

From: [Hannah Roovers](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Submission regarding good character references
Date: Monday, 8 July 2024 7:20:14 PM

Dear Mr McClellan and NSW Sentencing Council,

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

I find it deeply troubling and concerning that these good character references are allowing lesser sentences for child sexual abuse perpetrators - diminishing the horrific nature of the crime and the lifelong devastating impact on victim survivors. Good character references should be abolished when sentencing perpetrators for child sexual abuse crimes.

More often than not, a perpetrator of child sexual abuse is a 'community person who is always helping others' as a way to gain access to vulnerable children. Allowing good character references to lessen the length of a sentence only serves to show victim survivors that their pain and trauma is not important because the perpetrator is a 'good person'. What kind of 'good person' sexually abused children???

It shows all victim survivors out there that the legal system doesn't take into account the complex characteristics of a perpetrator and how them being 'of good character' means that they should be punished less for their crimes (which they have been convicted for!!!!).

I fully support the 'Your Reference Ain't Relevant' campaign in calling to remove the last 21 words of the the current provision.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,
Hannah Roovers