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## **RIDERSAFE NEWS**

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Recently we received some government statistics regarding the Ridersafe tests over the last twenty months which makes interesting reading. A graph is posted below to give a snapshot of the period.

In July 1995 a total of 296 Basic and 244 Advanced (Stage I & II) tests were undertaken. A total of 540 tests. The number of Stage I tests increased to a high of 541 in September '05 and averaged 431 per month over the next six months until April '06 when it hit a low of 317. The stage II tests on the other hand held reasonably steady on a month by month basis from September '05 to April '06 averaging 246 per month.

What this tells me is that in late 2005 and early 2006 many people were introduced to riding, probably through the interest generated in two-wheeled transport through scooters. However, a lot of this interest did not result in many of these would be motorcyclists returning for advanced training to gain their full license. Which is good. They tried it and found that it was not for them. They made a decision based on knowledge and experience. They knew what they were doing. Those committed to motorcycling stayed the course and got their P plates.

From May to July '06 something extraordinary happened. Enrolments for both basic and advanced training went through the roof, peaking at 750 and 681 respectively in June and dropping to 167 and 185 in July. The monthly difference between basic and advanced training in June, instead of reflecting the normal figure of 100 is now negligible and this difference continues for the next few months.

It is clear that the impending licensing fee increase has motivated a number of people to book in for their tests before the increase took effect. What's interesting is that the numbers for both categories are so close, indicating that the people who chose to do this are committing themselves to getting the full license. There is no time to try it out.

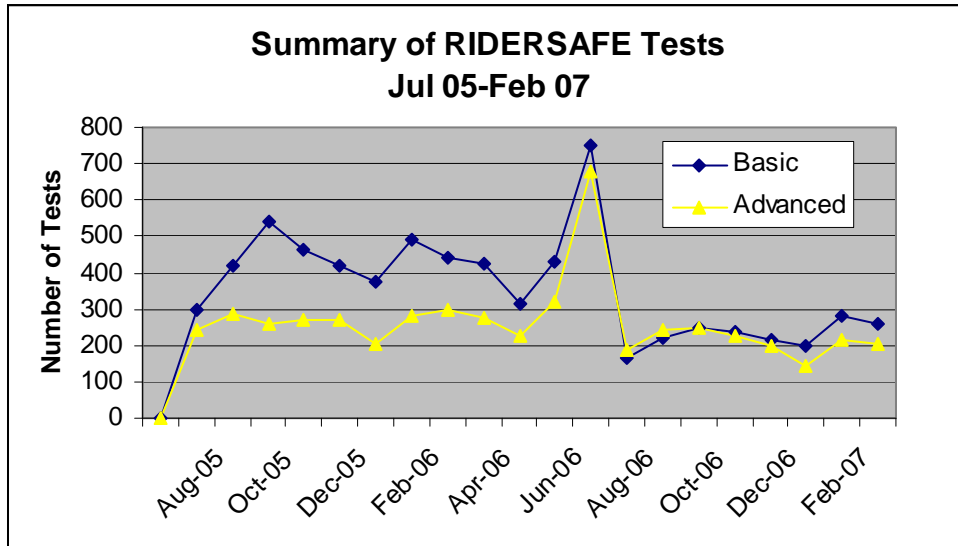
From July '06 to February '07 it is quite clear that the numbers of riders undertaking both basic and advanced tests have fallen considerably. The average number of tests per month are 228 and 208 respectively. These figures are both well under the 2005 figures.

What they tell us is that only serious riders will now consider getting a license. The government has succeeded in making the option of motor-cycling as transport or lifestyle beyond the means of a significant number of motorists.

This means that on average, if the figures hold the current pattern, then there will around 240 fewer motorcyclists on the roads every month than there were in early 2006 before the new fees came in.

That means 240 riders per month not testing in the brand new training centre at St. Agnes. It could mean 240 fewer new and used motorcycles per month traded (plus accessories, fuel, maintenance etc.). The economic implications are obvious.

If this was a ploy to allow fewer motorcyclists onto the roads then it probably has worked. Motorcyclists have always claimed that the government will try to regulate motorcyclists off the roads and in this they have finally succeeded.



The other side of this is that with fewer motorcyclists on the roads this may eventually be reflected in future road accident statistics. We will then find that the government will be claiming a victory for their road safety policies of heavier fines, more speed cameras and RBTs and will continue with and expand the use of these to the detriment of more enlightened policies such as driver training and road and road furniture construction and design.

On the other side, we may find that the numbers of unlicensed riders on the roads from now on will increase. There will be little significant change to motorcycle accident stats, unless of course the number and severity of accidents for this group is reflected in their lack of training – and who will ultimately avoid any responsibility for that?