



HANSLEGAL

CHARACTER REFERENCE GUIDE

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This first page is a general guide on what a character reference should address. The following pages contain examples of references to assist with wording, depending on the nature of your relationship with the person.

The Presiding Magistrate (*if Magistrates Court*) OR The Presiding Judge (*if District or Supreme Court*)
The Magistrates Court OR District Court OR Supreme Court
[Place]

Date

Your Honour,

RE: PERSON'S NAME

- The first paragraph should state that you are aware the letter is to be used in the sentencing of the person and that you are aware of the specific charges they are pleading guilty to (actually write out the charges)
- A sentence or two setting out your occupation and a bit about yourself
- Details of how long you have known the person and the nature of your relationship (this gives the Magistrate or Judge an indication of why your comments in relation to their character should be noted)
- If you wish, address any comments on the offences in question, such as if they are out of character
- Details of any positive attributes that you feel he/she has. Feel free to mention any positive community, family, employment etc contribution that he/she has made

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

[Full Name]

Note:

- **Information must be honest and accurate as it will be presented in Court**
- **The reference should not normally exceed one page**
- **The reference should be formulated in your own words**
- **The reference may be handwritten, but a typed reference is preferable, if possible (either way, it should be signed and dated)**
- **Letters from employers or persons in office should be on business letterhead**

SAMPLE REFERENCE – EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP

The Presiding Magistrate
The Magistrates Court
Ipswich

25 February 2020

Your Honour,

RE: JOSHUA SMITH

I am aware that this letter is to be used in the sentencing proceedings of Mr Joshua Smith in the Magistrates Court in relation to the following charge(s):

- Driving above the middle alcohol limit
- [Further charges if applicable]

My name is Trevor Jones. I have known Josh for 3 years. During that time, he has worked in my business, Springfield Landscaping Pty Ltd. We have contracts for a large amount of commercial and residential properties. He started out with us in a junior casual position and for the last year has worked as a supervisor.

I have always found Josh to be an honest and reliable employee who places high values on workplace safety and quality of work. He is always the first to put his hand up for extra work on the weekends.

Josh has confided in me about these charges, which I have been surprised to hear about. Despite what Josh has done, I have no hesitation in providing this character reference. It would be a great loss to the business if Josh could not continue in employment.

Yours faithfully

T. Jones

Trevor Jones

SAMPLE REFERENCE – FAMILY OR FRIEND RELATIONSHIP

The Presiding Judge
The District Court
Brisbane

Date

30 June 2020

RE: JOSHUA SMITH

I am aware that this letter is to be used in the sentencing proceedings of Mr Joshua Smith in the Magistrates Court in relation to the following charge(s):

- Assaults occasioning bodily harm
- [Further charges if applicable]

I am 25 years old and currently studying a Bachelor of Science at the University of Southern Queensland. I am Josh's younger brother. Josh has always been a trustworthy, helpful and loving member of our family. Apart from these offences, he has shown strong values and morals. He has always been employed and contributed to the community through other means like coaching our nephew's soccer team for the last two years.

Josh has always been there for our family and offers lots of support to our parents, helping them with their property. He also regularly cares for our sister's youngest child and is largely responsible for the care of his stepson Ben, who he has treated like his own child.

I was surprised and disappointed to hear that Josh has been charged with these offences. I've been with Josh on lots of occasions when he drinks and he is always responsible. Josh has told me that he's extremely ashamed of his actions as he would never want his children to think that violence is acceptable. I have helped Josh get involved in anger management counselling through his GP and I know he is committed to learning how to control his emotions more appropriately.

Josh opened up to me about the incident and has shown real remorse for his behaviour. I am glad that he has stepped up and is getting help with our support. I truly believe the incident was out of character and that Josh is taking the right steps to make sure it won't happen again.

Yours faithfully

T. Jones

Trevor Jones