Charlie Calafiore.

I first met Charlie Calafiore in 1993. I bought a new three door, diesel, Carrigarda green Discovery 1 from him. Little did I know what a long and rewarding association that would develop into.

Charlie has been a key member of the Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland since its creation in 1994. During all those years, he has been on the committee as Publicity Officer and Public Officer, that makes him the longest running committee member. Charlie has probably attended more meetings than any other member.

Apart from his role in meetings, Charlie does an enormous amount of behind the scenes work that keeps the club functioning. Organising to get the newsletters printed and posted, setting up for meetings, judging photo competitions, being the contact person for people enquiring about the club, arranging access to the dealership so that meetings can be held even if he cannot attend are just a few of the things he does with great efficiency.

In the early years of the club Charlie was a regular trip participant. Coming along on some “interesting” vehicle scratching trips in a shiny new demo Land Rover, usually a Discovery but occasionally a Defender. On one trip, in the foothills south of Dargo, Charlie nearly came to grief. Driving a new red Discovery, that was on loan from Land Rover, Charlie came sliding backwards down the slick yellow clay slope that was the steep section of Killeens Climb Track. With a drop on one side and a bank on the other, either by luck or skill, Charlie managed to bring the vehicle to a gentle halt nudging the bank. Fortunately, the only damage was a dislodged mud flap and the Discovery, along with six other vehicles, was winched past the clay section. Charlie was never so precious about the vehicles that he wouldn’t take them into the hills.

The many and legendary Dinner Plain weekends were a Charlie speciality. With fantastic catering, great accommodation and driving two of the most iconic 4x4 tracks in Victoria, Blue Rag Range Track and King Spur Track into Mayford, the weekends were sensational and a result of Charlies fine organising skills.

Charlie has been a welcoming host for meetings. With a philosophy that the most important part of the evening was the post meeting socialising, he must have made thousands of cups of coffee for members over the years. Charlie also organised gifts for guest speakers and visitors to the meetings and prizes for club competitions. The task Charlie hated the most was taking the minutes at the Annual General Meeting.

Charlie has been a great supporter of the club’s involvement at many Land Rover Owners’ Club of Victoria’s Field Days, now called the Victorian 4x4 Show. The latest model Land Rover products were always made available for club members to take to the event and put on display. That made our exhibit interesting for attendees with an interest in Land Rover product. I doubt that Charlie made many sales from the displayed vehicles, but his support was long lived and generous.

Charlie oversaw the transition of the Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland from support by Ray Massaro and Massaro Motors, to the current Gippsland Land Rover support. During that transition he made sure that the club still had full use of dealership facilities for meetings.

The dealership support, driven by Charlie, makes the club unique and has provided members with superb opportunities to inspect and when possible, drive, the latest models of the brand. Charlie has also involved the club in special events like model launches, Land Rover Roadshow and opening of the new dealership.

There used to be an annual award for the club member who did something that they should not have done while driving a Land Rover. Charlie was the first “winner” of the award, appropriately called “The Charlie Award”. I will not embarrass him by recounting what he did. Maybe he will tell the tale, but you’ll be sworn to secrecy if he does.

Charlie, you are a very worthy recipient of Life Membership of the Land Rover Owners Club of Gippsland.

Greg Rose.