

# ISIS applies a fresh approach to 'green' practice

NATALIE PUCHALSKI

SUSTAINABILITY can be about more than just the physical transformation of an office — it can also affect the nature of a company, according to one of Australia's leading sustainable builders.

ISIS general manager Tass Roufos said sustainability comprised social as well as economical and environmental elements.

The company was recently given a 5 star Green Star Office Interior certification for the \$4.5 million fitout of its Melbourne office that was completed last year.

The 2447-square-metre office on Queens Road was designed by Kann Finch and has energy-efficient lighting and air-conditioning, recycled timbers, low-solvent materials and a fresh-air rate 150 per cent above minimum requirements.

Some of the more visibly "green" features include a living wall of plants, as well as recycled wall panels sourced from an Altona abattoir.

"Also, when you walk into a new office fitout, you usually have that strong smell — like a new car smell — coming from the carpet,



the paint, etc," Mr Roufos said. "But when you walk into an office like this, you immediately notice that it doesn't have that same smell of chemicals."

Mr Roufos said one of the biggest changes in the new office was the open-plan layout and fewer partitions. There was also an emphasis on maximising natural light and the views of Albert Park.

However, rather than being full of "bling", Mr Roufos said the office had a

raw and agricultural feel that aimed to promote a more collaborative atmosphere.

Mr Roufos said the company aimed to improve the work-life balance for employees by providing them with an environment they are comfortable and enjoy working in. So, there are more meeting spaces, breakout areas and amenities such as a gym.

"It's a better business. We did productivity surveys at our old office and here at our

new one and we've noticed it's had a positive effect on staff," he said.

"It helps with staff attraction, staff productivity and engagement."

James Doyle, commercial manager, corporate and sustainability at ISIS, said that a few years ago companies were paying higher premiums to construct sustainable buildings due to the difficulty of sourcing materials.



Green is as green does: Right: Tass Roufos amid the living wall of plants; above and left: ISIS hopes its clients will be spurred to ideas just by visiting the office.

PICTURES: MICHAEL CLAYTON-JONES



"When clients walk into our office, they get ideas about what to incorporate in their own fitouts," he said.

Mr Roufos said all six ISIS state offices either had achieved or were working towards a 5 star Green Star certification. The Canberra office is aiming for a 6 star rating. "If there was ever a time to focus on sustainability, now is it, especially if you're looking for an edge. Good corporate citizenship is important."