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Scientific Society Presidents Call for Ministerial Intervention in Massey Science Cuts

The Presidents and Past Presidents of seven of New Zealand's scientific societies have released an open letter calling for incoming Ministers to intervene in Massey University's proposal to cut one third of science staff.

The letter's release coincides with the closing day of Massey's consultation on the cuts, and a last chance for reconsideration using standard academic processes within the university.

The letter states, "The sheer magnitude of change, its lack of clear definition, and intended purpose stand in stark contrast to the legislative definition of a university."

President of the New Zealand Association of Scientists, University of Waikato Professor Troy Baisden, says "Massey's proposal and processes undermine all five elements defining a university under the New Zealand legislation."

The letter states, "The consequence for institutions that do not act in accordance with their legislation must be ministerial intervention."

"We agree that the threshold for Ministerial intervention is indeed very high, but find clearly that it has been crossed."

In determining that the cuts are nationally significant, the presidents of the scientific bodies also note that the executive of the public university is acting with less accountability than a publicly traded corporation.

"Unless Massey University undertakes immediate remediation of its processes as we request, we call on the Minister of Tertiary Education and the Minister of Research Science and Technology to urgently rein in the pace of decision-making at Massey University and install an appropriate independent review mechanism."

The open letter is available: <http://bit.ly/MasseyCuts>