



Prime Minister

November 25 2009

Message for White Ribbon Day 2009

White Ribbon Day makes a strong statement that violence against women will not be tolerated in New Zealand.

I'd like to acknowledge the thousands of New Zealanders who support the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and who are speaking out to end abuse against women. I'd also like to thank the many organisations – like Stop Demand – taking a stand on this issue.

No woman should feel unsafe in her own home, and all New Zealanders need to contribute to “breaking the cycle” and ensuring that domestic violence is no longer tolerated in our communities.

The National-led government is committed to preventing violence against women. One of the first laws we introduced in office was the Domestic Violence (Enhancing Safety) Bill which was passed into law last month.

This new law gives police the power to issue on-the-spot protection orders to protect victims of partner abuse. The new legislation takes away the requirement for victims of domestic violence to apply to the courts for protection, and it gives police officers the authority to order alleged offenders to stay away from their homes for up to five days.

But domestic violence is not a problem that can be solved by legislation alone. It's a problem that requires commitment from every New Zealander to no longer allow women to suffer at the hands of their abusers.

Each and every one of us must speak up for any friends, colleagues, or neighbours who we know to be in a violent or abusive relationship.

Only by working together can we end the scourge of violence that marks the lives of too many New Zealand women.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John Key'.

John Key
Prime Minister