

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

Submission No: 92

Submitted by: [REDACTED]

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Submitter Comments:

I'd like to add a submission to the good character referencing. I'm writing to my partners lived experience, close friends who have experienced CSA and advocating for those who I have worked with as a counsellor. My partner has experienced prolonged CSA during her childhood and was groomed by a trusting adult. Today she lives with CPTSD due to the above and most likely will be a lifelong journey for herself. It has effected many aspects of her life as above her mental health, alongside her career, study, relationships and financial stability.

If good character references continue it confuses perpetrators manipulative and heinous acts by being perceived as a 'good' person outside the abuse. If the good character referencing continues this will be harmful for current and future survivors. Their experiences will be invalidated and replaced by their perpetrators reduced sentencing, due to being a 'good' person. It's already hard enough for survivors to come forward in our justice system and for this to continue increases the complexities for survivors to speak up.

Please I stress and encourage changes to be made around the good character referencing. If we continue we are only enabling perpetrators to continue the cycle of abuse. Our system needs to change and be built for survivors. Perpetrators need to be held accountable for their choices to inflict harm on the innocent of our society.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email and I really hope my contribution alongside many others will help those who have experienced abuse no child should ever.