



MEDIA RELEASE

Final journey around New Zealand for world-famous Beetle, before retiring at Auckland's MOTAT

- *Touring from 9-27 March, 2016 around New Zealand*

2 March, 2016: After their famous world tour in the 1960s, Kiwi adventurers Beth and Ivan Hodge are setting-off for one final expedition around New Zealand in their iconic Beetle, before they donate the 'love bug' to retire at Auckland's MOTAT.

The Hodges, now in their 80s, will be sharing insights and tales of their epic adventures, visiting places of personal significance, on their '*Bye Bye Beetle*' tour around the country.

In 1961 the Hodges bought a new Volkswagen Beetle for £439. With their possessions strapped to the roof-racks, they set off into the unknown: across Europe, through communist countries, the Middle East and into the Asian subcontinent.

35 years later, they dusted off the Beetle to retrace their steps and relive the memories on their 'second honeymoon'. They documented their travels in what is now a celebrated chronicle, [*For Love and a Beetle*](#).

Now, married for 57 years, they are embarking on their final journey in the Beetle, this time around New Zealand.

Mr Hodge says, "To take the Beetle on the last drive is incredibly emotional because it has been such a big part of our life – from within a year of our marriage, with so many highlights and exciting things we've done along the way. And now we have come to our last ever drive, which is very important to us. We are sharing the happiness and the New Zealand story with as many people as we can."

Volkswagen New Zealand General Manager, Tom Ruddenklau comments, "Volkswagen is very proud to support Beth and Ivan again, this time on their tour around New Zealand. They are a fantastic couple, who have seen and done so much in their Beetle, and they are always giving back to the community."

The Hodge's have decided to kindly donate the 'love bug' to MOTAT, New Zealand's Museum of Transport and Technology, at the end of their tour on 28 of March, where it will be open for public visitation and enjoyment.

Mr Hodge comments, "After seeing many wrecked and rusting cars, I thought our Beetle is too important to us to end up like that. Our Beetle has travelled the world and lived an exciting life. To end up in a wrecking yard would just be terrible. We decided we would like to donate it to an organisation that would respect it. So we turned to MOTAT.

"I personally retired at 50 to do the exciting things that we wanted to do as a couple – and we are continuing to do this. I feel sorry for the Beetle going into retirement – and we're not!"

Mrs Hodge adds, "With the Beetle retiring at MOTAT, it gives many others the opportunity to enjoy it, just as we have enjoyed it for the past 50 years."

MOTAT's chief executive Michael Frawley says, "MOTAT is honoured to become the custodian of Ivan and Beth's VW Beetle to ensure their remarkable story lives on. This vehicle has become a symbol of endurance, dependability, loyalty and innovation. We intend to relay these noble qualities on to our visitors by showcasing the VW Beetle at MOTAT and inspiring them to become like the Hodges – true trailblazers."

Mr and Mrs Hodge now live in Sydney, Australia but still consider New Zealand home.

For more information: <http://www.forloveandabeetle.com/>

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