

From:
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Submission for Your Reference Ain't Relevant
Date: Friday, 14 February 2025 6:36:40 PM

To whom it may concern,

I write in relation to the current review of good character in sentencing as part of the Your Reference Ain't Relevant campaign. I write as a counsellor-in-training, the child of a sexual abuse survivor, and a deeply concerned citizen.

The use of character references as part of sentencing for sexual violence and particularly sexual abuse of children drastically fails to understand how child sexual abuse occurs and the power structures that continue to enable it. Abusers develop positions of trust, power, and authority precisely to facilitate their abuse and to intimidate victims. That their 'good character' can be referred to in sentencing is not only unjust but re-traumatising for survivors. It continues to foster the belief among both perpetrators and survivors that abusers are untouchable. It deepens the traumatic scars, as well as the injustice.

The use of good character references does not provide any reliable information about the likelihood of rehabilitation, a sense of remorse from the offender, or appropriate sentencing. Please revoke this law and focus more effort on listening to and supporting survivors.

Yours sincerely,