



20-Nov-2019

NZ Association of Scientists Announces New President and Agenda

The New Zealand Association of Scientists (NZAS) new President is Professor Troy Baisden, based at the University of Waikato.

Baisden says, “I’m the first recent NZAS President based outside Wellington or Auckland. By taking on this role, I can help represent the large number of scientists working out of regional centres, including those focused on primary production and environmental issues.”

“A large proportion of public research funds relate to primary production and environment, and the nexus between these issues is a matter of deep public interest. These areas will get some extra focus within NZAS’s main objectives, which are to support scientists, promote and communicate science, including sound science policy.”

“For years, NZAS has raised concerns that a lack of stable positions for scientists immediately after their PhDs undermines the science sector. The problem is most acute in research disciplines including agriculture and the environment where New Zealand careers require unique knowledge that takes years to build.”

“Our focus on supporting early career scientists intersects with our focus on diversity issues in science. There are widespread concerns that Māori and Pasifika are underrepresented, undermining the role of science in addressing equity and Treaty of Waitangi issues.”

NZAS will also continue to consider MBIE’s recent draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy. Baisden worries that, “it doesn’t signal clear directions, particularly across environmental science and the primary sector. These areas differ from industrial and technological innovation, which dominate science policy internationally.”

“In addition, the draft Strategy’s focus on connections raises concerns that National Science Challenges are not achieving their intended level of connectedness and deserve more transparent review.”

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