

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

**Submission No:** 144  
**Submitted by:** Mary Pwtrus  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

I wholeheartedly support the proposal from the #YourReferenceAintRelevant campaign calling for a total abolition of good character references in the sentencing of convicted rapists, child sex offenders, and perpetrators of domestic violence. Allowing these references enables abusers to weaponise their social media status to minimise harm. Justice should be based on the facts of the case – not on who the offender knows. A crime is a crime and those who commit such heinous crimes aren't a specific group, people with such references can still take part in these acts. Keeping good character references in courts shows a complete lack of equality and the protection of the rights of the victim. It is a slap in the face to survivors of these crimes and an offender should not get a reduced sentence because of the people who "know" them. It is unethical to put in a good word for someone who has been convicted of sexual abuse and domestic violence just because you "know" them. It is even more unethical to let this slide.