



THURSDAY 5 MAY 2022

Statement from Coroner Brigitte Windley on scope decision in the Christchurch masjidain attack coronial inquiry

Following an extensive process to determine the issues that can and should be looked into in the coronial jurisdiction in relation to the 51 deaths in the 15 March 2019 terrorist attack at Masjid an-Nur and the Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch, I have now issued my decision on the scope of the inquiry. My decision sets out which issues will be within the scope of the coronial inquiry, which issues I have decided to exclude, and my reasons.

The atrocities of 15 March 2019 were unprecedented in New Zealand, as is the nature and scale of this inquiry. Three years on, the events of that day continue to have a profound and enduring impact on families of those who died, on those who were injured in the attack, on those who witnessed the events, and on those who responded to them.

In determining the scope of the inquiry, I have kept the purposes it seeks to achieve front of mind: a coronial inquiry must look to the past to determine the cause and circumstances of death, but must also look to the future to identify opportunities to reduce the chances of further loss of life in similar horrific circumstances.

This decision is a significant step in shaping the coronial inquiry and is the culmination of a process initiated by Chief Coroner Judge Marshall in December 2020. The inquiry is unique in that it follows criminal proceedings and a Royal Commission of Inquiry, both of which have had a strong influence in shaping the submissions about what issues this inquiry should look into.

Those who lost their lives as a result of the attack are at the heart of this inquiry. In determining its scope, I have looked to those most affected— the families of those who died and other Interested Parties, of which there are currently 119— to identify the issues of concern to them. The high level of engagement by Interested Parties and the extensive submissions made on the issues for the inquiry, including at the scope hearing in February this year, is testimony to the critical importance of this decision. I acknowledge and am grateful to the Interested Parties and their counsel for the considerable work that has gone into assisting and informing this process.

Having settled on the issues, the inquiry will now move into the substantive phase to identify and provide Interested Parties with further evidence about each issue, and determine what, if any, further investigations and evidence is needed.

As part of the inquiry, I have decided that an inquest hearing will be held in Christchurch but have not yet set down a hearing date. At this stage, issues related to the events of 15 March 2019 itself, including the emergency response, will be explored in the inquest hearing. I will decide in due course whether any of the other issues within the scope of the inquiry require



exploration in the forum of an inquest hearing, once the inquiry into those issues has progressed.

ENDS

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