



The time is right to expand practice

With the Gawler Dental Clinic in semi-rural South Australia busting at the seams, the time was right for Drs Ken Heath, John McKinnon and Adrian Balestrin to consider a move to larger premises.

“We had four small operatories originally designed decades ago for two dentists,” said Dr Heath, “and we were now attempting to house five full time dentists and an hygienist. It was clearly time to move to something bigger and better.

“We found a sizeable site nearby and decided, because of Local Council approval issues, that we would use a local draftsman (Rudi Skoda of Quickdraw Drafting) to design the external shell of our new 400m² surgery. We were acutely aware that given the magnitude of this project, a draftsman or ordinary architect would not have the skills or experience to come up with a purpose-designed dental practice, so we looked for specialist skills. Medifit fitted the bill nicely.

“We briefed them on our style of practice and how we see ourselves fitting into the community and they then came back with a few designs, which we narrowed down together. Our nursing staff were also consulted and Medifit made use of their experience and ideas to come up with a surgery design that fitted with our wishes.”

“Medifit was approached with a building design solution already underway,” said Sam Koranis, Managing Director of Medifit. “After initial consultations, the next stage was to discuss their exact design requirements with the Medifit design office to create a tailored design brief to make their dreams a reality.

“The general design philosophy was to create a comfortable and friendly environment with a modern interior that wouldn’t date rapidly and will appeal to the diverse age demographic of the community.”

On the wish list for the new practice were eight treatment rooms with four being larger than normal. A large sterilisation and

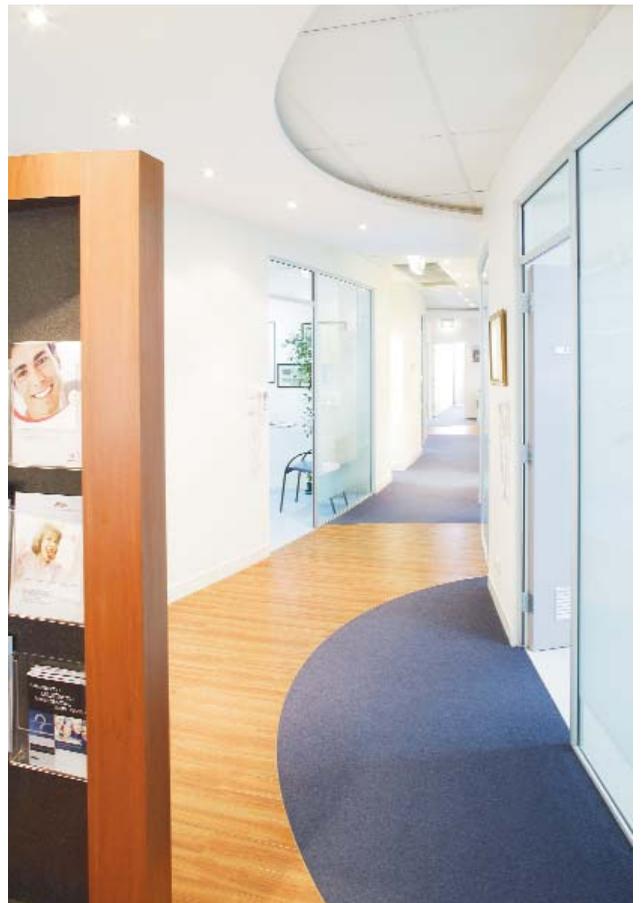
laboratory area were also specified, plus a staff area; reception with seating for 15; and an admin area screened from view and adjacent to the practice manager’s office. Patient toilets and a refresh area on exit from the treatment areas were also included, as was a doctors’ lounge, storage room, OPG, offices and a plant room.

“A principal design element is the spacious curved central corridor which creates the perception of being more like a foyer,” Mr Koranis said. “Natural light throughout the building was ample and glass was used extensively to ensure the foyer area gained maximum penetrating light.”

Upon entry clients are greeted by a friendly staff member and the reception area design is based on modern minimalist elements with strong curving lines. The soft, natural warm tones and gentle curved reception desk create a fluid element. The materials and finishes selected are based on a natural, earthy theme to create a comfortable and relaxing environment.



Above and below: 3D renderings of the proposed reception area and curved corridor designs.





The floor plan is designed to ensure related work areas are centrally located to create an efficient and productive traffic flow.

The surgeries are a generous size, with neutral coloured benchtop and soft natural wood tones to the cabinets creating continuity between the floor used throughout the surgeries.

Generous staff amenities are supplied with a functional kitchen, lockers, TV and an area to grab a quick bite to eat during lunch breaks. This staff area is located towards the back of the practice to allow staff to feel as though they are away from the hustle and bustle.

The plant room is located within the building but accessed externally, allowing ventilation and noise reduction to the rest of the practice.

“Medifit would have preferred to design and build the whole thing,” Dr Heath said, “and with the benefit of hindsight, this may have been better for us too. As usual there are always some hold-ups and it is always easier on large projects if one group is completely responsible. However, despite some minor hold-ups, the whole project went well and we are now in and using our fantastic new rooms.

“We chose to use Medifit to manage the building of the shell, which they sub-contracted out to Lincoln Engineering. Medifit completed all the external site works of 1650 square metres - inclusive of car parking, drainage, curbing, line marking, fencing, external lighting and landscaping - and all internal fitout works - plumbing, electrical, cabinetry and more. Watching the internal fitout come together was quite impressive, from the jigsaw MDF templates that were used to layout the exact floor plan, through to the quick fitting of surgery cabinetry.”





Summary

The Practice

Principal	Drs Heath, McKinnon and Balestrin
Type of Practice	General
Location	Gawler, South Australia
Size	Building - 410 square metres Land - 2050 square metres
No of chairs	8

The Team

Dental, Interior & Carpark Design	Medifit
Senior Designer	Geoff Raphael, Medifit
Building Design	Quickdraw
Building Construction	Lincoln Engineering
Carpark, Interiors and Joinery	Medifit

Equipment

Units	Planmeca Compact i dental units
X-Ray	Planmeca Intra X-Rays, Planmeca Dixi 3 sensors, Planmeca Digital Proline OPG
Software	Dental 4 Windows

“We chose Medifit because they offered the whole package, the whole internal fitout, external site works and project management of the builder who was contracted to build the shell,” said Dr Balestrin. “This meant we didn’t have to worry whether the electrician knew what the plumber was up to and so on. From the early stages, we could see that Medifit knew what they were doing and we were given a good idea of what the final product would look like through the 3D graphics which proved uncannily accurate.”

“The actual building process was good. Communication was very good the whole way through and we knew what was going on. We could contact Medifit easily if we felt we needed to. It was also good that once we had signed the contract, Sam just didn’t disappear never to be seen again. He dropped in whenever he was in town to make sure we were happy with how things were going and that personal touch is always important in any business transaction.”

“We’re all very happy with the great surgery we now get to work in. The patients all love it and comment on it all the time. We obviously have Medifit and their team to thank and acknowledge as well as Lincoln Engineering for the work done on the building shell.”

“Did we have problems during their building phase? Of course we did... but everyone does. The guys at

Medifit did do their best to sort them out in a fair and timely manner. There were a few small things that were left off the designs and to their credit, they fixed them with either no or minimal cost to us.

“Were they the cheapest quote? No... but we felt they could deliver, and they did which is worth a lot in my book. I wanted the job done well, and in a timely manner. In my experience, cheapest isn’t usually the best. The cost of not finishing on time is far greater than the small amount you pay upfront.”

“Would I do it all again with Medifit? Yes I would... We learnt a new word during the non-Medifit phase of construction - ‘variation’. It is imperative to get the design phase done thoroughly first, and hopefully you won’t hear that expensive word too much. Medifit’s variations were either non-existent or minimal in their nature due to their detailed Scope of Works which encapsulated all the details in the drawings.”

