

Iran’s footballers seek safety; NASA nudges an asteroid; an emu at the Paralympics; and a library filled with ants!

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, March 11

In Squiz Kids Today ... Iran’s footballers seek safety; NASA nudges an asteroid; an emu at the Paralympics; and a library filled with ants!

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

THE LOWDOWN

“Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!”

Some reports say that sound echoed through a secure building in Brisbane in the early hours of Monday morning as a group of five Iranian footballers celebrated being granted a visa to stay in Australia.

Let’s break it down..

The players are members of Iran’s women’s soccer team, who have been in Australia competing in the Women’s Asian Cup. But their time here has taken an unexpected turn. Most of you will know there’s been growing conflict and tension involving Iran in the Middle East recently — and inside Iran itself, people live under a very strict government where speaking out can bring serious consequences.

Before their opening match against South Korea earlier this month, several players made a quiet protest. As Iran’s national anthem played, they chose not to sing. Back home, Iranian state TV labelled them “traitors” — sparking fears they could face punishment if they returned.

After their final match of the tournament on Sunday — a 2–0 loss to the Philippines — five players made a dramatic decision. They slipped away from their team hotel and asked Australia for asylum. Asylum means asking another country for protection because it's not safe to go home.

Within 48 hours, Australian authorities moved the players to a secure location and granted them humanitarian visas. Other teammates may still return home — worried not just for themselves, but also for their families. For the five who stayed, it was an incredibly brave choice — and many people are hoping they and their loved ones stay safe.

While all that's been happening, parts of Australia have been dealing with some wild, wet weather. Major flooding has hit the Northern Territory, with communities along the Daly River and around Katherine seeing rivers rise to dangerous levels. And in Queensland, towns near Bundaberg are also facing flooding after days of heavy rain, with volunteers helping residents move belongings and stay safe. Through all the rain clouds, the strong Aussie spirit of neighbours helping neighbours has been shining through.

Can I get an “oi, oi, oi,” people!

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 back in Italy, where the Winter Paralympics are underway.

Australia has already had a huge moment on the slopes, with snowboarder Ben Tudhope winning a brilliant silver medal on Sunday in the Para snowboard cross. And he did it the hard way. During the quarter-finals, Ben dislocated his shoulder, but instead of pulling out, he strapped it up and kept racing — powering through to finish second. Other Aussies have been putting in strong performances too, with snowboarders Sean Pollard and Aaron McCarthy both making it through to the quarter-finals.

But while the athletes have been busy competing... something else is missing... Australia's beloved Paralympic mascot — Bruce the Emu.

Bruce is a five-foot-tall brass emu with one leg who travels with the Aussie team to big Games to bring a bit of fun and good luck. But sometime over the weekend, Bruce vanished from the Australian team headquarters in the Paralympic Village. The Para Pranksters left a ransom note claiming that Bruce was “safe and receiving the best care” and would be returned soon.

The Aussie team has now launched a social media search party with the hashtag... #BringBruceBack.

SPACED OUT

Picture the scene: giant asteroid hurtling toward Earth... scientists in mission control... dramatic music building in the background like an Armageddon-style disaster movie. Except this time, it's not Hollywood. It's NASA.

Back in 2022, NASA launched a mission called DART — the Double Asteroid Redirection Test — to see if humans could actually nudge an asteroid off course if one was ever heading our way. Their target was a pair of space rocks called Didymos and its smaller companion Dimorphos, which orbits around it.

The plan? Crash a spacecraft straight into Dimorphos. And it worked.

The impact shortened Dimorphos's orbit around Didymos by 32 minutes — a huge change in asteroid terms. But astronomers have kept watching the system ever since, and new measurements show the collision also slowed the pair's journey around the Sun by about 11.7 micrometres per second — shrinking their orbit by roughly 360 metres.

Which may not sound like much... But when it comes to asteroids and Earth? Even a tiny nudge early on can mean a very big miss later.

And in the asteroid-defence business... a miss is a very good thing.

WEIRD SCIENCE

Imagine walking into a giant library... where every shelf is packed with ants. Thousands of them. Millions, maybe. All staring back at you.

And you might be thinking... *uh-oh*... Well, you can relax because this new ant library is completely digital.

Scientists have created a massive online ant archive called Antscan — a digital collection of incredibly detailed 3-D scans of more than 2,000 ant species from around the world.

To make the scans, researchers used a powerful synchrotron particle accelerator, which fires bright X-ray beams through the ants, don't worry, they're not alive, to create super-detailed images of their insides. Each scan produces around 3,000 X-ray images, revealing everything from an ant's muscles and digestive system to its nervous system.

Why ants? Because they're one of the most successful species on Earth. Scientists estimate there are more than 20 quadrillion ants alive right now — that's roughly two-and-a-half million ants for every human.

And the best bit? You can explore the entire Antscan library online — links are 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. Five of which country's soccer players have been allowed to stay in Australia?
2. What type of animal is Bruce, Australia's Paralympic mascot?
3. Roughly how many ants are there for every human on Earth?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, March 11 ...the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, better known as NAPLAN, begins for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, today.

Over the next couple of weeks, more than a million kids will complete tests in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and maths. Now, if NAPLAN is on your calendar this week, here's an important thing to remember: it's not about being perfect.

The tests are designed to help teachers and schools understand how students are going — what skills they're doing well in, and where they might need a little extra help to keep

growing. So the best advice? Take a deep breath, read the questions carefully... and just do your best. You've got this!

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Tommy from Armadale, Vanessa from Springvale, Ella from Salisbury Heights, Celina from Marsfield and Nicolás from Brighton Le Sands.

Belated shoutouts go to... Fraser from Dural, Basharat from Yarrabilba and Mrs Smith, the Principal at Gladstone Public School.

Classroom shoutouts go to... stage 3 with Ms Viney, Miss Boney and Mr Murphy at Shoalhaven Heads Public School, class 5M with Miss Jenkins at MacKillop Catholic College in Mount Peter, class 4C with Mrs Gehrke at St Dymphna's Primary School in Aspley, Room 33 with Mr Hudson at Salisbury Heights Primary School, class 5 Blue with Mrs Evans at Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School in Eagle Vale and Year 6 Freeman class with Miss Tucker and Miss Sadani at St Luke's Catholic College in Marsden Park.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Iran
2. Emu
3. two-and-a-half million ants for every human

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.

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