

Press release: Family of Elsie Frost can apply for fresh inquest

On 9 October 1965, 14 year old Elsie Frost was stabbed to death on her way home from her sister's house. An inquest took place between 4 and 11 January 1966 and the Coroner recorded a verdict that Elsie Frost had died of multiple stab wounds and had been murdered by Ian Bernard Spencer.

The Attorney General said:

"Having considered the application, I have given consent to the family of Elsie Frost to apply to the High Court for a new inquest into her death.

"I am satisfied that there is new evidence available that was not put before the previous inquest, and I believe that it is in the interests of justice for the application for a new inquest to be heard by the High Court."

The Attorney General has the authority to decide whether an application can be made to the High Court for a new inquest to be opened. He has no power to order a new coronial inquest himself. A new inquest can only be ordered by the High Court on an application made either by the Attorney or by a third party with the consent of the Attorney.

Before an application can be made, the Attorney must be satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect that the Court would be persuaded to open a new inquest. These decisions are made as part of his public interest function, independently of Government and strictly on the basis of the evidence. The Attorney concluded, in this case, that there was sufficient grounds of challenge set out in the applications to have a reasonable prospect of success.