

**Bringing back the Tassie Tiger; keeping Venice afloat; dinosaur poo delivers a clue;
and the Big Peg is up for sale.**

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, September 16 -

In Squiz Kids today ... Bringing back the Tassie Tiger; keeping Venice afloat; dinosaur poo delivers a clue; and the Big Peg is up for sale.

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

THE LOWDOWN

Could the Tasmanian tiger be about to claw its way back from extinction? Last week marked 90 years since the last known Tasmanian tiger, or thylacine, died at a Hobart zoo, and it was also National Threatened Species Day. But Melbourne University Professor Andrew Pask thinks that this extinction might not be forever. He's been working with American company Colossal Biosciences, which is also working on the extinct dodo bird and mammoths.

So, how might you bring back an extinct animal?

Well, every living thing has genes... genes are like an instruction manual telling the body what to build and how to operate. Scientists have pieced together the thylacine's genetic instructions using DNA preserved in museums.

They're comparing them with those of its closest living relative: a tiny, mouse-like marsupial called the fat-tailed dunnart. And here's the astonishing bit: Thylacines were marsupials like kangaroos, koalas and wombats, so a newborn thylacine would be only the size of a grain of rice, and it could begin growing inside the little dunnart's pouch.

Scientists hope for a living thylacine by 2036. But whether it should eventually be released and how it might affect Tasmania's environment today are much bigger questions.

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 Venice, Italy, where experts say the floating city needs a Plan B.

Venice is built across more than 100 tiny islands, where canals replace roads and boats replace cars. To protect its streets and buildings from flooding, the city relies on MOSE... a system of 78 barriers hidden on the seabed at the entrances to its lagoon. When dangerously high water is forecast, air is pumped into the gates, forcing out the water inside and making them swing upwards to temporarily block out the Adriatic Sea.

It sounds brilliant, and so far, it has been. Since 2020, MOSE has prevented more than 150 floods. But new research says rising seas mean the barriers are being raised much more often than expected. Eventually, they might need to remain closed for months each year.

And that creates a problem: leave them open and Venice floods. Keep them closed, and the lagoon can't exchange water with the sea, trapping pollution, harming wildlife and blocking ships. Scientists are considering some extraordinary Plan Bs, including lifting Venice, building a giant wall around it or sealing off its lagoon.

Venice has around 140 churches, but now it might need another engineering miracle to stay above water.

ANCIENT EARTH

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Now if I were out walking in the wild and came across some poop, I'm not sure I'd consider that lucky, except of course in the case that it was 66 million-year-old tyrannosaur poop and contained the best-preserved feather from the age of dinosaurs.

That's exactly what happened to researcher David DeMar Jr. back in 2016 in Montana in the USA, and now scientists have published the results of scans that allowed them to peek inside the poop without breaking it apart. They found more feathers, bird leg bones and fish scales. Scientists think they belonged to a flightless diving bird that ate the fish before becoming lunch for a meat-eating dinosaur, possibly a young T. rex.

Its wing feathers were stiff, light and waterproof, a lot like those of modern waterbirds. But its primitive body feathers were fluffier and may not have trapped warmth as effectively.

That could be important. After an asteroid struck Earth, the whole planet cooled...and almost every kind of ancient bird disappeared, except the ancestors of birds alive today (we have a Shortcut about that BTW). Scientists wonder whether warmer, more modern feathers helped those birds survive.

[SIGH] A delicate clue, preserved in the least delicate place.

BIGGEST FURTHEST LONGEST

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Have you visited the Big Banana, posed beside the Big Prawn or craned your neck at the Big Merino? Australia's roadsides are dotted with enormous everyday objects, and now one of the more unusual ones needs a new owner. It's the Big Peg: a 5.2-metre-high, 750-kilogram steel clothes peg planted in a paddock near Canowindra, New South Wales.

The owner saw a picture of a similar sculpture in Belgium and thought it was hilarious. With the help of two mates, before long, one oversized peg had been built and concreted into the hillside.

Since 2018, it has attracted photographers, travellers and Google reviews comparing its cultural importance, perhaps a little generously, with the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. One couple even held their wedding ceremony in front of it. But the property that's home to the Big Peg is being sold, and it's a little TOO BIG for a moving van, so the new owner will become its custodian.

So, house hunters, how about it? Spacious paddocks, lovely country views and one extremely large laundry accessory included. BYO giant socks.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The school holidays are almost here... and while we take a couple of weeks off to plan some brilliant new episodes for the end of the year, there'll still be plenty happening on the Squiz Kids podcast channel! From Monday, look out for daily brain teasers, bumper Kids vs Adults S'Quizzes, some new Science Shorts and some favourites from the Squiz Kids vault. So keep us in your ears... and have a cracking holiday!

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What type of animal, related to koalas, possums and wombats, is the thylacine?
2. As well as feathers and a bird leg, what else was found in the fossilised dinosaur poop?
3. What Marvel or art and architecture did one Google Reviewer compare the Big Peg to?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, September 16 – Today is Play-Doh Day... An excellent excuse to get squishing and rolling.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Brighton from Vermont South, Kayden from Tanilba Bay, Cyrus from Kallangur, Mia from Lauriston and Tasman from Ballina

Belated Birthday Shoutouts go to.... Eli from Perth, Lexie from Morphett Vale and Even from Narre Warren.

Classroom shoutouts go to ... K-6 Blue with Mrs Clack at Cessnock Public School, class 5A at Trinity College in Blakeview and best wishes to their teacher, Miss Akeroyd who will be getting married soon.. Congratulations Miss Akeroyd! Lastly, but definitely not

leastly, to classes P-6 with Ms Scheiwe at Prairie State School... Now I looked Prairie State School up on a map, and it looks to be out in Queensland's Dinosaur Country... I hope I can visit you one day!

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. A Marsupial
2. Fish Scales
3. The Sistine Chapel

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 .

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