

Fire ants on the march; America's Super Tuesday; Squiz-E spots a deep fake; and let the AFL season begin!

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

THE LOWDOWN

Let's kick off proceedings today with a question What's tiny, has 6 legs, belongs to the insect family and could soon become a bigger problem in Australia than rabbits, cane toads, foxes, feral cats and wild dogs?

The answer is fire ants. And this week, politicians have been taking part in an inquiry to understand just how big a problem they are - and exactly what needs to be done to stop them.

Fire ants are what is called an invasive species. That's a species of animal that is not native to Australia - but has been introduced into our environment and is now running amok. Cane toads, foxes, feral cats and rabbits are other examples of invasive species - and they're all a problem because of the impact they have on native Australian animals. Fire ants have been isolated mostly to South East Queensland - where they are not only a pest, but also really dangerous. They have a really vicious bite - like a bull ant but more painful. And worryingly now, there have been reports of them marching south into NSW. And get this: one of the ways they move is by gathering together and forming rafts and floating down stream on rivers and streams. Cheeky!

The Senate Inquiry into fire ants has brought together politicians from all over the country to examine the problem and work out the best ways to solve it. Because luckily there are lots of clever scientists who specialise in doing just that.

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 the United States America - where they've just had something called Super Tuesday.

Not because the day was especially amazing - but because voters in 15 states got to choose which candidate they want to run for President.

You see: at the moment the United States is led by a man called Joe Biden, representing a political party called the Democrats. He's the current US president. And yesterday, he was endorsed by voters in 15 of the United States' 50 states as the candidate Democrats want in the White House.

His main rival for that job looks most likely to be Donald Trump - who is with the Republican party - and was President once before.

The election itself isn't happening until November. But expect lots of noise between now and then as both sides try to convince the American people their man is the best one for the job.

SPORT TIME

Heat up those footy franks and whip out your supporters gear - tonight marks the first game of the 2024 AFL season and it's shaping up to be a blockbuster as the AFL goes interstate.

You know how the traditional home of AFL is states like Victoria, South Australia, WA and Tassie? Well for the first time, the first four games of opening round will be played in rugby league territory - taking place in New South Wales and Queensland.

The action gets under way tonight when when the Swans take on the Demons at the Sydney Cricket Ground, then all eyes will be further north in Brisbane when tomorrow night local heroes the Brisbane Lions stage a rematch of last year's preliminary final in their clash against Carlton.

Then on Saturday afternoon, it's down to the Gold Coast we go for the Suns clash with Richmond, ahead of a Saturday night game in Sydney between the Giants and reigning premiers, the Collingwood Magpies.

So that's my weekend sorted ...

NEWSHOUNDS

Every Thursday Squiz-E the Newshound - our resident detective dog - pops his head into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet - and today Squiz-E is most concerned. He's stumbled upon lots of deep fakes this week. A deep fake is fake video. And one has popped up online pretending to be an actual TV news report from the respected French 24 news channel, France 24. The deep fake looks like a France 24 news report about the French President Emmanuel Macron ... it sounds like a France 24 news report, it even appears to feature one of the France 24 newsreaders - but it's all fake. Made by manipulating images using AI - and made by people determined to trick you and I into falling for what's called 'disinformation' ... that's information that is incorrect and is being purposely shared online to influence the way we think.

Luckily, Squiz-E knows to STOP THINK AND CHECK before believing everything he sees on the internet - and he pretty quickly sniffed out the fake.

And a reminder that if you want to become a Newshound like Squiz-E - get your teacher to sign-up to our fun, free media-literacy programme for primary school kids called Newshounds .. jump in via our website - squizkids.com.au

BBC EARTH EXPERIENCE GIVE AWAY

Do you like nature documentaries? Do you think you'd like a free family pass to the very excellent BBC Earth Experience on in Melbourne right now? A chance to visit the whole world in an immersive interactive multimedia display?

Then record a video of yourself quicksticks doing your best impersonation of legendary English documentary maker, David Attenborough and send it to us pronto at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au.

Entries closing soon ... and a big shout out to Zella from Brisbane whose very excellent David Attenborough narration about her dog Molly put a huge smile on our faces at Squiz Kids HQ.

Keep an eye on our Instagram account to see a selection of the best entries ...

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. Who will the Sydney Swans play in tonight's AFL season opener?
2. The spread of what sort of ants is a Senate Inquiry looking into?
3. What's the name of the current US President?

SHOUT OUTS

It's March 7 Today will see the unveiling of the Australian Olympic uniform for the Paris Olympics ... i hope it's fashionable ... plus on this day in 1933, the game of Monopoly first went on sale. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.

It's also a very special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... twins Niamh and Ned from Geelong West, Kamila from Hope Island, Arty from Rose Park, Lyla from Frenchs Forest, Alyssa from Upper Coomera, Pasito from Pacific Pines and Esme from Richmond.

Classroom shoutouts today go to... class 2M and Miss Liefing at Deniliquin South Public School, class 4/5 and Miss Lowry at Romaine Park Primary School in Burnie, class 4M and Mrs Matheson at Dubbo South Public School, year 6 with Mrs Peardon at St Michael's Catholic Parish Primary School in Thirroul, class 4 Gold with Mrs Shepherd at Mt Carmel School in Yass, class 5K with Mrs Kime at St John's Anglican College in Forest Lake and lastly class 5B and Mrs Bellingham at Walkervale State School in Bundaberg.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Melbourne Demons
2. Fire ants
3. Joe Biden