



Cover-up claim dug up at Kirra

By JAMES PERKINS

KIRRA Reef may have been allowed to be buried under sand by the Tweed River Sand Bypass despite environmental reports urging its protection, it has been claimed.

Politicians have begun reacting in the aftermath of the Bring Back Kirra paddle out, which attracted 3000 people to Kirra on Australia Day protesting at the loss of the iconic surf break.

Currumbin MP Jann Stuckey on February 5 echoed a promise by Tweed MP Geoff Provest for a freedom of information request to determine if the sand bypass contract required the reef to be protected from any oversupply of sand.

Ms Stuckey said: "Recently I came into possession of comprehensive environmental reports from 1994, 1995 and 1997 conducted by the Queensland and NSW governments that made distinct recommendations to preserve Kirra Reef.

"These reports stated the high conservation value of Kirra Reef, and its associated flora and fauna warranted careful design and implementation of measures to protect this habitat.



1500 people paddled out from a crowd of 3000 protestors to form a map of Australia at the Bring Back Kirra protest on Australia Day.

INSET: Jann Stuckey.

Picture: Joli

"These reports noted the principal concern was the proximity of sand dumping and the possibility of smothering the habitat.

"Until we see a copy of the contract we don't know if these key recommendations have been included or if they have been breached."

Ms Stuckey said if the contract had been breached, all pumping should stop, the contractor should

be sacked and compensation sought to fix the damage.

Save Kirra Point campaigner Joe Nowak said the natural average yearly movement of sand north along the coast was 500,000 cubic metres, yet over 13 years about 10 million cubic metres had been moved by the sand pumping project at a cost to taxpayers of \$77 million.