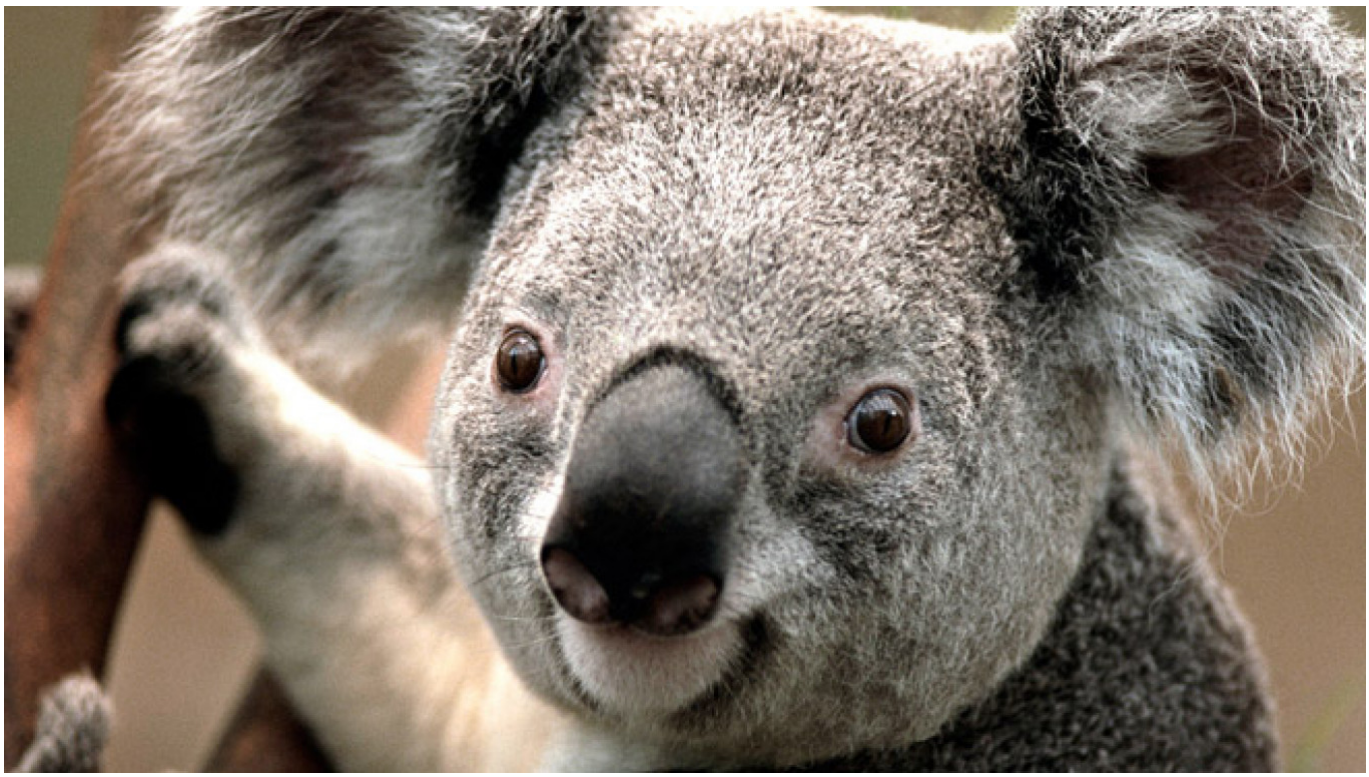
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Koala Cuddles for Putin

November 06, 2014



Koalas are native to Australia and have been a protected species since the 1920s.

President Vladimir Putin will have a chance to get a warm embrace from a koala specially trained to deliver hugs at the upcoming G20 summit in Brisbane, Australia.

A koala keeper at Brisbane's Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary said in comments to the NTD Television news agency that the "most important rule [in koala hugging] is pretending to be a tree," a skill that Putin and other world leaders will have to pick up if they expect to get a cuddle from one of the sanctuary's more than 100 resident koalas.

The summit, scheduled for Nov. 15-16, will bring together the leaders of the world's industrialized nations, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, U.S. President Barack Obama and Russia's Putin.

Australian Treasurer Joe Hockey said the main topic of discussion at the summit would be the world's economic situation, though the Ukraine crisis and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 would also be on the agenda.

Koalas are native to Australia and have been a protected species since the 1920s. Putin is

known for his frequent photo-ops with cuddly creatures, including, most recently, an Amur tiger cub.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/11/06/koala-cuddles-for-putin-a41105