

'Tragedy': Four dead after two planes crash in mid-air over central Victoria

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Two planes with trainee pilots on board were believed to be moving through cloud when they collided in mid-air before hurtling to the ground and killing four people in Central Victoria.

The planes collided about one kilometre from Mangalore Airport on Wednesday morning, with both aircraft suffering extensive damage before crashing into grassland, killing two people in each plane.



Authorities believe the aircraft collided at an altitude of about 4000 feet. At the time of the collision, the cloud base was also about 4000 feet. Authorities will investigate whether poor visibility affected the pilots' actions.

Both planes were flying with student pilots and veteran instructors on board. The bodies of all four victims, who have not yet been identified, were found inside the wrecked planes.

One plane, which took off from Mangalore Airport, had been flying for about three minutes and was gaining height when the collision happened. It hit the ground within seconds near the Seymour-Avenel Road just south of the airport.

That plane was run by Moorabbin Aviation Services but based at Mangalore.

The other plane, a Beechcraft Travel Air and operated by the Peninsula Aero Club, took off from Tyabb, on the Mornington Peninsula. It continued flying north after the collision for about two kilometres before slamming into the ground near Lambing Gully Road in Avenel.

The plane from Tyabb was heading toward the Mangalore Airport. Authorities believe the plane was either planning on landing or performing a practice approach without actually touching the tarmac.

Mangalore Airport does not have a traffic controller, and pilots are required to make radio broadcasts on their intention to fly near the airport.

Police attended both crash scenes about 11.30am and are investigating the cause of the collision. They say it is too early to know if weather conditions were a factor.

Extracted from: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/two-planes-involved-in-crash-in-central-victoria-20200219-p5429t.html>

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