

decipher

Central South Island Water | Head of Human Resources

Position Description and
Additional Information

11 August 2026



Central South Island Water Limited | Position Description

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Reports to:	Interim Chief Executive, transitioning to General Manager Corporate Services
Location:	Timaru or Fairlie
Direct Reports:	TBC

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Internal

- Interim Chief Executive
- General Manager Corporate Services
- The Board of Central South Island Water Limited
- Executive and senior leadership team
- People leaders and employees
- Establishment and transition teams

External

- Timaru District Council and Mackenzie District Council staff members
- Unions and employee representatives
- HR, employment law, remuneration and recruitment providers
- Relevant government and regulatory agencies
- Professional and industry networks

POSITION PURPOSE

The Head of Human Resources is responsible for establishing and leading the people and human resources function for Central South Island Water.

During the establishment phase, the role will develop and implement the HR frameworks, systems, policies and processes required to support the successful creation of the organisation and transition of its workforce. This includes establishing fit-for-purpose approaches to recruitment, employment relations, remuneration, performance, learning and development, employee experience and workforce planning.

Once established, the Head of Human Resources will lead the organisation's operational HR function, providing trusted advice to leaders, supporting a positive and high-performing workplace culture, and ensuring people practices remain effective, pragmatic and aligned with organisational priorities.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

HR Establishment and Transition

Accountability: Establish the people infrastructure required for Central South Island Water to operate as an effective standalone organisation.

Key expectations:

- Develop and implement the HR establishment plan, priorities and work programme.
- Establish fit-for-purpose HR policies, processes, systems and employment documentation.
- Support the transition and onboarding of employees into the new organisation.
- Ensure people-related establishment activities are well planned, communicated and delivered.
- Work collaboratively with the Interim Chief Executive, establishment team and partner councils throughout the transition.
- Work collaboratively with key stakeholder to establish a vision for the organisation and align strategy to achieve desired outcomes and culture.

People Strategy and Workforce Planning

Accountability: Develop a practical people approach that supports the organisation's establishment, capability requirements and future direction.

Key expectations:

- Develop workforce and capability plans aligned with organisational priorities.
- Support organisation design, role development and workforce transition.
- Identify current and future capability requirements and develop appropriate responses.
- Provide workforce insights and advice to support executive decision-making.

HR Systems, Policies and Processes

Accountability: Establish and maintain effective, contemporary and scalable HR frameworks.

Key expectations:

- Establish HR systems and processes that provide reliable employee information and support effective workforce management.
- Develop practical policies and frameworks that meet legislative requirements and organisational needs.
- Establish appropriate reporting, HR metrics and workforce information.
- Ensure HR practices remain efficient, consistent and fit for purpose as the organisation evolves.

Performance, Capability and Development

Accountability: Establish an organisational approach that aligns with the vision and supports performance, capability and development.

Key expectations:

- Design and implement performance and development frameworks.
- Establish learning and development approaches aligned with organisational capability requirements.
- Support leaders to build effective teams and manage performance confidently.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen leadership and organisational capability.

Remuneration and Reward

Accountability: Develop and maintain fair, competitive and sustainable remuneration and reward practices.

Key expectations:

- Establish remuneration frameworks, job evaluation and salary review processes.
- Provide advice on remuneration, market positioning and employment conditions.
- Ensure remuneration practices support attraction, retention, internal equity and organisational sustainability.

Employment Relations and HR Advisory

Accountability: Provide trusted, pragmatic advice across the full range of employment and people matters.

Key expectations:

- Provide advice and support to leaders on employee relations, performance, conduct and employment matters.
- Build constructive relationships with employees, unions and other relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure employment matters are managed fairly, consistently and in accordance with New Zealand employment legislation and good practice.
- Manage complex or sensitive employment matters appropriately.

Recruitment, Onboarding and Employee Experience

Accountability: Build the workforce required for the new organisation and support a positive employee experience.

Key expectations:

- Establish effective recruitment, selection and onboarding processes.
- Support establishment recruitment and workforce transition requirements.
- Build employment practices that support attraction and retention of capable people.
- Contribute to an inclusive, values-led and high-performing organisational culture.

HR Leadership and Operational Delivery

Accountability: Lead an effective and responsive HR function as Central South Island Water moves from establishment into business-as-usual operations.

Key expectations:

- Establish the structure, capability and priorities of the HR function.
- Ensure timely and practical HR support is available to leaders and employees.
- Manage HR resources, providers and relevant external relationships.
- Continuously improve people systems and practices as organisational needs evolve.
- Contribute as a senior leader to wider organisational priorities and initiatives.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will be an experienced senior HR practitioner who combines strong technical HR knowledge with the ability to build practical systems and solutions in an evolving environment.

They will bring:

- Significant generalist HR experience, ideally at senior leadership or Head of HR level.
- Demonstrated experience establishing or significantly developing HR frameworks, systems and processes.
- Strong knowledge of New Zealand employment legislation and employment relations practice.

- Experience across performance management, remuneration, recruitment, learning and development, workforce planning and employee relations.
- Strong judgement and the confidence to provide pragmatic advice to senior leaders.
- Experience supporting organisational change, workforce transition or establishment would be highly advantageous.
- A relevant tertiary qualification or equivalent professional experience.

LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

The Head of Human Resources will be:

- **Pragmatic** – able to develop solutions that work in practice.
- **Strategic** – able to work collaboratively to define and organisational vision, and develop strategy to achieve outcomes.
- **Collaborative** – builds strong relationships and works effectively across organisational boundaries.
- **Credible** – a trusted adviser who brings sound judgement and professional integrity.
- **Adaptable** – comfortable operating in an establishment environment where priorities will evolve.
- **Delivery focused** – able to move from strategy and design through to effective implementation.

Our Process



OUTREACH AND ADVERTISING | Applications close 2 September 2026

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



APPLICANT SCREENING | Upon application

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 | Late 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 | Early September

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 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 | Late 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.

Head of Human Resources, New Role

- Build the people function for a new regional water services organisation
- Lead HR strategy, systems and organisational capability from the ground up
- Senior leadership opportunity with significant scope to shape the future

Central South Island Water | Timaru

Central South Island Water is a newly established joint water services organisation bringing together the water services of Timaru and Mackenzie District Councils. As the organisation moves through establishment and towards full operations, there is a unique opportunity to create the people systems, practices and culture that will support its vision and future success.

Based in Timaru or Fairlie, we are looking for an experienced and pragmatic Head of Human Resources to lead this work. Interested?

The opportunity

Reporting initially to the Interim Chief Executive, and subsequently to the General Manager Corporate Services, the Head of Human Resources will take the lead in establishing the HR function for Central South Island Water.

This is a genuine build opportunity. You will develop and implement the frameworks, systems, policies and processes needed to support a new organisation and its workforce – spanning recruitment and onboarding, remuneration, performance and development, employment relations, workforce planning and employee experience.

As Central South Island Water transitions from establishment into business-as-usual operations, your focus will evolve to leading a responsive, commercially minded and trusted HR function that enables leaders and people to perform at their best.

About you

You will be an experienced senior HR practitioner who is equally comfortable designing the framework and rolling up your sleeves to make it happen.

You will bring:

- Broad senior-level HR generalist experience and strong knowledge of New Zealand employment practice.
- Experience developing and implementing HR frameworks, systems, policies and processes.
- Capability across employment relations, remuneration, performance, learning and development, recruitment and workforce planning.
- Experience supporting organisational change, establishment or workforce transition.
- Sound judgement and the credibility to advise and influence senior leaders.

- A practical, collaborative approach and the ability to operate effectively in an evolving environment.

Most importantly, you will enjoy creating something new. You will see the opportunity in a blank sheet of paper and know how to turn good thinking into simple, effective people practices that work.

Why Central South Island Water?

Few HR leadership opportunities offer the chance to influence an organisation so early in its journey. You will have the opportunity to shape how Central South Island Water attracts, develops, supports and engages its people, while helping establish an organisation responsible for delivering essential infrastructure and services to communities across South Canterbury.

This is an opportunity to build something that lasts – and to play an important part in the establishment and future success of Central South Island Water. Keen to find out more?

How to apply

For a copy of the position description and to apply, visit Decipher Group on <https://deciphergroup.co.nz/job-opportunities/head-of-human-resources/>

To discover more about Central South Island Water Limited, www.timaru.govt.nz and www.mackenzie.govt.nz

For a confidential discussion about the role; contact Lisa Edwards by either lisa@deciphergroup.co.nz or M: 021 240 4410

Applications close: Wednesday 2nd September 2026

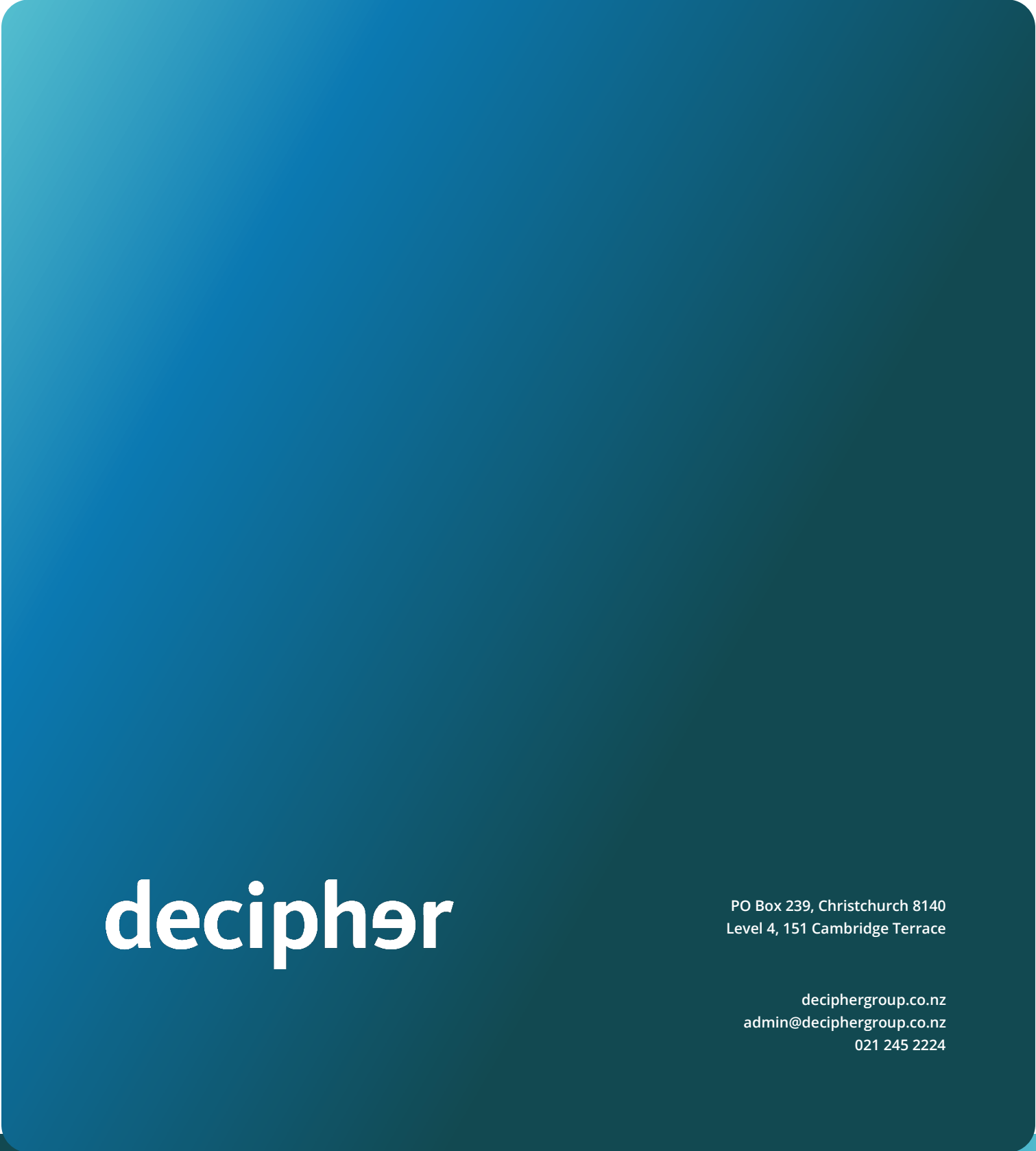
Please do not email us your CV and Cover Letter.
Please use the *Apply Now* link on our website.



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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