



A place in the sun

The many regional areas of Australia offer much over the hustle and bustle of city life. And, if you were considering relocating your business, where else sounds better than Cairns, in tropical far north Queensland! Bathed in sunshine and the heat of the tropics, this garden city is where the Great Barrier Reef meets the rainforest and presents the perfect lifestyle.

Specialist periodontist Brian James not only dreamt of the tropics, he decided to make his dream happen. The challenge of relocating a successful periodontics practice to Cairns then started to become a scary reality!

"I graduated as a Periodontist in 1995," said Dr James, "and relocated to Townsville where I started a practice. I then opened a satellite practice in Mackay and visited this periodically. At that stage, there was a Periodontist in Cairns but no one going south until the Sunshine Coast.

"My practice was initially pure periodontics but I then commenced implant therapy in 1997. From this time on, we were involved in implant site preparation, fixture placement and in many cases, final restoration. The practice was also involved in training and mentoring the local dental community in implant dentistry."

The practice grew steadily, particularly with the assistance provided by Prime Practice's management training. Around two years ago, Dr James started seeking new rooms within Townsville to expand the practice. At this time, he approached several design groups and spoke with Sam Koranis from Medifit about possible construction options.

Considerable difficulty was experienced finding an appropriate location and when one was found, less than scrupulous forces meant that it became unavailable. This happened more than once! Around this time, the Periodontist in Cairns closed up shop

and left town, leaving no permanently resident Periodontist based in Cairns.

"I spoke with my wife and family and we decided that for both business and quality of life reasons, we would look at moving to Cairns," Dr James said. "As fate would have it, I secured a space above Channel TEN in a commercial building, along with a car dealership and some engineers. We then commenced planning in earnest with Medifit."

Although there had been a couple of false starts with finding a new home, the design brief remained the same and the challenge for the Medifit Design team was to try and fit the requirements into a different shaped box. After much consultation, floor plans were implemented and the practice was on the road to a new beginning.

The site is a total of 132 square metres and needed to accommodate three large surgeries suitable for implant surgery;



laboratory and sterilisation area; and a reception and waiting area with bathroom facilities for patients. An office for Dr James; an administration area; staff facilities; and a consultation room that could be transformed into an OPG in the future were also all included.

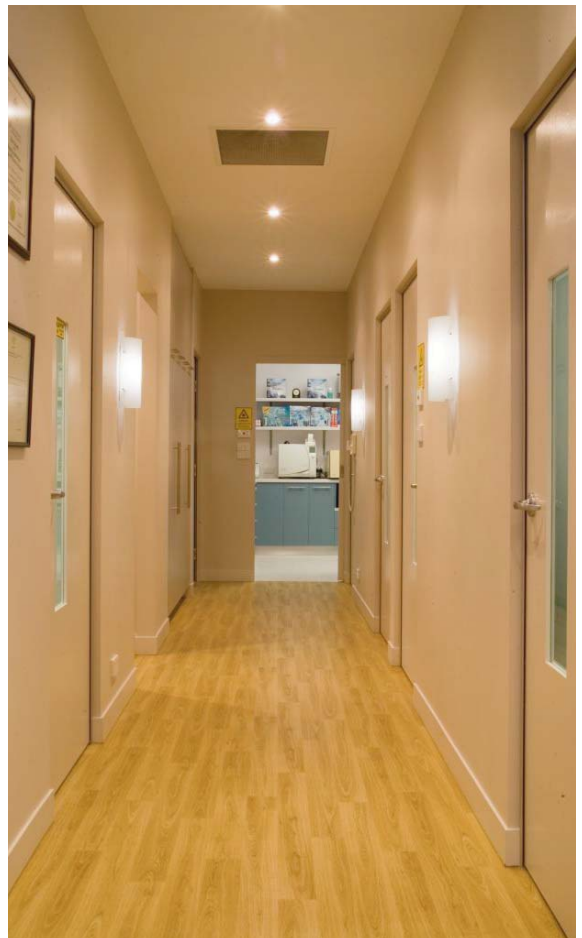
When talking through the design process and brief, Dr James stated that if he had to describe the look and feel he was after in a person, it would be “Audrey Hepburn” - having style with a hint of glamour, yet approachable.

Medifit Design spoke at great length to Dr James and his team about what he wanted to achieve with the new practice. “This sounds easy, but it can actually be very difficult to translate vague ideas and feelings into something real,” he said. “I wanted a practice that was elegant and stylish; minimalist without seeming pretentious or inaccessible; a place people would admire but not feel intimidated by. I wanted patients to think they had arrived at the right place for their treatment, without thinking ‘I am paying for all of this!’”

“Medifit provided the overall floor plan and following some refinement, I think we achieved close to my ideal. I wanted two point access for the surgeries, heaps of cupboard space, an office, and a consultation room. As refinement progressed, I decided to incorporate an i-CAT cone beaming volumetric imaging system and so some alterations were necessary midstream. I found the performance of the design team to be outstanding and when necessary, alterations could be turned around within minutes. Whilst making their own suggestions concerning colours and textures, they were receptive to suggestions from our end and we came up with a middle ground, which I am sure I would not have been able to achieve independently.

“Medifit stated that once started, construction would take around seven weeks. And, they were true to their word and the process went like clockwork.”





Design-wise, the location of the waiting area and reception were positioned to take advantage of the natural light filtering through the windows. The original entry didn't have a view so a new main entry into the practice was created to ensure a warm and friendly atmosphere was immediately evident.

To create a hint of glamour, the sweeping reception counter features a rich timber laminate with crisp white Corian and a dramatic insert of imported Italian Bisazza mosaics in varying hues of blue and grey.

The impact of the mosaics is highlighted by a soothing Dulux blue feature wall which works well with the geometric Interface modular carpet that completes the look. Yet more glamour is found in imported Italian glass pendants with frosted detail.

The Cairns Periodontics logo evolved from artwork "Kiara" selected individually by Dr James, which adorns the walls of the reception and waiting area.



Summary

The Practice

Principal	Dr Brian James
Type of Practice	Specialist Periodontics
Location	Cairns, Queensland
Size	132 square metres
No of chairs	3

The Team

Design	Medifit
Senior Designer	Geoffrey Raphael
Construction & Joinery	Medifit
Project Manager	Medifit - Claus Hein

Equipment

Dental Units	KaVo Primus 1058 TM
Autoclaves	W&H Lisa, Sirona Validator, Statim
Compressor	Dürr Trio
Suction	Dürr VS 900
Laser	KaVo KEY Laser 3+

“The artworks bring the environment to life, being an excellent example of how a client can personalise the space to suit their own style to feel part of the design process. Brian has impeccable taste so I was confident in his selection,” Mr Koranis said.

The laboratory and sterilisation area was custom designed to suit the workflow and equipment.

The surgeries are a generous size, with white Corian benchtops, complimented by laminate cupboards that create continuity throughout. Custom-designed cabinets and overhead cupboards to accommodate dental trays were also incorporated.

Generous staff amenities are on hand including a functional kitchen. The staff area is located in a quiet area away from the hustle and bustle with a quick entry/exit door should they need to zip out; this limits traffic flow within the dental practice and waiting area.

Adequate storage has been supplied using full height cabinets in passageways to ensure every possible inch of space is utilised.

“Claus Hein, the site foreman, had to do considerable juggling with the other businesses within the building in order to get access to ceiling spaces and to run plumbing and wiring,” Dr James said. “Thankfully, I remained blissfully unaware about any hassles and to his credit, the procedure was completed on time, as expected.

Claus was extremely approachable and always attentive to requests.

“On completion, the final minor alterations were requested and Medifit responded appropriately. I am very happy with the final result and our patients are also impressed. Medifit may not be for everyone, but then again, neither is my practice. The work they did was of a high quality and I am happy to recommend them to colleagues considering a refit.”

