

BtN: Episode 28 Transcript 14/10/14

Coming up.

- Find out what this clothing is and why some people want it banned.
- We meet a real astronaut as he teaches kids how to make their own rockets.
- And see the class that ditched electricity for a whole week.

Hi I'm Nathan and this is Behind the News. Let's get straight into it.

War Mission

Reporter: Nathan Bazley

INTRO: Australian jet fighters and special forces soldiers have been sent to Iraq to help fight against extremist group Islamic State. Our forces are fighting alongside the US, the UK, France Germany and many others in a move supported by both major parties here. But while all this sounds very war-like, Prime Minister Tony Abbott insists we're not at war, let's find out why.

NATHAN BAZLEY, REPORTER: In 1901, Australia first became a nation and as it did, this new nation was already fighting its first war. The Boer War was being fought in South Africa at the time. 16,000 Australians were sent to fight in it and 606 never made it home.

In the years since, Australian military forces have taken part in many other wars too. There's been World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan and the Iraq war among others. Now it's 2014 and Australia is involved in yet another fight. But is it a war that will one day be added to this list or is it something different? Let's find out.

Australia's military is back in Iraq only 5 years after pulling out the last time. The mission this time around is to stop Islamic State, a group that's invaded Iraq, taking over cities killing many innocent people. They've also threatened western countries with violence and called on their followers to do the same.

Australia is helping to stop them in two ways. The first is with air force jets, which take off from a base here in United Arab Emirates. Their job is to fly all the way to Iraq and strike Islamic State targets as they're identified. On top of this Australian special forces soldiers will be sent in to help train and advise the Iraqi soldiers

fighting Islamic State. But Prime Minister Tony Abbott says despite that, we're not at war.

TONY ABBOTT, PRIME MINISTER: I know that you'd love to have that headline, but it's not strictly accurate.

TONY ABBOTT: This is a mission, this is a fight, mission, fight, combat operations, combat operations.

TONY ABBOTT: It's essentially a humanitarian operation.

But why not use the word 'war'? Well the Prime Minister says there are three reasons why this should not be called a war. The first is because we were asked to fight in Iraq by the Iraqi government. The second is because we're fighting to save Iraqi civilians' lives. And the third is because we're not doing the mission by ourselves. We're joining forces with other nations.

But most experts say these reasons make no difference at all when it comes to deciding if this campaign should be called a war or not. They say that if there is a chance of fighting against an armed enemy and a chance a soldier might die then it is a war. Plain and simple.

So why would the Prime Minister want to avoid calling Iraq a war if it is one? Well one reason could be that people have a very clear idea in their mind of what a war is like. Big, deadly, expensive, and long. For example, the last war in Iraq lasted for 9 years. So the PM might be trying to reassure people that this won't be a repeat.

TONY ABBOTT: I want to reassure the Australian people that it will be as long as it needs to be, but as short as it possibly can be.

But how long this mission or war ends up taking will be something we'll only know when it's finally complete.

Now for the latest details on the fight in Iraq and this week's other big stories.

Let's go to the wire.

Here's Sarah

The Wire

Australian fighter jets have dropped bombs on Islamic State targets in Iraq.

But have pulled out of other attacks because the chance of killing civilians was too high.

The Australian air force is carrying out missions in Iraq most nights.

But local fighters have asked for more to help them hold ground against Islamic State.

There are also worries that the capital of Iraq Baghdad could fall to IS in the future if US soldiers don't move in to help out on the ground.

Back home now and the federal government has released a report reviewing what kids are being taught in Australian schools.

And it's calling for quite a few changes.

Overall it says the current curriculum asks primary school kids to learn too much and that it should be changed to focus more on the basics.

In English that means reading and writing and it recommended more classic literature and poetry.

It said there was too much of a focus on Indigenous history and not enough on European or Western civilisation.

In Geography there should be more on the Pacific Islands and less on things like environmental sustainability.

And all kids should have to learn music and visual arts.

And Malala Yousafzai has become the youngest ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The 17-year-old has been fighting for kids rights since she was a little girl in Pakistan.

Two years ago she was shot by members of an extremist group but she survived and has kept campaigning around the world.

'This award is for all those children who are voiceless, whose voices need to be heard.'

She shared the prize with an Indian children's rights campaigner called Kailash Satyarthi.

Burka Ban

Reporter: Emma Davis

INTRO: Recently, the things Islamic women wear on their heads became the centre of a big debate. There are many different types of them all with different names but the one most people were talking about was the Burka. Some politicians were asking for them to be banned. And at Parliament House in Canberra rules were announced to restrict women who wear them from sitting in the open public gallery. A lot of people have criticised both moves so we sent Emma to find out more.

REPORTER, EMMA DAVIS: It's dinner time in the Elhelw household and Eman, her parents and her friend Manal are just sitting down to eat.

This family is Muslim, meaning that they follow the religion of Islam, and for Eman and her friend Manal that includes wearing a hijab.

EMAN: "Our religion tells us to be modest and for a lot of different people modesty is interpreted differently so I might choose modesty as covering my hair and wearing long sleeves and long pants but someone else might interpret it as wearing skirts and dresses."

But recently a debate around another type of Islamic headwear has got Eman and Manal concerned.

TONY ABBOTT, PRIME MINISTER: Now I've said before I find it a fairly confronting form of attire and frankly I wish it weren't worn.

Some politicians and commentators have spoken recently about wanting the Burka banned in Australia. But first, what exactly is a burka? Well, there are three main types of Islamic headwear. First there's the hijab, it's the one you'd see most often in Australia and it's made up of a scarf that covers the head and neck but not the face. Then there is the niqab which covers part of the face but not the eyes. And finally, the burka, which covers the entire body and face while the eyes are covered with mesh.

Only a very, very small number of women wear the burka in Australia. So why are people calling for it to be banned? Well the main argument is security. Right now in Australia a lot of people are worried about their safety, especially inside important places like parliament house. Burka wearers can't be easily identified so some people think that could make it easier for those wearing one to commit a crime or hurt people. Some critics also say women might be forced to wear burkas by men.

But Eman and Manal disagree that the burka should be banned. Manal says Muslim women can choose which type of headwear they want to wear.

MANAL: I think it's important to know that hijab is a choice so however much or how little you want to cover up is a choice in Islam.

She says Eman's mum even chooses not to wear anything covering her head and that's her choice. Eman says banning burkas for security reasons will just force those that wear them to stay at home.

EMAN: I think for a lady that wears that all the time, when she doesn't wear that I can imagine that it feels like being naked. So she probably wouldn't want to leave the house.

Although she says women in burkas should still have to identify themselves in high security places if asked to.

EMAN: It shows that we're open minded and we're Australian and we follow the same rules as everyone else, we don't get special rules.

But even without a ban, Eman says life can be pretty hard for those that choose to wear Islamic headdress.

EMAN: When I go to school I go by train and a couple of times when I was on the train I'd not only just get looks I also got a lady attack me once, she was very vocal about her distaste for what I was wearing and that upset me but I have to say that experience upset me less than the looks that I always get and the judgement that I feel that I'm getting all the time and it's not a nice feeling.

So she wants people to realise that what people wear on their head is nothing to be afraid of.

EMAN: "It's just a way they've decided to express themselves, it's an item of clothing just like any other and they shouldn't feel like weird is threatening or weird is scary, weird is different and different is good!"

Presenter: Okay so let's find out where you stand on this issue.

Online Poll

The question we're asking you this week is.

Should Muslim women be allowed to wear burkas in public places?

To vote, just head to our website.

If you cast your mind back to before the holidays you might remember we did a story on the damage alcohol does to young people's brains.

In our poll, we asked you if because of that you would support Australia's drinking age being raised.

And most of you agreed you would!

Thanks for voting.

And a big thanks to all 4697 of you that voted in our poll from the week before that one on Australia's national flag because you all now hold the record for our most clicked-on poll to date!

Space School

Reporter: Emma Davis

INTRO: A group of school students recently got the chance to learn all about space from someone who's actually been there. The former astronaut went up three times in his life so he was the perfect person to tell the class what the experience was like and to help them build their own rockets too. Emma was there for the blastoff.

REPORTER, EMMA DAVIS: Meet the next generation of Australian astronauts. Well, maybe! Before these guys head for the moon, they're learning the ropes at Space School, where they're going to get some hands on experience that's out of this world!

This is Jean Francois Clervoy. He's been to space three times and now he's here to inspire these students and help them build some rockets of their own.

MAX: It's a really surreal experience because you never actually think that you'd get to meet a like a real astronaut, like you thought that you'd never meet like a movie star or a TV star or anything.

Jean Francois always wanted to be an astronaut.

JEAN FRANCOIS: So when I was kid I was dreaming that I would go to space for fun, I never thought that would require to choose to do a job to go to space.

In 1991 he got his first chance to head into outer space! He says the lift-off part is kind of like being on a rollercoaster.

JEAN FRANCOIS: When the engine ignites it's a huge kick in the butt. And then when the engine cut off, eight and a half minutes after liftoff, it's weightlessness forever. You feel like you, you start freefalling forever and you float and it's very strange because you may get to the point that you don't feel your body anymore.

All up Jean Francois' spent 675 hours in space and while it looks like a lot of fun, he says there was actually a lot of work to do up there!

JEAN FRANCOIS: On my missions they were short and we want to maximise the efficiency of the work, so it's almost 14, 16 hours of work every day.

The students also got the chance to ask him some questions about what it's like up there.

SOPHIE: I asked him about what his favourite part about his job was. To be honest if I was an astronaut it'd just be being in space, being completely weightless and that was almost his response.

KID: What was the food or drink you missed the most?

JEAN FRANCOIS: You know in space you cannot eat foods that are in pieces. Every meal has sauce which act like a glue. It is not possible to have food that makes particle that float in weightlessness. This is probably what I missed the most. Just biting in an apple, in an apple from the tree or eating a peach just from the tree, you cannot do this.

Space school is all about inspiring kids to become engineers, astronomers, physicists and astronauts and it works!

MAX: I would like to be an aerospace engineer creating spacecraft and jets

NICK: When I'm older I want to be involved in astrophysics.

SOPHIE: I've considered engineering quite a lot, so aerospace engineering, designing rockets, designing planes and helicopters

Now that their rockets are built it's time to see how they'll fly! For some of these students it could be the launch of a future that's out of this world.

Presenter: And that brings us to our first quiz.

Quiz 1

The question is: Which galaxy is Earth a part of?

Milky Way

Comet

Andromeda

Answer: Milky Way

In case you were wondering the Milky Way galaxy isn't just home to us it's home to more than 200 billion stars and features a big black hole in the middle.

Outdoor Class

Reporter: Emma Davis

INTRO: A class of school kids in Alice Springs recently set themselves a challenge - to spend a whole week outside, with no access to electricity at all. The challenge was trying to show how much electricity the average school classroom uses. The kids filmed everything for BtN. One of the students, Isla has this report for us.

Welcome to Alice Springs!

ISLA: This is our school, Bradshaw Primary School. And this is our class! Like all classrooms, we use a fair bit of electricity each day. There's the lights, computers, our smart board, even the air conditioning. And over a year that all adds up! So for the Enviro Week challenge this year we decided to find a fun way to cut the amount of energy we use.

The class took a vote of having lessons outside all week.

This is our last day of working inside as next week we are taking on the enviro week challenge - wild child. Yeah!

And that means no computers.

And that means no iPads.

And that also means no interactive whiteboards.

No electricity at all.

What do you think will be great about this?

I think it will be a big change

Nice fresh air

And we can wear sunglasses
It'll be fun.

What do you think won't work?

Well there definitely will be the cons to our enviro week challenge like in the mornings it might be too cold and in the afternoons it might be way too hot.

Our work could blow away.

What happens if it rains? Even though it doesn't rain in Alice Springs.

What about if a bird poos on us

ISLA: At the start of the week we had to move everything outside, and some of it was pretty heavy! We had to choose the best spot in our yard to set up our classroom cos we didn't want it somewhere too hot and sunny cos we might get burnt. And we didn't want it somewhere too cold and shady cos it's really cold. There were a few problems we had to deal with.

It's pretty much annoying when the wind blows your sheet away and you have to go get it.

It's not the best day to be outside because it's windy and all the birds are making noise.

It's annoying.

Well we're in the sun a lot so we've gotta put sun cream on so the kids don't get burnt so it's pretty annoying.

It's too cold.

ISLA: Plus we couldn't use computers, so we had to write everything by hand! But there were some good things about being outside all day too.

It's so great out here cos we can take our shoes off all the time.

ISLA: Once the week was over, we got to go back inside. But this challenge taught us how much energy we really use every day. So we're going to try to cut it down from now on. And if all Aussie kids join us, together we could make a real difference.

Presenter: Thanks for that report guys!

Now for another quiz sticking with the electricity theme.

Quiz 2

How much does it cost to run a computer for a year, if you leave it on 24hrs a day?

\$10

\$60

Or \$130

Answer: \$130

Whereas a computer only turned on during school hours costs about \$30 a year. It's a big difference! Okay time for the Score now. Here's the biggest results you need to know.

The Score

It was big weekend at the Bathurst 1000 with some calling it one of most dramatic ever.

There was plenty of action especially at corner two where the track started breaking up.

COMMENTATOR: We call them the marbles and effectively it's like driving on ice.

The race had to be stopped for a while to repair the track.

But once back on it was Ford's Chaz Mostert and Paul Morris who took the lead on the final lap going past Holden's Jamie Whincup who had to coast home after running out of fuel.

Considering the winning ford team started the race last on the grid it was a pretty amazing effort really!

The A-League season has kicked off for another year.

Spanish superstar David Villa played his first game for Melbourne City and even managed to score a goal!

David Villa. There's the goal!

It helped take his team to a 1-all draw with Sydney FC.

And it was a big game for Adelaide United, beating reigning champions Brisbane Roar in an upset.

This weekend was also the start of the NBL!

The Cairns Taipans are the standout team so far picking up two wins in Round One.

They upset last year's grand finalist Adelaide and then backed it up with another solid win against Melbourne.

And an Aussie guy has broken a world record for pull-ups live on an American TV show.

Caine Eckstein did 4210 pull-ups in 12 hours.

He not only broke the 12-hour record but it was enough to beat the 24-hour record too.

`Congratulations Caine on setting not one but 2 Guinness World Records titles. Thankyou.'

Challenging Toys

Reporter: Nathan Bazley

INTRO: Finally today: In the past, we've told you about the fact that a lot of stuff for kids is aimed at either girls or boys but rarely both. And the toy and TV show brand, My Little Pony is certainly no different. But what is different about this brand is that some boys are standing up and proudly saying that they're big fans of it. Check it out.

NATHAN BAZLEY, REPORTER: First it was a toy, then an animated series. Now it's got a cult following.

FAN 1: Each pony represents laughter, kindness, generosity.

My Little Pony is the reason all of these people are here today. They're all huge fans, but what they're all not is girls.

FAN 2: I came all the way from Townsville to be here.

FAN 3: It's really colourful and vibrant and just happy.

In fact there are so many male fans of My Little Pony that they have their own nickname Bronies.

JONO COLWELL, BRONIE: It started off being a term for a male who likes the show, 'cause they were so much more visible and everyone liked to pick on them so much more, calling them man-children. We thought well if people are going to call us this anyway, we might as well take it and make something of it.

Bronies are one example of people going against toy stereotypes. That's when toys or any other kids stuff are aimed at one specific group of people. If you walk into a shop, it's pretty easy to see which toys are meant for boys and which ones are for girls. And in the same way it's not hard to work out which gender My Little Pony is aimed at either. But male My little Pony fans are proud to stand against that stereotype.

JONO COLWELL: I feel that my masculinity does not need to be defined by what I do or don't like. I'm a man. I'm perfectly fine with liking My Little Pony. I also like guns and explosions and all that sort of stuff.

Some Bronies say that the show's female fans have been great at welcoming them into the fold.

FAN 4: Mostly the community, for the most part 'cause it's such a big, open community that will let anybody in. There's little to no judgment here.

But that doesn't mean everyone is as accepting.

FAN 5: Kind of like the kind of thing where you need to get away from a bit of the bad things in life, social bullying and all that. We have a lot of that kind of thing going on in this world. So, basically, we're just here to escape from that.

So while most boys play with action figures and girls play with dolls, these Bronies prove you can like whatever you want to like, no matter who it's meant for.

Closer

And that about wraps us up for this week!

Thanks for joining us. Please remember to jump online and have your say on our stories or click on our online poll to cast your vote about Burkas. And teachers please remember to make use of all the lesson plans and resources on the website too. Have a great week and I'll see you next time.