

## Shifting sands publicly debated

Colin Gilmore | 10th November 2011

FOUR options for enhancing the Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project are being considered by the public.

Option one is most likely to improve Kirra Point surf conditions but is also the least likely to be adopted, involving two additional pump outlets 1200m and 2400m north of an existing Kirra Point outlet.

Option two proposes extra and further offshore dredge placements of sand at Tugun, Bilinga and Snapper Rocks.

Option three suggests a one-off deposit at Kingscliff's heavily eroded beach of 200,000sq m of Tweed River entrance sand.

And option four proposes "back passing" Tweed River entrance sand south of the Letitia Spit pumping jetty, after which it would join the natural northward drift of sand the jetty mimics.

At a Tweed Civic Centre public meeting the company responsible for the four options, GHD Australia's project director Paul O'Keefe said option one was easily the most expensive at an overall cost of \$6 million.

"The North Kirra outlet is unfavourable," he said.

A local named Deborah asked if Mr O'Keefe saw North Kirra as a long-term solution, ignoring timelines or costs.

"The system would be expensive to maintain and the reason it was originally considered was because there was a large volume of sand in Coolangatta and Kirra, but since we started the study there's been considerable movement of sand northward anyway."

The options feasibility report states the North Kirra outlet would also "have a direct detrimental impact on the local beach amenity where the sand delivery outlet infrastructure is located".

"The use of a North Kirra outlet on a routine basis could also seriously starve the southernmost Gold Coast beaches of their requirements for restored sand supply.

"Consequently, routine use of this option would not provide a long-term enhancement to the system operations in terms of achieving project objectives that seek to restore and continue a natural sand supply to all the southern Gold Coast beaches."

Mr O'Keefe said the Kingscliff option was also expensive but "beach nourishment of 200,000sq m lasts five years - that's five years of good beach amenity".

Some locals questioned how any of the options could restore Kirra Point's once-famous surf break. "Surf breaks are dependent on where the sand goes and it's very difficult to pinpoint exactly what's going to happen," Mr O'Keefe said.

According to the report, surf quality at Kirra could improve through use of the North Kirra outlet.

"However, this would be subject to careful planning and placement of sand, as sand pumping to this location may also cause a local realignment of the beach south-east to Kirra, to the detriment of Kirra surfing and Kirra Reef in the future," it added.

The public can provide feedback until November 30 by visiting [www.tweedsandbypass.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tweedsandbypass.nsw.gov.au).