

Sam Lovell OAM - Living Legend of the Kimberley

Sam Lovell was born in January 1933 on Calwinyadah Station in the Kimberley, Western Australia. His father was Jack Lovell, part owner of Calwinyadah Station. Sam was taken away to Mulla Bulla Station in 1937 when he was 4 years old. Mulla Bulla Station was an Aboriginal settlement where so called "half caste" kids were taken. Sam does not remember his mother and never saw her again after he was taken away.

Sam's early employment ranged from truck driver, drover, Head Stockman to fencing and yard building contractor. In 1981, Sam and his wife Rosita established their own tourism business, "Kimberley Safari Tours" which they operated until 1992, with a client base of over 2,500 customers.

Sam was awarded the prestigious Sir David Brand Award in 1988 for his contribution to tourism. The Kimberley Tourism Association also presents an annual Encouragement Award, the Sam and Rosita Lovell Tourism Award to developing businesses.

Since 1995 Sam has been employed by the Office of Aboriginal Economic Development (OAED) as an Aboriginal Tourism Project Officer.

Developing tourism products based around Aboriginal culture can be a sensitive issue with many groups and requires culturally sensitive negotiations. In this regard, Sam has assisted in developing many Indigenous tourism businesses in the Kimberley region that today are thriving enterprises.

Apart from his involvement in the tourism industry as a Project Officer with OAED, Sam continues to provide an invaluable link between Aboriginal groups and Government departments and private industry and assist in negotiations between the two.

In 2001 Sam organised for a group of 15 Kimberley Aboriginal country musicians to attend Tamworth Country Music Festival. He has established the Country Music Association in Derby and has organised at his own expense for the group to attend the Tamworth Festival annually.

This has provided a valuable learning experience for young musicians, who aspire to be export orientated professional Indigenous musicians.

In 2003 Sam was awarded an Order of Australia, by the Governor of Western Australia, for his contribution to Indigenous Relations. Sam was also presented with a Certificate of Appreciation at a special cocktail function.

Sam has worked with many international media groups including the BBC and Swiss Television. He was most recently a Senior Cultural and Heritage Adviser on Baz Luhrmann's film set "Australia".



Sam Lovell talks with the Governor, in the gardens of Government House, following the awards ceremony

