

A year of it

IT WON'T BE HARD SAYING FAREWELL TO A TESTING 2011, ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THE GOOD THINGS HONDA HAS IN STORE FOR THE MOTORING PUBLIC IN 2012.

It's almost Christmas with 2012 fast approaching. I think many of us will be pleased to see the New Year dawn and hope that we have a smoother year ahead.

It sure has been a rough ride but I think we should reflect with some pride because despite the major events that have afflicted us in recent times – Pike River, the Christchurch earthquakes, the Rena grounding – as a country we have come through with a very strong heart.

We have just hosted a wonderful rugby world cup with an unprecedented level of cohesion and enthusiasm shown throughout the country (although it feels in the distant past already).

Globally, a lot of events have shaken people, nations and confidence – from the continuing European financial crisis, the Japan earthquakes and tsunami, the floods in Thailand and Queensland and other events. Our hearts go out to those affected.

In the world of the Honda we've been directly affected by the events in Japan and the Thailand flooding. Planned production has been knocked for a six. In the same manner that the people of Christchurch have stood up, shaken themselves off, knuckled down and began rebuilding their lives, we have seen our fellow Honda staff in Japan and Thailand stand up and work to restore

normal levels of production as quickly as possible. It has been simply amazing to watch – the impossible seems normal these days.

As I write, the flooding in Thailand and Honda's factory is so recent that restoration is, of course, not yet there but already we see the same resolve. Fortunately, more than 90% of our vehicles are made in Japan so not much disruption is expected for New Zealand customers.

Locally we're proud to be launching a selection of new models in the next few months, from the sporty CRZ in December to the 2012 Civic in the first quarter and the all-new CRV that follows closely. You can read details in this issue of *Eclipse*.

These new models are all uniquely "Honda" and you'll know that as soon as you drive them.

Like me, you will marvel at how the Honda R&D team can deliver such a step up in driving sophistication, quality and refinement when the outgoing model was still class leading.

How can they possibly do that, you might rightfully ask? The seat of your pants will tell you they have.

The CRZ leads the way with a redefinition of Integrated Motor Assist (IMA), now tuned for sports driving. It gives a real boost. Even if you don't see yourself being able to manage with a sports hatch,



INNOVATION DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN A LEADER AND A FOLLOWER

– STEVE JOBS

I extend my invitation to you to try the CRZ just to experience this game-changing new technology, not to mention the fun of driving it.

While we might say the economy is not firing on all cylinders at present, I'm reminded of Fred Dagg's mantra "we don't know how lucky we are". You don't have to look too far over the fence to remind yourself how true that is these days.

Summer is here along with strawberries, asparagus and long, warm evenings: the definition of a New Zealand summer. I know I'm looking forward to it and I hope you are, too.

I wish you a happy Christmas and festive season and best wishes for the New Year.

GRAEME SEYMOUR
MANAGING DIRECTOR
HONDA NEW ZEALAND