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**LOST ... former surf mecca Kirra Beach.**

## Time to put break back on the map

KIRRA'S world fame as a surfing destination will be used as ammunition to preserve the area's identity.

The newly-formed Kirra Business Group is aiming to work with the Kirra Point Committee to secure the unique character of what was once one of the world's most famous surfing breaks.

Group spokesman John Rankin said visitor numbers had declined since the Kirra Point break was lost because of the Tweed River sand bypass.

He said Kirra's surfing brand image was famous worldwide, yet even Gold Coasters found it difficult to define exactly where it was.

"They think it's part of Bilonga or Coolangatta," he said.

Mr Rankin said the group would work closely with the committee, of which he was the business representative, to rejuvenate surfing.

"Kirra's a great place to visit, but the width of the beach because of sand pumping is a major negative influence," he said.

"In contrast, during the '90s Kirra beach suffered from erosion, so we need to find the right balance."

Committee member Neil Lazarow, of Griffith University's Centre for Coastal Management, said the loss of Kirra as a southern Gold Coast recreational asset and one of the world's premier surfing breaks had significantly affected both the economy and the community.

He said local and visiting surfers pumped an estimated \$300 to \$500 million a year into the Gold Coast, and Kirra was missing its slice of the pie.

The business group will hold a public function next Wednesday at Café Fresh from 7pm.

Call 5536 1010 for details.