

Hon John Key  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
9.030 Executive Wing  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON 6106



28 August 2009

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to request that you take immediate action to save the Centre for New Zealand Studies which is located at the University of London's Birkbeck College. My understanding is that Birkbeck College has informed Dr Ian Conrich, Director of the Centre, that the College will close the Centre by 30 November this year.

The Centre was an initiative of Sir Graeme Davies, the New Zealand born Vice-Chancellor of the University of London and was opened in February 2007. I visited the Centre in January 2008 in my capacity as Minister of Education and saw the enormous value of the Centre as a showcase for New Zealand arts, culture and academic achievement.

To date the Centre has organised 114 events, 5 conferences and 3 festivals focusing on New Zealand studies. My understanding is that all have been well attended and have helped raise New Zealand's profile, particularly in academic and Arts circles. These events have been held not just in the UK but also in a number of other European countries.

The Centre has attracted over 2,000 visitors and researchers since it opened. Resources include over 6 000 books and journals, copies of nearly every film ever made in New Zealand and a huge range of music and other resources.

The previous Government recognised the value of the Centre as a showcase for our country and a contract was signed between the New Zealand Government and Birkbeck College to support the Centre. I would urge you to make strong representation to the University of London to keep the Centre open. The Centre for New Zealand Studies does a huge job in providing a small but distinct footprint, at minimal cost, for our country's art, music and wider culture in Europe.

Kind regards



**Hon Chris Carter**  
**Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Ethnic Affairs**  
**MP for Te Atatū**