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Executed man pardoned over 1921 murder

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Colin Ross Campbell was executed in 1922. (ABC TV)

Map: Melbourne 3000

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A Victorian man executed for murder 86 years ago is to receive a pardon.

Twelve-year-old Alma Tirtschke was raped and murdered in 1921 and her body was left near Melbourne's Gun Alley.

Colin Campbell Ross was convicted and hanged in 1922 but always maintained his innocence.

A re-examination of the case has found hairs on a blanket at his home did not belong to the girl.

Victorian Attorney-General Rob Hulls will today have Ross posthumously pardoned.

Mr Hulls says Ross would have to be retried to be found innocent, but the pardon recognises the serious doubts over his conviction.

"It also sends a salutary warning to those who still believe that the death penalty still has an appropriate place in our legal system," he said.

"This man when he was tried was never even given the opportunity for an independent examination of the hair that was a key part of prosecution case."

"So Supreme Court judges today have, I think quite rightly, said that a miscarriage of justice has occurred."

Members of both the Ross and Tirtschke families will attend a reception today at Parliament House in Melbourne.

Researcher Kevin Morgan wrote a book about the case and says the pardon will be a huge relief for both families.

"It means justice for the Ross and the Tirtschke families who have suffered the consequences of this miscarriage of justice for 86 years," he said.

"As well, a deep stain on the Australian legal system has now finally been expunged."