

(Version 2.0)



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Document control options

Departmental approvals

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Date	Name	Position	Action required (Review/endorse/approve)	Oue					
9/01/2023	Dereck Sanderson	DD(Darling Downs)	Approve	9/01/2023					
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1. Overview

On 5 January 2023 the department received a media enquiry regarding the length and spacing of "stabilisation rods" in Cut 21 and Cut 26 which both have experienced geotechnical failures post-construction and are currently subject to significant repair works.

The purpose of this report is to give a high-level summary of the design and construction process related to cut batter treatments with particular reference to Cut 21 RHS and Cut 26 RHS.

(Note RHS is "right hand side " in the direction of chainage which is the northern side of the bypass where its alignment is running east-west.)

The two cuttings are both within the eastern section of the project which exterids from the interchange with the Warrego Highway at Helidon in the east to the top of the range at the New England Highway.

This section is characterised by the steepest grades on the project, large cuts and large fills and a varied geology ranging from sections of strong and highly uniform basalt or sandstone to volcanically influenced sections with high variability of material types and strengths.

See locality map attached at Appendix 1.

This analysis has been carried out based on a review of the Issued for Construction (IFC) drawings and the Asbuilt drawings which were produced by Nexus and reviewed and certified by the Independent Reviewer.

2. Roles under a Public Private Partnership

The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing (TSRC) project is a Public Private Partnership (PPP) contract (between the State and Nexus Infrastructure) underbinned by a Design and Construct sub-contract (Nexus Delivery) and an Operate and Maintain sub-contract (Nexus Operations and Maintenance).

One of the key elements of the PPP contract model is the role of the Independent Reviewer in key technical processes for the Design and Construct phase.

This role is considered a necessary mechanism to give confidence to lenders and equity investors that their interests are protected.

As a result, the role of TMR under these arrangements is different to the role it normally adopts on the majority of its contracts.

In the context of this report, the key difference of significance is that TMR does not have an approval role in the design and construction activities.

The Independent Reviewer is tasked with reviewing and certifying the design and construction activities.

3. Design Process

Nexus have been contracted to design and construct the TSRC in accordance with the project-specific Performance Specification which calls up TMR's various design guidelines and specifications and other design guidelines and codes, for example Austroads design guidelines.

The Performance Specification defines the design process that should be followed for the project.

The design process is an iterative one where a design at a designated level of maturity is submitted to the Independent Reviewer for review and comment.

Toowoomba Bypass Summary Analysis of Design/Construction of Batter Protection at Cut 21 and Cut 26 – Toowoomba Bypass

The comments are fed back to Nexus and incorporated into the design work to take the design to the next level of maturity.

This process continues until the Issue for Construction (IFC) drawings are completed and certified by the Independent Reviewer.

During each iteration of the design the Independent Reviewer provides the design to TMR for comment.

The Independent Reviewer then includes the TMR comments it considers relevant in its list of comments and returns them to Nexus.

TMR has input to the design through its review role but is not the approver of the design

4. Summary of Approach to Batter Treatments

The term "stabilisation rods" used in the media enquiry is not a term used on the project.

It is assumed the reference is to soil nails or bolts which is the terminology adopted in the TSRC design. These will be referred to simply as bolts for the purposes of this report.

Bolts used on cut faces were an integral part of the design elements used to protect the cut batter faces from the elements.

It should be noted these treatments are "local level" and designed to protect the cut face. They are not part of the geotechnical design to deliver large scale geotechnical stability across the cuttings.

These design elements fall into two broad categories:

i. Slope protection where the bolts are used to essentially hold erosion control matting on the face of the cut. The matting is a plastic filament matrix that is filled with a topsoil / hydromulch mix that will facilitate vegetation growth over time.

This was the predominant treatment at Cut 21. (See details at Appendix 2)

ii. Slope reinforcement where the bolts hold steel mesh reinforcement in place to facilitate installation of a layer shotcrete facing to the batter.

This was the predominant treatment at Cut 26. (See details at Appendix 3).

The designers had a broad understanding of the geology at each of the cuttings based on pre-tender site investigation reports which were supplemented with additional site investigations during the design phase.

Notwithstanding the availability of this information the designers recognised that the actual location and extent of the various materials can only be fully known once the cut face is excavated.

As a result, the design contains numerous references to determining final treatments on site based on either specific testing or geotechnical expert advice.

In other words, the design itself contemplated that there would be changes during the construction phase to reflect the actual site conditions encountered.

Of particular note is the schedule of "J bolts" which are designated as "to be determined on site" in the original drawings. In the case of Cut 21 the drawings advise "Spot bolting and ancillary support may be required on zones of increased weathering and fracturing.

During construction they were not required at Cut 21 and so the As-built schedule shows no "j bolts".

5. IFC Drawings and Requirements

The IFC drawings are the version that is approved at the end of the design cycle and are therefore the initial set of drawings for construction.

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Relevant excerpts from the IFC drawings are attached at Appendix 4.

The bolt requirements as outlined in the IFC drawings are as follows:

i. Cut 21

Depending on batter slope and the type of material encountered the bolt requirements were 2.5 x 3 m spacing with 2 m length, 3 x 3 m spacing with 2 m length or 2.5 x 2.5 m spacing with 2.5 m length.

ii. Cut 26

The bolt requirements were 2.0 x 2.5 m with 3 m length.

6. Updated IFC Drawings

During construction in 2017 there was a significant geotechnical failure of Embankment 24.

This required a re-design which resulted in the motorway alignment pushing to the north from the original alignment.

Cut 26 is adjacent to Embankment 24 and so the shift in alignment made it necessary to re-design Cut 26.

The IFC drawings were updated to incorporate the changes from the re-alignment and these were then issued for construction.

Relevant excerpts from the re-issued IFC drawings are attached at Appendix 5.

The bolt requirements as outlined in the updated IFC drawings are as follows:

ii. Cut 21

The requirements for Cut 21 remained unchanged from the original IFC drawings

iii. Cut 26

The bolt requirements were 2.5 x 2.5 m staggered spacing with 3 m length except at Batter 1 which required 5 m length.

7. As-built Drawings

The As-built drawings are the documented record of what was constructed.

Relevant excerpts from the As-built drawings are attached at Appendix 6.

The actual spacings and lengths of bolts constructed were as follows:

iii. Cut 21

Depending on batter slope and the type of material encountered the bolt parameters of 2.5×3 m spacing with 2 m length, 3×3 m spacing with 2 m length or 2.5×2.5 m spacing with 2.5 m length were adopted in line with the IFC drawings.

iv. Cut 26

The bolt parameters adopted were all at $2.5 \times 2.5 \text{ m}$ staggered spacings but depending on location in the cutting the lengths were either 3m or 6m.

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8. Likely Geotechnical Failure Mechanisms

As mentioned in Section 4 the bolting that has been carried out on the project is part of "local level" treatments that are designed to protect the face of the cut batters from the elements over time.

Although protecting the faces of cuttings is critically important for the general stability and durability of the cuttings these protection treatments are not part of the geotechnical design to provide the large-scale stability of the cuttings.

The inference that changes in bolt spacing and lengths has led to the failures in Cut 21 and Cut 26 is misplaced.

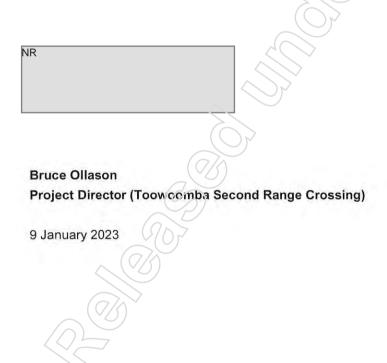
In general terms the large-scale stability problems being encountered at these cuttings has resulted from deep seated thin lenses of poor material being weakened by the ingress of water resulting in a loss of resistance and an inability to support the material above them.

A cross-section from Cut 26 showing the geological layering and likely failure planes is attached at Appendix 7.

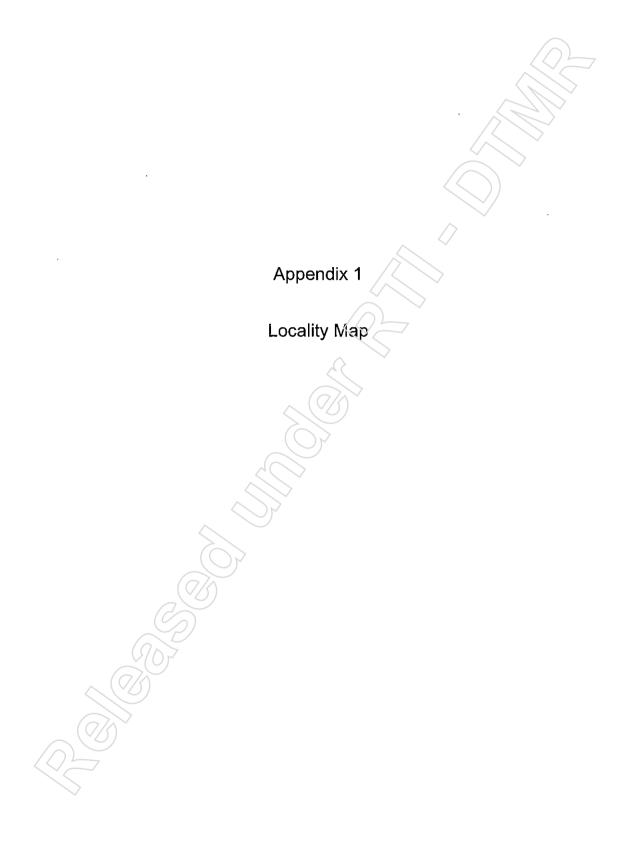
9. Conclusion

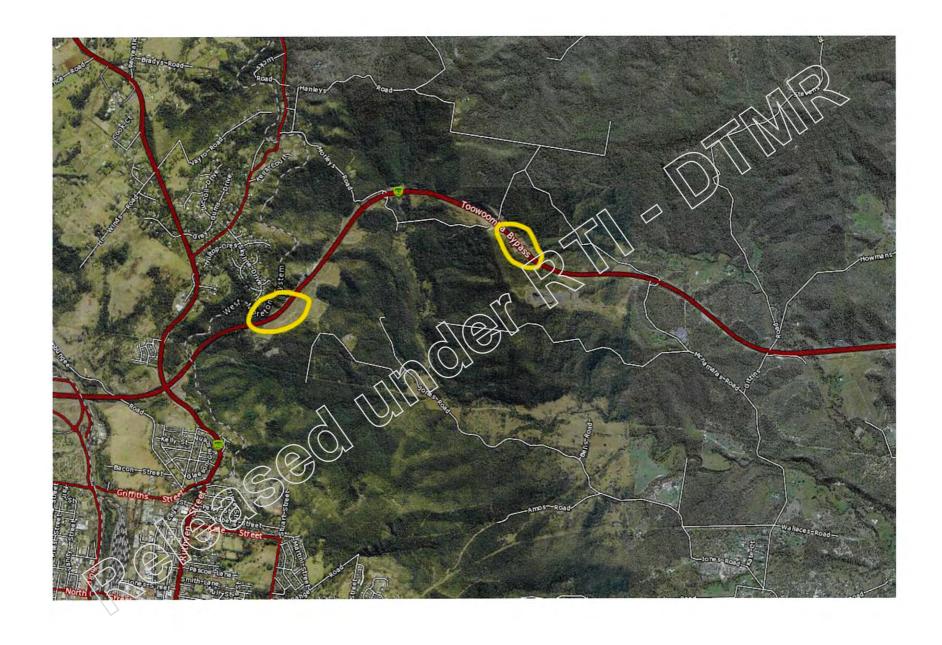
The original design contemplated adjustments to the design during construction to reflect the ground conditions exposed during excavation.

The constructed works are generally in accordance with the original design (or re-design for Cut 26) and the variations to the design have not resulted in shortening any bolts and in fact has resulted in longer bolts than originally scheduled in some sections of the design.



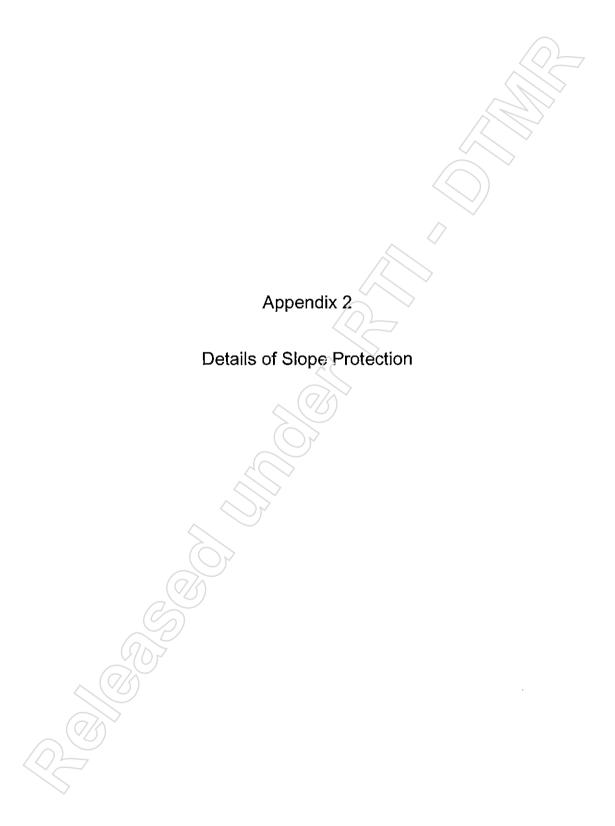
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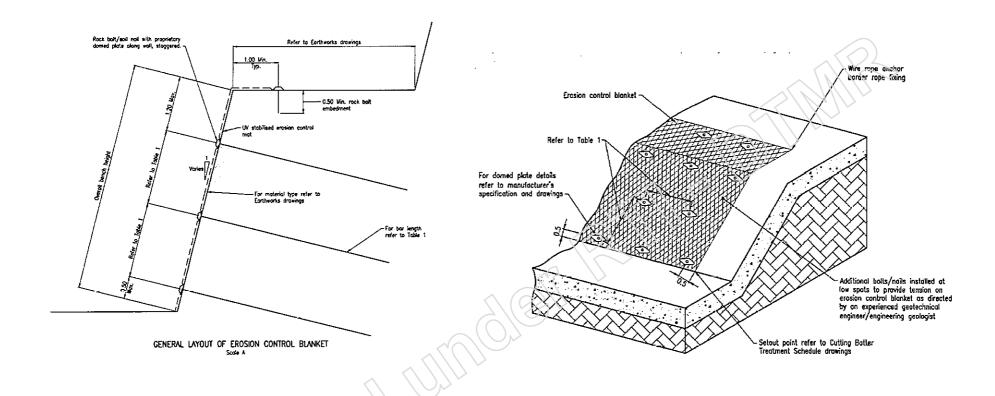


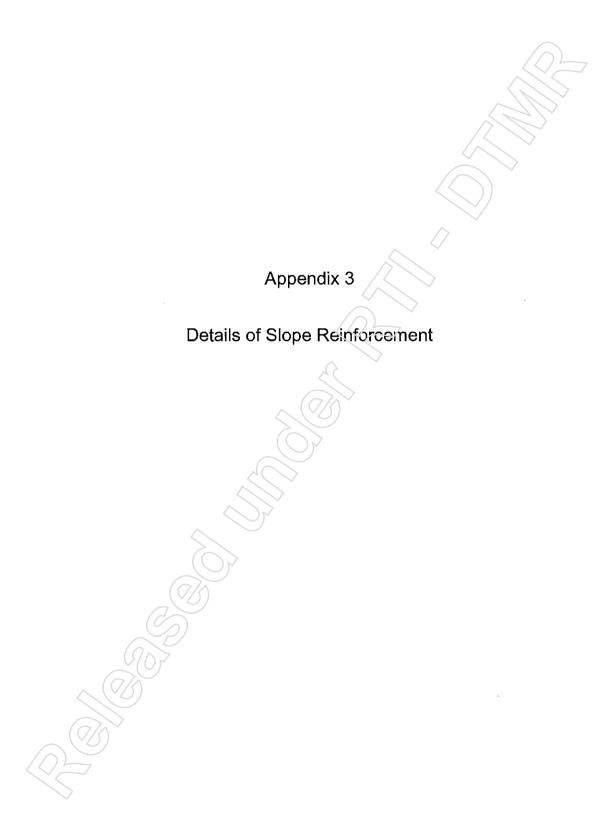


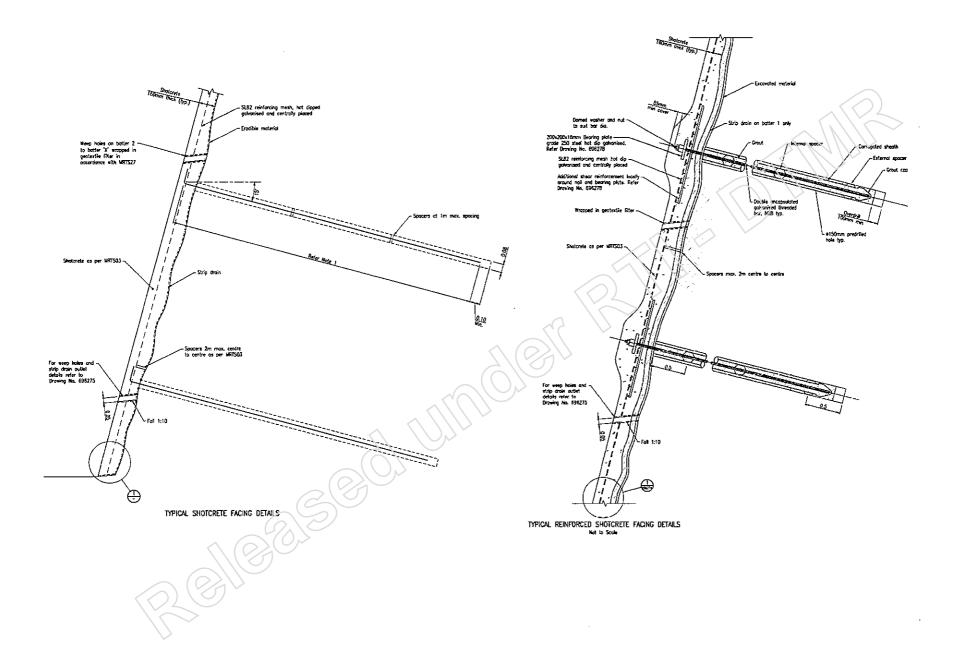
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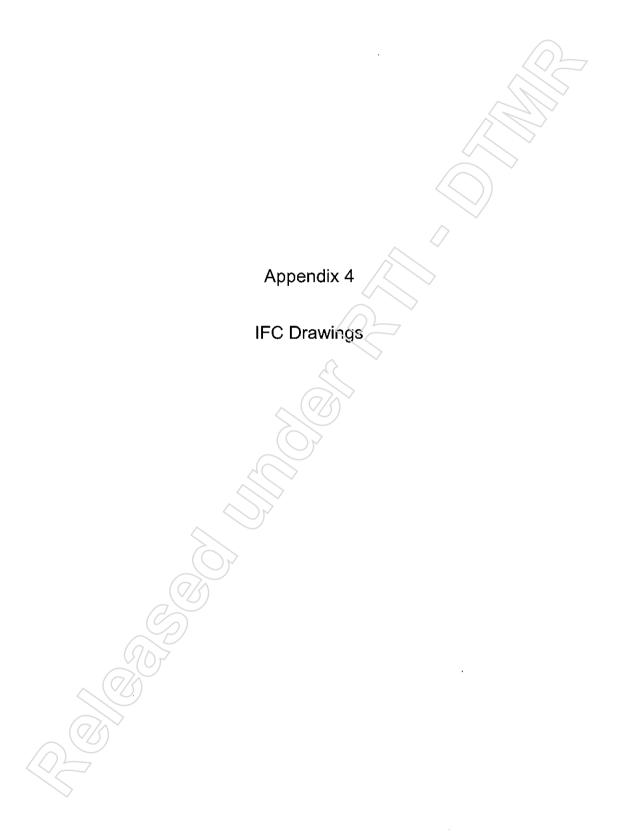
Summary Analysis of Design/Construction of Batter Protection at Cut 21 and Cut 26 - Toowoomba Bypass

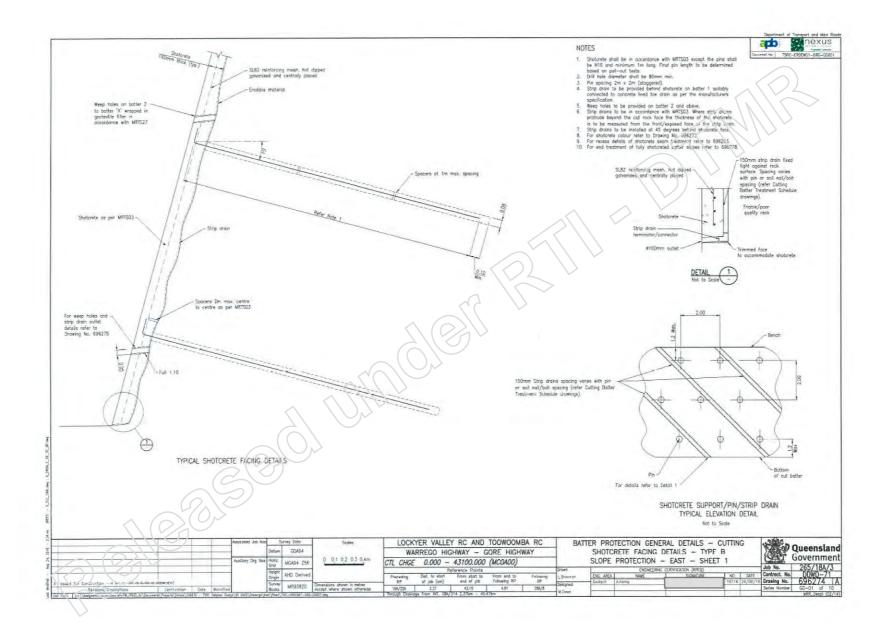


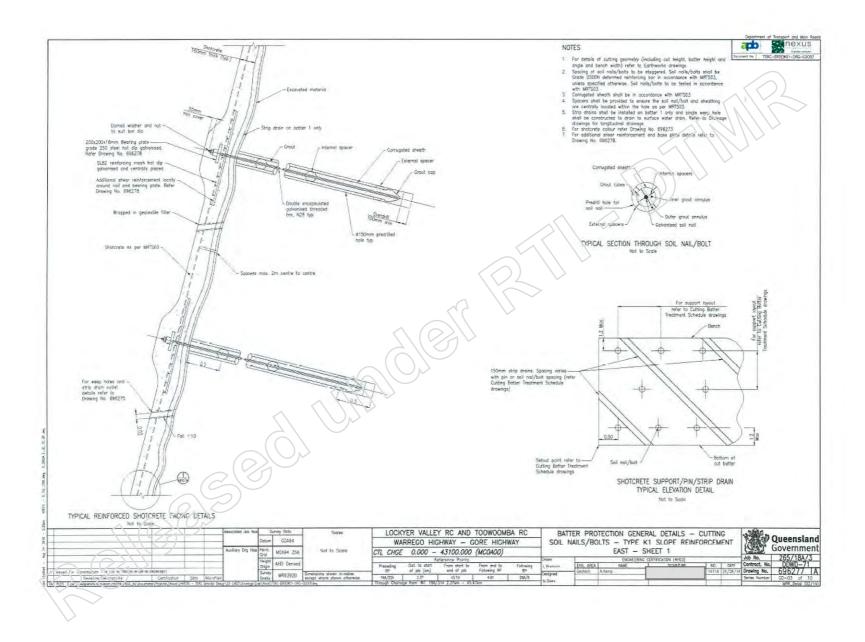


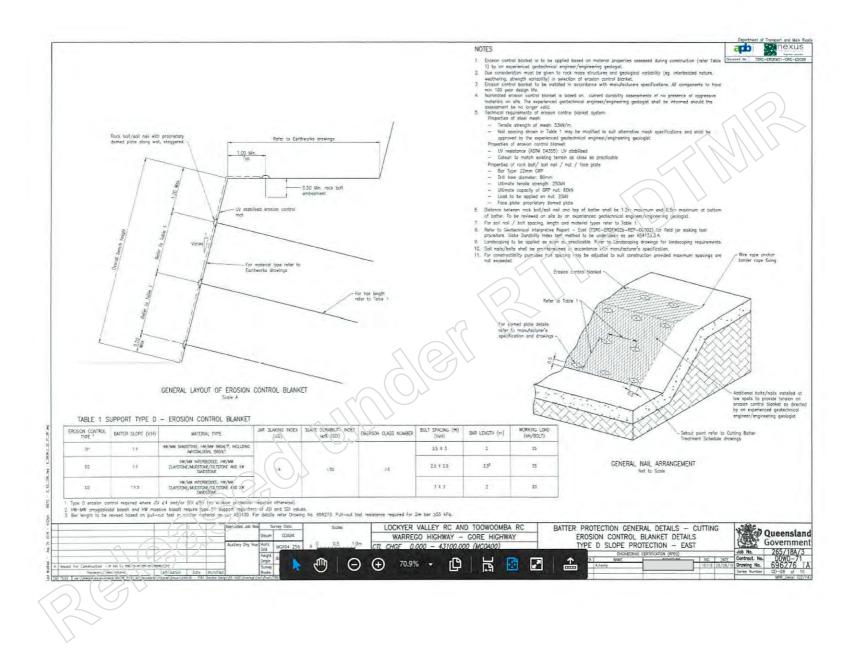


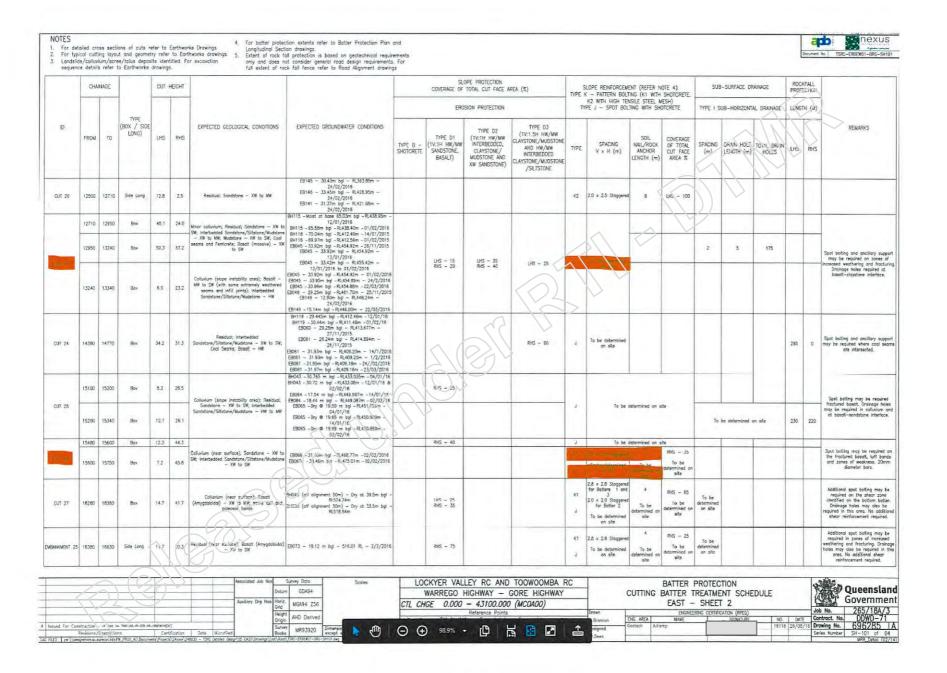


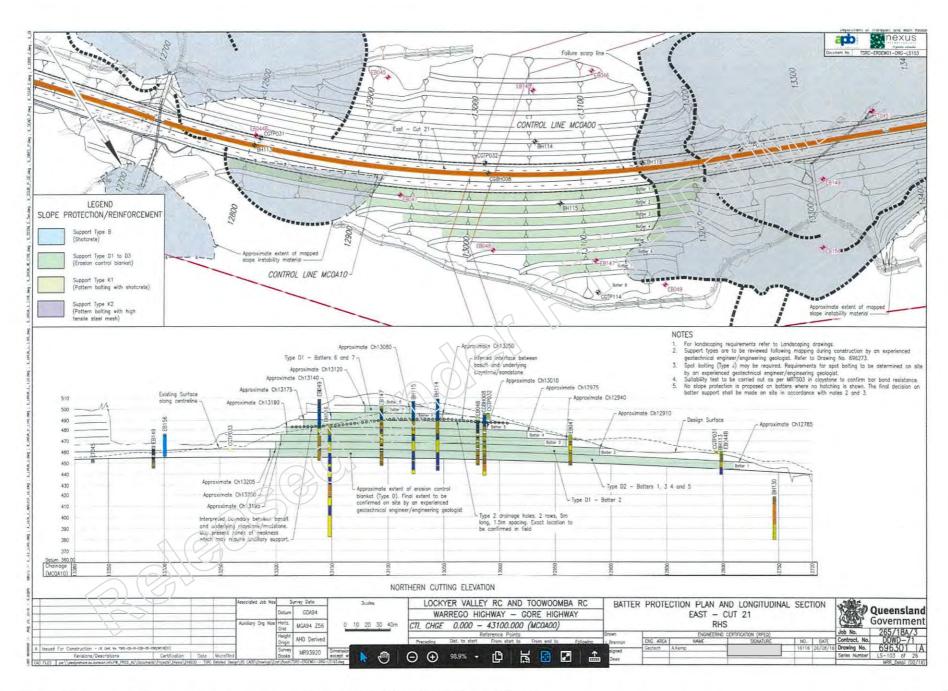


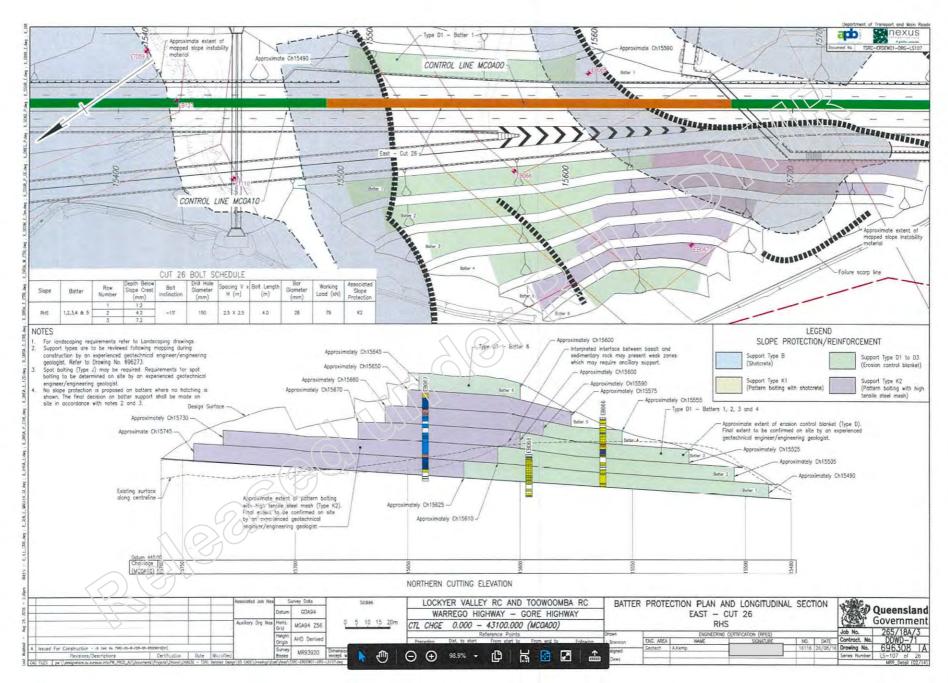


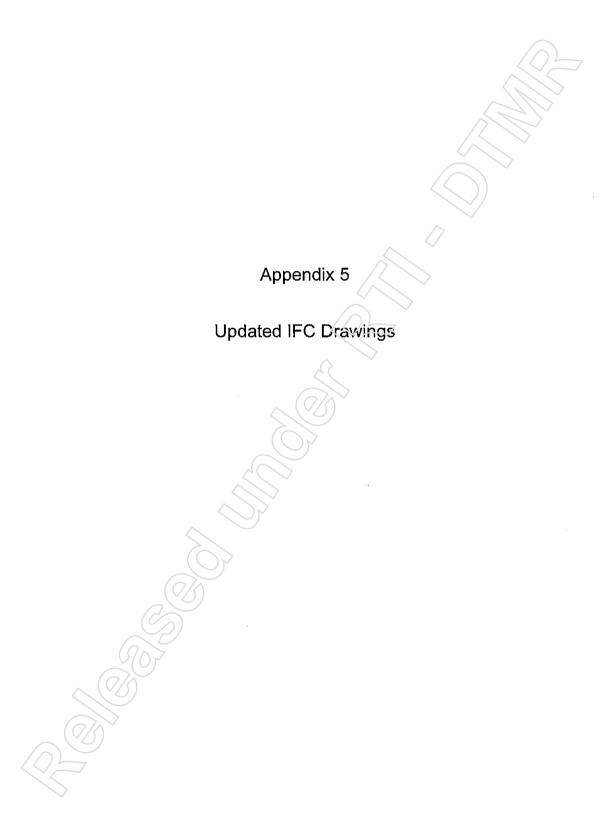






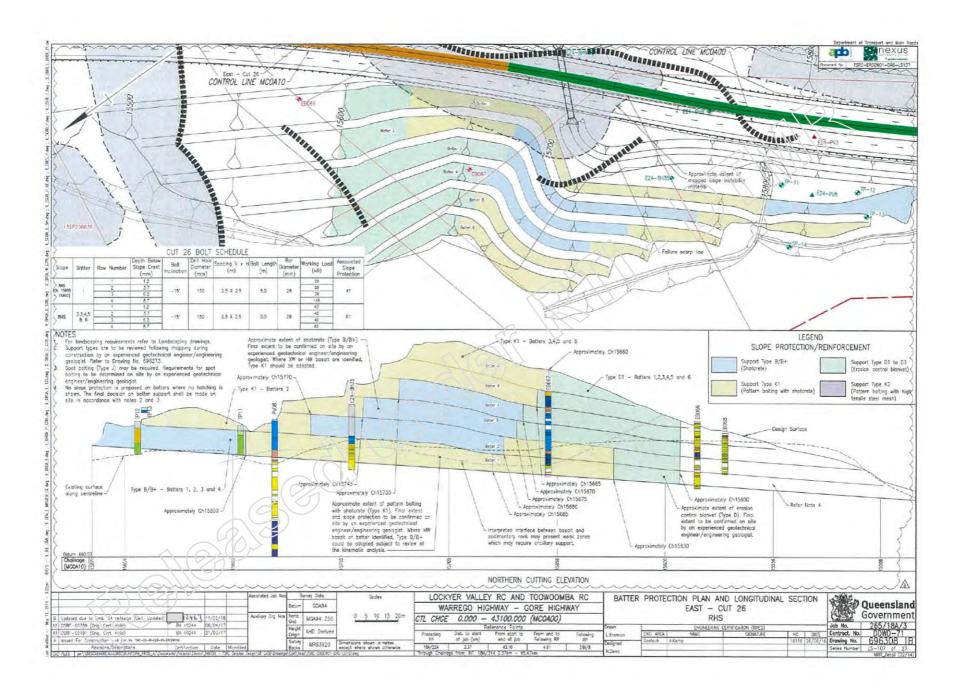




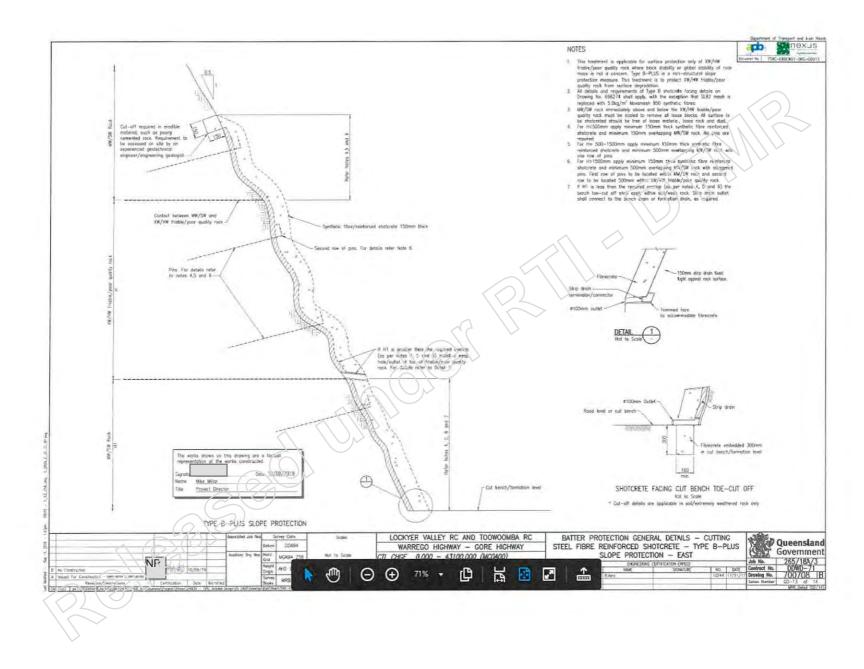


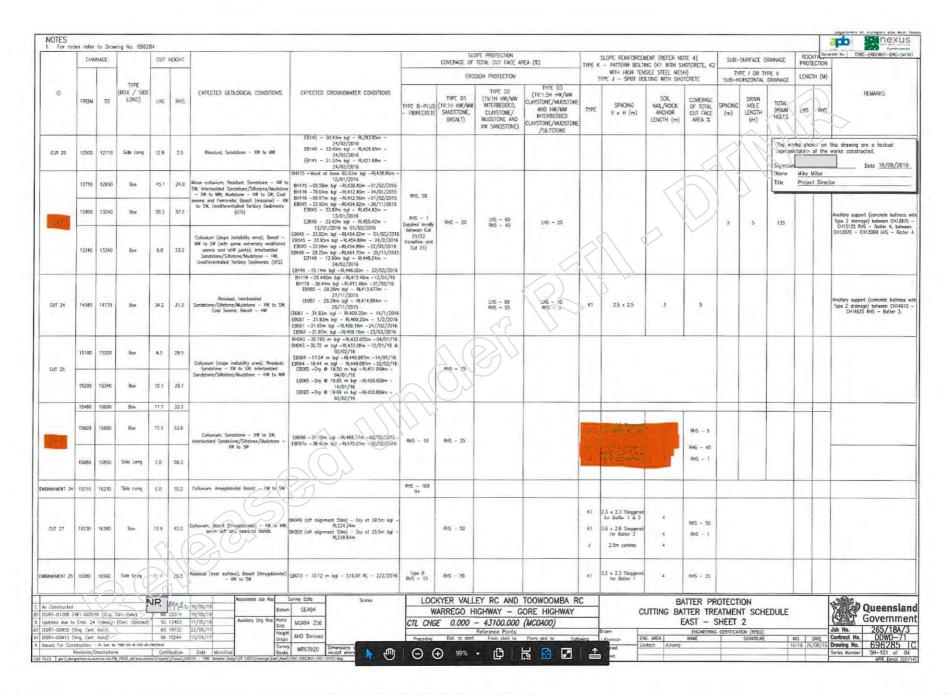
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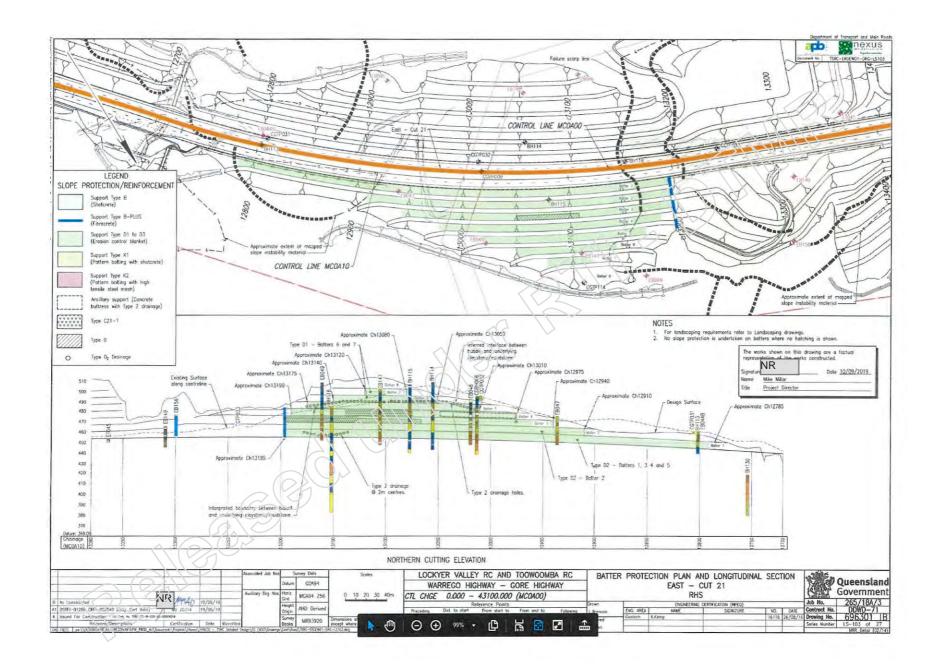
NOTES 1 For note			ng No. 6952	7					37	OPE PROTECTION			DIADE DEMEABOR	ent Incom De	VTF 41				ROCK		TSRC-ERDENOT-DRG-SH
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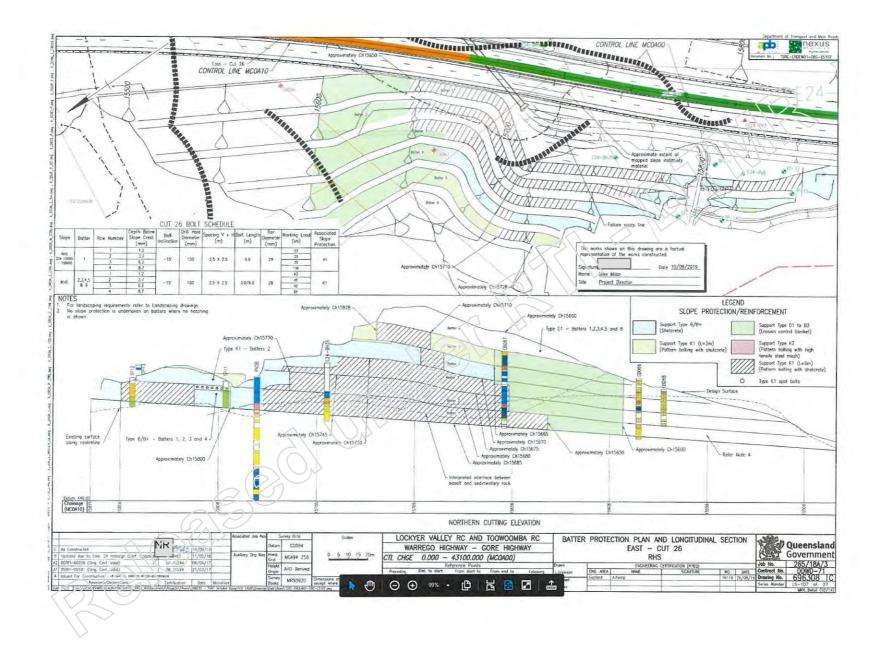




Diagram of Likely Geotechnical Failure Mechanism at Cut 26

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