

Council buries surfers' sand plan

By Rosita Gallasch

A PROPOSAL by Cronulla's surfers to have a temporary sand reef put offshore has been scuttled by Sutherland Shire Council.

The idea involved taking sand dredged from the Hacking River channel to a planned offshore location at Cronulla beach to create a temporary bombyra.

However, the council said it did not have enough time to investigate the plan before the scheduled dredging of the river in mid-June.

A group of long-time surfers approached national surfing reef architect Andrew Pitt in February with the idea to better place the sand dredged from the river.

Mr Pitt said the bombyra, an indigenous word for breaking waves on an offshore reef, would produce better surf, safer bathing within flagged areas, a wider beach and protection of the multimillion-dollar Prince Street seawall, at no extra cost.

"The 2010 project should include the planned placement of marine sand with broad benefits, not a random dumping of spoil with hit or miss benefits," Mr Pitt said.

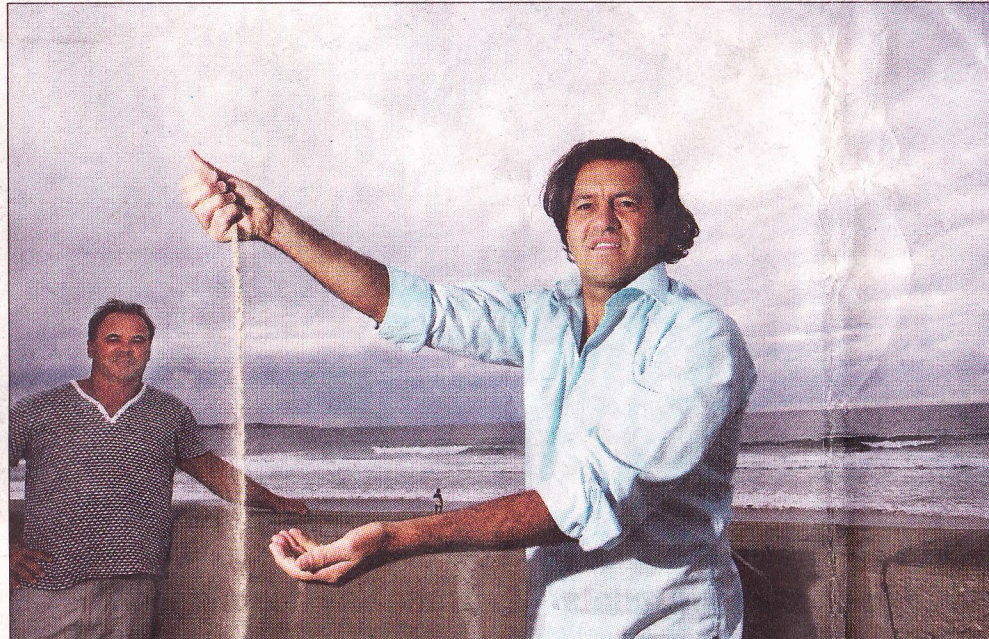
"I support the dredging - it maintains the river for boaters and keeps the navigation channels deep and safe, but I think if we're going to spend this money we should benefit more of the community."

Mr Pitt said the last dredging in 2007 had a "noticeable good impact", with an offshore sand reef created off South Cronulla beach that lasted for six months.

Long-time surfer and *Coastalwatch* editor Ben Horvath said the proposal was "win-win, no matter what".

"Something will have to be done to ensure the sustainability of the beach," Mr Horvath said.

"This (irregular dredging and placement) is



Surf break: Andrew Pitt came up with a proposal to help both the boaties and surfers.

Picture: John Veage

just a short term fix but for long term sustainability there are a couple of options that could be considered."

He said a pipeline from the river to Cronulla beach, similar to one in Queensland from the Tweed River to Snapper Rocks was one idea, or sand could be taken from large offshore deposits kilometres off the NSW coast.

The council accepted a \$1.16 million grant from the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water for the dredging in March.

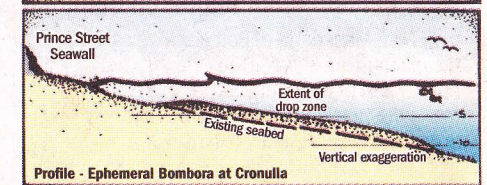
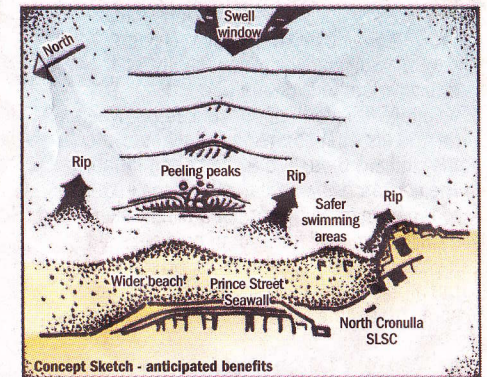
A council spokesman said 46,500 cubic metres would need to be dredged to maintain safe navigation in the river.

Of that, 10,500 cubic metres will be deposited at Lilli Pilli and 36,000 at North Cronulla beach and Cronulla beach, in the wave zone closer to the beach.

A council spokesman said although the proposal would not be considered this year it was possible in future.

"It could be considered for a future round of dredging if that's what the community wants and if there are no adverse environmental impacts," the spokesman said.

"However more detail is needed on the possible environmental impacts and whether it could obtain the necessary approvals required from the state government."



Sketch plans courtesy Andrew Pitt. www.surfineramos.com.au

CREATING WAVES

- The proposal would use 24,000 cubic metres of marine sand
 - It would be placed in the "Prince Street drop zone", which is 400 metres long, with a 50 metre-wide base and tapering to 10 metres wide at the seaward tip
 - It would extend from 200 metres off the shoreline to 600 metres offshore
 - The depth of works will extend from -4 metres Indian spring low water to -11 metres. It is expected to last between 6 and 12 months.
- **What do you think of the reef proposal? Tell us at theleader.com.au**