

From: [Carly Richardson](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Subject: Your Reference Ain't Relevant Campaign
Date: Monday, 8 July 2024 9:15:31 PM

Dear Mr. McClellan and the NSW sentencing council,

I am writing to communicate with you about the use of "good character" in sentencing, particularly within the context of Child Sexual Abuse cases, per Section 21A (5A) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999.

As a 19-year-old of the NSW community with lived experience of multiple forms of abuse and violence, I urge you to reassess the use of the Good Character references within the sentencing framework of Child Sex Offenders.

Good character references should not be considered within the context of Child Sexual Abuse cases as it innately delegitimizes the gravity of the offence at hand and prevents victims, who are of highest vulnerability, in receiving the due justice for the crimes committed against them.

The high levels of manipulation and grooming which is present within the majority of Child Sex Offenders can only be achieved by the throne of good character references in which they stand on. If we allow these offenders the grace to be observed within a positive light, we directly allow more vulnerable children to be assaulted and abused.

Stating subjectively sought observations of an individual being tried for the heinous crimes of child sexual assault is nothing less than barbaric. Every person on this planet, down to the most nefarious criminals ever go walk this earth have had allies to put in a good name for them. Character references are far too ineffective at gauging an individual's likelihood to commit crime, particularly at the stake of vulnerable children receiving justice, and therefore should be eradicated from Section 21A (5A) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999, and all other supporting acts.

In light of this, I agree with the "Your Reference Ain't Relevant Campaign" to remove the last 21 words of the current provision to ensure that justice in NSW can be sought for all victims of childhood sexual abuse, both past and yet to come.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

Carly Richardson