

Screen time limits for classrooms; England's planet-saving zoo; Footy semi-finals bring the action; and hooray for democracy!

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, September 14 -

In Squiz Kids today ... Screen time limits for classrooms; England's planet-saving zoo; Footy semi-finals bring the action; and hooray for democracy!

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

THE LOWDOWN

And we begin the week with news that kids in NSW classrooms will have their screen time severely reduced from next year as the state government tries to improve performance in reading, writing and arithmetic.

Last week, you might remember, we talked about an international report finding that Aussie primary kids ability to read, write and do maths had declined in the past three years, with the finger of blame being pointed at digital devices in the classroom.

And yesterday, the NSW government wasted no time announcing that from the start of next year, kids screen time in classrooms will start to be limited to as little as 15 minutes per day.

The new laws will also require kids to write with pen and paper for at least one hour per day, and start to introduce limits on the use of laptops, tablets and other digital devices in homework.

Experts yesterday said it was about finding a balance ... teaching kids how to use digital devices, because we live in a digital world - but making sure those devices don't impact their learning.

Digital detox kids ... get ready ... it's on its way.

On the subject of the digital age we're living in ... some of the most powerful companies behind the AI revolution have called for a slowdown in development of the technology.

Anthropic, OpenAI and Elon Musk's SpaceX are all big tech companies rushing to create AI robots that can perform most of the tasks humans perform. But with warnings last week that the robots are developing much faster than anyone expected, there's been a call to put the brakes on for a bit.

What interesting times we live in.

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 England - where a zoo has decided to keep endangered species only.

The Bristol Zoo in England's south has decided that instead of being home to lots of different species, it will only house endangered ones - to try to help keep them alive for future generations to enjoy.

The zoo has spent the past year scaling back the variety of animals it keeps to focus on those species that are threatened species in the wild - including a type of lemur, a Cameroonian giraffe, a special lowland gorilla and a Madagascan frog.

Combined with breeding programs and a focus on educating visitors, the zoo is helping to slowly but surely restore populations of geckos, pigeons, crayfish and red pandas - one endangered species at a time.

How clever!

SPORT TIME

And we are well and truly at the pointy end of the footy season, with finals played in both major Aussie codes at the weekend - with some teams knocked out and others marching into do-or-die showdowns next weekend.

In the AFL .. The Brisbane Lions got the job done against the Adelaide Crows setting themselves up for a semi-final face off with Hawthorn next weekend. Meanwhile Fremantle kicked its way into their first semi final since 2015 making light work of the Geelong Cats - meaning they will now take on Sydney for a shot at a grand final berth.

In the NRL ... The Newcastle Knights brought an end to the Souths Sydney Rabbitohs season, the Redcliffe Dolphins scored their first ever preliminary finals berth with a win over the New Zealand Warriors, the Sharks gave the North Queensland Cowboys a season early mark and the Panthers were too strong for the Roosters.

Meanwhile - the NRLW competition is heating up too after the last round of the women's footy competition took place this weekend - with the Roosters, Titans, Broncos, Tigers, Knights and Raiders all booking a spot in the finals.

And in the much-hyped NFL game on Friday - where American football took over the Melbourne Cricket Ground - the San Francisco 49ers beat the LA Rams.

As my son Flynn likes to say: how good's footy?

SQUIZ KIDS SALUTES

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And today we're offering a great big Squiz Kids Salutes to every kid in an Aussie primary school who has won the Aussie Of The Month award.

What's the Aussie of the Month award? You've heard of the Australian of the Year award, right? Aussie of The Month is a special category awarded to school kids across the country who have demonstrated something called 'active citizenship' in their school.

What's active citizenship? It's doing something for the good of your community .. whether that's holding a fund raiser for a local charity, organising a clean up of your local park or school or giving up your free time to help out a newcomer to your school or community.

I've stuck a link to the Aussie of The Month initiative in today's episode notes - and the reason it's especially important this week is because tomorrow is International Day of Democracy.

What's democracy? It's a way of running a country, where the people who live in that country have a say on how the joint is run. And that might sound like a totally normal thing - because that's how things are organised here in Australia - but according to a research outfit, there are currently on 87 countries in the world that are democracies - and some 92 countries that are considered autocracies.

An autocracy is where all the power in a country is held by one single person.

So be sure to take a moment tomorrow and give thanks for the fact you live in a democracy – and try not to take it for granted.

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. In which country is Bristol Zoo, and its project to protect endangered species?
2. Which Aussie state is about to introduce strict screen time limits in classrooms?
3. Who won the NFL game in Melbourne on Friday between the LA Rams and San Francisco 49ers?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Monday, September 14 – today marks the beginning of the Festival of Ganesh - an important date in the Hindu calendar, celebrating the birth of Lord Ganesh - the elephant headed god of wisdom and prosperity ..

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today and tomorrow... Ryan from Vermont South, Gabe from Yass, Tyler from Petrie, Christian from Bellevue Hill, Hannah from Packerham, Isaac from Aspley, Alistair from Turramurra, Lucy from Mudgee, Isaac from Ashmont, Jaxon from Goonellabah, Harry from St James, Tim from Little St James, and Jamie from Mitcham.

Belated Birthday Shoutouts go to.... Anna from Belrose and Mark from Erskineville

Classroom shoutouts go to ... Class 6C with Ms Heck at Whitsunday Anglican School in Mackay, class 5L with Miss Lee at Epping Public School and class 3K with Mrs Lehmensich at St Francis of Assisi Primary School in Calwell.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. England
2. NSW
3. 49ers

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 taking us to the remarkable country of Panama ... where a huge engineering and construction project that started in 1881 created a famous 82 kilometre canal connecting the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean.

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