

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

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Submitter Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for the #YourReferenceAintRelevant campaign, which calls for the abolishment of character references in sexual assault and rape trials. Allowing personal character references to influence sentencing in such cases undermines the justice process and sends a dangerous message to survivors that the social standing or likability of the offender can outweigh the harm caused. This practice perpetuates a culture of disbelief and retraumatisation, and it must end. I urge you to take action by reviewing and reforming the admissibility of character references in sexual violence cases. Survivors deserve a system that puts their safety and dignity first not one that protects perpetrators through outdated and irrelevant practices.