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

Submission No: 97

Submitted by: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

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Submitter Comments:

I fully support the proposal from the #YourReferenceAintRelevant campaign, which calls for the complete removal of good character references in the sentencing of convicted rapists, child sex offenders, and perpetrators of domestic and family violence.Too often, abusers cultivate a carefully managed public image, one designed to conceal their actions behind a mask of respectability. They present themselves as upstanding members of the community, using charm, status or influence to manipulate not only their victims but also the people around them. These relationships, often built on deception, are then weaponised in court through glowing character references that distort the reality of their behaviour.Allowing such references during sentencing gives offenders the opportunity to downplay the severity of their crimes and avoid full accountability. Justice should be determined by the facts of the case, not by how convincingly an offender has performed a role in public or how many people they have fooled into believing they are someone they are not.It is time we closed this loophole. Survivors deserve a justice system that sees through the faÃ§ade and centres their truth.