



• WA Liberal front-benchers Katie Hodson-Thomas and Bernie Masters agreed to get their feet wet and be shown the Beelie wetlands first-hand by locals who don't want Roe Highway stage 8 to be built nearby. Despite the tour the Libs remain committed to the road. However, Mr Masters concedes it needs to be done carefully. The MPs are pictured with Joe Branco from the North Lake Residents' Association, CALM's Neil Goldsborough and Wetland Education Centre's Rex Sallur. Photo by Jenny D'Anger

MPs tour pristine lake

by JENNY D'ANGER

WA LIBERAL environment spokesperson Bernie Masters is adamant Roe Highway stage 8 can, and should, be built between Bibra and North Lakes.

"I think it can go ahead in a far more environmentally acceptable manner than the current model," he told the *Herald*.

Along with colleague, shadow WA transport minister Katie Hodson-Thomas, Mr Masters was invited for a tour of the area by Melville locals Glenda Samuel and Neil Goldsborough. The pair wanted to show the Liberal

MPs that not everyone in Melville wants the highway, despite the claims of the pro-Roe and pro-bypass Save Our Suburbs group.

"So much of the river is privatised and restricted, Heathcote is full - it would be a shame to lose the lakes," Mrs Samuel lamented.

Before donning wellie boots the Libs were shown a video which included footage of a 2001 rally, held just before the last state election.

"I have a difficulty in reconciling a six-lane highway through here," Liberal MLC Simon O'Brien is seen telling the 1000-strong crowd.

Labor and the Liberals both agreed not to build Roe 8 because of the

environmental damage.

However, since then the Liberal Party has changed its tune and has made a number of firm commitments to build Roe 8 and the bypass if elected.

Despite their tour of the wetlands, which anti-roads people say will be threatened, the two Liberal front-benchers were sticking to the party line.

Mr Masters, a zoologist, pointed out the area is home to the only metropolitan yellow spoon bill and the Indonesian rainbow bee eater, which comes to the region to breed each year: "Yes, it is significant," he said when asked, before adding: "Which is why I say there are better ways to do [Roe 8] than the government has said in the past."