



Incorporated No. A0021659A

Life Membership – Ken Beaton

❖ awarded 16 November, 2014 ❖

Every so often it is the privilege of the President and the Committee to pay a tribute to someone who has made a special, lasting and memorable contribution to the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania. Today is one of those occasions ...

Ken Beaton joined the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria 15 years ago, and by any measure has been a larger-than-life character in its history.

Ken bought his first MX-5 in 1998 after selling his MG Midget and his wife's, Ruth, Toyota Twin Cam. He joined the Club early in 1999 but his first real involvement occurred when he (with his brother, Don) travelled to Queensland to attend his first NatMeet.

In those early days, the Tasmanian membership was extremely small but Ken did not let that deter him. Whilst others came and went, finding the tyranny of distance from the centre of Club activity in Melbourne too much to maintain their involvement or interest, Ken persevered.

In need of someone to "play with", Ken started gathering people around the northern coast of Tasmania, from Wynyard to Deloraine – even following some home after spotting them out and about – to form an unofficial northern Tasmanian MX-5 group. These "members" met in different homes along the coast and organised their own events.

With such vision and enthusiasm, Ken played a key role in building up the Tasmanian involvement that ultimately resulted in 2014 in the Club embracing its growing Tasmanian membership by changing its name to the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania.

In all, Ken has attended seven NatMeets and with Ruth's help, contributed significantly to the planning and running of four Tasmanian "Not the NatMeet" tours of Tasmania to host visiting Victorian Club members and show them the very best that his wonderful island has to offer. There's no doubt that Tasmania is perfect MX-5 country, and Ken's intimate knowledge of every inch of the best-kept secret roads (through his years of work with the Tasmanian Fire Service) helped make these tours among the most memorable Club events that participants had then – or since – attended.

Ken was the inaugural Convenor of the Northern Tasmania Chapter from its formation in June 2009 until, due to travel commitments, he stepped down in 2011.

Ken, with Ruth, has contributed many articles to the mxtra magazine over the years, as well as the Northern Tasmania Chapter's contribution to the *20 Roads for Years* book to celebrate the Club's 20th anniversary in 2010.

Not content with that, Ken produced his own monthly newsletter to keep Chapter members informed of upcoming runs, and built the size and success of the Northern Tasmania Chapter by encouraging members to assist in planning and conducting activities.

Ken's love of driving his MX-5 is well known in Devonport, as the roof of his shiny Classic Red NA is down in all but the most extreme weather conditions.

If he sees an unknown MX-5 parked anywhere in Tasmania, he always puts a card under the windscreen wiper to make sure the owner is aware of the Club, and makes it his business to follow up if they make contact.

His friendship, camaraderie and generosity has also been extended to many other interstate MX-5 Club members who have travelled to Tasmania, with never anything asked in return. Throughout his time with the Club, there has never been any agenda seeking personal recognition for Ken Beaton.

The conferring of Life Membership of this Club is not something that is done lightly. It has gone to only 12 other people in our 24-year history.

Our Statement of Purpose and Rules only allows it to be awarded to a member with at least 10 years of Club membership, during some of which *they have performed a Club role and provided exceptional service to the Club*. It also requires a unanimous vote of the Committee in favour before it can be conferred.

I'm very pleased to say that Ken has more than qualified on each of those requirements. Indeed, he is the first Tasmanian to join these esteemed ranks.

So, today, it is with great pleasure on behalf of the President, Don Nicoll and the Committee, I invite Ken to accept this award of *Life Membership of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania*.

Will Campbell, Past President
on behalf of Don Nicoll, President