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BUS FUND HELPS MORE THAN 10,000 SCHOOL KIDS SEE THE ARTS AT HOTA

Established four years ago, the Jock and Beverly McIlwain Arts Bus Fund has marked a milestone assisting over 10,000 Gold Coast school children to gain access to the arts and culture program at HOTA.

An initiative that aims to assist and reduce the cost of bus travel for schools, the Bus Fund provides a one-off subsidy towards transporting children to see an exhibition, performance or participate in workshops run by artists at HOTA.

Jock and Beverly McIlwain's mission was to share their love of the arts with the next generation and provide a positive impact on the local community's arts and culture scene.

"Subsidising the bus for these children is just one step towards helping young people attend the theatre or a workshop," Beverly said.

"The buses were so expensive, so we agreed we would finance them for the children. It then became known as the Bus Fund."

"In those four years since it started, the Bus Fund has assisted in transporting over 10,000 children to HOTA which is incredible and very rewarding."

The main barrier preventing schools from bringing their children to see the arts has previously been the cost of travel. This successful initiative has broken the mould and allowed school children to take advantage of the learning opportunities presented by attending the arts.

Children experiencing art and culture has been highlighted as a priority for HOTA, as it allows them to become more empowered to express themselves, have stronger language, motor and decision-making skills, all while they are more likely to do well in other school subjects and future careers.

HOTA CEO Criena Gehrke said the McIlwain's have been long-time generous supporters of HOTA and their commitment to the arts is extremely valued.

"Jock and Beverly McIlwain have been part of the HOTA family for a long time. So many Gold Coast kids have had memorable experiences due to the passion, energy and dedication of this remarkable couple," she said.

"Their generosity is truly inspiring, and their legacy will be felt for many generations to come."

For more information, visit their website: <https://hota.com.au/bus-fund/>

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