



Building an efficient practice from the ground up

BY JOSEPH ALLBEURY

When specialist orthodontist Rudi Linker decided to update his Mornington practice, he capitalised on the opportunity to relocate and build new premises from the ground up. The new practice, based in this popular holiday area in Victoria, not only allows Dr Linker and his associates to work more efficiently but also to accommodate other dental specialists.

"The old practice was very outdated and the rooms were too small," said Dr Linker. "We could have refurbished, but it was an old asbestos clad building so we decided to sell it and start from scratch."

"The new site we bought also had an old asbestos house on it but we knocked it down and started with a vacant site."

Dr Linker commissioned Paul Grossi to complete the project, which included designing the building, interior design (inclusive of joinery detailing) and ultimately the construction of the surgery from the ground up.

"We had a number of sessions ..."

said Dr Linker. "We brainstormed a lot of ideas and reviewed our current work practices in light of technological advances."

"We also looked at the Smile Council practices owned by orthodontists Alan Pollard, Albert Wong and Sam Amari. We looked at their practice for ideas and they

went out of their way to make it easy for Paul to understand what makes an effective and efficient orthodontic practice. We wanted to ensure we got it right."

The final design was drafted with expansion in mind and also a possible future exit strategy down the track.



"I wanted to incorporate the orthodontic practice, plus other dental specialities under the same umbrella. We now have two oral and maxillofacial surgeons, Mr Alf Nastrie and Alan Mansour, working from the practice once or twice a month to manage impacted wisdom teeth and skeletal discrepancies. We're now looking at getting in a Periodontist and an Endodontist and we're having discussions with a Prosthodontist as well."

The practice currently opens four days a week with plans to expand to the full five

days early in the year. Dr Linker works from the practice two days a week and spends the rest of his time at his other practices.

Dr Linker's associate, Dr Andrew McDonald, also works at the practice together with Dr Jacob Varughese, plus two part time dental therapists.

The main treatment area features three William Green Tantus dental units in an open plan, which is designed for maximum efficiency.

"The three treatment units in the main area are independent of each other," said

Dr Linker. "The biggest issue in an orthodontic practice is oral hygiene so as patients present, they come in and see one of the therapists who checks oral hygiene, removes the archwires and prepares the next arch wire for me to insert and activate. I can then go from chair to chair as the therapist finishes."

"It's working extremely well and it's a different set-up to my other practices. I think this is the future of how successful ortho practices will run. It makes for efficient and effective management of patients."

Dr Linker is now in the process of changing the workflow in his other practices along similar lines.

"We currently have two other treatment rooms, one for the visiting specialists and the other has a window into the main area which allows me to be able to oversee everything that is going on."

"The five units are all from William Green and we're very happy with their performance. I think they're priced well and the service is exceptional. They're state of the art with fibre optics, built-in curing lights, dryers on the chairs to dry the teeth for orthodontic procedures and more. The local representative, Gary Dickinson, did an exceptional job."

The large sterilisation area is separated from the main treatment area with a wide





bench that allows trays of instruments to be passed across. Two Techno-Gaz autoclaves feature, also supplied by William Green, plus two large ultrasonic cleaners built into the benchtop.

A built-in demineralising filter on the tap also allows the autoclaves to be easily filled with water when required.

"We designed the premises so that it can be easily reconfigured in the future as the practice grows," Dr Linker said.

"Downstairs, the back of the reception area and the two offices can be changed over to treatment areas if required and administration moved upstairs.

"We planned the building to be versatile for the future. I will eventually retire and it gives flexibility to whoever takes over.

"The practice is also opposite one of the biggest private hospitals on the Mornington Peninsula and at a pinch, we could always take out the dental chairs and turn it into medical consulting rooms."

Extensive storage for models and a small laboratory also feature on the ground floor plus an area for the OPG.

"We've just purchased an Instrumentarium digital OPG and Ceph from Jacobs Medical in Albury and we have a separate room for this at present. However, we will soon install a dental chair in the room as well

and use it as our records room."

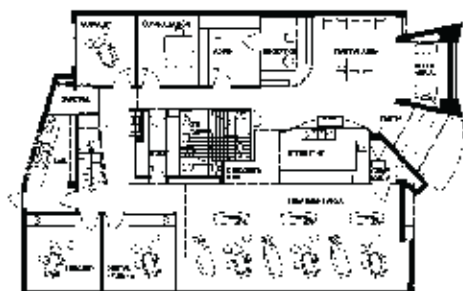
Upstairs at the practice is for staff and future expansion of the administration area. There is a bathroom with shower, laundry for in-house use, a kitchen/staff room, plus extra space for expansion.

The large waiting room can also be used as a lecture room complete with a digital projector on one wall.

"Paul Grossi from Grossi Constructions did a great job. He delivered everything I wanted and did such a good job, I have also recommended them to several colleagues."

"Paul was always available and made it easy for me to consult with them, often after hours so I didn't lose clinical time.

Paul ensured that the specialist trades people were commissioned. Paul was always on-site to ensure it went smoothly, and that level of commitment was what made the end results so successful."



GROUND FLOOR PLAN