

## Fanning Kirra's revival flames

Colin Gilmore | 3rd November 2011



BRING IT BACK: Two time world surfing champion Mick Fanning wants the famed Kirra Point break restored.

Blainey Woodham

TWO-TIME world surfing champion Mick Fanning has thrown his support behind the extension of the Big Groyne at Kirra Point.

He joined representatives of the Tweed River Sand Bypass Project, Bring Back Kirra and Kirra Point Incorporated to criticise the groyne's reduction 16 years ago.

Bypass project committee member Wayne "Rabbit" Bartholomew said after "15 bad surfing seasons" the groyne reduction's negative impact had "gone far beyond a coincidence".

"I was born and bred here and really, it was guys like Mick and Joel (Parkinson) who tasted the last few great years of Kirra," Mr Bartholomew said.

"Anyone under the age of 28 has never surfed Kirra and it's been an invaluable part of Mick's development."

Mr Fanning said Kirra Point's world-famous thick-lipped and super-fast barrels were a fable to young professional surfers.

He said Kirra used to prepare local professionals for other world-class breaks, such as South Africa's Jeffrey's Bay and Hawaii's Pipeline.

Mr Fanning said Kirra's missing break was costing surfers experience, which could not be matched at nearby Duranbah, Snapper Rocks and Currumbin Alley.

"Still to this day, (10-time world champion) Kelly Slater rates it as the best wave in the world and we've got to get it back."

Mr Bartholomew said with elections looming, he had heard "good intentions and lip service" from authorities but said "we need some resolve."

"People would line the boardwalk when Kirra was on," he said.

"They would come and stay and the Kirra precinct is missing out on all that.

"Our plan's not that radical - it's like having a grand prix race track and tweaking the chicanes."

Bring Back Kirra president Wayne Dean said the Department of Environment and Resource Management and Gold Coast City Council had been approached to fix the problem.

"DERM says it's the council's responsibility and the council says DERM should do it," Mr Dean said.

"(Division 14) Councillor Chris Robbins has been great, doing her best to restore it to its former glory," he said.

"But while the council is trying to do their best, they simply haven't had the funding."

Mr Fanning said that when he was young, Kirra "helped immensely with our training".

"It gave that confidence to be able to surf big barrels," he said.

"And it was a great foundation to take to the world tour."