

13 May 2019

### **2019 International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Service**

By international standards New Zealand has a relatively low prevalence of HIV, which is largely due to the great work of the New Zealand AIDS Foundation and our safe sex education. Condoms are essential and campaigns such as 'Love your Condom' have been valuable in promoting the importance of practicing safe sex.

It's fitting the theme for this year's memorial is 'Intensifying the fight for Health and Rights', as we're seeing more of a focus on HIV medication and preventative measures. This started in 2017 when PHARMAC started funding access to four HIV anti-retrovirals, and continued last year with the funding of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis.

This approach is significant and is helping ensure that HIV infections don't progress into AIDS. It's important we continue with this approach and ensure that our youth are educated as to how to protect themselves, and that there is treatment available for those affected.

On behalf of the National Party I send my best wishes to all those taking part in this year's AIDS Candlelight Memorial.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'S Bridges', written in a cursive style.

**Hon Simon Bridges**  
**Leader of the Opposition**