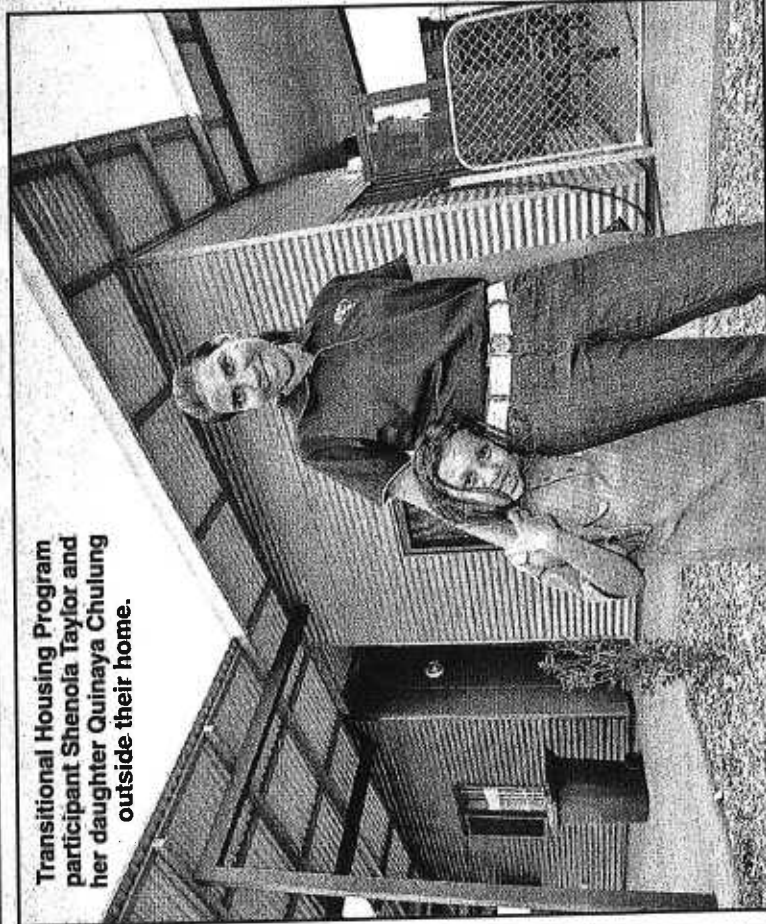


Transitional Housing Program participant Shenola Taylor and her daughter Quinaya Chulung outside their home.



## Home scheme offers benefits

**WA**  
A HOUSING scheme in Western Australia is reducing welfare dependency and changing the lives of Aboriginal people in Kunururra, in the state's Kimberley region.

The Transitional Housing Program, funded by the Federal Government, provides people with a rental home and access to support services to help them develop independence.

"In return they must be employed or in training, and their children must attend school regularly.

The scheme is being overseen by WA Department of Housing director general Grahame Seattle, who says it has a focus on individual responsibility that has proved successful at increasing workforce participation and school attendance, as well as reducing overcrowding in Aboriginal households.

"The overall goal is home ownership and intergenerational wealth transfer," he said.

"This is achieved by providing motivated Aboriginal people with a safe and secure place to live to create wealth and as a result reduce welfare dependence."

Since the program began last year, an average of 92 per cent of children in the program go to school, compared with 68 per cent across the Kimberley.

And all the tenants are employed or in training – double the state labour force participation rate for Aboriginal people of 50 per cent.

The program is a partnership between the Department of Housing, the Wunan Foundation, which provides support services, and Community Housing Ltd (CHL), which is the property and tenancy manager.

Four householders have had their applications to buy their property approved, with eight more home purchase applications in progress.

Wunan Foundation chairman and executive director Ian Trust believes the program will break the welfare cycle.

"There is absolutely no reason why people should be living in poverty for two or three generations when they are surrounded by opportunities, and this program is one of the ways we can do it," he said.

The program is as much about changing the people's mindsets as it is about delivering a physical outcome.

"It's amazing, the power of reward for effort," Mr Trust said. "We've had examples of people who have never been in work, on welfare for many, many years.

"After they got the first one or two pays they realised all of a sudden this money is all theirs and getting that car or buying a house is not too far away. It's amazing how they can just change."



Kimberley Transitional Housing Program participants Tracey Richards and Norman Dodd with their new puppy.

# 'We were living in fear'

## Mabo's widow tells of ASIO spying on family

By ALF WILSON

**QLD**  
BONITA Mabo, the widow of native title founder the late Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo, said her family lived in fear when they were spied upon by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in the mid-1960s. However, she did not know until recently that ASIO was taking pictures of her husband.

The photos of leading Australian and Torres Strait Islander activists, including one of Eddie Mabo, are part of an exhibition in Sydney of pictures taken by ASIO.

Included is a picture taken of Eddie Mabo in August 1965 when he was attending a meeting.

Other Indigenous men whose photos are in the exhibition include activist Gary Foley and the late actor Bob Maza, who is also of Murray Island descent.

The spying has featured in the documentary *Persons of Interest*, which has screened on SBS television.

Eddie Mabo was born on Murray Island in the Torres Strait on June 29, 1936 and died in Brisbane on January 21, 1992. He made history taking his battle for native title to the High Court of Australia. On June 3, 1992, Mr Mabo and a group of Murray Islanders were deemed to have rights to their land.

Speaking to the *Koori Mail* from her home in Townsville recently, Mrs Mabo said

she knew about the spying and lived in constant fear.

"I didn't know they were taking pics but we knew ASIO was spying on Eddie," she said.

"That was in 1965 when Eddie worked at the Townsville Harbour. We lived in Sturt Street near the city then.

"If he came home late I panicked and feared something bad had happened to him."

The 70-year-old Mrs Mabo said it was terrible being scared all of the time for herself, her husband and family.

"But there was nothing we could do about it even though it wasn't right and invaded our privacy – I always told Eddie to be careful at all times," she said.

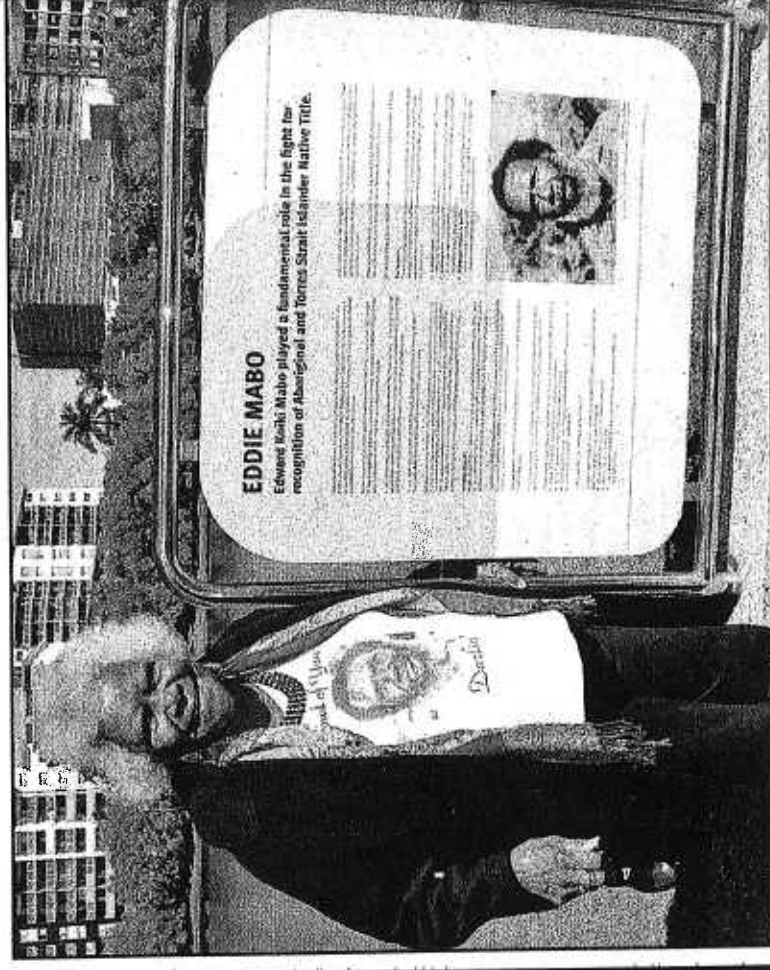
### Strange phone calls

Mrs Mabo said the family also received strange phone calls, which was upsetting. Mrs Mabo is the mother of seven, has 40 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

At the 21st anniversary celebrations of the High Court decision held last June in Townsville, Mrs Mabo wore a white shirt proclaiming 'Proud of You Darlin'.

It was near a photo of her husband at his memorial in Townsville's Central Park where she made an emotional speech to several hundred people including many students.

Mrs Mabo feels the exhibition organisers should have gained permission from family members before displaying the pictures.



Mrs Bonita Mabo at the memorial to her late husband Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo.