

DREAMWORLD TRAGEDY

AGONY AND ANGER



The upended raft (left) at Dreamworld.

HELPING HANDS

Since the tragedy, Dorsett family friend Sandra Brookfield has created a fund for the family. "The community is rallying," she said. At press time it had raised \$53,000. Search "Dreamworld Tragedy" at mycause.com.au.

Mourners attended a vigil outside Dreamworld on the Gold Coast on Oct. 28. "We've taken our boy on that ride," local mother Bianca Rasmussen told WHO. "It's awful."

Loved ones demand answers after the accident that claimed four lives

Looking out over the sparkling blue ocean from their Gold Coast holiday apartment on the evening of Oct. 24, Kate Goodchild and her family—partner David Turner, daughter Ebony, baby Evie and Kate's mother, Kim Dorsett—sat down for a home-cooked roast dinner and planned their next day. Together with Kate's brother, Luke Dorsett, and his boyfriend, Roozi Araghi, the extended family had travelled to the Gold Coast from Canberra for a relative's wedding and "had been celebrating and enjoying the beautiful weather and the views from their apartment," says Kim's best friend, Sandra Brookfield. They planned to visit Movie World but Ebony had her heart set on another theme park. Says Brookfield, 58: "She was the one who wanted to go to Dreamworld."

It was an innocent wish that is now, unfairly, a further source of agony for the 12-year-old. Amid the shock and grief of the Oct. 25 Dreamworld tragedy, in which four people died on the Thunder River Rapids ride at the Gold Coast theme park, loved ones are demanding answers. Kate, 32, Luke, 35, and Roozi, 38, together with New Zealand-born Cindy Low, 42, who was riding with 10-year-old son Kieran, were all killed after a raft flipped backwards—Australia's first theme park fatalities since Sydney's Luna Park Ghost Train fire claimed seven lives in 1979. "The next few weeks and months are going to be incredibly difficult for our families," said Kate and Luke's father, Shayne Goodchild, who considered Roozi "another son." "Like everyone else in Australia, we want to know what went wrong."

What is known is the circular raft was on a conveyer belt near the end of the 30-year-old ride when it ran into the back of another raft, which had become stuck. After mounting the stuck vessel, the raft flipped backwards; it is believed two of the adults drowned and two were crushed in the conveyer belt. Ebony, who Brookfield said feels responsible for the tragedy, and Kieran were thrown free and survived. Kate's partner, David Turner, who was watching nearby with the couple's 8-month-old baby, "managed to get to Kate, who died in his arms," said David's mother, Gillian Turner, in a statement to the media. "With [Ebony] screaming, looking on."

Kate and Luke's mother, Kim Dorsett, who had decided to stay in the apartment, was told of the deaths in a phone call. Kim then turned to her best friend. "Her words were,

"The kids are dead. I've just been told the kids have drowned at Dreamworld," recalls Brookfield, her voice breaking. "Ebony's saying things like, 'Who's going to do my hair? Who's going to take me to school?' This little girl is in shock."

As the families reeled, stories emerged of prior issues with the ride, which passed its annual inspection last month. The day before the accident, Farshad Moledina, 26, and his wife, who had driven from Melbourne to visit the theme park, thought something was wrong during their ride. "We were worried by the sound of it," the father-of-one tells WHO. "It was sort of like, 'tick, tick, tick.'" By the afternoon of the next day, it broke down; repairs were

made and service resumed. "The water had stopped," Dreamworld visitor Lisa Walker told News Corp. "There was no rapids."

"This little girl is in shock"

—Sandra Brookfield, of survivor Ebony, 12

As police dug deeper into the tragedy, Dreamworld faltered. After announcing it would reopen the park on Oct. 28, Dreamworld cancelled the plans on advice from police, who were still investigating the crime scene. Then on Oct. 27 it emerged that Dreamworld's parent company, Ardent Leisure, had yet to contact the victims' families, reportedly leaving the Dorsetts "furious." "This event will probably go down as one of the biggest failures in corporate crisis handling in history," Communications specialist Anthony McClellan told ABC's *Media Watch*.

By Oct. 31, the theme park was devoted to recovery, with the commencement of a "systematic and methodical park-wide safety review," announced Dreamworld CEO Craig Davidson, adding "there is no timeframe or



"We didn't call the Dorsett family because we didn't know how to contact them," said CEO Deborah Thomas (on Oct. 27).

"We have to bury our beautiful children," said Shayne Goodchild (right, with Kate Goodchild's partner David Turner in Canberra on Oct. 28).



decision with regard to the park's re-opening." The tragedy, said Ardent CEO Deborah Thomas "has devastated families and our community. We need to rebuild."

The families just want answers, and hope the coronial inquiry will provide them. "It will all come out," says Brookfield. Said Shayne Goodchild: "We want to know why our loved ones were taken from us in such horrific circumstances. No-one wants those answers more than we do."

■ By Michael Crooks. Reported by Louise Talbot and Rachel Syers

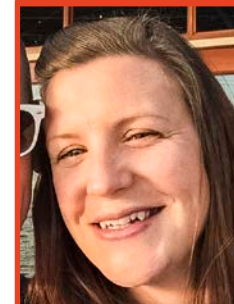
THE VICTIMS



Australian Bureau of Statistics public servant Roozbeh "Roozi" Araghi.



Dept of Human Services public servant Luke Dorsett doted on his niece, says Brookfield.



Mother-of-two Kate Goodchild was on maternity leave from her job at Medicare.



New Zealand mother-of-two Cindy Low lived with her family in Gosford, NSW.