

Letter of support for the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2024

Today, we gather to remember all those who are sadly no longer with us as a result of HIV.

We are here to recall loved ones, friends, and whanau; to support those close to us; and to stand in solidarity with everyone around Aotearoa and the world as they acknowledge and grieve the many lives lost to HIV.

We are here to commemorate, to unite, to observe, to support, and to heal.

Our thoughts extend to those in our communities. To those who have experienced isolation and discrimination: we see you, we are here for you, and today we recommit to raising awareness about HIV and breaking down associated stigmas. Thank you for sharing your experiences.

We also acknowledge the people in Aotearoa New Zealand working to help those affected by HIV. It's tough to overstate the importance of your mahi and how transformative it continues to be for many. Thanks to your work, astounding progress has been made over the past decade in lowering rates of transmission and improving the lives of those with HIV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The number of people diagnosed with HIV in Aotearoa New Zealand halved from 2016 to 2020. In 2021, the Labour Government signed New Zealand up to the UN political declaration on HIV and AIDS to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. We also fully funded PrEP and invested in behavioural research to guide the roll-out of HIV and STI prevention services around the country. We are proud of this record but acknowledge there is more to do.

Together, we can change attitudes and save lives.

To all participants in the 2024 International AIDS Candlelight Memorial: may your light be a beacon of hope for others.

In solidarity,



Chris Hipkins
Leader of the Labour Party

