

## **School in a warzone; human hair helps climate change; saving Dominica's mountain chicken frog; and zoo cages for humans.**

Hello Squiz Kids listeners -

Just jumping into your ears at the top of this week's podcast to ask a small favour.

We're in renovation mode at Squiz Kids - overhauling our website, improving the Newshounds experience - and we want to hear from you on how we could improve the podcast too.

To that end: I'd really appreciate it if you could fill out the Squiz Kids Survey - I've stuck a link in the episode notes - or you can access it via the website, [squizkids.com.au](http://squizkids.com.au).

A few minutes of your time will mean the world to us here at Squiz Kids - and make it easier for us to keep on doing what we do. Thanks in advance ...

### ***INTRO***

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Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what's happening in the world around you.

I'm Christie Kijurina

It's Thursday May 16 ...

In Squiz Kids Today ... School in a warzone; human hair helps climate change; saving Dominica's mountain chicken frog; and zoo cages for humans.

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

### ***THE LOWDOWN***

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Have you ever complained about having to go to school? I'm a teacher, and I know I have! But what if we couldn't go to school at all? Imagine missing out on learning, seeing our friends, playing handball, and visiting the canteen. Well, that's what many Palestinian kids are facing right now.

Late last year, we talked about a conflict between a group called Hamas in Gaza and the country of Israel. Sadly, it's still going on. The United

Nations says that over 70 per cent of schools in Gaza will need to be rebuilt when the fighting stops. And right now, about 625,000 kids can't attend regular classes because so many schools have been damaged or destroyed. But they're not giving up on learning.

Volunteer teachers are setting up makeshift schools in tents, where kids learn while sitting in the sand. And because over a million people have had to leave their homes, UNICEF, the United Nations' agency for children, is organising activities like singing, dancing, and essential learning. They're also setting up 50 tents that will help up to 6,000 students get back to learning.

And it's not just the younger kids. Medical students who were training to be doctors are now volunteering in hospitals because their schools are too damaged to attend, all while trying to complete their studies online with some pretty dodgy WiFi.

So, next time we're grumbling about getting out of bed for school, let's remember how lucky we are. These kids show us what true resilience looks like.

## ***SPIN THE GLOBE***

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Each day, we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops. Today, we've landed on the Caribbean Island of Dominica, where one very important animal is under threat: the Mountain Chicken, which, despite its name, is not a chicken, but a frog.

Confused? Let me explain: the mountain chicken is one of the world's largest frogs, weighing in at more than a kilogram and measuring more than 20 centimetres. That's about the size of a big tin of milo. And guess what? It used to be a local delicacy, found in soups, and stews and is apparently delicious when crispy fried ...and it tastes like...you guessed it...chicken!

But the Mountain Chicken Frog has had a tough time lately. A nasty fungal infection and wild tropical storms have caused their numbers to drop drastically. In a population count last year, conservationists found only 21 frogs, compared to the 36,000 that were eaten each year before their decline started in 2002.

But there's hope! Herpetologists (that's a fancy word for amphibian and reptile experts) worldwide, are on the case. Over 200 frogs are being cared for and researched in zoos around the world, and just last month, a pair at the London Zoo had six baby froglets. Awww!

With a little luck, the call of the Mountain Chicken will soon be heard again in the wilds of Dominica.

## **WEIRD SCIENCE**

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What do you think hairdressers and barbers do with all the hair they cut off people every day? And what about the pet groomers and the offcuts from sheep shearing? Experts say that the weight of human hair thrown away in Australia each year is 400,000 kilograms. That's as heavy as 267 average cars or 889 polar bears!

But guess what? Some clever Aussie scientists have found a way to turn hair and wool into a valuable material called graphite. The stuff in your pencils isn't lead, it's graphite! And it's not just useful for pencils. Along with a metal called lithium, graphite is a key part of batteries, especially the ones used to store renewable energy and power electric cars, which are part to the global plan to combat climate change.

Right now, Australia gets its graphite from mining and from imports from China, India, and Brazil. But this new technique could change everything. So, next time you get a haircut, remember: your hair could help power the future!

## **NEWSHOUNDS**

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Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound sticks his snout into Squiz Kids HQ to tell us about the fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet, and this week, Squiz-E's social scrolling came to a screeching halt when he found photos claiming to show a 'reverse zoo' in China, where humans are in cages and the animals roam free.

With his nose a-twitchin' Squiz-E quickly did a reverse image search. These viral images were everywhere—Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok. But Squiz-E sniffed out the truth: the photos came from a video on an official Chinese YouTube channel. It turns out that visitors at Chongqing City Zoo can pay for a thrilling experience where they feed lions and tigers from inside a wire mesh cage! I know!!

The zoo has regular attractions, too, but this special safari adventure is for those looking for an extra thrill.

This story is a perfect reminder not to believe everything you see, read and hear on the internet, because while there may be some truth to it, there's often more to the story. Check out the episode notes for a link to the original video and tips on how to do your own reverse image search.

Thanks Squiz-E, you've done it again!

## ***THE S'QUIZ***

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

1. Name the Carribean Island that is home to the Mountain Chicken
2. The weight of human hair thrown out by salons in Australia each year is the same as how many polar bears?
3. What type of search did Squiz-E do to find out the source of the video of people in cages in China?

## ***SHOUT OUTS***

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It's May 16th ... Global Accessibility Awareness Day. A day to get talking, thinking and learning about online access and inclusion for the more than one billion people on the planet with a disability,

It's also a special day for the following Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today...

Quorra from Dunedoo, Archer from Tempe, Rory and Aria from Yass, Nant from Ashmont, Margot from Sydney, Frankie from Ipswich, Claudia from Dee Why, Liam from Mortlake, Tiella from Bellevue Hill, Bill from Tregear and Charlotte listening over in Whistler, Canada.

A belated shout out goes to... Chadmintin from Darwin.

Classroom shoutouts today go to... year 6 yellow and Miss Kosmos at St Luke's Catholic Primary School in Revesby, class 5A and Mrs Mac at Karalee State School, class 4F and Mrs Fung at Beecroft Public School, class 5N and Mrs Maude at The King's School in North Parramatta, Mrs Hart and Mrs Wilson's classes at Langwarrin Park Primary School, class 5/6 with Miss Lewis at Millfield Public School in Cessnock and lastly, but definitely not leastly, Mrs Brookes students at the Guardian Preschool in Acacia Gardens.

## **The S'Quiz Answers:**

1. Dominica
2. 889
3. A reverse image search

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or if you want a classroom shout out - drop us a line at [squizkids@thesquiz.com.au](mailto:squizkids@thesquiz.com.au) or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - we'll be back again tomorrow with our Kids v Adults Weekly News S'quiz - where you get to test who's been paying the most attention to the week that just was...

In the meantime, get out there and have a most excellent day. Over and out.