

Frozen trees and koala conservation; Vampire bats love to cuddle; Sydney's big wet and astro-turfing; plus a big week for K-Pop Demon Hunters.

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

I'm Bryce Corbett

It's Monday August 25 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... Frozen trees and koala conservation; Vampire bats love to cuddle; Sydney's big wet and astro-turfing; plus a big week for K-Pop Demon Hunters.

THE LOWDOWN

Here's a question for you to kick off the week .. what do frozen trees and koala breeding programs have in common?

They're both at the forefront of efforts revealed this week to conserve some of our most iconic and important native species.

Scientists last week revealed they had developed techniques to freeze one of our native tree species which is under threat from an introduced invasive species.

Invasive species - when it comes to plants - are plants that have been introduced to the Australian environment from other countries - and are now threatening to overtake native species.

That's what's going on with the gossia gonoclada - or 'angle stemmed myrtle' tree - which is native to Australia but of which there are only 380 specimens left.

It's under threat from an introduced fungal disease called 'myrtle rust' - which is a fungus that grows on myrtle trees and can kill them.

But now - through a process called cryo-preservation, scientists have worked out how to freeze healthy myrtle trees so that they can be defrosted in the future and brought back to life to ensure the species survives.

Just like Han Solo in Return of The Jedi - and yes - I know that shows my age.

Genius.

And in other excellent preservation news .. a wild koala breeding program on the NSW north coast is showing promising results - with news at the weekend that six joeys have been born as part of the program - representing a 100 percent success rate.

And that's good news because a recent NSW government report found that unless population decline was halted, koalas in NSW would be extinct by 2050. And no-one wants that.

And if you're keen to learn more about Invasive Species- we have a Squiz Kids Shortcut podcast just for that ... I've linked to it in today's episode notes.

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 .. Central America - which is the part of the Americas between North America and South America - and takes in countries like Mexico and Guatemala and Costa Rica ... and is also home to the false vampire bat.

Vampire bats are exactly what they sound like ... bats that drink the blood of other animals ... they attach themselves to cows, horses, any warm blooded animal really, and suck their blood. Eugh. False vampire bats are cousins to the vampire bat. They don't suck blood, but they are carnivorous - which means they are meat eaters - hunting everything from insects to birds.

Photos of the little critters are as you'd expect: pretty fearsome, with their sharp fanged teeth and big ears - but proving you should never judge a book by its cover, scientists have this week discovered that false vampire bats are actually big ol' softies.

New video has emerged of the bats in their caves showing how much they like to cuddle each other ... often greeting one another with big winged hug - and even forming what the scientists call 'cuddle balls' which is where entire families get together and hug it out, wings wrapped lovingly around each other.

Can I get a great big .. Ohhhhhh ..?

And yes, I've stuck video of the cuddling bats in today's episode notes ..

POP CULTURE CORNER

From bats to demon hunters ... it's that kind of a podcast this morning. And yes, of course I am talking the best sort of demon hunters ... K-Pop Demon Hunters – and the exciting news that's coming out of one of the most streamed and ludicrously popular movies on Netflix right now.

Demon Hunter fans were already out in force at the weekend as cinemas all over Australia held special sing-along screenings of the animated film - and now there's rumours that Netflix is looking into making not one, but two sequels AND a live action remake of the original - plus a stage musical.

That's four extra helpings of Rumi, Mira, Zoey and Jinu - plus the Saja Boys ..

Meanwhile - here in Australia - the KPop Demon Hunters movie soundtrack continues to smash chart records .. this week becoming the biggest animated movie soundtrack since the charts launched in 1983 - beating Trolls and even ... you sitting down for this ... Frozen

Let it go, Elsa. Let it go ...

SPORT TIME

Do you live in Sydney? And do you play a weekend sport?

Have your games been cancelled for the past few weeks, because of the rain?

Well - no great surprise - as Sydney has just had the wettest August in 27 years.

And that has forced councils to close sports fields on weekends - meaning thousands of Aussie kids who are supposed to be out there kicking footys or throwing netballs have been stuck inside - no doubt driving their parents mad with all that pent up energy.

Well - we all know how getting outside and running around and playing team sports is good for us - for our bodies as well as our brains.

And that's why many councils in Sydney are starting to re-think the idea of swapping out grass fields for artificial turf.

It's really common in the northern hemisphere to play winter sports on artificial turf - whether it's rugby or soccer or netball - and that's because in lots of countries like England and France, they get lots of wet weekends in winter.

But what about the mud? Isn't getting soaked wet and covered in mud one of best bits of a winter sport? Discuss among yourselves ...

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What name do we give to baby koalas?
2. Which animated movie soundtrack has just beaten Elsa's Frozen to become the biggest selling in Australia?
3. What have scientists discover false vampire bats like to do?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Monday, August 25 ... today marks the launch of National Youth Parliament ... a chance for Aussie kids aged 16-17 to travel to Canberra and learn how our system of government works ... probs too old for you lot - but we'll keep an eye on it and keep you informed about it, because as we always say on Squiz Kids ... it's your country, you should know how it works ..

Today is also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today and tomorrow... Scarlett from Springvale, Oli from Albury, Hamish from Sandringham and Jenna from Exeter.

Belated shoutouts go to... Caitlin from Beaconsfield, Karl from Yeppoon and Pratik from Brisbane.

Classroom shout outs go to... all the students at St Luke's Catholic College in Marsden Park, class 4 White with Mrs Feddema at St Thomas' Primary School in Camp Hill and class 6R with Mrs Roy at Saint Stephens College in Upper Coomera.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Joeys
2. K-Pop Demon Hunters
3. Cuddle or hug

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after a classroom shout out- drop us a line at 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 a special Squiz The World as we visit the exotic Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan

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