

**MILO YIANNPOULOS**

*Statement*

**HON CHARLES SMITH (East Metropolitan)** [5.47 pm]: I rise to respond to recent public comments made by the Premier in October about British-born, American-based commentator and author Milo Yiannopoulos, whom I shall henceforth refer to as Milo. He is due to visit Western Australia later this year. According to media reports, the Premier stated that Milo was not welcome in Western Australia and that government-owned venues would not be available for him to use in his speaking tour. The Premier then repeated a number of false and malicious claims about Milo; namely, that he, to use the Premier's words, "defends paedophiles and associates with Nazis". They are curious words from the Premier. It appears that the Premier did not do any research into Milo or what he stands for. It is absurd to claim that Milo, a gay Jewish libertarian man with an African American partner, is somehow in league with Nazis. Milo also unequivocally condemns paedophilia and is himself a victim of child sexual abuse. The fact is that critics of Milo are looking for any excuse to prevent him from speaking as he challenges many of the left-wing, politically correct orthodoxies that they hold dear.

There appears to be a worrying trend in this state and the country towards greater regulation over what people can say. Increasingly, we see the left side of politics label dissenting views as hate speech in an attempt to stifle open inquiry and debate. It appears that many on the left have little regard for the notion of free speech; rather, they behave like Stalinists in trying to shut down discussion and silence their opponents. Outright character assassination has become a weapon to tear down anybody who is brave enough to publicly express non-politically correct views.

I certainly do not agree with everything Milo says. However, I believe in freedom of speech, a concept borne out of the European Enlightenment. In summing up the philosopher Voltaire's beliefs, Evelyn Beatrice Hall coined the phrase—I know we have heard it all before—"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Many on this side of the house share this sentiment and believe that Milo has the right to speak in Western Australia. Furthermore, Western Australians should have the right to attend his speaking events without being harassed, intimidated or attacked. I believe this may be an important test case but I hope freedom of speech can prevail here in Western Australia.