



Issue 8, April 2010

JEWELLED GECKOS RELEASED

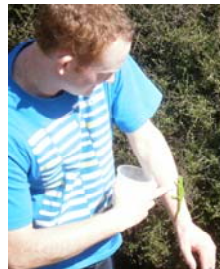
Last month I had the privilege of helping release the 16 jewelled geckos that were stolen by a German tourist from the Otago Peninsula in February.

The geckos, which are considered to be in gradual decline, were released back to their original homes with the help of University of Otago student Carey Knox.

I was impressed by the work the Otago Peninsula community and the Department of Conservation are doing to make sure our wildlife is protected and that the theft of our wildlife is prevented.



Speaking at the Otago Peninsula



Carey Knox releases one of the geckos

YOUTH MP SELECTED

I am delighted to have found a fantastic young leader to be my representative at this year's Youth Parliament. Katya Curran from St Hilda's Collegiate School was chosen after writing an essay and being interviewed.

I was extremely impressed all of the applicants from a number of secondary schools in Dunedin and it just goes to show the calibre of our young leaders in this city.

The 122 Youth MPs will take over Parliament for two days in July and will get to debate legislation, ask ministers oral questions, attend caucus meetings and sit on a select committee.

BACK BENCHES

The TVNZ7 political show *Back Benches* came to Dunedin this month. I was part of the panel alongside fellow MPs Clare Curran, Heather Roy and Metiria Turei. We debated issues such as the value of education, the Dunedin student culture and accommodation and employment.

A great crowd turned up to the Robbie Burns pub for what was a fantastic night.

You can watch the full episode at:

<http://tvnz.co.nz/back-benches>



On the *Back Benches* show with Clare Curran, Heather Roy and Metiria Turei

CANBERRA VISIT

Last month I visited Canberra as a member of the Health Select Committee as part of the annual joint exchange with the Australian Parliament.

The trip was an opportunity to meet with our Health Committee counterparts in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Our Committee is conducting inquiries into the early detection and treatment of prostate cancer, improving childhood rates of immunisation and into how we can create an environment to support more clinical trials. The Australian Government has also addressed these issues and it was helpful to compare approaches.

We were also interested in funding structures and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made some major announcements about future changes to their system that caused quite a stir in the health sector.



The Health Select Committee on the roof of the Australian Parliament building

ASPAC CONFERENCE

Last month I was privileged to speak on behalf of Finance Minister Bill English at The Asia Pacific Network of Science & Technology Centres (ASPAC) conference opening dinner.

The conference, held at the Otago Museum, emphasised the importance of growing the science and technology industry in the Asia Pacific region. It is an industry that is also very important to New Zealand's economic development.

It was a great night where I met world leaders in the field and even met Japan's first astronaut Professor Mamoru Mohri.



With Professor Mohri and Margaret Collins at the ASPAC conference welcome dinner

ANZAC DAY – PROUD AND TRAGIC

It was an early start to ANZAC Day with the dawn service at the Cenotaph in the Queen's Gardens in

Dunedin, followed by the parade and service in Mosgiel and the service in Outram where I was the guest speaker. There were excellent turnouts at all events.

The day was marred by the tragic news of the Iroquois crash at Pukerua Bay north of Wellington. Many members of my extended family have served in the Air Force including a brother who flew Iroquois. The Defence Force will be badly affected by the tragedy but the courage, resilience and comradeship that was first forged at Gallipoli will no doubt sustain them in this difficult period. RIP.



Mosgiel War Memorial

WEBSITE VIDEOS

You can now see videos of speeches I make in the House as well as regular video blogs detailing what I've been up to.

Check them out at www.michaelwoodhouse.co.nz

CONTACT DETAILS

Dunedin Office:

Upstart House
333 Princes Street
PO Box 807, Dunedin

Phone: 03 477 7330

Fax: 03 477 4885

Email: blueandgold@parliament.govt.nz

Assistants: Sue O'Connell & Cindi Ewart