



Wet & Wild Zone Summary report – March 2013

This report has been compiled by the *I'm a Scientist, Get me out of Here, Australia* team as a summary of zone activities and outcomes. It contains moderator observations and analysis of web statistics for the March 2013 Wet & Wild Zone.

Wet & Wild was one of the most popular zones this season, with questions in both the Ask section and Live Chats providing the platform for students to ask each of the five scientists in the zone any science related question on their minds. This zone included scientists from a range of 'Wet' and 'Wild' science backgrounds, with Simon the coastal systems researcher, Shona the aquatic invertebrate identifier, Jenny the PhD student, Elizabeth the statistician, and Blaire the emerging technologies communications and outreach officer. Even with so many areas of expertise covered, the fast paced Live Chats challenged their scientific knowledge, opinion and typing speeds, as well as the quality of their science jokes.

Statistics

Zone page	Pageviews
Total Zone	12,418
Zone homepage	1,320
ASK page	586
CHAT page	1,113
VOTE page	623
List of questions	940
Simon Allen	298
Shona Marks	462
Jennifer L. A. Shaw	418
Elizabeth Stark	210
Blaire Dobiecki	294

Table 1: Pageviews of the *I'm a Scientist* Wet & Wild zone

Number of . . .	Wet & Wild Zone	Average (per zone)	Whole event
Registered students	239	250	751
Questions asked	643	728	2,138
Questions approved	234	267	800
Answers given	630	634	1,902
Comments	259	148	444
Votes	244	306	919
Live chats	15	16	49
Lines of live chat	4,208	4,703	14,110
Schools	6	7	19

Table 2: Key engagement statistics from the *I'm a Scientist* Wet & Wild zone, compared to the average per zone and whole March 2013 event.



Graph 1: Pageviews of the *I'm a Scientist* Wet & Wild zone from March 1–29 2013 – including the week prior to, and after the two-week event.

Popular topics and words

The Ask section hosted lengthy and frank discussions, from “[When and Why did you become a scientist?](#)” to [what happened at school? were you ever picked on for being different](#). It was great to see the trust shared between the students and scientists and the open and honest discussions that resulted.

One of the most popular questions asked “[Would you say that Australia is a eco friendly country?](#)”. This question captures the expression of interest from students about Australia’s ecosystems and how the human population can help the environment. One particular comment from a student in response to scientists answers to “[does farming affect the rivers and water ways](#)” shows just how much of an impact this event can have on their view of the world, and science in general: “*So every action has a opposite reaction, meaning everything we do affects something else?*” (@awesomegal3).

Top on the list of questions in terms of number of pageviews was very apt for this zone “[do you have a favorite specie of animals?](#)”. The discussion that proceeded included further questions about classifying animals that may fall under many branches of the dichotomous key.



Diagram 1: A word cloud of the 50 most popular words used by students within the ASK section of the *I’m a Scientist* Wet & Wild zone. The more prominent the word, the more frequently it was used by students

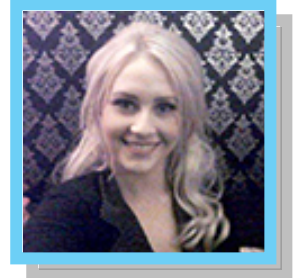


Diagram 2: A word cloud of the 150 most popular words used by students and scientists during the Live Chats in the *I’m a Scientist* Agriculture zone. The more prominent the word, the more frequently it was used.

Looking at the most popular words used within student's questions (diagram 1) and during live chats (diagram 2) we can see that *species* and *animals* featured high in their conversational vocabulary with the scientists.

Scientist winner: Jennifer L. A. Shaw

Jennifer is working towards her PhD at University of Adelaide. Her research looks at microbial communities in freshwater systems using genetics in order to determine water system health. Jennifer was certain that she wanted to donate all of her prize money to charity, and after much research she decided upon 'Room to Read', a charity set up to promote literacy and gender equality in developing nations.



Student winner: wdowe2

Student *wdowe2* was nominated by the scientists in the Wet & Wild zone for posing some very good questions in both the live chats and the ASK section of the *I'm a Scientist* website. *wdowe2*'s questions included "[If nanotechnology was to go inside the human body for medicinal purposes, how would it be masked so that the immune system wouldn't destroy it?](#)" and "[If the polar ice caps melt like predicted, will cities go underwater like Atlantis? Or will it be less severe?](#)".

Event sponsors

Thank you to our partners for supporting *I'm a Scientist, Get Me Out of Here!* in Australia:

- Major partners TechNYou for supporting the pilot in June 2011, both the May and August/September 2012 events, and this March 2013 event.
- Zone supporters the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARES) and the Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations (CRDC) for sponsoring the March 2013 Agriculture Zone.

Final thanks to the scientists

The success of the *I'm a Scientist* event is thanks to the scientists who volunteer their time to chat to students online and answer their science questions. A thanks also to the scientist's associated organisations for supporting them in taking part.