THE HISTORY
PLENTY VALLEY
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SCHOOL
1975
During 1975 an advertisement was placed in the local paper requesting the attendance at a meeting of anyone interested in a Montessori education for their child. From this small beginning, the school has grown to the 10 Early Learning and Primary Level classrooms that now exist. There are two Cycle 1 rooms for the 3 - 6 year olds. We introduced a 5 year old induction class in 2001 for 5 year olds who have not had a Montessori 3 and 4 year old environment. There are three Cycle 2 rooms and two Cycle 3 rooms in the school. The school also offers Playgroup on three mornings per week for 0 - 3 year olds to participate in a Montessori program. We also offer a Creative Arts Playgroup one morning per week which concentrates more on development of creative skills.

1976
In 1976 the first School Council of Plenty Valley Montessori School Association was elected. It consisted of eight members elected from the parent group (four every two years for a two year term) that is ultimately responsible for the school. It is the general aim of the Plenty Valley Montessori School Association to administer, finance, and maintain a school for children from Birth to 12 years of age, based on the philosophy and pedagogy of Dr Maria Montessori. The first pre-school began in Montmorency as a sessional Pre-School with two groups of 17 children.

1978
The Primary School, with 25 children and one teacher (Pennie Puckey), commenced in 1978 in St Paul's Anglican Church Hall, Montmorency South. The numbers of children and Staff steadily increased, at the same time as the School Council worked hard to find a permanent home for the school. Late 1979 the Plenty Valley Montessori School Association purchased the Aqueduct Rd site. Two large portables were bought in 1980 and delivered in 1981. With a grant from the School's Commission, the Administration and toilet blocks were completed by Easter 1982.

1982
Fifty children, two teachers (Pennie Puckey and Marleen Hengeveld), and one assistant made the grand shift from a temporary home the weekend after Easter. The green ribbons across the doorways to the new classrooms were cut after the "Children's Opening Ceremony." Stage One of the Plenty Valley Montessori School was officially opened by Hon. Neil Brown, QC, MP on June 26th, 1982.

During 1982, classroom three was completed, and the following year saw the expansion of the Primary School to three classrooms, three teachers and 70 children. The teacher assistant continued to work with the school, and an Administrator was employed to assist with the running of the school. During 1984 Classrooms 4 and 5 were completed, supported by a grant from the School's Commission. It was in 1984 that the full maturity of the Primary School was reached with the existence of the first Year 6 level, and instruction now being available for children from 3 to 12 years of age.

1984
Late in 1984, a First Cycle room was established at Aqueduct Rd, there beginning the transition from sessional Pre-Schools to First Cycle rooms on site. The official opening of the new complex by Pauline Toner, MLA, took place on November 11th, 1984. During 1987, another double complex was built and opened in June 1988 by the founder of the school, Liz Denton.
At this stage the school was set up on the following structure (not pure Montessori age groupings):

- **First Cycle** - both rooms catered for children aged 3 – 6.
- **Second Cycle** - Room 5 had 5 - 8 year olds - Prep and Grade 1 and 2 children.
- **Room 6** had 6 - 9 year olds - Grade 1, 2 and 3 children.
- **Third Cycle** - Room 1 had 8-11 year olds - is Grade 3, 4 and 5 children.
- **Room 2** had 9-12 year olds - Grade 4, 5 and 6 children.

The school began its After School Care Program for five nights a week in 1994.

**1996-1999**

A large building project was undertaken in 1996 and completed in 1997 when a new Staff room, Staff toilets, a sick Bay, Resource Room, Interview room, Principal and Business Manager's Offices, and a spacious Administration area was constructed, greatly improving the working conditions for all Staff. School Council made the decision to restructure the school into purist Montessori age groupings in 1998, and the new structure was set in place in February 1999.

The school now took on the following structure which is in line with Montessori developmental stages.

- **First Cycle** - both classes catering for children aged 3 - 6 years
- **Second Cycle** - both classes catering for 6-9 year olds
- **Third Cycle** - both classes catering for 9-12 year olds.

Pennie Puckey resigned as Principal in November 1998, and a new Principal (Dianne Davis) was appointed in June 1999.

A Montessori Playgroup was established in September 1999, running three mornings a week, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9.15am to 11.45am. This meant moving the props and scenery from the storage room to a storage shed, and relocating the Music program to this room so that Playgroup and the After School Care program could share the multi-purpose room. At this stage the school was incredibly crowded with the multi-purpose room housing many activities and programs. It was decided to build a new multi-purpose room in 2000 that would cater for Playgroup, After School Care and Art.

**2000-2001**

A School Band program began at the school in March 2000, in partnership with Eltham High School who employ all instrumental teachers, and oversee the administration of this program.

In 2001 a new Montessori classroom was established partly funded by money received from the Block Grant Authority. Room 8 caters for the high demand we have had since the school was re-structured to pure Montessori age groupings, for 5 year old positions that we have not been able to offer places to. These children have not had any Montessori experience, so have this year as an induction year before filtering into Cycle 2 classrooms.

In Term 3 of 2001, a new dimension was also added to Playgroup, with the introduction of a Creative Playgroup session on Monday mornings to cater for the older children in playgroup which has proved to be a very popular element of our Playgroup program. It incorporates art, craft, movement, dance, music and drama with the aim of preparing children for group activities, listening to instructions, cooperative activities etc.
**2004-2005**
A third Cycle 2 classrooms was started in 2004 in Room 3 which meant the Music program was moved back into the small portable.

At about the same time the original toilet block was demolished and a new one built with the help of funding received from the Block Grant Authority.

In 2005 an After School Care room was built out of school funds to be shared by Playgroup in the mornings, which alleviated some of the congestion in the multipurpose room.

**2007 - Current**
In 2007 the first stage of our third Cycle 2 room began and we saw the arrival of two large portable classrooms. The children watched in awe as a new cycle 2 classroom and a purpose built art room were literally dropped into place.

In late 2007 a beautiful new Music/Multipurpose room was constructed which completed this phase of our building plan. LOTE now moved into its new space in the old music room and the music department moved with great delight into their wonderful new space. We now have a purpose built space for all programs in the School.

At the beginning of 2008, Before School Care was introduced.

Plenty Valley Montessori School is situated on a 2½ hectare semi-rural site now surrounded on two sides by housing development, and a shopping complex on the opposite side of the road. The school now comprises of ten purpose built classrooms, a Music/Multipurpose Complex, Art and LOTE rooms, After School Care room and an Administration block. The school buildings and Staff car park are situated about the middle of the long, narrow block with a pine forest at the rear, a playground and the Parent car park to the front, with the children’s oval to the North.