

Chris Gallavin

7(2)(a) Privacy

6 January 2025

Chris Dyhrberg
Executive Director
Central Districts Water
Palmerston North

Central Districts Water Shareholders' Committee – Independent Chair

Tēnā koe Chris,

Let me introduce myself.

Nō Airani hoki ōku tīpuna, i tae mai ōku tīpuna ki Aotearoa i te rautau tekau mā iwa. Ko Rangitoto te waka. I whānau mai au i Te Waiharakeke, Te Wai Pounmu. I tipu ahau i raro i te maunga Tapuae-o-Uenuku. I tipu ahau i te taha o te awa o Wairau. I tipu ake au i Te Waiharakeke. Nō reira, ko Aotearoa tōku whenua tipu. Ko Chris tōku ingoa, Gallavin ko te ingoa o tōku whānau. I tēnei wā kei Te Papaeoia ahau e noho ana.

I am writing to express my interest in the role of Independent Chair of the Central Districts Water Shareholders' Committee. This is a pivotal moment for the Horowhenua, Palmerston North, and Rangitīkei regions as they establish a new water services entity grounded in robust governance and bicultural collaboration, to secure long-term public value for the communities of the Central Districts. The opportunity to support this kaupapa as an independent, impartial, and strategically minded Chair aligns directly with my professional experience and personal commitment to values-led leadership.

Across my career, I have been entrusted with leading organisations through periods of establishment, transformation, and heightened public scrutiny. Whether realigning the staffing and structural framework of the Sisters of Compassion Group (a social services charity with an annual turnover of \$14M and \$200M+ in assets, and at the time, 150 staff), reconstructing a significant element of the University of Canterbury after the Canterbury earthquakes, or designing bicultural governance models that embed Te Tiriti principles into organisational DNA, my work has consistently centred on building trust, strengthening governance, and enabling high-performing teams to deliver for their communities.

Governance Leadership & Strategic Oversight

The Shareholders Committee will play a critical role in shaping the governance culture of Central Districts Water, setting expectations, appointing directors, monitoring performance, and ensuring alignment between shareholder councils, mana whenua, and the company's board. My governance experience is well suited to this environment.

As Chief Executive of the Sisters of Compassion Group, I led a full organisational reconfiguration, including a comprehensive staff realignment, the disestablishment of three of the eight boards contained within the Group, and the initial decision to close and then sell a near-100-bed hospital-grade elder care facility. This required a values and EQ-centered approach to my engagement with multiple boards, particularly as I navigated the very public decision to sell the Upper Hutt based, Home of Compassion. Leading three boards through the necessary decision to close the Home of Compassion and then leading the co-management of the Home with Te Whatu Ora and Heritage Life Care (the latter being the eventual purchaser of the Home), required absolute clarity on the strategic

direction of the Sisters of Compassion, coupled with an acute commercial determination underpinned by a kaupapa that prioritised community and people. My actions through this crisis helped ensure that the 90-year history of the Home continued as a major community resource for future generations in the area.

Currently, I teach governance and global business as part of Massey University's top ten globally ranked Executive MBA programme. I work closely with senior leaders across multiple sectors to strengthen governance capability and decision-making processes, to provide strategic clarity set within the all-important notions of context and systems thinking. This work has helped me establish my reputation as a leading thought-leader in the area of governance practice. It has also deepened my understanding of best-practice governance frameworks and the dynamics of high-trust relationships within boards and executive teams. This knowledge and experience are, I suggest, directly relevant to the mandate of the Shareholders' Committee.

My extensive governance experience has also seen me lead a staffing change-management process at Carncot School (where I am board chair) in order to bring the school back into the black from years of deficit returns. For several years I was also board chair of the New Zealand Centre for Global Studies, as well as College Board at Massey University – the 20+ member central board of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences covering 600 staff, approximately 5000 full time students, and more than 24 educational programmes – Faculty Chair of the Law Faculty at the University of Canterbury, and Board Chair of the New Zealand Eisenhower Fellowship Programme.

Independent Facilitation & Consensus Building

The Independent Chair must be a neutral facilitator, someone who can guide diverse viewpoints toward shared outcomes without voting rights or political alignment. This is a space in which I am deeply experienced.

At base, I am an applied collaborator and consensus builder, having dedicated the last 14 years to building robust skills these areas. At the University of Canterbury, I led the law faculty through an intense period of crisis and renewal following the earthquakes. The environment was highly charged, with competing interests, exhausted staff, and significant public scrutiny. My role required calm, impartial facilitation and the ability to build consensus around difficult decisions. The success of this work was recognised when I was honoured in the New Zealander of the Year Awards for 2014.

Similarly, at the Sisters of Compassion, I worked across iwi, government, and community groups to navigate sensitive decisions with empathy, clarity, and fairness. This included the momentous decision to appoint a co-chief executive Māori as one half of the Tumu Whakarae for the organisation, the provision of emergency housing for Afghan families following the sudden withdrawal of western troops from Afghanistan, and the housing of migrant families through the New Zealand refugee programme. I am known for my ability to hold space for divergent perspectives while maintaining focus on long-term strategic outcomes.

Bicultural Partnership & Mana Whenua Engagement

The Shareholders Committee's structure, particularly the inclusion of mana whenua representatives nominated through Ngā Tapuwāe o Hau, reflects a commitment to collaboration under Te Tiriti o Waitangi that I strongly support.

My leadership at the Sisters of Compassion included establishing a bicultural executive model, appointing a Co-Chief Executive Māori, and embedding Te Ao Māori into governance, operations, and organisational culture. This was not symbolic work; it was structural, relational, and enduring. I engaged directly with iwi leaders to ensure that decision-making reflected shared authority and mutual respect.

Whilst at Canterbury University, I worked extensively with Ngāi Tahu in the establishment of cultural competence as a defining feature of the graduate profile of the university. At Massey, I was acting-head of school for 12 months of Te Pūtahi-a-toi – the School of Māori Knowledge – prior to appointing Professor Meihana Durie as the permanent head of school. As tangata tiriti, I found the acting-head position to be one of the most enriching of my career as I grew in my ability to listen, learn and to humbly contribute in an environment of humility and respect.

I bring a deep appreciation for tikanga informed governance, the importance of mana-enhancing processes, and the need for genuine collaboration in the stewardship of essential services such as water.

Meeting Management, Process Integrity & Strategic Focus

The Independent Chair must ensure that the Committee's processes are disciplined, transparent, and strategically focused. My experience in high-stakes environments, particularly as chair of complex committees, has honed my ability to:

- set clear agendas and maintain strategic alignment
- ensure timely, high-quality information flows
- support members to understand their roles and delegated powers
- uphold process integrity and manage conflicts of interest
- maintain momentum while fostering thoughtful deliberation

These are foundational to effective governance and essential in the establishment phase of a new water services entity.

A Calm, Values-Led Leader for a Complex Establishment Phase

The first year of Central Districts Water will be decisive. The Shareholders Committee will be required to make foundational appointments, establish expectations, and build trust across councils, mana whenua, and the new board. This requires a Chair who is steady, impartial, and experienced in navigating complexity.

I am privileged to have developed a body of practice in the leadership of complexity. I am a calm and measured leader, shaped by significant professional challenges and grounded in principles of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and whanaungatanga. I do not catastrophise. I seek to empower and not micro-manage. And I bring clarity, discipline, and a focus on long-term public value. My approach is to empower groups to work together in ways that exceed the sum of their parts, an essential quality for a joint committee representing three councils and mana whenua.

Conclusion

It would be a privilege to serve as the Independent Chair of the Shareholders Committee and to support the establishment of Central Districts Water as a trusted, high-performing, and values-driven water services entity. I welcome the opportunity to discuss how my experience, governance expertise, and commitment to collaboration could contribute to this important kaupapa.

Ngā mihi nui,

Chris Gallavin

Dr Chris Gallavin MInstD, LLB(Hons) Cant., PhD Hull, PGCertTE(Gov) Melb, MTEM, Melb.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrisgallavin/>

DR CHRIS GALLAVIN

Senior Executive

7(2)(a) Privacy
7(2)(a) Privacy
7(2)(a) Privacy

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrisgallavin/>



SUMMARY

Strategic, values-led executive leader with 20+ years' experience across social-justice, tertiary, the not-for-profit and international development sectors. Nationally recognised public advocate with over 1000 citations, two feature-length documentaries, and a global profile shaped by Eisenhower, Fulbright, Oxford University, and Duke of Edinburgh fellowships. Proven track record in leading complex organisations, growing funding, forging high-trust partnerships, and driving bicultural transformation. Unashamedly team focused with a portfolio of engagement across sectors on team development and optimisation. A self-aware, EQ-centred leader, deeply committed to te Tiriti o Waitangi, equity, and the rights and wellbeing of families and communities.

EDUCATION

Bachelor Degree in Law

University of Canterbury - First Class Hons. - 1998-01
Admitted Barrister & Solicitor 2007

Postgraduate Cert Education Governance

Melbourne University - 2017 - 2018

Masters of Education Management

Melbourne University - 2017 - 2019

Phd - Law

University of Hull, UK - 2002 - 2004

SKILLS

- **Strategic Planning:** Developed and executed strategic plans that aligned with institutional goals, contributing to considerable growth in revenue and funding.
- **Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration:** Built and maintained strong relationships with key industry and academic partners, driving collaborative research projects and increasing student and philanthropic revenue.
- **Financial Oversight:** Managed multi-million-dollar budgets, achieving significant cost reductions while maintaining high standards in both service and output.
- **Change Management & High-Performance Team Leadership:** Led multiple transformative initiatives, including reform of the School of Law, University of Canterbury. Staffing restructure, Sisters of Compassion.
- **Public Speaking & Media Liaison:** Regularly engaged with media outlets and public forums, enhancing institutional profile and promoting key initiatives.
- **Re-Branding:** Rebranding of UC Law to focus on professional and community engagement. New market identification and matched profile raising and brand awareness.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Dean - Faculty of Law & Associate Professor

University of Canterbury | 2012 - 2015

- **Leadership & Strategy:** Drafted and implemented the School's first strategic plan in over 100 years. Engaged the Faculty in the rebuild of the Canterbury community. Established New Zealand's first comprehensive clinical legal education programme. Instigated a philanthropic programme of support.
- **Research Focus:** Directed the Faculty's research and innovation strategy, maintaining the School as a top 100 QS ranked faculty.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Fostered strong relationships with industry partners, resulting in new collaborative projects and enhanced funding opportunities.
- **Innovation:** Established New Zealand's first and only Bachelor of Criminal Justice.
- **Financial Oversight:** Oversaw an operational budget of \$9 million, implementing cost-saving measures that drastically reduced expenses whilst aggressively pursuing new income opportunities.
- **Iwi Engagement:** Championed collaboration with indigenous Māori. Collaborated with the DVC Māori and the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre on the implementation of cultural competence as part of the graduate profile.

Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor - Humanities & Social Sciences & Professor of Law

Massey University | 2015 - 2020

- **Leadership & Strategy:** Line management of PVC's office including the Directors of Learning and Teaching, Academic Programmes and Research, the BA, Associate Dean Māori and Associate Dean Pacific. Drafted and oversaw College digital strategy, key member of the university's council of academic deans, oversaw development of student support structures, member of Provost's impact team. Significant Covid lockdown leadership. Led a team to establish the ground-breaking, multidisciplinary Masters of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Research Focus:** Line managed the Director of Research and oversaw a 250+% increase in the success rate and a 130+% income increase in Marsden applications between the four years of 2016-19 and the prior four years.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Negotiated and delivered an exclusive agreement with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), providing a 30% discount on fees for personnel and the provision of new university level programmes for the NZDF.

EXPERIENCE CONTU'D

- **Management Oversight:** Deputy head of College - co-management of 600 staff (headcount), three large physical campuses (Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington), income budget \$120M NZD, more than two dozen academic programmes.
- **Iwi Engagement:** Acting Head Te Pūtahi-a-toi, (School of Māori Knowledge (2016-2017).

Chief-Executive Officer

Sisters of Compassion Charity | 2021 - 2023

- **Leadership & Strategy:** Complete staffing and financial reconfiguration. Oversaw the disestablishment of two of nine boards. Managed the operation and fire-sale of an 88 bed, hospital grade, elder care facility. Led the Board to establish a Co-CE Māori position to co-manage the charity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Co-ordination of complex relationships with Iwi partners, the Catholic Church, service providers in the greater Wellington region, the philanthropic community and key business partners.
- **Financial Oversight:** \$14M NZD annual turnover, 150 staff, \$200M+ capital assets. Led the reconfiguration of financial planning and reporting for the charity.

Governance, Consultancy, & Media

2012 - Continuing

- **Governance:** Contract professor - executive education - EMBA and MBA programs, Massey University, 2025 - continuing. Teaching governance, complex thinking, business law, and global business. EMBA ranked No.1 New Zealand and top-10 globally.
- **Consultant:** With Collective Intelligence Ltd., - specialising in high-performing teams and executive development.
- **Media:** Expert commentator on public policy, governance and high-performing teams. Internationally recognised commentator with more than 1000 television, radio, and newspaper citations, including *ABC Australia*, *The Guardian* UK, and the *New York Times*. Numerous podcasts. Documentary filmmaker with TVNZ.

AWARDS

- **2024:** Invited guest, International Conference on leadership, National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- **2023:** Duke of Edinburgh Commonwealth Study Conference, Global Leadership, invited global leader, Canada.
- **2018:** Eisenhower International Fellow - project: The New Global University.
- **2016:** New Zealand Power Lawyers List, Lawfuel.
- **2014:** Community Hero Medal, New Zealander of the Year Awards.
- **2011:** Fulbright Professor Georgetown University.
- **2006:** Canterbury and Plumer Fellow, St Anne's College, University of Oxford.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- **2025:** Promoter and organiser, New Zealand Premiere of Not only Fred Dagg but also John Clarke documentary - free public event with 12 industry sponsors, and 300 guests, extensive media coverage - Palmerston North, 9 December 2025.
- **2024 - 2025:** Director of Fundraising, Centrepoint Theatre, Palmerston North, Assisting in their capital raise, involving extensive community and business engagement across and beyond the Manawatū region.
- **2022-2023:** Managed sale of St Joseph's Home of Compassion - after eight months of co-management between the Sisters of Compassion, Heritage LifeCare and Te Whatu Ora.
- **2020:** Negotiated exclusive agreement between the New Zealand Defence Force and Massey University. Offering substantial discount on fees and preferred partner on all university level course development for the NZDF .
- **2018-2019:** Appointed to the Sir Peter Blake Trust Dream Team in service of underprivileged schools.
- **2012-2015:** Philanthropic fundraising for UC Law including individual and institutional support in excess of \$200k (from no prior institutional history of philanthropic support).
- **2014:** Largest internship programme at a New Zealand law school with dozens of stakeholders across government, industry, and society. Including the establishment of the flagship USA Congressional Internship with the Right Hon. Mike Moore - then NZ Ambassador to the US, supported by the NZ-US Council and Air New Zealand.
- **2014-2015:** National high school speaking tour - topics included finding your passion, recognising opportunities and the importance of service - resulted in significant recruitment for the University of Canterbury including into the LLB and Bachelor of Criminal Justice degrees.
- **Nationally recognised public intellectual and speaker.** Dozens of keynote invitations to local, national and international events, conferences, and organisations.

BOARD & TRUSTEE MEMBERSHIP

- MInstD.
- Trustee, Te Manawa Museums Trust Board (CCO), (2025 - present).
- Board Member, Earle Creativity Trust, (2020 - present).
- Trustee, Board Chair - Carncot School Board, (2024 - present).
- Chair, Eisenhower Fellowships New Zealand, (2022 - present).
- New Zealand Centre for Global Studies, Trustee 2012 - 2024, Board Chair 2020 - Dec 2024.
- Trustee of the Canterbury Law Review, (2012-2015).
- Canterbury Community Law Board Member, (2013 - 2015).
- Trustee, New Zealand Public Interest Project, (2015 - 2017).
- Board of Trustees Manchester Street School, Feilding, (2016 - 2019).
- Adviser to the Management Committee of the Creative Sounds Society Inc (The Stomach - Palmerston North), (2016 - 2018).
- Trustee, Kimbolton Sculpture Trust, co-founder, (2017 - 2019).
- Trustee and Chair, Manawatu Writers' Festival, (2017 - 2019).
- College of Law, New Zealand Curriculum Advisory Committee, (2017 - 2021).
- Trustee - Palmerston North Methodist Social Services, (2020-2023).

REFEREES

A broad selection of referees is available on request.

A significant list of publications, guest speaker and public engagement roles is also available on request.