

BrightEconomy Advisory Board - Chairman's Report
February 2007

Submissions

No formal submissions were lodged during the month.

Annual Review

A date has been set for the annual review with the Mayor, on 7th February, so I will be able to brief the board on the outcome at the meeting on 9th February.

Strategy Implementation

The Cumminscorp Group have been supplied with the relevant data by Chris Heyward, to put together a detailed proposal to upgrade water quality in Lake Rotorua. The two key technologists (Ian Cummins and Ngaire Sadler), plan to visit Rotorua early this year to get a first hand appreciation of the matter at hand.

The Corporation is reportedly undergoing a change of shareholding which is delaying the process somewhat.

Board Interactions

Plans to have a field day viewing strategy related areas with Councillors and senior Council staff, are to be re-initiated this year, but may be influenced by staffing matters (see below).

A follow up Biomaterials (Wood Innovation Centre) workshop attracted very poor attendance in December with the major local participants all finding more pressing things to do in the hectic run up to Christmas. This was disappointing, but not unexpected. I am initiating involvement of the NZ Forest Owners Association to see if the project can be given legs. I also want to get input from my committee colleagues, Ray and Harvey on the best way forward.

Policy (reminder only)

The November board meeting discussed its responsibilities and powers to act in respect of situations where it might encounter a major difference of opinion with the Council.

The board will use all of its powers of persuasion and knowledge at its disposal to convert the Council to its viewpoint in such a situation ("Advisory"), but will stop short of entering into public lobbying/politicking to solicit support for its opinions (as outlined in its mandate)

The issue arose because of a sense that the board's submission on rating is not getting the airtime that we believe it deserves, and Council seems set on a course of only exploring two options, neither of which addresses the underlying issues which cause rate payer resistance in our view.

In the same way, the board also believes that it should not be an external submitter on the development of the 10 year strategic plan, but should be an internal contributor throughout the early development stages, if it is to be effective in influencing strategic development of the region positively.

In summary the board sees its role as a confidante of council rather than as a just another external lobby group. However to be effective in this role this requires council to treat the board as a confidante, helping it resolve the best possible pathway forward for our city and region.

Staff

Mark Rawson has tendered his resignation from the position of General Manager of Destination Rotorua EDU. This leaves a huge hole in our resources, and he will be sorely missed by the Board.

On behalf of the Board I thank Mark for a truly huge contribution, and wish him well in his new role with the Red Stag Group. I have had discussions with the CEO of RDC about replacement of Mark, and will discuss this with the Board, for input and assistance with the recruiting initiative.

Additionally, Amanda Gooding has suffered some health problems over the Christmas break, further depleting our scant resources. Amanda is now back at work part time.

On behalf of the board I extend to Amanda, our wish for a speedy and full recovery.

Bryce Heard
Chairman
BEAB