**PRESS RELEASE**

**28 April 2017**

**MINI South Africa celebrates 15 years in South Africa.**

**Midrand.** When the first classic Mini, made in Birmingham, went on the market on 18August 1959, none of the people involved at the time are likely to have imagined that the concept of a revolutionary small car would turn into one of the automotive industry's most impressive success stories stretching over a period of almost six decades.

Fifty-seven years ago, two models were presented to the public which differed solely in their radiator grille, hub caps and paint finishes: the Morris Mini Minor and the Austin Seven. Designer Alec Issigonis' concept was both simple and ingenious: lots of interior space combined with minimum exterior dimensions, four seats, perfect driving properties, low fuel consumption and a reasonable price. These brilliant ideas had an impact that has extended into the 21st century.

The brand's underlying principle was confirmed once more when it was reinvented with the market launch of MINI in 2001 by the BMW Group. Since then MINI has successfully combined the classic values of the early generations with the demands of modern automobiles across its model range.

In April 2002, MINI successfully made its debut in South Africa with the introduction of the first MINI Hatch. Fifteen years later MINI South Africa has grown from strength to strength. Since market introduction in 2002, a total of 29,167 vehicles across the brand’s model range have been sold in South Africa, through the 14 established MINI dealerships countrywide. Globally, more than 3,8 million MINI vehicles have been delivered to customers.

In the quest to continue the MINI brand’s unique success story, the BMW Group realigned MINI’s product and brand strategy in 2015 which included a refined model line-up, a new corporate identity and marketing strategy that will open the brand to new ideas and new business areas. This was all introduced with the launch of the second generation MINI Clubman. With five model variants now on offer and with stronger characters – the MINI Hatch, MINI 5-door Hatch, MINI Convertible, MINI Clubman and the recently introduced second generation MINI Countryman and MINI John Cooper Works Clubman – the MINI brand is geared towards reinventing itself in the premium compact car segment.

“Since its creation in 1959, the MINI brand has always stood for ideas, inspiration and passion. BMW Group South Africa has continued the unique MINI success story for the past fifteen years and we remain committed to turning more South Africans into passionate MINI fans,” says Lou-Anne Fitzsimons, Sales and Marketing Director at BMW Group South Africa.

In June, MINI South Africa will introduce the new MINI John Cooper Works Countryman. The second generation of the MINI John Cooper Works Countryman is the most spacious and most versatile model and features the most powerful engine ever to be fitted in a MINI. With an output of 170 kW, in combination with the standard all-wheel drive system (ALL4) and a robust vehicle concept, it takes the MINI experience to a whole new level – in terms of both race track feeling on the road and driving fun over various terrains. The MINI John Cooper Works will be followed by the introduction of a diesel variant of the MINI Countryman in the third quarter – this will be the first time MINI offers a diesel variant in South Africa.

**For any questions on this press release, please contact BMW Group South Africa’s Group Communications Division as follows:**

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**The BMW Group**

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world’s leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 31 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

 In 2016, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.367 million cars and 145,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2015 was approximately € 9.22 billion on revenues amounting to € 92.18 billion. As of 31 December 2015, the BMW Group had a workforce of 122,244 employees.

 The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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