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**JUMPING FOR JOY – A YELLOW-FOOTED ROCK WALLABY BABY  
PEEKES OUT OF MOTHER’S POUCH**

***The Joey is the First Birth in The Living Desert’s New Australian Adventures Habitat***

**PALM DESERT/INDIAN WELLS, CA --** (September 23, 2020) The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is thrilled to announce its newest addition to the Australian Adventures experience. After months of growing and moving around in its mother’s pouch, a tiny baby wallaby, also called a joey, has started to peek out.

“We are so excited to finally meet our new wallaby joey,” said RoxAnna Breitigan, Director of Animal Care. “We’ve seen it moving around in mom’s pouch for a few weeks and have been eager to see the joey’s face emerge. We estimate the joey was born mid-May and is now about four months old with its eyes open and peach fuzz beginning to grow. We expect it will be another two months before the joey fully emerges from the pouch; however, guests will start to see the joey exploring its new surroundings in the coming weeks.”

Yellow-footed rock wallabies are marsupials native to Australia. Wallabies are born underdeveloped and then crawl into their mother’s pouch where they stay safe, nurse, and continue to develop for six to seven months before they leave the pouch. Joeys are born blind, hairless, and are about the size of a raisin, weighing only 500mg. They are currently listed as Near Threatened by the International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Born to first time parents, seven-year-old mother, Prissy, and seven-year-old father, Marstey, the joey will continue to peek out of the pouch over the next few weeks and will soon begin to explore the world around, while continuing to return to the safety of mom. Wallaby mobs are led by a dominant male with a few breeding females.

“This is a very exciting birth for all of us,” said Allen Monroe, President/CEO. “As the first wallaby birth at The Living Desert, this cute little joey is the perfect addition to our new Australian Adventures experience. This birth was based on a breeding recommendation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP). The Living Desert’s mob of wallabies has future breeding recommendations, so we are hopeful there will more new arrivals in the future.”

A well-baby exam will be scheduled in a few months, once the joey has fully emerged and left the pouch, noted Breitigan. And, although the gender is not yet known, this adorable joey is sure to win the hearts of guests.

**About the Living Desert:**

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit, accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, ensuring the highest standards of all aspects of animal care, education, conservation, public service, and operations. The Zoo is active in conservation research, habitat protection, breeding programs and education initiatives around the world, as well as in its own community. The Zoo has been a top destination in the Palm Springs area for 50 years. The Living Desert is located at 47900 Portola Ave, Palm Desert, CA 92260. For more information: (760) 346-5694 or visit [livingdesert.org](http://livingdesert.org).

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