



The Honourable Andrew McNamara MP  
Member for Hervey Bay



Queensland  
Government

Minister for Sustainability,  
Climate Change and Innovation

26 SEP 2007

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliamentary Service  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter to the Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr MP dated 5 September 2007 relating to Petition No. 798-07 concerning the build-up of sand in and around Kirra Beach.

Queensland's southern beaches received an adequate natural sand supply from the south, before the Tweed River entrance training walls were extended in the early 1960s. The extension of these entrance training walls resulted in a reduction in the natural sand supply to the southern Gold Coast beaches. This caused substantial erosion from Rainbow Bay to Tugun requiring coastal protection works, such as rock walls and groynes. The erosion was most noticeable around Kirra. A number of dredge operations were also undertaken to supply sand to the beaches but the benefits were short-lived as they did not address the overall problem.

The Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Project was designed to replicate nature by delivering sand quantities equivalent to the net natural supply rate from the south. It became operational in May 2001. In the initial years of operation, a quantity of sand greater than the natural supply rate was delivered in order to restore the southern Gold Coast beaches. The additional sand will feed onto the southern Gold Coast beaches by natural coastal processes, which is dependant on the prevailing weather conditions.

The project maintains a dedicated project team both in the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New South Wales Department of Lands to oversee contracts with the operator, and to monitor the performance of operations. To ensure that the bypass system continues to deliver sand consistent with the net natural supply of sand from the south, a number of conditions exist within the *Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing Agreement Act 1998* and the contracts with the operator. These include penalty rates for over or under delivery of sand over a certain threshold. The removal of these conditions would not be beneficial to the project as there would no longer be controls to ensure the overall project objectives are achieved.

The impact of the project on recreational amenities and the environment is routinely monitored and discussed with various community stakeholders through the Project Advisory Committee which includes surfing, surf-lifesaving, fishing and boating interests. The monitoring activities include daily monitoring of beach conditions through video cameras. The results of this monitoring indicate that the beach width at Kirra has reduced 100 metres since November 2006, and is still continuing to reduce.

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Now that the system is supplying sand consistent with the natural littoral drift rates, there will be greater seasonal fluctuations in beach conditions that have not been observed since human interference in the 1960s by the extension of the Tweed River training walls.

The management of the Kirra Point groyne resides with the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC), which is currently investigating options for the groyne as part of an overall Shoreline Erosion Management Plan for the Gold Coast.

A number of the issues detailed in the petition in relation to dredge and pumping placement locations were identified in the Kirra Wave Study undertaken by the Griffith Centre for Coastal Management for the GCCC as part of its overall Shoreline Management Plan. Subsequently, the GCCC has written to the EPA seeking advice in relation to these matters. Discussions are currently underway with the various key stakeholders.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact the project director Mr Robert Schwartz of the EPA on telephone (07) 3869 9529.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew McNamara MP**  
**Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation**