



# Paddle power pays off

## Governments pulling together to save Kirra

BY JAMES PERKINS

AUSTRALIA Day's Save Kirra paddle out has drawn swift reaction from politicians, according to event organisers.

Less than a week after 1500 people paddled out to protest the loss of waves, event director Andrew McKinnon yesterday said senior government ministers from both sides of the border had agreed to meet and work out a solution.

"There is no doubt that the unprecedented surfing show of strength and the community concern of the loss of Kirra Point has highlighted a distinct message to the powers that be and the reaction has drawn a quick response with discussions set in place with Queensland and New South Wales State government ministers ready to deal with the problem," Mr McKinnon said.

There have been meetings with the government about the loss of Kirra before, but Mr McKinnon said this would be different.

"We are talking to the relevant ministers that can get down to the

root of the problem with the Tweed sand bypass; that hasn't happened before."

Thousands watched from the point as about 1500 paddled out on Australia Day to protest the loss of surf at Kirra, which was once considered one of the world's best waves.

The Tweed River entrance sand bypassing operation started pumping sand from south of the Tweed River to Coolangatta in 2001.

The river was also dredged, with the sand dumped just off Snapper Rocks.

While this created the Superbank, now a world-famous wave in its own right, it also killed Kirra and covered its offshore reef with sand.

Mr McKinnon says the pumping operation could be tweaked so Kirra would return and the Superbank would remain.

The New South Wales Department of Lands and Queensland's Environmental Protection Agency made a joint statement yesterday, saying the sand-pumping system

was always under review and there were signs Kirra was returning.

It said the project was operating with the aim of achieving sand delivery to Gold Coast beaches to match the natural flow of sand along the coast, which had been blocked by the walls at the Tweed River entrance.

"For the 2008 dredging, sand was placed in deeper waters seaward of existing placement areas to slow sand movement into Coolangatta bay," a spokesman said.

"There are very clear signs that the sand in the bay is moving northwards, with a major reduction in sand volume over the past 12 months. This trend is expected to continue under natural conditions. Favourable weather patterns will speed up this process.

"The project partners (including the Queensland EPA, Lands and Gold Coast council) work closely together and will continue to examine this issue to determine whether other actions are appropriate."



1 MORE than 1500 paddled out at Kirra on Australia Day in a mass call to bring Kirra back. INSET: Mick Fanning among the crowd. D12364