

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

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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 and family 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. As we all know by now, grooming hides behind harmless. Abusers are often prominent figures in their community, always seen as the 'nice guy', and may have children of their own. In what world do we live in that we would we ask a convicted murderer if they were a 'good person' before sentencing them? If we are to ever move forward and meaningfully reduce the rates of sexual abuse, we need to remove these good character references which are a weapon that abusers use to receive a more lenient sentence.