



Ali Caldwell Music Education Otago - NZ Ukulele Trust - St Clair School - Mum of musical boys.

Kia ora koutou,

**I'm taking the opportunity to send thanks to everyone involved in the recent MENZA Conference in Pōneke Wellington.**

Music has many purposes, but in my eyes (and ears), its primary purpose is to connect — connect us with other people, connect us to other places, connect us to our past, connect us to ourselves. Te Rito MENZA gave space and time to connect in bucketloads (hey, we even connected with buckets!!)

To the incredible organisers, I send you a Wayne's World, "We are not worthy". I can only imagine the hours and days and months of preparation you put in, but none of the exhaustion you must have felt showed in your daily welcomes, and your extensive mahi resulted in slick delivery of workshops, keynotes, plenary sessions, catering, entertainment, and so much more.

To anyone reading this who has never been to a MENZA Conference, I urge you to start working on your principal and Board of Trustees NOW to ensure you make it to the next one (and do not pay for it yourself). Don't wait to find out who the keynote speakers are — they will engage and inspire you. Don't wait to find out what workshops are available — you will enjoy every single one, with colleagues from around Aotearoa and beyond. The second you arrive, you will know you are about to share experiences with kindred spirits who understand why you go over and above to make a difference to your students. You will be eminded that you have the best job in the world. You will be inspired by educators and colleagues, who are shining lights in Aotearoa NZ for how we can all work together and learn from each other.

Thank you MENZA — here's to the next one.  
Ngā mihi nui

*Reply from ★  
★ the Editor*

Dear Ali,

*Thank you so much for your kind words. The conference sub-committee really went above and beyond, creating an event where we could all come together and share in something magical. My experience was a lot like yours in that I loved every second of it! I second your call for everyone who's able to make plans to attend the next MENZA conference.*

*Ngā mihi Jessica Brown*