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Kia Reels Off 3rd Year Of Record Growth In NZ

High flying Kia Motors confirmed its status as one of the world's hottest car brands with record sales internationally and also here in New Zealand for 2011, where it marked its third year of growth.

Worldwide, sales of Kia passenger cars hit an all-time high of 2,478,959, a year-on-year increase of 18.6% and also broke the 2 million target for the first time.

Kia sales rose a solid 11.8% locally during 2011 to reach its highest number of registrations ever in New Zealand, which was more than three times the increase in the new car market as a whole (and twice that of Kia's growth in Australia).

One of the fastest growing car companies in the world, Kia's unprecedented growth is the direct result of the company's design-led transformation, under the stewardship of its German-based Chief Design Officer Peter Schreyer.

The numbers could have been even higher if the company had been able to produce more vehicles at its factories around the world, which were stretched to meet the rising global demand.

"To increase our sales by 11.8% in face of challenging local market conditions and production restrictions was a great result," says Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand, adding that the dedication and strengthening of our dealer network was as much responsible for the growth as the exciting new product.

"A lot of work has gone into developing our dealer network to ensure that brand is meeting and exceeding customer expectations and that's really paying off for us.

“This year we are forecasting another year-on-year increase, with the momentum gained in 2011 already starting to build in January. Virtually all of our models have been completely replaced or refreshed over the past 18 months and have won awards and critical acclaim around the world, so we are very excited about the coming year.”

New models introduced by Kia in New Zealand in 2011 included the all-new award winning Optima mid-size sedan, Picanto mini car and Rio small car.

During the past year Kia won more awards and accolades around the world than ever before and it also won its first motor racing crown, the production-based Kia Koup in the Grand-Am road racing championships with driver and team titles in the 2011 Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge (CTSCC).

The Koup is part of the C-segment Cerato range, which was the best-selling Kia model internationally in 2011, accounting for 410,709 units (16.5%), followed by the Sportage compact CUV with 331,022 units (13%) and the B-segment Rio with 282,776 units (11.4%). Next came the Sorento mid-size CUV with 220,783 units (9%) and rounding out the Kia top five was the Soul urban crossover with 180,109 units (7%).

With an eye on the future, Kia Motors has also committed to increase its investment in research and development by a further 11% in 2012, compared to last year, in order to provide customers with the latest technology in production vehicles.

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Photo caption: Best selling Kia model around the world in 2011 was the Cerato.

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