

More aged care services promised for State

By **Claire Campbell**

MORE aged care beds and home care packages have been promised for South Australia as the ageing population increases.

Federal member for Barker Tony Pasin said more aged care places would be allocated in the Barker region in the coming years.

"As a government, we are always looking to encourage greater investment in new and expanded aged care facilities," he said.

"Such investment will ensure that older members of our community have the care they need, when and where they need it."

An additional 185 beds and 500 home care packages have been planned for South Australia but it was unsure in which area they would be located.

As of June 30, 2013, there were 2227 operational places and packages, including 1341 in residential aged care and \$86 million of recurrent funding for aged care in Barker.

It is mostly the Federal Government that controls policy and funding for aged care services, under the National Health

Reform.

Yet Liberal candidate for Hammond Adrian Pederick said the South Australian Liberal Party was committed to the health and wellbeing of elderly citizens.

"We'll always do what we can to make sure our elderly citizens are looked after," he said.

"There may be the odd wait list (for residential care) but it's making very good use of our hospitals, one whole wing in Tailem Bend is dedicated to the elderly.

"It's good to have that share of funding."

In response to the story "No room for our elderly" in The Standard on February 13, Mr Pederick said there were a few empty beds in the region but nursing homes must be run at capacity to survive.

"The issue is per head funding, that's why they keep their facilities at capacity or near capacity," he said.

Greens candidate for Hammond Damien Pyne said The Greens supported palliative care, as well as decentralised, home-based care and community-based care.

"We'd prefer people were able to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, and with funding increases

to community groups and facilities we believe this is a real possibility," he said.

"We will continue to push for more funding for regional areas to help close the gap between rural and urban communities and ensure that people who are in need receive access to the best possible care, whether that be at-home care, residential care or a mix of both.

"It's clear that health solutions need to address the needs of regional communities on a case by case basis, and secure the future of long-term funding so that people are not left in the lurch."

He said improved public transport to Adelaide would benefit older Murraylands residents so care and respite could be offered in city facilities if necessary.

Labor and Nationals candidates for Hammond were also contacted but did not respond before deadline.