

From: [The Survivor Hub \(TSH\)](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Character references
Date: Monday, 8 July 2024 8:46:23 PM

Dear Mr. McClellan and the 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 concerning the use of "good character" in sentencing, particularly for child sexual abuse cases.

As a concerned member of the community as well as the director and cofounder of a charity supporting survivors of sexual violence, I believe it is crucial to ensure that our sentencing framework reflects the seriousness of child sexual offences and holds perpetrators fully accountable for their actions. The use of good character references in these cases often undermines the gravity of the crime and the harm caused to victims.

I believe that good character references should not be considered in these cases as they can diminish the severity of the offences and hinder justice for survivors. It is essential to prioritise the protection and well-being of survivors and ensure that offenders are held fully accountable for their actions.

I wholeheartedly support the 'Your Reference Ain't Relevant' Campaign's call to remove the last 21 words of the current provision.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,
Anna Coutts-Trotter on behalf of The Survivor Hub