



**Government House
New Zealand**

AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2015

Nga mihi ki a koutou.

The AIDS Candlelight Memorial is an opportunity for us all to pause and reflect on the millions of people around the world who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS.

We owe it to their memory to ensure that the battle against HIV/AIDS continues. While there has been great progress in New Zealand, there is always a new generation of young people who need to be educated, and all sectors of the population who need to be reminded about risky behaviours if they are not to become complacent. As Patron of the New Zealand AIDS Foundation, I fully support its work to provide up-to-date information, to support people living with HIV/AIDS and to act as their advocate in the national arena.

Our thoughts and actions must not just reflect the successes at home when we consider that the benefits of medical research and treatment have not been widely shared across the world. HIV/AIDS remains a critical humanitarian issue while there are countries where the rates of infection remain high and, or where treatment options are limited; where people living with HIV/AIDS and people in the LGBTI communities suffer discrimination and stigma. The daunting statistics will only change when there is better communication, equity of access to effective medication and there is an equivalent shift in social attitudes.

The AIDS Candlelight Memorial 2015 is a most worthy initiative and its aspirational goal is one which deserves our unreserved support.

Kia ora, kia kaha, kia manawanui, huihui tātou katoa.

**Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, GNZM QSO
Governor-General of New Zealand**