

**From:** [Prudence Edwards](#)  
**To:** [sentencingcouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Submission - Good Character in Sentencing  
**Date:** Monday, 8 July 2024 6:43:20 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to provide my perspective on the review of section 21A(5A) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 (NSW) and other relevant sections concerning the use of "good character" in sentencing, particularly for child sexual abuse cases.

I believe it is crucial to ensure that our sentencing framework holds perpetrators fully accountable, particularly in the case of child sexual offenses, which cause life long harm to victims. The use of good character references in these cases can diminish the severity of the offences, by introducing a mitigating factor. **How the perpetrator is perceived by others does not change or mitigate the victim's experience.** I believe that good character references should not be considered in these cases as they hinder justice for victims. It is essential to prioritise the protection and well-being of victims in the justice process.

I wholeheartedly support the 'Your Reference Ain't Relevant' Campaign's call to remove the last 21 words of the current provision. I hope this reform will lead to similar action in other Australian jurisdictions. Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,

Prudence Edwards