

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

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My rapist's lawyer brought "good character references" to court. They described him as polite, hardworking, well-liked — as if those things could somehow undo what he did to me.

Those references had nothing to do with the night he violated me. But they were used to paint a picture of someone who couldn't possibly have done what I said — and he was found not guilty.

The system cared more about who he was to other people than what he did to me. My character was never put on trial — his was used as a shield. And it worked.

This isn't justice. "Good character" in unrelated parts of someone's life should not be allowed to outweigh the violence they committed. Using references this way reinforces bias, especially when the accused is privileged and the survivor is not.

Character references for sexual violence cases aren't just irrelevant — they are dangerous. They silence survivors and distort justice.

#YourReferenceAintRelevant