



Bring back epic Kirra

Surfers step up battle

Terry Kavanagh

THE fight to revive Kirra's world-famous waves will move to a wider front on International Surfing Day this week.

Gold Coast surfers launch website www.kirrapoint.org on Friday to broaden the campaign to fix what was once Queensland's best surf break.

They believe its demise due to sand dredging could be losing the economy millions of dollars from the surf tourism market. They hope to gain the

support of thousands of boardriders.

Griffith University researcher Neil Lazarow and former world champions Wayne Bartholomew and long-boarder Wayne Deane are leading the Bring Back Kirra campaign and hope the website will enlist an army of supporters around the world.

Mr Lazarow, the Kirra Point Committee chairman, said the site aimed to lobby governments, boost community support and raise \$80,000 for research to restore the "magic" tubes of the southern Gold Coast break.

He said Kirra was among the world's best tube-riding breaks until it was buried under thousands of tonnes of sand from the Tweed River sand bypass project, which

started eight years ago.

The scheme involved dredging, dumping and pumping sand from south of the Tweed River to Snapper Rocks and Coolangatta.

It created the Snapper Rocks Superbank but crippled Kirra, turning the wave haven into a 150m-wide surfing sahara.

Eight-time world champion Kelly Slater, who rated the old Kirra as his favourite point break on the planet, joined a chorus of local surf stars mourning the loss and demanding action.

Mr Lazarow said the committee had so far been bogged down by red tape.

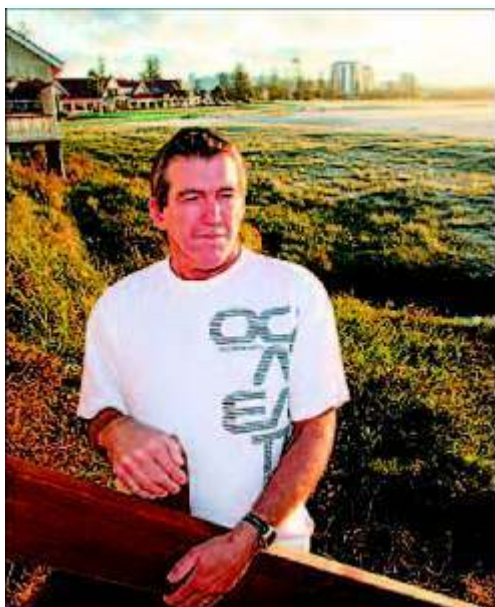
"It's incredibly frustrating," he said. "One of the keys is trying to identify who is actually responsible. It's very complicated because it involves two state governments and two

local councils." Recommendations from Mr Lazarow's initial Kirra Wave Study in 2007 included lengthening Kirra's "Big Groyne" by 30m and depositing sand farther northwest toward Bilinga.

He hoped the website would raise about \$50,000 to investigate the Groyne plan, and another \$30,000 for a study about Gold Coast surfing and Kirra's economic benefits. Mr Lazarow recommended a new \$4 million sand pumping outlet between North Kirra and Bilinga.

The website has a petition which he hopes will show Kirra's world-wide appeal.

Tell us what you think. Email yournews@thesundaymail.com.au, or write to GPO Box 130. Brisbane. 4001



POINT TAKEN: Kirra when it was perfect in the early 1990s (left); and leading the charge to return it to its past glory is longboard champion Wayne Deane (above)

