

Embargoed until 6am, 10 February 2023

9 February 2023

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL EPILEPSY DAY

February 13 is International Epilepsy Day for 2023 and when Parliament meets for the first time on 14 February, MPs from both sides of the House will be wearing purple ribbons to acknowledge the day.

Purple represents epilepsy awareness and Epilepsy New Zealand CEO, Ross Smith hopes the act of wearing a purple ribbon will help spark conversations about epilepsy.

This year's theme for International Epilepsy Day, 'Step Up Against Stigma', provides a platform for people with epilepsy, and those who care for them, to open up and talk about their epilepsy.

"What we know is that giving people education about epilepsy and dispelling myths can reduce stigma and discrimination in schools, workplaces and communities. Stigma can also be reduced when the people who are stigmatised are given opportunities to tell others about their lives and how stigma has affected them", said Ross Smith.

Epilepsy New Zealand President, Glenn Livingstone who also lives with epilepsy hopes that "If people with epilepsy and their families talk about it, the policymakers, teachers and employers will begin to understand that epilepsy affects people in all communities and when treated, people with epilepsy can live productive lives".

International Epilepsy Day is celebrated in more than 100 countries. In Aotearoa/New Zealand we acknowledge this through sharing of stories in our communities and honouring our Epilepsy Warriors.

See more at www.epilepsy.org.nz

About Epilepsy NZ

Epilepsy affects around 1 in a 100 people in New Zealand or around 48,000 people.

Around 70% of people living with epilepsy are well maintained on one or more anti-seizure medications.

Epilepsy New Zealand is the only nationwide organisation providing information and support to people living with epilepsy in New Zealand.

If you or someone you know needs support, please reach out to us on 0800 374537 or national@epilepsy.org.nz

**** ENDS ****

For more information or to contact Ross Smith or Glenn Livingstone please contact:

Ross Smith

CEO, Epilepsy NZ

HAMILTON

Phone: 021-979306

Email: ceo@epilepsy.org.nz

www.epilepsy.org.nz

Established as a registered charity in 1956 (CC10611)