



Joint Media Release

26 June 2026

Coast Waters board members announced

The three directors for the new joint West Coast council-controlled organisation for Local Water Done Well - Coast Waters Ltd have been selected from 50 applicants. Coast Waters has been established by the Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils to deliver drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services across the West Coast.

The new board members are Chair Darin Cusack, James Ryan and Onno Mulder. The board of directors will provide independent governance to Coast Waters under direction set by Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils. The Councils' Shareholders' Representative Forum is currently developing a statement of expectation for the Coast Waters board.

One of the board's tasks will be to create a Water Services Strategy that ensures Coast Waters provides safe and sustainable water services into the future.

The subcommittee to select the directors was made up of Mayors from the three councils, and iwi representative Francois Tumahai of Ngati Waewae.

Their initial board meeting will be in July 2026.

Background information about board members:

Board chair – Darin Cusack

Darin brings a background in aviation, infrastructure, rail, regulatory and tourism sectors, having held chief executive/ senior executive, board and independent chair roles throughout New Zealand and the Pacific region.

He has held directorships and senior roles in the tourism, aviation/aerospace, rail, urban transport, and contracting industries. His current governance roles include Chair of Auckland One Rail Ltd and Airways New Zealand Ltd and he is also on the boards of Ashburton Contracting Ltd, Hawkes Bay Airport Ltd the Civil Aviation Authority of NZ and the Canterbury Cricket Association.

Darin recently led the Pacific Aviation Investment Program (PAIP) on behalf of the World Bank Group across six countries in the Pacific region, and the reform and restructure of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office. The programme delivered more than US\$350 million of infrastructure renewal, technical assistance, regulatory oversight, policy development and capacity building.

Board member – James Ryan

James is a governance and infrastructure professional with significant international experience across regulated environments. In his current infrastructure advisory work, he works with councils and government agencies on the structuring and delivery of social infrastructure projects in New Zealand.

James' career commenced as a lawyer at Russell McVeagh and has included roles with the United Nations in Switzerland and, most recently, supporting governance across a multi-billion dollar, multi-jurisdictional portfolio of one of the largest single family offices in Europe. He holds a Master of Science in Water Science, Policy and Management from the University of Oxford, where his research focused on cost-of-capital frameworks for regulated utilities; and a Lincoln University Postgraduate Certificate in Resource Studies specialising in water management.

Board member – Onno Mulder

Onno is an experienced infrastructure chief executive and non-executive director with more than 20 years of leadership across water and electricity sectors. He is currently Chief Executive of EA Networks and serves on the board of Wai Hononga, New Plymouth's water organisation. He previously spent more than 15 years as Chief Executive of Citycare Limited. He brings extensive governance and management experience and a strong track record of delivery across a range of industries. Onno is focused on achieving strong outcomes for businesses, shareholders, and stakeholders, while empowering the teams he works with.

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