

Wednesday, February 14

Schools close as Victoria bakes; Rio's colourful Carnival; Lucky the deaf muster dog; and Taylor tickets mania.

That's what's making news, kid's style...

THE LOWDOWN

Schools were closed and students ordered to stay home across a large part of regional Victoria yesterday as the southern state sweltered in temperatures that hit the 40s and brought with them bushfires and evacuations from towns near the Grampians National Park - plus thunderstorms that left thousands across Victoria without power.

Yesterday afternoon, people in the towns of Halls Gap, Bellfield and Pomonal were told to evacuate as strong winds turned grassfires into fast moving bushfires and emergency crews worked into the night to control them.

The heatwave conditions also whipped up huge thunderstorms across the state - so big that they wiped out the electricity supply to more than 70,000 Victorians and threw hailstones the size of golf balls down onto towns like Ballarat.

Melburnians also had to take cover yesterday afternoon as a severe thunderstorm swept the city - chucking down hail and disrupting the train and bus network causing commuter chaos across the nation's second biggest city.

Heatwave conditions and thunderstorms are a lethal combination when it comes to bushfires. Weeks of hot weather dry out the fields, grass and bushland - then the lightning from thunderstorms hits the ground - or trees - and sets the landscape on fire.

Cyclones, bushfires and hailstorms ... what a summer it's been ...

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops .. and today we've landed in Brazil – where the country is throwing one very big party as part of its famous Carnival celebrations. In cities like Rio de Janeiro and Salvador - the streets are filled with partying Brazilians - wearing bright feathered and sequinned costumes

of every colour imaginable - taking part in huge parades down the main streets of their cities where massive floats featuring the most elaborate designs carry dancers and performers. A float is a motorised platform - think of it as a huge, decorated truck. I've stuck a link to some video in today's episode notes.

The Carnival in Brazil is also known as Mardi Gras – which is French for Fat Tuesday - which we also know here in Australia as Shrove Tuesday - which in the Christian tradition, is when people eat pancakes before giving up all sorts of lovely treats for Lent - in the lead up to Easter. Which is only six weeks away. Weeee!

ANIMAL KINGDOM

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Hands up who's been watching the ABC TV series, Muster Dogs? How good is it? I especially love watching it with my own muster dog, Louis - he's a border collie and spends a lot of the program sniffing behind the TV looking for the dogs on screen.

If you haven't seen it, you'll have missed the incredible Lucky - a muster dog who rounds up sheep and cattle for his owner, Frank despite being deaf.

How does Lucky know what to do if he can't hear Frank shouting instructions? Frank gets down on one knee and claps - as a sign for Lucky to return to him. Or Frank stamps his foot - so that Lucky can FEEL the vibrations in the ground and look to see what hand signals Frank is making. Amazing.

I've stuck a link to video of Lucky at work in today's episode notes.

As Frank says: "I just decided I would train him and win him over using friendship - and now I'm lucky to have him."

Lucky indeed.

POP CULTURE CORNER

The internet went into meltdown yesterday afternoon after Taylor Swift - whose Eras concert tour arrives in Melbourne on Thursday - put some last minute tickets on sale.

The tickets were for seats which don't quite have a full view of the stage at both her Melbourne and Sydney concerts - but the fan frenzy it spurred was as epic as everything else to do with Tay Tay these days.

The tickets sold out in a flash - within minutes of them going online.

It follows Tay Tay causing a splash at the SuperBowl in the United States on Monday - the big grand final of NFL football - which saw her boyfriend Travis Kelce's team just beat their opponents, the San Francisco 49ers in a game that was forced into overtime. But because

this is Pop Culture Corner and not Sport Time - let's give a shout out to Usher - whose half time performance was spectacular. Who knew the man could also roller skate while he sang and danced? Just incredible. I've stuck a link to video of it in today's episode notes.

THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. Which team won the American SuperBowl?
2. In which country do they take to the streets to celebrate Carnival?
3. What's the name of Lucky the muster dog's owner?

SHOUT OUTS

It's February 14 Valentine's Day ... when you can send a card, flowers, chocolates to someone you love ... maybe it's someone you secretly admire from afar, or love openly and in full view of the world .. it's a celebration of love, people. Which makes the world go around afterall ...

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Harriette from Forest Lake, Audrey from Tempe, Josephine and Phoenix from Yass, Sebastian from Gilberton, Emile from Normanhurst, Christian from Leura and Rylee and Maddy from Holland Park.

Happy belated birthday to... Mikayla and Damon from Leura, Nora from Goodna and Aiza (pronounced Eye-za) from Sydney.

Classroom shoutouts today go to... Class 3S and Mrs Sutton from Blayney Public School, class 5/6B with Ms Cronin from Ardeer South Primary School, classes 4/5/6 Hotshots with Mr O'Connor from Mulbring Public School, year 4 with Mrs Bryant at St Columba's Primary School in Adamstown and lastly today class N15 with Mrs George at Eddystone Primary School in Perth.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Kansas City Chiefs
2. Brazil
3. Frank