

Mary the Tassie Devil comes home; Marones level-up Origin; Socceroots next big test; and Merlin the duck wins the World Cup.

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 Thursday, June 18 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... Mary the Tassie Devil comes home; Marones level-up Origin; Socceroots next big test; and Merlin the duck wins the World Cup.

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

THE LOWDOWN

After two weeks on the run, Mary the Tasmanian Devil has been recaptured and returned the Gold Coast wildlife park she ran away from in a daring, mid-night escape.

Mary captured the attention of the country - and even many parts of the world - when she managed to leap over the fence of her enclosure at the Paradise Country wildlife sanctuary in south-east Queensland and run off into nearby bushland.

For the last two weeks, she's been in hiding ... occasionally captured on CCTV in the backyards of local residents, but otherwise taking refuge in bushland just behind Warner Bros Movie World and only about two kilometres from where she disappeared.

Hmmm ... maybe she likes roller coasters .. or maybe she was trying to meet up with Taz the Looney Tunes cartoon character ...

But I digress..

When wildlife officers finally located her on Tuesday night, she was reported to be in a weakened condition ... a little worse for wear after her fortnight on the run.

She's now safe in the hands of vets who are nursing her back to full health - and hopefully be back in her enclosure soon with her housemate, Mavka. And probably a higher fence ...

So how did wildlife officers track Mary down? They followed the trail of pooh she left in the bush.

Imagine being a devil pooh tracker ...

Mary of course has timed her return home to perfection - with a big ol' sleep on the cards for her this weekend ... specifically because Sunday will be the shortest day of the year for those of us down here in the Southern Hemisphere.

It's called the winter solstice - and marks the day that the Earth is at its greatest tilt on its axis.

For the northern hemisphere - it's the opposite - they'll experience their longest day of the year on Sunday.

I've stuck a link in today's episode notes to some cool animations that explain it.

Happy Solstice everyone ...

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 Mexico - a nation that's gripped with World Cup fever as one of the three host nations - where a duck called Merlin has become a national hero.

Merlin is the pet of a young boy in Mexico City - whose mother sells water and soft drinks from a mobile cart. When Mexico beat South Africa in the tournament's opening match last week, photos of Merlin dressed in a mini Mexican football jersey went viral - and the duck has become a certified celebrity - with FIFA now planning to shoot a TV commercial with the famous feathered friend.

Meanwhile: it will a super early morning for fans of the Socceroos this Saturday morning as the men in green and gold take on Team USA in the city of Seattle. Kick off is at 5am Australian eastern time - so set your alarms people! Australia is currently in second place in its group, with the USA ahead on goals scored ... the top two teams in each group go through to the round of 32 ... fingers and toes and eyes, arms and legs crossed ...

SPORT TIME

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Of course the World Cup and football of the round ball variety wasn't the only game in town overnight ... fans of the footy of the oval shaped variety - I'm talking rugba league! - had plenty to get excited about last night ...

And that's because Queensland smashed NSW in the second State of Origin game - winning 44-24 and setting up a decider for three weeks' time...

In front of 91,000 fans at Melbourne's MCG, the NSW Blues came out of the blocks strong - running into half time with a lead of 12 points to 8.

But something must have been in the water in the Maroons dressing room at half time, because the second half of the game the traffic was all one way - pointing to an emphatic Queensland victory.

Maroons winger Selwyn Cobbo scored three tries and set up a fourth, Sam Walker didn't miss a single shot at goal - and now - with the series tied at 1 game each - all eyes turn to Brisbane for the decider ... Bring . It. On ...

NEWSHOUNDS

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Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound sticks his snout into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet .. and today his snout is twitching having come across a bunch of fake videos on social media - showing Aussie politicians, including the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese saying stuff they never said.

Now this is one of the big problems with AI generated videos. How easily they can make it seem as if someone has said something they never did.

And that might be harmless if it's, say, a video of your dad saying he loves peanut butter and honey sandwiches .. but when it's a video of a political leader having words put in their mouth that they never said - that's when things get dangerous. Imagine if there was a fake video created of the Prime Minister of New Zealand declaring war on Australia. And imagine if people saw it online - and shared it - and suddenly the country is panicking thinking our friendly neighbourhood Kiwis had turned against us. Not good.

It's why we need to so careful when we're online - whether we're a kid or an adult - to not automatically believe everything we see.

What is it that Squiz-E tells us to do each week? That's right. He says to STOP, THINK and CHECK ...

And as a Newshound: you should be explaining to the adults in your life that they also need to STOP THINK and CHECK when they are scrolling on social media.

Just because it appears on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube - doesn't make it true.

Good work Squiz-E - you've done it again.

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. How many weeks was Mary the Tassie Devil on the run?
2. True or false: the winter solstice is when the Earth's axis is at maximum tilt towards the sun?
3. What is the name of the duck in Mexico made famous during this World Cup? It's also the name of a famous wizard ...

SHOUTOUTS

It's Thursday June 18 – today is International Sushi Day ... how good is sushi? I'm a salmon and avocado buy myself ... or anything with raw tuna ... grab yourself some umami today

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Elira from Pakenham, Nikita from West Albury, Stella from Orange, Edith from Subiaco, Chloe from Armadale, Hartley from Greenwich.

Belated shoutouts go to... Isabelle from Concord West and Mary from Bendigo

Classroom shoutouts go to... the year 2 classes with Miss Woods & Mrs Wallace at Dubbo North Public School, year 5 with Miss Driver at St Brigids Catholic Primary School in Rosewood, class 2S with Miss Saleeb at Kogarah Public School and class 5K1 with Miss Carter at Springfield Central State School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Two
2. True
3. Merlin

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you'd like a shoutout, or if you want a classroom shoutout... 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

.

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