

A billion-galaxy telescope prepares for launch ; 10,000 animals step onto the scales; robot-made records get the boot; and a googly-eyed gamble pays off.

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, August 26 -

In Squiz Kids today ... A billion-galaxy telescope prepares for launch ; 10,000 animals step onto the scales ; robot-made records get the boot; and a googly-eyed gamble pays off.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Imagine taking one photograph so enormous that you'd need more than half a million televisions just to display it. Enough to cover 45 New York City blocks. That's the scale of NASA's newest space telescope.

It cost \$4.3 billion US, is as long as a semi-trailer and can do in one month what would take the Hubble telescope about a century to achieve.

NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is preparing to blast off from Florida aboard a SpaceX rocket this Sunday at 9.26 pm AEST.

Named after NASA's first chief astronomer and the "mother of Hubble", Roman will travel 1.5 million kilometres to an area called Lagrange Point 2. At L2, the telescope can remain positioned with Earth and the Sun in roughly the same direction, helping it

maintain a stable temperature and an uninterrupted view into deep space. From there, it will investigate dark matter, dark energy, distant planets, stars, black holes and billions of galaxies.

While the James Webb Space Telescope zooms in to study small areas of space in extraordinary detail, Roman will take wide, sweeping views. Roman can see at least 100 times more sky in one image than Hubble and survey it up to 1,000 times faster. Scientists expect it to produce more than 500 terabytes of data every year... more than Hubble has collected across its entire 35-plus-year mission.

Just wow! And the launch will be livestreamed on NASA's website. There's a link in the episode notes.

<https://www.nasa.gov/live/>

In other slightly smaller news (but just slightly) FIFA World Cup superstar Erling Haaland has had a haircut... There's also a link in the 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 London, where the zoo's tiniest and tallest residents are stepping, hopping and slithering onto the scales.

It's London Zoo's annual weigh-in, when keepers update the vital statistics of around 10,000 animals.

At the tiny end are Partula snails weighing less than one gram. Giant Magnolia Land Snail Number 2 is comparatively hefty at 102.5 grams. At the furry-potato end, capybaras Kiwi and Gizmo weighed 45 and 50.5 kilograms.

The challenge is convincing everyone to cooperate. Penguins follow their breakfast fish across scales, snack-seeking squirrel monkeys crowd around for their turn and

capibaras are rewarded with plenty of pats. Large animals can walk over scales disguised in their habitats. That's good because I would not like to be the one coaxing a Sumatran Tiger onto the scales.

Each result helps keepers keep an eye on the animals' growth and health, and is shared with conservationists worldwide.

POP CULTURE CORNER

Could a robot become Australia's next number-one musician? It might be able to write lyrics, invent a melody and create a singing voice, but Australia's music industry has decided that only human artists can hit the charts. The Australian Recording Industry Association, better known as ARIA, announced this week that songs made entirely by artificial intelligence will no longer be eligible for its official charts.

AI isn't completely banned, but only recordings that are "substantially human-made" will be allowed onto the official list of top songs. A human musician can still use AI to suggest a sound, adjust a recording or assist with part of the creative process.

This decision is important because last month a controversial AI-assisted cover of a song by pop superstar Madonna, collected tens of millions of streams and received lots of airtime on Aussie radio stations. This led to it hitting number 4 on two ARIA charts.

ARIA says completely artificial music can be created using technology trained on human artists' recordings, sometimes without their permission, and that's unfair. But it's not entirely straightforward, because exactly how much human creativity does it take to turn an artificial song into human art? Hmmm...

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Never judge a fox by its googly eyes... It sounds like an Aesop's fable, but an X-ray has revealed the remarkable truth behind this very peculiar tale.

When a badly stuffed fox head appeared in a British auction catalogue, most people probably saw its plastic googly eyes and kept scrolling. It was expected to fetch no more than about \$100. But trained zoologist, James Cranfield, looked beyond its wonky appearance and counted its teeth. So, a fox has six upper incisor teeth between its pointy canine teeth and this strange specimen had eight, a telltale feature of a

marsupial called the thylacine, also known as the long-extinct Tasmanian tiger. And any Tassie Tiger remains are now extremely rare.

James wasn't the only amateur auction detective that day, and a bidding war sent the price soaring to approximately \$120,000.

But, the expensive gamble has now paid off: X-rays have revealed a complete and beautifully preserved thylacine skull inside the stuffing. Experts have confirmed that it is genuine, and scientists are hoping to be able to collect DNA from it.

Nobody knows how the century-old specimen reached England, but after hiding behind googly eyes for decades, its secret is finally out.

BOOKWEEK CALLOUT

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Happy Book Week, everyone! We've already had soooo many fabulous costume photos come in!

But there's still half a week to go, so keep those photos coming. Kids, ask an adult to send a photo of your costume to squizkids@thesquiz.com.au. Make sure they include your name, age, where you're from and the character you've dressed as. There are prizes to be won! And we'll be popping them on our socials

And teachers — don't be shy! Gather your teaching team, strike your best Book Week pose and send us a photo of your costumes too. We know you've been working just as hard with the cardboard, safety pins and sticky tape!

We've already shared a whole heap of them to the Squiz Kids Instagram feed at [@squizkids](https://www.instagram.com/squizkids) ... so ask an adult to check them out with you.

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 five word name of NASA's newest space telescope. I'll give you a hint, the initials are NGRST
2. Can you name London Zoo's two capybaras?

3. What is the scientific name for a Tasmanian Tiger?

SHOUTOUTS

It's Wednesday, August 26 – International Dog Day!

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today ... Lane from Orange, Henry from Brown Hill, Millanay from Forestlake, Eddie from Yarrawonga, Grace from Kallangur, Miles from Ballarat, Kester from Dural and Josie from Pymble.

A belated shoutout goes to ... Fatima from Chester Hill

Classroom shoutouts go to ... Class 5A and their teacher Miss Akeroyd at Trinity College Blakeview, Class 5M and their teacher Mrs McConaghy at St John's Anglican College Forestlake, and Class 6 Neptune who want to shout out their teacher Mr Diaz at Chester Hill Public School...great work, Mr Diaz!

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope
2. Kiwi and Gizmo
3. Thylacine

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you'd like a shoutout, or if you want a classroom shoutout, or parents, if you'd like to shout out a class or a wonderful teacher... 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 Squiz The World episode where we pay a visit to Scotland ... it's been in the news a lot this past month with the Commonwealth Games - but how much do you really know about the country where a stuffed sheep's gut is considered a delicacy?

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