



Central South Island
Water | General Manager
Corporate Services and
CFO

Position Description and
Additional Information

October 2026





Position Description | Central South Island Water

General Manager Corporate Services & CFO

Title:	General Manager Corporate Services & Chief Financial Officer
Reports to:	Chief Executive
Direct Reports:	Head of HR, Finance Manager, Data & Digital Manager, Governance, Risk and Legal Manager
Function:	Corporate Services which comprises: Finance, Data & Digital, Human Resources, Governance, Risk and Legal
Head Office:	Timaru

Central South Island Water | In Summary

Central South Island Water has been established to deliver drinking water and wastewater services across the Timaru and Mackenzie districts, serving approximately 25,000 connections. From its planned operational commencement on 1 July 2027, it will bring together the councils' existing water teams, assets and service arrangements within this standalone organisation. It will also provide stormwater services to both councils (the method of service provision is currently being determined).

The organisation will be responsible for safe, reliable services, sustainable infrastructure investment and a direct relationship with customers through billing, service support and community engagement. Its founding priorities are strong leadership, decisions grounded in reliable data and evidence, and genuine customer focus. It will build a culture of performance, accountability and continuous improvement where people can develop their careers and contribute to better services.

Led by the Chief Executive and four General Managers across Operations, Planning and Delivery, Corporate Services, and Customer and Community, the executive team will share responsibility for establishing the organisation, shaping its culture and delivering outcomes across both districts. Each General Manager will lead their portfolio while contributing to decisions and priorities that support the success of Central South Island Water as a whole.

Role purpose

The General Manager Corporate Services & Chief Financial Officer (the GM) will provide strategic financial leadership and build the corporate capability needed for Central South Island Water to operate independently and sustainably. Financial strategy and management is the primary focus, including funding, investment, financial performance, pricing analysis and regulatory reporting.

The GM will provide evidence-based advice to the Chief Executive, executive team and Board, with pricing strategies and outcomes developed and agreed collectively by the executive team, subject to Board approval where required. Through specialist leaders, the GM will oversee human resources, digital and data, governance, risk and assurance. As a member of the executive team, the GM will shape a culture of performance, continuous improvement and customer service, sharing responsibility for the success of the whole organisation.





Key accountability areas

Collective executive leadership | the GM will

- Work with the Chief Executive and fellow General Managers to shape organisational direction, agree priorities and take shared responsibility for performance and customer outcomes.
- Bring strategic financial advice and constructive challenge to executive decisions, using reliable data, tested assumptions and clear options to balance service, investment and affordability.
- Lead across portfolio boundaries, support collective decisions and model a culture of accountability, continuous improvement and customer service.
- Provide visible executive leadership of health, safety and wellbeing, taking shared responsibility for a culture where risks are understood, people speak up and safe work is expected.
- Ensure decisions, resources and assurance support the safety of employees, contractors and the public, with clear accountability and learning from incidents.

People leadership and performance | the GM will

- Lead and develop a team of leaders who take ownership of their portfolios and contribute to organisation-wide outcomes.
- Set clear expectations, measurable outcomes and decision-making authority; coach direct reports to strengthen their judgement, capability and confidence.
- Build a culture of performance and accountability through regular review of results, feedback, recognition and timely, constructive conversations when expectations are not met.
- Model visible, inclusive leadership and create opportunities for learning, career development and succession, encouraging leaders to improve how their teams work and serve others.

Establishment and transition | the GM will

- Lead corporate readiness for commencement on 1 July 2027, ensuring financial, people, digital, governance and reporting arrangements support reliable services from day one.
- Set priorities and hold specialist leaders and providers accountable for readiness milestones, including funding, financial controls and dependable corporate systems.
- Resolve establishment risks and dependencies with fellow executives, councils and advisers, then lead the improvement of systems and processes as the organisation matures.

Financial leadership and sustainability | the GM will

- Lead financial strategy and long-term sustainability, aligning funding, expenditure and investment with service commitments, customer affordability and organisational priorities.
- Provide the Chief Executive and Board with clear analysis of financial performance, forecasts and risks; use scenario modelling and tested assumptions to inform decisions and recommend action.
- Oversee funding, borrowing, liquidity, debt covenants, treasury and financial controls within approved policies and delegations, ensuring transparent treatment of company finances and related-party costs.





Pricing and investment | the GM will

- Lead the financial modelling, cost analysis and advice that underpin pricing and revenue planning, bringing clear options and trade-offs to the executive team.
- Work with fellow General Managers to develop and agree pricing strategies and intended outcomes collectively, incorporating operating costs, investment priorities, customer impacts and affordability, subject to Board approval where required.
- Partner with Planning and Delivery to test investment priorities and funding options, and with Customer and Community to align pricing decisions with accurate billing and revenue collection; billing delivery remains with the customer portfolio.

Regulatory reporting and assurance | the GM will

- Lead financial and economic regulatory reporting, including Commerce Commission requirements, establishing clear ownership, reliable data and timely, accurate submissions.
- Coordinate company-wide regulatory reporting and assurance with accountable portfolio leaders, who retain responsibility for their technical obligations and source information.
- Build reporting capability and controls through specialist staff and advisers, using regulatory insights to inform financial planning, pricing advice and performance improvement.

People strategy and organisational capability | the GM will

- Lead the people and capability strategy through the Head of HR, aligning workforce planning, leadership development and performance expectations with organisational priorities.
- Provide executive oversight of staff integration, employment relations and change, building consistent leadership practices and a culture where people see opportunities to grow their careers.
- Ensure effective people policies, payroll assurance and corporate health and safety arrangements, using workforce information and feedback to improve capability and performance.

Digital data and corporate systems | the GM will

- Set direction for digital capability, data governance and corporate systems so leaders can rely on accurate, accessible information to make decisions, monitor performance and improve customer service.
- Hold the Data and Digital Manager and external providers accountable for system readiness, service quality, cyber security, resilience and value for money; operational technology remains within Operations, with coordinated support and clear interfaces.
- Lead the evaluation and establishment of fit-for-purpose IT service arrangements, including outsourced provision, while retaining company ownership of data and technology decisions; guide future systems integration and process improvement.

Governance risk and assurance | the GM will

- Lead an integrated approach to governance, risk and assurance that gives the Chief Executive and Board clear, evidence-based visibility of obligations, performance and material risks.
- Ensure effective delegations, policies, audit and reporting arrangements through the Governance, Risk and Legal Manager, with clear ownership, timely escalation and follow-through.





- Oversee access to specialist legal advice and management of company and council interface obligations, ensuring proportionate controls support informed decisions and effective delivery.

Commercial stewardship and corporate performance | the GM will

- Set clear service standards and performance measures for corporate functions, holding leaders accountable for budgets, capability and responsive support that enables the organisation to serve its customers.
- Provide commercial insight and constructive challenge to business cases, procurement and major commitments, using evidence to assess value for money, risk and service outcomes.
- Lead continuous process improvement across corporate services, using performance data and feedback to simplify work, improve reliability and hold advisers and providers accountable for results.

Person specification

The role requires a strategic CFO with the breadth to lead specialist corporate functions and the practical judgement to build capability in a lean organisation. The successful candidate will combine financial discipline with people leadership, evidence-based decision-making and a clear commitment to customer outcomes. Relevant transferable experience will be considered alongside sector knowledge.

Experience

- Senior financial leadership, preferably at CFO or equivalent level, with responsibility for financial strategy, funding, forecasting, performance, controls and commercial advice.
- Experience influencing organisational direction and investment priorities, using financial modelling and scenario analysis to provide clear recommendations to an executive team and Board.
- Experience leading and developing managers across a broader corporate portfolio, or demonstrated ability to oversee specialists in people, digital, governance and risk.
- A record of building a culture of performance and accountability, and establishing or improving systems and processes through organisational change, integration or business establishment.
- Experience in pricing or cost-based revenue planning and regulatory reporting, or closely comparable work in a regulated or publicly accountable environment; ability to work with specialists and develop capability in the water regulatory framework.
- Experience overseeing external advisers and service providers. Infrastructure, utilities, local government or water experience would be valuable; relevant commercial experience from other sectors is welcome.

Qualifications

- A relevant tertiary qualification.
- A recognised professional accounting qualification such as CA, CPA or an equivalent designation.





Skills and leadership qualities

- Strategic financial judgement and commercial acumen, including the ability to assess funding, pricing, investment and affordability trade-offs.
- Strong analytical skills and confidence testing data, assumptions and options, translating complex financial and regulatory information into clear advice.
- Confident leadership of specialist managers, with effective coaching, clear expectations and accountability for measurable results.
- Sound understanding of governance, risk and assurance, with the ability to establish proportionate controls and reliable reporting.
- Ability to prioritise in a lean organisation, stay close enough to delivery to support progress, and lead continuous improvement in systems, processes and service quality.
- Integrity, clear communication and collaborative leadership, with the ability to connect financial and corporate decisions to customer outcomes and the success of the whole organisation.

Our Process



OUTREACH AND ADVERTISING | Applications close 6 November 2026

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



APPLICANT SCREENING | Late October Early November

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 to Mid November

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 to Mid November

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 to Late November

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 November

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.

GM Corporate Services and CFO – Shape Tomorrow

- Build the foundations of this organisation with fresh thinking
- Shape a culture of service, performance and continuous improvement
- Join a collaborative executive team with shared responsibility for success

Central South Island Water | Help shape what comes next

Central South Island Water has been established to deliver drinking water and wastewater services across the Timaru and Mackenzie districts, alongside stormwater services for both councils. Preparing to commence operations on 1 July 2027, the organisation has a clear ambition: reliable services, decisions grounded in evidence and a genuine focus on customers and the communities it serves.

The new role of GM Corporate Services & CFO is an opportunity to help shape an organisation from its foundations – building the capability, culture and ways of working that will support its communities for years to come. Sound like you?

About the opportunity | Establish, Build, Shape

Reporting to the Chief Executive, you will join three other new General Managers who will collectively build and lead Central South Island Water. Your contribution will extend across the organisation, helping the executive team make sound decisions, navigate competing priorities and deliver shared outcomes.

As CFO, you will lead financial strategy, funding and commercial advice, connecting infrastructure investment and service commitments with long-term sustainability and customer affordability. You will lead pricing analysis and financial and economic regulatory reporting, with pricing strategies and outcomes agreed collectively by the executive team.

Alongside this financial leadership, you will oversee specialist leaders across people, digital and data, governance, risk and assurance. You will build corporate services that enable effective delivery, developing your team and setting clear expectations for performance, accountability and responsive service.

Your priorities will include:

- Establishing dependable financial systems, controls and corporate capability for commencement.
- Providing clear, evidence-based advice to the Chief Executive, executive team and Board.
- Building leadership capability and a culture where people take ownership, improve processes and develop their careers.
- Bringing commercial discipline and a customer perspective to investment and organisational decisions.

About you | Fresh thinking, New ideas

You are a strategic financial leader with the breadth to oversee a wider corporate portfolio and the practical judgement to operate effectively in a lean, developing organisation. Your background could

be in utilities, infrastructure or another commercial environment. We welcome transferable capability and fresh thinking from beyond water and local government.

You bring:

- Senior financial leadership experience and a recognised accounting qualification such as CA, CPA or equivalent.
- Strong judgement across funding, investment, financial modelling and commercial performance.
- Confidence advising an executive team and Board, testing assumptions and explaining complex choices clearly.
- The ability to lead specialists, coach people and hold teams accountable for results.
- Experience in pricing, regulatory reporting or comparable work within a regulated or publicly accountable environment (would be useful but is not necessary).

You will be comfortable with ambiguity, willing to challenge established approaches and committed to working as one executive team. Above all, you will connect sound financial leadership with the people and services it supports.

Help establish an organisation, build its culture and shape its future.

How to apply

For a copy of the position description and to apply, visit the Decipher Group website on <https://deciphergroup.co.nz/job-opportunities/general-manager-corporate-services-and-cfo/>

To discover more about Central South Island Water and the partner Councils visit www.timaru.govt.nz and www.mckenzie.govt.nz

To make a time for a confidential discussion about the role; contact Leanne Crozier at Decipher Group by txt to 021 245 2224 or email leanne@deciphergroup.co.nz

Applications close: Friday 6th November 2026

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



Leanne Crozier
Director & Co-Founder
Decipher Group

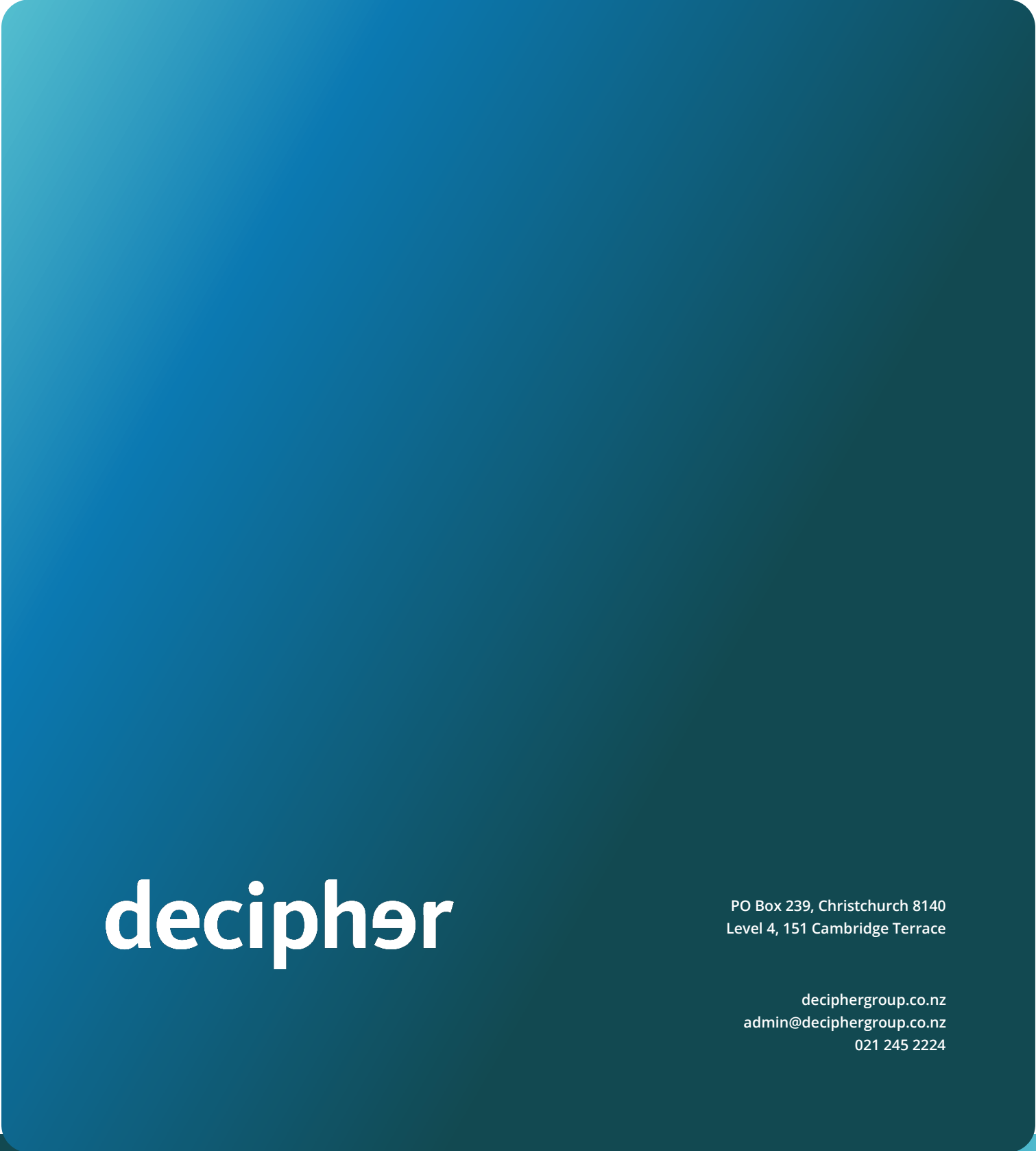
Natural leader
Wordsmith
On point - on task
Connected

decipher

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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