



New Zealand AIDS Foundation
Te Tūāpapa Mate Āraikore o Aotearoa

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Responding to HIV in New Zealand with renewed vigour in a brave new world

July 1 will mark an important milestone in New Zealand AIDS Foundation's (NZAF's) history. It will commemorate three decades of the AIDS epidemic in New Zealand and the Foundation's response to it.

Over the last several months, the Foundation has been curating the 30 Project which is central to the anniversary celebration. Archived film and video footage, photography and safe sex campaign materials have been converted into accessible digital formats. The 30 Project will consist of three short digital videos, each chronicling a -ten year period. Award-winning gay director David Herkt has edited the new digital resource into stories that provide the viewer with a real and visceral insight into New Zealand's response to the AIDS epidemic. These can be viewed independently or as a whole.

The 30 Project is not just a memorial, but also a resource for the future. It will reconnect new generations with the real faces and stories of New Zealanders who have responded to the HIV/AIDS epidemic over three decades and in some cases given the ultimate contribution - their lives. The 30 Project will acknowledge the people that paved the way, helping to build NZAF into one of the most effective national HIV prevention organisations in the world.

"Connecting with the past can help to re-energize the New Zealand community in the fight against HIV/AIDS today," says Shaun Robinson, Executive Director, NZAF.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has changed dramatically over 30 years with medications meaning that HIV no longer progresses to AIDS and people with the virus live a normal lifespan. However, HIV remains incurable and the prevention of new infections remains as relevant as ever. With the 2014 figure showing an increase in new cases of HIV, the 30th anniversary will also signify a renewed vigour and conviction in responding to the epidemic.

"New Zealand has done many things right in its response to HIV and we have much to be thankful for," says Robinson. "Thirty years of human rights and law reform around homosexuality mean that HIV and sex can be talked about openly and safe sex can be freely promoted. As a result 80% of gay and bisexual men use condoms for casual sex and this has kept HIV at very low levels". New Zealand has one of world's lowest prevalence of HIV thanks to a culture of safe sex and condom use.

"The story of the New Zealand AIDS Foundation and the response to HIV /AIDS is made up hundreds of people's contributions. It is a community that responded to the epidemic and that response is kept strong by remembering the lessons of the past as well as engaging with the world as it is today" said Shaun Robinson.

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