

## **BrightEconomy column, Rotorua Daily Post, 14 September 2006**

***By Margriet Theron, BrightEconomy Advisory Board member***

Among the six areas of opportunity identified by the BrightEconomy Advisory Board, local energy generation stands out as an area of focus where the district stands to gain very large dividends from sustainable development.

The Drivers of Change process identified security of energy supplies as a major global concern over the next two decades. The process also made it clear that the effects of extreme weather and rising oil costs will impact on New Zealand's energy supply system. We will also have to contend with lagging infrastructure investment which can threaten security of supply.

If Rotorua can offer secure, local energy supplies at a reasonable cost we will immediately become more attractive as a place to invest and do business, and to live and work.

The BrightEconomy Board has established that we have the potential to be largely self-sufficient in energy generation through sustainable resources such as water for hydro-electricity generation, geothermal steam and bio-mass from forest and sawmill waste.

These are Rotorua's special natural advantages, which could be supplemented by wind and solar power generation over time.

We know that entrepreneurs are already working on some energy developments for the district and region, and we are keen to see more planning under way.

Energy developers, the district and regional councils and the community also need certainty in the planning process to ensure everyone can be confident that sound, sustainable development can go ahead in ways that will work with our natural environment.

The BrightEconomy Board has gathered information about patterns of local energy use. We are working now to assess the comparative advantages of different generation opportunities, and to start determining the most efficient methods, to help guide effective investment.