



23-Feb-2020

NZ Association of Scientists Reacts to Concerns at Massey Albany

The New Zealand Association of Scientists (NZAS) is monitoring the concerns raised by scientists and those in related disciplines at Massey University Albany, following two recent [news](#) items posted on the university website. The president of NZAS, Prof Troy Baisden, comments:

“Massey University has expanded aggressively in recent decades, putting itself and other institutions in the same markets under financial pressures.”

“Massey’s recent news articles suggest a major realignment, reflecting tight finances. Reports suggest deep concern among academics in science and related disciplines on the Albany campus, speculating that deep cuts could have unforeseen consequences in science and related disciplines.”

“What is most concerning is that announcements appear to come ahead of internal consultation, including the traditional role of academic boards in allowing leaders in research and teaching to manage the impact of proposed changes.”

“As a result, the [‘Digital Plus’](#) strategy may well be poorly considered. The logical implications appear to be either a big modern Auckland campus devoid of critical mass in STEM disciplines, or maintaining excellence in some science disciplines when supporting subjects such as maths and statistics are deprecated to digital learning only.”

“More broadly, universities offering research-informed teaching are complex systems, and blinkered efforts to improve on a single metric, such cost per student, often have costly unintended consequences. Public [information](#) shows Massey’s finances are tight yet stable, so scientists appear to be right to question risky changes that will distract from excellence in teaching and research, or sink morale.”

“If proposals gut working teams or cause top flight academics to leave, those left behind will be far less successful delivering research excellence and shepherding students toward successful careers.”

Contact: Prof Troy Baisden (President NZAS) ph: 021 875 160 email: president@scientists.org.nz
www.scientists.org.nz