

Funding approved for energy strategy

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Funding for an energy strategy for the Bay of Plenty has been approved by NZ Trade and Enterprise.

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council announced that the region's economic development application to NZTE for regional economic development activities has been approved in full. This includes funding to complete work started last year on an energy strategy for the Bay of Plenty.

The purpose of the strategy is to bring a wide perspective to energy sources and use in the Bay of Plenty and how they can be applied to create wealth opportunities.

The strategy will look at a wide range of aspects relating to energy, including conservation, renewable sources, security of supply, export opportunities, new and emerging technologies and employment opportunities.

A reference group of industry, consumers and specialists will be formed to assist in developing the strategy, which will also identify what barriers exist for wealth creation opportunities.

Rotorua District Council's Chief Executive Peter Guerin said the most important aspect from Rotorua's perspective was what the strategy would say about using geothermal resources.

"We are very interested to see how new technologies could be employed to unlock use of geothermal energy for use in domestic, business and industry in the Rotorua area. Not only are we looking to drive economic growth, we are also keen to see the district utilize cleaner energy sources to address problems such as our air quality," Mr Guerin said.

Work on the energy strategy will commence in the next few months and will be coordinated with work being done on a forestry strategy for the Bay, which has also received NZTE funding.

The strategy is expected to be released for comment to an energy forum planned for early next year.

It is linked to the recently released National Energy Strategy, which sets the strategic direction of the energy sector and the role energy will play in New Zealand's economy. The Government is currently consulting on the [draft New Zealand Energy Strategy](#).

Replacing a 2007 document, the new strategy has been updated to align with current government energy policy priorities and to reflect a stronger focus on economic development.

Regional Governance Group member Anthony Olsen, who has a special interest in geothermal energy use, supported the strategy.

"Outcomes from this strategy will demonstrate how the wide ranging opportunities relating to sustainable energy can be harnessed in an integrated and collaborative way for the economic benefit for all of our communities."

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