

BtN: Episode 31 Transcript 4/11/14

Coming up.

- Downloaders beware. A Hollywood company fights for the details of some Australian pirates.
- The Government demands kids learn more about music. We find out why.
- And should kids get the day off on their birthday? We ask you for your thoughts.

Hey I'm Tash and you're watching BtN. You'll see all that later but first.

GST Changes

Reporter: Matthew Holbrook

INTRO: Did you know there's one tax that most Australian kids have to pay? It's called the GST and it's charged on most of the things you buy and on things people do for you. But the Prime Minister has just announced he's open to increasing it or putting it on more things. Matt found out why.

What do these things have in common - flour, sugar and eggs?

MATT HOLBROOK, REPORTER: If you answered with "They're all ingredients you need to make biscuits", then you'd be right. Yay, biscuits. But they share something else as well. They're all products we don't pay tax on.

Taxes are a big part of our lives and the government uses them to pay for all kinds of important things. But while these things aren't taxed, most things we buy are which means you have probably paid taxes too. Like on this, this and this.

It's called The Goods and Services Tax or GST. The GST makes up 10 per cent of the price we pay for goods, which are most things. And services, which are people doing things for us. So, if something costs you \$110, 10 of those dollars go straight to the government. That's the GST.

It was brought in back in 2000 but long before then governments had talked about introducing it to replace a range of existing taxes and help simplify the tax system. And all of the money raised would go to the states. It was controversial, but after years of debate, the GST was finally introduced.

But there were some compromises the government had to agree to. Some things had to be excluded, like "basic foods". That includes things like bread, milk and fruit and veg.

MATT: So most of our biscuit ingredients are GST free, although if they came prepared, like these, you'd have to pay GST on them.

Some health services, education, exports and some charity stuff are GST-free too. Overall, the GST raises about fifty billion dollars a year which the states rely on. But now the federal government floated the idea of changing it to raise more money.

TONY ABBOTT, PRIME MINISTER: The GST is a matter for states but something that ought to be looked at.

Two of the possible changes are increasing the GST percentage from 10 per cent to something a little higher. Or getting rid of some of those exclusions on basic foods but changing the GST is a big deal because it would hit everyone.

And all the states would need to agree on any change before it could happen. But whatever's in store for the future of the GST, politicians are sure to treat it with at least as much seriousness as I do this task.

The Wire

The United Nations has released new warnings on the impacts of climate change. Some of the world's top scientists reckon greenhouse gases are at the highest level they've been in 800,000 years. These gases are created when we burn things like coal and petrol. And while some of it in the atmosphere is ok. A lot is really bad. The report says all countries have a responsibility to cut down on the amount of greenhouse gases they produce. Or else we'll damage the Earth's climate and the air we breathe.

In the American desert investigators are trying to work out what caused a spaceship to crash. The Virgin Galactic SpaceShip Two is supposed to take tourists into outer space. It was on a test flight when it crashed last Friday over California. One pilot was killed and another was seriously injured after parachuting from around 15 thousand meters. They were testing out a new type of fuel but the investigators aren't sure if that had anything to do with the crash.

In Hawaii, locals are pretty worried about a stream of lava that's flowing towards their town. Authorities had told people in about 50 houses to get ready to evacuate but it looks like they're in luck. The lava has started to slow down about 150 metres from the town's main road. The flow has done a lot of damage so far though. It's destroyed trees, a shed and even a cemetery.

And in Queensland an Aussie researcher has been using drones to do something a bit weird. He's using them to collect whale mucus. He hovers the aircraft right over the whale's blowhole and as it breathes the drone collects the whale's mucus. It sounds a bit gross but testing the mucus is a good way to work out how healthy the whale is.

Piracy Crackdown

Reporter: Matthew Holbrook

INTRO: A Hollywood film company recently went to court to demand the personal details of Australians who downloaded one particular movie illegally. If successful, those downloaders could each face thousands-of-dollars in fines. But internet service providers say they're going to fight to keep the details secret. But it's not because they support piracy. Here's Matt to tell you more.

Sometimes it's nice to have a bit of privacy. Whether you just want to feel relaxed or it's a slightly more urgent matter. But this is one place where it can feel like privacy isn't that hard to come by.

Online it seems like no-one has to know who you are or what you're doing, even if you're doing something like downloading illegally. Except that's not entirely true.

Internet service providers have always known exactly who you are and what you do online. They're the companies that connect you to the net. And at the moment they're the only ones with that knowledge.

But what if all of the companies that own all of the movies, TV shows and songs, could find out who you are, too? Well, that could soon be possible here in Australia. One Hollywood film company is trying to force internet providers to do in pirates by getting them to hand over the details of their customers.

But so far, Aussie internet providers aren't budging and the Federal Court will decide what should happen next year. But is it fair for a big movie company to track down and target individuals? Should people have a right to privacy even if they've broken the law?

VOX 1: If it is a continued download of movies they should be exposed.

VOX 2: I think it's wrong for people who are giving out the name for the movie studios.

VOX 3: Like invading their privacy

VOX 4: They should have to face the consequences of doing something illegal.

VOX 5: People may download it for specific reasons.

Australia's right up there among the world's worst when it comes to online piracy. Nearly thirty per cent of Aussies aged between 18 and 64 download illegally.

LORI FLEKSER, IP AWARENESS FOUNDATION: People are less inclined to believe that piracy is stealing or theft and that's a very worrying statistic.

TV, music and film industries say piracy is hurting them big time, because it means the creators don't see a cent of the money they would otherwise be entitled to. So is going after people who do the wrong thing going to solve the problem?

Well, some argue that better and cheaper access to entertainment is more likely to make a difference. Here in Australia, we pay 40 per cent more than in the US to download many new movies, while some TV shows just aren't available here.

Next year's court decision could have a big impact on how pirates are dealt with in the future, but whatever happens, it's an issue that won't be going away anytime soon.

Quiz 1

Okay, let's have a quiz about movies.

The question is:

Which film has taken the most money at the cinemas?

Avatar

Frozen

Titanic

Answer: Avatar

Music Education

Reporter: Emma Davis

INTRO: Did you know there is a Government group that decides what you should learn at school? Recently they did a review and decided a few areas should change. And one of those areas was the Arts. The panel recommended that kids should be taught more music but less of things like drama and dance. Emma went along to a school participating in a nationwide music performance to see how kids felt about the changes.

These kids are warming up for a big music performance.

WINONA: Ah we're preparing for Music Count Us In. Yeah, I'm so excited.

KID 1: "Well it's a performance that traditionally happens every year at 12 o'clock at schools across Australia."

This year the song for Music Count Us In was written by a group of students and Winona was one of them!

WINONA: So yeah the final product actually has all of our favourite bits of each other's songs in it.

The whole point of 'Music Count Us In' is to get kids excited about learning music and encourage teachers to do more lessons on it in schools.

But music is just one of the subjects kids study at school. Here's all of them. Music comes under the category of arts, along with dance, drama, visual arts, and media arts. But how much time should schools spend teaching you each of these subjects? And is one more important than the others? Recently the government ordered a review of Australia's national curriculum and it recommended that there should be a bigger focus on music education and more training for teachers. But do you agree that kids should be taught more about music if it means learning less about other arts subjects like drama and dance?

Well here at this school a lot of kids see the value in extended music lessons.

KID 2: I think music is important because it helps kids learn language easier because you have to read notes on a page as well as know where it is on what instrument you're playing.

KID 1: "Ah music's important to learn at school because if you're not really skilled at sports or something this is a fantastic path to choose because not only you can play in

a band or learn an instrument or anything because there's also like technology as well that you can produce your own music oh it's just fantastic."

KID 3: Yeah I used to get so nervous, I never would want to go on stage but it's helped me to become more confident in singing on stage and everything.

But while music lessons are important, many kids here think that the other areas of the arts are just as important and shouldn't be decreased.

The Government is still trying to work out exactly where the balance should be but at Winona's school it's nearly time for their big performance, singing the song she helped to write!

WINONA: I had great fun and it was just so nice to have all of my school mates stand around and listen to something that I'd worked so hard on with many other people and just to see everyone enjoy it just as much as I did.

Quiz 2

Quiz number 2 now.

Let's get into it. How many keys are there on a standard piano?

22

44

88

Answer: 88

That's 52 white keys and 36 black keys.

Skipping School

Reporter: Natasha Thiele

INTRO: Now for a serious question. Should students be forced to go to school on their birthday? That's the question being asked after one principal in Tasmania banned kids from having the day off on their birthday saying it's not a good enough reason to stay home. But are there any good reasons, apart from being sick? What about a big family holiday or a dentist appointment? Let's take a look at the issue.

NATASHA THIELE, REPORTER: Yah, it's your Birthday! A time to celebrate! But there's one problem, you're stuck at school! But wouldn't it be nice if you could enjoy

the day somewhere else? Well, that's definitely not going to happen at one school in Tasmania. It's decided to crack down on students who take a day off for their birthday because they say it's not a good enough excuse!

Over in the UK, they're even more strict. Students used to be allowed to take their birthdays off. But now, some schools are fining parents for keeping their kids out of school without a good reason. It's all got people talking about what reasons are good reasons for kids missing school. Being sick is obviously a good excuse. But what about if you have a dentist appointment or you have to spend time with a relative who isn't well? Your folks might be taking you to a big sporting event or perhaps you're away on a big family holiday. So where should the line be drawn? Well while you're thinking about that, let's take a look at why not being at school can cause problems.

Research has found that Aussie students skip school more often than students from any other developed country. And taking a day off here and there can really add up! To give you an idea, if you miss on average three weeks of school per year, that's like missing half a year of school by the end of Year 6. And that could leave you well behind your classmates going into high school.

But on the other hand, some people think there's nothing wrong with taking a day off school every so often if there's a good reason. They say taking kids on a family holiday overseas, for example, still allows them to learn about the outside world. While others say kids can easily catch up on their work or continue learning whilst away. But where would you draw the line?

KID 1: If they're going on holidays yes but if they have a birthday, it's the parents decision.

KID 2: I think it's okay if they have a reason so sickness, holidays, family issues, maybe someone's fallen sick that's close to you, but other things like birthdays and just not feeling like you want to go to school, I don't think that's alright because you might miss out on certain things at school that's quite important for your future education.

KID 3: Yeah I do think that it's okay because on birthdays they deserve to celebrate with their family and just enjoy their birthday, not have to go through the torture of school.

KID 4: Not really because you might miss like a vital piece of learning that you might need to know for future lessons. If it's like a holiday or a family like occasion then it's alright.

Presenter: Now I want to know what you think about that.

Online Poll

The question

Is it okay for kids to have days off school for birthdays or holidays?

To vote just head to our website.

Last week, we told you about the ban on pet rabbits in Queensland. And in our poll, we asked you if that ban should be overturned. A massive 88% said 'yes' it should. As always thanks for getting involved.

Now it's time for sport, Here's Emma

The Score

The Western Sydney Wanderers have made history as the first Aussie team to win the Aussie Champions League. The Wanderers upset Saudi giant Al-Hilal to be crowned the best team in all of Asia. It wasn't the flashiest of victories - the game ended in a nil all draw.

But after winning their earlier match against Al-Hilal, a 1 nil draw was enough to make them champions. Only 14 Wanderers fans were at the game to see the performance because it was really hard for travelling fans to get visas but thousands of die-hard supporters were cheering the team on back home.

“We finally proved everybody wrong, we did it!
We got a champions league trophy in Sydney, Western Sydney ole ole ole”

Aussie keeper Ante Covic won player of the tournament thanks to a number of brilliant saves including this one in the dying minutes of the grand final.

The NBA season is underway. And young Aussie, Dante Exum has had his first win as a member of the Utah Jazz. He scored 10 ten points in his team's 118-91 win over the Phoenix Suns. The number five draft pick scored most of his points from beyond the arc. And he shared the floor with Aussie teammate Joe Ingles who chimed in with three assists.

And Aussie wheelchair racer Kurt Fearnley has won his fifth New York marathon in a dramatic finish.

It was a tough race for Fearnley but he broke free from the pack in the final stretch to finish in first place.

Grave Mission

Reporter: Natasha Thiele

INTRO: Finally today last week was Halloween. And while some people got dressed up some kids we met marked Halloween with a trip to the cemetery. They weren't doing it for the scary factor though. They did it because they've adopted a cemetery so they can care for it in the future. Let's find out more.

NATASHA THIELE, REPORTER: It's not the kind of place some people would like to spend their day. But these guys are here to make a difference! They're taking part in a program called Adopt-a-Grave. It involves spending time at one of Adelaide's oldest cemeteries, where more than 65-thousand people are buried.

ROSS WHITFIELD, ADELAIDE CEMETERIES AUTHORITY: I really want you to remember that you are in a cemetery. Cemeteries are generally places for quiet reflection and we need to be respectful for not only the sites around here but also the people who might be visiting today.

This is their third visit to their adopted cemetery. The last two visits were spent weeding and getting rid of rubbish. Today their job is to restore this iron fence.

ROSS: Alright, so I reckon what we'll do first we'll jump into these cool suits.

And that meant me as well!

ROSS: What we're going to be doing is adding a fish oil and mineral turpentine solution, we're going to be applying it with paintbrushes and what we're doing is just, it's like a superficial raincoat.

But first things first, they need to protect the area.

REPORTER: What are you doing here?

STUDENT 1: Well we're taping the drop sheets together so that none of the fish oil that we're painting on the iron gates goes on to the stone.

Then it was time to paint! But they didn't just spend time cleaning up graves, they also went to the State Library to learn about some interesting people buried here. And they were given the task of finding their graves on their next visit.

REPORTER: And with the scavenger hunt, did you manage to find the graves that you're after because there are tens of thousands of graves here?

STUDENT 2: We found a couple but we didn't find all of them.

STUDENT 3: We just found this from over there.

STUDENT 4: Do I have to re-attach it?

ROSS: Not quite, not quite. Really important though guys that when we do find bits of this, it's obviously a part of the monumentation. I'd say it's come off one of these little heads here.

The program's helped these guys gain a better appreciation of cemeteries and the people who've been laid to rest here.

ROSS: When you look around the site today, it's a lot better than when we came here a couple of weeks ago. So well done and thank you on behalf of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority.

STEVE, STUDENT: I've learned that not too many people do look after them so it's good to get the students out here cleaning in them because school isn't just about books, it's for you to learn life experiences.

DELENN, STUDENT: All three sessions have taught me the importance of more community service and reaching back to those who've served us before us. We've learned many previous stories and it's probably likely it's one of the most honest things I've done.

JAMES, STUDENT: If we got the offer to come back, I would come back.

Closer

And that brings us to the end of another show. Just remember to let us know what you thought about today's stories using the hashtag 'behind the news'. And please remember to vote in our poll this week about skipping school. And until next week have a good one!