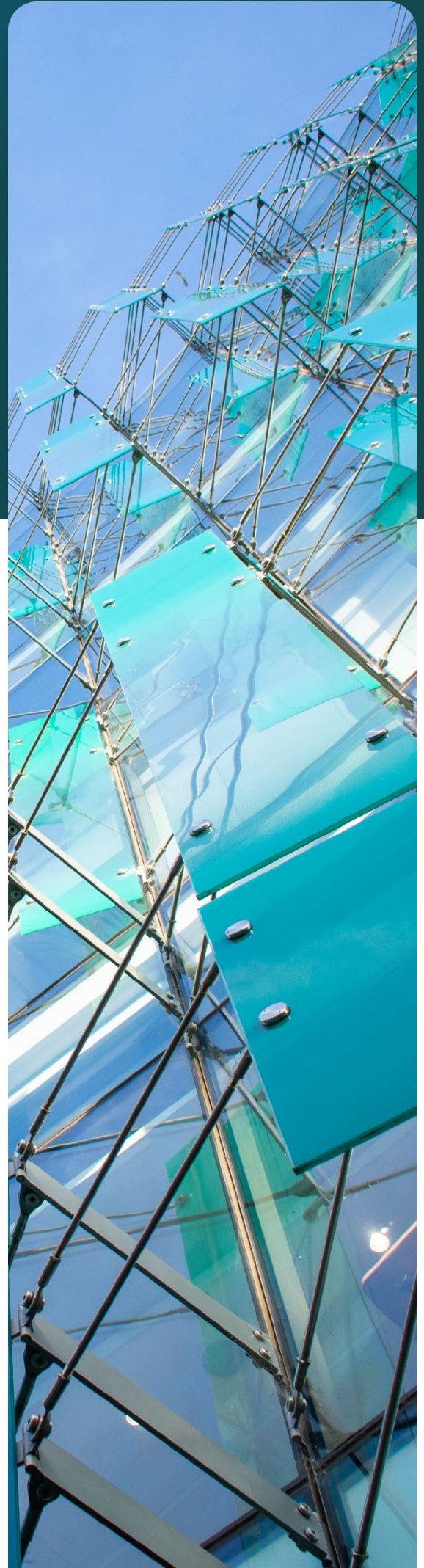


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Great South | General Manager Strategic Projects

Position Description and
Additional Information

July 2026





Job Description: General Manager Strategic Projects

Purpose: The General Manager Strategic Projects is a senior leadership role responsible for the design, delivery, and governance of complex, high-impact programmes and projects that advance the region's economic and environmental development outcomes. The role translates regional strategies, shareholder expectations, and government priorities into well-governed initiatives that deliver measurable benefits for the region.

Reports to: Chief Executive

Direct reports: Geoscience / GIS Analyst
Civil and Geospatial Engineer
Strategic Projects Engineer
Sustainable Development Advisor
Strategic Projects and Regional Strategy Support

Relationships: Great South CEO and General Managers
Great South staff
Great South shareholders and key stakeholders
Local Government staff and elected representatives
Community groups and funders
Central Government officials and politicians
Key industry agencies and business representatives
Papatipu rūnaka leaders and operational staff

Date: July 2026

Our Vision: Even better lives through sustainable regional development.

Our Values:



About us: Southland Regional Development Agency (SRDA) trading as Great South, embraces a focus on sustainable regional growth and has a clear mandate to leverage opportunities for Murihiku Southland in the areas of economic and business development, tourism, and events. As a council-controlled organisation, Great South works on behalf of its shareholders to encourage the future growth and development of the region.

Key Accountabilities

The General Manager Strategic Projects is an integral part of the Senior Management Team at Great South and oversees the operations of the Strategic Projects team.

The position holder is expected to:

- Support the Chief Executive in leading and managing the Southland Regional Development Agency (SRDA) to meet its vision and operational targets in line with stakeholder expectations.
- Effectively manage SRDA's strategic projects operations including human and financial resources, achievement of agreed operational targets, maintenance and ongoing improvement of operational quality and stakeholder relationships. Provide leadership, direction and a supportive environment for team members.
- Actively seek new commercial opportunities that drives regional development for Murihiku Southland
- Perform the duties of this position in a manner that meets SRDA's corporate strategy and objectives for Southland while maintaining and developing a cohesive approach to all aspects of the Strategic Projects portfolio.
- Maintain and develop relationships with local Iwi for Enterprise and Business opportunities.
- Present as required at the various stakeholder meetings on behalf of SRDA.
- Demonstrate commitment to SRDA's core values, comply with the Code of Conduct and promote the image of SRDA as an efficient and professional organisation.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic & Programme Leadership

- Lead the end-to-end development and delivery of major strategic programmes and projects aligned with organisational strategy and regional priorities.
- Translate strategic direction into clear scopes, milestones, budgets, and benefits realisation frameworks.
- Ensure initiatives are delivered on time, within budget, and to agreed quality and outcome standards.
- Contribute as a member of the senior leadership team to organisational strategy, culture, and performance.
- Act for the Chief Executive when required, including representing the organisation at meetings and forums.

2. Economic Development, Investment & Strategy

- Lead the development of bankable projects and facilitate attraction of capital investment into the region.
- Manage the delivery contracts and consulting services and the deliver external contracts.
- Oversee feasibility studies, business case development, trend analysis, and opportunity identification.
- Support infrastructure, business efficiency, automation and control systems, technology, telecommunications, transport, export, industry, natural resources and research and development initiatives.
- Provide strategic advice and advocacy on regional economic development issues and opportunities across all sectors agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, land use change.

3. Climate, Energy & Sustainability

- Lead and support regional initiatives addressing emissions reduction, climate adaptation, and sustainability.

- Oversee development and implementation of regional energy and emissions related strategies.
- Integrate environmental outcomes into strategic projects and programme design.
- Develop and design the integration of spatial data sets to develop new and innovative tools to improve business efficiency and to articulate complex topics in an understandable and user-friendly manner.
- Develop earth observation systems to efficiently measure regional spatial change both onshore and offshore.
- Maintain and develop spatial data sets such as soils, terrain data, growing degree days, crop systems transport, water resources, ground cover, Climate Change, risk management indicators, and prepare reports and guidance to support future sustainable development.

4. Stakeholder & Partner Engagement

- Lead senior relationships with central government, local authorities, iwi/Māori partners, industry, funders, and community organisations.
- Where applicable, enable co-design and collaborative delivery across multiple stakeholders.
- Represent the organisation at regional and national forums as required.
- Advocate for regional goals, develop technical reports and submissions

5. Governance, Risk & Assurance

- Establish and maintain robust governance arrangements including steering groups, reporting, and assurance frameworks for key projects.
- Prepare high quality papers and briefings for the Chief Executive, Board, and funding partners.
- Identify, manage, and escalate delivery, financial, reputational, and strategic risks.
- Ensure compliance with public sector accountability and probity expectations.

6. Financial & Funding Management

- Develop and manage programme and project budgets ensuring strong financial discipline and value for money.
- Lead funding applications, negotiations, and stewardship across multiple funding sources.
- Monitor funding compliance and contractual obligations.

7. People & Capability Leadership

- Provide strong, values-based leadership to project teams.
- Build organisational capability in programme and project management.
- Coach and mentor staff, supporting performance, wellbeing, and professional development.

8. Reporting, Research & Communications

- Commission and oversee research and economic intelligence to support decision making.
- Ensure timely and accurate reporting to governance bodies and stakeholders.
- Support external communications and media engagement when delegated.

9. Legal and Statutory Regulations

- Ensure compliance with all funding agreements with Government and other agencies.
- Monitor compliance with relevant codes, industry standards, legal requirements for all projects and services.

Health and safety

- Fulfil obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 by complying with the SRDA health and safety policies and procedures as outlined in the company handbook including;
 - Take reasonable care to look after own health and safety, fitness for work, and the health and safety of others, including team members.

- Ensure that no action or inaction on your part results in injury or illness to either yourself or to others.
- Attend and actively participate in health and safety discussions and training.

Essential Knowledge, Experience and Skills

- Experience and a soundtrack record of delivering complex, multi-stakeholder programmes or projects.
- Strong strategic, commercial, and financial acumen.
- Knowledge of contract service delivery and contract law.
- Strong industry experience.
- Demonstrated governance, risk management, and assurance experience.
- Proven ability to build trusted partnerships across government, iwi/Māori, industry, and community.
- Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its application in a regional development context.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including Board-level reporting.
- Tertiary qualification in engineering, Climate Change, business development, business management, economics, project or programme management, or a related discipline, or equivalent senior leadership experience.

Signed:

Employee

SRDA Representative

Date:

Date:

Our Process



OUTREACH AND ADVERTISING | Applications close 3 August 2026

Potential candidates identified through targeted search; applications reviewed and responded to.



APPLICANT SCREENING | Early August

Initial screening of applications as they are received. This may include a discussion with candidates about their motivations for applying. We aim to run a timely and efficient process.



SELECTING AND SHORTLISTING | Mid August

Once the role has closed our team will present the most qualified candidates to the client. Within this period, all applicants will receive notification of the status of their application.



CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS | Mid August

Decipher Group prioritises a robust and consistent interview framework, based on a behavioural and competency-based assessment. Candidates will be advised of the interview structure and who will be present on the panel. All interviewed candidates will receive prompt feedback and will be advised of next steps once we have debriefed with the interview panel.



VETTING AND DUE DILIGENCE | Late August – Early September

We conduct thorough background checks and referencing to further assess competencies of preferred candidate/s. Decipher Group utilises a third-party provider for pre-employment and probity checks such as criminal history, qualification, employment history and bankruptcy. Our team will notify you in advance prior to us contacting your referees. Throughout the entire process, candidate confidentiality and privacy remain an absolute priority.



DECISION AND ONBOARDING | Early September

Following a rigorous evaluation, a conditional offer of employment will be made, subject to the completion of the above stage. Our team will communicate regularly with both the client and the successful candidate during this period. At the conclusion of the recruitment process, all remaining candidates will be notified, with the opportunity for feedback.

General Manager Strategic Projects

- Shape the future of Murihiku Southland
- Lead strategic projects from idea to delivery
- Executive leadership with real impact

About Great South

Great South exists for one purpose – creating even better lives through sustainable regional development. Working across business, infrastructure, investment, innovation and sustainability, Great South brings together government, industry, iwi and communities to deliver projects that will strengthen Murihiku Southland for generations to come.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an exceptional project and programme leader to join the Executive Team as General Manager – Strategic Projects.

This role follows the retirement of a highly respected leader whose work has helped shape some of Southland's most significant regional initiatives. Rather than replacing decades of experience, we're looking for someone who is ready to build on that legacy and create one of their own.

The Opportunity | Shape the future of one of New Zealand's most ambitious regions.

This is not a role where you'll simply oversee existing programmes. You'll identify opportunities, test ideas, lead feasibility work, build business cases, secure support and funding, and guide complex projects through planning, governance and delivery until they become real outcomes that benefit the region.

Every project is different. Some will involve infrastructure, some investment, some sustainability, some technology and innovation. All will require you to bring people together, navigate complexity and maintain momentum.

You'll lead a capable and passionate team while working alongside an equally committed Executive Team in an organisation recognised for its collaborative culture, strong relationships and genuine commitment to making a difference.

About You | We're deliberately looking beyond the obvious.

You may already be leading major projects or programmes within infrastructure, engineering, consulting, government, regional development, utilities, primary industries or another complex environment.

Most importantly, you'll demonstrate that you can:

- lead complex projects from concept through feasibility, planning, governance and successful delivery

- think commercially while balancing stakeholder expectations and long-term regional outcomes
- build credibility with a wide range of stakeholders including government, industry, iwi and community partners
- lead and motivate capable professionals while creating a positive, high-performing team environment
- bring energy, initiative and drive to opportunities rather than waiting for someone else to create them.

You won't need to have spent your career in regional development. What matters is your ability to lead significant initiatives, solve complex problems and turn ambitious ideas into tangible outcomes.

Why Great South? Great Purpose, Great Culture, Great People

This is a rare opportunity to combine executive leadership with work that has genuine and lasting impact. You'll join an organisation with an outstanding culture, supportive leadership and a team that is passionate about the future of Murihiku Southland.

Every project you deliver has the potential to strengthen businesses, communities and the regional economy. If you're looking for meaningful work where your leadership can leave a lasting legacy, we'd love to hear from you.

How to apply

To discover more about Great South, visit www.greatsouth.nz

For a confidential discussion about the role; contact Deb Vaughan on E: deb@deciphergroup.co.nz or by mobile on 022 850 0188

Applications close: 3rd August 2026

Please do not email us your CV and Cover Letter.
Please use the *Apply Now* link on our website.



Deb Vaughan

Senior Business Partner

Decipher Group

People-connector

Creative

Experienced

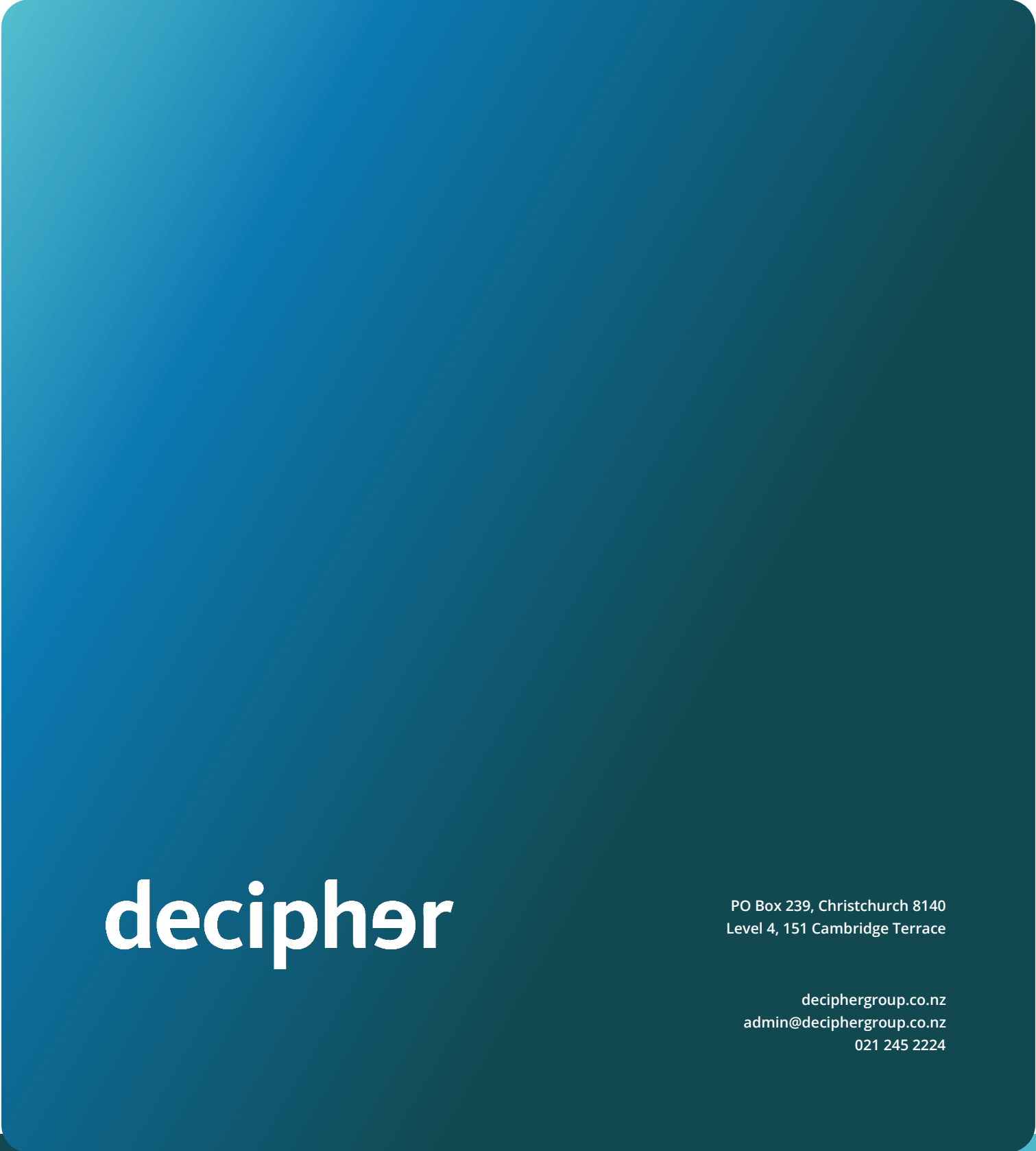
Authentic

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Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Decipher Group cares deeply about helping individuals achieve their full potential and supporting organisations to thrive by working toward a more progressive future.

Fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging that truly values individual differences, backgrounds, and perspectives ignites creativity and new ideas – and this is part of what makes our team exceptional. For us, progress is the only goal worth benchmarking.



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PO Box 239, Christchurch 8140
Level 4, 151 Cambridge Terrace

deciphergroup.co.nz
admin@deciphergroup.co.nz
021 245 2224