

# VICTORIAN ANAESTHETIC GROUP (VAG)

## MEDITRUST FACILITATES A MAJOR OPERATIONAL CHANGE FOR VICTORIAN ANAESTHETIC GROUP

### AT A GLANCE

**LOCATION**

Glen Iris, VIC

**ESTABLISHED**

1958

**GROUP SIZE:**

42 anaesthetists

**WEBSITE:**[www.vag.com.au](http://www.vag.com.au)

Victorian Anaesthetic Group (VAG), with rooms in Glen Iris, is one of Victoria's largest and most prestigious anaesthetic groups.

Commencing in 1958, by 2012 the practice had grown to include 42 anaesthetists offering those doctors an industry leading level of support. The rooms provided traditional billing services as well as the allocation of anaesthetist "cover" for surgeon lists. The group also evolved a charter of best practice in obtaining Informed Financial Consent (IFC) that set the standard expected of members.

At the beginning of 2012 the group had a mature billing system but, in order to meet all its objectives, had four different systems or solutions within its administration environment. A new end-to-end solution to address the core functions of the practice was desired.

VAG embarked upon a trial of the Accounts and Informed Financial Consent (IFC) aspects of MediTrust software in November 2012. The conduct of the trial included keeping a set of metrics that indicated significant improvements in throughput and turnaround time were achievable using the MediTrust solution. Eventually VAG was able to satisfy itself that its best way forward was to subscribe to the full suite of MediTrust software for all doctors in the group. An important implication of having access to the MediTrust software was that VAG was able to in-source its IFC process with a technology platform that would be efficient and cost effective for use by staff.

By the end of January 2014, VAG had cut over all its doctors to MediTrust and commenced processing all new accounts on the MediTrust platform. The insourcing of IFC processes commenced at the same time and was completed for all doctors by March 2014. The final piece of the initial project was put in place in July 2014 when the Bookings Department of the practice switched over to the integrated MediTrust calendar for managing the bookings for all 46 doctors in the group at the time.

The Business Manager of VAG, Frank Romano, was responsible for ensuring that the project was completed according to the expectations of the Board as this was not just a technology transformation project but also a change in the way the staff in the rooms supported the member anaesthetists.



*Every practice will have its own idea as to the form and pace that such a transformation will take. To MediTrust's credit, they fitted into our specific requirements and we felt at all times that we were in control of our own progress. We were never pushed any harder or faster by MediTrust than what we were ready and able to handle. MediTrust was also willing to make whatever adjustments were necessary in order to improve their software and make it more effective, to our benefit as well as to the greater community of users.*



**FRANK ROMANO - BUSINESS MANAGER**  
**VAG**

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VAG and MediTrust established a partnership (which endures beyond the implementation project with support that is “always available”) and worked cooperatively throughout the project which was characterised by a number of important disciplines:

- A** During the trial, VAG staff examined the MediTrust system and identified a number of enhancements they required to the system. A process was established whereby VAG and MediTrust jointly reviewed all such requests and agreed to implement the request, schedule it for future releases or decline the request on the basis that an alternative approach was available.
- B** A project management approach was established incorporating regular joint review meetings to identify progress or otherwise and to assign responsibilities for resolution.
- C** MediTrust provided a comprehensive training and support program including onsite training days for staff and evenings for doctors.

## The Business Manager offers his perspective on the practical impact of the system implementation:



*As we are maturing in our use of this system, we are also finding it an invaluable tool for us to determine the appropriate level of total staff resource required. There is a wide variation in how doctors wish to interact with the system. This ranges from those that wish to have no interaction (apart from looking at their calendar) to those who wish to enter their own information on-line (such as procedure times and item numbers). A big selling point to our doctors (and staff) was that the system could cater to that entire range of choice. This has meant we can still gain efficiencies but doctors don't feel they have to be forced into something they don't want to use personally.*

*To our great delight, many doctors who thought they wouldn't want to interact with the system are slowly starting to come around to its usefulness as a personal on-line tool and a time saver for the throughput of their patient accounts. It's even having a positive impact on those still wishing to use physical cards. Many are now prepared to get us their information in a more efficient and timely manner than they did when they waited until the opportunity arose for them to find the time to come into the office.*

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The practical outcomes that have been delivered to VAG as a result of the MediTrust system implementation include the following:

- 1 VAG doctors have full visibility of their patient circumstances pre-theatre. This is achieved through a combination of theatre-list importing, patient self-serving over the web and direct data entry by staff.
- 2 Quotes are issued and IFC is sought for all appropriate procedures.
- 3 Many doctors (in increasing numbers) use the quotes to self-generate a base account before passing it over to the office staff to complete whilst the more traditionally oriented doctors continue to bring their cards into the office. The system allows for both approaches.
- 4 Doctors and staff have a much improved view of the state of accounts as well as current and upcoming workloads and coverage requirements.

## Comments by The Practice Manager and Anaesthetic Member:



*The introduction of new software is always faced with some trepidation within the work place. However, despite initial concerns, staff found that the MediTrust system was easily mastered and the overall effect was very positive. MediTrust provided excellent and thorough staff training and most importantly continue to provide immediate support whenever requested. We now have all staff working within the same system, from the importing of surgeon's lists into the calendar, to the delivery of IFC, and to the completion of an account. Staff have immediate access to all patient information at all times. The system is very transparent and staff are aware of their own accountability, which assists management with KPIs dealing with throughput and accuracy. MediTrust allows us to service our client base much more efficiently with the provision of patient fees to the surgeon's rooms, if requested. Members have the ability to access their own patient account details and can compile their own personalised account reports which has virtually eliminated the amount of time previously spent by staff needing to respond to the members' report requests.*



**MARY-ANNE BURGESS - PRACTICE MANAGER**  
VAG



*MediTrust has facilitated a major operational change at VAG. Introducing change in any organisation can be difficult. The traditional anaesthetic groups have particular challenges. The membership is often varied in terms of age, maturity of practice, spectrum of clinical practice, information technology awareness, adaptation and skills. MediTrust was able to take these factors into account to develop and implement a system that works for everyone. MediTrust have also been very sensitive to the delicate relationship that anaesthetists have with their surgeons and referrers. This has enhanced the service that VAG provides.*



**DR ANTONIO GROSSI - MEMBER**  
VAG

