

Key-wiana encounter for PM

PRIME Minister John Key got up close and personal with one of New Zealand's national icons during a flying visit to Otorohanga last week.

Mr Key was in town on Thursday to officially open the new falcon enclosure at the Otorohanga Kiwi House and Native Bird Park.

But it was his ability to think on his feet that was to the fore when presented with an impromptu opportunity to name the Kiwi House's newest arrival, a 20-day old kiwi.

He was quick to dub the chick 'Keith' - after another famous National leader and Prime Minister, the late Sir Keith Holyoake. Sir Keith was popularly known as 'Kiwi Keith'.

It is a good kiwi name, Keith," he says, after he was offered the chance to hold and name the baby kiwi.

Mr Key says it was a great experience.

"I have never seen a wild kiwi, let alone held one, and if it wasn't for places like the Kiwi House, you wouldn't get opportunities like this."

Mr Key says it was wonderful to be invited to the official opening of the new aviary.

"I last visited the Kiwi House

in 1971, when I was 10-years-old and it is great to see how the facility has extended.

"As Minister of Tourism, it is fascinating to see places like this."

"I get about 600 invitations a week and I like coming to things which are interesting and cool."

Otorohanga Zoological Society president, Nancy Jensen says it has been almost 100 years since the last official visit from a Prime Minister, but it's been "worth the wait."

"The last official visit to Otorohanga was in 1915, when then Prime Minister, William Massey came and opened our town hall."

"We feel very privileged to have John Key here," says Mrs Jensen.

A large crowd turned out for the special occasion and Otorohanga mayor, Dale Williams says it was excellent to see the community support the opening.

"This facility is for all of us to enjoy for many years to come."

"It is a jewel in Otorohanga's crown."

Mr Key enjoyed his visit and says "there is a great community atmosphere here."

"I will definitely be coming back."

He also visited the Waitomo Caves.

"I have never seen a wild kiwi, let alone held one."

- PM, John Key



KEY-WI: New Zealand's Prime Minister meets the New Zealand icon. John Key held a baby kiwi at the Otorohanga Kiwi House on Thursday and was giving the honour of naming it. He chose 'Kiwi Keith' after former PM, Sir Keith Holyoake.



KEY ORA: Prime Minister, John Key received a warm greeting from Kio Kio School students when he arrived at the Otorohanga Kiwi House on Thursday to officially open the new falcon enclosure.

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