


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

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Submitted by: 
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I wholeheartedly support the submission from # 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. This is an important step for justice for victims and ensure victims feel the justice system is worth accessing at all. As a victim of sexual assault and with close family and friends living with domestic violence, I know how much of an impact this has on victims reaching out for help and feeling like the justice system is worth pursuing. It contributes to under reporting of offences, why perpetrators continue to offend unreported and victims live with life long mental health issues they often are not able to seek help for for many years- in my case decades with an inter generational impact. Good character references are essentially what makes us feel not believed and why we don't report, pursue outcomes at our expense.