

From: [Helen D](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Good character in sentencing submission
Date: Friday, 14 February 2025 5:40:41 PM

Dear Nsw Sentencing council,

I write this submission in support of the "Your Reference Ain't Relevant" campaign. Specifically, to review the 21A(5A) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 (NSW) (Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act) and to change the "special rules for child sexual offences". I believe that good character references and consideration of lack of criminal history do not have a place in the justice system for offences of this nature. I am a Clinical Psychologist and anecdotally in my professional work, perpetrators of these offences use these respectable members of the community positions including participation in school, church and local sporting communities to gain trust and respect of their victims and their families as part of the grooming process. Those that commit child sexual offences can protect themselves behind these positions of power which can perpetuate the abuse. Therefore character references and lack of criminal history should not negate the fact they have criminally violated a child sexually.

Often perpetrators are not convicted of their crimes and the current rules may further protect perpetrators and undermine the seriousness and impact of their crime, additionally putting the greater community at risk.

Regards,
Helen Doutty