

tural background and be comfortable with that before making his way in the world.

Many mixed blood Aboriginals I met have had to come to terms with this inner confusion, sometimes getting flack from both their own people and whites (as non-aboriginals are called).

Anyway I soon found that at Nguuu (as Bathurst is now known), the native Tiwi people had made all the young Mission children welcome. The school goes from infants up to intermediate and is staffed mainly by white teachers, a few aboriginal teachers and teacher aides. The children speak both native Tiwi and English, and a bilingual programme is used to reinforce the lessons.

However the children are handicapped by tropical ear infection which causes deafness and a home environment that is ill-equipped to take advantage of such education.

Although parents may be aware of the benefits of education, from 74 years of missionary settlement, it is not reflected in children going on to college in Darwin.

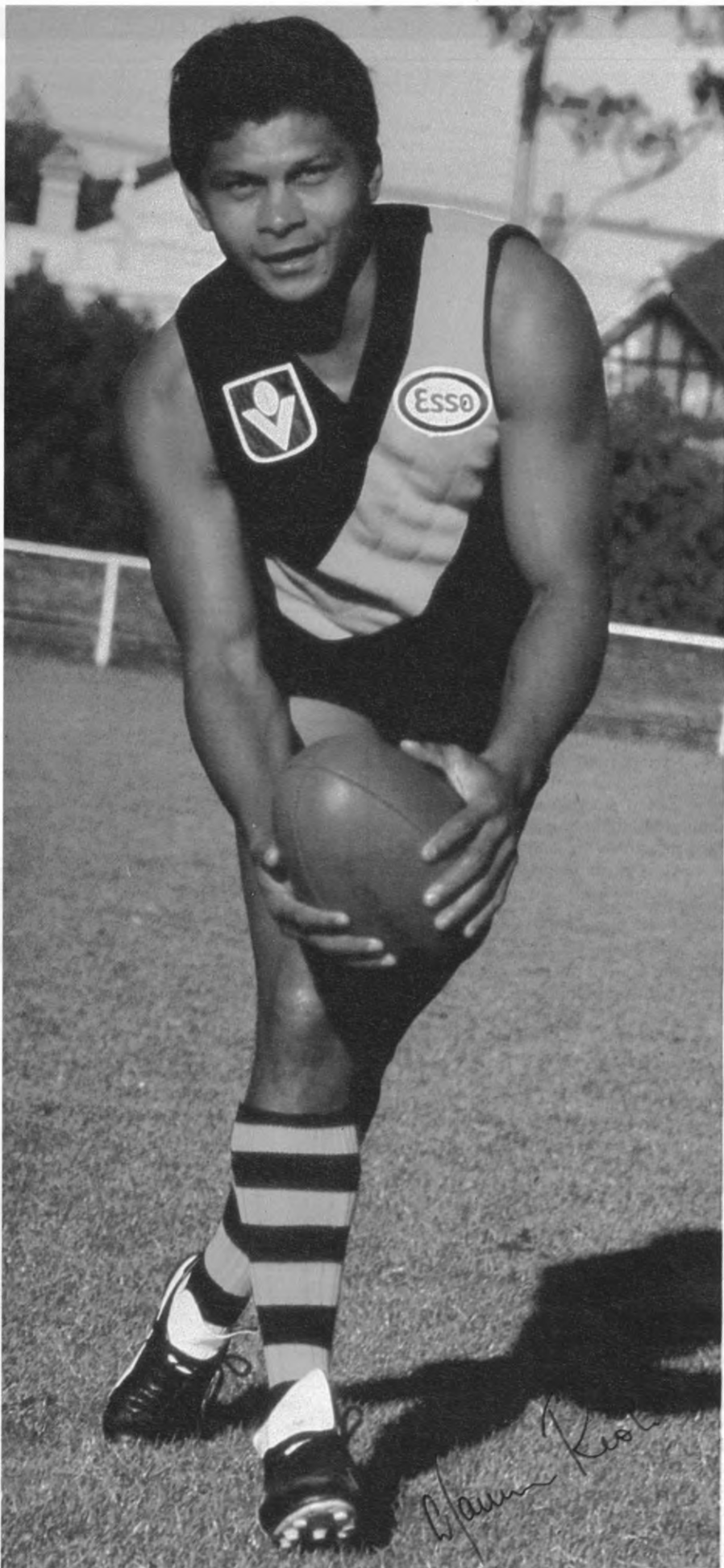
It's perhaps here that the reality of the Tiwi lifestyle hits you. Economically the islands are dependant on government funding for essential services like housing, water and electricity. These services require in turn people to run them, with nearly all run by white supervisors. The town-clerk, a south-Australian, said that the locals weren't qualified for positions and he put it down to children being disadvantaged even before they started school.

Over on Melville Island Cyril Rioli stands out as a man who wants his people to start being more independant. He looks after the local store on behalf of the people's council and has a proven track record in being able to handle responsibility. He was involved with logging operations on Bathurst, spent some time in management at a Darwin store, and was invited back to Melville to take over the store.

His family is well-known amongst Tiwi Islanders for their sports prowess, with several sons making their mark especially in Australian rules football. This "Aussy rules" has produced a famous national hero for Aboriginals and white Australians alike, Maurice Rioli.

But for Maurice to play competitively, he has to work and play in Melbourne. I watched a television programme about him and was amazed at the contrast in living style. It's a long way from Melbourne to Melville Island. While houses range from two roomed open style to concrete bungalows with air-conditioning, the unhurried pace of life remains. In 35 degree temperatures, it's hard to hurry.

For most adults on the island there's little paid work. Tiwi Design, is a small silk screening business started by an art teacher in 1969. On my visit there



Aussy Rules hero, Maurice Rioli running with the ball.