Why ‘human’ is word of the year; Whale speed limits in Tahiti; AFLW grand finalists decided; and Toy Story hay sculptures.

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, November 23

In Squiz Kids Today …. Why ‘human’ is word of the year; Whale speed limits in Tahiti; AFLW grand finalists decided; and Toy Story hay sculptures.

That’s what’s making news, kids’ style …

THE LOWDOWN

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You know it’s getting close to the end of the year when certain things happen - and that includes when the folk who publish the Cambridge English Dictionary nominate their word of the year.

And the word of the year for 2026 is … human.

Now - at first glance, that might seem like an odd choice for word of the year. But as the Cambridge Dictionary folk explained it yesterday - it couldn’t be more perfect as the world contemplates a future where robots and artificial intelligence will become more and more common.

Specifically: what it is that separates humans from robots will become ever more important in the years to come, as we all start to work out what it means to be human and whether machines can ever replicate or replace that.

I know – that's a lot for a Monday.

So let's look at the other words of 2026 that made the shortlist ..

There was 'wholesome' - to describe something that makes your life better generally speaking; 'mogging' made the cut too - which is the art of outshining someone in real life or a photo and 'aura farming' - which is apparently done a lot on social media by people wanting to present a side of themselves that other people will be attracted to or impressed by.

Then there's 'air jail' when you pick up a dog to stop it from misbehaving - and my favourite, 'dubai chocolate' - because - well, it's delicious.

SPIN THE GLOBE

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Each day we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops - and today we've landed in Tahiti – where fast ferries and transport ships have changed the speed at which they travel through whale habitat after a wildlife photographer's close encounter with a humpback whale.

Boats that criss cross between the islands of Tahiti have altered the speed at which they travel since the publication of a close up photo of a humpback whale's eye.

The photo captures the soul of the creature ... hinting that beneath the hulking exterior of one of the world's largest mammals is an animal that thinks and feels – is curious and thoughtful. An image so powerful, that ship companies now take much more care when travelling through parts of the sea where whales are known to live.

The power of an single image - a moment captured in time - saving wildlife in danger .. how good is that?

SPORT TIME

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The Kangaroos have kicked their way into their fourth consecutive grand final in the AFLW at the weekend, beating the Sydney Swans 83 points to 51.

It means North Melbourne will now take on other preliminary final winners, the Melbourne Demons next Friday night, after the Demons held off Carlton by 30 points in a thriller on Saturday.

The North Melbourne Kangaroos are going for a 'three peat' .. meaning, they've won the last two grand finals they've played in and are hoping to make it three.

Meanwhile: the Wallabies had a welcome win on Saturday night against Wales in the Welsh city of Cardiff – breaking a four-match losing streak. Thank goodness. And the English rugby team was celebrating too after a convincing victory saw them send the All Blacks packing in their match this weekend.

And hats off to the Aussie T20 cricket team, who pulled off a remarkable run chase to beat England with only one ball remaining. Newcomer, Nikhil Chaudary was being celebrated yesterday after the

Australia had multiple notable contributors to its successful run chase, but none more so than Nikhil Chaudhary.

The right-hander clobbered 66 from 38 balls at the crease, and used his spin bowling skills to claim 2 wickets for 21 ..

The best bit ... Nikhil's parents had traveled all the way from his country of birth, India, to see him play for his new home country, Australia. How good ...

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

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Speaking of good … farmers in the upper Murray region in Victoria have been given their artistic sides a work out creating sculptures from bales of hay - including characters from Thomas the Tank engine and Toy Story.

The paddocks of the Biggera Valley in Victoria's north east resemble a sort of book-inspired theme park with Cats in the Hat, Fat Controllers, Winnie The Poohs and Buzz Lightyears featured in a series of hay-bale sculptures.

By placing the big, round, cylindrical hay bales on top of one another, or laying them down in a chain on the ground, then spray painting them - the farmers have brought a bit of festive cheer to their region - which they hope might give road tripping families a reason to visit them this Christmas holiday.

Hey - how cool … geddit … hey … (DAD JOKE ALARM) – ahhhh - just wanted to give the dad joke alarm one more try before Christmas …

SANTA Q+A

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(SLEIGH BELLS)

On the subject of Christas … there's only 32 sleeps left until Christmas DAy .. that's like, just over four weeks! Agggh!

And to make sure you're well and truly into the Christmas spirit – we're amping up the Christmas content here at Squiz Kids ..

Keep your ears out for a very special interview with one of the elves working Santa's Post Office near the north Pole —

And don't forget our special Squiz Kids Q+A with Santa and Mrs Claus … the questions that you've sent in already are EXCELLENT … some of them are fall down funny … and I can't wait to put them to Santa and Mrs Claus when I speak to them in a week's time.

If you'd like to ask Santa and/or Mrs Claus a question - then look lively. You've only got until the end of this week to get your questions in.

Either hop onto the Squiz Kids website and follow the links to record it - or send your question via email to squizkids@thesquiz.com.

(SLEIGH BELLS)

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. In which Polynesian island are ferries and boats slowing down to help the local whale population?
2. Which team has advanced to it's fourth consecutive AFLW grand final?
3. What's the term given to picking up dogs when they're misbehaving - that made it into the Cambridge English Dictionary this year?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Monday, November 23 – today is Fibonacci Day ... the Fibonacci Sequence is a mathematical sequence that is often called the 'golden ratio' – it's found in fossils and flower petals and pineapples – a naturally occurring sequence that creates patterns that are pleasing to the eye ...

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today and tomorrow... Tate from Officer, Tom and Fergus from Exeter, Pippy from Shoalhaven Heads, Ruby from Turramurra, Pamela from Bullarah and Harrison from Minchinbury.

A belated shoutout goes to... Arlo from Queensland.

Classroom shoutouts go to... Class 3/4O with Miss O'Connor and class 1A with Miss Phillips at The Lakes Christian College in Penrith, class 5W with Ms Walkley at Gumdale State School and the year 4 students at Pymble Ladies' College with Mrs Soumboulidis, Mr Loker, Miss Treharne, Ms Avraam, Mrs Kotian, Mrs Cole, Mrs Dreverman and Mrs Melrose.

And finally... a shout out to Tucker Dixon from Braidwood Central School in the NSW Southern Highlands ... Tucker wrote to me last week to point out in a story about pterodactyls last week, I mistakenly referred to them as dinosaurs... when in fact they are pterosaurs ... well done Tucker for being such a good Newshound and always Stopping, Thinking and Checking before believing everything you hear ...

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Tahiti
2. North Melbourne Kangaroos
3. Air jail

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.

And finally: if you love Squiz Kids, we'd love you do us a favour and hit follow on Apple Podcasts or Spotify or wherever you're listening to us. And while you're there, why not share this episode with someone you think would enjoy it too? The only way we can continue to do what we do is by growing and in order to grow, we need your support -

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - we'll be back again tomorrow with a special, Christmas-themed Squiz The World- as we pay a virtual visit to the country that Santa calls home ... that's right, we're off to Finland!

Cannot wait!

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