

LANGUAGE & COMMUNITY SYMPOSIUM

2022



ViếtSpeak

Multilingual Advocacy

WELCOME



Acknowledgement of Country & Indigenous Languages

We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung language groups of the Kulin Nation, their Ancestors, Elders, families and communities who are the Traditional Custodians of the greater Melbourne, Werribee and the Mornington Peninsula areas. We acknowledge language revitalisation and practices are integral to culture, recognition and reconciliation.

Chúng tôi công nhận nhóm ngôn ngữ Boon Wurrung và Woi Wurrung của Dân tộc Kulin, tổ tiên của họ, các tộc trưởng, gia đình và cộng đồng thổ dân. Họ là người giữ gìn lãnh địa truyền thống của Vùng đất Melbourne và ngoại vi, Werribee và bán đảo Mornington. Chúng tôi công nhận sự hồi sinh của ngôn ngữ và xử dụng ngôn ngữ đi liền với văn hoá, công nhận và hóa giải.



symposium

A symposium is an event that brings together members of the wider community to share experiences and insights on a given issue, in this case on the role of language in building communities and cultures.



Language & Life

A Community Symposium on Language and Education

On Sunday, 27th November 2022, at Footscray Community Art Centre, language advocacy group ViệtSpeak held a symposium on the value and importance of languages and linguistic diversity. We wanted to explore how the use and transmission of languages helps communities to thrive, maintain a strong sense of cultural identity and relate to each other on a more personal level. We also wanted to give community members an opportunity to share their own experiences about what language means to them and how they are able, or would like to, lead multilingual lives.





The idea of the event is to hold various panel discussions and workshops that touch on different aspects of a topic and enable audience members to participate in a direct way. At the ViệtSpeak Symposium, three panel discussions were held, each exploring a different aspect of language teaching, maintenance and revitalisation.



Participants from all ages and cultural backgrounds gathered to watch the panellists share their insights, inspired by their personal stories of resilience and creativity. The atmosphere was buzzing as participants asked questions to develop our ideas about how we can help keep language alive and enrich communities. Through the discussions, we gained valuable insight into how we can support language through revitalisation and teaching programs. This includes the importance of learning about culture alongside the technical aspects of language and that any revitalisation program needs to be led by speakers of that language and interpreters so that the nuance of concepts can be captured in translation. The discussions were thought-provoking and life-giving.





In addition to the panel discussions, participants could also partake in a series of workshops to explore their personal connection to language. The room was awash with ideas, words and colours as we got to work on our personal stories and creations. One workshop was run by non-profit arts organisation Kids Own Publishing, inviting children (and adults) to create a personal storybook in any language they know and love. Something fascinating and unexpected was the sight of adults and parents alike feeling safe to let their curious and imaginative nature shine through, joining in the creation of these colourful storybooks, using textas and crayons to express themselves.



READ



Also available on the day were stalls such as the Đất Nước Library, themed around American author Ocean Vuong's work: 'A letter to my mother that she will never read', which invited participants to exchange letters, photos and drawings to express the trauma of language loss in the Vietnamese diaspora.

Finally, a podcast booth invited participants to record themselves and others reflecting on bilingualism and language in Australia. Guests could also listen to a new episode of our podcast series Growing Up Bilingual in Australia.



STORY

TIME



The workshops gave us an opportunity to share our own experiences with languages and multilingualism, including our histories, and our hopes and dreams for the future. We were also able to reflect more on the panel discussions and how they were relevant to our own lives by creating our own material.

The Symposium enabled participants of all ages, cultural and linguistic backgrounds to reflect on and share their thoughts on the meaning of language in their lives and the importance of maintaining it. We came away with the insight that people and communities relate to and use language in different ways. We were reminded that the inability to learn and use languages, communicate with family members and connect with culture can result in complex grief and trauma. However, we also learned that languages can be maintained in many ways and that communities show incredible resilience by keeping their languages alive, even within Australia's monolingual mindset and education system. The Symposium allowed all panellists and participants to feel heard and valued, helping to break down cultural, political and generational barriers.

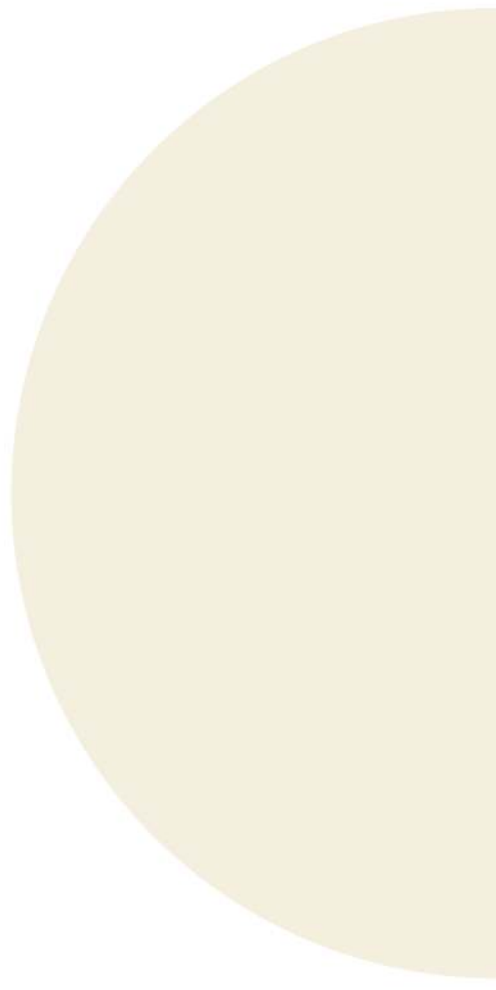


COMM

UNITY



LANGUAGES MATTERS



ViệtSpeak developed this Symposium to celebrate linguistic diversity and to explore how we can continue to help maintain and support language transmission, use and learning. The hope was that community members could come together, learn from each other's experiences, and resist the settler colonial notion that English language and culture should take priority over other ways of knowing and being.

We hope that the Symposium will lead to further conversations about the value of bi and multilingual education programs, especially how they can help build cultural pride and keep communities together.



SHARE







THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who participated in this event and shared their insights and experiences! We have learned that although people come together from diverse backgrounds such as professions, roles and experiences, the event enabled us to share a united passion for language and building community. It was wonderful to hear from everyone and we look forward to seeing you all at our next event.

PARTNERS

Neighbourhood Festival - Event Partner
Footscray Community Arts - Venue
Trade Creative Agency - Film Production
Ngoc Tran (Shop Bao Ngoc) - Catering

GUEST SPEAKERS + FACILITATORS

Julie Choi
Phuong-Nghi Le-Pham
Beth Sometimes
Rene Wanuny Kulitja
Helen Ngo
Vicki Couzens
Chi Vu
CR Cuc Lam
Chau Cong

VOLUNTEERS

California Nguyen - Photographer & Event Support
Thomas Dinh - Photographer
Cath Edwards - Writer
Tony Bui - Translator
Ngan Nguyen - Translator
Hoang Tran Nguyen - Event Lead Organiser
Liz Murray - Event Support
Anh Nguyen Austen - Event Support
Jorge Jorquera - Event Support
David Tran - Event Support
Marie Brennan - Event Support
Hong Tran - Event Support

**FOOTSCRAY
COMMUNITY
ARTS**



Language and Community Symposium
Hội Thảo Chuyên Đề về Ngôn Ngữ và Cộng Đồng

House of Mother Tongue, House of Other Tongue Nhà Tiếng Mẹ Đẻ, Nhà Ngôn Ngữ Khác



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