



**Francom**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FRANCOM GROUP ACQUIRES PANTHERA**

- *Transformative acquisition makes Francom one of the largest debt purchasing and collection groups in Australia*
- *Brookfield Special Investments backing continues under new ownership*
- *Secures future employment of 200 people*

#### **For immediate release**

**5 December 2024:** Australian family-owned credit and legal agency, Francom Group, has today announced the acquisition of one of Australia's largest private debt purchasing and collection groups, PF Management Group Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries (collectively, Panthera).

The assets of Panthera will operate under the Francom Credit brand moving forward. All current Francom debt collection solutions will be consolidated into the operations of Francom Credit, providing a more streamlined business structure. Francom Legal will continue to operate all franchising, legal and compliance operations.

Brookfield Special Investments, an existing lender to Panthera, supports the acquisition and has agreed to continue to extend finance to the enlarged Francom Credit group to support its expansion and ongoing operations in the sector.

This transformative transaction makes Francom Group the third largest debt purchasing and collection agency in Australia; increases its debt book by approximately 12 times; and grows the number of people it employs by 400 per cent.

Founded and managed by licensed legal professionals, Francom Group operates at the highest levels of compliance and governance and represents some of Australia's most well-known brands. Georgina Antoun will remain as CEO of Francom Group and will oversee all operations of Francom Credit.

#### **Panthera Acquisition**

Francom Group has an ambition to transform the perceptions and practices of the debt collection industry. Under new ownership and management, Panthera's operations will be realigned with Francom Group's approach, which is underpinned by ethical leadership, flexibility, transparency and education.

Francom Group will upskill and train all Panthera employees in its values of Listen, Imagine, Educate, Believe and Navigate. A core component of this training is a strict no interest and no fees policy, unless awarded by the Court. Since entering the debt collection industry in 2019, Francom has not commenced bankruptcy or liquidation proceedings, and has an objective to refrain from these actions.

Francom Group CEO Georgina Antoun said: "This acquisition represents a key pillar of our growth strategy and our genuine desire to positively change the perceptions and practices of the debt collection industry.

"As a family-owned company, we are energised by the opportunity to transform one of Australia's largest collection houses and align its approach and practices with our strong moral and ethical focus, based on robust corporate social responsibility frameworks. Our shared goal is to provide sophistication to the industry, give corporate customers the comfort to trust their debt practices and provide customers knowledge of the lasting effects of debt.

"In a cost-of-living crisis, we acknowledge the additional stress that debt can have on customers, which is why we centre our approach around flexibility, transparency and education. We do this by providing genuine solutions,



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including longer term payment arrangements with manageable and realistic repayments tailored to individual circumstances.

“We look forward to working with Brookfield Special Investments, as well as the 200 Panthera team members who will be joining the Francom Group. Today’s announcement secures their future employment, and we are excited to welcome them to the team.”

Brookfield Special Investments Senior Vice President Rahim Chunara said: “We are pleased to see Francom Group acquire Panthera, allowing the business to remain in operation and securing the employment of more than 200 staff members. Francom Group’s focus on compliance and ethical business practices is important to us and we remain committed to supporting the growth of the enlarged Francom Credit business into the future.”

Francom Group acknowledges Panthera’s litigation matters currently underway in Victoria and will work to resolve those matters as quickly as possible.

**ENDS**

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### **About Francom Group**

Founded in 2013 by legal professionals, Francom Group is a family-owned finance and legal solutions agency, offering a comprehensive suite of services, including franchising, legal, compliance, debt collection and finance. It operates in Australia and New Zealand.

Francom Group comprises Francom Legal, Francom Credit and Francom Finance. Francom Legal represents some of Australia’s most well-known franchise brands, including the Cheesecake Shop, Soul Origin, Retail Food Group and Roll’d. Francom Credit represents some of Australia’s largest organisations, including AGL and Origin and is the third largest debt purchasing and collection agency in the country, following the acquisition of Panthera in 2024. Francom Finance provides sustainable funding solutions designed to support personal and commercial growth ventures, across corporate finance, debt restructuring, capital raising, investment management, business loans and investor relations.

Francom Group employs more than 250 people and has a strong focus on its corporate social responsibility, which is underpinned by *Francommunity*, a program that aims to enhance awareness of the business’s impact on economic, social, and environmental aspects of society.