

15 December 2023

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 18 November 2023, in which you asked for a copy of any structural analysis and engineering reporting that has resulted in the current closure of the Rob Roy Glacier bridge.

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The context for my response is that engineering inspections had raised concerns regarding the rockfall risk at the bridge site as well as concern about the lack of redundancy in the bridge structure. There had also been regular reported observations of overloading of the bridge above the posted load limit.

A subsequent engineering notification stated that the bridge anchors were susceptible to fatigue and embrittlement effects that could result in a sudden failure. It requested installation of safety straps and double anchors.

On 22 May 2023, the Department's Engineering Manager recommended closure of this bridge until these risks could be assessed and/or mitigated. The decision maker (David Butt – Acting Operations Manager, Central Otago) decided to close the bridge.

In making this decision, the decision maker took on expert advice from the Department's Engineering Manager and decided to err on the side of caution. Load limits were considered and explored before the final decision was made, but it was deemed that load limits would be highly unlikely to be adhered to at this and other bridge sites covered by the advice, thus creating a significant and undue safety risk.

I have interpreted your request to include engineering notifications and maintenance orders that are stored in the Department's asset management system as well as advice sent by email. The documents relevant to your request are listed as follows:

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	16 October 2020	Maintenance Notification: Safety Straps	Released in full
2	23 December 2021	Maintenance Order: Chief Engineer and SR to decide extent	Released in full
3	22 May 2023	Maintenance Order: Bridge Closure by Engineer	Released in full
4	22 May 2023	Email from Engineering Manager: Recommended Closure of Blue Pools, Makarora and Rob Roy Suspension Bridges	Released in part

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- personal contact details of officials, under section 9(2)(a) – *to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.*

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Shan Baththana Mudiyansele
 Director, Asset Management
 Department of Conservation
 Te Papa Atawhai