



Rescued joey Tallow, on a stuffed koala toy, has become part of the family for Taronga Zoo senior keeper Nick de Vos

Koala can't bear to be without 'dad'

CUDDLY baby koala Tallow just can't bear to be separated from her surrogate "dad" — Taronga Zoo keeper Nick de Vos.

The six-month-old joey has become part of Mr de Vos's family after being neglected by her mother at birth.

"You can't help but get attached to them," Mr de Vos said. "My two-year-old son Charlie loves Tallow and has made her feel a part of the family.

"He's very proud and is the first to introduce her to everyone that comes over."

But the 29-year-old senior keeper has been a part of Tallow's family for more

years than she'd know, having hand-reared her father as well.

Mr de Vos said the baby koala's mother had been having difficulty dealing with her first newborn.

"It's quite typical in the wild and in captivity to struggle with their first (newborn)," he said, adding that Tallow had become cold and heavily dehydrated and wasn't managing to properly feed from her mother.

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Tallow snuggles up in an artificial pouch Pictures: Rohan Kelly