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## **Intrepid Travel purchases US tour company**

Australian-based Intrepid Travel, one of the world's leading small group adventure operators, has continued its expansion into North America with the purchase of United States adventure tour operator, Suntrek.

Intrepid Travel Pty Ltd has acquired Suntrek Tours Inc through a full buyout, thus gaining complete and immediate control of the business. Suntrek Tours is one of the largest small group adventure tour operators in North America. They have carried over 100,000 passengers over the past 27 years and work with Europe's most reputable agents and wholesalers.

The deal follows on from the announcement earlier this month that Intrepid Travel has purchased a 20 per cent stake in Canadian-based gay and lesbian travel company, OUT Adventures.

It enhances Intrepid Travel's North America offering, adding tour operations to its existing sales and marketing companies that are based in Boulder and Toronto.

Over the past 18 months, Intrepid Travel has invested in excess of US\$10m in North America and plans to further increase its investment by in excess of a further 50 per cent over the next year through further development of product and increased marketing activities.

"We hope our purchase of Suntrek provides some good news amidst the doom and gloom. It's all about offering more choice for travellers. Historically, people turn to adventure travel when the going gets tough as it is a cheaper, better value style of travel. We want to make sure we have the product to meet the demand," said Darrell Wade, CEO and Co-Founder of Intrepid Travel.

Since 2000 Intrepid Travel has embarked on a global vertical integration strategy, establishing operations companies in many of the countries that it travels to. It has given it a competitive edge through improved local knowledge, increased efficiencies, economies of scale and an expanded product offering.

Suntrek fits perfectly with Intrepid Travel's proposition of offering real life experiences that can only be discovered in a small group environment (its trips don't exceed 13 passengers) and that encourage interaction with the local people and landscapes.

Suntrek currently offers over 60 tours, from a seven day trip of California to nine weeks expeditions that zig zag across the country.

Suntrek is an established brand in Europe (currently accounts for 50 per cent of passengers) with a sales office in Germany. Intrepid Travel will benefit from these relationships in markets where it is seeking to grow its presence. In addition, it allows Intrepid Travel to provide a broader product offering to existing industry partners.

In announcing the deal, Intrepid Travel thanks Daniel Hildebrand, President and Founder of Suntrek who will remain in the business full time until the end of January. Over the coming months he will work side by side with Matt Berna who will take over as President in January. Matt brings with him 15 years experience in the adventure travel industry, with the majority of his experience gained in North America.

For more information contact Eliza Anderson, Corporate PR Manager on +61 3 9473 2692 or +61 410 535 977.

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### **About Intrepid Travel**

With over 19 years of experience, Intrepid Travel is one of the world's leading small group adventure tour operators. Intrepid offers over 450 itineraries in more than 90 destinations worldwide. Intrepid trips are designed to go off the beaten track, meet the locals and travel in an unconventional way, joining locals on their transport, in their markets and even in their homes.

**About Suntrek**

Suntrek has been operating small group tours of North America since 1982. They currently offer over 60 exciting adventure tours throughout North America, including Alaska, Mexico, Belize and Guatemala. They operate a fleet of over 85 specially equipped maxi-vans, which carry 13 passengers each. Their clients are primarily round-the-world travellers and young professionals, most hailing from Europe.