

BtN: Episode 22 Transcript 12/8/14

Coming up:

- A deadly disease has experts worried. We show you what's being done to stop it.
- See a side to Christmas Island that the regular news doesn't show you.
- And Australian champion BMX rider Sam Willoughby helps kids build some bikes of their own.

Hi, I'm Nathan and this is Behind the News. You'll see all those stories a bit later. But first this week.

Gaza

Reporter: Emma Davis

INTRO: We're going to take you inside the deadly conflict in Gaza. We've told you about it in the Wire over the past few weeks during which time many people have been killed. But this situation goes back a lot longer than that. And it's incredibly complex to try to understand. Here's Emma with the story so far.

EMMA DAVIS, REPORTER: This is Gaza. It's estimated that around two million people live here and around half of the population is under 18. Compare Gaza to some of our cities around Australia. See? It's not a big area. But recently it's been the site of a lot of destruction. So why has all this been going on? Well that's a tricky question to answer and people with different points of view will tell the story differently. Let's go back to the map again.

Here's the area we're talking about, including Gaza. It's not technically a separate country but the people who live there call themselves Palestinians and they have their own government. But take a step back in time and this map was a lot different!

Before 1948 there was no Israel! All this area was known as Palestine and it was under the control of Britain. The people who lived there were from different ethnic groups and while the majority were Muslim there were also Christians and Jews and other religions. Around the time of the Second World War, Jewish people in Europe were treated really badly. Millions were killed and thousands fled to Palestine. Some wanted to set up their own Jewish country in the place their ancestors lived and a place they believed was promised to them by God. But the area was also sacred to Muslims and Christians and the people who were already living there were afraid they would lose their homes.

The United Nations then came up with an idea to split Palestine into two separate countries, one Arab and one Jewish. The Jewish leaders said yes and created the state of Israel. But the Arab leaders didn't accept the plan and a war broke out. Israel

won that war and the others that followed. They then claimed the area of Israel as their own. After that, many Palestinians left their homes and became refugees in Gaza and the West Bank. Many people who live there still feel like they were forced off their land and both sides have continued fighting about it. Many Palestinians believe they're being treated unfairly and Hamas the powerful Palestinian militant group in charge of Gaza has openly said it wants to destroy Israel. Finding a solution is hard.

Over the past month, Hamas has fired almost three thousand rockets at Israel and built tunnels where they can attack it from underground. Israel has also fired heavily on Gaza and their attacks have had a much bigger impact. Many Palestinian civilians have died. Israel says it's trying to hit Hamas' weapons and leaders but it's also hit office buildings, hospitals, Gaza's only power plant and some schools. Israel blames Hamas for launching weapons from areas with lots of civilians in them, but other countries and the United Nations have criticised Israel for not doing enough to protect innocent people from being killed.

Around the world people are now calling for an end to the violence. Many have also taken to social media to show that there are plenty of Jews and Arabs who just want peace.

MAN AND WOMAN: "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies."

But it will take more than tweets and wall posts to solve this incredibly complicated conflict.

Presenter: Okay, there's lots of other big stuff going on in the world right now. Let's catch up with some of it in the wire.

The Wire

Last Thursday a memorial was held in Melbourne for the Australian victims of the MH-17 plane crash.

Nearly 2 thousand people packed into this cathedral, listening to speeches from various religious leaders and Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott: "children had lost parents, parents had lost children, and an aching void had opened in 100s of lives"

To politics and the government has announced it wants to bring in new laws that would force telephone and internet companies to store some information about their customers.

It's called metadata. They hope that the information could be used by security agencies to help catch terrorists.

But some people are worried it's an invasion of privacy.

A zoo in Adelaide is stuck in the middle of a controversy that involves ice cream and orangutans.

The zoo's been selling icy treats made by local brand Golden North which doesn't contain the ingredient palm oil.

But now it's decided to drop them for ice creams by Streets which do contain it.

Palm oil's been linked to the destruction of tropical rainforests and the zoo usually campaigns against its use.

Adelaide zoo says its deal with Streets will make them more money and they'll try to make sure the products contain palm oil that comes from sustainable rainforests.

And if you could ask the Prime Minister whatever you wanted, what would it be?

Kid: My question is what did you learn in primary school that helped you do your job today?

The kids at Seaforth Primary got a chance to grill the Prime Minister on all sorts of things when he visited their school last week.

He gave them a bit of insight into the life of a PM and answered a few tricky questions about persuading people.

KID: My question is what happens when people don't agree with your point of view?
Prime Minister Tony Abbott: Well, that rarely happens, as you know, Imogene (ha ha)

Ebola

Reporter: Natasha Thiele

INTRO: The outbreak of a disease in Africa has got experts around the world really worried this week. It's called Ebola. It's deadly and we haven't worked out how to cure it yet. Tash has more on this threat and its chances of making it to Australia.

NATASHA THIELE, REPORTER: These guys are some of the world's best scientists. They're from the CSIRO Animal Health Laboratory in Victoria and here they're studying live samples of Ebola. It's the deadly disease that has experts really worried because right now in Africa, there is an outbreak of Ebola that's spreading quickly and even worse we don't know how to cure it.

Ebola is a highly dangerous virus that's been around since the 70s. It originally came from animals like fruit-bats, gorillas and chimps but now humans have it. The virus spreads via saliva, blood or sweat. It attacks the body's cells before getting into the bloodstream and shutting everything down.

The symptoms of Ebola are pretty bad. People start off feeling really sick, then they get a rash, vomiting, diarrhoea and finally bleeding. Several vaccines are being tested to stop the virus, but scientists haven't found a cure yet. Some lucky people do survive though like this boy who had Ebola and is now doing okay!

The Ebola outbreak happening right now in West Africa is already one of the worst in history. So far it's affecting Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria. More than 900 people have died including doctors who've been treating Ebola patients. Hospitals are full and local communities are starting to panic. To deal with the emergency and stop the spread of Ebola, Operation Octopus has been set up. Schools have been closed, troops and medical workers wearing protective clothing have been sent to affected areas. And quarantines have been set up.

But the World Health Organisation says Ebola is spreading faster than they can control it. The good news is health experts say it's unlikely the virus will come to Australia. They say we have one of the best border protection systems in the world. People who are feeling sick on flights and at airports are checked and even if Ebola did make it here, we have a good health system in place to help contain it. That's where these researchers from the CSIRO come in again. Ebola may be killing a lot of people, but it's good to know there are just as many people around the world trying to stop it.

Quiz 1

Okay now let's go to a quiz. This one's on viruses.

Is a virus a living thing?

Yes

No

The answer is no, but there's a catch.

There's actually a lot of debate about whether viruses should be called 'living' or not. But most scientists say they're not because they can't reproduce without another cell to help them.

Moving on.

Christmas Island

Reporter: Natasha Thiele

INTRO: And recently, the Australian Human Rights Commission spoke out about the conditions faced by detainees at the Christmas Island Detention Centre. It's just the latest in a series of stories about the welfare of asylum seekers held there. But away from the detention centre there's a whole community of people who live on Christmas Island that would like it to be known for more than just bad news.

Rookie reporter, Dewi is one of them and this week she shows us the other side.

DEWI: When most people think of Christmas Island, they think of this. When I think of Christmas Island, I think of this. This is the beautiful view we have on Christmas Island. Guys, is this one thing you like about the island? (FRIENDS: Yes, of course.)

Hello BtN. My name is Dewi and welcome to Christmas Island. It's a place that's been receiving a lot of media coverage lately and there are different beliefs about Christmas Island, so today I'd like to show you what it's really like living on this island. Christmas Island is located 180 kilometres from Java, Indonesia and about 2,700 kilometres from Perth, Western Australia.

That's a long way from Australia, but we're still a proud part of it. We have an Australian postcode, Australian phone numbers and Australian TV channels. We get to vote in Federal Elections too, so we don't miss out on anything. But there are other reasons we love living here too.

LOCAL 1: What I like most about living on Christmas Island is that even though we're isolated, our island infrastructure allows us to achieve our full potential.

LOCAL 2: I think Christmas Island is unique because we have a good sense of cultural cohesion despite the fact that we have many races and religions on the island.

LOCAL 3: It's very, very multicultural. We get to experience lots of different cultures so we have people who are Buddhist, Christian and also Muslim on the Island so it's, you know very interesting to share different cultures and to celebrate them.

My parents are from Indonesia and Singapore. They moved to Christmas Island before I was born. Overall, 70% of people have Chinese background, 20% European and 10% Malaysian. We have various places named in different languages, for example we have a street called Poon Saan which means the 'middle point' in Chinese and here is the Rumah Tinggi which means the 'tall house' in Malay. As you can see all of those different cultures mix together really well here. We like to celebrate lots of different cultural events each year too. This is us enjoying Chinese New Year. There's always plenty of food and entertainment. Traditional dances are always good to watch too.

This is where I live and this is my school. So this is the only school on the island, Christmas Island District High School, and there are around 260 students from primary to Year 12. Some of the kids from the detention centre go to my school too, but they go to a different part so we don't get to hang out with them. My favourite subject here is chemistry. I also like playing sport!

After school, there is heaps to do too. Christmas Island has plenty of outdoor activities including swimming, fishing, snorkelling and plenty. We have places such as the Grotto, the Waterfall and several beaches. Our island is paradise, so even though we are isolated from the rest of the country we have lots of things here that help make this a great place to live. I hope I've given you an insight into life on Christmas Island and shown you there is more to this island than you might have realised.

Quiz 2

Thanks Dewi for that report!

Now let's test how much you know about her home.

What is the population of Christmas Island?

Is it

200

2000

Or 20,000

The answer is 2000

That's the population not including the people held in the detention centre. Including them can often double the population of the island.

Fist Vs Shake

Reporter: Matt Holbrook

INTRO: It's been the way humans have greeted each other for centuries. But is shaking hands actually a health hazard? That's what some scientists reckon after they discovered just how many germs are transferred with each shake. They found that fist bumping is heaps better. So if we want to stay healthy this winter, is that how we should all be saying hi? Matt looks into it.

When you greet someone, does it look like this? If so, you can stop watching now. Still here? OK, how about this? Or maybe even like this?

If so, good on you, because it took us hours to learn that. But all of that elaborate shaking might be giving you more than a great way to say hi. A new report's found handshakes are actually a pretty effective way of transferring germs. Scientists found shaking hands transferred 10 times as much bacteria as something like bumping fists.

MATT HOLBROOK, REPORTER: But if a fist bump isn't your thing, a high five is a better option than a handshake, too. I love high fives!

Scientists say that by doing this, we're less likely to get sick, which is always a good thing. So fist bumps forever, handshakes never?

MATT: Well that's probably a bit easier said than done, handshakes have been with us for a long, long, time.

They're a big deal. Many of us shake hands when we meet someone for the first time, or when we're just saying hi to a friend. Hand-shakes are especially important for our world leaders who are always meeting and greeting people. And there's an argument that fist bumping could seem a bit too casual coming from someone like our PM.

So it's unlikely we'll see handshakes die just yet. But even if we were to make the switch to fist bumps, it's not going to solve the germ problem entirely. The thing is, bacteria are everywhere; they're all around us and inside of us too. While some germs can make us sick, the vast majority of the bacteria we come into contact with are actually pretty harmless. There are even a lot of good ones that our bodies rely on to do things like digest food and absorb nutrients.

MATT: But even germs aren't always where you'd expect them to be, like a toilet seat. You'd think there'd be heaps here, but you'd be wrong.

One study found that smart-phones or tablets can have up to 30 times more germs. A computer desk, 400 times more germs. While a kitchen sponge can be 200,000 times more germey than your average toilet seat. That might sound a bit gross, but it just goes to show that bacteria are a normal part of all of our lives.

MATT: The best way to stop spreading germs that could potentially make us sick is to wash your hands, especially after you go to the toilet and before meals.

And while you don't necessarily have to say goodbye to your secret handshake, throwing in a fist bump might not be such a bad idea.

Online Poll

So, fist bump or handshake you can decide. Should society ditch the handshake in favour of the fist bump? Our website is the place to vote.

Last week we ran a story that found most kids hide what they do online from their parents. So in our poll we asked you if your parents have a right to know what you do on the internet.

And after around 4000 votes a surprisingly tight majority went with no parents don't need to know everything.

Thanks for getting involved voters!

Okay, sports news now. Enjoy!

The Score

A huge game of soccer was played in Sydney on the weekend between the A-League ALL STARS and Italian champions JUVENTUS.

The ALL STARS had a 2-1 lead in the second half.

But the Italians scored two late goals to beat the Aussies 3-2.

COMMENTATOR: And Juventus have their goal!

The world's best yo-yoer's have competed in the World YoYo Contest in the Czech Republic.

Forget old tricks like 'walk the dog' and 'rock the cradle'. These guys choreograph moves to the latest music even spinning their yo-yos around their bodies!

These days yo-yos are made from titanium with high speed ball bearings to keep them spinning.

And who would've thought pigs like to surf!

Kama lives in Hawaii and he loves hitting the waves.

His owner reckons he fell into the pool one day and just started to swim.

That's a skill that comes in handy when he and his owner wipe-out in the surf.

BMX Champ

Reporter: Matt Holbrook

INTRO: Last week in the score we brought you the story of Sam Willoughby, who'd just taken out two events at the World BMX championships. He's now returned to Australia with the aim of encouraging more kids to get on a bike like him. Matt met him as he helped heaps of kids build one for themselves.

He's a world champion, but when he's not on the race track, Sam still loves his bikes.

SAM WILLOUGHBY: A bike has given me so much over the years, and right from a youngster at 6 years old, till now as a profession, it's just something I'm passionate about.

And he's keen to pass that passion on. He's helping kids build their own bikes as part of a program called the Happiness Cycle. Basically, kids get to pick out a bike, put it together, and then take it home!

It's all about encouraging kids to cycle as a way to stay fit and healthy. But it's also meant to be a lot of fun.

SAM WILLOUGHBY: It's easier to ride down to the shops, easier than walking or running. It's fun for the teens, they can be more extreme with it, do more jumps with it, that kind of thing.

To start with the kids take part in a special meeting, where they learn important safety stuff. Then, they pick up their bike parts, and get to work!

There are a few helpers around in case they get stuck, but it's up to the kids to follow the instructions, choose the right tools and put their bikes together.

GIRL: I've never really had a bike sort of thing

GIRL 2: It's a bit of fun to make it, too, because I feel pretty proud that we're making a bike.

ASTIN: We've just been fixing up bikes and as soon as you just make it, it's yours and you have to ride around and stuff.

The kids say they're learning heaps as they go along. And it doesn't take long before they're putting on the finishing touches.

DYLAN: I've learned really how to like the road rules and how to build a bike more.

GIRL 3: We learned that assembling a bike is pretty hard, but it's pretty cool at the same time.

MATT HOLBROOK, REPORTER: Once the kids finish their bikes, they come here. It's a bit of a final safety check before they hit the road.

Once everything's been ticked off, they collect all their safety gear, like helmets and lights. And it's time for a test run. Yep, for Sam, too!

SAM WILLOUGHBY: The thing that drew me to bikes was the freedom it gave me. It's a form of transportation, but it's also, I love that to this day, it's a sense of freedom. Ride by yourself, challenge yourself, it can be as simple as a casual ride on the beach, as competitive as racing on the track at a world or Olympic championships.

And who knows, maybe the next world champ could be right here!

Closer

And that's us all done for another week. But the fun doesn't have to end there. Head to our website to let us know what you thought of our stories this week and cast your vote in our poll about handshakes versus fist bumps. I want to see a record number of votes for this one!

Have a great week, and we'll see you next time!