

Aged 'must pay more' for care

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POLITICAL REPORTER

ELDERLY people need to pay more for their own care and accommodation in nursing homes to avoid a "looming crisis", the industry's peak bodies say.

The Aged Care Association and Aged and Community Services, which represent about 16,000 aged care residents and 16,000 staff in residential aged care in South Australia, warn of an urgent need for "fundamental reform" of current funding models.

Aged Care Association (SA) chief executive Paul Carberry said unless residents paid a greater share of the cost of care and accommodation "aged care in Australia is heading for a crisis".

The Federal Government on average contributes about \$42,880 a year for people needing high-level care and \$15,565 for those on low-level care. Mr Carberry said Commonwealth subsidies had declined in real terms every year since 1997.

"We should always ensure that

those who don't have the means to pay continue to have access to quality aged care," he said.

"However, with a future declining workforce and a rapidly expanding aged population, it makes sense, both economic and moral, that those who can afford to, should accept a greater share of the cost of aged care than is presently the case."

Aged and Community Services chief executive Greg Mundy said "overall, the amount aged care residents contribute is not sufficient".

Minister for Ageing Christopher Pyne said the Government believed the funding model was "very sustainable". "We have no plans to change those formulas to require residents to pay more," he said.

Opposition ageing spokeswoman Jan McLucas said while funding had to be sustainable, she ruled out increasing resident contributions. "The transitional accommodation supplement gives an incoming government a window of opportunity of two years to fix this issue," she said.