

Media Release

Kia Motors New Zealand



NEWS

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SUV trend is good news for Kia

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As the popularity of SUVs continues to grow in New Zealand, the trend is heading in a direction where they will eclipse overall passenger car sales for the first time this year, with Kia's Sportage and Sorento models playing key roles in supporting that trend.

"Buyer preference for SUVs has been building over the last few years and we believe they will finally overtake passenger cars well before the end of 2016 and their sales will continue to strengthen," says Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand.

Latest figures indicate that has already happened in the last month, with SUV sales surpassing passenger car sales in April for the very first time, and for the year-to-date SUVs are less than 300 units behind.

Mr. McDonald says it is easy to see why buyers are attracted to SUVs, as they offer increased interior space and utility over a traditional car – they also sit higher on the road, improving the driver's view of other vehicles and the surrounding environment.

Kia has experienced popularity among the SUV market in recent years with its Sportage and Sorento models resonating with buyers thanks to their appealing design and sophisticated equipment levels. The SUV options from Kia have also broadened with the repackaging of the Kia Soul to make it more SUV-like, boosting sales of this iconic model.

Much of the sales action has been taking place in the mid-size SUV segment, where the Kia Sportage sits. Launched just a few months ago, the latest Sportage takes the urban SUV concept to the next level with bold styling already earning the newcomer awards in Europe for design and innovation.

Featuring a signature new look, the design team at Kia Motors created a sense of sporty and powerful energy from every angle of the Sportage. The result, according to Mr. McDonald, delivers a strong stance and commanding road presence, which has led to sales of the new Sportage being at unprecedented numbers since its launch.

One of the reasons for the success of the modern SUV is that they have become more car-like in the

way they drive and perform on the road. This approach has been developed even further by Kia Motors, which has a specialist team that enhances the suspension and steering settings for most of its vehicles sold in New Zealand under the ANZAC suspension programme.

In another trend, the majority of SUV's bought today are now front-drive rather than AWD, as style and practicality have become more important than the ability to go anywhere.

Even in the larger SUV segment, buyers are preferring front-drive to AWD and Kia has set the pace in this part of the market by expanding its 7-seater Kia Sorento range to include more front-drive options in the latest model.

"Very few people actually drive off-road in an SUV and it makes sense for us to provide other equipment that owners will find much more useful," adds Mr. McDonald.

Dispensing with the AWD system also saves weight and improves the fuel economy of a vehicle, he says. Both the Kia Sportage and Sorento offer AWD for drivers who still require this option.

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Photo caption: The Sportage and Sorento are leading the SUV charge for Kia Motors in New Zealand.

About Kia Motors New Zealand

Kia Motors New Zealand Limited (www.Kia.com/NZ) – a maker of quality vehicles for the young-at-heart is a subsidiary of Kia Motors Corporation (KMC) which was founded in 2006 and sells and services high quality, class leading vehicles like the Soul, Cerato, Optima, Sportage and Sorento through a network of 21 dealers nationwide. Kia Motors New Zealand manages the New Zealand operation from its Auckland headquarters. Kia's brand slogan "The Power to Surprise" represents the company's global commitment to surprise the world by providing exciting & inspiring experiences that go beyond expectations.

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