

It's Census time in Oz; Brazil's capybara invasion; Mice plague a feast for owls; and Minecraft comes to Switch 2.

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 10 -

In Squiz Kids today ... It's Census time in Oz; Brazil's capybara invasion; Mice plague a feast for owls; and Minecraft comes to Switch 2.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Ok kids of Australia - it's time to stand up and be counted. And I mean, literally.

And that because tomorrow night is Census night ... the night where we all report back to a government agency called the Australian Bureau of Statistics - where we are on that night, who we are, who else we're living with and how we lead our lives.

It's kind of like the roll call at school .. when the teacher checks to see who is present. Except in this case, it's the government doing a nationwide stock take - to make sure it has all important data to make decisions about how the country is run.

Every household in Australia will be asked to fill out a form online tomorrow night indicating how many people are in their house or apartment or caravan or tent you happen to live in.

It's the government's way of getting a snapshot of how many people live in a certain suburb or town or city - what circumstances they're living in - so that they can start to make plans to ensure the services the government offers suit that suburb, town or city and the people who live there. The Census happens every five years.

For instance: how many kids are in a household will impact how many schools or pre-schools are needed in that area. Or how many grandparents will indicate how many hospitals or aged care facilities are required.

Because if you don't measure and monitor these sorts of things, you can't properly plan for the future. Simple.

Meanwhile .. scientists across Australia continue to watch nervously as bird flu continues to infect more and more native birds.

Sick birds were found on the NSW south coast over the weekend - but also inland, near a town called Wentworth, on the Victorian border - where bird flu had spread to wetland species of native birds.

And to understand more about bird flu - make sure you listen to the excellent science short Christie recorded on Saturday on this podcast feed ..

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 Brazil - in beautiful South America - where a couple of capybaras clearly have their sights set on a career in politics.

Video emerged over the weekend of the cute as pie creatures wandering into the halls of parliament in the Brazilian province of Matto Grosso.

Capybaras are native to Brazil, hugely popular on social media, and renowned throughout the world for being the world's largest rodents. They're also very curious creatures.

And the fact the Matto Grosso parliament building is situated next to a nature reserve probably meant it was only a matter of time before a couple of capybaras wandered in to check on proceedings among the politicians.

I've stuck a link to video of the parliamentary visit in today's episode notes .. you're welcome.

ANIMAL KINGDOM

Keen listeners of this podcast will remember a couple of months ago we talked about the mice plague sweeping regional Australia.

It was bad news for farmers - whose crops were overrun by the hungry beasts in their millions ... but it now turns out that the explosion of mice has been good for another creature ... the barn owl.

There's been a barn owl baby boom in Western Australia's wheatbelt - which the term used to describe the part of the state where lots of farmers grow wheat - an essential ingredient for things like bread, pasta, noodles and pastries.

And the reason there are so many owl chicks being hatched? Because the mum and dad owls have plenty of mice to choose from to help feed hungry beaks back in their nests.

It's nature's way of fixing the mouse plague problem .. just breed more owls. Genius.

POP CULTURE CORNER

Any Minecraft fans out there? Yeah - I thought so ... well you'll be excited to learn that the world's second most popular online game for kids will soon be available on the Nintendo Switch 2.

It's like mixing your two favourite things .. peaches and cream, peanut butter and jam ... what do you mean that sounds foul? You never know until you try it ...

A native Switch 2 version of Minecraft will be available from October 27 - which has the gaming world very excited.

There's talk too that you'll be able to upgrade your existing version of Minecraft with something called a digital upgrade pathway reportedly being designed too.

Now tell me that doesn't get your Monday off to a good start?

Q+A TIME!

He's Australia's biggest selling kids' author, the creative brains behind the Treehouse series of books and he's back in the Squiz Kids Q+A hotseat tomorrow to answer a bunch of cool questions you sent in.

I'm talking of course about Andy Griffiths - whose new book, You + Me And The Gigantic Knucklehead has just been released.

If you've ever wanted to know if Andy has laughed so hard he had to stop writing, or who his favourite character from a Treehouse book is, or whether he's ever come up with an idea that's too gross to put into a book ... then be sure to tune in to Squiz Kids tomorrow to have a listen.

And a huge thanks to the hundreds of you who sent in questions ... every one was excellent - and if we had all the time in the world, we would have included each one. And congrats to the listeners whose questions were chosen - there's a prize on its way for you - and extra congrats to the kid whose question Andy judged the best - there's a special prize just for you. Listen tomorrow to find out the winners ...

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What's the name of the roll call or stocktake that the Australian government does every five years?
2. Name the species of bird that is doing very nicely thank you very much out of the mice plague in regional Western Australia?
3. Name the animals native to Brazil that decided to take a wander into a local parliamentary building?

SHOUTOUTS

It's Monday, August 10 – today is World Lion Day ... ROOOARRR ... how cool is that? Celebrating the so-called king of the jungle ... even though they don't live in jungles, but rather, out on the savannah ...

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today and tomorrow ...Emily from Mt Riverview, Frankie from Exeter, Marcus from North Sydney, Lucie from Kangaroo Lake, Connor from Northcote, Abigale from Canberra, James from Carindale, Oliver from Mooroolbark, Miss Laura from Gladstone, and William from Fisher in Illinois.

A belated shoutout goes to ...Asher from Melbourne

Classroom shoutouts go to ... Class 1CH from Spensley Street Primary School in Clifton Hill, Class 5SM and their teacher Miss Maas from Moranbah East State School, Class 3/4M and their teacher Ms McFarlane from Mount Riverview Public School

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Census
2. Barn owl
3. Capybara

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 our special Squiz Kids Q+A with kids' author Andy Griffiths.

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