

Orphaned baby koala finds fluffy toy friend

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Shayne, a baby koala who has found comfort cuddling a toy koala in the absence of his mother after she was killed by a car as he clung to her back, recovers at the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital

An orphaned baby koala in Australia has found solace cuddling a fluffy toy marsupial in the absence of his mother as he recovers from the trauma of her death.

Nine-month-old Shayne's mother was recently hit and killed by a car in Queensland state as he clung to her back.

Rescuers found the joey had been thrown 20 metres down the road by the impact and was being chased by crows.

The baby was taken to the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital, run by the family of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin, where doctors said he was overcoming his terrifying ordeal with the help of a toy koala as he learns to be independent.

"Shayne has no injuries as a result of the accident, instead, he's dealing with the loss of his mum and the vital life lessons he needs to learn in order to become an independent, wild koala," hospital director Rosie Booth said Monday.

At the hospital Shayne, his black button nose and bushy ears visible above the soft pink blanket he was swaddled in, clung onto the back of the toy koala as he might his real mother.

"It's very fortunate that we had an observant rescuer who found Shayne and brought him into us because he wouldn't have lasted even a day in the wild by himself at his young age—now he gets a second chance at life," Booth said.



The orphaned baby koala Shayne is being cared for by the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital in Queensland, which treats an average of 70 to 80 koalas every month

The much-loved koala has been under increasing threat across Australia in recent decades, particularly from habitat loss, disease, dog attacks and bushfires.

The [hospital](#) treats an average of 70 to 80 koalas every month.

A 2012 national count placed total Koala numbers at around 330,000, though their treetop habitat makes accurate assessment difficult.

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