

**From:** [Jarred Griffiths](#)  
**To:** [xxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xx.xx](mailto:xxxxxxxxx@xxxxx.xx.xx)  
**Cc:** [Anna Fifield](#)  
**Subject:** Mayor Barry's OpEd for tomorrow's Hutt News  
**Date:** Monday, 26 July 2021 11:29:21 AM  
**Attachments:** [Mayor Campbell Barry OpEd - 26July2021.docx](#)

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Hi there,

Please find attached piece on behalf of Mayor Campbell Barry for tomorrow's Hutt News.

Give me a bell if there are any issues.

Ngā mihi,

**Jarred Griffiths** ([He/Him](#))

[Pou Arataki Tari o Te Koromatua](#) | Head of Mayor's Office

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040,  
New Zealand

**Kawereō:** 027 245 5569 **Paetukutuku:** [www.huttcity.govt.nz](http://www.huttcity.govt.nz)

## **Council is investing in necessary infrastructure**

Last week's Hutt News carried an opinion piece written by Bruce Sherlock. While I don't usually respond to opinion pieces, I consider it important to correct some of Mr Sherlock's statements and provide additional context.

I'm not going to beat around the bush. Our infrastructure (like much of New Zealand) has experienced decades of underinvestment. Our water infrastructure in particular is under immense pressure from a trifecta of issues: ageing infrastructure, unprecedented population growth, and yes, underinvestment.

60 per cent of our water infrastructure needs to be upgraded or replaced in the next 30 years, and our city has reached its 2030 population forecast ten years early. Council's previous leadership neglected to plan and budget for either scenario.

We also know that repairs were put off and some assets were run into the ground. Wellington Water tells us we have a \$230 million backlog of deferred renewals in Lower Hutt. We are now having to play catch-up so those assets don't fail.

I make no apologies for doubling investment in water infrastructure over the next 10 years. There is no alternative, we have to get the basics right.

Mr Sherlock said our city's previous rubbish and recycling service wasn't broken. That's not what people were telling us.

There was very little capacity in the old green crates for recycling. What made it into the crate was often strewn around the city on a windy day.

Rubbish and recycling work as one system. You can't tweak one part of the system without affecting the other. If Council had just upgraded recycling in the city, we would have faced increased levels of contamination. That has happened at other Councils.

Sticking with the previous system would have also cost more — \$116 per year as opposed to \$105 per year under the new system.

As for rubbish collection, every household now gets a bin, and for 80 per cent of people, it will be cheaper. Yes, admittedly the service will cost more for some low-waste producers. However, we will review the service in a year with a view to make improvements.

In the meantime, people will benefit from reduced carbon emissions from fewer (and electric) collection trucks on the road as well as less waste going to landfill. This will extend its life and put off having to find and invest in a new location, and that's a win for our city.

Mr Sherlock also claims that by no longer accepting green waste directly at Silverstream Landfill, this will increase costs to Council and the environment. This is incorrect.

Accepting green waste for landfill cover generates methane which is one of the most potent greenhouse gases. Composting is far better for the environment, and saves Council money through reduced emissions liability.

We've also recently installed a flare at Silverstream Landfill to burn off methane. This was recommended in 2018, but was not quickly progressed under Mr Sherlock's management. It's likely the delay in installing the flare cost Council between \$700,000 - \$1 million in avoidable Emission Trading Scheme costs in the past year.

I'm proud of the new approach our Council is taking, and I don't resile from it. It's pretty simple — failing to invest and change now will only become more expensive (economically and environmentally) in the long run.

**From:** [Jarred Griffiths](#)  
**To:** [Anna Fifield](#); [Nicholas Boyack](#)  
**Cc:** [Caryn Ellis](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to Bruce Sherlock piece in today's Hutt News  
**Date:** Wednesday, 21 July 2021 12:16:46 PM

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Tēnā koutou,

Thanks Anna/Nicholas. Campbell will take up the opportunity and will supply something ahead of that deadline. Can you please advise of your word limit (would 550 be fine)?

Re Mr Sherlock's opinion piece, I want to be absolutely clear neither the Mayor nor Council dispute his right to hold an opinion or have a piece published – however, believe facts and accuracy of information are fundamentally important.

We agree that some matters come down to interpretation, but others are patently incorrect. Read together, it is simply not accurate.

Thanks again for opportunity for Mayor to respond.

Ngā mihi,

**Jarred Griffiths** ([He/Him](#))

[Pou Arataki Tari o Te Koromatua](#) | Head of Mayor's Office

Te Kaunihera o Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City Council, 30 Laings Road, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040, New Zealand  
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**From:** Anna Fifield <xxxx.xxxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 21 July 2021 12:06 PM  
**To:** Nicholas Boyack <xxxxxxx.xxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx>  
**Cc:** Jarred Griffiths <xxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx.xxxx.xx>; Caryn Ellis <Caryn.xxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxxx.xx>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to Bruce Sherlock piece in today's Hutt News

hi Jarred -- confirming this. many of these points seem matters of interpretation and as you note, Bruce Sherlock is entitled to his opinion (he's also entitled to say that he used to perform this role at the council -- that explains his qualifications to write and is standard practice)

Campbell is welcome to a right of reply. please send it to Nicholas by the deadline

Thanks, Anna

On Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 12:01 PM Nicholas Boyack <[xxxxxxx.xxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx](mailto:xxxxxxx.xxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx)> wrote:

Jarred, Anna has asked me to respond to your email re the Bruce Sherlock column. As you correctly point out it is an opinion piece and represents his genuine opinion.  
Bruce was a long standing and well regarded council employee and is entitled to express an opinion.  
You will be aware that I was in contact with Caryn Ellis prior to publication and after it appeared. I emphasised that the council was welcome to respond and also offered to run an opinion piece supplied by Jo Miller to the DP.  
My offer remains on the table and we would welcome a response from Campbell. Our deadline for the Hutt News is Monday 10am.  
If you do choose to respond please CC in Anna, as I am away on Monday.  
Give me a ring if you want to discuss this further.

Nicholas

On Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 9:15 PM Anna Fifield <[xxxx.xxxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx](mailto:xxxx.xxxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx)> wrote:

let's talk about this

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jarred Griffiths** <xxxxxx.xxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx>

Date: Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 9:13 PM

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to Bruce Sherlock piece in today's Hutt News

To: Anna Fifield <xxx.xxxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx>

Hi Anna,

Yes, sure – have quickly made a few points below:

- Para 1 – Mr Sherlock claims Cr Milne had not voted for Council's LTP. Cr Milne did not vote for the adoption of the plan, but supported all initiatives within the plan.
- Para 2 – minor omission, though would note Mr Sherlock claims the Mayor makes a direct correlation between rates rise and history underinvestment in the ad that was run. The Mayor did not reference the rates rise.
- Para 3 – Mr Sherlock claims the Mayor's points around underinvestment are not supported by evidence. This is not true, particularly advice that Wellington Water has given Council over the years that the investment in water infrastructure has simply been insufficient.
- Para 4 – Mr Sherlock gives reader impression that Council has detailed asset information for all of its assets. This is simply untrue, part of Council's challenge (not just Hutt – but can be seen in Wellington too) is the quality of asset information.
- Para 4- Mr Sherlock claims Council's are required to include funding in LTPs if issues are identified in asset investigations. This is simply not true – Council's have absolute discretion in investment levels.
- Para 5 – Council questions this, apparent, glowing feedback. Particularly because asset information was extremely incomplete.
- Para 6 – Mr Sherlock claims Lower Hutt has seen no infrastructure failures that have plagued Wellington. This is simply not true. Council is grappling with significant wastewater discharge issues into local waterways. The Waiwhetu aquifer has been chlorinated since 2017 due to unknown e-coli contamination, water leaks across the network have increased 60% since 2016.
- Para 7 – Mr Sherlock has employed some back-of-the-envelope maths to calculate increase in headcount. This is not accurate (though waiting on HR to confirm). Increase in costs are due in part to a modest increase in staffing, but also remuneration inflation etc. What the piece also misses, is that more staff have been needed to perform core activities like processing building consents, resource consents etc.
- Para 8 – Mr Sherlock is comparing apples with bowling balls here. Council's refuse system was user-pays, as it was rubbish bags only. There was a net cost to most households, who still used a private collection service. In putting in place a Council-run refuse service, most ratepayers (approx. 80%) will experience a net saving. The figure of \$6 million is presented as a net increase, however this does not reflect the savings households will see.
- Para 8 – Mr Sherlock raises point of cost of recycling, and it being \$40 when he left and \$100 now. This paints an incomplete picture. First, Council's previous recycling contract was based on the contractor selling recyclables on the market. As you will know, the recycling market has collapsed over the past two/three years. This means the same contract, if renewed, would actually cost \$105 p/year. Council's new service is, on this basis, cheaper than the previous service had it continued, as the contract doesn't include the sale of material (and worth noting, under the current agreement, Council would receive a share of recycling sales should the market pick up again)
- Para 8 – Mr Sherlock suggests that Council has other avenues to enhance the environment. This is true, however neglects the fact that the landfill represents Lower Hutt's largest contribution to emissions and therefore rubbish and recycling services are one of the biggest levers Council has to improve outcomes in this area
- Para 9 – Mr Sherlock makes several points about green waste at the landfill. Firstly, it's not that Council no longer accepts it, it's that it is no longer mulched and used as landfill cover. This is because it generated significant amounts of methane. If this practice had continued, Council's liability under the Emissions Trading Scheme would have been higher than it otherwise could be. Therefore, a decision has been made to compost this instead.
- Para 9 – Mr Sherlock infers that gas from green waste generates electricity. This is partially true – however it is actually gas from the entire landfill operation that contributes to electricity generation. Therefore, without the green waste being mulched, electricity is still being generation – this is contrary to his points in the subsequent paragraph as well
- Para 10 – This is simply misleading, and suggests the current process is more environmentally damaging than what occurred in the past. This is not true, as we are diverting material that would in itself generate large amounts of methane gas.
- Para 10 – Mr Sherlock makes a suggestion that reduced electricity production will increase NZ's reliance on coal-fire production. This is preposterous, given the insignificant amount of electricity generated at Silverstream.
- Para 11 – Mr Sherlock states Council's plan (presumably combination of rubbish, recycling, landfill management

changes will have no environment benefit). This is categorically incorrect. The changes have already increased both volume and quality of recycling collected, will likely extend the life of Silverstream Landfill, gives Council (for the first time) a complete picture of Lower Hutt's waste stream, and management decisions at the landfill have reduced Council's ETS liability

- Para 12 – Mr Sherlock infers the Chief Executive has had a role in approving the rates increase. This is incorrect, only elected members have that authority.

There are other issues the Mayor (and Council) has with the piece, however we accept these are largely Mr Sherlock's genuine opinion. However, a response would certainly help readers come to their own conclusion on the validity.

Give me a bell if you need anything further.

Ngā mihi,

**Jarred Griffiths** ([He/Him](#))

[Pou Arataki Tari o Te Koromatua | Head of Mayor's Office](#)

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**From:** Anna Fifield <[xxxx.xxxxxx@xxxx.xx.x](mailto:xxxx.xxxxxx@xxxx.xx.x)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 20 July 2021 8:19 PM

**To:** Jarred Griffiths <[xxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.x](mailto:xxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.x)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to Bruce Sherlock piece in today's Hutt News

hi Jarred -- can you please outline what are the errors/misinformation?

thanks,  
Anna

On Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 4:37 PM Jarred Griffiths <[xxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.x](mailto:xxxxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.x)> wrote:

Kia ora Anna,

Hope you're well, and survived the wild weather over the weekend. I think last time we spoke you said you have a trampoline escape your section, so hopefully there was no repeat of that at your place!

Re Bruce Sherlock's piece in the Hutt News today, Campbell (and senior staff) are frankly quite surprised Mr Sherlock has stepped into the political fray re some of Council's recent decisions.

There is also an element of frustration at the level of misinformation in the opinion piece, and the fact he has used his former title to peddle misinformation for a political impact.

For both of these reasons, I wonder if you would consider publishing a response from Campbell in next week's Hutt News – and if this could be prominent i.e in the first section of the paper.

Happy to chat over the phone if useful.

Ngā mihi,

**Jarred Griffiths** ([He/Him](#))

[Pou Arataki Tari o Te Koromatua | Head of Mayor's Office](#)

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**Nicholas Boyack**

Senior journalist

**7(2)(a)**

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**From:** [Jarred Griffiths](#)  
**To:** [Anna Fifield](#)  
**Subject:** Response to Bruce Sherlock piece in today's Hutt News  
**Date:** Tuesday, 20 July 2021 4:37:24 PM

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Kia ora Anna,

Hope you're well, and survived the wild weather over the weekend. I think last time we spoke you said you have a trampoline escape your section, so hopefully there was no repeat of that at your place!

Re Bruce Sherlock's piece in the Hutt News today, Campbell (and senior staff) are frankly quite surprised Mr Sherlock has stepped into the political fray re some of Council's recent decisions.

There is also an element of frustration at the level of misinformation in the opinion piece, and the fact he has used his former title to peddle misinformation for a political impact.

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Ngā mihi,

**Jarred Griffiths** ([He/Him](#))

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