

## **Elephant sensory superhairs; a teaching prize triumph; Obama on extraterrestrials; the fart facts project.**

### ***INTRO***

-----

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 Wednesday, February 18 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... Elephant sensory superhairs; a teaching prize triumph; Obama on extraterrestrials; the fart facts project.

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

### ***THE LOWDOWN***

—

Imagine learning your times tables from a mural stretching down your street.

An art teacher in India has just won one of the biggest prizes in education for helping kids do exactly that. Rouble Nagi has been awarded the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize after spending more than two decades turning slum walls and village lanes into colourful outdoor classrooms.

Slums are very crowded neighbourhoods where many families live in small, basic housing and don't always have reliable access to things like clean water, electricity or schools.

While in Australia most children are required by law to attend school and have access to free public education, that isn't always the case in some parts of India. Some families

can't afford uniforms or supplies. Others need their children to work to help support the household. That means millions of children can miss out on formal schooling.

So 24 years ago, Rouble started small — teaching just 30 children through art. Today, her foundation runs around 800 learning centres, turning neighbourhood walls into bright murals that teach reading, maths and history. She calls them “Living Walls of Learning”.

-----

Meanwhile, in Canberra, there's been a change at the top of the Liberal Party of Australia.

Angus Taylor has successfully challenged Sussan Ley to become party leader. Ley had made history as the party's first female leader, but held the role for just nine months before the internal vote. Supporters of Taylor say it's about direction and strategy. Others question whether enough time was given for change to take shape.

As always in politics — time will tell.

## ***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 Germany — where scientists have discovered elephant trunks come with built-in touch sensors.

An elephant's trunk is covered in about 1,000 whiskers. Because elephants don't see especially well, those whiskers extend their sense of touch.

Researchers found each whisker starts stiff at the base and becomes softer toward the tip. That design helps elephants detect exactly where something brushes against them.

Unlike rat or cat whiskers, which are solid, elephant whiskers are porous and shaped like a blade of grass — and once lost, they don't regrow. Porous is a fancy word for something that has tiny holes to absorb air or water.

To test their theory, scientists 3D printed a giant whisker and knocked it against objects... who said science is boring?! Apparently you could feel the difference depending on where it hit.

Which may explain how elephants can gently lift something fragile like a flower— or move something enormous like a tree— all with the same trunk.

Turns out, whiskers ain't just whiskers.

### **BELIEVE IT OR NOT**

Aliens. Area 51. A former president. What could possibly go wrong?

Over the weekend, former American President Barack Obama found himself at the centre of an internet frenzy after answering a lightning-round question on a political podcast: Are aliens real?

“They’re real, but I haven’t seen them,” he said jokingly and social media took off faster than a UFO.

So Obama quickly jumped back online to clarify. The universe is enormous, he said — so statistically, there’s a good chance life exists somewhere. But the distances between solar systems are so huge that the chances aliens have visited Earth? Very low. And during his presidency, he saw zero evidence of extraterrestrial contact.

The takeaway?

In space, no one can hear you scream.

And on social media, everyone hears half the story.

### **WEIRD SCIENCE**

Breaking news from the world of... breaking wind.

Scientists in the US have developed sensor-equipped “Smart Underwear” to objectively measure flatulence... that’s farts people! The device clips into underwear and tracks hydrogen gas released by the gut.

Until now, most research relied on people reporting their own numbers — and let’s just say, memory or reporting can be unreliable when it comes to farts.

Early findings suggest healthy adults may pass gas more than twice as often as previously thought.

The bigger mission? Creating a Human Flatus Atlas — a detailed guide to normal gas patterns. That baseline could help doctors better understand digestive health and how diet changes affect our gut microbes.

Another example of science not being boring. A bit disgusting maybe but definitely not dull.

## **Q+A Callout**

[Fanfare]

I'm so excited to announce Squiz Kids Q+A is back!

And we haven't saved the best for last. Nope. We're kicking things off with a bang, a brainwave, and possibly a very loud shirt... because our first very special guest is none other than Dr Karl Kruszelnicki!

Yes. That Dr Karl.

Science explainer. Myth-buster. University of Sydney physicist. ABC radio legend who's been answering curly questions from Aussies for decades. Author of more than 40 books. And proud owner of some of the brightest shirts ever stitched together by humanity.

This is your chance to ask him a question.

It could be about science.

It could be about him.

It could be gloriously random.

Maybe you want to know...

- Where on Earth does he find such bright shirts?
- How did he first fall in love with science?
- What did he win an Ig Nobel Prize for... and what even is an Ig Nobel Prize?
- What's his favourite band or song to listen to while thinking big thoughts?
- What's the strangest question anyone has ever asked him?
- What's one science myth he really wishes people would stop believing?

Now it's over to you.

If you've got a question you're bursting to ask Dr Karl, send it in!

You can email your question to [squizkids@thesquiz.com.au](mailto:squizkids@thesquiz.com.au) and if we pick yours, we'll ask you to send us a voice recording.

OR head to the Squiz Kids website, follow the instructions carefully, and send us your voice recording directly.

You've got until Tuesday, March 3.

So go on... what are you waiting for?

## **THE S'QUIZ**

-----

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

1. What is the name of the new leader of the Liberal Party, replacing Sussan Ley?
2. Approximately how many whiskers does an elephant have on its trunk?
3. What is the name of the database about farts that researchers want to create...  
It's the Human Flatus what?

## **SHOUT OUTS**

-----

It's Wednesday, February 18 ... This year, two significant moments in the religious calendar fall on the same day. For many Christians, today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent — a 40-day period of reflection, prayer and preparation leading up to Easter.

And for Muslims, the holy month of Ramadan begins at sunset this evening. Ramadan is a sacred month of fasting from dawn until dusk, along with increased prayer, generosity and time spent with family and community.

Different prayers, different practices — but a shared focus on kindness, reflection and hope.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today...Isaac from Forest Lake, and Blake and Sophia from Kurri Kurri.

Belated shoutouts go to... Tayla from Yarrawonga, Victoria from White Rock, Ivy-Rose from the Northern Beaches, Ethan and Amelia from Casula and Daisy listening over in Ha Noi, Vietnam.

Classroom shoutouts go to... class 5 Blue with Mrs K at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School in Kurri Kurri, classes 6A, B and H with Mrs Oliver, Mrs Hopson, Mr Threlfall from Echuca Primary School, class 5B with Mrs Meher-Homji at Jindalee State School, year 2 with Ms Blee at Wenona School in North Sydney and year 4 with Miss Wall at Shore School, also in North Sydney.

And a special shoutout to Mario and Aedan from Australia but now living in Colombia, South America, who recently emailed us to suggest a Squiz The World Episode on Colombia - stay tuned!

**The S'Quiz Answers:**

1. Angus Taylor
2. 1000
3. Atlas

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](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

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