



Debris at the crash site in eastern Ukraine.

News

## MH17: The Victorians on doomed Malaysia Airlines flight

Andrew Jefferson, Alex White, Angus Thompson, Herald Sun  
July 20, 2014 10:49am

A FAMILY of five, a teacher and her author husband, a popular Sunbury couple and a young couple on their way to a wedding are among the tragic toll of Victorian victims on flight MH17.

Family and friends connected to seven families across the state have been overwhelmed by grief and anger as the full extent of the Malaysia Airlines tragedy has unfolded.

In total, 36 Australians are now among the 298 who died when the commercial airliner was blown out of the sky over eastern Ukraine.

The toll comprises 28 Australian citizens and eight permanent Dutch residents.

Victoria's informal toll stands at 18, with all but one identified.

## [MELBOURNE FAMILY PERISHES ON MH17](#)

## [AIDS DELEGATES VOW TO BATTLE ON](#)

## [RELATIVES ANGRY AT LACK OF RESPECT](#)

### **GLEN IRIS COUPLE ON WAY HOME**

GLEN Iris couple **Why Keong Lee** and wife **Mona Cheng Sim Lee** have emerged as the latest Victorian victims to die when MH17 was shot down.

The [Malay Mail Online](#) reports Mr Lee, 60, and his wife were to have stopped in Malaysia to visit family on their way home from a European vacation.

“My brother and his wife were on holiday in the Netherlands and were scheduled to be in Malaysia for a week to catch up with the rest of the family,” said Mr Lee’s distraught elder brother, Wai Hong Lee.

“It is difficult for me to accept that my brother and sister-in-law were on the plane and that I can never see them again.”

He said the couple had moved to Australia 20 years ago and had two daughters.

Now Mr Lee was having to break the news to their 93-year-old mother.

“I just don’t know how to tell her that her son and daughter-in-law are no longer alive,” he told the website.





📷 Ithamar Avnon was on board Flight MH17.

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## STUDENT KILLED AFTER UNI BREAK

ITHAMAR Avnon, 27, was a Dutch national living in Windsor.

He had been visiting his family in Amsterdam and attended a wedding in Israel.

He was on his way back to Australia to resume his business studies at Melbourne's Swinburne University when MH17 was shot down.



📷 Dad Hans van den Hende, mum Shaliza Dewa, children Piers, 15, Marnix, 12, and Margaux, 8.

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## SO MUCH JOY, GONE SO SOON

A BEAUTIFUL young dancer whose smile would melt your heart, a dedicated swimmer who was at training at 4am, a handy young soccer player, a devoted mum and a hardworking dad - that's how friends describe each member of a [Melbourne family who were tragically killed on Flight MH17](#).

The van den Hende family were permanent Australian residents travelling on Dutch and Malaysian passports so their loss had been hidden until late Saturday.

The deaths of **Hans van den Hende**, **Shaliza Dewa**, 45, and their sons **Piers**, 15, and **Marnix**, 12, and daughter **Margaux**, 8, take the number of Victorians lost to 18.

"The whole family has just disappeared out of the community," a friend said.

The community at Eynesbury, a new estate 40km west of Melbourne, was in mourning.

The van den Hende family moved to Australia more than seven years ago when Hans started working at Securrency, which was the Reserve Bank's note printing development company.

He worked in procurement and logistics at the plant that makes the base plastic for Australia's banknotes.

The company, based in Craigieburn, has been taken over by Innovia Security, which confirmed the deaths

Ms Dewa's mother, Datin Siti Dina, was interviewed at the airport in Kuala Lumpur on Friday, according to The Straits Times.

"My friend and I watched the news on CNN as soon as I received the call," she told reporters. "I called up my son-in-law's family immediately."

The van den Hende children all went to Bacchus Marsh Grammar School and were well known on the 20-minute bus ride by children from a number of schools.

They were bright and sporty, friends said.

Piers played soccer and had a hit of golf with a junior development squad at Eynesbury.

Marnix was a gifted swimmer, who matched his talent with hard work.

"He was doing high-level swim training, he was in the pool at 4am and then he would back that up by going to school," a friend said.

Margaux, the youngest in the family, lit up rooms with her smile.

She was involved in a dancing club and would often do her routines for the family.

Piers had stayed back at Bacchus Marsh Grammar to finish a woodwork project before his family's overseas trip.

He wanted to make sure the pine side cabinet he'd been working on would be finished in time for assessment.

The 15-year-old filed each edge and sanded the wood meticulously each night after all his classmates had gone home.

Marnix, in grade 6, and Margaux, in grade 2, were just as studious as their older brother.

"They were simply beautiful kids," principal Andrew Neal said.

Ms Dewa boarded at Cato College in Elsternwick as a teenager.

A schoolfriend said: “There were quite a lot of us who still caught up. She was an absolutely gorgeous person. It’s horrible to think we won’t see her again.”



📷 Maree and Albert Rizk.

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### **FOOTBALL CLUB MOURNS STALWART DUO**

A SUNBURY brother and sister say they are overwhelmed by the support they have received since their parents perished in a plane disaster.

**Albert** and **Maree Rizk** were travelling with two friends visiting Switzerland, Germany and other parts of Europe during a month-long holiday.

They were due back in Sunbury on Friday but never made it home.

The other couple, also from Sunbury, also caught an earlier flight.

Family spokesman Ken Grech said the couple tried to change their flight to avoid a lengthy stopover in Kuala Lumpur.

The couple had a daughter, Vanessa, 22, and son James, 21, and had lived in the Sunbury area for more than 20 years.



📷 James Rizk, centre, is supported by friends at the Sunbury Football Club game. Picture: Tim Carrafa

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Mr Rizk was a committee member of the Sunbury Lions Football Club - where son James played in the senior team - while Maree volunteered countless hours in the club canteen.

On Saturday, James made the brave trip to Ballarat to cheer on his Sunbury Lions teammates as they played Redan.

A minute's silence was held before the game in honour of the Rizks.

Still too distraught to speak to the media, James tweeted his thanks to the army of well-wishers who had been in touch since his parent's death.

"We are overwhelmed with the amount of support Vanessa Rizk and myself have received," he said.

"From family, friends and people of the community.

"Appreciate every message and call we have received.

"Our mum & dad would be so grateful for the support, but it goes to show how incredible they were as people, and how many lives they have touched.

"We will miss them so much."

Mr Rizk worked as a director of real estate agency Raine & Horne at Sunbury, and James had just joined the Gisborne branch of the business as a property manager.



Training to be a certified property manager and fully licensed estate agent, James has aspirations to follow in his father's footsteps by moving into sales at a later date.

Mourners left a steady stream of bouquets and cards against the shopfront of Sunbury's Raine & Horne office over the past two days.

Friends say both children have been left shattered by the death of their fun-loving parents, who were aged in their early 50s, with the news still sinking in.

Vanessa's Facebook page includes a touching last message from her father posted on July 9.

"Great photo Ness, we should go away more often," posted Mr Rizk.



📷 Mourners gather at the office of Raine and Horne Real Estate in Sunbury. Picture: Nathan Dyer

Mr Grech, director of Raine & Horne in Gisborne, said James was its property manager.

"I got a call from James at 7am saying that plane was the one his father was on and hoping they'd transferred flights," Mr Grech said.

"Obviously the family's quite devastated."

Sunbury councillor Jack Ogilvie, vice-president of the Sunbury Football Club, said he had received a call from club president Phil Lithgow yesterday morning, informing him that the Rizks were on the flight.

"I'm just in shock; he was one of the best blokes to have a beer with," he said.

Fellow Sunbury councillor Steve Medcraft said he was devastated.

Mr Medcraft said he and Mr Rizk met more than 30 years ago when Mr Rizk began dating his sister.

“I was actually joking with him before he left, asking him why he was flying with Malaysia Airlines after the last missing plane,” he said.

Ballarat Football League operations manager Aaron Nunn offered the league’s sympathy to the Rizk family and said the BFL would work with Sunbury to appropriately honour the couple.

“Albert was a well-respected club member; they were just a really good family, so it’s an absolute tragedy,” he said.



📷 Frankie and Liam Davison were on board MH17.

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## **TALENTED PAIR LOST TO FAMILY, SCHOOL**

CYCLISTS on their weekly Mornington Cycling Club ride stopped for a minute’s silence on Saturday to remember one of their members and friends who was lost in the MH17 tragedy.

It was a sombre start to the ride as they reflected on the loss of passionate cyclist and award-winning author **Liam Davison** and his wife, **Francesca**, known as Frankie.

Club president Bruce Trew said the club had been left in “shock and disbelief” after hearing the news they were on the shot down flight as they returned home from holidays.

“We can’t stop thinking how unfair and devastating it is, particularly for his children,” he said.



“(Liam) was just a really kind, gentle, friendly and supportive guy in the cycling community.

“He was very passionate about cycling and was well respected by everyone.”

Charter Mason Giant Master Racing Team, who Mr Davison once competed with, said: “The peleton has lost a true gentleman.”

The Davisons are survived by their two children, Milly and Sam.

Tributes have flowed from former students and colleagues of Mrs Davison, who have described her as an “incredible” and “very special” teacher who will be greatly missed.

“Frankie was one of the most encouraging and inspirational teachers I have ever encountered,” Lorna Elizabeth posted in an online tribute.

Clarissa Susanto recalled Mrs Davison being her first teacher when she first moved to Australia.

“She was always so encouraging and nurturing,” she said.

“A very special teacher who has touched so many lives over the years,” Emma Kenner said. “Will be remembered as one of the best.”



📷 Mornington Cycling Club members observe a minute's silence in memory of Liam Davison.

Earlier in the day, the devastated family of another of the 14 Victorians killed in the MH17 crash expressed their grief and shock at his death.

On Friday, Toorak College released a statement, confirming the deaths of much-loved teacher Ms Davison and her husband.

“Our hearts and sympathy goes out to their children, Milly and Sam, and family,” the school said.

“We are devastated by the news of this tragedy.”

The couple lived near the school in Mt Eliza.

Mr Davison, 56, was a critically acclaimed author whose second novel, *Soundings*, won the National Book Council Banjo Award for Fiction in 1993.

*Soundings* and his third book, *The White Woman*, were short-listed for the Victorian Premier’s Awards.

Mr Davison won a Marten Bequest in 1993 and he spent three months in France with his family.

His last book, *The Betrayal*, was set in France and Daylesford.

He told the *Herald Sun* in 1999 that he became interested in creative writing while studying to be a teacher.

“I had a lecturer who actively encouraged creative writing, which was not very common then ... it was something new and unusual,” Mr Davison said.

He wrote pieces for small publications before his first novel, *The Velodrome*, was published after being short-listed for the Vogel Award.



📷 Victims Elaine Teoh and Emiel Mahler.

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## **COUPLE WERE ON THE WAY TO A WEDDING**

A YOUNG Melbourne couple were travelling to Kuala Lumpur for a wedding when tragedy struck flight MH17.

**Elaine Teoh** and boyfriend **Emiel Mahler**, a Dutch national, had been on a holiday before jetting to Kuala Lumpur.

It's believed Mr Mahler and Ms Teoh, originally from Penang in Malaysia, met while working at financial company IG Australia on Collins St in Melbourne.

Mr Mahler's Facebook page show the couple posing for photos. Friends' tributes began to flow last night.

"I just can't believe it," one said.

Ms Teoh and Mr Mahler (above), both 27, started working at IG in 2010, according to their LinkedIn accounts.

"They were both beloved members of our close IG community," head of Asia Pacific Tamas Szabo said.

Mr Mahler left the company in December to be a foreign exchange trader at Vanguard Australia.

Ms Teoh continued at IG as a finance supervisor.



Managing director John James said everyone at Vanguard was in shock.

“We’re extremely saddened by Emiel’s sudden passing and our thoughts are with Emiel and Elaine’s family and friends,” he said.

“They were travelling to Kuala Lumpur for a wedding before he planned to return to work here.”

Ms Teoh studied a Bachelor of Commerce, Accounting and Finance at the University of Melbourne from 2006 to 2008.

Malaysians of Melbourne University confirmed Ms Teoh was on the flight. “It has been a tough year for Malaysia,” a statement said.



📷 Gerry and Mary Menke, with daughter Anna Cowen.

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## **T RAGIC END FOR PIONEER COUPLE**

A MALLACOOTA couple recognised for spearheading one of Australia’s unique industries are among those killed on the Malaysia Airlines flight.

**Gerry and Mary Menke**, recognised for decades of work in the abalone industry, were confirmed as victims.

It’s understood the couple had jetted overseas to celebrate Mr Menke’s 70th birthday.

An abalone diver with more than 30 years of experience, Mr Menke was credited as an industry trailblazer, helping to establish Victoria’s burgeoning abalone pearl aquaculture

business.

The pair were most recently awarded an East Gippsland business award and were the only producers of the rare abalone pearls in the country.

Mr Menke was inspired to start the business after a visit to a New Zealand enterprise.

Tributes flowed online for the couple last night as news filtered through the local community.

“Our deepest sympathies to the Menke family and Mallacoota community,” said one.

It’s understood two of the couple’s children were attempting to fly back to Australia last night.

Another son and a daughter were being comforted last night.

A family spokesman confirmed they had been alerted to the tragedy by local police early on Saturday.

Gerry and Mary Menke, with daughter Anna Cowen, established an abalone pearl business.



📷 Marco Grippeling.

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### **WIFE ON EARLIER FLIGHT**

EXPERIENCED Melbourne security consultant **Marco Grippeling** had been on holiday with his wife but had returned on a separate flight home.

The 48-year-old's wife of three years was being comforted by friends.

"Marco's wife, family and friends both in Australia and Holland are completely devastated by their loss," a spokesman said on Saturday.

"They ask for respect and privacy during this very difficult time."

According to the flight manifest, Mr Grippeling was seated in 26K in the economy section of the doomed flight that was blown out of the sky over Ukraine early on Friday.

The 48-year-old was a leader in his field with extensive experience from more than 18 years in the industry.

He was last employed with mining giant Rio Tinto, where he focused on incident response against "state-sponsored threats and organised crime".

During his 18 years in the industry, he also worked at Switzerland's Hadron Collider - the world's largest particle separator.

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The moment MH17 disappears

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**\* The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has set up a hotline for concerned Australian relatives. Phone 1300 555 135**

**Do you know anybody on the flight? Contact the Herald Sun newsdesk on (03) 9292 1226**





📷 A map showing where MH17 crashed.

- with Ashley Argoon and Marlene Millott