



Relocation wins over renovation for Lara Dental

Since graduating from the University of Melbourne, Drs Geoff Storey and Charlie Kahwagi had both worked in and around the Geelong region of Victoria for some 15 years. The pair ended up working together in the town of Lara and eventually decided to call it home.

“In 2002, we decided to purchase the small dental practice that we worked in which was a converted house with minimal space and one surgery each. As a result, our thoughts were never too far from re-designing and extending the practice as soon as we could.

“Within 12 months, we had employed the services of a very capable local architect to re-design our surgery, but it became very obvious after two years of discussions and designs that we needed the help of experts in the dental surgery design arena. It was then that Medifit became involved

with the interior design of the old practice which was about to be refurbished.”

Lara has a mixed demographic with a high percentage of elderly people. It is also slowly becoming the rural playground for city executives who wish to escape the rat race and is only an hour from the city with excellent freeways linking city and rural life. For Drs Storey and Kahwagi, it offered the best of both worlds but the need to expand the practice was becoming paramount.

“After finally having our design approved by council, the property next door became available for sale and with consideration of cost and the possibility of extended down time, we decided to start again. It was then that we also decided to utilise Medifit’s services for the whole project incorporating architectural design of the building, interior design and council

liaison for DA approvals. This decision was based on their professionalism on the old project, their knowledge of the dental industry and the speed of their service. This was all achieved with a minimum of fuss and all the way from Perth. We could not have asked for any better service!

“Both Sam Koranis and Mark Evangelisti were extremely helpful, knowledgeable and accommodating and the Medifit design team were excellent with the change of plan and interpreting our new design brief. This was the start of the new design phase of our purpose built dental centre.

“Our requirements were relatively basic - two surgeries each, an office each, a sterilisation room, staffroom, storage and an inviting patient lounge. We got all of these things and much more. We now have room to move and our staff and patients could not be happier. The Medifit 3D computer



3D renderings developed in the design phase.

modeling was uncannily accurate and allowed us to visualize what the practice would like before it was built. We found this design tool extremely helpful.”

Council was quite strict on the type of building that could be designed and insisted that the building blend in well with the streetscape and be complimentary to the 1940’s, 50’s and 60’s architecture of the area. Fortunately, Drs Storey and Kahwagi wished to go in the direction of a contemporary Californian Bungalow which was within the Council’s requirements.

After initial consultations with the directors of Medifit, the next stage was to discuss their exact design requirements with their appointed Medifit designer to create a tailored design brief to make their dreams a reality.

The general design philosophy was to create an ergonomic and functional space that would be comfortable and modern, and that would appeal to a diverse age demographic.

Upon entry clients are greeted by a friendly staff member at the curved reception desk, the reception/waiting area design

is open and naturally well lit with strong but minimal elements. The neutral earthy tones coupled with a strong dark feature colour frames the large sweeping reception desk.

The materials and finishes selected are based on natural earthy brown tones to create a warm and inviting environment. The reception area is one of the primary focal points, and to add a strong impact, a modern feature wall creates a focal interest and displays the Lara Dental logo.

The Floor Plan is designed in a circular flow to ensure related work areas are centrally located to create an efficient and



productive traffic flow. The Steri and Lab are combined to create a large spacious area to work within a central location for easy access between surgeries.

Each Dentist has his own dedicated Office within close proximity to his surgeries.

A corridor has been created directly behind reception for filing cabinets which also acts as the rear wall to the equally centrally located practice manager's office, both within easy access to all surgeries and the reception area. Generous staff amenities include a functional kitchen, washing machine, dryer, storage and staff restrooms. The staff area is located at the rear of the practice to allow staff to feel as though they are away from the hustle and bustle of the practice and can close off this area for privacy.

Adequate storage has been supplied with the convenience of the plant room located externally at the rear of the premises

allowing for ventilation and noise reduction within the practice.

The surgeries are a generous size, with neutral coloured benchtops and warm timber wood tones to the cabinets. Each dentist has a slightly different finish to the benchtops.

"As with all construction projects, there were a few hiccups along the way but nothing that Medifit couldn't handle with a minimum of fuss. The Medifit team in Victoria from a construction and fitout perspective were both diligent and professional and managed to complete the project within the time frames and the budget set. We could not believe that the whole project only took 6 months to complete. We often commented during construction how quickly things moved along. The other thing that we appreciated was that there were no variations which was a refreshing change from other building experiences we had in the past on residential projects.



“Hindsight is a wonderful thing and had we realised the huge difficulties with just connecting electricity and phone lines we would have been a little less stressed. Thankfully Medifit never added to any of that stress which was great.

“We’ve now been operating in our new dental centre for 8 months and often wonder how we managed for as long as we did in our old surgery. Thanks to Medifit and their strong design and construction team, our purpose built centre now allows us to provide optimum dental care in far more inviting surroundings. Our patients certainly appreciate the difference and regularly comment on how much they love the new practice.

“We certainly would have no hesitation in recommending to any potential client Medifit’s expertise in design and construction. We would certainly utilise their services again.”



Summary

The Practice

Principal	Drs Geoff Storey & Charlie Kahwagi
Type of Practice	General
Location	Lara, Victoria
Size	186 square metres
No of chairs	4

The Team

Design	Medifit
Construction & Joinery	Medifit

Equipment

Dental Units	A-dec 500 and A-dec 1040
Autoclaves	Lisa 500
X-Ray	Progeny Preva
Compressor	Cattani
Suction	Cattani