



By JOSEPH ALLBEURY

20 years on...

In 2009, *Australasian Dental Practice* enters its 20th year of publication! That's quite a milestone for any magazine and we are quietly proud of our achievements in that time. As the publisher of the magazine since 1994, it has personally been a very interesting

journey for me; one where I have learnt much, made many friends and hopefully enriched the lives of all our readers to a greater or lesser extent.

While 20 years is of course worthy of celebration, 2009 holds much uncertainty that few take joy in. The popular press continues to run commentary on the worsening state of the world's financial affairs and there is no doubt that this is affecting us all. In dentistry, I'm hearing that some practices are becoming quiet while in the industry, there have been redundancies and a range of other measures taken to reduce costs and stimulate sales.

The personal dread many of us feel is very real and while the current situation alone is extraordinarily bad in the history of the world, it has been made doubly so because we've enjoyed such a long period of great prosperity. I broadly remember the recession we supposedly had to have, but the details of how that affected my life are scant; many people younger than me don't ever remember any form of hardship at all.

History can give us some comfort that this situation will eventually right itself as the "sins" that created it are remedied, however the views on how long we have to wait are mixed from months to years.

From the perspective of our businesses, it is clear that there will continue to be casualties. Businesses built to harvest the cream off the top of the good times may find that they are unable to adapt to the current environment. Others born lean may have grown fat from that same cream and must now work hard to trim down.

Dentistry is of course a profession that has endured many fiscal cycles in its long history and despite extraordinary times, it will endure this current low as well. There may well be practices that have been built on the delivery of high-end elective procedures that could be reviewing their options; others who thrive on "meat and potatoes" functional dentistry may have seen little change so far.

The opportunity for us all right now is to tune our businesses to thrive; forget about the good times past and future, imagine if today was the first day you opened your doors.

What would you do differently if you had no history or experience with times of prosperity? All the same rules of business still apply: you have to spend money to make money; you have to employ people and reward them and yourself; you have to be a prudent manager; you have to be and stay motivated. Now is not the time to worry about when the good times will return; rather it is a time to ensure our businesses are fit enough to survive and thrive right now.

I've enjoyed working in dentistry for the past 15 years and look forward to being here for many more years to come.

Joseph Allbeury Editor and Publisher

10% tax deduction on new equipment



Medfin's General Manager Distribution, Tim Geddes, thinks that the Federal Government's "Nation Building" initiative announced on December 12 last year is something every dentist should be aware of. The gives a 10% investment allowance to encourage and assist business to invest in new equipment and assets. The investment allowance is an additional tax deduction that allows you to take 10% off the cost of qualifying assets. It is available to practice owners (and others) who purchase new tangible depreciating assets with a price tag of \$10,000 or more. Tangible depreciating assets include most types of plant and equipment, business cars and other assets which are used by businesses. The investment allowance is available for new equipment purchased from 12 December 2008 and prior to 30 June 2009. To qualify for the deduction, the equipment must be installed and ready for use by June 2010. If you are interested in taking advantage of the new government investment allowance, speak to your accountant or refer to the Federal Government Infrastructure website: www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/publications/nation_building.aspx. Tim and the Medfin team can also help with the financing of course! Your local Medfin Relationship Manager can be contacted on 1300-361-122 or visit www.medfin.com.au and request a quote.

Filling the Gap celebrates third birthday



Filling the Gap, a program that organizes volunteer dentists to work for short periods treating indigenous communities around Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands of far north Queensland, is celebrated its third year of operation in January. Access to dental care has been a long term, ongoing problem in the region despite facilities being available. The waiting list for basic care is around one year and this has been causing people with minor problems to develop acute or chronic conditions. In the three years that Filling the Gap has been running, almost 4,000 Indigenous people have received treatment from volunteer dentists. 80 dentists have so far volunteered between 1 and 2 weeks of their time to the Wuchopperen Oral Health Clinic, some of them returning 2 and 3 times, and the benefits that flow are far reaching to all involved. For more information on how you can get involved, visit www.fillingthegap.com.au

VOCO appoints new consultant for Sydney



VOCO has appointed Ms Katrina Johnston to its team as a Dental Consultant responsible for the Sydney area. Ms Johnston career started at the Edinburgh Dental Hospital in Scotland where she under took training as a dental surgery assistant before switching to general nursing. Her nursing career has predominantly been community-based and she subsequently completed a degree in community health. After emigrating to Australia with her family, her career direction changed in 2006 when she accepted a sales role with Pfizer. Ms Johnston, who will utilise her broad knowledge base to interact with health professionals, looks forward to establishing business relationships with both existing and new VOCO customers and can be contacted on 0434-491-399.

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