

From: [Maggie Blanden](#)
To: [sentencingcouncil](#)
Date: Monday, 8 July 2024 10:42:39 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, Aboriginal woman and survivor of child sexual abuse, 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 victims. It is essential to prioritise the protection and well-being of victims and ensure that offenders are held fully accountable for their actions.

Gendered violence disproportionately impacts on First Nations women, particularly child sexual abuse. The figures are distressing and unfortunately provisions like this cut to the heart of the epidemic of violence in this country. My thesis and 2 articles with Common Ground explore this further -

<https://www.commonground.org.au/article/racial-and-gendered-violence>

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, Maggie Blanden