TRANSFER OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN NORTHERN TERRITORY.

(Joint Statement by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator J.L. Cavanagh, and the Minister for the Northern Territory, Dr Rex Patterson)

In a joint statement issued today, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, and the Minister for the Northern Territory, Dr Rex Patterson, stated that agreement had been reached on the transfer of social welfare functions previously carried out within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the Department of the Northern Territory.

The Community Welfare Section would become part of the new Social Development Branch of the Social and Commercial Affairs Division of the Department of the Northern Territory with effect from 25 February 1974.

The Ministers indicated that the decision was consistent with the stated intention of Government policy that at some appropriate time in the future, the community welfare function should become part of the Department of the Northern Territory.

Insofar as welfare of Aboriginal communities is concerned, the transfer is a further step in placing functional responsibility within the appropriate functional Government department.

The Ministers said it was considered important to have an organization concentrating on programmes of social development consistent with the Government's aims. Placement within the Department of the Northern Territory would ensure that aspects of social development would be more closely co-ordinated with overall development plans.

Close links would be established between the two administering Departments to ensure that the Government's policy intentions in relation to Aboriginal welfare are facilitated.

Detailed arrangements associated with the transfer of responsibilities are being finalised at Department level, and should be concluded within the next few days.

CAIIMERRA. A.C.T.

DARWIN N.T.

22 FEBRUARY.