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John Key first to address Australian Parliament

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FRI, 13 MAY 2011 11:25A.M.

By James Murray

John Key will be the first New Zealand Prime Minister to address the Australian Parliament, not long after Julia Gillard's historic speech at the Beehive.

Ms Gillard became the first Australian Prime Minister to address Parliament in February.

Objections from the Green Party, amongst others, meant Ms Gillard spoke in the debating chamber but not during a formal sitting of Parliament.

It is not clear whether Mr Key will receive the same treatment.

"The invitation to address the Australian Parliament in Canberra was made by Prime Minister Gillard when I met her during her visit in March to attend the Christchurch earthquake memorial service," says Mr Key.

The address will take place on Monday, 20 June.

That evening Mr Key will fly to Sydney to attend a private charity fundraising gala dinner organised by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia to raise money for the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal.

Mr Key's visit will last from June 19 to 21 and include a bilateral meeting with Ms Gillard and talks with her cabinet.

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Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, right and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key lay roses at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at the National War Memorial (NZPA)

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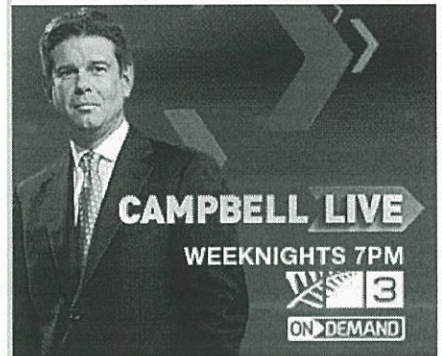
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