

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

**Submission No:** 149  
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### 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 status to minimise harm. Justice should be based on the facts of the case - not on who the offender knows. Good character in one context does not erase violence in another. When courts accept character references from friends, colleagues, or community leaders, they risk silencing victims and reinforcing harmful narratives that protect perpetrators at the expense of survivors. Sentencing should reflect the gravity of the crime and the impact on the victim - not the reputation of the offender. Abolishing this practice is a necessary step toward a justice system that truly centres survivors, holds perpetrators fully accountable, and recognises that no amount of social capital should outweigh the harm done.