



## New practice ready to captivate

**B**uying a practice is always an exciting time for a young dentist and often, with more vigour and enthusiasm to contribute than cold hard cash, a rundown practice can be the ideal place to start. So was the case with Dr Gareth Lewell, who soon after graduating dentistry in New Zealand, moved to Australia to begin his career.

“I graduated from the University of Otago in 2002, which is also where I met my wife, Belinda, who graduated in the same class,” Dr Lewell explained. “We were attracted to the cultural and sporting events and sunny climate that Australia had to offer and immigrated to Melbourne only a couple of months after graduation.

“I bought a dental practice in April 2003, which we renamed Captivate Dental, while Belinda had settled in to work in the public sector. It was a run-down one chair practice operating two

days a week. Thankfully, the transition into the business was helped by one of the former principals staying on part-time for 12 months. Over the next couple of years, I built not only the client base, but also their expectations of what dentistry could do for them.

“18 months out from the expiry of our lease in 2008, we had a stable patient base and were getting busy. I decided that it was time to move onto bigger premises. The existing surgery at the time was quite small - only 50 square metres) - and I knew that if I was going to have an environment that would suit my philosophy, I would have to purchase premises and have input into the fit-out from the start.

“We found a great building only 100 metres down the road which was much larger at 115 square metres but had a long, narrow footprint. I was very busy in my private life around this time with my wife

giving birth to twins in September 2007 so I was not keen to deal with the added stress of organising design and construction of the new practice.

“Medifit had a great reputation for design backed up by quality, so I contacted them and met with their managing director, Sam Koranis, soon after. I was really impressed by Sam’s attitude and his ability to show me what I could achieve on my budget. Sam seemed to have the uncanny knack of predicting what my next question would be and giving me the answer straight. I was especially impressed by the efficient way that the Medifit design team used the space they were given. The fact Medifit took care of everything from design and permits all the way through to the completed building project was fantastic. They were literally a one-stop shop, which meant I always knew where to go if I had any concerns.”



*3D rendering developed in the design phase*

The wishlist for the new practice included two treatment rooms with provision for a third in the future, central sterilisation, a practice manager's office, reception and waiting areas, a child friendly play area, disabled toilet, staff kitchen and an external storage area.

The general design philosophy Medifit employed was to create an inviting friendly atmosphere that drew upon influences from its coastal location. For this reason, a neutral colour palette and emphasis on timbers was a key feature in bringing a coastal feel to the practice.

Upon entry, the patients focus is immediately drawn to the feature timber batten and logo wall behind the reception counter. The curved shape of the reception counter and wall leads one eye to this wall and aids in creating a feeling of depth in a confined space.





*3D rendering developed in the design phase*

The reception counter is minimal and crisp; its curved shape ties in with the curves in the corporate logo as well as the colour and provides a contrast to the nearby upholstered wall which features the three primary colours featured in the logo.

A feature panel on the waiting room wall also ties in with the crispness of the reception counter as well as the logo whilst providing a point of interest to the long wall that leads into the clinical areas.

The upholstered wall to the left of reception has a dual function in attempting to create both a visual interest and provide an acoustic buffer for the children's play area, which is an important factor in this layout due to the area's proximity to the reception area.







## Summary

### The Practice

Principal	Dr Gareth Lewell
Type of Practice	General
Location	Moorabbin, Victoria
Size	115 square metres
No of chairs	2 + 1

### The Team

Design	Medifit
Construction	Medifit

### Equipment

Dental Units	Planmeca Compact i
Sterilisation	Tuttnauer
Compressor	Cattani K200 in Cattani CAPS (Controlled Atmosphere Protection System)
Suction	Cattani Turbo Smart A
Software	Oasis

Beyond reception is a corridor which leads to the clinical areas. The colours of the waiting area are continued into the corridor and a change in flooring is introduced to both differentiate and provide acoustic buffers.

The staff area located at the rear of the practice offers both respite and privacy from the working areas.

Adequate storage has been supplied with the plant room located externally at the side of the premises allowing for ventilation and noise reduction within the practice.

The surgeries are a generous size with white Corian benchtops and blue cabinetry. The use of blue cabinetry against the neutral coloured walls provides a complimentary contrast whilst at the same time, the walls bring in the right amount of warmth to create a comfortable patient environment.

“The finished design really reflected what I wanted, a polished environment but with a casual feel,” Dr Lewell said. “There were a few unforeseen problems in the build such as the discovery of asbestos in the ceiling, but Medifit dealt with everything quickly and with minimal inconvenience and cost.

“I moved into the new surgery in August 2008 and I love working in the new premises and my staff are enjoying it too. It has given me a renewed spring in my step and made me realise that dentistry can be whatever you want it to be.

“New patients have walked in solely because the surgery looked fresh and professional as they walked past. I have found that the polished environment has helped reflect the high quality of dentistry that I strive to provide and has enabled me to communicate more comprehensive treatment plans to my clients.

“I am currently working from one dental chair, but have another chair installed in a second room, which I will be utilising in the near future. Also, as we have allowed room for a third operator, I have room to grow over the coming years. Belinda is currently doing the practice administration for Captivate Dental and is pregnant with our third child, who is arriving this September. She hopes to return to clinical dentistry in 2010.

“We both agree that building our own clinic and using Medifit has been a great decision and we would highly recommend

them to anyone who wishes to undertake such a project. One point of contact, on time, on budget, professional and friendly - what more can you ask for! We are already enjoying the results and I am sure we will for some time to come.”

