

MEDIA RELEASE

Intrepid's new global headquarters has everything – except an office for the boss

Intrepid has moved in to a new global headquarters which has a beer garden and a ping pong table, but there's no office for bosses of the world's largest adventure travel company.

Just one desk has been assigned to a staff member in the new 2600sqm space in Melbourne's CBD - an editing suite for the in-house video production manager. Instead 230 Intrepid Group employees have been given lockers and will use state-of-the-art technology to 'desk-surf' between five 'neighbourhoods', 19 meeting rooms, and 18 break-out spaces.

This is the first global headquarters for the now privately-owned Intrepid Group, which went through a shareholder split with TUI in August last year to return to the original Founders with the vision of having a purpose beyond profit. The open-plan directive comes straight from the top, with CEO and co-Founder Darrell Wade keen to ensure that the new office creates a culture of collaboration and openness in the multi-brand business.

567 Collins Street contains WIFI throughout and is a showcase for environmentally sustainable technology, but the location amongst corporate law firms is notably different from Intrepid's first home in Fitzroy. The brief from Design Manager Liam Neal to Melbourne design firm PTID was to ensure that the office looked 'more Brunswick Street than Chapel Street'. The space needed to capture the Intrepid Group's spirit; its social heart and sense of fun, the heritage of its six tour operator brands, its sustainable values, its authenticity, and it needed to avoid travel industry clichés.

Inspiration for the design came from Intrepid's history, its global network of 1600 staff around the world, and Melbourne's own eclectic mix of cafes and restaurants.

Visitors to the new office wait in the 'Arrival Lounge' before following the hand-painted sign-posts by Melbourne illustrator Rosa Friend the five 'neighbourhoods'. But the most prominent feature is a huge communal kitchen with a ping pong table custom-made out of recycled timber. Designers sourced recycled furniture to create flexible zones that feel like a home away from home, including authentic Turkish rugs from Intrepid's office in Istanbul.

Now the world's largest adventure travel company, one of the most important part of the brief for co-founder Darrell Wade was the preservation of the company's 27 year history and achievements, as well as reflect the company's strong values: *Innovation, Passion, Fun, Responsibility, Integrity* and *Growth*, which are prominently displayed on the wall in the entrance.

Globally recognised as a leader in responsible tourism, Intrepid was the first travel company to end elephant rides, with TripAdvisor and more than 100 travel companies following suit. Three elephant sculptures by Australian artist Tom Rippon are dotted around the office as a reminder of what the company has done to achieve its vision of 'Changing the Way People See the World'.

The company's mantra of *Best Travel Experience Ever* is displayed in neon lights in the corridor and a light-box art installation created with slides taken from travels in the 1970s and 80s pays homage to the history of Intrepid, Peregrine and Geckos Adventures, while awards and archives are now on display in a meeting room which is designed to double as a library.

The new office also has a clean-desk policy, a digital phone system, and 'followme' printing technology to reduce clutter and paper wastage.

"So much of our history was hiding away in boxes and we wanted to bring it out and celebrate it, keep the important things, without unnecessary hoarding" says Darrell Wade, CEO and Founder of the Intrepid Group. "This is more than just a new office for Intrepid, it marks a real milestone for the story of the Intrepid Group."

The move follows the opening of Intrepid's new European headquarters in London six weeks ago and the Melbourne office's flexible floor plan allows for future growth of the company.

"We wanted to create a space to socialise, to share knowledge and ideas and be inspired every day" says James Thornton, Managing Director Intrepid Group. "Last year we went through the biggest change ever to our business, and instead of slowing us down – it's lit a fire that we just couldn't have predicted. Sales have been fantastic with all brands smashing targets. We can't wait to host our industry friends in our new space. The energy is tangible."

The new Intrepid Group building includes safe bicycle store, a repair centre, and shower facilities with a daily towel service. All Melbourne staff were given a \$200 voucher for Good Cycles, a not-for-profit bike shop, to welcome them to the new building and help to gear up for another busy year ahead for the fast-growing travel company.

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