

[fact sheet]

welcoming a new generation of directors



Decipher Group is leading an innovative programme assisting businesses to increase governance capability and diversity of thought by facilitating the placement of emerging directors at board level.

The Emerging Director Programme assists businesses to innovate and bring in new skills required at board level to effectively lead their businesses in today's rapidly changing marketplace.

Globally, boardrooms are evolving. Pressures like increased scrutiny, regulation and technological disruption are placing a greater focus on boards to assess the capabilities they need around the table and to balance expertise, build diversity and create a successful team to meet these challenges.

Decipher Group works alongside leadership and governance teams to create an Emerging Director Programme customised to their organisation, providing support and direction across programme positioning, mentoring and professional development, communications as well as requirements related to the search and placement of emerging directors*.

What an Emerging Director Programme can deliver for your business:



*Emerging directors are not considered directors of a company or a member of the board. They do not have voting rights and their role in board meetings will be solely to observe and participate in board discussions in their capacity as an adviser to the board. They are entitled to attend board meetings, participate in board discussions and receive certain documentation and mentoring.

[fact sheet]

building capability



The Emerging Director Programme provides experienced executives with first-hand governance experience and the ability to contribute and add value to the boardroom. The programme nurtures governance capability and provides emerging directors the opportunity to connect and learn from senior directors and chairs through the fixed term placement on a board.

Benefits for Emerging Directors

- Opportunity to gain and accumulate experience for current and future roles - making you more effective at working alongside boards.
- Connect, network and learn from experienced directors - opportunity to mimic and mirror behaviours that result in positive outcomes.
- An opportunity to be part of a cohort of board-ready emerging directors.
- Developing a governance profile that really highlights your core competencies.
- Opportunity for ongoing professional development and access to a governance pathway toolkit.

Benefits for Employers of Emerging Directors

- Hands-on, practical development of your executives.
- Demonstrating a commitment to growing capability - keeping them engaged in their professional development.
- Employees bring back examples of best practice and grow in self-confidence.
- Giving them the ability to contribute more effectively in interactions with your board.



“Matching boards and associate directors is a delicate and systematic process. That's the benefit that an external consultancy can provide in terms of acting as the programme facilitator. In regard to Decipher Group, I couldn't fault the assistance and involvement that they have given. Every interaction has been open and transparent.”

David Kerr, Professional Director and Chair

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what they said



Kate Morrison, Independent Director

Chair, The New Zealand Merino Company; Director, Chair of Risk, Audit and Finance Committee, Christchurch International Airport Limited; Chair, Link Engine Management; Director, Heartland Bank; Director, FarmRight Limited; Director, Helping Hands Work; Owner/Director, Morrison Horgan Limited.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate as an intern director on the board of Christchurch International Airport Limited (2016 - 2017), as part of a programme sponsored by Christchurch City Holdings Limited.

This was a rare opportunity to observe a highly professional group of directors and senior executives interacting in the context of a diverse and ever-evolving business; as part of the programme I also received dedicated mentoring from a member of the board as well as general support from the whole team. A fast tracked apprenticeship in governance, the opportunity provided me with credentials to open the door to a variety of other governance roles.

As a newcomer to Christchurch, it was a great opportunity to explore a potential different career path. The opportunity also allowed me to prove in person, the value I could bring to the table, rather than people having to make assumptions based on my CV and previous executive experience etc.

Having experienced the programme first-hand, I think it is a useful way for companies to identify a wider range of future governance talent and 'build a bench' of directors – particularly as boards seek to diversify away from the traditional board skillsets of law, accountancy, banking etc. It's a less risky way for boards to explore the impact of diversity in its widest sense. It also signals that the leadership is willing to 'walk the walk' in terms of modernising and building a board whose skills and experience more clearly align with the future strategic direction of the company.

In my experience, these programmes require a significant amount of resource to set up and manage as well as benefiting from having clear guidance at the outset as to the expected outcomes or what success might look like for each participant. Utilising the capability of an external provider to facilitate the programme is certainly a contributing factor to success.

"A fast-tracked apprenticeship in governance, the opportunity provided me with credentials to open the door to a variety of other governance roles."

[case study]

Associate Director Programme



Decipher Group partnered with Christchurch City Holdings Limited (CCHL) on the development and implementation of the CCHL Associate Director Programme – a flagship programme to foster a community of emerging directors with a diverse set of relevant skills and experience.

The CCHL Associate Director Programme offers emerging directors the opportunity to accelerate their boardroom experience with participants appointed as an Associate Director, for a 12-month duration (with the possibility of an extension), on a board in the CCHL group of companies. The focus of the programme is to improve governance capability in Christchurch and increase 'bench strength' for the CCHL Group boards, in developing future directors.



Paul Munro, Programme Partner

Professional Director; Formerly CEO, CCHL

Christchurch City Holdings Limited (CCHL) is the wholly owned investment arm of Christchurch City Council, with responsibility for some of the key infrastructure organisations critical to the regional economy. CCHL is accountable for the appointment of directors across ten different boards, which requires significant oversight to ensure we place quality and diverse candidates across these organisations.

When we were planning for the introduction of an emerging director programme, our board was very clear around what we wanted to deliver – with a specific focus on developing the capability of individuals who were 'director-ready'. This was not only about building governance capability within the CCHL Group but also contributing to a broader pool of talent by enhancing the skills and experience of senior leaders who are embarking on a governance career.

With the successful launch of the Associate Director Programme in 2018, already we are seeing benefits around the boardroom table with associate directors actively engaged in virtually all governance aspects and in a broader context, contributing to greater debate and diverse thinking which adds strategic value to a high performing board.

In the creation of the programme, we worked alongside Decipher Group who brought some really constructive ideas to help us shape the programme. They provided the resource, capability and independence to ensure that we developed an Associate Director Programme that aligned with the strategic intent of our board. Decipher Group have the necessary expertise and in-depth knowledge of the governance recruitment market, that delivered insight and practical application to the entire process.

Equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge and experience they need to grow as a director will provide immense value to your organisation as well as the wider governance community. Decipher Group are the perfect partners to guide you on this journey.

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what they said



Melissa Davies, Former Associate Director

Director, Motus Health; Board Subcommittee, New Zealand Rugby; Director, Canterbury A&P Association; Director, Silver Delta; Founder, Holdmine; Co-founder, Bolstur; Former Associate Director, Lyttelton Port Company Limited.

My drive and motivation for business success as well as a commitment to contributing to a thriving local economy, has cultivated my interest in a governance career. As an emerging director, with a diverse career portfolio, I'm not the typical choice for governance roles.

Changing the mindset of who can add value around a boardroom table is a real challenge and one that is starting to shift, but in saying that, I enjoy working with businesses that are open to diverse thinking and embrace new experiences.

When the team at Decipher Group put the CCHL Associate Director Programme on my radar, and having discussed the opportunity with them, I saw a real opportunity for personal and professional development. It was encouraging to see an organisation like Christchurch City Holdings Limited put real effort into growing governance capability in the region.



Ben Reed, Former Associate Director

Managing Director, HamiltonJet; Director, Ecocentral; Trustee, Ako Ōtautahi Learning City Christchurch; Committee Member, British New Zealand Business Association.

The first thing I will say about Decipher Group is that they are very well connected and great at putting combinations of people together that work. I know Leanne Crozier (director and co-owner) well and have regularly taken her advice on candidates for roles in my day-job as CEO for HamiltonJet.

That brings me to my current role as Associate Director at EcoCentral. Whilst I was not actively seeking an extra-curricular role, Decipher identified me as a suitable candidate for the Christchurch City Holdings Limited Associate Director Programme. Already reporting to a Board of Directors, I felt I had a reasonable understanding of the governance process, but my view had been formed whilst in possession of a deep operational understanding of the business.

Seeing the process without that familiarity, has allowed me to better grasp the difference between running a company and a governance role. I am certain that Decipher knew how valuable this would be for me and also felt confident that I would add value to EcoCentral as a business. The role itself has been fascinating, educational and fun. At the same time, I've expanded my own network and got to work with some well renowned leaders and directors. I certainly thank Decipher Group for urging me to consider this opportunity.

[about us]

Decipher Group



Decipher Group is a leading business partner to organisations in the delivery of people focused strategies, advice, development and support. We are a forward thinking, people-focused consultancy that creates strategic partnerships between businesses and people.

Our business model was built around offering a premium service that is responsive, energetic, innovative and nurturing. Everything we do is client-led. Through partnering with our clients and focusing on relationship development, we become an extension of our client's business – trusted advisors with the skills and expertise to deliver results. We also have a passion for building capability and are committed to encouraging and empowering executive leaders as they develop their governance careers.

Decipher Group is perfectly positioned to co-create an emerging director programme specific to your business.

Let's talk about how your business could benefit from the development of an Emerging Director Programme...