



Sarah Arnold | Smile Dental

how green is my practice

Ten years on, Smile Dental is renovating and expanding. And making a green practice even greener.

2009 marks our tenth birthday at Smile Dental. It's also our tenth year in the building we built from scratch as a custom-designed dental practice. In ten years, our practice has grown and evolved. So it's time to do some renovation and refurbishment on the building that has served us, and our patients, so well.

The building was originally designed to suit the local environment, and support the global environment. These days, environmental issues are increasingly top of our mind. Designers and developers, businesses operators and home owners alike are constantly exploring new ways to go green.

Perhaps you've heard about the eco disco in London that uses the energy of feet pounding the dance floor to generate its own electricity?! While we'll stop short of introducing patient pedal power, we will be aiming to make our already green building even greener.

Our building was originally designed to stay cool in our warm tropical climate, minimising air-conditioning requirements. From day one we had a staff shower and change room, encouraging people to travel to work under their own steam. For some time now, we've been working longer days and shorter weeks – our four-day working week not only gives our staff a three-day weekend, but also means one less day we all need to commute to work.

In the treatment rooms, we have always utilised high quality reusable products, rather than cheaper disposable ones. To reduce paper consumption, we long ago switched to a paperless planning and charting



system. We were one of the first amalgam-free practices in Australia, reducing future mercury waste. And we were also one of the first to switch to digital X-rays, eliminating the need for developing, processing and deliveries.

Our original building was designed by local architect Roger MacCallum, who will also be doing the renovations. The new Smile Dental will offer new levels of patient comfort and convenience. Additional treatment rooms will accommodate our expanding range of services and patient care. The renovations will be completed in stages throughout 2009 – so as not to disrupt the practice – with completion scheduled for late in the year.

In the upcoming renovations, we'll be using more timber, and less steel and aluminium. We'll be increasing the insulation and window tinting, further reducing air-conditioning requirements. We'll be utilising more energy-efficient lighting, and incorporating more individually lit zones.

Our extensions will utilise the existing building structure, reducing the need for new materials and construction. And we'll be submitting our new practice to the Green Building Council of Australia for a Green Star Certified Rating, so we can benchmark our performance.

In short, we'll be aiming to make our business as green as a dental practice can be. How green is your business?

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