Media information

**50 Years an icon: BMW Group South Africa starts anniversary celebrations in style as 300,000th BMW X3 rolls off assembly line.**

**+++ First plant outside Germany a key player in global production network +++ Year-long celebration to be interspersed with significant milestones +++ More than 300,000 BMW X3s produced since 2018 +++ More than 1,6 million vehicles produced at BMW Group Plant Rosslyn since March 1973 +++ Reinforced commitment to South Africa for the next 50 years +++**

**Midrand.** Fifty years ago, in March 1973, a key automotive, economic, and societal player in South Africa was founded: The newly established plant of BMW South Africa started to produce the first BMW vehicles, laying the foundation for a South African icon. Located in Rosslyn, outside the capital city of Pretoria, this was the first BMW production site outside of Germany. Few would have imagined the critical role the subsidiary on the tip of Africa would ultimately play in developing products – and nurturing talent – for the Bavarian manufacturer.

Milan Nedeljković, Member of the Board of BMW AG for Production and Chairman of the Board of Management, BMW Group South Africa, said: “As the first plant outside Germany, the emotional link to South Africa is very strong. It was our first step to internationalise BMW.

“Plant Rosslyn has over the past 50 years proven itself to be an essential member of our production network, consistently improving quality and productivity. The passion for the brand is clear, and the right teams with the right spirit are in place to direct its growth for the next 50 years.”

Five decades later, in addition to BMW Group Plant Rosslyn, the BMW Group South Africa business includes a National Sales Company that sells and distributes BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad; a Financial Services company established in 1990; and a software company (or IT Hub) servicing more than 50 countries.

Over 50 years, however, Plant Rosslyn has remained at the core of the BMW Group’s South African operation. More than R12,6 billion has been invested into the production facility by the BMW Group since 1995. To date, more than 1,6 million cars have been produced at this plant, which recently attained another significant milestone with the 300,000th BMW X3 rolling off its assembly line.

**Peter van Binsbergen, CEO of BMW Group South Africa** and the first South African to occupy this seat, said: “BMW Group Plant Rosslyn is an iconic production facility within the BMW Group, and BMW Group South Africa is a global success story for the business!

“Plant Rosslyn represents a cornerstone of the BMW Group’s global production network of more than 30 sites in 15 countries. We built BMW 3 Series here for more than 30 years; a period that included production of the iconic 333i and the cherished 325iS ‘Gusheshe’. BMW South Africa benefited from the successful adoption of a government-endorsed export programme from 1995 before transitioning to an “X” plant in 2018.

“Given our rich and colourful history, while we acknowledge our past, our 50th celebration is an equally good time to look ahead. I can only say thank you to the people of South Africa for allowing us to serve you for the past 50 years. We are not only a corporate citizen in South Africa, but through our people and our vehicles, we are a part of the fabric of South African society. Wait until you see what we intend for the next 50 years!”

**Production at BMW Group Plant Rosslyn.**

The clearest demonstration of the BMW Group’s long-term commitment to South Africa, BMW Group Plant Rosslyn has over the years produced iconic cars unique to South Africa. Products such as the BMW 2000 SA, BMW 745i, BMW 530 MLE, BMW 333i, as well as the BMW 325iS have laid the basis for the typical BMW brand DNA to become genuinely South African.

A Training Academy was established at BMW Group Plant Rosslyn in 1978 to equip craftspeople for the Plant. Even in the pre-democracy period, it was distinctive for accepting learners irrespective of their ethnicity. In 2018, the company opened a R73 million Training Academy at Plant Rosslyn, and in April 2019, a brand-new R109 million Retailer Training Centre was opened at the Midrand headquarter to support its retailer partners.

The BMW Group has since 1995 invested more than R12.6 billion into the production facility that, in 1999, became the first in the world to achieve certification for its integrated quality, health and safety, as well as environmental management system (ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and BS 8800). An award-winning production facility, BMW Group Plant Rosslyn was bestowed Gold and Platinum honours in 2002 and 2015, respectively, in the respected JD Power Initial Quality Study.

Plant Rosslyn would go on to produce 1,191,604 BMW 3 Series over five generations, before changing to BMW X3 production in 2018. More than 300,000 BMW X3s have been produced at BMW Group Plant Rosslyn. The bulk of these units are exported to more than 40 markets, including 14 African countries.

Sustainability and efficiency are central to BMW Group Plant Rosslyn’s strategic direction, and it is a common thread throughout the facility’s value chain. Several key projects support Plant Rosslyn’s sustainability goals. They include, since 2015, the Bio2Watt partnership in pursuit of a carbon-neutral electricity supply, and a zero-waste-to-landfill project where waste is converted into bricks used for low-cost housing.

**A social and cultural beacon.**

BMW Group South Africa’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts are concentrated under the banner #WeBuildMoreThanJustCars. The company prides itself on building communities, opportunities, sustainable solutions, industry, and emotions. Sustainable educational activities are focussed at the Ntšha-Peu and Lethabong schools in Soshanguve, outside Pretoria, which is home to many BMW associates employed at Plant Rosslyn. These primary and secondary schools benefit from a close relationship with BMW Group South Africa that span facilities and resources, to learner mentoring programmes.

**Our cultural engagement.**

For over five decades, the BMW Group has been supporting hundreds of cultural initiatives worldwide. Unrestricted freedom of creative potential is of the utmost importance, as it is equally as crucial for the field of art as it is for ground-breaking innovations within a successful business enterprise. BMW Group South Africa supports local artists via its partnerships with The Southern Guild, and the BMW Young Collectors Co, among others. The longest-standing relationship, however, has been forged with Dr “Mam” Esther Mahlangu, a global icon of traditional Ndebele art. In 1991, Dr Mahlangu became the first African, and the first female, to adorn a BMW Art Car. Our relationship with Dr Mahlangu continues as she embarks on her first ever retrospective exhibition taking place in South Africa, the USA, and Europe from 2024 to 2027.

**Honouring the past, setting course for the future.**

Celebrating its 50th year allows BMW Group South Africa to look back at its unparalled history, its achievements, and its successes. Looking to the future, its local operations will refine their focus on sustainability (as an automotive manufacturer and a responsible corporate citizen), and the further expansion of the global BMW IT Hub situated in Pretoria’s Menlyn Maine.

As the fastest growing innovation hub in the BMW Group, this crucial department provides IT services for core global BMW Group processes, including production and logistics, finance, and sales. The hub contributed R2.6 billion to the South African economy in 2022, with a staff complement totalling more than 2,000.

In 2023, the BMW Group South Africa directly and indirectly employs close to 23,000 people. This year, the company will reinforce its commitment to South Africa and its people, highlighting its benchmark-setting corporate responsibility partnerships and outlining the future of its state-of-the-art Rosslyn production facility. The company’s steadfast BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad fans are sure to be kept on the edge of their seats throughout the year.

**Note to editors:**

A 50 year of BMW Group South Africa logo has been created for the commemorative year, inspired by a work of art crafted by Dr Esther Mahlangu. This logo will be used in all communication of BMW Group South Africa’s 50th anniversary celebrations throughout 2023.

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**The BMW Group**

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world’s leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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