

## **BrightEconomy column, Rotorua Daily Post 17 August 2006**

### **Forum supporters keen to get on with it**

***By Bryce Heard, chairman, BrightEconomy Advisory Board***

Workshops on fields of opportunity were the heart of the 2006 Rotorua Economic Growth Opportunities Forum last Thursday.

A strong message came out of each of the five workshops – business people want to be more involved in helping to plan for sustainable economic growth in Rotorua. They want follow-up workshops, more information and more participation.

The response is heartening for the BrightEconomy Advisory Board, which organised the Forum with the help of Destination Rotorua Economic Development. We knew we were on the right track, and it was pleasing to get such a strong endorsement from the business community.

They bought strongly into the vision of sustainable growth to bring long-term improvements in Rotorua's economic, social and cultural environment – more and better jobs, a stronger tax base for public facilities, environmentally and culturally sound development.

The 230 people who attended the Forum also provided feedback to help guide the Board and focus its thinking and efforts in the coming months.

Our next step now is collating all the feedback, then we will work to organise follow-up workshops while research and studies are continuing to identify specific business prospects among the six new fields of opportunity that were set out at the Forum.

The first follow-up workshop to be held is likely to be about water, which shared a Forum workshop with research and development. Those with a particular interest in developing water-based business opportunities made it clear they wanted a workshop of their own to examine the issues in more depth and drive the process forward.

There is no doubt the BrightEconomy Board's approach to sustainable economic development has support. A challenge for the Board now will be to use our limited resources to drive the planning process as far and as quickly as a number of supporters want to see.