



Incorporated No. A0021659A

Hall of Fame – Ken Beaton

❖ awarded posthumously 10 July, 2024 ❖

It is the privilege of the Club Committee, on behalf of all Club members, to pay a tribute to a Life Member who continued to contribute at the highest level well after that former recognition, with induction into the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania Hall of Fame.

Prior to his passing, **Ken Beaton** met all of the criteria for Hall of Fame membership. He joined the Club on 1 April 1999 and, at the time of his death, had been a member for 24 years (just three months short of achieving his 25-year recognition). He was awarded Life membership in 2014 and was still an active supporter until a few months before his death.

By any measure, Ken was a larger-than-life character in the history of the Northern Tasmania Chapter and the Club as a whole.

Ken bought his first MX-5 in 1998 after selling his MG Midget and his wife Ruth's 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 over Easter in 1999.

In those early days, the Tasmanian membership of the Club 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 the formation of the Northern Tasmania Chapter of the Club in April 2008, with Ken as the inaugural Convenor. Due to travel commitments, he relinquished that role in 2012, but not before installing a replacement Chapter Captain for whom Ken continued to provide assistance and mentorship for many years.

It was in no small part due to Ken's drive and development of the Northern Tasmania Chapter that, in 2014, the Club fully embraced its growing Tasmanian membership by changing its name to the *Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania*.

In all, Ken 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 had 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, with Ruth, 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 was well known in Devonport, as the roof of his shiny Classic Red NA was down in all but the most extreme weather conditions. If he saw an unknown MX-5 parked anywhere in Tasmania, he always puts a card under the windscreen wiper to make sure the owner was aware of the Club, and made it his business to follow up if they made contact.

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

The high number of Club members from northern and southern Tasmania and the mainland who attended his funeral in January 2024 was no small testament to his popularity and to the impact that he had on the Northern Tasmania Chapter, on the Club, and on individuals with whom he came into contact.

Membership of the Club's Hall of Fame is an honour that is bestowed only on truly outstanding members over the life of the Club.

Our recognition guidelines state that Hall of Fame membership is offered only to a member with a minimum of 15 years' Club membership, and who is already an Honorary Life Member. Their attitude and demeanour must reflect the values of the Club, and they must have demonstrated a remarkable contribution to the Club.

The award may only be conferred in exceptional circumstances, at the absolute discretion of the Committee. In this case it was conferred by a unanimous vote in favour of the Committee, which was very pleased to recognise Ken as being more than qualified on each of those requirements for membership.

So, it is with great pleasure that we bestow on the late Ken Beaton this award as a
Member of the Hall of Fame of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria & Tasmania.

Cary Warren, President