

Son alive, says pilot's father

MELBOURNE: The father of missing pilot Mr Frederick Valentich denied yesterday that his son had staged his disappearance.

"I think he is still alive", Mr Guido Valentich said as a Department of Transport aircraft resumed the search for Mr Frederick Valentich, 20, who went missing in a light aircraft on a flight to King Island, off the Victorian coast, a week ago.

Mr Valentich said he believed his son had been taken by an unidentified flying object. When asked where his son might be, Mr Valentich replied, "Your guess is as good as mine. All I am worried about is that he was released in a different area, very far away from where he was taken".

Mr Valentich took last week off from work to keep a vigil by his telephone to await news of his son, who worked for the Air Training Corps on a voluntary basis and spent a lot of time preparing for his commercial pilot's licence.

Mr Valentich said a Rosanna man contacted him on Friday to say he had

contacted him on Friday to say he had sighted the same UFO as his son. Mr Valentich said he had arranged to meet the man, 58, an engineering firm worker, on Tuesday.

A twin engined Aero-Commander aircraft from Moorabbin airport made sweeps of Victoria's south-west coast between Torquay and Peterborough yesterday.

A spokesman for the Department of Transport said, "They are looking to see if anything has been washed ashore. If anything is found which can be positively identified as coming from the plane, the search will be reactivated".

It was announced on Friday that tests on oil found in the Bass Strait in the area Mr Valentich is believed to have disappeared showed it was marine oil and not from an aircraft.
