Video transcript: laneways

# Featuring

* Andrew Slade (Interviewee, Farmer)
* Peter Rowe (Interviewee, Economist)
* Rhys Jones (voiceover)

## Andrew Slade:

Sheep work for us hasn't been hard for 20 years, I mean we've gone out and looked at all the sheep handling equipment that is out there and have implemented on farm, and for us sheep work’s no harder than putting in a crop.

My name is Andrew Slade. We farm in Mount Barker WA. We run five and a half thousand breeding ewes, 700 head of cattle. Twenty years ago we started implementing a laneway system. Before the laneways, accessibility to some paddocks was reduced in the winter months. Also the time spent checking livestock and moving livestock and machinery was a lot more.

So the laneway network is a network of raceways totalling 40 kilometres of gravelled roads, fenced off. That helps to save labour to make livestock more cost-effective for us, more efficient.

They’re set up 15 meters wide. We'll have three main sets of yards through the farm and the laneways all run to those central points. We make sure that the laneways are cambered, we have our own grader on farm and we use that to maintain the roads. There's a lot of gravel close to the surface which we can use for building roads otherwise when necessary we've carted gravel, made bridges and whatever else is needed.

The laneways have probably halved the amount of time we spent checking sheep, feeding sheep, moving equipment from point A to point B, and general wear and tear on vehicles is probably halved as well because you're not bouncing across the paddocks.

Over the lifetime we’d expect the laneways to certainly repay themselves.

## Peter Rowe:

My name is Peter Rowe. I’m an agricultural economist and I've been working in the field for over 20 years. I was asked by the Department of Agriculture and Food to look at the economics behind the Slade’s laneways.

If the Slades built their system today it would cost them about $320 000 from scratch to build. They believe it will last them for around 50 years and it will save them $528 000 through a mix of lower labour costs as they’re travelling around the farm faster and also through reduced wear and tear on the vehicle. That's the equivalent of $2.60 return for each dollar they invest in the laneway system.

And the payback period for that would be around seven years.

## Andrew Slade:

We want to set up our farm as if we want to farm it for life so we want to make it easier for ourselves and do everything possible to make farming enjoyable for us and our future generations.

So it's more about increasing our capacity to farm it effectively and enjoyably.

## Rhys Jones:

The Department of Agriculture and Food WA, through its Sheep Industry Business Innovation Project, made possible by Royalties for Regions, is supporting and sharing new technologies in the sheep industry. This is improving labour efficiency in the sector and making it easy all-round to run sheep.