
From: Peter Buchanan [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 22 December 2024 6:27 PM
To: sentencingcouncil
Subject: Your Reference Ain't Relevant.

As a survivor, I am writing to support the **#YourReferenceAintRelevant** campaign and call for the removal of good character references in sentencing for crimes such as child sexual abuse, domestic violence and rape.

While I did not have the opportunity to confront my abuser in a criminal trial (he died before I disclosed), I know how traumatising it would be to see an offender's "good character" referenced during a legal process would be. References, I might add, from people who had also been groomed by the offender as the victim was.

These references send the message that the reputation of an offender matters more than the harm they caused. Such references diminish the severity of the crime and fail to acknowledge how these offenders often use their well cultivated perceived trustworthiness to commit these crimes.

Good character references have no places in cases such as this. By allowing them, the justice systems risks retraumatising survivors and undermining the accountability offenders should face.

I urge the sentencing council to lead the country and recommend the removal of good character references from sentencing in all of these cases. It is time for the legal system to prioritise survivors and reflect the reality of these crimes in its processes.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter

Peter Buchanan
TT Tragic 727
FIR Dip App Sci Grad Dip Ed MBA

I acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Original Custodians of this country of Australia, and their connection to land and community. I pay my respects to them and their cultures, and to the Elders both past and present.