

THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2022

Update from Coroner Brigitte Windley on masjidain attack coronial inquiry First Phase inquest

On 28 April 2022 I issued my decision on the scope of the masjidain attack coronial inquiry.

That decision confirmed that, as part of the inquiry, an inquest hearing (now referred to as the “First Phase Inquest”) would be convened to hear evidence in relation to the issues about the attack itself and the emergency response, including the initial investigative response, along with the issue of survivability (issues 1-9 inclusive as set out in Appendix A to the scope decision).

As I also said in the scope decision, I have yet to decide whether the inquiry into the other issues within scope will necessitate a further inquest hearing. I will make that decision once the inquiry into those other issues has been further progressed.

In an inquiry of this scale, it is not unexpected that a range of factors, in combination, have created a significant challenge in securing hearing dates for the First Phase Inquest.

These include the large number of Interested Parties and counsel, counsel and witness availability, the availability of adequate court facilities at the Christchurch Law Courts, and being generally mindful of the added pressures school holidays and the Christmas/New Year period has on families and others who have Interested Party status and wish to attend.

Out of respect to the families of the deceased, it was also important to recognise the anniversary of the attack, as well as observance of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, as additional considerations to factor in.

In recent pre-inquest conferencing I explored the potential for setting down hearing dates later this year. However, a number of counsel, in particular those acting for a number of the families, asked for more time to undertake the preparatory work needed to ensure that counsel is able to address the First Phase Inquest issues in a comprehensive and robust manner.

I remain committed to ensuring the inquiry progresses in a timely manner which recognises and sufficiently accommodates the interests of the families, the scale of work involved and competing demands that need to be managed.

In balancing all of these considerations, I have now set down the First Phase Inquest hearing to take place within the four-week period between **Monday 15 May to Friday 9 June 2023** at the Christchurch Law Courts.

Coroner Brigitte Windley

Media contact:

Joe Locke, Ministry of Justice Media & Social Media Manager
M: 021 636 416, E: joe.locke@justice.govt.nz