

## Penalties and Sentences (Sexual Offences) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy (RASARA)
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Justice Equity and Community Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
3 June 2025

Via email: [jicsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:jicsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Secretariat.,

**Response to the Penalties and Sentences (Sexual Offences) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

This submission is prepared on behalf of the Rape and Sexual Assault Advocacy and Research Association (**RASARA**).

RASARA is an independent, not-for-profit charitable organisation established to build and hold the evidence base for survivor-centric rape justice reform. We advocate for best practice in legal responses to rape and sexual assault. More information about RASARA is available at: <http://rasara.org>.

This submission rejects the relevance of good character evidence in the sentencing of sexual offence matters. We have had the opportunity to review the submission made by Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) and endorse that submission on this and all other matters. We further submit the below.

We acknowledge the limits the bill places on the application of good character evidence. However, these qualifiers are insufficient to protect the rights of victims and do not align with community expectations. As such, they fall far short.

Good character evidence should never be admissible in sentencing for any sexual offence. This is because:

- (a) it is irrelevant and misleading, having no logical basis in furthering any sentencing outcomes, and in fact being suited to sexual offenders who use good character to groom victims; and
- (b) in (all) circumstances of sexual (and family) violence, the offender's good character facilitated the offence and/or concealed the offending.

People of good character do not rape. But rapists rely on the social scaffolding that excuses and justifies sexual violence, such as what is achieved through the admission of good character evidence.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this response.

Regards,



Dr Rachael Burgin (CEO, RASARA)  
*On behalf of the Board of RASARA*  
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