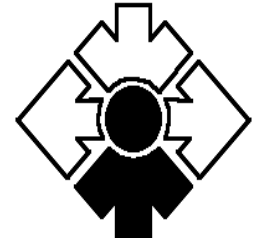


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Concerns for Reduced Science Content at Radio NZ

The New Zealand Association of Scientists (NZAS) is troubled by news of changes to science content at New Zealand public broadcaster RNZ.

NZAS Past-President Associate Professor Nicola Gaston says “We are particularly concerned about the future for the type of science coverage provided by the Our Changing World programme. This is the only programme delivering quality, in-depth, science stories for, and about, New Zealand. Its format allows for in-depth exploration of topics and even allows for scrutiny of scientific thinking, a behind-the-scenes intro into what it is like to work in the world of science.”

“Importantly, it focuses a good deal of the time on New Zealand science and scientists. It aligns well with the Government’s current and laudable push to improve society’s science literacy”, Gaston says.

Gaston notes “the very first point of the RNZ charter says it provides ‘programmes which contribute toward intellectual, **scientific**, cultural, development’.

The Association does understand that there is a need to periodically reinvigorate content. However, from what we have been able to determine, it seems the present plan will see a significant reduction in on-air science content.

The need for as many people as possible to understand and value science will only grow with the challenges facing us: climate impacts, ageing yet growing populations, technology, enforced migration, pandemics, environmental stress, biodiversity, and more besides.

It appears self-evident to us that RNZ, as a public broadcaster, should play a lead role in delivering this knowledge.

Dr Gaston states that “by all means, we expect RNZ to question and re-think science programming - but we need to create more New Zealand science content, not less”.

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[current NZAS President Associate Professor Craig Stevens is in Korea until Wednesday 11 May but available by email at president@scientists.org.nz].