the words of the Lament, a song by my friend, the late Glenda McGloughey, we weep for our sisters in danger.

00:01:56 Janet Salisbury

We weep for our brothers and children.

00:01:58 Janet Salisbury

Sound the cries of grief and despair.

00:02:02 Janet Salisbury

Sound the lament for the dead.

00:02:04 Janet Salisbury

Because through lamenting for what is truly happening, I think we can together find the path to renewal.

00:02:11 Janet Salisbury

Our theme today of building an international roadmap for a just transition away from fossil fuels goes to the heart of our purpose in the Women's Climate Congress.

00:02:20 Janet Salisbury

Recent developments to create a new multilateral process outside of the United Nations process is to create an international roadmap is very exciting.

00:02:30 Janet Salisbury

Since the Paris Agreement, progress has been made to reduce, but it's been very slow.

00:02:36 Janet Salisbury

And negotiations at the Annual Conference of the Parties, or cops, has been unable to reach consensus on a formal commitment to phase out fossil fuel production and actually transition national economies away from the dependence on fossil fuel.

00:02:50 Janet Salisbury

At COP30 in Brazil, formal global consensus on fossil fuel phaseout the text from the negotiations once more omitted fossil fuels altogether.

00:03:00 Janet Salisbury

Primary Agreement to counter this deadlock, Brazil announced that it would pursue another multilateral process outside of the formal UN FCCC process to advance action among countries and stakeholders to create the roadmap away from fossil fuels that we so desperately need.

00:03:16 Janet Salisbury

The international challenge was taken up by Colombia and the Netherlands to co host a conference as an innovative, inclusive and action oriented space to help countries move towards more sustainable, sovereign and secure energy systems.

00:03:30 Janet Salisbury

Road ahead is still hard and rocky, but it feels like a new world thinking organ has been born and is taking its first steps.

00:03:38 Janet Salisbury

So with that I'd really like to introduce our two wonderful speakers for today.

00:03:42 Janet Salisbury

Now their bios are online on our website.

00:03:44 Janet Salisbury

I'm going to tell you a bit about them anyway.

00:03:47 Janet Salisbury

So first of all, I'd like to introduce Tzaporah Berman, who is joining us from Vancouver and is the co founder and international Program Director at Stand Earth, which was formerly called Forest Ethics and she's the founder and Chair of the Fossil Fuel Treaty.

00:04:03 Tzaporah Berman

Hi everybody.

00:04:04 Tzeporah Berman
I'm thrilled to join you all.

00:04:06 Tzeporah Berman
I am the founder and chair of the Fossil Fuel Treaty and I've spent the last little over 30 years now designing environment and climate policy, advising governments, but also designing advocacy and communications initiatives, really trying to understand how social change is made and how to build power for change.

00:04:26 Tzeporah Berman
And I've been focusing on fossil fuels now for about, well, I guess almost the last 20 years.

00:04:32 Janet Salisbury
That's great.

00:04:32 Janet Salisbury
Wonderful to have you here.

00:04:33 Janet Salisbury
Tzeporah, our other speaker.

00:04:35 Amanda Cahill
So hi everybody.

00:04:37 Amanda Cahill
So my name's Amanda Cahill.

00:04:38 Amanda Cahill
Most people know me as the founder of the Next Economy, which is an NGO that I set up in 2018 to work with regional areas to help them understand and manage the transition.

00:04:48 Amanda Cahill
So not just energy, but like how do they manage all of the changes that are happening across the economy in a way that we can build more resilient economies that are generating well being for people, but also nature as well.

00:04:59 Amanda Cahill
So we're known for doing a lot of planning on the ground.

00:05:02 Amanda Cahill

What most people don't know though is we take what we're learning in real time and work with government and industry around policies and frameworks and investment and what needs to happen so we can change the system and not have to just keep working in every community.

00:05:15 Amanda Cahill

More recently I stepped out of the CEO role last year.

00:05:18 Amanda Cahill

So for the last year I've been lucky enough to be able to have the time and space to respond to some international requests.

00:05:24 Amanda Cahill

They want to learn from what's happening in Australia.

00:05:26 Amanda Cahill

And one of those things was being invited to go to the TAFF conference in Colombia.

00:05:31 Janet Salisbury

That's wonderful.

00:05:32 Janet Salisbury

So I'll start with you, Tzeporah.

00:05:33 Janet Salisbury

I was going to ask you sort of, you know, you're obviously developed great influence in this area and you've been really working amazingly hard on this transition away from fossil fuels.

00:05:42 Janet Salisbury

I just wanted you to talk a little bit about what brought you along this path and how you feel, what gives you sort of inspiration to do this work.

00:05:49 Tzeporah Berman

Thanks, Janet.

00:05:50 Tzeporah Berman

In 2011, I was one of the directors of Greenpeace International's climate program in 40 countries.

00:05:56 Tzeporah Berman

And I was living with my family in Amsterdam.

00:05:58 Tzeporah Berman

It was a very exciting job because I got to learn about what so many different countries are doing around the world are not doing on climate change and got to work with teams in all of those 40 countries.

00:06:08 Tzeporah Berman

But that was the year that our then Prime Minister Harper came out at a big speech saying Canada was going to become an energy superpower.

00:06:16 Tzeporah Berman

He was going to ensure a tripling of the size of the tar sands and six new pipelines to facilitate that and et cetera, et cetera.

00:06:24 Tzeporah Berman

And I, I did something I'm proud of.

00:06:26 Tzeporah Berman

I. I left my job and moved home to Canada because one lesson over kind of 35 years now almost of activism for me is that need to work on during the day, what keeps me up at night.

00:06:38 Tzeporah Berman

And I was doing interesting work in lots of different countries.

00:06:41 Tzeporah Berman

But what was really bothering me was what was happening in Canada and this idea that even though even Harper had gone to Copenhagen for the Copenhagen climate summit in 2008 and said climate change is the greatest challenge that humanity has ever faced.

00:06:55 Tzeporah Berman

But by 2012, when it was not that interesting to people, which is also a good lesson for us, that it can go up and down and has so frequently in terms of whether decision makers see it as a priority.

00:07:07 Tzeporah Berman

To make a long story very short, I spent six years working with first nations people in impacted communities, fighting tar sands pipelines and refineries in their communities.

00:07:16 Tzeporah Berman

So we had some success, but it felt like a giant game of whack a mole.

00:07:20 Tzeporah Berman

This is the most powerful and wealthiest industry on Earth.

00:07:23 Tzeporah Berman

And every time we defeated a project, they would propose another one.

00:07:27 Tzeporah Berman

And so I decided when a progressive government was elected, both in federally, our Prime Minister Trudeau as well as in Alberta, for the first time in almost 50 years, we had a progressive elected a woman leader, Premier Rachel Notley, and she wanted to create a climate plan in Alberta.

00:07:43 Tzeporah Berman

It's like saying you're creating A climate plan in Texas or something.

00:07:46 Tzeporah Berman

I don't know what the equivalent is in Australia, but maybe some coal town.

00:07:50 Tzeporah Berman

At the time I had been facilitating some very quiet dinner conversations with CEOs of oil companies in part because I just wanted to understand how these quite brilliant people were thinking about this, how they could be expanding oil sands development at this moment in history.

00:08:06 Tzeporah Berman

And I learned a lot about how they think.

00:08:08 Tzeporah Berman

And Premier Notley appointed me to who helped develop climate policy in the oil sands and along with former CEO of Shell and an indigenous woman named Melody Lapine from the Miccosu Cree.

00:08:19 Tzeporah Berman

And we were to create consensus based recommendations between the oil industry, scientists, first nations, labor and communities.

00:08:26 Tzeporah Berman

And we were able successfully over a two year period to create some really incredible climate policy recommendations.

00:08:32 Tzeporah Berman

But what I realized during that process is even though people would agree climate

change is real and we have to reduce emissions and we're going to have to phase out fossil fuel emissions, they would agree that we had to phase out fossil fuels.

00:08:45 Tzporah Berman

And it became very clear to me that climate policy was only considered emissions or pollution reduction and that while we were trying to reduce those emissions and that pollution, the industry was just allowed to continue to grow and increase production.

00:08:59 Tzporah Berman

Morpeldin convened some international conversations trying to find out, well, what do other jurisdictions do that produce fossil fuels?

00:09:05 Tzporah Berman

Do they see their responsibility as also reducing production or just reducing emissions?

00:09:11 Tzporah Berman

And I discovered what I consider to be a major gap in international climate policy that for 30 years we've talked about reducing emissions and not production.

00:09:20 Tzporah Berman

And the idea has been that demand will go down and the price of renewables will go down and we'll start using less fossil fuels and then the world will constrain fossil fuel supply, the markets will constrain fossil fuel supply somewhat magically, but that's not happening in part because the markets are distorted by billions, actually trillions of dollars in subsidies, that public money that goes to the oil and gas industry.

00:09:43 Tzporah Berman

And I realized that although we have an incredible and agreement in the Paris Agreement, that there is no international agreement to ensure fossil fuel phaseout.

00:09:53 Tzporah Berman

So every day we're making the problem bigger.

00:09:55 Tzporah Berman

And when we build a new pipeline or a new oil sands project, a new coal mine, we are embedding future emissions into our system.

00:10:04 Tzporah Berman

And we're actually on track now.

00:10:06 Tzporah Berman

We now know that we're on track to produce 120% more oil, gas and coal than the world can ever burn if we want to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

00:10:14 Tzporah Berman

We already have enough fossil fuels on the surface of the planet or under construction to use while we transition to a cleaner and safer economy if we're going to try and stay below 2 degrees.

00:10:25 Tzporah Berman

And so it was with that knowledge in hand that I decided to try and build a new international agreement that would be a companion to the Paris Agreement.

00:10:35 Tzporah Berman

And I studied nuclear non proliferation and landmines and chemical weapons and met with some great academics and others who were thinking along the same lines.

00:10:45 Tzporah Berman

And we created the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative which is what I chair now.

00:10:50 Janet Salisbury

It's just amazing to hear that.

00:10:52 Janet Salisbury

So Amanda, so you've done amazing work in Australia in communities in the front line.

00:10:56 Janet Salisbury

Tell us a bit about your journey.

00:10:58 Janet Salisbury

What motivates you to keep looking for common ground here?

00:11:01 Amanda Cahill

Background the first half of my career was actually in international development and working on sort of poverty alleviation and livelihood projects at a village level across Asia and the Pacific, usually working for very tiny little NGOs.

00:11:13 Amanda Cahill

And I also want send my love and solidarity to the people of Nepal where we used to work at Engineers Without Borders and people of Colombia as well.

00:11:21 Amanda Cahill

Since we were there, they've suffered the terrible earthquake, but also they've had out of control fires and elections.

00:11:28 Amanda Cahill

So they've elected a new government that is undoing a lot of the good work around the commitments that were set around energy and climate as well.

00:11:34 Amanda Cahill

And people are struggling right now.

00:11:37 Amanda Cahill

So my heart, I guess where I started was in that international work like seeing you know, sea level rise, salt water intrusion in places like Timor Leste in 2007, seeing in India not just devastation from changing climate but also solutions around people setting up small scale solar or pico hydro projects in the mountains and being really inspired by what people were doing which led me to ask questions, what is Australia doing?

00:12:02 Amanda Cahill

If I'm seeing both large scale and small scale renewable energy across India in 2010, I'm seeing sea level rise across the Pacific island nations we're working with with Fiji setting up an agreement to take in refugees from Tuvalu and Kiribati.

00:12:17 Amanda Cahill

So I was like just a minute, the problem isn't here.

00:12:19 Amanda Cahill

We can start dealing with the symptoms.

00:12:21 Amanda Cahill

But actually I need to go back to Australia because we're one of the biggest fossil fuel producing countries in the world.

00:12:27 Amanda Cahill

So that led me to volunteering with a couple of climate groups with their boards around strategy because I was a facilitator and also training up climate activists and how to work with the community.

00:12:37 Amanda Cahill

And that led me to a request to do.

00:12:40 Amanda Cahill

Somebody asked me to do a presentation, a one off presentation in a coal mining town back in 2014, alongside Tim Buckley.

00:12:47 Amanda Cahill

And it was just people asking Tim, you know, who's a client finance analyst, you know, what do we do if the coal is in structural decline?

00:12:54 Amanda Cahill

And he's like, I don't know, I don't do that stuff.

00:12:57 Amanda Cahill

So they're like, amanda, do you know about economic development?

00:12:59 Amanda Cahill

Can you just do this presentation with him about planning for transition?

00:13:02 Amanda Cahill

And the one off meeting led to a whole lot of emails and phone calls from the Chamber of Commerce, the state government, industry, the head of the sugarcane industry saying, look, I don't care about climate.

00:13:12 Amanda Cahill

I'm not a granny, but I care about the economy.

00:13:14 Amanda Cahill

And we're so tied to coal right now that if he's right, we need to start planning for this now because it takes a really long time to turn an industry like this around.

00:13:23 Amanda Cahill

So I just started getting requests from the Hunter Valley, Latrobe Valley.

00:13:27 Amanda Cahill

The head of the ACTU called me.

00:13:28 Amanda Cahill

It was just.

00:13:29 Amanda Cahill

It just suddenly just spiraled out of control.

00:13:31 Amanda Cahill

And the interesting thing was I was like, it made so much sense to me as someone

who'd worked in economic development, like, you just plan for the future, right?

00:13:38 Amanda Cahill

This is a technical issue.

00:13:40 Amanda Cahill

I'd worked with engineers.

00:13:41 Amanda Cahill

We know how to do this.

00:13:42 Amanda Cahill

We'd already modeled the emissions reductions back in 2010 as to what Australia needed to do.

00:13:46 Amanda Cahill

We had the technology.

00:13:47 Amanda Cahill

I'd seen it in the Himalayas in India.

00:13:50 Amanda Cahill

We have lots of money in this country.

00:13:51 Amanda Cahill

It's like, we can manage this, right?

00:13:53 Amanda Cahill

And then just seeing how difficult it was to even get anyone to take the concept of transition seriously.

00:13:58 Amanda Cahill

Tried to get the environment movement to support communities around it, tried to get government to do it.

00:14:03 Amanda Cahill

And in the end, that led me to setting up, after about four years, the Next Economy as a model for actually working, meeting communities where they're at, meeting industry and government where they're at, and saying, how do we practically move forward around this as an economic challenge?

00:14:18 Amanda Cahill

But like Zeporah, it's also, in the last couple of years, seeing the change of government at a federal level in 2022, and suddenly there's openness and seeing industry going great.

00:14:27 Amanda Cahill

We can be on the right side of history, seeing the money move, and yet things are getting harder again and we're seeing that really hard edge of power starting to get in the way of the.

00:14:37 Amanda Cahill

That we needed.

00:14:38 Amanda Cahill

So the TAFF conference, the Transitioning Away From Fossil Fuel conference, was incredibly refreshing.

00:14:43 Amanda Cahill

So thank you, Zeporah, for the work that you're doing and actually naming where the Real problems are now.

00:14:48 Amanda Cahill

It's not a lack of money, it's not a lack of technical know how this is about power and how we tackle it.

00:14:53 Janet Salisbury

Thanks Amanda.

00:14:54 Janet Salisbury

And did you mention earlier on about your book Amanda's written amazing book.

00:15:00 Janet Salisbury

It's called Regional Energy Transitions in Australia from Impossible to Possible and and it's an amazing book.

00:15:06 Amanda Cahill

We had 18 authors from coal region so people telling their own story about how change is happening.

00:15:18 Speaker Bec Horridge

You're listening to Earth Matters broadcast nationally across this continent via the Community Radio Network.

00:15:25 Speaker Bec Horridge
I'm your show host Bec Horage.

00:15:28 Speaker Bec Horridge
We continue with the Women's climate conversation beyond the Fossil fuel Deadlock.

00:15:33 Speaker Bec Horridge
Here's Janet Salisbury with with Tzeporah Berman and Dr. Amanda Cahill talking about the first transitioning Away from fossil fuels conference focusing on phasing out fossil fuel production.

00:15:46 Janet Salisbury
Let's talk a little bit about this conference in Santa Marta in Colombia.

00:15:50 Janet Salisbury
It seems like it was very important because at least some of the global leaders stopped arguing about whether to phase out fossil fuels and started a process of collaborating to actually end this economic dependency that we have.

00:16:03 Janet Salisbury
Tzeporah, can you tell us a little bit about this initiative, how it came about, how it differed from the normal UN negotiations at COP27?

00:16:12 Tzeporah Berman
The Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, the secretariat that works to support the countries who are wanting to develop this new treaty, proposed to the countries probably two years ago that they create a standalone diplomatic process to discuss fossil fuel phaseout, not just to build a fossil fuel treaty, but to work with countries in collaboration to understand what the barriers are to stopping fossil fuel phase out.

00:16:40 Tzeporah Berman
What are the best practices in just transition?

00:16:43 Tzeporah Berman
How do we remove the financial barriers that stand in the way?

00:16:47 Tzeporah Berman
What I've learned after meeting with dozens and dozens of countries over the last five years is that especially in the global south, for the majority of countries who are pursuing new fossil fuel development right now, many of them are doing it just to feed their debt or they're doing it because they can't get investment into renewable energy, which they'd rather do for various financial reasons.

00:17:08 Tzporah Berman

The cost of capital, how most of the infrastructure investment into renewable energy is still private and private capital is from the north, is nervous about the south, many other barriers.

00:17:21 Tzporah Berman

And so again, we looked to history because there have been deadlocks like this in the past.

00:17:27 Tzporah Berman

Let's take landmines, for example.

00:17:30 Tzporah Berman

Many people tried to create cooperation between nation states on landmines and cluster bombs for many, many years.

00:17:38 Tzporah Berman

And it was stopped inside the existing treaties and processes at the UN because vested interests, those who really wanted to continue to have free reign, to dramatically expand landmines, had the ability to shift the rules and distort the conversation.

00:17:57 Tzporah Berman

And I would offer that that's what's been happening inside the UNFCCC on climate change.

00:18:02 Tzporah Berman

We have a process that because of an intervention from Saudi Arabia 30 years ago, is by consensus.

00:18:09 Tzporah Berman

So that means that Saudi Arabia can, and many other countries can continue to weaken any language on fossil fuels or agreements that are put forward on fossil fuels that they feel might hurt their ability to develop fossil fuels.

00:18:23 Tzporah Berman

And it's those consensus based rules.

00:18:25 Tzporah Berman

And I would offer that also.

00:18:27 Tzporah Berman

The, the fact that so many fossil fuel lobbyists are allowed to be at the table, to be designing policy at the sides of governments, has really made this conversation almost impossible at cops.

00:18:38 Tzeporah Berman

What a lot of people don't realize is that even five years ago in Glasgow, the words fossil fuels were never said at climate change negotiations.

00:18:46 Tzeporah Berman

In fact, the first campaign the fossil fuel treaty ran at Glasgow was billboards and digital ads that said it's time to say the F words at cop.

00:18:55 Tzeporah Berman

Which I thought was pretty funny.

00:18:57 Tzeporah Berman

It got people's attention anyways, so we proposed a standalone diplomatic process on fossil fuel phaseout and that in that process the countries could define who comes and have a space that's outside of all these rules.

00:19:10 Tzeporah Berman

And if, again, if you look in history, history, Canada proposed the Ottawa Convention and held the Ottawa Convention, which became the first convening of nation states that led to the landmine treaty.

00:19:21 Tzeporah Berman

So it wasn't a negotiation space and Santa Marta was not a negotiation space.

00:19:26 Tzeporah Berman

It was the first ever diplomatic conference on fossil fuel phaseout with no industry, oil and gas lobbyists and coal lobbyists there, with many of the countries that have held back the process not attending, and those who attended were there to have a deeper convers.

00:19:44 Tzeporah Berman

What would it take, as Janet said, not to have a conversation where they argued about whether the words fossil fuels should appear in an agreement or whether fossil fuel phase out is necessary?

00:19:54 Tzeporah Berman

And if, you know climate science, you know that's just such an absurd conversation because 86% of the emissions trapped in our atmosphere just come from three

things, oil, gas and coal.

00:20:04 Tzeporah Berman

So of course we need to phase them out.

00:20:06 Tzeporah Berman

But the industry has been trying to convince governments, especially in Canada, the us, Australia, Norway, the UK that by just putting in place new technologies, carbon capture and storage, and we can plant more trees and it will allow them to decouple emissions from production and we can just keep growing production.

00:20:24 Tzeporah Berman

Well, it's not working and it hasn't Worked, but yet our governments keep throwing money into carbon capture and storage and other technologies and allowing new production.

00:20:33 Tzeporah Berman

So what happened in Santa Marta is those conversations didn't happen.

00:20:37 Tzeporah Berman

The conversations that happened were seriously about how can countries cooperate, were about the legal, the fiscal barriers to stopping the transition.

00:20:47 Tzeporah Berman

And so like that, that first Ottawa convention, we heard people say, this has been the most creative and freeing conversation on this topic I've ever had.

00:20:55 Tzeporah Berman

And so Colombia agreed initially to host it.

00:20:58 Tzeporah Berman

Netherlands joined them in Belem.

00:21:00 Tzeporah Berman

And then they and the organizations that behind the scenes supported them and Fossil Fuel Treaty was one of them, had about five months to pull off a diplomatic conference with 60 countries, ended up coming with no UN support.

00:21:14 Tzeporah Berman

So that means everything from security for ministers to the agenda to pay for flights for most governments from the Global south who don't have budgets, where they can just say, okay, I'm going to fly around the world to a new conference that isn't on

the UN system.

00:21:29 Tzeporah Berman

And so it was a bit put together by a little bit of spit and duct tape, as we say here in Canada.

00:21:33 Tzeporah Berman

But we did it, we pulled it off and 60 countries came.

00:21:37 Tzeporah Berman

It gave me a lot of hope.

00:21:39 Tzeporah Berman

And one of the most exciting outcomes is that the countries agreed to do it again every year.

00:21:44 Tzeporah Berman

And so and Tuvalu and Ireland stepped up on the final day of the conference and said, we'll host it.

00:21:50 Tzeporah Berman

So again, a global south end, Global north country co hosting.

00:21:53 Tzeporah Berman

And the second international conference on fossil fuel phaseout is set to be at the end of April 2027.

00:21:59 Janet Salisbury

I just want to turn to Amanda, who was there.

00:22:02 Janet Salisbury

Lucky thing.

00:22:03 Janet Salisbury

Went off down to Columbia.

00:22:04 Janet Salisbury

Some of us were here in Australia going to Women Deliver at the time.

00:22:08 Janet Salisbury

So some of this conference went a little bit under our radar until afterwards and I started reading up about it.

00:22:13 Janet Salisbury
I thought, wow, this is amazing.

00:22:14 Janet Salisbury
Anyway, Amanda was lucky enough to be there.

00:22:16 Janet Salisbury
You've been really working hard to connect regional Australian transition frameworks to global policy and contributing to negotiations and mechanisms to create a just transition.

00:22:26 Janet Salisbury
Tell us about what you were doing at Santa Marta and what was it like for you?

00:22:32 Amanda Cahill
Yeah, well, it was all a little bit unexpected, actually.

00:22:36 Amanda Cahill
So actually, and I went to Copenhagen in Brazil for the first time ever, mostly because I work on just transitions.

00:22:45 Amanda Cahill
Just transitions was going to be a big theme and Australia was going to get cop this year.

00:22:49 Amanda Cahill
So basically I was sort of strong armed into going.

00:22:51 Amanda Cahill
I didn't actually believe in international processes because I'd had a really bad experience in 2012 at the Rio Plus20 summit about how that doesn't work.

00:23:01 Amanda Cahill
And so I was like, I'm never doing international work.

00:23:04 Amanda Cahill
But given that Australia was going to be hosting cop, I went to Billing and then somehow kind of by accident ended up in the middle of negotiations around establishing a new global mechanism to support just transitions based on work I'd done with the Australian government around setting up the NZ sorry, net zero Economy Authority and studying what other countries were doing around governance mechanisms.

00:23:26 Amanda Cahill

So suddenly I'm in the middle of international negotiations and this amazing conference gets announced around transitioning away from fossil fuels.

00:23:34 Amanda Cahill

So I was very lucky.

00:23:35 Amanda Cahill

CANNA Climate Action Network of Australia asked and asked me to attend and to get involved in that.

00:23:42 Amanda Cahill

And also ANU asked me to attend as an academic, academic as well, because I have an academic background.

00:23:49 Amanda Cahill

So I ended up in three different streams.

00:23:51 Amanda Cahill

So the interesting thing about the conference was it wasn't just a conference, it was actually a whole process that lasted months and you had to have skin in the game to attend.

00:24:00 Amanda Cahill

So to even get an invitation you had to put in a submission with your ideas.

00:24:05 Amanda Cahill

It was short and sharp and you had to know what you were talking about and have evidence for it.

00:24:10 Amanda Cahill

If you passed that first stage, then you were invited to join.

00:24:13 Amanda Cahill

Join different streams.

00:24:14 Amanda Cahill

So I was invited to join the academic stream, the NGO stream and also the social movement stream.

00:24:20 Amanda Cahill

Then we had a whole lot of online sessions and then we ended up on the ground and

so and each group was left to self organize how they wanted to generate their ideas in that.

00:24:29 Amanda Cahill

So I was, it was really interesting for me because I was participating in very different groups of people all grappling with this question of how do we move away from fossil fuels?

00:24:39 Amanda Cahill

What policies do we have?

00:24:41 Amanda Cahill

What are the financial constraints and solutions that people have?

00:24:43 Amanda Cahill

What are the legal barriers, you know, what are different countries doing?

00:24:47 Amanda Cahill

And being in the room and seeing people put really practical ideas on the table and seeing very cynical bureaucrats and academics light up and kind of go, you're doing that, how are you doing that?

00:24:59 Amanda Cahill

And people just problem solving and swapping ideas.

00:25:01 Amanda Cahill

So it was incredibly generative.

00:25:03 Amanda Cahill

It was very messy, like the short time frame, but also the self organizing component of it, it and the commitment to participation I think was really different.

00:25:13 Amanda Cahill

It was a very gendered kind of approach to it made it very messy, but it meant that people could find each other and really get to the crux of the issues very quickly.

00:25:21 Amanda Cahill

And what was amazing was seeing people who were very different converge at these points of kind of going, okay, there are some core issues here that we have to tackle if we want to move forward.

00:25:31 Janet Salisbury

I gather that there were these streams you've mentioned that the academic and NGOs and so on.

00:25:38 Janet Salisbury
They were.

00:25:38 Janet Salisbury
They'd all they had met prior, you know, had their own sort of meetings prior.

00:25:43 Janet Salisbury
And there was a women's stream.

00:25:45 Amanda Cahill
There was peasant farmers and fishers.

00:25:47 Amanda Cahill
There were indigenous peoples.

00:25:49 Amanda Cahill
They were.

00:25:49 Amanda Cahill
Who else?

00:25:50 Tzaporah Berman
Business leaders.

00:25:51 Amanda Cahill
Faith.

00:25:52 Tzaporah Berman
There was a faith stream.

00:25:55 Tzaporah Berman
Labor.

00:25:56 Tzaporah Berman
Yeah, there.

00:25:56 Tzaporah Berman
So it felt like not just one conference, but, you know, there was all these meetings in the online.

00:26:03 Tzeporah Berman

But then when you got there to Santa Marta, it was a week of conferences.

00:26:08 Tzeporah Berman

Like the academic conference lasted two days and then there was the business conference and there was the faith leaders conference.

00:26:13 Tzeporah Berman

And what was amazing about it was every single mini conference was about how to do fossil fuel phase ed and what is our role as a collective.

00:26:24 Tzeporah Berman

It was astounding.

00:26:25 Tzeporah Berman

Some of us have been working on fossil fuels for a really long time, for decades.

00:26:29 Tzeporah Berman

It was like a dream come true.

00:26:31 Tzeporah Berman

We kept running into each other, go, can you believe this is happening?

00:26:33 Tzeporah Berman

I know.

00:26:34 Tzeporah Berman

I was just had a conversation where this happened.

00:26:36 Tzeporah Berman

Well, I do want to say that I don't.

00:26:37 Tzeporah Berman

I think the process reflected gender like I think the process reflected that.

00:26:42 Tzeporah Berman

The two ministers who were in charge were both women and they were determined to see an inclusive process, a relational process.

00:26:50 Tzeporah Berman

It was, it was, it was astounding.

00:26:53 Speaker Bec Horridge
There is more to this conversation.

00:26:55 Speaker Bec Horridge
Find it in the Earth Matters special extended podcast and check out the Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels conference report.

00:27:02 Speaker Bec Horridge
Support the links on the Earth Matters homepage.

00:27:05 Speaker Bec Horridge
Thank you to the Women's Climate Congress for this conversation.

00:27:08 Speaker Bec Horridge
Find more background at their website, womensclimatecongress.com you've been listening to Earth Matters, Community Radio's National Environment justice program.

00:27:21 Speaker Bec Horridge
If you missed any of today's show, you can find our podcasts@3cr.org.au Earth Matters would like to thank the Community Broadcasting foundation for their financial support and the Community Radio Network for getting the program out to you.

00:27:38 Speaker Bec Horridge
Earth Matters is produced in the studios of 3Cr on Wurundjeri country.