

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Regional expertise key to growth strategy for advice firm** *Advisers combining local knowledge & technology to better service clients*

**Sydney, 8 May 2014:** Innovation in technology is pivotal to increasing accessibility to financial advice. But in order to deliver the best client outcomes across every market it should be combined with the local expertise that only regional financial planners can deliver, says State Super Financial Services (SSFS) WA State Manager, Scott Phillips.

According to Mr Phillips, local expertise and intimate knowledge of specific regional issues affecting wealth creation enables financial planners to stand apart from others in delivering genuinely tailored advice. This is because the nuances and subtleties of the area in which they live can also significantly shape the kind of advice clients need, as well as how they want to receive it.

“Just as there isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach to financial advice, there should also be an understanding that clients in different locations need tailored advice, created and viewed through a local lens. Some of the common client concerns that we deal with on a regular basis here in WA are likely to be different to the ones that SSFS financial planners deal with in regional NSW, and again in Sydney, and quality advice should reflect that,” Mr Phillips said.

Mr Phillips’ comments occurred while he was speaking about the growing regional focus for the SSFS business, which the Perth SSFS office is looking to grow – and about using more technology to increase access for current and prospective clients.

“We are combining local expertise with an innovative advice service, so clients can access advice in the manner that is most convenient for them. We have complemented our comprehensive face-to-face advice offer with a telephone-based advice service, designed to support the Perth office as well as the broader public sector market in Western Australia.

“There is a natural synergy between our financial planners and our clients. Just as those in the WA public sector are relied on for their specialist skills and knowledge of local conditions, so our financial planners are also specialists in their own right – in providing financial advice that’s relevant to the public sector.

“So, for example, our financial planners have the specialised knowledge they need to help clients navigate the complexity of Defined Benefit schemes that are common for local WA clients and can help them understand how to maximise their benefits. For members of the GESB scheme, this sort of advice is no longer available from within the scheme so knowing there are specialist financial planners close by can provide additional peace of mind.”

Mr Phillips said SSFS was promoting its Perth business and the local expertise of its financial planners with a recent advertising campaign. The campaign, which kicked off this month across print, online and radio, uses the tagline ‘Serving the people who serve Western Australia’.

Being able to give advice specific to local clients helps in terms of relationship building but can also help the client financially. Illustrating this point with an example, Mr Phillips referred to helping members who started in the Western Australian public sector before July 1983 to improve the tax outcome of their benefit by advising them to make extra contributions to super just before they retire/claim.

Concluding, Mr Phillips said while having a regional strategy is important, it is also reassuring that the WA financial planners are part of the larger SSFS team – a business with a track record of over 24 years of helping clients based on their specialised expertise and public sector capabilities. And a business with clear goals for developing technology to better enable clients to access advice when and how they wish to receive it.

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**About State Super Financial Services:**

State Super Financial Services (SSFS) is a leading financial planning and advice provider. It has over 55,000 clients and more than \$13bn in funds under management as at March 2014. SSFS provides specialised advice, services and implementation solutions, particularly in the area of public sector retirement financial advice to members of Defined Benefit Schemes. SSFS has 144 professional financial planners working from 18 offices across Australia with a regular presence in 44 other sites across NSW, the ACT, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

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