



**Government House
New Zealand**

AIDs Candlelight Memorial

Kia ora koutou

Today, all around New Zealand, people will be gathering together to remember friends, partners and family members who lost the battle with HIV/AIDS.

It is a time to support one another as we recall the years when a positive diagnosis was effectively a death sentence. It is a time to be grateful that advances in medical science have enabled thousands of New Zealanders to live with that diagnosis.

While New Zealand is fortunate to have one of the lowest incidences of HIV in the world, there is no room for complacency. Each successive generation of New Zealanders needs to be aware of what constitutes risky behaviour and what their responsibilities are towards others.

The theme of this year's AIDS Candlelight Memorial – Engage, Educate, Empower – reinforces the work of the AIDS Foundation in New Zealand to raise awareness, to educate, to assist those living with HIV/AIDS and to act as their advocate.

It is up to all of us to reinforce those messages ourselves.

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