Transcript of excerpts from *Aboriginal Liaison Unit in the Top End* video

Excerpt 1

**Chris Corbett:** Hello, my name is Chris Corbett. I’m the Director for Social Security in the Northern Territory. We have made this video for you on the services that our Aboriginal Liaison Unit provides to people on communities in the Top End, so that when problems occur, you’ll know who to ask.

Here are 3 Top End Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Ben Cubillo, Rain Aguis and Glen Castillian.

Excerpt 2

**Voiceover:** After we get back from our field trips, we go to the Darwin Regional Office of the Department of Social Security. Then to our desks where we make sure that the claim forms will get to the right people. They’re checked as quickly as possible – and talk about our experiences in the different communities.

I then report to the Regional Manager, Bob Mitchell and tell him how things are in some of the communities. We have then a general meeting to discuss the main problems and talk about how best we can solve any difficulties.

**[ALOs talking in a meeting]**

**Man 1:** The people are still not answering the mail. People are still moving around, not bothering to let the community – let the department know where they’re going. And actually, their cheques are going to the community, and they’re coming into town asking for their cheques at the counter. This is still one of the real major areas that we have out there.

**Voiceover:** Don’t forget to tell us when you change your postal address!

**[ALOs talking in a meeting]**

**Man 2:** Some other consistent problems I seem to be picking up from all your visits is the mail not being picked up. We’re getting the stuff out there, but it’s staying in the council offices or in the post offices rather than getting to the client. I’d like some ideas from you guys as to how we can go about solving that problem.

**Man 1:** Well meself, I’d like to see people – whoever we send mail out to – I’d like to see them pick their own mail up. That means they’re getting their cheques. We send a letter to them – if they pick their cheques up and their mail, they’ll be able to either get their money on time, or they’re also getting information from us to say whether we need to receive any further information from them.

**Voiceover:** You must answer all questions on letters we send out to you.

We visit all major communities in the Top End. Before we visit, we ask for permission from the council president, and we get our contact person to put up a sign letting people know when we will be out there.

Excerpt 3

**Ben Cubillo:** Sometimes when you come into town, to the Social Security office, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer may not always be there. Please talk to our Counter Officers – they may be able to help you and sort your problems out.

Excerpt 4

**Voiceover:** Filing is real important though to make sure that when we take a claim off the people, that the form comes into the office and it leaves our hands and it goes – if we’ve got Unemployment Benefit claim forms, it’ll go to the Unemployment Benefits section. If we’ve got Child Endowment, Family Allowance claim forms, it’ll go into that section. If we’ve got a pension form, it’ll go to that section. It actually leaves the Aboriginal Liaison Officer once he walks into the office, you see, and it goes to some other person. And there’s a time factor. So it’ll be at least 2 weeks with an Unemployment Benefit form before they’re going to receive any money. When they come into town, they have to lodge their form. You look at the form properly, look at the date they’ve got to lodge their form and make sure that form comes in, because if it doesn’t come in on that date, and it’s not filled in correctly, no money.

**Voiceover:** So for you to continue to get your money, here are 3 of the most important things you must do.

One – you must tell Social Security when you move from one community to another, or into town, so that we know where you are, and we can send your money to your new address.

Two – you must sign your Unemployment Benefit form. You cannot sign, or send this form back to Social Security, until the date on the top right-hand side of the form.

Three – you must answer all questions on letters that we send out to you. This helps Social Security know things like how many children you have, have you just stopped work, or have you claimed Unemployment Benefit before, so that Social Security can pay you the right amount of money.

**Ben Cubillo:** Aboriginal Liaison Officers are an important link between the community and Social Security. They are here to help you. Look for them when they next visit your community.