

Media statement – 17 July, 2017

The following statement was prepared in response to questions from a media organisation:

Why can't groups extend their bookings for recreational facilities at the Karori campus after 1 December, 2017?

Victoria made the decision to divest the Karori campus in August 2016. At that time, we developed and communicated a time-frame of 12 to 24 months for the divestment process. As this process is now well advanced, we are unable to give any certainty about the use of the campus beyond 1 December 2017.

Why has Victoria not entered into a masterplanning exercise with Wellington City Council around the future of the Karori campus?

The University has engaged closely with Wellington City Council (WCC) throughout the divestment process. The future owner(s) of the campus site may wish to engage in a masterplan exercise with WCC regarding the future of the site. That is not the role of the prior owners.

Victoria University's primary purpose is to provide high quality, cost-effective tertiary education to our students and research on behalf of the wider community. Other bodies have a mission to provide community facilities, to make town planning decisions and to decide on investment in schools.

Commentary on suggestions that Victoria University bought the Karori campus for \$10

Victoria University did not buy the Karori campus for \$10. The \$10 consideration paid when the Crown transferred the Karori campus title to Victoria University has become the subject of myth and ignores the fact that the University has invested many millions of dollars in upgrading and maintaining the facility. Victoria has been the beneficial owner of the Karori campus since 2004. It acquired the assets and liabilities of the College of Education by merger. At the time of the merger (in 2004) the assets and liabilities of the campus were transferred onto the University's balance sheet at their market value at that date. Since that time, Victoria has been fully responsible for upgrades, maintenance, operating and insurance costs. We also now need to meet the very considerable costs of re-developing a building on the Kelburn Campus to provide permanent accommodation to the staff and students displaced by the closure of the Karori campus.

The proceeds from the sale of the Karori campus will go towards repairing earthquake damage, providing permanent facilities at Kelburn for the students and staff of the Faculty of Education who were displaced by the closure of the Karori campus (and are currently in temporary facilities) and scholarships for disadvantaged students.

Additional information

Why did Victoria turn down the enquiry, from WCC, for the NZ Ballet to use space at the Karori campus?

Victoria responded quickly and positively to WCC's enquiry by advising that the NZ Ballet was more than welcome to use the site until December 2017. We have also allowed the Police to use the campus for training exercises until the end of 2017.

However, WCC required a site for the NZ Ballet that provided certainty of tenure through to as late as 2019 and therefore decided that the availability of the Karori campus did not meet this requirement.