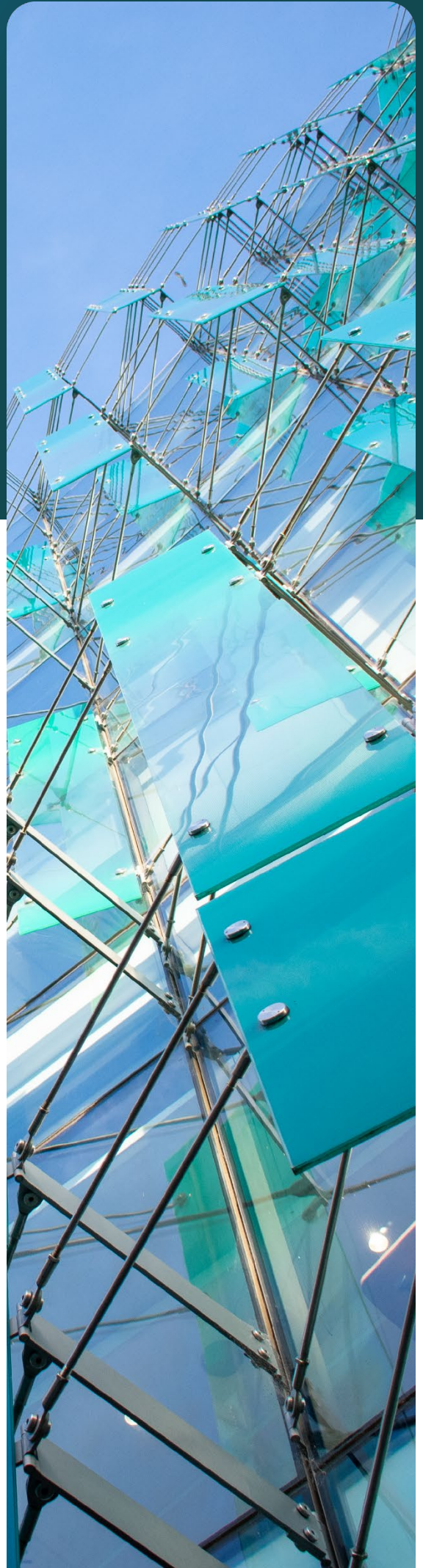


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Invercargill City Council | Legal Counsel

Position Description and
Additional Information

28 August 2026



Position Description

Position Title:	Legal Counsel
Reports To:	Group Manager – Corporate Services
Responsible For:	1 Direct Report
Group and Team:	Corporate Services – Legal
Children’s Worker:	No
Delegations and Budget Responsibilities:	As per Delegations Register

Purpose

To provide expert legal advice and oversight to Invercargill City Council across commercial, risk, corporate, property, and conveyancing matters. Additionally, to provide legal advice to the Chief Executive, ELT and Elected Members and Council on public law matters. Manage legal risk, support legally robust decision-making, provide legal input on procurement and complex contractual arrangements, and ensure property-related transactions are progressed appropriately. Provide day-to-day advice on, employment, internal policy, and health and safety matters, lead early dispute resolution, and engage with specialist external counsel where required.

Key Relationships

External to Council

- Clients/public.
- Community groups and organisations.
- Other local and regional authorities.
- Outside agencies including Government departments.
- Professional organisations.

Within Council

- Other team members in your Department/Group.
- Other Invercargill City Council employees.
- Elected Representatives.
- Executive Leadership Team.

Our Compass Values and Behaviours

Responsibility

Take ownership of decisions and outcomes, both collectively and individually.

- We willingly share our knowledge.
- We acknowledge our mistakes, work to resolve them and learn from them.
- We give and receive feedback in a constructive manner to resolve issues.
- We do our job with total commitment.

Respect

Everyone is important, as are their views.

- We support and care for each other.
- We stop to listen, learn and understand.
- We communicate in an honest, up-front, and considerate manner.
- We maintain confidences and avoid hurtful gossip.

Above and Beyond

Take opportunities to go the extra mile.

- We take the initiative to improve our work practices to get the best result.
- We challenge ourselves and each other to make it better.
- We take pride in providing the best possible outcomes.
- We are ambassadors for our Council at all times.

Positivity

Always look on the bright side of life.

- We are approachable, interested and friendly.
- We are open and receptive to change.
- We acknowledge and praise the efforts of others.
- We work together as a team to get the job done.

What You Will Do *(provided as a guide only)*

Leadership

- Lead, coach and motivate team members, promoting employee engagement with constructive feedback, openness, acknowledgement and trust.
- Ensure a workplace culture of shared ideas, problem solving and mutual support within and across teams that empowers others to achieve results that are responsive, business like, well planned, safe and successful.
- Meet organisation goals through the proactive and consistent application of performance and development processes; in accordance with Council's Performance and Remuneration Framework.
- Promptly address concerns relating to the performance of team members so that an appropriate support/development plan can be put in place.

Commercial Contracts and Procurement

- Partner with Procurement, maintaining clear accountability between legal risk and statutory compliance (Legal) and commercial delivery and contract management (Procurement).
- Provide strategic legal advice on commercial, contractual, property, governance and statutory matters, ensuring Council's interests are protected and legal risks are effectively managed.
- Review and advise on complex, high-risk or non-standard contracts, procurement activities, commercial arrangements and property transactions, ensuring compliance with legislation, Council policy, governance requirements and risk appetite.
- Lead legal aspects of land and property matters, including acquisitions, disposals, leases, easements, statutory land processes and conveyancing activities, engaging specialist counsel where required.
- Provide strategic legal advice to the Chief Executive, ELT, Elected Members and Council on public law, governance and statutory obligations, including the Local Government Act, LGOIMA, Code of Conduct matters and elected member conflicts of interest.
- Support the Chief Executive, ELT and Council on complex, sensitive and high-profile matters by identifying legal risks, options and recommended courses of action.
- Provide legal advice on regulatory frameworks, statutory decision-making, enforcement, prosecution and litigation matters, ensuring lawful, robust and defensible decisions.
- Manage litigation and external legal providers to protect Council's interests and ensure the delivery of high-quality legal services and representation.
- Build effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders to resolve complex issues requiring specialist legal expertise, statutory interpretation or litigation management.

Legal Advice and Advocacy

- Provide timely, pragmatic, and high-quality legal advice across a broad range of Council commercial/corporate, procurement, and property matters.
- Interpret and apply relevant legislation, including local government, regulatory, and commercial law.
- Provide general day-to-day advice on employment agreements, internal policies, and health and safety compliance matters, while working with specialist employment lawyers on complex personal grievances, major restructures, or regulatory prosecutions.
- Support decision-making by translating legal issues into clear, practical guidance for non-legal stakeholders.
- Represent Council's interests in legal matters, including engagement with external legal providers where required.

Dispute Resolution

- Manage and resolve contractual and commercial disputes, seeking practical and cost-effective outcomes.
- Provide advice on dispute resolution strategies, including negotiation and mediation, and manage engagement with specialist litigators where matters proceed to Court, or other formal proceedings.
- Work with internal stakeholders and external counsel to prepare and manage legal proceedings, with the role focused on initial dispute management, risk mitigation, and coordination of corporate/commercial matters.
- Minimise legal risk through proactive identification and management of potential disputes.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Build strong relationships across Council, providing trusted legal support to business units and leadership.
- Engage effectively with external stakeholders, including contractors, suppliers, and legal advisors.
- Communicate complex legal matters clearly and concisely to a range of audiences.
- Promote a proactive, solutions-focused approach to legal support in the commercial/corporate activities across the organisation.

Financial Management

- Ensure the effective financial management of activities and budgets under your control in accordance with Council guidelines, timelines and delegated responsibilities.
- Clearly set out the relationship between the LTP and the Council's Annual Plan, and such plans and strategies in reports recommended to the Group Manager.
- Ensure a professional and well considered business case is presented when requesting a change in resource requirements.

Note: Specific performance measures for this position will be discussed between you and your manager through the performance development plan process.

What You Will Bring

The below qualities, knowledge and skills are the key focus for this position and are used to assess an applicant's suitability for the role and the incumbent's performance in the position.

Education and Qualifications

Essential:

Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and admission as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand

Current practising certificate

Current NZ drivers' licence

Desirable

Relevant postgraduate qualifications or professional development in commercial law

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Essential:

Minimum 10 years' commercial/corporate law experience, particularly in contracts, procurement, and property or commercial transactions

Ability to provide clear, pragmatic, and solutions-focused legal advice

Knowledge of key local government legislation, including the Local Government Act and related statutes

Strong stakeholder engagement and influencing capability

Ability to manage competing priorities and deliver high-quality outcomes in a complex environment

Experience effectively drafting and negotiating complex commercial contracts

Experience advising on procurement processes and managing contractual risk

Experience drafting, reviewing, and advising on leases, land acquisitions, sale and purchase agreements, and other commercial property or conveyancing matters

Demonstrated experience in dispute resolution, including negotiation and working with external counsel and representatives

Experience working across a wide range of stakeholders and organisational functions

Desirable:

Experience within New Zealand local government, the public sector, or a similar in-house environment

Understanding of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Tikanga Māori

Agreement

Employee

Name

Sign

Date

Manager

Name

Sign

Date

Note: From time to time it may be necessary to consider changes in the position description in response to the changing nature of the work environment, which includes technological and statutory change. Such changes may be considered as part of the performance development review process or as required.

What We All Do

Customer Commitment

Treat customers with respect – taking the time to listen, learn and understand.
Present a positive image of Council by ensuring an efficient, courteous and professional service to customers at all times.
Acknowledge problems and complaints, identifying and promptly acting on solutions.

Continuous Improvement

Evaluate and review work practices and processes within all areas of responsibility to ensure that they are effective and efficient and implement improvements where appropriate.
Identify and propose additional business or service opportunities that enhance Council's existing capabilities.

Health, Safety and Well-being

Promote a safe and sound working environment and a culture of safe and responsible behaviours and attitudes.
Adhere to Health, Safety and Well-being policies and procedures, enabling a safe and healthy work environment for all workers and members of the public.

Civil Defence Emergency Management

Assist Council in preparing for and responding to an emergency.
After establishing the safety of members of your household, you may be assigned duties to assist Council and/or Emergency Management Southland in an emergency.

Other Duties

Undertake duties from time to time that may be in addition to those outlined but which fall within your capabilities and experience.

Our Process



OUTREACH AND ADVERTISING | Applications close Monday 21st September

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



APPLICANT SCREENING | Mid to late September

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 | Early October

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 October

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 | Mid October

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 | Mid October

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.

Legal Counsel – New Inhouse Role

- Broad commercial remit with diversity
- Influence decisions across the organisation
- In-house career without the timesheets!

Make your legal expertise count where it matters.

Invercargill City Council is entering an important period of change and investment, with a strong focus on delivering sustainable services, strengthening organisational capability and ensuring the city is well positioned for the future.

As part of this evolution, Council is establishing a new in-house Legal Counsel role – creating an opportunity for an experienced commercial lawyer to step into a broad, influential position where your advice will directly shape decisions and outcomes across the organisation.

Reporting to the Group Manager – Corporate Services and leading a Legal Executive, you will become a trusted adviser to the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, Elected Members and teams across Council. Are you keen for this exciting step?

About the Role

This is a genuinely varied in-house legal role spanning commercial contracts, procurement, property and conveyancing, corporate and public law, governance, dispute resolution and general organisational advice.

You will provide pragmatic legal guidance on complex commercial and contractual matters; support procurement and property transactions; advise on statutory and governance obligations; manage emerging disputes and legal risk; and coordinate specialist external counsel when required.

Importantly, this is not a role for someone who wants to practise law from the sidelines. You will work closely with leaders across Council, translating complex legal issues into practical advice that enables good decisions and gets things done.

You will also have the opportunity to help shape how Council accesses and manages legal services, including the establishment and ongoing management of its external legal panel.

About you

You will be an experienced commercial lawyer who combines strong technical capability with commercial judgement, pragmatism and excellent relationship skills. You may already be working in-house, or perhaps you are an experienced private practice lawyer ready to leave behind billable hours and six-minute units for a role offering breadth, autonomy and tangible impact.

Ideally, you will bring:

- An LLB, admission as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand and a current practising certificate.
- Significant commercial legal experience, particularly across contracts, procurement and property or commercial transactions.

- Strong drafting, negotiation and dispute resolution capability.
- The ability to provide clear, practical and solutions-focused advice.
- Confidence engaging with senior leaders, governance stakeholders and people across a diverse organisation.
- Sound judgement and the ability to know when specialist external expertise is required.

Local government experience would be valuable, but it is not essential. More important is your ability to understand a complex organisation, build trusted relationships and provide commercially grounded advice.

Why Invercargill City Council?

This is an opportunity to build an in-house legal career with genuine variety and influence while enjoying everything Southland has to offer.

Invercargill combines the opportunities and amenities of a regional city with an affordable, easy lifestyle and extraordinary natural environments on its doorstep. With Fiordland, Stewart Island/Rakiura, the Catlins and Central Otago within reach, it is a place where a rewarding career and life outside work can comfortably coexist.

Invercargill City Council offers flexible working arrangements and relocation support for the right candidate.

If you are looking for a legal role where relationships matter, your advice has visible impact and no two days are quite the same, we would love to hear from you.

How to apply

For a copy of the position description and to apply, visit the Decipher Group website on [Job opportunities - Decipher Group](#). To discover more about Southland and Invercargill City Council www.southlandnz.com and www.icc.govt.nz

For a confidential discussion about the role; Leanne Crozier on 021 245 2224 or Email to leanne@deciphergroup.co.nz Applications close: Monday 21st September 2026

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



Leanne Crozier

Director & Co-Founder

Decipher Group

Natural leader

Wordsmith

On point – on task

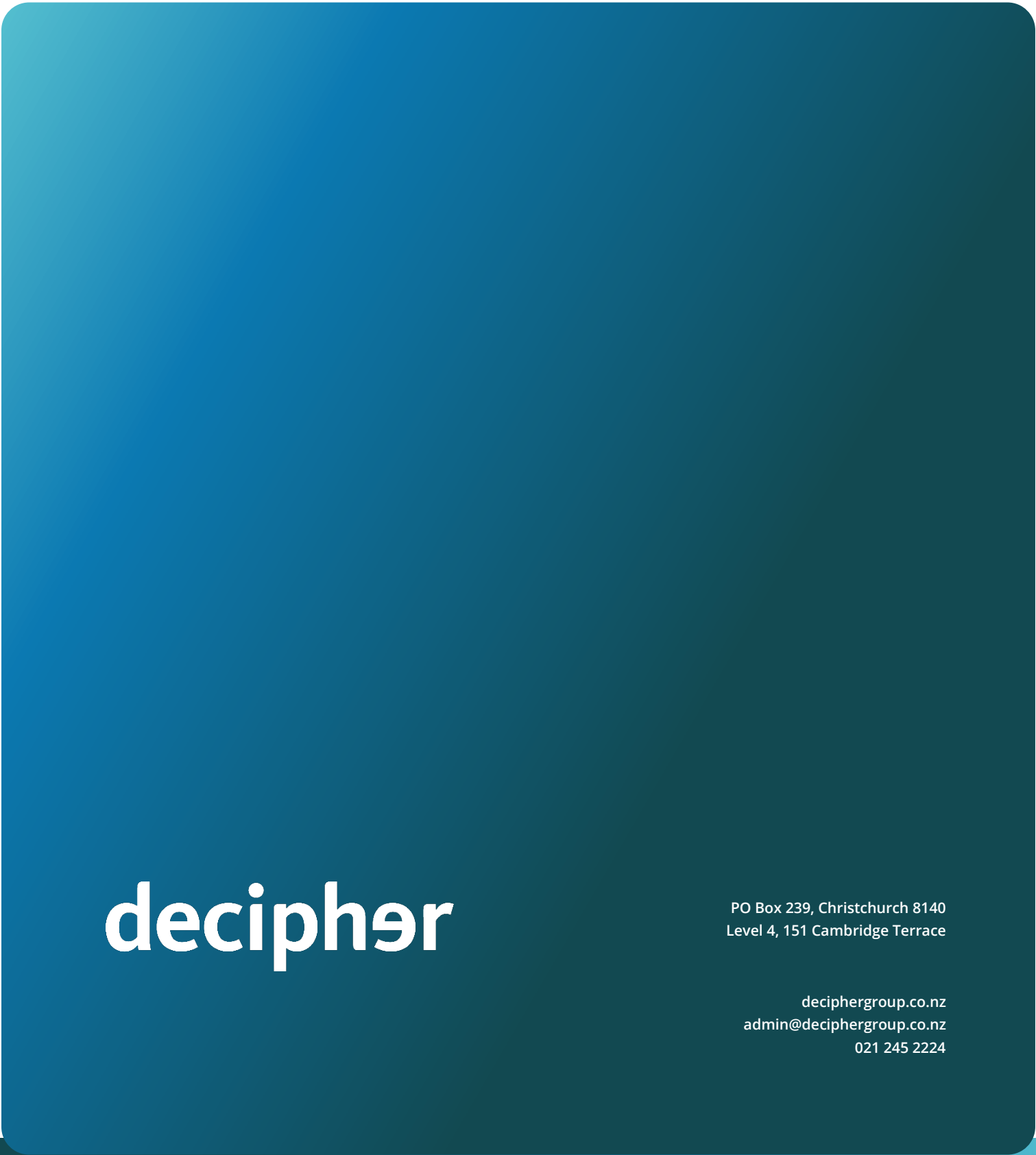
Connected

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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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