

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

Submission No: 155
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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 status to minimise harm. Justice should be based on the facts of the case - not on who the offender knows. It shouldn't matter if the perpetrator is nice to their friends, is respected at their workplace, or goes to church. Research shows time and time again that offenders often seem like 'normal' and even beloved members of the community, but their behaviour when no other adult is watching is a true test of their character. If someone targets and abuses vulnerable people in the shadows, then they should not be afforded the privilege of having people praise who they are in the light of the day. I strongly urge the committee to balance the scales and abolish character references for this type of offending.