

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

**Submission No:** 177

**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]

**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name

**Attachments:** No attachment

**Submitter Comments:**

I work full time as a psychologist in NSW and work with a significant number of young adults. Many clients disclose various forms of sexual assault, usually historic and sometimes current. The main reason they dont seek further support and that I am the only person they ever tell is because the perpetrator is usually known to them and they are fearful of others not believing them, because they know others in their life will find it hard to believe the alleged assault based on their character seen in general social settings. People can be "nice" and be sexual assault and rape perpetrators. Allowing character references in court brings in irrelevant information about the alleged perpetrator and is essentially a red herring, and it hurts survivors before they have even sought support or made an allegation because they believe they can never be believed before they even try to disclose. Not allowing character references in hearings is a step in changing the culture around understanding who and why people perpetrate, and ensures social standing doesnt allow them privileges irrelevant to the law.