

Practice digitisation begins with Insight

There were good reasons why Dr Anna Meyer placed the Vatech Premium Digital X-ray Insight high on her priority list for digitising her specialist orthodontic practice in Auckland, New Zealand.

By Danny Chan

While the award-winning orthodontist grew up on the North Shore of Auckland, this would be the first time she is practicing on her native soil. More significantly, she was returning home to start her own practice after spending almost a decade in Melbourne furthering her studies and then working, as a specialist orthodontist at the Royal Melbourne Dental Hospital and in private practice.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery with Distinction at the University of Otago in 2005, Dr Meyer worked as a general dentist in Wellington before moving to Melbourne to undertake her specialist orthodontic training through a Clinical Doctorate Degree at the University of Melbourne. Notably, she received both the Australian Society of Orthodontists' Elsdon Storey Award for

her research thesis as well as the esteemed Milton Sims Award for academic and clinical excellence. She became only the second individual in the history of these prestigious awards to have received both accolades.

In November last year, Dr Meyer bought over a very respected and well-established practice from specialist orthodontist Dr James Pretorius, who was transitioning into retirement. Dr Meyer feels very lucky to have found a practice like this to come back to New Zealand to. She knew that an important part of the transition was to digitise the practice:

"Dr Pretorius had really good systems in place which worked very well for him, and I've certainly taken on most of them as there is no point in re-inventing the wheel, but I did want to digitise the practice early



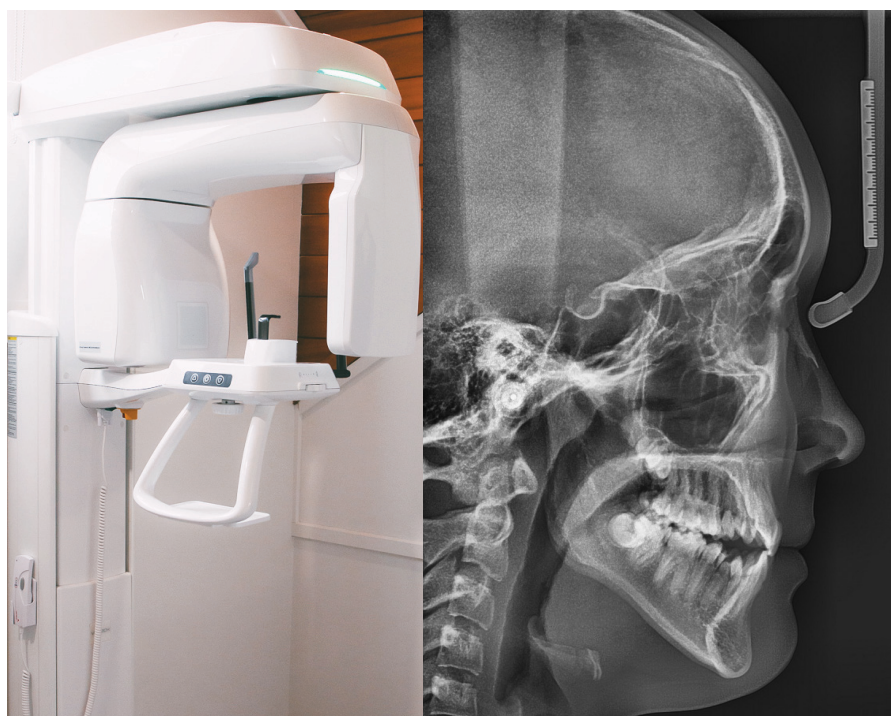
on. I thought the longer I left it to digitise the practice, the harder it would be to integrate newer technologies later on, so digitisation was carefully planned from day one."

"The first step," Dr Meyer adds, "was to get a digital x-ray machine, which to me was the most important and integral part of the digitisation."

For a specialist orthodontic clinic that uses radiographic equipment "dozens of times every day", Dr Meyer says there can be "no compromise" when choosing what to buy.

"OPGs and lateral cephs are the two basic radiographic diagnostic tools that we use routinely to check a patient's general growth and development, watch out for potential issues like impactions or other incidental findings such as abnormal radiolucencies or radiopacities. We use lateral cephs as an important tool to aid the diagnosis of skeletal patterns of a patient, in both the sagittal and in the anteroposterior dimension."

In other words, Dr Meyer did not pick the Vatech Insight out of a hat. Firstly, the orthodontist had four years of experience working with an older Vatech X-ray unit during one of her private practice tenures in Melbourne, and thought it delivered crisp and clear images. She also carried out extensive pre-purchase research from



visiting dental exhibitions and getting feedback and recommendations from colleagues.

"I personally think that having good word-of-mouth referrals is very important (for product research). The Vatech Insight had very positive feedback – it's especially reliable when you hear it from trusted colleagues who have invested in the machine for their own practices."

Having used the x-ray unit for about six months, Dr Meyer provides her own user perspective:

"I found it really easy to use from the beginning. The model I have has an auto-focusing mode and the ability to take five layers of images in one exposure. This helps to minimise positioning errors and deliver clear images."

Dr Meyer recalls a recent keynote speech at an orthodontic conference in which a well-known specialist in dental maxillofacial radiography was commenting on how "the panorex is actually one of the most difficult x-rays to get right in terms of positioning."

Thankfully, her experience with the Vatech unit has been anything but difficult. "The (Insight) has got a simple set up to get the patient into the right position. I'm able to get a really clear image each time I take the x-ray."

What deserves mention, she adds, is the unit's ability to take multiple layers of panoramic images in a single exposure across a single focal trough.

"I think it's up to 41 layers! This feature could be useful for checking dilacerations or root resorption. Also, if you can't be sure if there is a supernumerary present, having a little more depth in the x-ray can be very helpful."

As for using radiography on younger patients – quite often the case for an orthodontist – the unit's 1.9-second exposure time for lateral cephs, low radiation dose and small footprint ("it doesn't look intimidating for even my youngest patients") are all well appreciated attributes.



Dr Meyer further appreciates the luxury of having her own x-ray unit, both for the sake of improving convenience and patient communication:

"If there's a clinical query, I can easily take an image on the spot and explain any orthodontic issues to my patients and their parents' right there and then, with the x-ray image in front of them. Often,

it means not having to return for another appointment, which is a huge time-saver for busy parents and schoolchildren."

Just as she is able to deliver better service to her patients, the personable orthodontist did not fail to acknowledge quality customer service that was rendered to her.

"I have dealt with both the employees from the Vatech office in Sydney as well as Adrienne Renton from the local distributor (DRC NZ Ltd). They have been very accessible and quick to reply to emails – and above all, professional."

"As the key equipment to my practice's digitisation, the (Vatech Insight) has been an absolute delight to own and use.

"Besides laying a strong foundation for my digital pipeline, it has performed as well as anybody could have hoped for." ♦