

From: [Klaudia Martin-Files](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: #YourReferenceAintRelevant
Date: Tuesday, 11 February 2025 2:28:39 PM

To whom it may concern,

As a survivor of child sexual assault, intimate partner violence and an advocate for abuse survivors. I am writing to support the #YourReferenceAintRelevant campaign and the removal of good character references in sentencing for crimes such as child sexual assault, domestic violence and sexual assault.

In ALL states and territories, this should be removed.

Offenders of violence use their “good character” to groom and gain access to victims. In my personal experience, this was most definitely the case. My offenders utilised their “good character” to isolate, groom, and perpetrate violence against me.

Additionally, my perpetrators “good character” prevented me from coming forward and disclosing due to the very real risk of not being believed because of their “image” and “status”.

Offenders are AWARE that they need to uphold a different image in community than behind closed doors, and allowing a “good character” reference to be considered in a court room is only rewarding this behaviour. It also takes power away from the victim and subtly says that the impacts they experience because of the harm perpetrated against them is minimised because the perpetrator generally has a “good character”.

Importantly, as a survivor, it has never been an option for myself to proceed with the legal system because of flawed processes such as this. I refuse to endure a process that prioritises offenders reputations over a survivors voice / story. However, ALL survivors should feel safe and supported to seek justice.

Therefore, there needs to be changes made to the legal system that supports survivor wellbeing and prioritises their right to justice.

Thank you for your time and considering this submission.

Thank you,
Claudia Martin-Files