

AGEISM

Statement by Member for Yokine

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine) [12.53 pm]: I remind all members of this house and the community generally of the need to guard against inappropriate ageist comments about older people in our community. On 9 November, the member for Capel referred to me as a dinosaur. I may be fair game as a politician, but it is this sort of remark that essentially denigrates all people over the age of 60 years. He obviously takes his lead from Robert Taylor in *The West Australian*. Clearly, the member for Capel is unaware that not only is it the federal government's policy to encourage workers to stay in the work force beyond retirement age, but also that his boss, the Prime Minister, is 66 years of age. According to the standards of the member for Capel, the Prime Minister is a dinosaur and past his use-by date. I am a spring chicken in comparison, having turned a sprightly 61 years of age last week. The member for Capel should give a little more thought before he speaks, instead of making demeaning and undignified remarks that question the capability and contribution of people over a certain age to the work force and society in general. If parliamentarians are not able to show the most basic consideration and respect to their colleagues, how on earth can we expect our constituents to treat their co-workers of whatever age with respect?

The member for Capel's view would consign to the scrap heap Alan Greenspan, at 81 years of age, and United States Vice President Dick Cheney, at age 64. Rupert Murdoch, at age 73, is clearly past it; Queen Elizabeth, at age 79, is way beyond it; and Janet Holmes à Court, at age 62, should have probably thrown in the towel! Clearly, these outstanding, enterprising people have nothing further to contribute. How sad and undignified life would be if we lived in the member for Capel's world, or that described on a daily basis by Robert Taylor in *The West Australian*. Our parents had it right, and we can learn much from our Aboriginal and ethnic communities. Respect for our elders begins with us.