

BrightEconomy column, Rotorua Daily Post 10 August 2006

Forum sets out growth path

By Bryce Heard, chairman, BrightEconomy Advisory Board

The 2006 Rotorua Economic Opportunities Forum, held today, is the culmination of 10 months' planning and consultation, and the beginning of a detailed plan to increase Rotorua's economic growth.

The Forum allows the BrightEconomy Advisory Board to set out a robust framework for development and a detailed path towards sustainable economic development that will improve Rotorua's overall standard of living.

If development is to be really sustainable it must build on Rotorua's strengths – our comparative advantages that will enable us to compete more effectively, nationally and globally.

The Board had to develop a method of screening opportunities and setting priorities so that it came up with a clear, coherent, sustainable development path.

We called this screening tool the Future Insights process. Through it we identified 10 relevant global, national and local "drivers of change" that will affect economies and people over the next two decades.

The Board applied these drivers of change to Rotorua's situation, and especially to our natural comparative advantages, to come up with a nine-point development framework, consisting of three existing primary economic drivers and six new fields of opportunity for sustainable development in Rotorua.

The existing drivers are tourism, agriculture, and forestry and wood processing.

The six new fields are: Bio-materials, local energy generation, water, land use optimisation, immigration and lifestyle investment, and research and development.

In the coming months, each of these six fields is to be investigated more deeply to test the thinking to date and identify detailed business opportunities.