



## MESSAGE FROM LABOUR LEADER JACINDA ARDERN

My apologies that I cannot join you as you gather for the 2022 International AIDS Candlelight Memorial.

Today, we remember all of those - loved ones, family, friends - who are sadly no longer with us because of Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome. But we also remember and acknowledge those who have experienced isolation, stigma and discrimination. There remain challenges that still need to be addressed, both in our health response to HIV, but also our community response.

It's within this context that today we also recognise the continued efforts of those working to help others affected by HIV. It's no overstatement to say these efforts are life-changing.

Thanks to the incredible work of organisations, researchers, and individuals, we have seen real progress in lowering rates of transmission, and improved experiences of those with HIV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As a Government, we are committed to maintaining this momentum. There's still more to do, and we will continue to work alongside dedicated organisations to end the transmission of HIV and ensure everyone is able to receive the healthcare and support they need.

Last year, New Zealand signed up to the UN political declaration on HIV and AIDS to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

This builds on the work our Government has already done, including supporting the decision by PHARMAC to fund PrEP and investing in behavioural research to guide the roll-out of HIV and STI prevention services around the country.

But we will not stop there. We will continue to work with experts, advocates and community organisations to further lower transmission rates and improve the experience of those who are living with AIDS.

Thank you to the New Zealanders who are sharing their perspectives and experiences today. I look forward to together, continuing the progress we have made.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacinda', written in a cursive style.

Jacinda Ardern  
**Leader of the New Zealand Labour Party**