



## Media Release

### **Sentry Dealer Group Announces Acquisition of Australian Finance Group Financial Planning**

**Tuesday October 13, 2009.** National dealer group Sentry Group CEO Murray Hills has announced the acquisition of the Australian Finance Group Ltd's (AFG) financial planning arm Australian Finance Group Financial Planning Pty Ltd (AFGFP).

AFGFP has over 190 advisers with offices in all Australian States.

Commenting on the announcement, Murray Hills said the acquisition of AFGFP would significantly bolster Sentry's position in the marketplace as the dealer group's adviser strength would be increased to over 310 advisers nationwide with a total \$2.2 Billion FUA.

Through its member network, AFG manages over \$50 Billion in mortgage finance representing over 10% of home lending in Australia.

Earlier this year, AFG conducted a comprehensive review of its operations and strategic future direction and in doing so, acknowledged it required a 'specialist' industry partner within the financial planning marketplace.

Sentry's industry reputation, experienced management team, national presence, robust and flexible operational structure, adviser service specialisation and administrative capacity ensured its success.

"The synergy and compatibility of our respective corporate cultures, values and commitment to the long term well being of our advisers and their practices had the greatest influence on our decision to accept the Sentry offer," said AFG Managing Director Brett McKeon.

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AFGFP and Sentry will continue to operate under their individual brands and licences, although a number of administrative and support staff will transfer to Sentry Group.

Furthermore, under the terms of the arrangement, AFG will become a shareholder in Sentry Group and in doing so reflects its ongoing involvement and commitment to financial planning and life risk protection advice industry.

In March 2008, Sentry Group confirmed a strategic partnership with ING Australia (INGA) whereby INGA acquired a 37.5% stake in the dealer group. The partnership with INGA was a milestone in the four year history of Sentry as it provided the foundation for the dealer group's ambitious growth aspirations.

ING Australia's involvement with Sentry Group has given the business and their advisers greater profile. The shareholding has substantially assisted Sentry in attracting advisers and executing its growth strategy.

Murray Hills also confirmed that the greater industry presence, economies of scale and operational efficiencies will deliver significant benefits to advisers and their clients.

"Additional benefits that will be available to the Sentry and AFGFP advisers will be access to a broader Approved Product List; extensive range of personal and professional development programs; innovative client service and retention initiatives; and more efficient compliance support," said Murray Hills.

Murray Hills also confirmed that Sentry Group and AFG have agreed to implement a cross marketing program that will strengthen the marketplace offering of the respective adviser networks and provide them additional business growth and client service opportunities.

Murray Hills concluded, "The acquisition of AFGFP by the Sentry Group will be significant and long term with both AFG and Sentry benefiting from individual specialisation, cross marketing and economies of scale."

"The acquisition of AFGFP has accelerated the Sentry Group's long term national growth objectives and will provide a significant base for future recruiting and acquisition endeavours."

**Ends**

## Issued by Sentry Group Pty Ltd

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### About Sentry Group Pty Ltd

The Sentry Group was founded in 2005 by an experienced team of financial services professionals with a history of working with independently minded advisers led by majority shareholder and CEO Murray Hills.

Sentry Group comprises four AFSL's, over 185 Practices and 310 financial advisers, throughout Australia who provide comprehensive solutions for its clients utilising the specialist resources of its wholly owned subsidiary companies. Whilst well qualified, skilled and experienced, every Sentry adviser is committed to on-going training and development to ensure their knowledge, skills and capabilities are at all times leading edge.

ING Australia Limited holds a strategic investment in Sentry.

Sentry is currently seeking to recruit further adviser groups and individual practices in all States.

### About Australian Finance Group

Established in 1994 as an aggregator, Australian Finance Group (AFG) is one of Australia's leading financial services companies.

AFG is now one of the largest providers of mortgage broking services in the country, offering more than 650 financial products from Australia's leading lenders. With more than 2,500 members nationally, AFG focuses on supporting motivated, high level performers: 30% of Australia's top 100 mortgage brokers are AFG members.

Through its member network, AFG processes more than \$2 billion of mortgage finance every month and manages more than \$50 Billion in mortgage finance.

AFG has achieved industry recognition, including the Aggregator of the Year Award from the Mortgage and Finance Association of Australia for 2006, 2007 and 2008.