

BtN: Episode 20 Transcript 28/07/15

Coming up

- Shark attacks hit the headlines. We find out when it's safe to go back in the water.
- In the wrap-up from schools tree day we discover how trees manage to keep us all alive.
- And meet Jordan the girl proving that you don't need to be able to speak to tell your story. 'Hi BtN, my name is Jordan and I am fourteen years old.'

Hi I'm Nathan and this is BtN. Thanks for joining us. You'll see all that later but first today.

Public Money

Reporter: Amelia Moseley

INTRO: We're going to take a look at the ongoing controversy surrounding the speaker of Federal Parliament Bronwyn Bishop. As we told you last week people have been criticising her over a decision to hire an expensive helicopter to fly her to a liberal party fundraiser. She says it was within the rules. Other people say it was the wrong thing to do. Here's Amelia to explain.

KID: Can I please have some money for lunch?

MUM: Ok darling, here you go.

KID Thanks, Mum!

AMELIA MOSELY, REPORTER: When you have a big juicy allowance in your pocket, it can be pretty tempting to spend up on things you want.

MUM: Did you use your lunch money to buy lollies?

KID: Well you didn't say I couldn't. I had lollies for lunch!

MUM: You know that wasn't what I meant.

If you're a kid, using your allowance like this might get you in a bit of trouble and give you a bit of a stomach ache! But if you're a politician, it's heaps more serious.

You might not have realised these guys get allowances too. Not from their parents; from taxpayers. It's meant to be used for specific politician stuff, like meetings and travelling overseas and around Australia for work.

REPORTER: Politicians don't have to pay for this stuff out of their salaries because it's all part of their job running the country. But if someone thinks you're not spending your allowance the right way - it can be a big problem.

Recently, this politician has been in the spotlight for how she chose to spend her allowance. Her name's Bronwyn Bishop and she's the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Last year, she flew to a political fundraiser in a luxury chopper at a cost of more than five thousand bucks. The same trip in a car would have only taken an hour and a half and would have cost much, much less.

Some people got angry about it because they said it was a huge waste of money. Some just poked fun! But most, including many from her own party said taking such an expensive flight wasn't the right way to use her allowance.

EWEN JONES, LIBERAL BACKBENCHER: I'd love to take a chopper from Melbourne to Geelong. I would love to take a chopper from Melbourne to Geelong. Would you spend taxpayer money on it? I certainly wouldn't no.

TONY ABBOTT: This is a serious error of judgement and quite understandably the Australian people are unhappy.

The opposition now want the police to investigate, but the Speaker says she hasn't broken any rules because she did use the helicopter for official business. But she admits her high flying ride isn't a great look.

BRONWYN BISHOP: I've just told you it's an error of judgement and it shouldn't have been done and I'm repaying the money.

But this isn't the only example of a polly using their allowance money in a way the public might not be happy about. People from all sides of politics have been criticised. That's why some people reckon the rules need to be made clearer and stricter so no one can be accused of wasting money.

NICK XENOPHON: The speaker acted within the rules, but clearly the rules need to be overhauled, they need to be more transparent, they need to be more open.

After all, we should be able to trust politicians to do the right thing with their allowances. Just like your parents trust you to do the right thing with yours.

MUM: Here you go darling.

KID: Thanks mum.

Okay, let's see what other stories were around last week. Here's the wire.

Labor politicians and supporters gathered for a big conference over the weekend to debate and vote on what the party's policies should be. One of the big topics was the question of whether to turn back the boats of asylum seekers trying to make their way to Australia. Labor leader Bill Shorten campaigned for yes while some senior people in his party preferred no as did these protestors.

But Mr Shorten won on that one. He also committed to a vote on same sex marriage within his first 100 days in power if he wins the next federal election.

The Aussie government's released designs for its brand new food labelling system. It's meant to make it easier for shoppers to tell if the food they're buying is really made in Australia, or if it's just been packaged here. The labels will also show how many of the ingredients are home-grown. You should start spotting them from next year.

World famous scientist Stephen Hawking has launched the biggest ever search for intelligent alien life. The program called 'Breakthrough Listen' will use two of the world's most powerful telescopes including one in Australia to search up to a million of the closest stars to earth to see if there's anyone out there.

It'll even listen out for messages they might be trying to send our way. The project will take ten years and cost about 100 million US dollars. But some reckon it's all worth it to find out if we're really alone in the universe.

Shark Attacks

Reporter: Matthew Holbrook

INTRO: Over the weekend we heard some sad and really scary news. A diver was killed in a shark attack off the Tasmanian coast. The news comes just a couple of weeks after surfer Mick Fanning's dramatic brush with a shark during his World Surfing League final in South Africa. Both stories can leave you with the feeling that it's not safe to go swimming anymore. But what are the chances of actually being attacked by a shark? Matt found out.

MATTHEW HOLBROOK, REPORTER: It's the final of an international surfing event in South Africa, and Aussie, and three time world champ, Mick Fanning, is chasing another title. Then, this happens.

MICK FANNING, SURFER: I'm totally fine, got nothing wrong with me, there's a small depression in the board and my leg rope got bitten.

For Mick, it was the scariest moment of his life.

MICK FANNING, SURFER: I'm happy to never compete again, to walk away from that, I'm just so stoked.

But while Mick was lucky to walk away without a scratch, he was also very unlucky to get attacked in the first place. That's because shark attacks are actually really rare. Aussies make around 100 million visits to the beach each year. But in the past two decades, shark attacks have been responsible for around two deaths a year. So you're more likely to die from a lightning strike, or from bumping into someone, or even falling out of bed!

So experts say a fear of sharks shouldn't keep any of us out of the water. In fact, the group most at risk here is sharks themselves. Around 100 million sharks are killed each year. In many places, they're hunted for their meat and fins, and over-fishing has taken away a lot of their food, which has hurt them even more. But sharks are an important part of our ecosystem, which is a big reason why the Great White is protected here in Australia.

So we need sharks, but sharks don't really need us, because they don't actually see us as food. Experts say attacks sometimes happen when we're mistaken for other creatures that sharks do like to snack on like seals.

So, while it's really unlikely you'll ever have a close encounter with one of these guys. There are some simple things you can do that can help make you feel safer in the water. Avoid swimming at times when sharks might be feeding, like at dawn or dusk; don't swim by yourself or in murky water so you're less likely to be mistaken for food! And swim in patrolled areas, taking notice of any signs or warnings.

Mick Fanning's now back home in Australia, and while his experience was a huge shock, he's already returned to the water for his first surf since the attack.

MICK FANNING, SURFER: It's something I do to clear my mind, something I do that gives me peace.

And he says, really, it's up to us, to learn to share the ocean, with these impressive creatures.

Quiz 1

Okay, quiz time now. What is a baby shark called?

A pup

A calf

or a sharklet?

The answer is a pup. And they are born with a full set of teeth right from birth.

Cerebral Palsy

Rookie Reporter: Jordan

INTRO: This week is cerebral palsy awareness week and 14-year old Jordan wants to use the date to bust a few misconceptions. Cerebral palsy might have stopped her from being able to walk but she can still enjoy life as much as any other kid. And it might have stopped her from being able to talk but she can still tell her story. Take a look.

Hi BtN! My name is Jordan, and I'm 14 years old. You've probably already noticed that my voice sounds different to yours. It comes from this tablet attached to my wheelchair because I have Cerebral Palsy. Cerebral Palsy is a brain disorder that affects my movement and muscle control.

But even though I look a bit different cruising around in my wheelchair and talking through a tablet, I'm still just like you. Like all kids, I have to go to school. Each morning I get picked up by this special taxi. I also love my friends. We have lots of fun.

But sometimes, I find it hard to communicate with people. Some people can be impatient with me. And others tease me for being different. But my friends are always there to help me, and my family helps a lot too. I also have a companion dog, called Ruby, who keeps me company. She is very clever and I love her so much!

One of the most important thing I have is my speaking tablet. It's really easy to use. All I do is type in what I want to say and press the 'speak' button. It hasn't always been perfect. My old machine used to have lots of men's voices on it but none of them suited me. Now, I've found a girl's voice called 'Nicole Kidman'! She sounds perfect!

Cerebral Palsy makes some things tricky, but it doesn't stop me doing the things I love. I go to the park with my sister Jed and her friend, and I ride on the liberty swing. I'm also super lucky my community raised money to buy a beach wheelchair. I love going to the beach in it, and swimming in the water with my friends.

Every year I go to camp with my friends and family. I am a bit of a daredevil and like going on flying foxes and pendulum swings. I feel really free when I'm flying through the air. Because of the daredevil thing, I also love going on rides at the show. I love the dodgem cars and I am already a good driver! LOL!

The reason I want to tell you my story is that I want everyone to know what I am like behind my wheelchair and tablet. I am a normal kid, and even though my life isn't easy, I love it. That's why I smile as much as I can. And I hope all of you will smile back at me too.

Quiz 2

Amazing report Jordan. Okay, let's go to a quiz.

What part of the body does cerebral relate to?

Is it:

The nerves

The legs

Or the brain

The answer is the brain

Tree Day

Rookie Reporter: Matthew Holbrook

INTRO: Schools Tree Day was held last week and thousands of schools across Australia took part by getting their hands dirty and planting a few. But why are trees so important for the environment anyway? Well here's Matt to tell us.

MELANIE: The good things about being around trees is that you get to be in a peaceful environment away from the cars and all the loud noise, just get to relax and have fun.

HOLLY: They're fun to climb and they provide shelter.

MARISSA: They're also beautiful and you can climb in them and they're fun.

These guys have been learning all about trees at school. And now they're busy planting some of their own for schools tree day

MATT: What can I do to help?

ETHAN: You can plant one of our trees for us.

MATT: I don't want to mess this up. Do you think I will? I probably could do.

MELANIE: You can loosen up the roots a little bit so they don't get all tangled when the plant's trying to regenerate.

But why is planting trees an important thing to do? Well trees and plants matter for all kinds of reasons. One of the biggest is that we need them to survive.

HOLLY: Trees are good for the environment because they turn carbon dioxide into oxygen.

We breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. But trees do the opposite. They take in carbon dioxide from the air through their leaves. And through a process called photosynthesis, where they use the sun's energy to make their food, they release oxygen. That's vital to us so we can breathe but it's also a big help to the

planet. Less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is one way of slowing down climate change.

MATT: Ethan can you tell me a bit more about the tree?

ETHAN: Well when it grows up it's going to attract native birds and they'll probably nest and have more little babies.

That's another talent trees have. They can provide homes to all kinds of wildlife, whether it's tiny insects, or birds and other animals. Some give wildlife food, like leaves, fruit and nuts, which we can enjoy too! Trees also create a good environment for other plants to grow.

MELANIE: The good thing about trees is they keep the soil all together so it's harder for the wind to blow it away.

Beneath the ground, tree roots can spread a long, long way. While roots give trees water and minerals from the soil, they also help hold it together so it doesn't get washed or blown away. That's a big problem in areas around the world where natural forests have been cleared. Apart from affecting the soil, and the things that grow in it, deforestation can affect the animals and people who call that area home. And it's a big reason programs like this one are trying to put more trees back into the ground.

ETHAN: I feel close to nature in this area, and I tend to go here in some recesses and lunches.

Experts reckon trees can make us all feel healthier and happier, and even stay focused at school. It's not hard to argue trees do a lot for us, and by helping add more of them to our earth these guys say we're all much better off.

Online Poll

Okay so that should give you a pretty good idea of what trees do for us. Now let's find out how many of you planted some new ones last week.

Did your school get involved in National Tree Day this year?

Head to our website to let us know.

The Score

Okay, time now to find out what happened in the world of sport this week. Here's the score.

The world's most famous cycling race the tour de France has wrapped up after 22 days on the road. There were plenty of twists and turns, thrills and spills. But in the end Englishman Chris Froome took out the top spot.

CHRIS FROOME: Very special. I understand its history, good and bad. I will always respect it, never dishonour it, and I will always be proud to have won it.

To the AFL, and while West Coast beat Sydney on Sunday, this goal celebration from Swans forward Lewis Jetta has been getting most of the attention. Jetta says he was sticking up for teammate Adam Goodes who had been getting booed during the game. Goodes had performed a similar celebration two months ago during the AFL's Indigenous round.

ADAM GOODES: Makes me really proud he was thinking of me when he was doing that but he definitely got the moves and definitely performed it a lot better than I did.

Aussie BMX racer Caroline Buchanan has taken home a silver medal at the world championships in Belgium.

And to do it she had to deal with some wet and windy weather!

CAROLINE BUCHANAN: It was definitely just wild and crazy and windy and everyone was going everywhere!

First place went to Stefany Hernandez from Venezuela.

And an Aussie team has proved they're the best soccer players in the world. Well, as long as they're playing against other robots. They took out the world cup at the RoboCup games in China. Although there were some nasty spills along the way.

STEPHEN MCGILL: The goal is that by 2050 these robots will be able to compete and win a soccer match against real humans that actually won the FIFA World Cup.

They've clearly still got a long way to go.

Mentor Kids

Reporter: Eloise Fuss

INTRO: Finally today. Changing schools can be challenging for any kid. But imagine how hard it would be if you'd just come from overseas, and didn't know the language yet. That's what it's like for some refugee kids who arrive in Australia. But the primary school in this next story has set up a special student mentor program to help. Here's Eloise with more.

At this school there's more than 53 different nationalities, and kids speak about 35 different languages. This can be a bit overwhelming for new kids, like Nima, who's recently arrived from Afghanistan as a refugee.

Nima: When I first came to school I was bored because I didn't have any friends with me to play.

But that's where these buddies in fluoro vests come in really handy. Muna is just one of the year five, six and seven students taking part in a program that teaches them to be mentors, so they can help kids who've recently come to Australia as refugees.

Muna: They really needed someone by their side, and they needed help, so I volunteered to be a leader.

It's the job of volunteer mentors to look out for new kids during recess and lunch, and make sure they're fitting into their new school.

Asma: I saw a little girl, she was outside and she was crying because she wasn't playing with anybody, so me and my friends helped her out, and we took her to the playground and played with her.

They wear these bright vests so kids know who they can go to for help.

Nyajima: To be a good leader you have to be responsible, understand kids, and be patient with them.

Kids like Nima say they're great to have around.

Nima: It was like someone coming to me, and he said do you want to play with me and I said yes, and we played together and it was fun.

Some of the mentors came to Australia as refugees themselves, so they know exactly how important their job is.

Nyajima: When I first arrived I was really scared, recess and lunchtime I would play by myself.

Muna: When I first arrived I had no English and I had to go into a class with no one and I was lonely, if this leader thing was on I would have went and it would have been a lot easier.

One of the highlights of this program is when the mentors and new kids all come together to play games in the gymnasium.

Braden: I've taught them new easy games which they can use in the future in their lives, and I've also helped them a bit with English.

Jonathon: If I see a smaller one by themselves, I try to talk to them and try to get them to play with others.

For the mentors, it's a chance to learn how to be leaders.

Matthew: Well I don't have a little brother or sister, it's a bit hard to understand them, but I just want to help them have a person to play with.

And for kids like Nima, it's helped him settle in at the school.

Nima: Making new friends, playing some games.

As you can see, it's a fun program that makes a big difference.

Presenter: What a great idea.

Ask a Reporter

Now just before we leave. Last week we held our first #AskaReporter session on Greece's financial problems. We got heaps of great questions from the kids that took part including this one.

NATHAN: From year 5 at St Andrews: What is Matt's favourite food?

MATT: That's a great question! Way to go Year 5 at St Andrews, you got it!

Next week's topic will be on Shark Attacks. So if you'd like your school to get involved there are instructions on our website.

Closer

Right, that's it from us for this week. Bye for now!