



Central South Island Water | General Manager Planning and Delivery

Position Description and
Additional Information

October 2026





Position Description | Central South Island Water

General Manager Planning and Delivery

Title:	General Manager Planning and Delivery
Reports to:	Chief Executive
Direct Reports:	Water Planner, Asset Information and GIS Lead, Capital Delivery Project Team Leader, Water Services Principal, 3 Waters Engineer, New Connections Lead
Function:	Planning and Delivery comprising asset management and strategy, capital delivery, growth, development and consents interfaces
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 Planning and Delivery (the GM) will provide executive leadership of the strategy, asset management and capital investment needed for sustainable water services across the Timaru and Mackenzie districts. The GM will lead the Water Services Strategy, build planning capability and turn asset evidence, service needs and growth expectations into credible, prioritised and affordable investment plans.





Through capable leaders, professional staff and delivery partners, the GM will oversee an achievable capital programme and build a culture of performance, accountability and continuous improvement. As a member of the executive team, the GM will connect long-term infrastructure choices with operational performance, customer outcomes and financial sustainability, 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 evidence-based advice and constructive challenge to executive decisions on infrastructure, service levels and pricing, making investment priorities, lifecycle costs, risks and customer benefits clear.
- 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 engagement and a culture of performance and accountability through visible leadership, regular review of results, feedback, recognition and timely, constructive conversations when expectations are not met.
- Create opportunities for learning and career development; prioritise succession planning, knowledge transfer and specialist capability so the organisation retains the expertise needed for reliable services.

Establishment and transition | the GM will

- Lead preparation of the first Water Services Strategy for commencement on 1 July 2027, drawing on specialist advice and building the internal capability needed to maintain it.
- Set clear readiness milestones for planning, asset information and capital delivery, including the transfer of teams, projects, records and delivery responsibilities.
- Resolve establishment risks with fellow executives, councils and advisers, linking initial investment priorities with funding, pricing and service commitments.





Water services strategy and investment priorities | the GM will

- Lead the long-term direction for water services infrastructure, translating service, resilience, renewal and growth needs into clear strategic choices.
- Test the investment pipeline and its underlying assumptions, using asset evidence, risk, demand and lifecycle costs to distinguish essential priorities from work that can be deferred or redesigned.
- Work with Corporate Services and fellow executives to develop credible, affordable investment options and contribute to collective pricing decisions, giving the Chief Executive and Board clear recommendations and trade-offs.

Asset management and organisational capability | the GM will

- Build asset management as a core organisational discipline, setting expectations for condition assessment, service performance, lifecycle planning and renewal priorities.
- Develop the team's planning and technical capability, using specialist support where needed and incorporating operational knowledge into asset decisions.
- Hold the team accountable for practical, evidence-based plans and regularly test whether investment priorities remain aligned with asset risk, service needs and affordability.

Capital programme leadership and delivery | the GM will

- Lead an achievable capital programme with clear business cases, delivery priorities, budgets, milestones and accountability for outcomes.
- Hold delivery leaders and external designers and contractors accountable for safety, quality, cost and programme performance, acting as an informed client and escalating material changes promptly.
- Ensure robust commissioning and handover to Operations, with assets fit to operate and maintain and benefits assessed against the case for investment.

Asset information and decision support | the GM will

- Take ownership of reliable asset and spatial information, establishing clear stewardship, quality standards and confidence in the evidence used for planning and investment.
- Work with Data and Digital, Finance and Operations to oversee data migration and integration between asset, GIS, financial and operational systems.
- Ensure completed works provide accurate asset records and as-built information; use performance and condition insights to refine plans and improve decision-making.

Growth development and consenting | the GM will

- Lead planning for growth, demand and network capacity, assessing development and seasonal pressures across both districts.
- Set expectations for development servicing, new connections and asset vesting, ensuring clear decisions, sound technical assurance and responsive service to applicants.
- Coordinate technical input to council planning, consenting and road corridor processes, with clear interfaces that recognise councils' retained statutory responsibilities.





Customer outcomes and cross portfolio delivery | the GM will

- Work with Operations and Customer and Community to align investment and works programmes with service needs, operational readiness and customer expectations.
- Ensure planned works and infrastructure decisions are supported by timely engagement and clear communication of disruption, benefits and trade-offs.
- Use customer feedback and service performance evidence to inform priorities and assess whether completed investment delivers the intended outcomes.

Resources continuous improvement and assurance | the GM will

- Lead portfolio planning and resource allocation, aligning budgets, specialist advice and team capacity with agreed priorities and delivery commitments.
- Set measurable expectations for planning quality, programme performance and investment outcomes; use results and lessons learned to improve business cases, processes and delivery.
- Provide the Chief Executive and Board with clear, evidence-based advice on investment, performance, dependencies and material risks, supporting coordinated regulatory reporting with Corporate Services.

Person specification

The role requires a strategic infrastructure leader who can build planning capability, challenge investment assumptions and translate long-term priorities into practical delivery. The successful candidate will combine asset management and commercial judgement with visible people leadership, evidence-based decisions and a clear commitment to customer outcomes. Relevant experience from other infrastructure and asset-intensive sectors is welcome.

Experience

- Senior leadership in infrastructure planning, asset management, capital delivery or a comparable asset-intensive environment, with responsibility for professional teams and investment outcomes.
- A record of connecting long-term strategy with credible, prioritised investment plans and practical delivery.
- Experience building asset management capability, strengthening data quality and developing lifecycle plans and evidence-based business cases.
- Experience overseeing capital programmes, procurement and external designers or construction providers, with accountability for safety, quality, cost and delivery.
- Experience developing leaders, strengthening performance and leading change or establishing new capability.
- Experience advising executive teams or governance bodies on complex investment choices and navigating growth, development, consenting and stakeholder interfaces. Water experience is valuable; relevant utilities, infrastructure or other sector experience is welcome.





Qualifications

- A relevant tertiary qualification in engineering, infrastructure, asset management, planning or a related discipline, or equivalent depth of relevant professional experience.
- Professional registration or qualifications in asset management, investment planning or programme management would be valuable.

Skills and leadership qualities

- Strategic judgement that balances service performance, infrastructure risk, growth and affordability.
- Strong asset management and investment analysis skills, with the ability to test data, technical assumptions and the credibility of forecast requirements.
- Commercial judgement and programme oversight, including clear assessment of lifecycle costs, procurement options and delivery risk.
- Visible, inclusive leadership with effective coaching, clear expectations and accountability for measurable results.
- Ability to translate complex evidence into clear recommendations and influence executives, governance bodies, councils and delivery partners.
- Adaptability and practical judgement in a lean organisation, with the ability to build capability, lead continuous improvement and connect investment decisions to customer outcomes.

Our Process



OUTREACH AND ADVERTISING | Applications close: 6th November

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



APPLICANT SCREENING | Late Oct/Early Nov

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 Planning and Delivery – Shape Futures

- Bring fresh thinking to infrastructure strategy and investment.
- Build capability and turn evidence into better long-term decisions.
- 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 Planning and Delivery is an opportunity to shape the organisation's infrastructure future - building planning capability, challenging assumptions and directing investment towards the outcomes that matter most. 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.

You will lead water services strategy, asset management, capital delivery and planning for growth. An immediate priority will be developing the first Water Services Strategy, connecting asset condition, service needs and future demand with credible, affordable investment choices.

This role has significant scope to influence how the organisation thinks and invests. You will test the investment pipeline, strengthen the evidence behind decisions and help determine what needs to happen first, what can wait and where a different approach could deliver better value.

Through your team and specialist partners, you will build asset management capability and oversee an achievable capital programme. Working closely with fellow executives, you will connect infrastructure decisions with operational needs, customer outcomes and financial sustainability.

Your priorities will include:

- Developing a clear water services strategy and prioritised investment programme.
- Building planning capability, reliable asset information and disciplined decision-making.
- Leading capital delivery with clear expectations for safety, quality, cost and performance.
- Developing people and improving processes, with accountability for the service benefits investment delivers.

About you | Fresh thinking, New Ideas

You are a strategic infrastructure leader who can connect long-term thinking with practical delivery. You bring the judgement to challenge investment assumptions, the commercial discipline to navigate constrained funding and the leadership to build capability through others.

Your background could be in electricity, utilities, transport, infrastructure or another asset-intensive environment. We welcome transferable experience and fresh perspectives from beyond water and local government.

Water-sector experience would be valuable, but it is not essential – it's your ability to understand complex infrastructure, lead technical specialists and bring sound judgement to investment decisions that will matter most.

You will bring:

- Senior leadership experience in infrastructure planning, asset management, capital delivery or a comparable portfolio.
- A record of translating strategy into credible investment priorities and achievable programmes.
- Strong analytical and commercial judgement, including the ability to test asset evidence, lifecycle costs and delivery options.
- The ability to develop people, set clear expectations and build a culture of performance and continuous improvement.
- Confidence advising executives and Boards, explaining complex choices and working constructively with delivery partners and stakeholders.

You will be comfortable with ambiguity, willing to challenge established approaches and committed to working as one executive team. Above all, you will connect infrastructure investment with reliable services and lasting value for customers and communities.

Help establish an organisation, strengthen its capability and shape infrastructure for generations to come.

How to apply

For a copy of the position description and to apply, visit the Decipher Group website on [General Manager Planning and Delivery - Decipher Group](#). 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 Lisa Edwards at Decipher Group by text to 021 240 4410 or email lisa@deciphergroup.co.nz.

Applications close: Friday 6 November 2026.

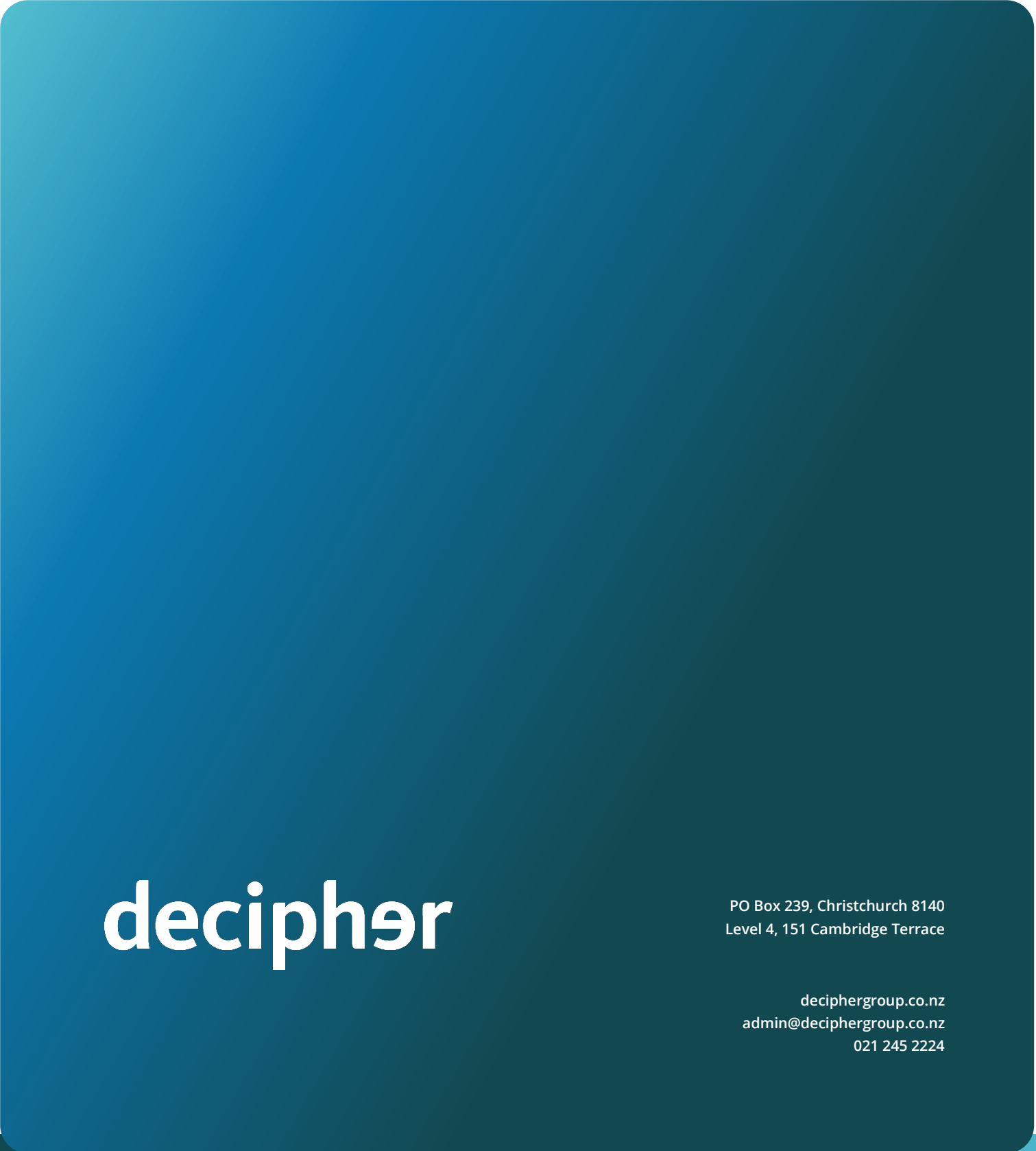
Please do not email us your CV and Cover Letter. Please use the *Apply Now* link on our website.



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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