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**From:** Ashley Stanton  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 11 February 2025 2:40 PM  
**To:** sentencingcouncil  
**Subject:** Your Reference Ain't Relevant campaign

I am writing today in support of the 'Your Reference Ain't Relevant' Campaign and to request the removal of good character references in sentencing for all crimes relating to child and adult sexual abuse, domestic and family violence, and rape.

These "good character" references are re-traumatising for victims and are also completely irrelevant. If someone has broken the law and committed a heinous crime, they should be punished accordingly. Someone's "good character" reference should have no bearing on the verdict. This is especially true when we consider that behaving with "good character" is a tactic often deployed by perpetrators to cover their crimes. Further, the inclusion of "good character" references diminish the severity of these crimes.

I wholeheartedly support the 'Your Reference Ain't Relevant' campaign and its call to remove the last 21 words of section 21A(5A) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 (NSW). This is a necessary step to ensure that sentencing frameworks reflect the seriousness of these offences and prioritise the protection and dignity of survivors over the personal reputations of offenders.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,  
Ashley Stanton